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# THE GROWTH
OF
# ENGLISH INDUSTRY
AND
# COMMERCE
IN MODERN TIMES.

BY

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LAISSEZ FAIRE

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# VII. LAISSEZ FAIRE.

A.D. 1776 —1850.

## I. The Workshop of the World.

*The Industrial Revolution which began in England*

**242.** The period, which opened with Arkwright's mechanical inventions, has been the commencement of a new era in the Economic History, not only of England, but of the whole world. It marked one of the great stages in the growth of human power to master nature. The discovery of the New World, and of the sea route to India, had been events which gradually altered the whole method and scale on which European commerce was carried on. The application of water-power, and of steam, to do the work which had been previously accomplished by human drudgery, is comparable with the commercial revolution of the sixteenth century, as a new departure of which we do not even yet see the full significance. Physical forces have been utilised so as to aid man in his work; and the introduction of machinery continues slowly, but surely, to revolutionise the habits and organisation of industrial life in all parts of the globe. Half-civilised and barbarous peoples are compelled to have recourse, as far as may be, to modern weapons and modern means of communication; they cannot hold aloof, or deny themselves the use of such appliances. But the adoption of modern methods of production and traffic is hardly consistent with the maintenance of the old social order, in any country on this earth. England was the pioneer of the application of mechanism to industry, and thus became the workshop of the world, so that other countries have been inspired by her example. The policy of endeavouring to retain the advantages of machinery for England alone was mooted, but never very seriously pursued, and it was definitely abandoned in 1825.

*entails a complete alteration of social conditions*

A.D. 1776 —1850.

The changes which have taken place in England, during the last hundred and thirty years, at least suggest the direction of the movements which may be expected in other lands, as they are drawn more and more to adapt themselves to modern conditions. The time has not yet come to write the History of the Industrial Revolution in its broader aspects, for we only know the beginning of the story; we can trace the origin and immediate results in England, but we cannot yet gauge its importance for the world as a whole.

*wherever it spreads.*

It was not an accident that England took the lead in this matter; the circumstances of the day afforded most favourable conditions for the successful introduction of new appliances. Inventions and discoveries often seem to be merely fortuitous; men are apt to regard the new machinery as the outcome of a special and unaccountable burst of inventive genius in the eighteenth century. But we are not forced to be content with such a meagre explanation. To point out that Arkwright and Watt were fortunate in the fact that the times were ripe for them, is not to detract from their merits. There had been many ingenious men[1] from the time of William Lee and Dodo Dudley, but the conditions of their day were unfavourable to their success. The introduction of expensive implements, or processes, involves a large outlay; it is not worth while for any man, however energetic, to make the attempt, unless he has a considerable command of capital, and has access to large markets. In the eighteenth century these conditions were being more and more realised. The institution of the Bank of England, and of other banks, had given a great impulse to the formation of capital; and it was much more possible, than it had ever been before, for a capable man to obtain the means of introducing costly improvements in the management of his business. It had become apparent, too, that the long-continued efforts to build up the maritime power of England had been crowned with success; she had established commercial connections with all parts of the globe, and had access to markets that were practically unlimited. Under these circumstances, enterprising men were willing to run the risk of introducing expensive

*Mechanical inventions were not a practical success*

*till the eighteenth century afforded the requisite opportunities for enterprise.*

[1] *Calendars* S. P. D. 1690—1692, *s.v.* Inventions.



A.D. 1776 —1850.

novelties, and inventors could reasonably hope to reap advantage themselves from the improvements they suggested.

In the seventeenth century such an expansion had hardly been possible at all; the dominant principles were still in favour of a well-ordered trade, to be maintained by securing special concessions; the interlopers, who were prepared to contest such privileges and to force their business on any terms they could, were still regarded as injurious to the sound and healthy development of commerce. But after the Revolution England entered on a new phase of mercantile life; and the keen competition, which had been allowed free play temporarily during the Interregnum, with disastrous results, came to be accepted as the ordinary atmosphere of trade. The principles, which the interlopers had practised, were being more generally adopted, and all merchants became agreed that it was by pushing their wares, and selling goods that were better and cheaper than those of other countries, that new markets could be opened up and old ones retained. The "well-ordered trade" of the Merchant Companies would hardly have afforded sufficient scope for the introduction of mechanical improvements in manufacturing. In the civic commerce of the Middle Ages, and during the seventeenth century, merchants had looked to well-defined and restricted markets, in which they held exclusive rights. So long as this was the case attempts were made to carry on industrial production so as just to meet these limited requirements, and to secure favourable conditions for the artisan, by guarding him from competition and authoritatively assessing his wages. As merchants and manufacturers realised that they could best gain, and keep, foreign markets, not by special privileges, but by supplying the required goods at low rates, they aimed at introducing the conditions of manufacture under which industrial expansion is possible. This opinion commended itself more and more to men of business and legislators, but it penetrated slowly among the artisans, who preferred the stability of the life they enjoyed under a system of regulation and restriction. Workmen were inclined to oppose the introduction of machinery in so far as it tended to upset the old-established order of the realm[1], while others seem to have hoped

*The well-ordered trade of the seventeenth century*

*had been incompatible with the pushing of business,*

*and the old regulations were proving mischievous;*

[1] See below, pp. 638, 652.

A.D. 1776 —1850.

characteristic feature is that it is an application of power, and not of human exertion. Hence the introduction of machinery always has a very direct bearing on the position of the labourer. From one point of view we may say that it saves him from drudgery; from another, that it forces upon him the strain of a competition in which he is overmatched, and thus gradually deprives him of employment. The invention of new processes and new implements has not such a necessary and direct result on the employment and remuneration of labour as occurs with the introduction of machines. So far as the wealth of the realm was concerned, the development of the coal and iron trades was of extraordinary importance, but the substitution of mechanical inventions for hand labour in the textile trades brought about a revolution in social life throughout the country.

*had such marked results as*

*the substitution of machinery for hand labour.*

**244.** Though the changes effected by the industrial revolution have been so startling, it may yet be said, when we view them from an economic standpoint, that they were of unexampled violence rather than wholly new. After all, the age of mechanical invention was only one phase of a larger movement. We have traced the gradual intervention of capital in industry and agriculture, especially during the eighteenth century; we shall now have to note the operation of the same force, but at a greatly accelerated pace. Capitalism obtained a footing and held its ground in the cloth trade[1], because of the facilities which the wealthy man enjoyed for purchasing materials, or for meeting the markets. Other trades, such as coal mining or iron manufacture, had been necessarily capitalistic in type from the earliest days, because none but wealthy men were able to purchase expensive plant, and to run the risks of setting it up. The invention of mechanical appliances for the textile trades gave a still greater advantage to the rich employer, as compared with the domestic weaver, since only substantial men could afford to employ machines. It was a farther sign of the triumph of the modern system of business management.

*The introduction of machines*

*was a phase in the progress of Capitalism,*

*and led to increased*

It is worth while to distinguish some of the principal changes in connection with labour, which resulted from the increase of capitalist organisation and especially from machine

[1] See pp. 499 and 505 above.



A.D. 1776 —1850.

production. The opening chapter of the *Wealth of Nations* calls attention to the important improvement which is known as the division of processes. Adam Smith there points out that an employer can organise production, and assign each man his own particular task in such a way, that there shall be a saving of time and of skill. There will also be other advantages, such as an increase of deftness, from the acquired facility in doing some one operation rapidly and well. The division of processes is sure to arise under any capitalist system of control; in some districts of the cloth trade, it had been carried out to a very considerable extent for centuries, and it is true to say that increased subdivision has facilitated the invention of machinery. None the less is it also true that the adoption of mechanical appliances has led to the development of new forms of specialised labour, and has tended to confine men more exclusively to particular departments of work.

*division of processes,*

The invention of machinery, as well as the introduction of new processes, brought about a considerable shifting of labour. The employment of coal for smelting iron tended to the disuse of charcoal burning, and caused an increased demand for hewers in coal-mines; whether there was less employment or more, in connection with the production of a ton of suitable fuel, it was employment of a different kind. The adoption of machinery in the textile trades also caused an extraordinary shifting of labour; for children were quite competent to tend machines which carried on work that had hitherto occupied adults. On the whole, machinery rendered it possible in many departments of industry to substitute unskilled for skilled labour.

*and to the shifting of labour*

The tendency, which had been observable during the early part of the century, for manufactures to migrate to particular districts, was enormously accelerated by the introduction of machinery. So far as the cloth trade was concerned, the trend appears to have been due to the facilities which water-power afforded for fulling-mills; and as one invention after another was introduced, it became not merely advantageous, but necessary for the manufacturer to establish his business at some place where power was available. We have in consequence the rapid concentration of industries in the West

*as well as to the migration of industry to localities where power was available.*

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Riding and other areas where water-power could be had, and the comparative desertion of low lying and level districts. The application of steam-power caused a farther readjustment in favour of the coal-producing areas; but this new development did not resuscitate the decaying industries of the Eastern Counties, since they were as badly off for coal as they were for water-power.

*The concentration of labour involved*

**245.** The introduction of machinery rendered it necessary to concentrate the labourers in factories where the machines were in operation; the new methods of work were incompatible with the continued existence of cottage industry. The man who worked in his own house, whether as a wage-earner under the capitalist system or as an independent tradesman under the domestic system, was no longer required, so soon as it was proved that machine production was economically better. In the same way, the concentration of spinning in factories deprived the women of a by-employment in their cottages. During the greater part of the eighteenth century industrial occupations were very widely diffused, and the interconnection between the artisan population and rural occupation was close[1]. The severance had already begun; but under the influence of the introduction of machinery it went on with greater rapidity, till the differentiation of town from country employment was practically complete.

*the decay of cottage employment*

*and increased the differentiation of town and country*

The divorce of the industrial population from the soil tended on the one hand to the impoverishment of the rural districts, from which manufactures were withdrawn, and on the other to a notable change in the position of the workman; he came to be wholly dependent on his earnings, and to have no other source to which he could look for support. The cottage weavers, whether wage-earners or independent men, had had the opportunity of work in the fields in harvest and of supplementing their income from their gardens or through their privileges on the common wastes. When the industrial population was massed in factory towns[2] they were necessarily deprived of these subsidiary sources of income, and their terms of employment were affected by the state of trade.

*so that the weaver ceased to have subsidiary sources of income,*

[1] See pp. 502 and 561 above.

[2] A Committee of the House of Commons insisted the advantages of allotments to the artisan population and had evidence of a widespread anxiety to obtain them. *Reports* 1843, VII. 203.



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*while his earnings were fluctuating*

So long as cottage industry lasted, the workmen had something to fall back upon when times were bad; but under the new conditions the fluctuations were much more violent than they had ever been before, and the workman had no means of improving his position. The prosperity of the mass of the population no longer rested on the solid basis of land, but upon the fluctuating basis of trade[1].

*There was rapid material progress and*

The age of invention then was not merely concerned, as might at first sight appear, with the improvement of particular arts, it effected an entire revolution in the economic life of the country; for this reason it is not quite easy to weigh against one another the loss and gain involved in such a fundamental change. We see on the one hand the signs of marvellous economic progress; an immensely increased command over material resources of all sorts and an extraordinary development of trade and wealth, with the consequent ability to cope with the schemes by which Napoleon endeavoured to compass our ruin. On the other hand we see a loss of stability of every kind; England as a nation forfeited her self-sufficing character and became dependent on an imported food supply; and a large proportion of the population, who had been fairly secure in the prospect of shelter and employment and subsistence for their lives, were reduced to a condition of the greatest uncertainty as to their lot from year to year or from week to week. Over against the rapid advance of material prosperity must be set the terrible suffering which was endured in the period of transition; and while we congratulate ourselves on the progress that has taken place, we should not forget the cost at which it has been obtained, or the elements of well-being that have been sacrificed.

*this involved a loss of stability.*

*Machinery gave opportunity for the rise*

**246.** There were, however, certain sections of the community which were able to take advantage of the period of change, and to adapt themselves rapidly to the new conditions; a class of capitalist manufacturers came into great prominence, and they were soon able to exercise considerable influence in Parliament. There had of course been wealthy employers in certain districts[2], especially in the iron trade, and in the

[1] Massie, *Plan*, p. 69. See above, p. 577.

[2] Compare the iron, glass and brass works mentioned by Rudder, *Gloucestershire*, 601.

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cloth trade of the West of England; but the moneyed men of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had been merchants rather than manufacturers of textile goods. It was only with the progress of the industrial revolution that the wealthy employer of labour attained to anything like the social status which had been accorded to successful merchants from time immemorial. But the triumph of capital in industry involved the rise and prosperity of a large number of captains of industry[1].

*of capitalist employers,*

It seems probable that there was comparatively little room for the intrusion of new men in the old centres of the cloth trades. There were large and well-established houses engaged in this manufacture in the West of England, and they had an honourable ambition to maintain the traditions of their trades. In Yorkshire, too, there was a class of capitalist merchants who were ready to deflect their energies into manufacturing as occasion arose. The wealthy employers of the West Riding seem to have been chiefly drawn from this class, though they were doubtless reinforced to some extent by men like Hirst who had risen from the ranks[2]. There is reason to believe, however, that in Lancashire, and the other areas where the cotton trade was carried on, the course of affairs was somewhat different. This industry was characterised by an extraordinary expansion, and it offered abundant opportunities for new men, of energy and perseverance, to force their way to the front. "Few of the men who entered the trade rich were successful. They trusted too much to others—too little to themselves; whilst on the contrary the men who prospered were raised by their own efforts—commencing in a very humble way, generally from exercising some handicraft, as clockmaking, hatting, &c., and pushing their advance by a series of unceasing exertions, having a very limited capital to begin with, or even none at all, saving their own labour[3]." The yeomen farmers as a class failed to seize the opportunities open to them; but a "few of these men, shaking off their slothful habits, both of

*some of whom were drawn from mercantile business*

*and some of whom had risen from the ranks*

[1] For an admirable examination of the growth of this class see P. Mantoux, *La Révolution Industrielle*, 376.

[2] *The Woollen Trade during the last Fifty Years*, Brit. Mus. 10347. de. 25.

[3] P. Gaskell, *Artisans and Machinery*, 33.



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body and mind, devoted themselves to remedying other conditions with a perseverance certain to be successful. Joining to this determination a practical acquaintance with the details of manufactures, personal superintendence and industry, several of the most eminently successful steam-manufacturers have sprung from this class of people, and have long since become the most opulent of a wealthy community[1]." The Peels and the Strutts were examples of families which emerged from the ranks of the yeomen and acquired great wealth in the cotton trade. Many of the rich manufacturers in such towns as Stockport, Hyde, Duckenfield and Staleybridge had in early life worked as "hatters, shoemakers, carters, weavers, or some other trade[2]." Some of these self-made men were not disinclined to be proud of their own success, and to be at once hard and contemptuous towards the man who had shown so little energy as to remain in the labouring class, as if it was less his misfortune than his fault.

*of the yeoman class.*

*The improvements in production led to the adoption of a new policy for stimulating industry,*

It was not unnatural that, as the cotton manufacture continued to increase, Manchester should become the centre of a school of men who were deeply imbued with the belief that in industrial affairs the battle was to the strong and the race to the swift. The system, which the Mercantilists had built up with the view of stimulating industry, seemed to this new race only to stifle and hamper it. Under somewhat different circumstances the capitalist employers might have been eager to secure protection. The *nouveaux riches* of the fourteenth century were eager to protect English municipalities against the intrusion of aliens; the merchant princes of the seventeenth century organised a restrictive system by means of which they hoped to foster the English industry at the expense of the French and the Dutch. American millionaires have found their protective tariff an assistance in building up gigantic trusts. It is at least conceivable that the cotton manufacturers of the early part of the nineteenth century should have endeavoured to retain for a time a monopoly of industrial power, and have forced other peoples to pay such prices as would have enabled them to remodel the conditions of production in a satisfactory

*not by recasting*

[1] Gaskell, *ib.* p. 32.

[2] *Ib.* 96.

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favourable impression he had expected. There was henceforth no hindrance to the general use of power-spinning. The hand-jenny, which was improved from Highs' invention by Hargreave of Blackburn about 1767, had met with serious opposition[1], and it had hardly been introduced in the cotton districts before it was superseded[2], and the work transferred to mills where water-power was available. A further invention in 1775 by Crompton, of the Water Mule which combined the principles of the Jenny and the Water Frame, rendered it possible to obtain a much finer thread than had previously been produced by machinery, so that it became possible to develop the muslin manufacture[3]. Through these changes the carding, roving and spinning of cotton were no longer continued as cottage employments, and weaving was the only part of the manufacture which was not concentrated in factories.

*and power-spinning became very general.*

*The weaving of cotton on linen warp had grown up during the*

The cotton trade had a peculiar position among English manufactures; it was not an industry for which the country was naturally adapted, for the materials were imported, and it had never enjoyed the protection bestowed on some other exotic trades, for there was no serious French competition. The early history of the trade is very obscure; and it is rendered particularly confusing by the ambiguous use of the term cottons, which was applied in the sixteenth century to some kind of cloth manufactured from wool[4]. There can be little doubt, however, that the trade in Manchester goods, in which Humphrey Chetham made his fortune[5], included cottons

[1] The fact that the hand-jennies and carding machines were destroyed in Lancashire, Nottingham, and elsewhere (Rees, *Encyclopedia* (1819), s.v. *Cotton Manufacture*) is a further indication that the cottagers who spun cotton were wage-earners. Otherwise they might, like the Yorkshire domestic clothiers (see p. 502) have welcomed the introduction of such hand-machines. They appear to have become reconciled to hand-jennies ten years later, and to have only attacked machines that went by water or horse-power in 1779 (*loc. cit.*).

[2] *Annals of Agriculture* (1788), x. 580.

[3] R. Guest, *Compendious History of Cotton Manufacture*, 31.

[4] Defoe among other writers appears to have been misled by this ambiguity: he speaks of the cotton manufacture as earlier than the woollen, *Tour* (1724) III. Letter iii. p. 216. The tradition of the older sense of the term cotton survived in Lancashire in the nineteenth century, W. Cooke Taylor, *Notes of a Tour in the Manufacturing Districts of Lancashire*, 140. It seems probable that the same sort of confusion occurs in the use of the term 'fustian'; cf. 11 H. VII. c. 27.

[5] He and his brothers "betook themselves to the Trading of this County



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and fustians made from the vegetable material. In 1641 we have an undoubted mention of the weaving of cotton in its modern sense; Lewis Roberts[1] speaks with admiration of the enterprise of the Manchester men who bought the cotton wool of Cyprus and Smyrna[2] in London and sold quantities of fustians, vermilions and dimities. A few years earlier, in 1626, we have an isolated proposal to employ the poor in the spinning and weaving of cotton wool[3]; it seems likely enough that the industry was planted in Lancashire about 1685 by immigrants from Antwerp, a city where the fustian manufacture had been prosecuted with success[4]. But however it was

*sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.*

dealing in Manchester commodities, sent up to London. * * He was High Sheriff of the County 1635, discharging the place with great Honour. Insomuch that very good Gentlemen of Birth and Estate did wear his Cloth at the Assize to testifie their unfeigned affection to him" (Fuller's *Worthies*, 121). Fuller also explains that several sorts of fustians are made in Lancashire, "whose inhabitants, buying the Cotton Wool or Yarne coming from beyond the Sea, make it here into Fustians, to the good employment of the poor and great improvement of the rich therein, serving mean people for their outsides, and their betters for the Lineings of their garments; Bolton is the Staple place for this commodity being brought thither from all parts of the county" (*ib.* 106). In Rees' *Encyclopedia* there is an interesting account of the organisation of the fustian trade about the middle of the seventeenth century. "Fustians were manufactured in quantities at Bolton, Leigh, and other places adjacent; but Bolton was the principal market for them, where they were bought in the grey by the Manchester dealers, who finished and sold them in the country. The Manchester traders went regularly on market days to buy fustians of the weavers, each weaver then procuring his own yarn and cotton as he could, which subjected the trade to great inconvenience. To remedy this, the chapmen themselves furnished warps and cottons to the weavers, and employed persons in all the little villages and places adjacent, to deliver out materials, and receive back the manufactured goods when finished. Each weaver's cottage formed at that time a separate and independent little factory, in which the raw material was prepared, carded and spun, by the female part of the family, and supplied woof, or weft, for the goods which were wove by the father and his sons." s.v. *Cotton Manufacture*.

[1] "The towne of Manchester in Lancashire must be also herein remembered and worthily, and for their industry commended, who buy the Yarne of the Irish in great quantity, and weaving it returne the same againe in Linnen into Ireland to sell; neither doth the industry rest here, for they buy Cotten wool in London, that comes first from Cyprus and Smyrna, and at home worke the same and perfit it into Fustians, Vermilions, Dymities and other such Stuffes, and then returne it to London, where the same is vented and sold, and not seldom sent into forrain parts," *Treasure of Trafficke*, 32, 33. The localisation of the cotton trade in Lancashire may have been connected with facilities for obtaining from Ireland the linen yarn, which was then found necessary for the warp of the fabrics.

[2] One of the allegations in favour of the Turkey Company was that it provided materials for this manufacture, while the East India Company introduced finished goods.

[3] J. Stoit, Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. 12,496, f. 236.

[4] Cunningham, *Alien Immigrants*, p. 180.

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planted, it took root in Lancashire and developed steadily till about 1740, when an era of more rapid progress began[1]. The competition of the East India Company was that which the manufacturers had most reason to fear, and though the cloth they wove of cotton on a linen warp had a practical monopoly in the home market[2], they were liable to be undersold by the company in foreign markets. Arkwright's inventions, by spinning a firmer cotton thread than had hitherto been procurable and one which was suitable for the warp[3], made it possible to manufacture a cloth on terms which rendered it acceptable in markets in all parts of the world.

*but cloth could now be made of cotton only, and foreigners undersold.*

The effect of Arkwright's success was to open up to a trade, that had hitherto been conducted on a small scale, the possibility of enormous and indefinite expansion[4]. Materials could be obtained in considerable quantities from the East and the Bahamas; and in the last decades of the eighteenth century increasing supplies were procured from the southern States[5].

*Ample supplies of material were available,*

[1] The progress was not uncheckered, however, and was closely dependent on the supply of materials. The evidence given before the Select Committee of 1751 seems to show that their French and German rivals could obtain the linen yarn used as warp more cheaply than the English manufacturers could procure it from Ireland (*Reports from Committees of the House of Commons*, Reprints, First Series, II. 291, 292). In order to assist them it was resolved that the duties on the importation of foreign linen yarn should be reduced (*Commons Journals*, XXVI. 234). The English had an advantage in the possession of cotton islands; but their continental rivals offered better prices and secured a large part of the crop (*Reports, op. cit.* 296). There were further complaints of decline in the manufacture in 1766. T., *Letters on the Utility of Machinery*, 9.

[2] 9 Geo. II. c. 4.

[3] Linen had been previously used for this purpose. In 1774 an Act was passed which repealed 7 Geo. I. c. 7 and rendered it possible for Arkwright to take full advantage of the improvement. 14 Geo. III. c. 72.

[4] The average annual import of cotton wool for the years 1701 to 1705 was 1,170,881 lbs.; it rose in the following decade and from 1716–20 averaged 2,173,287 lbs. For quinquennial periods after the invention of the jenny and frame

| | |
|---|---|
| 1771—1775 . . . | 4,764,589, |
| 1776—1780 . . . | 6,706,013, |
| 1781—1785 . . . | 10,941,934, |
| 1786—1790 . . . | 25,443,270. |

In 1800 it reached 56,010,732 and in 1810, 136,488,935, but after this year there was a remarkable drop (as low as 50,966,000 in 1813), and matters did not mend till after the close of the war. Guest, *op. cit.* 51.

[5] The cultivation of cotton had been introduced into the Carolinas and Georgia from the Bahamas about the time of the War of Independence. Whitney's invention of the cotton-gin which separated the fibre from the seed, and prepared the cotton for export, gave an immense stimulus to the production; in 1794, one million six hundred thousand pounds were exported. Leone Levi, *History*, 83.



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Since plenty of raw material was available, the manufacture advanced rapidly[1] to meet the enlarging demand for cheap cotton cloth. It is to be noticed, however, that the trade was liable to serious interruptions; both for the materials used, and for access to the markets in which the cloth was sold, the Lancashire manufacturers were dependent on foreign commerce; and a breach of mercantile intercourse might disorganise the whole of the industry[2]. This occurred to some extent from the decline of the American demand for Manchester goods during the War of Independence; as a result there was considerable distress among the hands employed. They were inclined to attribute it to the introduction of machinery and there was a good deal of rioting[3] and destruction of spinning-jennies in parts of Lancashire. Apart from these periods of distress, however, the trade increased by leaps and bounds, and it was alleged in 1806 that a third part in value of all our exports was sent abroad in the form of cotton goods.

*though interruptions of trade were disastrous*

[1] The first phase of development was the extension of the Lancashire cotton trade at the expense of woollen and linen: "From the year 1770 to 1788 a complete change had gradually been effected in the spinning of yarns—that of wool disappearing altogether and that of linen was also nearly gone—cotton, cotton, cotton was become the almost universal material for employment, the hand-wheels, with the exception of one establishment were all thrown into lumber-rooms, the yarn was spun on common jennies, the carding for all numbers up to 40 hanks in the pound, was done on carding engines; but the finer numbers of 60 to 80 were still carded by hand, it being a general opinion that machine carding would never answer for fine numbers. In weaving no great alteration had taken place during these 18 years, save the introduction of the fly-shuttle—a change in the woollen looms to fustians and calico, and the linen nearly gone except the few fabrics in which there was a mixture of cotton. To the best of my recollection there was no increase of looms during this period—but rather a decrease." Radcliffe, *Origin of the New System of Manufacture*, 61.

[2] For an instance of this in 1653, see S. P. D. Inter. LXVIII. 4, Mar. 20, 1653–4. The commissioners of customs had seized twelve bags which had been imported from Dunkirk contrary to the Navigation Acts and the "trade was in danger to return from whence by industry 'twas gained." See also below, pp. 686, 689.

[3] These disturbances called forth the Act 22 Geo. III. c. 40, which complains of the "destroying the manufactures of wool, silk, linen and cotton, and the materials, tools, tackle and other utensils prepared for or used therein." There were riots at Hunslet in Yorkshire when the military were called out (Cookson's Evidence, *Reports*, 1806, III., printed pag. 81), but these were probably directed against shearing frames, not against jennies (see below, p. 662). There had also been riots on the part of the spinners in 1753, and Kay was forced to leave Bury, as he had been driven out of Colchester in 1738 on account of his shuttle, and from Leeds on account of his power-loom in 1745. Woodcroft, *op. cit.* p. 4. See also T., *Letters on the utility*, p. 20, note. On the hostility to machinery in 1824—30 see S. J. Chapman, *Lancashire Cotton Industry*, 73.

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*and there was an increased demand for labour,*

This unexampled expansion of the industry opened up a very much larger field for employment than had been available before the era of these inventions. The abundance of yarn, especially after 1788, when mule yarns became available, was such that the services of weavers were in great demand[1], and considerable quantities of yarn were sent abroad for use on foreign looms. The kinds of labour needed were not very different from those required in the old days of hand spinning and carding, but girls and women were concentrated in factories to tend the machines, instead of spinning with their wheels in cottages. This case affords an excellent illustration of an important principle in regard to labour-saving machinery; when the improvement renders the article cheaper and thereby stimulates the demand, it is quite likely that there will be an increased call for labour[2], because the machine has come into use[3]. The artisans, who thought that such inventions must necessarily deprive them of their occupation, were mistaken; the number of hands engaged in the cotton trade to-day is undoubtedly very much larger than it was in the time of Arkwright. Much remains to be said about the conditions and terms of employment, but there can be no doubt whatever that the introduction of machinery did not diminish the numbers occupied in the cotton trade.

*but the supply of water-power was limited,*

The only check to the indefinite expansion of the trade lay in the limited supply of water-power available; that cause for apprehension was removed, however, by the invention of Boulton and Watt, and the application of steam as the motive power in cotton mills. Though steam engines had long been in use for pumping water from mines, the improvements,

[1] Radcliffe, *Origin of the New System of Manufacture*, p. 65.

[2] Arkwright asserted that when power-spinning was introduced, the spinners were not left idle, but were "almost immediately engaged" in weaving or other branches of the business. Anstie, *Observations*, 12 n.

[3] On one of the limiting conditions, see below, pp. 661, 662. Other illustrations are furnished by the railways, which by rendering intercommunication cheap have developed intercourse of every sort. It is probable that more horses are required now, as subsidiary to railway traffic, than were needed in the eighteenth century to do all the haulage by road: there can be no doubt that there is far larger employment for men. Other illustrations of an increased demand for labour in consequence of the introduction of labour-saving implements are afforded by the type-writer and the sewing-machine.



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which reduced the cost of working and rendered it possible to apply steam power to industry, were an immense advance.

*and the application of steam power*

At Papplewick in Nottinghamshire a steam cotton mill was erected in 1785; and the new power was utilised for spinning at Manchester in 1789, and at Glasgow in 1792. Its full effect was only gradually felt, and water continued to be economically the better agent during the first quarter of the nineteenth century; but eventually as a consequence of Watt's invention, water-falls became of less value. Instead of carrying the people to the power, employers found it preferable to place the power among the people at the most convenient trading centres. The factory system is older than the application of steam to the textile trades; but the introduction of the new mechanical power tended to destroy the advantage of factory villages on streams, and rendered possible the gradual concentration of the population in factory towns.

*was followed by the growth of factory towns.*

The cotton trade, as depending on imported materials and supplying foreign markets[1], was probably a capitalistic trade from the very first; the suggestion that it was planted by immigration from abroad harmonises with this view; and though the weavers were cottagers, it is likely that they were wage earners[2] and not men who worked on the domestic

[1] See p. 518 above.

[2] The conditions of life during this period of expansion are fully described by Radcliffe. "These families, up to the time I have been speaking of, whether as cottagers or small farmers, had supported themselves by the different occupations I have mentioned in spinning and manufacturing, as their progenitors from the earliest institutions of society had done before them. But the mule-twist now coming into vogue, for the warp as well as the weft, added to the water-twist and common jinny yarns, with an increasing demand for every fabric the loom could produce, put all hands in request of every age and description. The fabrics made from wool or linen vanished, while the old loom-shops being insufficient every lumber-room, even old barns, carthouses, and outbuildings of any description were repaired, windows broke through the old blank walls and all fitted up for loom-shops. This source of making room being at length exhausted, new weavers cottages with loom-shops rose up in every direction; all immediately filled, and when in full work the weekly circulation of money as the price of labour only rose to five times the amount ever before experienced in this sub-division, every family bringing home weekly 40, 60, 80, 100 or even 120 shillings per week." *Origin of the New System of Manufacture*, 66. Radcliffe had personal knowledge of these times, for as he says, "I always attended Manchester Market on Tuesdays, bringing from the bank my cash for the wages of the week. Next morning, soon after six, I entered the warehouse to serve the weavers of whom there were generally ten to twenty waiting behind the counter, on which I placed the money to count into the drawer before I began business." *Ib.* p. 68.

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system[1]. However this may be, the manufacture was organised on capitalistic lines from the time of the introduction of machinery, and the cotton factories which rose in the neighbourhood of Manchester and other large towns soon began to attract public attention.

*The condition of parish apprentices in cotton factories*

**248.** From a very early time the state of the factories, and the conditions under which the children employed in them lived and worked called forth severe criticism by public authorities. In 1784, before the great period of expansion had set in, the Lancashire magistrates had deputed Dr Percival and other medical men to institute enquiries on the subject[2]; their report shows how long the evil was allowed to continue before any serious attempt was made to check it, and how slowly the national conscience was aroused to the necessity of taking active and effective measures. Work in the factories did not in all probability make greater calls upon the powers of the children than work in other occupations[3]; but the cotton factories brought the evil into light in connection with a growing industry, in which it was practicable to deal with it. The subsequent attempt to enforce regulations in old-established trades roused less opposition[4], since a beginning

*attracted attention,*

[1] Gaskell (*Artisans and Machinery*, 31) speaks of yeomen who obtained jennies and tried to compete with the mules. The opportunity of industrial occupation would delay the extinction of the class (see above, p. 558) of small farmers in this district. Kennedy's description implies that the cotton weavers owned the implements and turned their own cottages into small factories, before water-power was used. *Rise and progress of Cotton Trade*, in *Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester*, 2nd Series, III. 120, 9.

[2] Hutchins and Harrison, *Factory Legislation*, 7.

[3] Mr Cooke Taylor has recorded the impressions of some of the elderly men with whom he spoke in 1842. One of them appealing to his own youth—about 1770—maintained that these had been "really the days of infant slavery. 'The creatures were set to work,' he said, 'as soon as they could crawl,' and their parents were the hardest of task masters. I may remark that on a previous occasion I had received a similar account from an old man in the vale of Todmorden, who declared that he would not accept an offer to live his whole life over again, if it were to be accompanied with the condition of passing through the same servitude and misery which he had endured in infancy. Both these old men expressed great indignation at the clamour which had been raised for infant protection; my Todmorden friend quite lost his temper when any reference was made to the subject, contrasting in very strong terms the severities he had endured, and the heavy labours he had to perform, both in his father's house and afterwards as an apprentice, with the light toil and positive comfort of the factory children." *Notes of a Tour in the Manufacturing Districts of Lancashire*, 141.

[4] The Act of 1802 applied to other factories besides cotton mills, but there seems to have been very little spinning of wool by children in mills at that date.



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had been made with the cotton trade; after the principle of state intervention had once been accepted, it became possible to apply it, step by step, not only to factories, but to workshops as well.

*not from the danger of overwork,*

The main evil, as recognised at this time, lay, not in the excessive hours of work[1], but in the conditions under which the children who had been apprenticed in cotton factories were housed and fed. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were fully alive to the peril of idleness, as the source of crime of every kind[2]; the squatters on commons and the weavers, who worked or not as they chose, were regarded as dangers to the prosperity of the country, but the ordinary citizen failed to contemplate the possibility of any evil arising from overwork. Still the public did appreciate the unwholesome conditions in which the children were housed and fed, and the fact that they were deprived of all opportunity of instruction. Most of them were parish apprentices, who were brought in batches from their parishes, and the parish authorities were very negligent[3] about seeing that the terms

[1] Dr Percival may be regarded as exceptionally far-seeing. In the report which he and other medical men presented to the Lancaster county magistrates in 1784 the following passage occurs. "We earnestly recommend a longer recess from labour at noon and a more early dismission from it in the evening, to all those who work in cotton mills; but we deem this indulgence essential to the present health and future capacity for labour, for those who are under the age of fourteen; for the active recreations of childhood and youth are necessary to the growth, the vigour and the right conformation of the human body. And we cannot excuse ourselves on the present occasion from suggesting to you, who are the guardians of the public weal, this further very important consideration, that the rising generation should not be debarred from all opportunities of instruction at the only season of life in which they can be properly improved." Apparently in consequence of this report the magistrates resolved that in future they would not allow "indentures of Parish Apprentices whereby they shall be bound to owners of cotton mills and other works in which children are obliged to work in the night, or more than ten hours in the day." Hutchins and Harrison, *History of Factory Legislation*, 8.

[2] This point is well brought out by Miss Hutchins and Miss Harrison in their excellent work on *Factory Legislation*, 3.

[3] The system of farming the poor (see above, p. 575) doubtless contributed to the neglect on the part of parish authorities. The officials had, at all events, no interest in interfering on behalf of the children. "It is within the compass of probability, that there have been, and are yet, instances, wherein the overseers of the poor and more especially the assistant overseers, who are mere mercenaries and serve for pay, have been, and are, some of them at least, bribed by the owners of mills for spinning silk, cotton or woollen yarn, to visit the habitation of the

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of the indentures were properly complied with. Apprenticeship had always been regarded not merely as a period of service, but as an opportunity of training in conduct. The public mind had been uneasy about the treatment of other parish apprentices[1], but the number of the cotton factories concentrated in Manchester led to the demands for special regulations for those who were bound to this particular trade[2]. Sir Robert Peel, who felt the need of more effective regulations than he had been able to give in his own factory[3], took the matter up, and a measure was passed in 1802, for the protection of apprentices in cotton and other factories. The Act[4] insists that the interior of the mills should be whitewashed twice a year, and that they should be properly ventilated; it enacts that the apprentices shall be provided with proper clothing by their masters; it forbids work for more than twelve hours, and prohibits night work—with a temporary exception for large mills; it provides that the apprentices shall receive elementary education and religious instruction, and lays down rules as to their sleeping accommodation.

*but because of their defective moral training*

*The first Factory Act*

The measure appears to have been almost inoperative[5], it probably led the mill-owners to engage children to work

persons receiving parochial aid, and to compel them, when children are wanting, utterly regardless of education, health or inclination to deliver up their offspring, or by cutting off the parish allowance leave them to perish for want!" John Brown, *Memoirs of Robert Blincoe*, p 29. A writer on the workhouses of Great Britain in 1732 complains of "a very bad Practice in Parish Officers who to save Expense, are apt to turn children by putting them out as early as they can, to any sorry masters that will take them, without any concern for their Education or Welfare, on account of the little Money that is given with them." Hutchins and Harrison, *op cit.* 6.

[1] Jonas Hanway had called attention to the frightful mortality among parish infants (*Letters on the importance of the rising generation* (1777), I 27) and to the condition of the chimney sweeps. For other references see Hutchins and Harrison, *op. cit.* 6, 14.

[2] Compare the resolutions of the Manchester Board of Health (1796) quoted by Sir Robert Peel. *Minutes of evidence on Children employed in Manufactories*, in *Reports*, 1816, III. 377, printed pag 139. [3] *Ib* 377.

[4] 42 Geo. III. c. 73, *An Act for the preservation of the health and morals of parish apprentices and others employed in cotton and other mills.*

[5] Sir Robert Peel seems to have thought that it had had beneficial effects at the time it was passed (*Reports*, 1816, III 378, printed pag. 140), but it is difficult to believe that the Act caused any considerable change in the mills generally. Even when the parish authorities were moved to interfere, no obvious improvement resulted It is probable that "the atrocious treatment experienced by the thousands and tens of thousands of orphan children, poured forth from our



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without agreeing to a formal apprenticeship, and in any case, it was easy to evade the measure, as there was no proper machinery for enforcing it[1]. Still, this first Factory Act has a very great importance, as marking the genesis of the modern system of industrial regulation; it served as the thin end of the wedge The factory legislation of the nineteenth century was occasioned by the new conditions which arose, in consequence of the introduction of machinery, but it was not a wholly new departure. It has its origin in connection with the mediaeval, and Elizabethan system, of

*was directly connected with the apprenticeship system.*

charitable institutions, and from parish workhouses, and the dreadful rapidity with which they were consumed in the various cotton mills, to which they were transported, and the sad spectacle exhibited by most of the survivors, were the real causes, which, in 1802, produced Sir Robert Peel's Bill, for the relief and protection of infant paupers employed in cotton mills Hence, the extraordinary liveliness evinced by the overseers and churchwardens of Saint Pancras might have been occasioned by the dreadful scenes of cruelty and oppression developed during the progress of that Bill, which Blincoe never heard of, nor ever saw, till eleven or twelve years after it had passed into a law It would be difficult to produce a more striking instance of the utter contempt, in which the upstart owners of great establishments treated an Act, purposely enacted to restrain their unparalleled cruelty and waste of human life The Act itself declared the masters, owners, or occupiers of every cotton mill in Great Britain and Wales should have a legible copy of the Act, placed in some conspicuous and public part of each mill, and accessible to everyone, yet Blincoe who was reared in the cotton mill, never saw or heard of any such law, till eleven or twelve years after it had been enacted!

"When the committee began their investigation, as to the treatment and condition of the children sent from St Pancras Workhouse, Blincoe was called up among others and admonished to speak the truth and nothing but the truth! So great however was the terror of the stick and strap, being applied to their persons, after these great dons should be at a great distance, it rendered him and no doubt the great majority of his fellow sufferers extremely cautious and timid It is however likely that their looks bespoke their sufferings, and told a tale not to be misunderstood. The visitors saw their food, dress, bedding, and they caused, in conjunction with the local magistrates very great alterations to be made A new house was ordered to be erected near the mill, for the use of the apprentices, in which there were fewer beds to a given space. The quantity of good and wholesome animal food to be dressed and distributed in a more decent way, was specified. A much more cleanly and decorous mode of cookery and serving up the dinner and other meals was ordered. The apprentices were divided into six classes, and a new set of tin cans numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 were made to be served up to each individual according to the class to which he or she may belong, to hold the soup or porridge! The old governor was discharged, who had given them all such a fright on their first arrival, and several of the overlookers were dismissed and new ones introduced' John Brown, *Memoir of Robert Blincoe*, p. 27

[1] The justices were to appoint visitors to inspect the mills, and provision was made for the registration of mills.

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apprenticeship; this gave a good ground in law[1] and custom for taking up the matter at all.

*Before the power-loom came into use,*

**249.** The great development of cotton spinning suggested the possibility of constructing a machine for weaving; this was actually done by Dr Cartwright[2]; but he had not the business ability[3] of Arkwright, and the invention did not come into general use, or greatly affect either the conditions of the trade, or the employment of weavers, during at any rate the first few years of the nineteenth century[4]. Yet owing to

[1] In 1801 Mr Justice Grose sentenced a man named Jouvaux to twelve months hard labour for ill-treating his apprentices. Hutchins and Harrison, *op. cit.* 14.

[2] A previous experiment had been made by John Kay, but seems never to have been taken up; Woodcroft, *op. cit.* 4. Edmund Cartwright, who was a Kentish clergyman, knew nothing about the textile trades and had never interested himself in machine construction, until he invented the power-loom. While at Matlock, in 1784, he had had some conversation with spinners there, who were contending that such a vast quantity of yarn was now spun that it would soon be impossible to get hands to weave it. His suggestion that a weaving machine should be invented was apparently treated with scorn; but as he believed that only three movements were required in the process, he set himself to construct a machine with the help of a carpenter and smith. His machine was cumbrous in the extreme, and it required two strong men to keep it going even slowly, but he was proud of his invention and patented it. It then occurred to him to go and see a weaver at work; with the result that he was able to improve on his first rough attempt and to produce a machine which was eventually a commercial success; Dr Cartwright's own attempts to make it remunerative proved a failure, and it was not till 1801 that mills were started at Glasgow, where it was worked to advantage. (Baines, 231.)

[3] The mill which Cartwright erected at Doncaster was not a success, and Grimshaw's mill fitted with power-looms at Manchester in 1790 did not give satisfactory results. Guest, *op. cit.* 46.

[4] Power weaving hardly became a practical success till after the invention of the dressing-frame. "In the year 1803, Mr Thomas Johnson, of Bradbury in Cheshire, invented the Dressing Frame. Before this invention the warp was dressed in the Loom in small portions, as it unrolled from the beam, the Loom ceasing to work during the operation. Mr Johnson's machine dresses the whole warp at once; when dressed the warp is placed in the Loom which now works without intermission. A factory for Steam Looms was built in Manchester, in 1806. Soon afterwards two others were erected at Stockport, and about 1809, a fourth was completed in Westhoughton. In these renewed attempts to weave by steam, considerable improvements were made in the structure of the Looms, in the mode of warping, and in preparing the weft for the shuttle. With these improvements, aided by others in the art of spinning, which enabled the Spinners to make yarn much superior to that made in 1790, and assisted by Johnson's machine, which is peculiarly adapted for the dressing of warps for Steam Looms, the experiment succeeded. Before the invention of the Dressing Frame, one Weaver was required to each steam Loom, at present a boy or girl, fourteen or fifteen years of age can manage two Steam Looms, and with their help can weave three and a half times as much cloth as the best hand Weaver." Guest, *op. cit.* 46.



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the action of other causes, the weavers sank rapidly from a condition of unusual comfort into one of terrible privation. During the peace which preceded the Revolutionary War, the manufacture had been rapidly developed, and had been in part taken up by speculators who produced recklessly[1]. As a consequence the payments for cotton weaving rose to an unprecedented figure[2]. The attraction of the rates offered was so great that labour was drawn from other employments; it was only by agreeing to raise wages that farmers could obtain the necessary hands[3]. As Dr Gaskell writes, "Great numbers of agricultural labourers deserted their occupations, and a new race of hand-loom weavers, which had undergone none of the transitions of the primitive manufacturers were the product of the existing state of things. This body of men was of a still lower grade in the social scale than the original weavers, had been earning a much less amount of wages, and had been accustomed to be mere labourers. The master spinners therefore found them ready to work at an inferior price, and thus discovered an outlet for their extra quantity of yarn. This at once led to a great depreciation in the price of hand-loom labour, and was the beginning of that train of disasters which has finally terminated in reducing

*the cotton weavers enjoyed great prosperity temporarily*

[1] "It has arisen in this way, that people having very little or no capital, have been induced to begin by the prospects held out to them, perhaps by people in London, and when they have got the goods into the market, they have been obliged to sell them for less than they cost, or without regard to the first cost, and this has injured the regular trade more than anything else. I think,* * * when the regular Manufacturer finds that he cannot sell the goods at the price they cost, he is compelled to lower his wages. * * * Perhaps three, four or five (of the new persons) may be insolvent every year in the neighbourhood (of Bolton), and when they come to be examined before their Creditors, it turns out the cause of their Insolvency is, the goods being sold for less than they cost" (Mr Ainsworth's evidence, *Reports, etc., Journeymen Cotton Weavers*, 1808, II. p. 102). See also the *Report on Manufactures, Commerce, etc.*, in 1833. "Trade at present requires industry, economy and skill. During the war, profits were made by plunges, by speculation." *Reports*, 1833, VI. 27, printed pag. 23.

[2] Owing to the plentiful supply of cotton yarn, weavers were attracted from woollen to cotton. *Annals of Agriculture*, XVI. 423.

[3] *Reports*, 1808, II. 119. Mr Atherton said that the wages of agricultural labourers near Bolton, which were from 3*s.* to 3*s.* 6*d.* a day in 1808, rose at the time when weavers' wages were high; "they rose up from 2*s.* 4*d.* a day when wages were so that we (weavers) could get a good living; at that time people would not work outwork, if they could get Weaving." "The pay of agricultural labour is much higher than it has been, owing to a great many cotton manufactories being erected in this county" (Cumberland in 1795). *Annals of Agriculture*, XXIV. 313.

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those who have kept to it to a state of starvation[1]." The good times did not last, however; the interruptions caused by the war reduced the opportunities for employment. Not only was there a danger, which was severely felt during the war of 1812, of an interruption of the supplies of material for the spinners, and consequent diminution of the demand for weaving, but times of peace brought no corresponding advantage to weavers, though they benefited the spinners. English yarn was exported and woven by German manufacturers, so that there was little market on the continent for English woven cloth[2]. The wages paid in the overcrowded trade fell to lower and lower rates. In 1808 the cotton weavers seem to have worked for about a half of the wages they had received eight years before[3], and the depression continued to get worse and worse[4]. This newly developed and suddenly distressed industry was the field on which the battle, between the old method of regulating wages and the new system of depending on competition, was to be fought out.

*but were soon reduced to receiving starvation rates of pay.*

The first attempt at affording any sort of relief was made immediately after the tide of prosperity had turned. The Arbitration Act of 1800[5] was intended to provide a cheap and summary mode of settling disputes. It empowered the weavers and their employers to go before Arbitrators in case of any difference as to wages, and arranged that the rates thus fixed should be enforced; but this proved inoperative: the general uncertainty which affected the trade rendered the scheme nugatory. Prices could not be maintained, and the masters again and again lowered wages, with disastrous effects. The diminution of wages[6] only tended to

*The Arbitration Act of* 1800

[1] Gaskell, *Artisans and Machinery* (1836), 34.

[2] Radcliffe, *New System of Manufacture*, p. 49 fol.

[3] *Reports*, 1808, II. 103. It is difficult to calculate precisely, as the length of the piece was increased, while the wages decreased and the outgoings were heavier proportionally on the lower wages. For the piece (two weeks' work) in 1797, fifty shillings was paid, and in 1808, only eighteen shillings. *Ib.* 116.

[4] See the figures in Baines, *op. cit.* 489: "Fluctuation was a greater evil perhaps than the lowness of the rate; previous to that period (1811) fluctuations to the extent of 30 per cent. took place in the course of a month in the price of labour." *Reports* (*Artisans and Machinery*), 1824, v. 60.

[5] 40 Geo. III. c. 90.

[6] It also affected the home demand prejudicially; with starvation wages, labourers could not buy cloth so largely. Brentano, *Anfang und Ende der englischen Kornzolle*, p. 13.



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increase the production, as the weavers worked longer hours in the hope of making up the old rate of income[1]; and they were forced into deeper and deeper misery. As was to be expected, the small masters, who were not in a substantial position, were chiefly to blame for cutting prices lower and lower; many of the employers would have been willing to see some method adopted for fixing a minimum wage for the weavers, and gave in their adhesion to the policy which was advocated by the men[2]. The workmen had been unsuccessful in getting the Arbitration Act amended so as to meet their expectations[3], and in 1808 an attempt was made to induce Parliament to fix a statutory minimum for weavers' wages[4]. The feeling of the House was decidedly against such a measure, however; though the appeal of the Lancashire weavers was so piteous that it could not be ignored altogether. A Select Committee took evidence on the subject, and reported very decidedly against the proposal as impracticable and likely to aggravate the distress. At length in 1812 the weavers discovered that there was no need to agitate for fresh legislation, as the law of the land already provided all that they asked for. They appealed to the magistrates in Quarter Sessions to have the Elizabethan Act for the assessment of wages put into effect; but the only result was that the subject came once more under the notice of Parliament[5], and Lord Sidmouth proceeded to move for

*proved ineffective;*

*and the weavers demanded*

*an assessment of their wages under the Act of* 1563.

[1] *Reports, etc.*, 1808, II. 119.

[2] Many of the mill-owners as well as the hands would have welcomed it. "'Do you know whether the head Manufacturers of Bolton are desirous of this minimum?' 'The head manufacturers in general are. Mr Sudell told me he wished it might take place, and he should call a meeting in Blackburn about it; the smaller Manufacturers in our town in general have petitioned for it; there are very few who have objected to it'." *Reports, Misc.* 1808, II. 119. See also pp. 98, 108, and Petition, *Commons Journals*, LXIV. 95.

[3] The amending Act of 1804 (44 Geo. III. c. 87) was no more successful than the original measure.

[4] The project was again mooted in 1835 as a remedy for the distress among the cotton-weavers. It was advocated by Mr John Fielden. *Select Committee on Hand-Loom Weavers, Reports, etc.* 1835, XIII. p. 31, questions 43, 45, 46.

[5] The change in the tone of parliamentary discussion is very noticeable, if we compare the debate in 1795 on Mr Whitehead's bill for fixing a minimum wage, which was read a second time *nem. con.* and was sympathetically criticised by Fox (*Parl. Hist.* XXXII. 700), with that on the cotton weavers' Bill in 1808. Mr Rose himself, in introducing the Bill, indicated his dissent from its principles and excused himself on the ground that he was acting "in compliance with the wishes

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*This had fallen into desuetude,*

the repeal of this part of the measure, since it had long fallen into desuetude, and the principle of the Act was condemned by exponents of the fashionable Political Economy of the day[1]. The House of Commons does not appear to have thought it necessary to make any further enquiry into the probable effect of their action on the one class in the community who addressed them on the subject. Petitions were sent from several centres in Lancashire, but the Bolton petition may be quoted at some length. It sets forth that—"The Petitioners are much concerned to learn that a Bill has been brought into the House to repeal so much of the Statute 5 *Eliz.* as empowers and requires the Magistrates, in their respective jurisdictions, to rate and settle the prices to be paid to labourers, handicrafts, spinners, weavers, etc., and that the Petitioners have endured almost constant reductions in the prices of their labour for many years, with sometimes a trifling advance, but during the last 30 months they have continued, with very little alteration, so low, that the average wages of cotton weavers do not exceed 5*s.* per week, though other trades in general earn from 20*s.* to 30*s.* per week; and that the extravagant prices of provisions of all kinds render it impossible for the Petitioners to procure food for themselves and families, and the parishes are so burthened that an adequate supply cannot be had from that quarter; and that in the 40th year of His present Majesty, a Law was made to settle disputes between Masters and Workmen, which Law, having been found capable of evasion, and evaded, became unavailing; after which in 1802, 1803, and 1804, applications being made to amend that of the 40th, another Law was

of the cotton weavers, backed with the consent of their employers." *Parl. Debates*, XI. 426, 427.

[1] Chalmers held that the true interest of a manufacturing community can alone be effectually promoted by competition, which hinders the rise of wages among workmen and promotes at once the goodness and cheapness of the manufacture. Chalmers, *Estimate of the Comparative Strength of Great Britain*, p. 37. Ricardo gave the sanction of his authority to this manner of dealing with the question when he spoke against any delay in the repeal of the Spitalfields Acts. "The principles of true political economy never changed, and those who did not understand that science had better say nothing about it, but endeavour to give good reasons, if they could find any, for supporting the existing act" (*Parl. Debates*, N. S. IX. 381. Compare Bonar, *Letters of David Ricardo to Malthus*, p. xi).



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made varying in some points from the former, but this also is found unavailing, in as much as no one conviction before a Magistrate under this Law has ever been confirmed at any Quarter Sessions of the Peace; and that several applications have since been made to the House to enact such Laws as they would judge suitable to afford relief to the trade, in which Masters and Workmen have joined, but hitherto without any effect; and that, about twelve months since, it was found that the Statute of Elizabeth (if acted upon) was competent to afford the desired relief, and it was resorted to in certain cases, but the want of generality prevented its obtaining at that time, especially as it can be acted upon only at the Easter Quarter Sessions or six weeks thereafter; and that as Petitions to the Magistrates were almost general at the last Quarter Sessions, and all graciously received at each different jurisdiction, much hope was entertained that at the next Easter Sessions, the Magistrates would settle the wages of the Petitioners, and they obtain food by their industry; and that the present Bill to repeal the aforesaid Law has sunk the spirits of the Petitioners beyond description, having no hope left; the former laws made for their security being unavailing, there is no protection for their sole property, which is their labour; and that, though the said law of 5 *Eliz.* was wisely designed to protect all Trades and Workmen, yet none will essentially suffer by its repeal save the Cotton Weavers; the Silk Weavers have law to secure their prices, as have other Artisans. Tradesmen generally received their contracted wages, but Cotton Weavers, when their work is done, know not what they shall receive, as that depends on the goodness of the employer's heart[1]." So far as the history of the repeal of these clauses can be traced, it does not appear that there was any demand for it, or that any petitions were presented in favour of repeal. The magistrates and weavers in Lancashire were anxious that the Act should remain, and the majority of the employers appear to have been favourable to some measure of the sort. The House of Commons was not moved by manufacturers or practical men of any sort; it seems to have been simply

*and was repealed in deference to* doctrinaire *opinion*

[1] *Commons Journals*, LXVIII. 229.

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*with the result of throwing the cotton-weavers on the rates in Lancashire.*

influenced by the exponents of the principles of Political Economy, who overvalued the reliability of the *laissez faire* doctrines on which they laid such stress; and the wage clauses of the Statute of Artificers were repealed in 1813[1]. The manufacturing population had always been liable to come on the rates in periods of bad trade[2], and the determination of the legislature had the effect of habituating the cotton-weavers to allowances in addition to wages[3]. It is important to observe, that in this agitation the weavers were maintaining a strictly conservative attitude; they asked to have the law of the land put in execution, and they could not but be deeply incensed at the line taken, both by the legislature and by the magistrates who were charged with the administration of the law.

*The Scotch weavers, when attempting to secure legal redress*

The cotton weavers in Scotland fared even worse. They were anxious to obtain an authoritative list of prices, and at last, after long and very costly proceedings in the Court of Session, they did procure the authoritative recognition of certain rates as legal. So soon, however, as they endeavoured to enforce it, they found that the magistrates would not

[1] 53 Geo. III. c. 40.

[2] See above, pp. 50, 562 n. 4, 571, 577, and 656 below.

[3] Mr Henderson's report in 1833 is very instructive, and shows that the moral effects were not so disastrous as in the agricultural districts. "The depression of wages, and the difficulty of finding employment, especially for the older weavers, whose habits were fixed, has led to a general practice in the weaving district of making an allowance to able-bodied weavers, with more than two children under 10 years of age. There is no fixed scale for this allowance, but the practice is to make up the earnings of the family to 2*s*., or in some places, to 1*s* 6*d*. a head. This course certainly is an approximation to the payment of wages out of the poor rate; but there are some material distinctions between the case of the weaver and the case of the agricultural labourer. The agricultural roundsman has no spur to exertion, nor interest to please the farmer, who is his master only for the day, consequently his habit of industry is relaxed and destroyed; on the other hand, as the weaver always works by the piece, and the current rate of wages is well-known, it is easy to calculate what he might earn if industrious, and the parish allowance is apportioned accordingly; so that, if he is indolent, he suffers for it; if he is industrious, he reaps the benefit of his exertions; and the fact unquestionably is, that the weavers are stimulated beyond their powers under the allowance system." *Reports*, 1834, XXVIII. 913. The progress of the power-loom compelled increasing numbers to rely on the allowance system. It had been unknown in Oldham in 1824 (*Reports*, 1824, VI. 405), but in 1833, the members of the select vestry, who were very careful in administering relief, found that "after providing for the aged, sick, widows with families and other usual dependents on parochial aid, the hand-loom weavers require the principal attention." No permanent relief was afforded to any able-bodied men except weavers. *Reports*, 1834, XXVIII. 921.



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support them, and they were forced to try to fight their own battle by engaging in the great strike of 1813 in which 40,000 weavers took part[1]. At that date the organisation of such a movement was a criminal offence; the police intervened, and the strikers were sent to gaol. This great struggle, resulting as it did in the abandonment of all attempts at the State-regulation of wages[2], testifies alike to the miserable condition of the workmen in this great industry, and to the inability of the government to suggest any remedy. It is well to remember that the distress in this trade cannot be assigned to the introduction of machinery, as the power-loom was still in its infancy. In fact, it appears that the low rates to which the wages of hand-loom weavers were driven down interfered to prevent the introduction of the power-loom; the cost of production was so low that there was little prospect of any saving from the use of machines[3]; there was not sufficient economic motive to induce manufacturers generally to incur the risk and unpopularity of sinking their capital in costly plant.

*rendered themselves liable to criminal proceedings.*

*The introduction of machinery in calico printing*

**250.** The weavers were not the only body of artisans employed in the cotton trade who suffered severely during the long wars. The calico printers were also in a pitiable condition, but there was a reason for their distress which was entirely independent of the trade fluctuations which had affected the weavers. An ingenious and expensive machine for calico printing had been introduced, with the result that the labour of skilled men was hardly required at all; the employment of boys was substituted for that of men on quite

[1] An admirable account of the whole proceeding will be found in Mr Richmond's evidence. *Reports* (*Artisans and Machinery*), 1824, v. pp. 59—64.

[2] There is a curious parallel in the story of the agitation which had occurred in Gloucestershire and Wilts in 1756. The woollen weavers in the Stroud Valley and other centres of the trade had demanded that the practice of assessing wages should be re-introduced, and obtained a new Act of Parliament (29 Geo. II. c. 33) under which a list was published (*C. J.* XXVII. 732). The clothiers of the West of England would not abide by this schedule of payments, and petitioned Parliament to repeal the new Act and allow wages to be settled by competition. The Committee of the House of Commons reported that the clothiers had proved their case and that attempts to assess weavers' wages were impracticable and injurious. Mr Richmond alleged, however, in 1824 that the measure passed under George II. had "been acted on repeatedly in England, on a small scale." *Reports*, 1824, v. 60.

[3] See below, p. 791.

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a large scale, and the trade suffered from overstocking with apprentices.

Calico printing is one of the arts which the Huguenots introduced into this country after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes[1]. This was the period when, under Whig tutelage, strenuous efforts were being made to protect native industries, and Indian prints had been prohibited in order to benefit the English woollen workers. This told in favour of the newly planted printing trade for a time[2], since there was no competition to be feared from Indian painted goods, while the calico printers were able to get plenty of Indian white calico to work on. At the close of the eighteenth century, the printing trade was still carried on in the neighbourhood of London, where the finest work continued to be done[3]; it had also been introduced into Lancashire about 1764, by Mr Robert Peel[4], the father of the first baronet of that name, and it developed rapidly with the growth of the cotton manufacture. Hand printing was effected by means of engraved blocks ten inches long and five wide; these could of course only print in one colour at a time, and great care had to be used in adjusting them[5], so as to render the pattern continuous. The printing of a piece of calico twenty-eight yards long in a single colour involved 448 separate applications of the block, and the introduction of a second colour would have required a repetition of the same work[6]. This laborious process was superseded about 1785 by the invention of cylinder printing; the cloth was passed over engraved cylinders, so that two or more colours could be printed at the same operation, and only a hundredth part of the labour previously needed was now requisite to produce the same result[7]. Under the new conditions boys could be employed in what had been hitherto the work of men; so that on the introduction of the machinery, complaints began to be made by the journeymen as to the undue multiplication of apprentices. There was one shop in Lancashire where fifty-five apprentices had been working at

*led to the substitution of boys for men.*

[1] See above, p. 329.

[2] The legislature subsequently interfered to check the trade; see above, p. 517.

[3] Baines, *op. cit.* 265.

[4] *Ib.* 262.

[5] In 1782, when the trade as carried on by hand labour had reached a high degree of excellence, there was legislation against enticing operatives abroad or exporting blocks. 22 Geo. III. c. 60.

[6] Baines, *op. cit.* 266.

[7] *Ib.* 266.



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one time, and only two journeymen[1]; it was obvious that under such circumstances, the man who had served his time had very little hope of obtaining employment. The usual contract of apprenticeship in the trade was very one-sided[2]; the masters were careful to safeguard themselves against any loss which arose from the unskilfulness of the boys, and retained a right of dismissal; while the boys were compelled to work for the full period of seven years, at wages which were very much lower than those which journeymen would have demanded[3]. The Elizabethan custom of apprenticeship was maintained, but in a form which was very oppressive towards the apprentices, and most injurious to the adult workmen. A bill was introduced into Parliament for limiting the proportion of apprentices to journeymen, and insisting that there should be proper indentures for each apprentice[4]. There was an interesting debate on the second reading, when Mr Moore[5] expressed strong views as to the duty of the State towards the artisan population, and Sheridan[6] vigorously advocated the cause of the journeymen. But, as might have been expected, the principles of *laissez faire* prevailed; the bill was dropped, and no other remedy for the admitted evil was attempted. The whole story presents some very curious features, and it is difficult to follow the course of the transition[7];

*and overstocking with apprentices.*

[1] This was in 1794; this extraordinary disproportion appears to have been due to wholesale dismissals of journeymen in periods of slack trade (*Reports, etc., Calico Printers*, 1803–4, v. 594). At the same mill in 1803 there were 51 journeymen to 44 apprentices. *Ib.* 599.

[2] *Report, Calico Printers*, 1806, III. 1130.

[3] A boy in his first year was paid 3*s.* 6*d.* a week, and employed on work for which a journeyman would have been paid £1. 11*s.* 6*d.* *Reports, Calico Printers*, 1803–4, v. 596.

[4] *Public Bills*, 1806–7, I. 207. Compare also the *Report on the Minutes of Evidence*, in *Reports*, 1806, III. 1127.

[5] "He conceived it the first duty of the government to see that the subjects of the realm had bread." *Parl. Debates* (23 April, 1807), IX. 534.

[6] "What was their complaint? Why, that after having served seven years to a business confessedly injurious to their health, and which rendered them unfit for any other occupation, they were to be turned loose upon the world, supplanted in their employments by whole legions of apprentices, at 12 or 14 years of age, for the wages of 4*s.*, 6*s.*, or 8*s.* per week, instead of 25*s.*, the usual average of the journeyman, by whose previous skill and ingenuity the operations of the manufacture were so amplified that children could do the work as well as journeymen." *Ib.* 535.

[7] It appears that there were no complaints as to the condition of the trade in

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but at all events, the incident brings out a special form of injury to which labour might be exposed by the adoption of machines, through the shifting of employment from one class of labourers to another, and the loss which fell on the skilled workman.

*The quality of the product was improved by the introduction of machinery in the cotton trades.*

So far as this and other branches of the cotton trade was concerned, the introduction of machinery had tended not only to an immense increase of the quantities produced, but to an improvement of the quality. A machine can go on turning out a perfectly regular yarn, in a way that very few fingers are capable of doing, and the possibilities of error in power weaving and steam printing are reduced to a minimum. There are many wares which lose all artistic interest, when they are turned out by machinery, but cotton yarn is not one of them; the deftest spinners had cultivated a mechanical precision, and the new machinery carried the spinners' art to a high degree of perfection. From every point of view the economic advantage of the new developments was incontestable.

*The condition of the woollen differed from that of the cotton trade,*

**251.** The conditions of the woollen trades were in many respects very different from those of the cotton manufacture. As a consequence, the effects of the introduction of machinery were very dissimilar in the two great branches of textile industry. It is also true that the course of the transition in

London, but that a due proportion of journeymen were employed there. In fourteen shops there were 37 apprentices to 216 journeymen (*Reports*, 1803–4, v. 596). It is still more startling to find that the Manchester calico printers in 1815 had a very strong combination and were able to insist on the trade being managed as they desired. One of the employers thus addressed the men: "We have by terms conceded what we ought all manfully to have resisted, and you elated with success have been led on from one extravagant demand to another, till the burden is become too intolerable to be borne. You fix the number of our apprentices, and oftentimes even the number of our journeymen. You dismiss certain proportions of our hands, and will not allow others to come in their stead. You stop all Surface Machines, and go the length even to destroy the rollers before our face. You restrict the Cylinder Machine, and even dictate the kind of pattern it is to print. You dismiss our overlookers when they don't suit you, and force obnoxious servants into our employ. Lastly, you set all subordination and good order at defiance, and instead of showing deference and respect to your employers, treat them with personal insult and contempt." *Considerations addressed to the Journeyman Calico Printers by one of their Masters*, quoted by S. and B. Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, 67. On the support which this combination received from other trades, see a pamphlet, to which Mr Webb kindly called my attention, by W. D. Evans, entitled *Charge to the Grand Jury*, pp. 5, 17.



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the woollen manufacture is very much harder to trace. Cotton spinning had been, on the whole, concentrated in the Lancashire district, and the introduction of spinning machinery, with the consequent development of the trade, aroused a great deal of interest, and was written about at the time. The spinning of wool, on the other hand, was widely diffused through all parts of the country in the latter part of the eighteenth century; the course of the change in one district was in all probability very different from the transition in others, and as the revolution did not bring about an immediate expansion of the trade, it did not attract any special attention; we are very badly off for accurate information on the whole subject.

*as spinning was widely diffused,*

The cotton trade, in the first half of the eighteenth century, had been exposed to fierce competition from manufacturers on the continent; it was only by obtaining a start in the introducing of mechanical spinning that England secured for a time a very great advantage over all her rivals in this industry. With the woollen trade it was different; the supply of raw material had given the English clothiers a position of great economic strength, if not of actual monopoly, all through the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; the anxiety of the traders was directed not to gaining, but to maintaining their advantage over competitors.

*and native materials were largely employed.*

These various differences are, however, connected with the fundamental distinction that the clothiers were engaged in working up native materials, while the cotton manufacturers were not. Considerable quantities of Spanish and German wool were imported, especially for use in certain classes of goods; but the English product was the main basis of the trade[1]. From this it followed that there was not the same danger of violent fluctuations in the woollen, as in the cotton trade; the supply of raw material was less likely to be cut off suddenly[2], but on the other hand there was less possibility of expansion. The cotton manufacturers could look to practically unlimited areas in distant parts of the globe for an increased supply of raw material; while the quantity of English wool obtainable was limited. The clothiers had a

*The supply of English wool was limited,*

[1] See above, p. 495.

[2] See above, p. 625, and below, p. 689.

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practical monopoly of the wool grown in the country; and there was no considerable area to which they could look for large additional quantities of raw material.

*and seems to have been diminishing,*

There is some reason to believe that, during the last quarter of the eighteenth century and first few years of the nineteenth—that is during the period when spinning machinery was being introduced,—the supply of English wool actually diminished[1]. Enclosing in the seventeenth and a great part of the eighteenth century had told in favour of the improvement of pasture; but it seems that towards its close, this was no longer the case. The rising price of corn rendered it profitable to convert grass land to tillage, and the area available for pasture seems to have decreased. The policy of the country, too, had been directed, from the fifteenth century onwards, towards rendering corn growing more profitable than pasture farming: the landowners in the grass countries had never succeeded in the demand that they should be treated more or less like the agriculturists and have liberty to export their wool[2], instead of being limited to the home market. The price was thus kept down, and in all probability this reacted sooner or later upon the quantity produced. At all events it appears that about 1794–6 there was a deficiency, which was looked upon as a wool famine; and the ordinary conditions of the supply of raw material were such, that there was no possibility of a rapid expansion of the manufacture. The changes which had been introduced, in the breeding of sheep, were not favourable to the wool supply, and there was a marked decline in the quality of the British clip[3]. From 1800 onwards, there was occasion for an

*so that there was more reliance on foreign wool,*

[1] The price was very low in 1780, and rose rapidly from that time. Long wool was quoted at 4*d.* and in 1791 at 7¾*d.*; short at 4¾*d.* in 1780 and at 9*d.* in 1791. Bischoff, *A Comprehensive History of the Wool and Worsted Manufactures*, I. 405.

[2] In 1816 Lord Milton argued that permission to export would raise the price of wool and thus induce landed men to increase the supply (Bischoff, *op. cit.* I. 411). There had been a similar controversy in 1781, when Sir John Dalrymple urged that exportation should be permitted (*The Question Considered*). This pamphlet called forth answers from Tucker and Forster, and support from Chalmers (*Propriety of allowing Qualified Exportation*, 1782). The gentlemen of Lincolnshire formally advocated it, while the manufacturers agitated against it. *Short View of Proceedings*, Brit. Mus. B. 546 (13), gives a full account of the controversy.

[3] "The heavier the carcase the coarser the fleece." Mr Hughes' evidence, *Lords Committee on the State of the British Wool Trade*, in *Reports*, 1828, VIII. 400, printed pag. 48. Though the weight of wool was increased, when sheep were fed on clover and turnips, the quality produced was inferior to that from sheep fed on the downs and heath, N. Forster, *Answer to Sir J. Dalrymple* (1782), p. 27; also Alexander Williams, *Address to the Woollen Manufacturers* (1800), quoted by Bischoff, I. 334.



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increasing reliance on foreign wools[1], especially those of Saxony, and it seemed as if England were becoming dependent on foreign countries for the materials not only of the cotton trade, but of the long-established woollen industry as well.

The anxiety which was felt upon the subject comes out strikingly in one of the incidental controversies that arose over the union of Ireland with England. High as was the price of wool in England, it was dearer still in the sister island; possibly the repression of the woollen manufactures had been only too complete, and wool-growing, under the discouragements to which the manufacture was subjected, had ceased to be so profitable as to lead men to prosecute it on a considerable scale[2]; but whatever the reason may have been, the fact remains that the price of wool ranged much higher in Ireland[3]. In the Act of Union it was proposed that there should be a free interchange of goods between England and Ireland. The manufacturers had long enjoyed a monopoly of the home supply; they believed they had reason to fear that export to Ireland, which had hitherto been prohibited, would force them to pay at a still higher rate. There were some signs of the old jealousy of Irish manufactures; but the opposition was chiefly due to a belief that English wool, if readily transferred to Ireland, would be clandestinely exported thence to the continent, and that our rivals in France and the Low Countries would secure a regular supply of English wool, which would enable them to

*and revived anxiety about the smuggling of English wool abroad,*

[1] In 1800 the importation of wool from Germany was 412,394 lbs., in 1814 it was 3,432,465 lbs.; in 1825 it reached the unprecedented figure of 28,799,661 lbs. *Reports*, 1828, VIII. Ap. 1, 681.

[2] Pococke in 1752 calls attention to the specially good quality of wool produced near Galway. *Tour*, p. 108. Much of the Irish wool thus found its way to Cork, p. 118. For licenses for export of wool from Ireland see *Calendar of State Papers*, Home Office, 1760–65, pp. 251, 375, 508, 687.

[3] In England in 1795 wool was 8¼*d.* per lb. as against 11*d.* per lb. in Ireland. In 1797 wool in England was 6¾*d.* as against 9¾*d.* in Ireland, and in 1799 wool was 8*d.* per lb. in England as against 1*s.* 3¼*d.* in Ireland. Bischoff, I. 324.

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manufacture goods of a class for which Englishmen believed they had exceptional advantages.

*which showed itself in all parts of the country.*

The agitation gives us an interesting light on many matters connected with this manufacture. A rise in the price of wool would have affected all branches of the trade, and the outcry came from many parts of the country. The outburst was far less local than in 1697; at that time it had been concentrated in the West of England, whence artisans were migrating. A hundred and thirteen firms in London petitioned against permitting export to Ireland, and they were supported by petitions from[1] Cornwall, Exeter, Totnes, Tiverton, Welshpool, Frome, Bury St Edmunds, Huddersfield, Tavistock, Painswick, Rochdale, Huntingdon, Norwich, Somersetshire, Sudbury, Halifax, Gloucester, Bury, Preston, Market Harborough, Witney, Wiveliscombe, Southwark, Bradford, Cirencester, Colne, Burnley, Banbury, Shrewsbury, Leeds, Wakefield, Haworth, Kendal, Addingham, Kidderminster, Keighley, Skipton, Salisbury. A glance at this list shows how widely the trade was diffused; and it is also evident that the manufactures in Yorkshire were coming into prominence as compared with those of the Eastern Counties[2]. Very severe pressure was brought to bear in favour of an amendment moved by Mr Wilberforce "to leave out of the resolution what relates to suffering wool to be exported from this country, but that the Irish should be allowed to work up the wool which they themselves grow[3]"; but Pitt was anxious to carry the complete commercial union of the two countries and argued at length against the amendment, which was lost.

Eventually, necessity proved the mother of invention, and serious attempts were made, not only to improve the breed of English sheep, by the introduction of merino-sheep from Spain, but to find some new area, under English control, for pasture-farming. As a result, advantage was taken of the facilities afforded by Australia. The development of this source of supply was only accomplished gradually, as very serious difficulties had to be overcome. Some sheep were

*A new source of supply was found*

[1] Bischoff, I. 321.
[2] Norfolk was still "full of manufacturers" in 1779. *Parl. List.* xx. 644.
[3] Bischoff, I. 327.



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imported from Calcutta, but the native breed of Bengal is not a good stock; the fleece is of a poor colour and bad quality[1]. The first important step in improving the breed was taken by Captain Waterhouse, who was in command of H.M. Ship *Reliance*, and called at the Cape in 1797, during the first period of British possession, on his way to Australia. He then had the opportunity of purchasing twenty-nine Spanish merino-sheep, and he bought them, partly on his own account, and partly for friends who were willing to join in the speculation[2]. The passage from the Cape to Sydney occupied nearly three months, and about a third of the sheep died on the way. When they arrived in Australia, they were carefully tended, however, and as Captain Waterhouse distributed them among several farmers[3], the breed in the colony and the quality of the wool was improved in an astonishingly short space of time.

*through the transportation of sheep,*

By this means it was demonstrated that Australia was admirably fitted for wool-growing, and that there might be a new and practically unlimited supply of the raw material of our chief manufacture, but it did not become available in any considerable quantity till the second decade of the nineteenth century. Captain Macarthur, who had been engaged in farming in Australia for some years, and had a flock of 4000 sheep[4], was the first man who devoted himself to pushing this new trade; he visited England in 1803, with the double object of raising capital to engage in pasture farming on a large scale, and of getting a grant, from Government, of lands suitable for a sheep farm.

In neither object was he wholly successful, although he obtained the assistance of one powerful authority in pushing his scheme. Sir Joseph Banks, then President of the Royal Society, had accompanied Cook in his voyage of discovery in 1770, when Botany Bay was first sighted, and he had taken a prominent part in the colonisation of New South Wales in 1787. It was now necessary to set aside part of the system which was then adopted in letting land. Grants had hitherto been made with a view to the prosecution of tillage, and

[1] Bonwick, *Romance of the Wool Trade*, 31.
[2] *Ib.* 70. [3] *Ib.* 71. [4] *Ib.* 73.

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with reference to English territorial ideas. Each of the convicts, as he became free, received a grant of thirty or forty acres, if he chose to apply for it, at a quit rent, for the property in the soil was carefully retained by the State[1]. The pasture of Australia, though plentiful, was poor, and Captain Macarthur calculated[2] that three acres were necessary for every sheep, and that a square mile would only suffice for a flock of two hundred. There was a strong feeling against allowing any single individual to monopolise large areas of land in the neighbourhood of the growing town. The difficulty was met by a proposal which was put forward by Sir Joseph Banks. "As you and the gentlemen concerned with you[3]," he wrote, "seem determined to persevere in your New South Wales sheep adventure, and as I am aware that its success will be of infinite importance to the manufacturers of England, and that its failure will not happen without much previous advantage to the infant colony, I should be glad to know whether the adventurers would be contented with a grant of a large quantity of land as sheep walks only, resumable by the Government in any parcels in which it shall be found convenient to grant it as private property, on condition of an equal quantity of land being granted in recompense as sheep walk. The lands to be chosen by your agent in lots of 100,000 acres each, and a new lot granted as soon as the former has been occupied, as far as 1,000,000 acres." This was the form of tenure which was eventually adopted; many graziers held the area for grass alone, and removed elsewhere, when the Government notified them that the land was required for other purposes; they were in consequence spoken of as squatters[4]. Captain Macarthur may be described

*and development of squatting in Australia,*

[1] Bonwick, 104. [2] *Ib.* 75. [3] *Ib.* 77.

[4] *Ib.* 78. The term squatter is associated in England with settling on a common (see above, p. 568). In Australia the first plan was to grant common grazing rights over a considerable area to a group of settlers by lease (Governor King's *Proclamation*, 1804, in Bonwick, 105). This system soon proved too restricted for the rapidly increasing flocks, and in 1820 letters of occupation were granted to some individuals, so as to allow them to range beyond the limits prescribed in this lease (Bonwick, 106). In 1831 (see p. 861 below) the policy of the colony was so far changed that the out-and-out sale of land was introduced, partly, it would appear, through the influence of Mr Wakefield (*Art of Colonisation*, 45)—though mining rights were still reserved (Bonwick, 107)—but the prices were prohibitive, so far as graziers were concerned, and but little relief was given to them till 1847, when



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as the first of the class; he obtained from Government a grant of a conditional right to use 5000 acres for pasturing sheep[1], and settled down on the Nepean River. He had failed in obtaining the use of British capital for his enterprise, but he had done not a little to stir up public interest in England, and he certainly laid the foundation of the wool trade on which the prosperity of Australia has been built up. The example which had been set was speedily followed, and the terms of Captain Macarthur's grant laid down the lines of the system under which sheep-farming was gradually developed.

*but this area was not available for any considerable quantity*

Some time elapsed before the supply of Australian wool was sufficient in quantity, or adequate in quality, to cause any serious difference in the prospects of the English cloth manufacture. The importation in 1820 was about 190,000 lbs., in 1826 it was over 1,000,000, and in 1828 it was estimated at double that quantity[2]. After the introduction of the Saxon breeds into New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, there was an extraordinary improvement in the wool obtained, both as to fineness of texture and softness of quality, and a merchant could predict that, within fifteen or twenty years, England would be independent of supplies from Spain and Germany[3]. The new source of material had come to be of the utmost importance in the thirties, when the struggle between hand-weaving and power-weaving was being fought out. But the intervention of machine spinning took place in the woollen trade at a time when expansion was impracticable, because of the limitation in the supply of material.

*till after the revolution in spinning.*

**252.** The manufacture of woollen cloth involved an immense number of separate processes, which are enumerated in Mr Mines' Report[4] on the condition of the hand-loom

Orders in Council appeared which divided the waste lands of Australia into three classes, and gave the squatters much greater security of tenure than they had hitherto enjoyed. On the settled lands, which were available for purchase, the squatter had only a yearly tenure; on the intermediate lands, he was allowed an eight years' lease; while on the unsettled lands he might obtain a lease for fourteen years, at the rent of £10 for every 4000 sheep in his flocks (*ib.* 109). The very form of these orders shows how completely English ideas on the subject had changed since Macarthur first approached the Government on the subject in 1803.

[1] Bonwick, 81. [2] Mr Donaldson's evidence, *Reports*, 1828, VIII. 425.

[3] Mr Hughes' evidence, *Reports*, 1828, VIII. 400.

[4] *Reports*, 1840, XXIV. 389, printed pag. 369.

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weavers in Gloucestershire in 1840; preparing the wool involved seven distinct processes, and double the number were necessary in order to render the cloth, as taken from the loom, fit for the market[1]. Mr Miles gives a brief statement of the saving made by the introduction of machinery in each of the more important processes. So far as the preparation of the wool was concerned, the carding machinery patented by Lewis Paul in 1748 and introduced by him at Northampton, Leominster and Wigan[2], appears to have come into general use before the close of the century, and though it displaced about 75 per cent. of the labour employed[3], and some rioting occurred, we hear of wonderfully little disturbance in connection with its introduction. In 1793 Arthur Young, writing of Leeds, describes how he "viewed with great pleasure the machines for unclotting and puffing out wool, if I may use the expression, also for spinning and various other operations[4]." Similarly we hear that in the West Riding, people in general approved of machinery for the preparatory processes, and when wool was given them to weave, took it to the "slubbing engine to be scribbled, carded and slubbed[5]." Mr Howlett, writing from Dunmow in 1790, in enumerating various recent inventions, mentions mills "for grinding the wool preparatory to carding, by means of this the master

*A great saving was effected by machines for carding and scribbling*

[1] The regularly apprenticed Yorkshire clothier had opportunities of becoming practically acquainted with all these processes. Joseph Coope of Pudsey near Leeds gave an interesting account of his training to the Committee on the State of the Woollen Manufacture in 1806. He had been taught when he was eight years old (1783) to spin with a wheel in his parents' house, and subsequently, when jennies were introduced, to card and slub the wool in preparation for the jennies. He was bound apprentice for seven years when he was thirteen. "The first year," he says, "I was chiefly put to the loom, in the second year under the care of my master and a servant man, when I was not at the loom I was still employed in slubbing and carding. The second year I was put to the jenny, and towards the latter end of the second year, and during the third, I alternately spun my own web, and then wove it at the same time, a servant man was working and helped me in the same way." In the fourth year "it was nearly the same only I was getting more proficient in it. The fifth and sixth years, or the two last years rather, my master considered me as competent to do what we commonly call a man's day work." *Reports*, 1806, III. 647, printed pag. 31.

[2] Bischoff, I. 313. Kay had invented a power machine for carding cotton before 1779. Rees, *op. cit.* s.v. *Cotton*.

[3] *Reports*, 1840, XXIV. 390.

[4] *Annals of Agriculture*, XXVII. 310.

[5] *Reports*, *Misc.* 1806, III. p. 992, printed pag. 400; also Mr Ellis' evidence, *Ib.* 64.



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manufacturer has as much done for $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ as used to be performed for $4\frac{1}{2}d.$[1]" The machinery for carding appears to have been quite acceptable in Yorkshire in 1806; and to have been ordinarily used by the domestic manufacturers[2]; similar mechanism had been introduced into Gloucestershire some years earlier[3]. It is obvious, that as the trade could not expand to any considerable extent, the displacement of so much labour involved a loss of employment; and the attempt to introduce machinery in the preparatory processes of the worsted manufacture gave rise to violent opposition. The worsted[4], as distinguished from woollen, manufacture works up wools with long staple, the fibres of which are straightened out as in the linen or cotton manufacture; while the woollen manufacture, properly so called, is dependent on wools with a short staple, the fibres of which have much tenacity, and which can thus be matted into a thick material like felt. Till the time of Edmund Cartwright, wool for the manufacture of worsted had been combed by hand; but between the years 1790 and 1792 Cartwright perfected his second great invention. The estimate which he gave of the importance of his invention sounds like an exaggeration, but a brief experience showed that there was no real over-statement; "a set of machinery consisting of three machines will require the attendance of an overlooker and ten children, and will comb a pack, or 240 lbs., in twelve hours. As neither fire nor oil is necessary for machine combing, the saving of those articles, even the fire alone, will, in general, pay the wages of the overlooker and children; so that the actual saving to the manufacturer is the *whole* of what the combing costs by the old imperfect mode of hand combing. Machine combed wool is better, especially for machine spinning, by at least 12 per cent., being all equally mixed, and the slivers uniform

*and these had been generally adopted,*

*but the invention of machinery for the preliminary processes of worsted manufacture*

[1] *Annals of Agriculture*, XV. p. 262.

[2] *Reports*, 1806, III, printed pagination 6, 32, 34. The scribbling machinery displaced about 75 % of the male labour employed in Gloucestershire in that process. *Reports*, 1840, XXIV. 390.

[3] About fifty years ago according to Mr Miles in 1840.

[4] Machine combing was introduced in 1794 at Tiverton, and did in one hour, with the employment of one overseer and eleven children, work that would have taken a good workman thirty hours; see *Report* in *Commons Journals*, XLIX. 322.

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and of any required length[1]." With all its advantages, however, it did not immediately become remunerative to the inventor, but its success was sufficient to arouse the antagonism of the hand wool-combers; especially as a machine on a somewhat different principle was invented in 1793[2] by William Toplis[3] of Mansfield. As nearly fifty thousand men were employed in this trade in different places[4], the excitement became considerable in many parts of the kingdom, and when a Bill was brought into the House of Commons for suppressing the machine, upwards of forty petitions were presented in its favour. But the eighteenth century legislators favoured a policy of non-interference. The Bill was thrown out, and the only relief which was given to the woolcombers was that of relaxing 5 Elizabeth c. 4 in their favour, and allowing them to apply themselves to any trade in any part of the kingdom[5] without new apprenticeship. One reason, which undoubtedly weighed with the Commons, was the allegation that the wool-combers were wastrels, who would not work more than half their time. Greater security against frauds by the workmen[6], and an increased prospect of

*roused great antagonism among the wool-combers.*

[1] Burnley, *Wool and Wool-combing*, 115, quoting Cartwright, 129.

[2] There were similar inventions by Popple, 1792 (Bischoff, I. 316), and by Wright and Hawksley. Burnley, *op. cit.* 136.

[3] He had a power mill for spinning wool at work in 1788, and advertised for woolcombers at 3*s.* and 3*s.* 6*d.* a day to prepare material. *Annals of Agriculture*, x. 281.

[4] A considerable amount of organisation existed among the wool-combers before these events gave it fresh importance. They had Clubs—the nature of which was thus explained. It is a Contribution levied upon every Woolcomber (who is willing to be Member of any Club) according to the Exigencies of their affairs. "The one End of it is to enable the Woolcomber to travel from Place to Place to seek for employment, when Work is scarce where he resides; and the other End is to have Relief when he is sick, wherever he may be; and if he should die to be buried by the Club; and it is necessary for him, to enable himself to be relieved by these Clubs, to have a Certificate from the Club to which he belongs, that he has behaved well, in and to the Woolcombing Trade, and that he is an honest Man: but if he defrauds any body, he loses his claim to that Certificate, and to the Advantages belonging to it." *Commons Journals*, XLIX. 324.

[5] Bischoff, I. 316. As a matter of fact the machine only managed to compete in certain classes of work; the real contest between hand and machine combing was delayed till some time after the great strike in 1825.

[6] Mr Edward Sheppard said that "in some Instances but not generally the Clothier gladly gives up the Trouble of Superintendence and the Expences of erecting Buildings when he can get the Work done well otherwise; the principal Motive of those Clothiers who have weaving at Home is to guard themselves from these Embezzlements, but he believes they have offered a Reward to those who will inform against Embezzlement. * * That there is one Brand of Morals which he conceives would be materially benefited by the Employment of Weavers under the Eye of the Master, namely Honesty; and he speaks from Experience, that those Parishes most remote from the Inspection and Superintendence of a Head are the most vicious and that Embezzlements and all the Evils of Night Work and Immorality connected with it prevail in such Places to an enormous Extent." See *Reports, Misc.* 1802–3 (*Report from Committee on Woollen Clothiers' Petition*), v. 257. Also for unfair advantages taken by workmen when prepaid, *Considerations on Taxes as they affect Price of Labour* (1765), p. 17.



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being able to rely on getting the work done in a given time, were afforded by the new method, and it was welcomed by the employers[1].

*Hand-jennies for wool came into use*

**253.** The transition, from the old-fashioned spinning by hand in cottages to the power spinning in factories, is much more difficult to trace in the woollen than in the cotton manufacture. In the cotton trade Arkwright's system of roller spinning by power, followed hard on Hargreave's introduction of the spinning-jenny which went by hand, but the use of the wheel was maintained generally for the woollen trade[2], long after the practical success of the jennies had been demonstrated in the cotton trade. The subsequent mechanical progress was also more gradual, as the jenny when adapted to the spinning of woollen yarn continued to hold its own throughout the eighteenth century. The invention was taken up, especially in the Yorkshire district, by the domestic weavers[3]. It seems to have been a regular thing for weavers to have one or two jennies in their cottages, and to have employed their families or hired help to do the work[4]. The Yorkshiremen seem to have been more ready than the West of England clothiers to adopt such improvements[5], as they were in regard to the

*at the centres of domestic weaving,*

[1] Bischoff, I. 316.

[2] The new inventions appear to have been very slowly diffused in the old centres of manufacture. Before 1789 the mule had been generally introduced in Lancashire, and the hand jennies in Yorkshire, but pains were still being directed to improve spinning as carried on by the most primitive process in Norfolk. The Society of Arts was interested in the experiments in fine spinning of wool made by Miss Ann Ives, and awarded her a silver medal for her success. "A sample of the fine Spinning, together with a Spindle and Whirl sent by Miss Ives, and a piece of a Shawl from Mr Harvey of Norwich are reserved in the Society's Repository." *Transactions of the Society of Arts*, VII. 150.

[3] The jenny appears to have come in about 1785, just when it was being ousted from the cotton trade by the mule. *Report*, 1806, III. printed pag. 30 (Coope), also 73 (Cookson).

[4] W. Child, a journeyman, had two looms and a spinning-jenny in his own house. *Reports*, 1806, III. printed pag. 103.

[5] This was specially noticeable in regard to spinning-jennies and scribbling and carding machines, and gave Yorkshiremen an advantage over Wiltshire. Anstie, *Observations*, 17. They held out longer against the shearing frame, which was

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flying shuttle; but we have incidental notices of jennies in various parts of the country. In 1791 spinning-jennies were in use at Barnstaple and Ottery S. Mary; they had caused some uneasiness among the spinners, but had had no sensible effect on the trade[1]. At Kendal there was machine spinning at the same date; at first it seemed to hurt the hand spinning, but the complaints on this head did not continue[2]. The true character of the competition was becoming apparent however; for it was observed, at Pucklechurch, that the machines were ousting the inferior spinners, and that there was a demand for finer threads, so that the spinners, who were paid by the pound, were obliged to do more work for the same money[3]. In Cornwall, in 1795[4], the competition of jennies was clearly felt; and in other cases, the improved rates for weaving rendered the women and children independent, and unwilling to "rival a woollen jenny." There were riots at Bury in Suffolk in 1816[5], which seem to have been partly directed against these implements, and this probably means that they were of comparatively recent introduction in the Eastern Counties at that date[6].

*and spinning with the wheel ceased to be remunerative,*

In the last decade of the eighteenth century we have a competition between two methods of spinning—by the wheel, and by the domestic machines known as jennies. The jennies would have ousted the wheels under any circumstances sooner or later, but there were other causes at work which accelerated the change. Chief among these was the scarcity of wool, with a consequent diminution of employment and such low rates of pay that hand spinning ceased to be a remunerative occupation. The change became the subject of

not part of a domestic weaver's equipment, but a machine which competed with wage-earning workmen. See below, p. 662.

[1] *Annals of Agriculture*, xv. 494. [2] *Ib.* 497. [3] *Ib.* 585.

[4] "The earnings by spinning have for the last year been much curtailed, owing to the woolstaplers using spinning engines near their place of residence, in preference to sending their wool into the country to be spun by hand." *Annals of Agriculture*, xxvi. 19. [5] *Annual Register*, 1816, p. 70.

[6] T. writing in 1779 notices that distaff spinning was still maintained in Norfolk. *Letters on the Utility and Policy of employing Machines*, p. 14. It is said that spinning—presumably with a wheel—was introduced by an Italian—Anthony Bonvis—about 1505, and that the making of Devonshire kerseys began about the same time (C. Owen, *Danger of the Church and Kingdom from Foreigners*, 48). The wheel had come into general use in England, but had not apparently penetrated into the area where the textile arts had been longest established. On the modes of spinning in different localities in 1596, *S. P. D. El. Ad.* xxxiii. 71.



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complaint as early as 1784, when the price was unusually high for a time. Governor Pownall urged in 1788 that wages for spinning must be raised, so that the spinners might have enough to live on, or that machines must be introduced and the manufacture 'broken up.' He calculated that a spinner walked thirty-three miles, stepping back and forwards to the wheel, in order to earn 2*s.* 8*d.*[1] The lack of employment, with starvation wages for spinning, would of course be most noticeable in districts from which the trade was migrating, as for example in the Eastern Counties; the rates had fallen to 4*d.* a day as compared with 7*d.* or 8*d.* forty years before[2]. To whatever cause these starvation payments for spinning in the old centres of the manufacture may have been due, the effects were very serious. Spinning was ceasing[3] to be remunerative, even as a by-occupation. In 1795, when Davies was pleading the case of the rural labourers, he insisted on the importance to domestic economy of the possibility of obtaining an income from this source. But the opportunities of getting work of this sort were being curtailed, at all events in the old centres of manufacture; the fine spinning, which was so much in demand, was badly paid, while the inferior hands were left idle altogether. During the wars, the interruption of the wool supply from Germany and Spain[4], and the closing of the ordinary channels for exporting cloth, caused violent fluctuations; and these changes, together with the migration of industry to the West Riding, involved thousands of families in the rural districts of Southern England in great want.

*even as a by-occupation.*

The course of this revolution is somewhat obscured by the success of the measures which were intended to relieve this distress. It had been recognised from Tudor times onward, that it was necessary for the government to take special action in times when trade was bad; the difficulties under

[1] *Annals of Agriculture*, x. 546. [2] *Ib.* xv. 261.

[3] In 1793 Mr Maxwell notes in regard to Huntingdonshire that "women and children may have constant employment in spinning yarn, which is put out by the generality of the country shopkeepers; though at present it is but a very indifferent means of employment, and they always prefer out of door's work when the season comes on." *Annals of Agriculture*, xxi. 170.

[4] *Reports, Misc.* 1802–3, v. 266.

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Henry VIII and James I had arisen in connection with weaving, and the remedy adopted had been that of putting pressure on the capitalists to give employment. But this principle could not be applied in the wool famine at the close of the eighteenth century. The failure of spinning was a more widely diffused and serious evil than the distress among the weavers had been. The art had been very successfully introduced into most parts of the country, and offered a by-occupation for women and children, which was an essential part of the domestic economy. Spinning had been the mainstay of many households, and when it declined, numbers of families, which had hitherto been independent, were unable to support themselves without help from the rates[1]. The Berkshire justices, whose example in dealing with the difficulty was widely followed, did not see their way to set higher rates for agricultural labour or artisan employments, but tried to grant allowances in lieu of the receipts from spinning, and thus supplemented the wages of the labourers. This expedient might have answered if the depression had been merely temporary; but it could not stay the course of progress which was making itself felt. Indeed, the allowance system probably accelerated the changes. By relieving distress and preventing agitation it smoothed the way for the introduction of jennies and power spinning. The idler part of the women were quite content to receive parochial relief as a regular thing, and even destroyed their wheels[2].

*In 1793 the Berkshire justices granted allowances from the rates,*

*and this tided over the transition*

Hand-jennies did the work well, and they were not very costly, as they did not involve the use of water or steam power; employers could have the spinning done under supervision on their own premises, and the new implements steadily superseded the immemorial methods of work in cottages. This was the most important step, so far as its social effects were concerned, in the introduction of machinery in the cloth manufacture. So long as the spindle, or the wheel, was in vogue, spinning was practised as a by-occupation

*to spinning by jennies in factories*

[1] The occasional dependence of spinners on aid from the rates had been noticed in 1766 at Chippenham and Calne, Arthur Young (*Annals*, VIII. 66). He also remarks that spinning was regarded as a manufacture which brought "the burthen of enormous poor charges." *Ib.* V. 221, also 420, and see above, p. 638.

[2] *Annals of Agriculture*, XXV. 635.



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by women who had many other duties to do. But the jenny with its twenty spindles was a more elaborate machine, and spinning came to be a definite trade on its own account. It ceased to be carried on in ordinary cottages, by one member of the family or another, and became the regular employment of a particular class of workers. Though the regular spinners might earn more at the jenny than they did before, there must have been an immense reduction in the number of those who had earned a little with their wheels.

*and subsequent spinning by power.*

The domestic jenny was not however destined to last. Mr Benjamin Gott of Leeds appears to have been the first man in that district to introduce spinning by power[1], and factories soon encroached upon the operations of the spinning-jennies. The Yorkshire rates for spinning had been high[2], and as the machinery was gradually improved, it must have effected an enormous saving. In 1828[3], power-spinning was introduced into the West of England district, and, as it was calculated, effected a saving of 750 per cent. on the cost of spinning by wheel. The introduction, first of jennies and then of power-spinning, was by far the most important change, so far as its social effects are concerned, in the whole revolution; and when we consider its magnitude, it must be a matter of surprise that the new departure attracted so little attention at the time.

*The flying shuttle brought large earnings*

**254.** The introduction of the flying shuttle[4] appears to have had a remarkable result in the improved position of those woollen weavers who continued to get employment at the trade. They were paid by the piece, and the price of cloth was rising, owing to the increasing cost of wool; but the rate of payment to weavers did not diminish. Those who

[1] Bischoff, *Comprehensive History of the Woollen and Worsted Manufacture*, I. 315, but Hirst seems to have held that he was entitled to this distinction, see below, p. 661, n. 4. Messrs Toplis had erected a spinning mill for wool at Cuckney, seven miles from Mansfield in Nottinghamshire, as early as 1788. *Annals of Agriculture*, X. 281.

[2] The developing trade of the West Riding found employment for all available hands in 1791; Halifax masters had to pay spinners at the rate of 1*s.* 3*d.* or 1*s.* 4*d.* (*Annals*, XVI. 423). These high rates were partly due to the concurrent demand for labour for cotton spinning. *Account of Society for Promotion of Industry in Lindsey* (1789), Brit. Mus. 103 I. 56, p. 54.

[3] Miles' Report in *Reports from Assistant Hand-Loom Weavers' Commissioners*, 1840, XXIV. p. 390.

[4] See above, p. 502

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*to those woollen weavers who found employment,*

were good workmen, and chose to work hard, could make very large earnings indeed. The price of cloth in 1803 was said to have risen 30 %, while weavers' wages had increased 100 %; there is ample evidence that the weavers looked back on the period of the war as one of exceptional prosperity[1]. This gain took place, however, at the expense of the weavers who were thrown out of employment altogether; owing to the scarcity of material it was inevitable that the trade should contract rather than expand. It could not maintain all the labour that had been previously engaged in it. It cannot be a matter of surprise that, despite the high payments made to the employed weavers, there was much discontent among the class, and this found expression especially in the West of England district, where capitalism was in vogue. The trade was developing in the Yorkshire district, and the Gloucestershire and Wiltshire weavers had difficulty in holding their own.

*but the unemployed commenced an agitation*

Like all the other workmen's agitations of the time, the demand of the woollen weavers took the form of insisting that the old laws regulating the cloth trade should be carried out. These were very numerous; and in so far as they laid down definite rules for the size and weight of cloth, they were certainly out of date; there was no doubt that clothiers were liable to punishment for infringing them, and in 1803 Parliament passed a temporary measure for preventing prosecution under these Acts, until there should be time to consider the whole subject. A Select Committee of the House of Commons reported, in 1806, on the question of the regulation of the clothing trade. The most pressing difficulties arose in connection with the Elizabethan Statute of Artificers. This had fixed on seven years as the period of apprenticeship, and since weaving could be learned in two or three years, many of the best workmen had failed to serve a regular apprenticeship[2]. There was little cause for surprise

*for enforcing the old rules.*

*The obligation of a seven years' apprenticeship*

[1] *Reports*, 1840, XXIII. 417.

[2] This was the case even in Yorkshire, where apprenticeship had a firmer hold than in the West of England. Mr John Lees, Merchant and Woollen Manufacturer of Halifax, stated in his evidence before the Committee on the Yorkshire Woollen Petition in 1803: "Not one in Ten of the Workmen employed in the woollen manufactory has served a regular Apprenticeship; many have not been apprenticed at all, and the others have been apprenticed for Three, Four, or Five Years according to their Ages. Apprenticeships for Seven Years are quite unnecessary; a Youth from Sixteen to Eighteen Years of Age would learn the Art of Weaving in Twelve Months. That he has some persons now in his Employment that have been actually engaged for Seven Years, but does not by any means consider them as more competent workmen than others who have not been apprenticed for so long a Time; the Consequence of being obliged to employ none but legally apprenticed Weavers must reduce the Business to One-tenth of its present Extent; That he knows of no legal Weavers now out of Employment, in consequence of others who have not been legally apprenticed being employed; on the contrary Weavers are wanted: That he apprehends Nine tenths of the present workmen would be thrown out of employ if the Statute of the Fifth of Elizabeth, Chapter Four, should be enforced." *Reports*, 1802–3, v. 305.



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that, when employment was scarce, the fully trained weavers should endeavour to take a stand upon their legal rights, and insist that only duly qualified men should be set to work. The clothiers, on the other hand, would have been unwilling to dismiss good workmen in order to take on men, who had served an apprenticeship, but who were not better workmen than the others. The complaints of the weavers received very full consideration from Parliament, but it was not possible in the then state of public opinion to comply with their demands[1]. The House of Commons decided to set aside the necessity of apprenticeship, first tentatively[2], and then permanently, in the clothing trades[3]. There were somewhat similar difficulties in other trades, from the manner in which the apprenticeship system was carried out[4]; and Parliament was petitioned to render the old system more effectual; but when the question had been once raised, it became clear that the House of Commons was in favour of settling it in another fashion. Still, no immediate action was taken; a Select Committee was appointed to take evidence, with the result that the chairman's view of the case was entirely altered; he had been in favour of sweeping away the legal enforcement of the apprenticeship system, but he was convinced by what he heard, that this would be a serious wrong in all sorts of trade, that it would tend to a deterioration in the quality of goods,

*was set aside temporarily*

[1] The weavers of Yorkshire, who regarded apprenticeship as the bulwark of the domestic system and desired to maintain it against the encroachments of the factory system, had not really adhered to the Statute of Elizabeth, as the Trustees of the Cloth Halls at Leeds had allowed the custom of five years' apprenticeship to spring up, in place of the seven years demanded by law. *Reports* (*Woollen Manufacture*), 1806, III. 581, printed pagination 13.

[2] 43 Geo. III. c. 136 and continuing Acts.

[3] 49 Geo. III. c. 109.

[4] See above on the calico printers, p. 641, also *Reports* (*Committee on Apprentice Laws*), 1812–13, IV. 991.

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and to a lowering of the status of the workmen. Petitions in support of this opinion poured in from all parts of the country, and all sorts of trades[1]. But a mere mass of evidence had no chance of producing conviction in minds which were thoroughly imbued with a belief in the all-sufficiency of economic principles. Mr Sergeant Onslow urged the repeal of the Act, and remarked that "the reign of Elizabeth, though glorious, was not one in which sound principles of commerce were known[2]." Mr Phillips, the member for Ilchester, was still more decided. "The true principles of commerce," he said, "appeared at that time to be misunderstood, and the Act in question proved the truth of this assertion. The persons most competent to form regulations with respect to trade were the master manufacturers, whose interest it was to have goods of the best fabric, and no legislative enactment could ever effect so much in producing that result as the merely leaving things to their own courses and operation[3]."

*and despite the evidence in favour of retaining it,*

On this subject the politicians were only giving effect to the conclusions of economists of repute. Chalmers had been brief, but to the point. "This law, as far as it requires apprenticeships, ought to be repealed, because its tendency is to abridge the liberty of the subject, and to prevent competition among workmen[4]." Adam Smith, with his experience of the laxer Scottish usage, had condemned the English system[5], and it may be doubted if any of his followers, at the beginning of this century, would have dissented from his conclusion on this point. Once again *laissez faire*, pure and simple, triumphed through the influence of, and with the approval of economists, and the apprenticeship system was not modified, but swept away in 1814[6]. It thus came about that the whole Elizabethan labour code, both as regards wages and apprentices, was formally abolished. We may notice, however, that whereas the wages clauses had been regarded as a mere dead letter, the House of Commons believed that apprenticeship was in most cases an exceedingly good thing, and that it was already so

*the system was abandoned.*

[1] It appears that there were 300,000 signatures against, and 2000 in favour of repeal. *Parl. Debates*, XXVII. 574.

[2] *Parl. Debates*, XXVII. 564, see also 881.

[3] *Ib.* 572

[4] Chalmers, *Estimate*, p. 36.

[5] *Wealth of Nations*, p. 50.

[6] 54 Geo. III. c. 96.



firmly established that there was no need to strengthen it by legislative sanctions[1]. A.D. 1776 —1850.

**255.** Parliament was also called upon to decide on the policy which should be pursued in regard to the use of machinery for dressing and finishing the cloth. A statute of Edward VI had prohibited the use of gig-mills, and about 1802, when a machine which bore the same name was introduced into Wiltshire, it gave rise to a good deal of rioting; though, as it appears, similar machinery had been in use for some time in Gloucestershire[2]. It was not quite clear whether the new machines were identical with those which had been prohibited in Tudor times[3]; but the attention of the parliamentary Committee on the subject was chiefly directed to the quality of the work done. When the members were once convinced that machine work did not injure the fabric and wrought as well or better than the hand, they were entirely disinclined to support the workmen in their demand for the enforcement of the old prohibition of gig-mills, or to recommend that action should be taken.

*The use of gig-mills, though possibly illegal, was permitted,*

*since they did the work well;*

This Committee of 1806 felt bound to allude at some length to the troubles which had arisen in Yorkshire, in connection with the introduction of shearing frames. These were undoubtedly a new invention, and as such lay outside the precise sphere of the Committee's enquiries. Mr Gott had introduced them at Leeds[4], and the employers, who adopted them, could dispense with some of their men. In this, as in other departments of the woollen trade, there could be no hope that manufacture would expand, so that more

*but the newly invented shearing frames*

[1] *Parl. Debates*, XXVII. 564.

[2] *Reports (Woollen Clothiers' Petition)*, 1802–3, v. 254: 1806, III. p. 3.

[3] *Reports (Woollen Clothiers' Petition)*, 1802–3, v. 251. The subject is discussed by J. Anstie, in his very interesting *Observations on the necessity of introducing improved machinery into the woollen manufacture in the counties of Wilts, Gloucester, and Somerset* (1803), 68. See above, p. 297 n. 4. The London Clothworkers complained of the use of gig-mills in the time of Charles I. S. P. D. C. I. CCLVII. 1. 4.

[4] Bischoff, *op. cit.* I. 315. Mr William Hirst of Leeds claimed that the cloth manufactured in Yorkshire before 1813 would not bear gig-finishing, as the West of England cloth did, and that he was the first to manufacture a cloth on which the frames could be used with advantage (Hirst, *History of the Woollen Trade during the last Sixty Years* (1844), 17. He also claims that he was the first to introduce spinning mules into the woollen manufacture, p. 39. The public recognition which he received shows that he rendered considerable services to the Yorkshire trade.

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labour would be eventually required. That had happened in the cotton trade, where the conditions of the supply of materials were quite different, and Sir Robert Peel argued, from his experience as a cotton manufacturer, that the same thing would occur in the woollen trade as well[1]. But he was entirely mistaken; the shearmen who had combined in a secret society[2] were perfectly right in believing that they were being ousted from employment by the competition of machines. They had no hope of continuing to live by the trade in which they had been brought up. Under these circumstances, a series of attacks on the new machines was ably planned and vigorously carried out. The shearmen[3] had a very complete secret organisation, the working of which has been dramatically pourtrayed by Mrs G. L. Banks[4]. One murder occurred in connection with this outbreak, near Huddersfield[5], and there was an immense destruction of property.

*deprived skilled workmen of employment*

*and roused them into violent opposition,*

This was the only branch of the Yorkshire clothing trades in which the attempted introduction of machinery was signalised by outbursts of mob violence[6]. The rioters were closely associated with the Luddites, who had been goaded into violent outbreaks by the distress they endured as framework knitters in Nottinghamshire. The circumstances of the two trades were curiously distinct; the shearmen were agitating against the introduction of a new machine, but this was not the case with the Luddites, as there

*in which they were associated with the Luddites.*

[1] *Reports*, 1806, III. 1033, printed pagination 441.

[2] They had a powerful combination in Leeds, before 1806, and called out all the shearmen in Mr Gott's employ, because he took two apprentices whose age was not in accordance with their rules. *Reports*, 1806, III. 959, printed pagination 367.

[3] *Report from the Committee on the State of the Woollen Manufacture*, 1806, III. printed pagination 15. [4] *Bond Slaves*.

[5] *Report from the Committee of Secrecy* (*Disturbed Northern Counties*), 1812, II. 309.

[6] The rioters had been successful in 1780 in preventing the use of frames. (See above, p. 625, n. 3.) Hirst, writing in 1844, says: "About sixty years ago an attempt was made to introduce machinery for finishing the cloth, both in the West of England and in Yorkshire. The workmen raised the most violent opposition to it, and after a severe struggle the masters in Yorkshire were obliged to abandon the attempt, while in the West of England they succeeded. They thus had a double advantage, for all their goods were manufactured under their own care, while those in Yorkshire were manufactured in various parts and brought to sell in the Cloth Hall, in Leeds, in the balk state. They were then sent out to be finished, for there were few at that time who manufactured and finished cloth." Hirst, p. 10.



had been no considerable improvement in the stocking frame. It continued to be worked by human power, and the trade was for the most part carried on by men who hired machines and worked them in their cottages. Still it was true that the stockingers and the shearmen were alike suffering from capitalist oppression—though in different forms—that the implements in their respective trades were known as frames, and that the destruction of these frames offered the most obvious means of revenging themselves on their employers[1]. Framework knitting was carried on both in the hosiery and lace trades, and the circumstances of the industry had hardly altered during sixty years preceding 1812[2]. New machines were being devised in the lace trade, but had hardly been introduced, and did not affect the stockingers. Up till the middle of the eighteenth century the Framework Knitters' Company had been successful in exercising a certain control over the trade, in Godalming, Tewkesbury and Nottingham, as well as in London; but there was good reason for saying that they acted as a mere monopoly[3], and passed regulations which restricted the trade, while they did little to improve it in any way. After a long enquiry the House of Commons resolved to set their by-laws altogether aside in 1753[4]. Shortly after this time, however, there were serious complaints from the workmen in London, Nottingham, Leicester, Tewkesbury, and other places, of the hardships to which they were subjected[5], especially by the fact that they

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*When the regulation of framework knitting by the Company ceased,*

*complaints of hardship arose from the hands,*

[1] The evidence appears to show that the Luddites were engaged in executing popular vengeance on wealthy, or hard, owners of frames, and it is difficult to see that their action was in any way connected with the great mechanical progress of the time. On the other hand, the riots in Yorkshire were directed against a newly introduced machine. The mob in the West Riding was carefully discriminating, and concentrated its attention almost exclusively on those parts of the buildings where shearing frames and gig-mills were in operation (*Annual Register*, 1812, 54; *Chronicle*, pp. 39, 51, 114). As the work done by the machines was cheaper and better, the rioters were unfortunate in trying to secure a position which Parliament had treated as untenable.

[2] Strutt's apparatus had been patented in 1758 (Felkin, *History of Machine-wrought Hosiery*, 93); and Heathcote applied power to the frames in 1816, *ib.* 243.

[3] In 1720, they had attempted to raise a capital of £2,000,000 and carry on the trade as a joint-stock company. *Commons Journals*, XXVI. 785. [4] *Ib.* 788.

[5] In 1779 John Long, a frame-work knitter, gave evidence to the effect that whereas workmen used to be able to earn 2*s.* 1*d.* per day now they could only earn 1*s.* 6*d.* Out of that they had to pay 3*d.* for frame-rent and about 3*d.* more for

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*who paid frame-rents,*

were responsible to the masters for paying frame-rent, whether they had employment given them or not[1]. The proposals to regulate wages were negatived, however, and things dragged on till 1811 and 1812, when the interruption of trade caused a general reduction in the lace-making at Nottingham, and the oppressiveness of the charge for frame-rents was especially felt; but the disturbance appears to have been aggravated by the action of a new class of masters, who had very little knowledge of the trade, and regarded frames as a profitable investment. At the same time, large quantities of goods were produced of such an inferior quality as to damage the reputation of the trade very considerably[2]. The Committee of the House of Commons were inclined to recommend the entire prohibition of certain classes of manufactures, and to insist on the publication of a schedule of payments; but after hearing additional evidence, they realised more clearly the very complicated nature of this industry, and the impracticability of carrying out the suggestions which had been incorporated in a Bill[3]. A kind of cheap stocking, known

*and subsequently inferior goods were produced,*

winding, seaming, needles and candles. They had to work from 6 to 10 o'clock to earn 1*s.* 7*d.* When work was given out it took some time to prepare the materials for the loom. Masters would not employ a man who has a frame of his own, but force the persons they employ to hire a frame from their employer. That several hosiers in Tewkesbury compel the men to buy the materials and make the stockings, which they afterwards purchase of them, and sometimes throw them upon the hands of the workmen. The men are compelled to buy the cotton wool from the masters, and sell it to the spinners, and then purchase the thread from the spinners. *Commons Journals*, XXXVII. 370.

[1] A witness (Marsh) said, "That he knows several of the Masters of London who employ journeymen and let out more frames to them than they have Employment for, for the Sake of the Frame Rents." *Commons Journals*, XXXVI. 742. Another witness deposed in 1779, "That he has been obliged to pay Frame Rent though his Master had not given him work, and in case of illness he is obliged to pay Frame Rent." *Commons Journals*, XXXVII. 370.

[2] "It appears by the evidence given before your Committee that all the Witnesses attribute the decay of the trade more to the making of fraudulent and bad articles than to the war or to any other cause. * * * It cannot be necessary for your Committee to state that the making of bad articles and deceitful work in any manufacture tends to bring the Trade into disgrace and ultimately to the ruin of the Trade; of this the Lace Trade at Nottingham, which has been for many years a most lucrative and flourishing trade, is a striking instance. And it appears to your Committee that in this particular branch most gross frauds are constantly practised which must destroy it, unless some check can be put to these practices by the Legislature." *Report of the Committee on the Framework Knitters' Petitions*, 1812, II. 206.

[3] "Your Committee have been confirmed in the Opinion expressed in their



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as "cut-up work[1]," was beginning to come into the market at this time[2]; and seven years later the disastrous effect on the regular manufacturers of flooding the market with inferior qualities was fully apparent in the neighbouring districts of Leicestershire[3], which seems to have enjoyed considerable prosperity even at the time of the Luddite riots[4]. Parliament had no success either in putting down the low-class work, or regulating the abuse of frame-rents, or dealing with the owners of independent frames[5]. Bad as the state of affairs had been in 1811, at the time when Byron made his celebrated speech in the House of Lords[6],

*which spoiled the market.*

former Report, that the Workmen suffer considerable inconveniences and are liable to deductions in various ways, in the payment for their work; but they have found it very difficult to suggest measures that can meet or obviate all those abuses, being of opinion that legislative enactments alone will not have that effect, and that trade of every kind should be left as much as possible to find its own level." They propose the "removal from the Bill of certain Clauses relative to the Hosiery business and also to recommend the enactment of certain Regulations for the Lace Trade which they confidently hope will tend to remove much dissatisfaction between Masters and Workmen in that Trade, and to encourage the more general use of that article by ensuring its more serviceable and perfect quality.* * * They consider it (the Bill) in some degree as a Bill of experiment and therefore recommend it to be passed only for a limited time." *Second Report of the Committee upon the Petitions of the Framework Knitters*, 1812, II. 268.

[1] The cut-work was made in one large piece and afterwards cut out to the shape of the leg, the seams by which they are joined being often very ill done. This was much cheaper and depressed the regular woven trade. "The hosiers who do not make the cut-up work are continually lowering the wages to meet them in the market. * * * It has caused men's ribbed hose, which were in 1814 and 1815 at 12*s.* a dozen when they were wrought with a selvage...to be reduced so that they are now brought into the market at 5*s.* a dozen making." *Reports*, 1819, V. 416. Cut-work "has a tendency to increase the quantity of stockings in the market and by that means it always keeps the market overstocked with goods, thereby obliging the manufacturers to dismiss a large quantity of hands" (*ib.* 417). The men had to work extra hours and so there was an increased quantity.

[2] *Report of the Committee upon the Petitions of the Framework Knitters*, 1812, II. 207.

[3] "The direct effect of the cut-up work is to throw an additional quantity of goods into an already overstocked market which effects a reduction of price in all the articles, not of the cut-up articles only, but also of the better fabric. In the home market it has had the effect of inducing a substitute to be adopted in many families who have been in the habit of wearing our worsted articles." The foreigners have either purchased through the medium of their agents, or in many cases have come personally into the market to sell out their own articles." *Reports*, 1819, V. 430, printed pagination 30.

[4] *Report of the Select Committee on the Framework Knitters' Petition* (1819), V. 407.

[5] *Report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the Condition of the Frame-Work Knitters*, in *Reports*, 1845, XV. 68.

[6] *Parl. Debates*, XXI. 966.

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it had become much worse in 1845, when Mr Muggeridge reported on the state of the trade[1]. All the old evils existed, and new causes of complaint are mentioned as well. There was much loss of time to the workers, who did not receive yarn when they gave back the finished goods at the end of the week, but had to wait till mid-day on Monday[2]. As the weavers wrought at home they were able to requisition the assistance of their wives and children, and the whole family were occupied for very long hours and at starvation wages, from which the frame-rents had always to be deducted. The business was easily learned, and owing to the conditions in which it was carried on, the supply of labour, male and female, was practically unlimited. In periods of occasional depression, even benevolent masters had believed they were doing the kindest thing in spreading the work among many families, so as to give all a little to do, on the principle that a little pay was better than none[3]. There was thus a stint[4] on the employment of each hand, and the irregularity of their earnings was in itself a serious evil. Mr Muggeridge rightly regarded this practice of spreading work as the main cause of

*The evils were aggravated*

*by the practice of spreading work,*

[1] According to his figures wages had fallen 35 % between 1811 and 1842. *Reports, etc.*, 1845, xv. p. 51. In 1819 a special appeal to the charity of the nation was made on behalf of the framework knitters by Robert Hall, but the distress was constantly recurring, p. 107.

[2] *Reports, etc.*, 1845, xv. 117. The long-established custom of idling on Saturday to Monday to which the Factory Commissioners called attention in 1833 was not so entirely without excuse as they believed, but seems to have been originally due to this unsatisfactory trade usage. *Ib.* 1833, xx. 534. *Report, Factories Inquiry Commission.*

[3] *Reports, etc.*, 1845, xv 65.

[4] "The practice of 'stinting' being resorted to in most periods of depression in the trade with the twofold object of keeping the machinery going, and deriving the full amount of profits from its use in the shape of frame-rents, the workman instead of being driven to seek other employment, as he must necessarily do if left wholly unemployed, is kept, sometimes for months together, on the borders of starvation with just enough of work to prevent him seeking a more extended field of occupation, and too little to maintain either himself or his family in any state approaching to comfort or respectability. * * * Time after time the operatives in particular qualities of goods have been stinted to two or three or four days' work in a week only, for weeks or months together; every obstacle thrown in the way to check their facilities of production, such as deferred or scanty supplies of the material for manufacture from the warehouse; complaints of the work when made and heavy abatements on one pretext or another deducted from the scanty pittance of wages earned * * * until at length the continued pressure on the market of goods so produced necessarily sold at any sacrifice by needy manufacturers has forced down prices to a level which has often, for a considerable period, almost annihilated particular branches of the trade." *Reports*, 1845, xv. 67, printed pagination 55.



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all the distress[1], and appears to favour the granting of allotments[2] as a means of affording valuable occupation in leisure time. But though this expedient was tried it could not serve to raise wages; the industrial 'reserve[3]' was so large that the capitalist could force the stockingers to accept any terms, while the charge for frame-rents ran remorselessly on. The stockingers had endeavoured to contest these claims, and had raised a case under the Truck Acts, but it was given against them[4]; altogether the circumstances of the trade were such that capitalists had the opportunity of acting very oppressively towards the men. The evidence seems to show that under these circumstances the larger masters maintained an honourable course on the whole; but that the small capitalists, who had difficulty in carrying on business at all, were less scrupulous.

*and were not due to machinery*

The story of the framework knitters is particularly instructive for those who desire to analyse the causes of the distress that was felt in the early part of this century. In this particular industry, where conditions were so utterly miserable, there can be no pretence that mechanical improvements contributed to the degradation of the workers; this was due to a combination of circumstances which may be best described as reckless competition. The institutions of the Middle Ages, and of the seventeenth century, had aimed at maintaining the quality of goods as a necessary condition of lasting industrial success; the old methods of achieving this result were no longer practicable; but the evils, against which they had been directed, became particularly rampant when manufacturers came to aim at mere cheapness, as the only thing to be considered in the successful conduct of business. So long as this was the case no improvement seemed possible; to raise wages in any way would increase

*but to reckless competition.*

[1] *Ib.* 142.

[2] *Ib.* 138. This practice proved favourable to hand-loom weavers at Bridport (*Ib. Reports from Assistant Commissioners on Hand-Loom Weavers*, 1840, xxiii. 288), but its success depended on the precise form of the scheme, and one of the methods tried at Frome did little good. (*Ib.* 300.) On the failure of allotments, where too large, as at Rotherfield in Sussex, or when managed by parish officers, not by private individuals, see *Reports* 1834, xxvii. 107.

[3] F. Engels, *Conditions*, 84.

[4] Felkin, *op. cit.* 455.

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the expense of production, and diminish the sale of the goods; while the low rates of wages were in themselves an obstacle to improved production; it seemed to be a vicious circle, from which there was no escape.

## III. Aggravations of the evils of transition.

*The inevitable difficulties of transition*

**256.** All periods of rapid transition are likely to be times of difficulty, especially to the poorer classes of the community; under no circumstances could such sweeping changes, as were involved in the Industrial Revolution, have passed over the country without inflicting an immense amount of suffering. Some pains were taken to minimise the trouble, especially where it affected the women and children who practised spinning as a by-employment; and the strain of the times was partially alleviated by the expedient of parish allowances[1]. With this exception, however, the circumstances of the day were such as to aggravate the inevitable evils of transition. These arose far less from the introduction of new machines, than from the fact that the labourer had come to be so entirely dependent on the state of trade, for obtaining employment, and for the terms on which he was remunerated. Fluctuations of business were fatal to his well-being in every industry, whether it had been affected by the introduction of new processes and appliances or not. The commercial development, which had been going on so rapidly, was not checked by the secession of the colonies, and during the half-century from 1775 to 1825 English trade increased enormously. The Industrial Revolution had been occasioned by the commercial expansion of the earlier part of the eighteenth century, and it led in turn to an unprecedented extension of our trade[2]. But the political complications with France and America, at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, were incompatible

*were aggravated by the fluctuations of trade,*

[1] See above, pp. 638 and 656, also below, p. 718.

[2] The tonnage of the shipping belonging to Great Britain in 1780 was 619,000, and in 1790 it had increased to 1,355,000. The shipping of Great Britain and Ireland was 1,698,000 in 1800; 2,211,000 in 1810; 2,439,000 in 1820; 2,201,000 in 1830, 2,584,000 in 1840; 3,565,000 in 1850; and 4,659,000 in 1860. L. Levi, *op. cit.* pp. 50, 146, 246 and 412.



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with steady growth. The progress which occurred was the outcome of a series of violent reactions; the alternations of periods of peace and war were continually affecting the conditions under which maritime intercourse could be carried on, and business of every kind was highly speculative. That large fortunes were made is true enough; but it is also true that, in such a state of affairs, all attempts to provide steady employment for the operatives, at regular wages, were doomed to failure, and the standard of life could not but be lowered. The minor fluctuations in the cloth trade, in the early part of the seventeenth century, had taxed the abilities of the administration, but the expansion and contraction, at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, were on a very much larger scale, and affected a far greater number of industries. It would be impossible to follow out these ramifications in detail; we can only attempt to indicate the general effects which the wars of this period had, in interrupting, or diverting English commerce, and inducing financial disaster.

*which rendered manufacturing speculative*

*and tended to lower the operatives' standard of life.*

*The breach with the American colonists*

It does not appear that the immediate effects of the rupture with the United States in 1776, were very much felt by the commercial community, or the industrial population. The market for our manufactures there was closed; but there must have been an increased demand for the equipment of our armies. There was probably some difficulty about naval stores; but so long as supplies could be obtained from Canada, and from the Baltic, this can hardly have been serious. The mischief of the revolt only came home to Englishmen as the country was embroiled in incidental disputes with one after another of the European countries. The French were only too delighted to see the break-up of English power in America, and were ready to foment the quarrel. They were jealous of the magnificent maritime resources which had been revealed to the world, when the influence of Chatham was exerted on English policy; they feared that the French West Indies[1] would be swallowed up by the British monster, as Canada had been; and some of them anticipated that the rise of an independent state in the New

[1] Lecky, *England in the Eighteenth Century*, iv. 39.

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World would exorcise the commercial jealousy of the European peoples[1]. For a time the French Government was content with giving clandestine assistance to the colonists[2], but this attitude could not be maintained for long; and in 1778 King Louis openly espoused the American cause and concluded a treaty with the United States. When the mask was once thrown aside, it was impossible to explain away the unfriendly acts of which the French had been guilty, and Englishmen with heavy hearts[3] drifted into a war which had become inevitable. The various branches of the House of Bourbon were so closely connected that this involved a quarrel with Spain[4]. The Dutch were eager to reestablish the regular commercial relations with the North American coast from which the Navigation Acts had excluded them, and naturally followed the course pursued by France. They supplied the colonists with arms and ammunition, and joined in the fray when war was declared in 1780. England found herself actively opposed by the most powerful maritime nations of the Continent, at the time when she was seeking to coerce her colonies. Nor was assistance to be hoped for from any of the Powers which were not actually in arms against Great Britain. Frederick of Prussia cherished a grudge against England, and though he gave no open countenance to the Americans, he discouraged the efforts of the English King to utilise his German connection in order to enlist soldiers for employment in dealing with the colonists. But the most serious blow came from Catharine of Russia, who was probably more inclined to sympathise with England than any of the other European monarchs. The English had been strictly scrupulous in respecting Russian commerce, but the Spaniards had been less careful; and Catharine, in self-defence, defined a doctrine of neutral trading which she was prepared to enforce. The rule, which she enunciated in 1780, differed from the traditional principles, which England maintained[5].

*was taken advantage of by French and Dutch rivals,*

*and Russia insisted on maintaining a new doctrine of neutral trading,*

[1] Turgot, *Memoire sur la manière dont la France et l'Espagne devoient envisager les suites de la querelle entre la Grande Bretagne et ses Colonies*, in *Œuvres* (1809), VIII. 461.

[2] Lecky, *op. cit.* 44.

[3] *Parl. Hist.* XIX. 920, 928.

[4] The Spaniards were strongly anti-English and supplied the Americans with gunpowder. Lecky, *op. cit.* IV. 45.

[5] "The doctrine of maritime law which England had steadily asserted was that which Vattel laid down when he maintained that 'the effects belonging to an enemy found on board a neutral ship are seizable by the rights of war' (*Droits des Gens*, book III. § 115). * * * The right of a belligerent to confiscate all goods belonging to an enemy found on neutral vessels had been fully recognised in the Consolato del Mare, which chiefly regulated the maritime law of the Middle Ages. It appears then to have been undisputed, and it is not too much to say that it had been asserted and acted on in more modern times by every considerable naval Power. An ordinance of Lewis XIV., indeed, in 1681, went much beyond the English doctrine, and asserted, in accordance with what is said to have been the earlier French practice, the right of a belligerent to confiscate any neutral vessel containing an enemy's goods; and this was the received French doctrine for the next sixty-three years, and the received Spanish doctrine for a considerably longer period. In 1744, however, a new French ordinance adopted the English rule that the goods, but the goods only, were liable to confiscation. Holland, in her practice and her professions, had hitherto agreed with England, and the right of a belligerent to confiscate an enemy's property in neutral ships was clearly laid down in the beginning of the eighteenth century by Bynkershoek, the chief Dutch authority on maritime law. Russia herself, during her late war with the Turks, had systematically confiscated Turkish property in neutral vessels (Malmesbury, *Diaries*, I. 306, 307). The importance, indeed, to any great naval power of stopping the commerce of its enemy, and preventing the influx of indispensable stores into its ports, was so manifest, that it is not surprising that it should have been insisted on; and it is equally natural that neutral Powers which had little or no prospect of obtaining any naval ascendancy, should have disliked it, and should have greatly coveted the opportunity which a war might give them of carrying on in their own ships the trade of the belligerents. The doctrine that free ships make free goods appears to have been first put forward in a Prussian memorial in 1752, at a time when Prussian merchantmen had begun, on some considerable scale, to carry on trade for the Powers which were then at war; but it never received any sanction from the great maritime Powers till France, with the object of injuring England, adopted it in 1778. The accession of Russia in 1780 at once gave it an almost general authority." Lecky, *op. cit.* IV. 156.

[1] Koch and Schoell, I. 477, 479.



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She insisted that neutral vessels should be allowed to trade freely from port to port on the coasts of nations at war, and that all goods belonging to the subjects of belligerent Powers should be free in neutral ships. These principles made it impossible for a belligerent to cut off the commerce of an enemy, and they were favourable to the Americans, since their trade could go on unchecked. This doctrine was also advantageous to the smaller maritime Powers, which could claim a right to continue and develop a carrying trade, when England was hampered by hostilities. Sweden and Denmark immediately adopted the same policy as Russia, and Austria, Portugal and the Two Sicilies also joined the Armed Neutrality[1]. These Powers refused to recognise any blockade which was not rendered effective, and thus the different questions, which

*to the disadvantage of the English,*

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were to become so prominent in the great struggle with Napoleon, were definitely raised. Hence the indirect effect of the break with the colonies was to bring about a serious dislocation of trade, and to expose the English mercantile marine first to the attacks of American privateers, and subsequently to those of other countries. To adequately protect English vessels, against the cruisers of so many different nations, was practically impossible; it appears that the frightful increase of risk, attending all trading operations, was the principal evil of this period, rather than the mere interruption of any one branch of commerce. Some of the rates for insurance for ships appear to have increased from two guineas to £21 per cent.[1]. This was the period in which the practice of marine insurance came to be regularly adopted by shipowners; and commercial relations were strained in many directions. But after all, warfare on the high seas was a game in which England was well prepared to take a part, and she played it with much success. The American privateers did less damage than had been anticipated[2]; the tonnage of British-built shipping increased during the years of the war[3], while in a couple of years the Americans lost something like 900 vessels; and the Atlantic coast was exposed to ruthless raids, such as those which destroyed Newhaven in Connecticut and Suffolk in Virginia[4]. Nor were the tables turned after the European Powers threw themselves into the struggle. "The combined fleets of France and Spain," as Washington wrote in 1780, "last year were greatly superior to those of the enemy. Nevertheless the enemy sustained no material damage, and at the close of the campaign gave a very important blow to our allies. This campaign the difference between the fleets will be inconsiderable.... What are we to expect will be the case if there should be another campaign? In all probability the advantage will be on the side of the English, and then what would become of America? We ought not to deceive ourselves. The

*who sustained heavy losses,*

*but no permanent damage*

[1] Leone Levi, *History*, 45.

[2] In 1818, "by sound seamanship, by good fortune, and by the neglect of the enemy an important fleet of merchantmen from the East Indies, another from Lisbon, and a third from Jamaica all arrived in safety." Lecky, *op. cit* IV. 94.

[3] Chalmers, *Opinions on subjects arising from American Independence*, p. 99.

[4] Lecky, *op. cit*. IV. 94, 116.



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maritime resources of Great Britain are more substantial and real than those of France and Spain united[1]." The attempt of the Dutch to carry on their trade, according to the newly defined rights of neutrals, involved them in ruinous losses. The surrender of the island of S. Eustatius was a very serious disaster, as many ships and valuable stores were seized by the English[2], and the Dutch East India Company received a shock from which it never recovered[3]. Anxious as the times were for the merchants, England was able to give as hard blows as she received, and her rivals were the principal sufferers.

*to their maritime power.*

When England at length acknowledged the independence of the United States, and the treaty of Versailles with the other belligerents was signed in 1783, many valuable islands and places of trade were restored to Spain and to France. Spain obtained Minorca and the Philippines, as well as Florida; while England only received the Bahamas, and rights for the timber trade in Honduras. France was less fortunate, though her commercial stations in the East Indies were secured to her; she obtained the island of Tobago, which then yielded the best supplies of cotton, and she insisted on a more favourable interpretation of the disputed rights in the Newfoundland fisheries. England was at no pains to retain her recent acquisitions or enlarge her responsibilities, and apart altogether from the loss of her Colonies, the territorial readjustments were not in her favour; but her maritime superiority stood out more markedly than ever The Dutch had suffered irreparable losses both in the East and West; the maritime resources of France had been strained to man the navy; and the development of shipping by the Americans had received a severe check[4]. England emerged

*Though England relinquished many possessions in 1783,*

*her maritime superiority was more striking than ever,*

[1] Sparks, *Writings of George Washington*, VII. 59. Washington continues with an interesting remark: "In modern wars the longest purse must chiefly determine the event. I fear that of the enemy will be found to be so. Though the government is deeply in debt and of course poor, the nation is rich, and their riches afford a fund, which will not be easily exhausted. Besides their system of public credit is such that it is capable of greater exertions than that of any other nation."

[2] Lecky, *op. cit* IV. 166.

[3] Beer, *Allgemeine Geschichte des Welthandels*, II. 225.

[4] During the years of the war there was an extraordinary revival of shipbuilding in English yards; the Americans did not fare so well as they had done, when they were deprived of the advantage afforded to their commerce by the British Navigation Acts. Macpherson, IV. 10 n.

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from the struggle without a rival in ability to carry on the commerce of the world, during the very decade when the great development of the hardware and of the cotton trades was taking place. As a consequence England succeeded in retaining her hold on the trade of the United States, and neither France nor Holland was able to obtain a substantial share of this commerce. Pitt failed in his attempt to maintain the full freedom of intercourse with the new republic, which he would have desired[1]; but the trade of the United States with England expanded very rapidly, especially after the development of cotton growing in Carolina. It was found that Dean Tucker's forecast was amply justified[2], and that the political severance from the United States did little to injure our commercial dealings with the people. Economists began to realise how firmly the material prosperity of England was founded, when this blow to her prestige caused so little injury Still more striking testimony to the economic strength of England was afforded when the treaty of 1786 opened up freer intercourse with France, and English goods commanded a ready sale in continental markets.

*and enabled her to monopolise the carrying trade*

So strongly was English maritime power established at this time, that her rivals had little means of attacking her; and the war of 1793, which followed the outbreak of the Revolution in France, was much less injurious to English commerce than the War of Independence had been. England set herself, with considerable success, to ruin the trade and shipping of France; and her high-handed measures with this object were resented by the United States, as well as by Norway and Sweden, who sought to preserve their rights as neutrals. But English relations with the neutral powers, though strained, were not broken, and her commerce continued to flourish. In 1795 France succeeded in mastering Holland, and England engaged in the attempt to destroy both her

*and to ruin her rivals.*

[1] Trade was not permitted between the United States and the West India Islands. This was a serious grievance to the planters (*Commons Journals*, XXXIX. 840), but the restriction was maintained in the hope of preventing American competition in the carrying trade. Holroyd, *Observations on the Commerce of the American States*, 79.

[2] J. Tucker, *True Interest of Great Britain* (1776), p. 51. Also *A Series of Answers*, p. 30, Brit. Mus. 522. g. 5 (5).



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ancient rivals at once. They were unable, even when united, to do her serious damage[1]; the distant trades with India, Africa and Brazil, and with the United States, remained open, though they were of course attended with unusual risk. The chief privation was due to the fact that none of these distant trades served, as European trade might have done, to replenish the supplies of food in the years of dearth; for the Armed Neutrality cut us off from the areas of wheat on the Baltic[2]. The serious risk of not being self-sufficing in our food supply was clearly felt, though there were possibilities of importation even then, as the United States exported food stuffs[3] to Spain and Portugal. The most obvious result of the war was to give an unhealthy stimulus to English tillage, and to force on rapid changes in the rural districts, but it must have caused much uncertainty in various industries, and contributed to the distress of which we hear among operatives.

*a stimulus was given to English tillage,*

With the Peace of Amiens in 1802, hopes were entertained of still greater developments, as the trade of the whole world was suddenly thrown open to England. The Dutch indeed were replaced in the possession of the colonies they had lost, but their marine had suffered severely, and the triumph of England over her old rival was at last complete. Great Britain had attained to the same sort of maritime supremacy which Holland had secured in 1648, while the rapid development of the textile and iron manufactures gave her prosperity a prospective stability which Holland had never enjoyed in the same degree[4]. English traders and manufacturers were,

*and after the Peace of Amiens, to manufactures*

[1] Reinhard, *Present state of the Commerce of Great Britain*, 19, 46.

[2] Rose, *Our Food Supply*, in *Monthly Review*, March 1902, p. 67.

[3] Yeats, *Recent and Existing Commerce*, 237.

[4] Though the Treaty of Amiens restored to the Dutch most of the colonial possessions they had lost, they never recovered the effects of this war, in which they were crushed by the hostility of their larger neighbours. Their exclusion from American trade by the English parliament in 1651 was felt as a grievance in the middle of the eighteenth century, *i.e.* so soon as their development in other directions was checked, and this later experience appears to have given rise to the opinion that the maintenance of the Navigation Acts inflicted serious injury, even after 1667 when the Dutch had been admitted as intermediaries in the German trade (Dumont, *op. cit.* VII. i. 48). The greatness of Holland, like that of Carthage, had been raised, not on the stable basis of land, but on the fluctuating basis of trade. "The manufacturers became merchants, and the merchants became agents and carriers; so that the solid sources

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however, only able to take full advantage of these great opportunities for a few months; the quantity of English goods exported was enormously increased for a time, especially in trade with the United States and Brazil. But the stimulus given to production was not altogether wholesome; the expansion was so rapid that business men had attempted to strain their credit to the utmost in order to engage in vast speculations, and there was a very serious revulsion when the war broke out again in 1803.

*for American markets.*

*English prosperity was securely founded,*

The final crisis had now arrived in the great struggle between France and England for predominance in the world. It seemed possible that the nineteenth century might reverse the story of the eighteenth, and that a rejuvenated France might assert a new power against her ancient rival, not only in Europe but in India and the West Indies. There was a general impression that English prosperity rested on very insecure foundations, and that these might be completely undermined; this opinion gave rise to much anxiety in England, while sanguine expectations of successful rivalry were cherished in France. The economic relations of the two countries had been completely reversed since the Restoration period; after the Peace of Versailles, France had been in constant danger of being flooded by English goods, and French manufacturers demanded the strenuous enforcement of protective legislation in the interest of native industries[1]. The

*as industry*

of riches gradually disappeared." Playfair, *Inquiry into the permanent Causes of the Decline and Fall of wealthy and powerful Nations*, 66. His whole account of the decline of Holland is interesting. Her one important manufacture, that of linen, was weighted by the pressure of taxation in competing with other countries, and the increasing use of cotton must surely have affected the demand for the higher-priced fabric. The Dutch carrying trade, which had revived during the War of Independence, was fatally injured when Holland was forced to side against England in the Revolutionary War, and the blows she then received were anticipations of the complete destruction of her greatness which ensued, when she was drawn by Napoleon into the Continental System. It is not uninteresting to notice that these causes of the eventual fall of Holland were noted by Cary, whose comments on Dutch trade are instructive. Writing in 1695 he says, "The Trade of the *Dutch* consists rather in Buying and Selling than Manufactures, most of their Profits arising from that and the Freights they make of their Ships. * * * Such a Commerce to England would be of little Advantage no more than jobbing for guineas, this Nation would no way advance its Wealth thereby, whose Profits depend on our Product and Manufactures." *Essay on the State of England in relation to its Trade* (1695), pp. 123, 124.

[1] Mr Welsford points out the influence of these conditions in bringing about the Reign of Terror. *Strength of Nations*, 188.



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Revolutionary government hoped, by closing French markets and attacking English commerce, to ruin this country. The natural resources of France were such that she seemed to be able to stand alone, while England was dependent on her commerce. The French authorities absolutely discarded the free trade views which had been diffused by Quesnay under the monarchy, and prohibited the importation of English goods[1], in the hope that they would "soon tear down the veil which envelopes the imposing Colossus of British Power[2]." They had, however, greatly underrated the economic strength of this country. Vastly as the carrying trade and commerce had increased, this was only one side of English development; industry had been improved to such an extent, both as regards the quality and the cheapness of goods, that other countries found it impossible to dispense altogether with British manufactures. Gallant efforts had been made, too, by the introduction of better methods of stock-raising and tillage to render the food supply sufficient, at least in favourable years, for our greatly increased population. England was really far better prepared to engage in this great struggle than she appeared to her antagonists, and it is worth while to quote the opinion of a contemporary observer, who realised what a commanding position England had attained in the commercial and industrial world.

*and agriculture had all been developed;*

"It is a fact of public notoriety, that within the last fifty years almost all the English colonies have been improved, and made to yield more plentiful returns; that their population, and even that of the three united kingdoms in Europe, has been considerably augmented: that their manufactures have acquired a much greater degree of perfection; and of course a more wide-spread circulation; by which means their trade and navigation have been increased by nearly one-half. It is farther known, that within the last thirty years almost every necessary has been enhanced by one-third part of its former price. It is therefore natural that the English receive at present more money for their manufactured products and for

*a large revenue was derived*

[1] Mollien, *Mémoires d'un Ministre du Trésor Public*, III. 314. See also Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution Franç.* III. 245.

[2] Brissot, quoted by Rose in *Eng. Hist. Rev.* VIII. 704.

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the commodities which they import from both Indies, than they used to do formerly; and that in consequence they are greater gainers by it, and can afford, better than ever, to pay taxes. In all the well governed states of Europe the expenditure has been rising for the last thirty years, and the revenues have risen in proportion.

"He who doubts the advanced flourishing condition of the British commerce and the wealth of the nation, may easily convince himself of his error, merely by comparing the former and present English custom-house entries, the list of imports and exports, and the amount of the duties which they necessarily occasion: to this ought to be added, that the English are now in possession of the greater part of the commerce of the world, and by these means have it in their power to fix the standard price of almost every commodity. They have besides this, immediately after the commencement of the present war, captured from the French and Dutch great numbers of ships with rich cargoes, the amount of which is estimated to exceed £14,000,000 sterling.

*from customs,*

*and England could defy competition*

"Allowing that the other commercial nations who are competitors with the English in trade over all the world, even felt themselves inclined to undersell the English in their prices, it would in the first place be incompatible with their interests; in the second, it is out of their power to supply all nations sufficiently, out of the scantiness of their stores. The English possess quantities immensely larger than they do, and barter them for the produce of their manufactures; which is generally the case in every corner of the globe. There is scarcely a single commodity, a single article either of luxury or convenience, that is not manufactured by the English, with the most consummate skill, and in the highest state of perfection.

"The soil of Britain does not indeed produce a quantity of corn sufficient for the exigencies of its inhabitants; and for this reason it becomes necessary, every year, to remit large sums of money for its purchase to the ports in the Baltic; but then nature has indemnified that country with her rich coal mines, the envy of foreigners, who by this means become, in a certain manner, tributary to England; for the

*through her wealth in coal,*



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English parliament has laid a considerable duty on the exportation of coals, which foreign nations are obliged to pay.

"A nation whose active commerce is so preponderating, compared with its passive trade, who is herself the ruler of the most numerous and fertile colonies in all parts of the world; a nation that sends the produce of her industry to every zone; that has so formidable a navy, and so widespread a navigation; a nation, that by her activity and the genius of her citizens, manufactures its numberless articles of merchandise, infinitely finer, in much superior workmanship, in far more exquisite goodness, than all other nations, without exception; and that is able to sell them infinitely cheaper, owing to her admirable engines, her machines, and her native coal; a nation, whose credit and whose capital is so immense as that of England; surely such a nation must render all foreigners tributary; and her very enemies must help to bear the immense burthen of her debt and the enormous accumulation of her taxes.

*despite the pressure of debt,*

"The commerce of France and Holland is at present almost totally suspended by the blockade of most of their ports[1]. Both countries are totally cut off from their possessions in the East Indies, and are allowed to carry on but a very insignificant trade with their West India colonies. How

[1] "Before the Revolution France employed, in its colonial trade, 180,000 tons of shipping. Between the years 1763 and 1778, the returns in produce from the French colonies, consisting of sugar, coffee, indigo, cocoa and cotton, amounted to the annual value of about £6,400,000 sterling. Of these one-half was consumed in France, the other half exported to other parts of Europe. In 1788 the tonnage employed in the French colonial trade had been augmented to 696 vessels of the burthen of 204,058 tons. The imports rose in that year to the value of about £7,000,000 sterling.

"From an official paper of the French minister of the interior, we learn, that in the year ending Sept. 1800,

| | £ Sterling. |
|---|---|
| The value of the imports of France was . . . . | 13,500,000 |
| Of the exports . . . . . | 11,300,000 |
| Balance against France in 1800 | 2,200,000 |
| In the year ending Sept. 1801, the imports were . . | 17,370,000 |
| Exports . . . . . | 12,716,000 |
| | 4,654,000 |
| Value of prizes captured this year from the enemy . . | 670,000 |
| Balance against France in 1801 | £3,984,000." |

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then can these two powers wage war with the produce of their commercial dealings as England does? England alone has room, notwithstanding the harbours that are shut against her, on the extensive globe, and the vast oceans that surround it.

"The sums which Spain and Portugal are obliged to pay to France for their neutrality, cannot, at any rate, indemnify the latter for the expenses of the war, for the obstruction of her commerce, and the loss of her colonies. Add to this, that the credit which France and Holland once had, is now so very, very trifling, as to cripple and paralyse every important enterprise in which they may happen to embark.

"What then will be the end of this new war, carried on with so much fury? What are the catastrophes that will at last bring back peace, and appease enraged minds? No mortal will dare to give a decisive answer to these questions. But the attentive observer of the history of his time is, however, at liberty to take a view of matters of fact, and of the resources of the contending parties, from which he may deduce tolerably accurate conclusions[1]."

*so that she was able to triumph in the end.*

Had English statesmen been a little more confident of their real strength they might have been saved from a costly blunder; but in the terrible strain of the struggle they were tempted to make a ruthless use of their advantages. It was of course our object, as in the Revolutionary War, to destroy the commerce of France and Holland. In this we were extraordinarily successful. "Not a single merchant ship," as was asserted in 1805, "under a flag inimical to Great Britain, now crosses the equator or traverses the Atlantic Ocean[2]." Markets formerly closed were now opened by force; England was able to take advantage of her maritime supremacy to prevent the transport of goods by other traders; she was thus once more brought into conflict with neutrals, and especially with the people of the United States.

*The attempts of England to destroy the commerce of France embroiled her with the United States*

American shipowners had enjoyed a period of unwonted prosperity from 1793—1802 during the Revolutionary War; they had temporarily become the principal carriers in the trade between the French West Indian colonies and the

[1] Reinhard, *op. cit.* pp. 43—46.

[2] *War in Disguise*, p. 71.



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mother country; previously this trade had been closed to them, but during the war it was convenient to the French that it should be conducted in ships sailing under the United States flag. At the Peace of Amiens in 1802 the government of France at once resumed the colonial monopoly, and excluded the United States ships from a trade which they had enjoyed during the war[1]. Hence during the brief period of peace, the French and Dutch trade revived, and the shipping of the States, which had increased enormously during the Revolutionary War, suffered a corresponding decline. With the outbreak of the Napoleonic War, however, the French commercial policy was changed again, and the trade between the mother country and the colonies was thrown open to neutrals. The United States took full advantage of their opportunity, and a new period of prosperity for their shipping began[2]. By calling at an American port and taking out fresh papers, a vessel could carry on a regular trade between France and her colonies, without having any reason to elude our privateers. Indeed the cessation of the restrictive policy, which France and Spain had pursued, favoured the rapid development of their colonies[3]; and as the neutral traders had no need of convoys, or special rates of insurance, the sugar of the French colonies could be imported on cheaper terms than that from our own islands, even at the very time when we had a complete supremacy at sea. It was further contended that this trade was not a genuine neutral trade, since, owing to the French navigation laws, the neutrals would never have had the opportunity of engaging in it, but for the war; as a matter of fact it had been held illicit in 1756, and our courts had never departed from the rule which was then laid down[4].

*since they had developed a carrying trade between France and her colonies*

[1] *War in Disguise*, 1805 [by A. Stephen], p. 19.

[2] Though none of the United States ports lay on the direct route from South America or the West Indies to France and Holland, the trade winds and Gulf Stream (*War in Disguise*, 1805, p. 42) served in such a fashion, that there was but little delay in transmitting goods by way of some North American port, so that the stream of trade between France and Holland and their West Indian colonies readily shifted, according to the exigencies of the times.

[3] *War in Disguise*, p. 75.

[4] "The general rule is, that the neutral has a right to carry on, in time of war, his accustomed trade, to the utmost extent of which that accustomed trade is capable. Very different is the case of a trade which the neutral has never possessed, which he holds by no title of use and habit in times of peace; and

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In so far then as trade was a source of profit and power to France, it appeared that, though we had destroyed her shipping, we had not cut off her commerce. It was not only carried on by neutral vessels to her own ports, but it reached her through the neutral markets of Hamburg, Altona, Emden, Copenhagen, Gottenburg and Lisbon. The rivers and canals of Germany and Flanders carried produce and East Indian fabrics in all directions from these centres, so as to affect not only our commerce but our manufactures. "They supplant, or rival the British planter and merchant, throughout the continent of Europe, and in all the ports of the Mediterranean. They supplant even the manufacturers of Manchester, Birmingham and Yorkshire; for the looms and forges of Germany are put in action by the colonial produce of our enemies, and are rivalling us, by the ample supplies they send under the neutral flag, to every part of the New World[1]." Under these circumstances, the British Government determined to attempt, not only to destroy French shipping, but to cut off French trade, by putting a stop to "the frauds of the neutral flags." The first definite action in the matter was taken in 1806, when England endeavoured to strike at the neutral trading, by declaring a blockade along the whole of the Channel from Brest to the Elbe. This was merely declaratory, as the blockade was only enforced at the mouth of the Seine[2], and in the narrow seas, but it gave Napoleon the opportunity of posing as a champion who would redress the wrongs of neutral powers. France had assumed the *rôle* of the deliverer of the European peoples from privileged tyranny, and it suited Napoleon to come forward as the maintainer of national rights against the economic and commercial tyranny of Great Britain. In the Berlin Decree of November 1806, he represented the Orders in Council as an infraction of the recognised principles of International Law,

*to the disadvantage of British traders.*

*The Orders in Council against neutral trading*

*called forth the Berlin*

which in fact he can obtain in war, by no other title than by the success of one belligerent against the other and at the expense of that very belligerent under whose success he sets up his title; and such I take to be the colonial trade generally speaking." Judgment of Sir William Scott, quoted in *War in Disguise*, 13.

1 *War in Disguise*, 73, 71.

2 According to the doctrine which Napoleon maintained, the restrictions in regard to blockade only applied to places actually invested; England claimed to interrupt commerce at ports which she had not invested.



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and claimed the right to use against England the same measure which she had meted out to other traders[1]. He accordingly declared the British Isles in a state of blockade; that all commerce and correspondence with Britain should cease; that all British subjects found in countries occupied by French troops should be prisoners of war; that all merchandise and property of British subjects should be a good and lawful prize; and that all British manufactures or merchandise should be deemed a good prize[2]. In responding to this manifesto England drifted into an act of aggression towards neutral states, which forced them, as during the War of Independence, into a position of hostility. By the Order in Council, issued January 7th, 1807, she declared that neutral vessels were not to trade from port to port on the coasts of France, or of French allies; and further, on the 11th of November, the order appeared, which insisted that neutrals should only trade with a hostile port after touching at a British port, and after paying such customs as the British Government might impose. Napoleon retorted with the Milan Decree (Dec. 1807), which declared that any vessel, which had submitted to the British regulations, was thereby denationalised and good and lawful prize.

*and Milan Decrees;*

By these steps Napoleon was successful in embroiling England in fresh and serious difficulties. The immediate loss to the continental countries was indeed great, as Napoleon insisted on the enforcement of his decrees all over Europe. Denmark, Sweden, and for a time Turkey submitted to his mandates; the Portuguese, who neglected his orders, were severely punished, and vast quantities of English goods were seized at Hamburg, Bremen and Lubeck. The French Minister of Commerce congratulated himself prematurely. "England" he wrote "sees her wares repudiated by the whole of Europe. Her vessels, laden with immense riches, are

*these pressed severely on the customers of England*

1 England was acting in accordance with the rule of 1798 "not to seize any neutral vessels which should be found carrying on trade directly between the colonies of the enemy and the neutral country to which the vessel belonged, and laden with property of the inhabitants of such neutral country, provided that such neutral vessel should not be supplying, nor should have on the outward voyage supplied, the enemy with any articles of contraband of war, and should not be trading with any blockaded ports." Leone Levi, *History*, 104.

2 Leone Levi, *History*, 106.

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wandering over those wide seas where she claims the monopoly, and they seek in vain from the Straits of the Sound to the Hellespont for one port which will open to receive them. * * *

"The war itself is nothing more or less than a war for the freedom of commerce. Its violation was the original cause of the outbreak of hostilities. Europe is well aware of its danger, and the Emperor has constantly tried to make freedom for commerce the preliminary of all negotiations. Each of his conquests, by closing an outlet for English trade, has been a victory for French commerce. Thus this war, which has for the moment suspended all the commercial relations of France, has been a war made in her interest, as well as in the interest of the whole of Europe, which up to now has been ground down by the monopoly of England[1]."

*but did not break down her monopoly;*

Napoleon looked forward with satisfaction to a speedy rupture between England and the United States. But it was much easier to attempt to interrupt existing commerce, than to call the machinery of production into being. Napoleon's positive scheme of establishing a Continental System, which should foster national prosperity and military resources n France, was an entire failure. He tried to develop the cultivation of cotton in Corsica, and the manufacture of beet-root sugar, so as to provide substitutes for colonial produce; this industry was widely diffused, but it had no real vitality, and collapsed on the fall of the Empire. He allowed the export of food-stuffs to England in 1811, when they were sorely needed, as he believed this would stimulate French and Italian agriculture, and drain Britain of gold[2].

*Napoleon failed to develop industries,*

[1] The report of the Minister of Commerce made 24 Aug. 1807. *Correspondance de Napoleon Ier*, vol. xv. p. 528.

[2] This point has been excellently worked out by Mr Rose in the *Monthly Review*, March, 1902: "Thus, at the time when Napoleon was about to order British and colonial goods (for he now assumed that all colonial goods were British) to be confiscated or burnt all over his vast Empire, he seeks to stimulate exports to our shores. And why? Because such exports would benefit his States and enable public works to be carried out. We may go even further and say that Napoleon believed the effect of sending those exports to our shores would be to weaken us. His economic ideas were those of the crudest section of the old Mercantilist School. He believed that a nation's commercial wealth consisted essentially in its exports, while imports were to be jealously restricted because they drew bullion away. Destroy Britain's exports, and allow her to import whatever his own lands could well spare and she would bleed to death. Such, briefly stated, was his creed. At that time, wheat fetched more than £5 the quarter; and our great enemy, imagining the drain of our gold to be a greater loss to us than the incoming of new life was gain, pursued the very policy which enabled us to survive that year of scarcity without a serious strain. In 1811–1812 those precious exports of corn from the Napoleonic States ceased, but only because there was not enough for their own people.

"In the latter year, especially, the bread stuffs of Prussia and Poland were drawn into the devouring vortex of Napoleon's Russian expedition; and this purely military reason explains why the best Danzig sold at Mark Lane at £9 the quarter, and why England was on the brink of starvation. There is not a shred of evidence to prove that the autocrat himself ever framed that notion of cutting off our food supplies, which our Continental friends now frankly tell us would be their chief aim in case of a great war." p. 74.



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The condition of the less favoured members of the system was even worse; their interests were entirely subordinated to those of France, while their commerce was diverted, or interrupted, in a way that caused serious trouble in all parts of the continent, and did comparatively little harm to England. Her colonial and distant commerce increased and gave ample employment to shipping that would otherwise have been engaged in European waters; English manufactures were so far indispensable[1], that a large contraband trade sprang up at once, and quantities of goods were also imported by officials who had licences permitting them to engage in the prohibited traffic[2]. Napoleon, in the hope of doing something for native manufactures, at last determined to confiscate and destroy all English goods; and large bonfires were lighted in Antwerp, Nantes, Ratisbon, Leipsic, Civita Vecchia and many other places. This was the beginning of the end; the loss incurred, following as it did on a long period of uncertain and speculative trade, brought about a collapse of business everywhere; even the favoured French manufacturers were in despair, and the other members of the Continental System, who had been obliged to join in the exclusion of English products, became utterly disaffected by the tyranny imposed on them in the name of commercial liberty. Russia suffered especially, and the military expedition to Moscow[3] was rendered necessary by Napoleon's determination to maintain the Continental System; the weapon which he had forged in the hope of dealing a fatal blow at English prosperity[4] was turned against himself.

*and a large contraband trade sprung up.*

[1] Rose, *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, 1893, p. 722.

[2] Rose, *Life of Napoleon*, II. 222.

[3] *Ib.* II. 235.

[4] *Ib.* II. 103 and 211—216.

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So far as England was concerned, the most serious difficulty to our manufacturers, involving as it did the suffering of the operatives, was due to the indirect effect of the measures which had been taken by Government in the supposed interests of British trade. As the United States had profited more than any of the other neutrals from carrying on the trade between France and her colonies, American ship-owners suffered more than those of other neutral nations by the Orders in Council and the Berlin and Milan Decrees; both of the belligerents[1] had imposed and enforced restrictions on American commerce, and their action roused increasing indignation in the United States. The Orders in Council were not issued in England without considerable opposition from those who wished to maintain friendly relations with America. In 1809 the United States passed a non-intercourse Act, and made preparations for open hostilities. Hence these Orders, by straining our relations with the United States, had most serious results on the condition of this country. When their produce was not shipped to Spain and France, the United States could not deal so largely in our manufactures; the interruption of trade with them threatened a third of our foreign commerce, increased the difficulties of our food supply, and cut off a portion of the supply of raw cotton for the Lancashire spinners. As competitors in trade, they had foiled our attempts to isolate France and throw her on her own resources. War in disguise had been carried on under the colour of a neutral flag; but in retaliating for this evil, the British Government brought about a condition of affairs, in which every branch of trade connected with America suffered, and suffered severely. Smuggling of every kind, with all its attendant evils, was of constant occurrence[2], and English public opinion became more and more sensible of the mischiefs caused by the policy we had adopted. The Government, however, pursued its course, though assenting, in answer to an appeal from Lord Brougham[3], to a conditional repeal of the Orders in Council, when Napoleon's Decrees should be withdrawn. Before effect could be given to this view, however,

*The rupture with the States*

*affected our supplies of material and food*

*as well as our manufactures.*

[1] Tucker, *Life of Jefferson*, II. 291.

[2] Marquis of Lansdowne, quoted by Leone Levi, *op. cit.* 110.

[3] *Ib.* 111.



the patience of the United States had been exhausted. The American supporters of Great Britain were foiled; war was declared in 1812, and the quarrel, with all its disastrous consequences to trade and industry, was only healed at the Congress of Vienna.

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With the establishment of peace, in 1815, maritime communication was of course resumed, but material prosperity did not at once revive. Indeed the depression affected all sides of national life simultaneously, and gave rise to expressions of complaint in many quarters. "During the earlier part of the year, the distress had appeared particularly confined to the agricultural labourers, at least the evils pressing upon them were those which had almost exclusively engaged the attention of the parliamentary speakers. But as the season advanced, and an unusual inclemency of weather brought with it the prospect of a general failure in the harvests of Europe, and a rapid rise in the corn market, much more serious distress burst forth among the manufacturing poor, who began to murmur that their reduced wages would no longer satisfy them with bread.

*With the establishment of peace*

"By the sudden failure of the war-demand for a vast variety of articles, which was not compensated as yet by the recovery of any peace-market, foreign or domestic, thousands of artisans were thrown out of employment, and reduced to a state of extreme want and penury. A detestable spirit of conspiracy, which manifested itself in the early part of the year in the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Huntingdon, and Cambridge, directed against houses, barns, and rick-yards, which were devoted to the flames, was probably the result of a want of agricultural employment, joined to the love of plunder. But the distressing scenes which afterwards took place amongst the colliers of Staffordshire, and the attempts made by the assembled workmen of the iron manufacturing districts of South Wales, to stop by force the working of the forges, arose from the causes above referred to. In general, however, the workmen conducted themselves without violence, and received with gratitude the contributions made for their relief.

*a period of depression ensued;*

"The general sense of suffering found vent throughout the country in meetings called for the purpose of discussing the

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causes and remedies of these evils, and petitions for redress of grievances, for economy and for parliamentary reform, poured in on all sides." There was a bitter irony in the fact that the success of England, in foiling the attack on her commercial prosperity, should be marked by "urgent symptoms of suffering which broke out over the whole face of the country and in almost all classes of the community[1]."

*though successful speculators had gained,*

The various international struggles had far-reaching results on the business habits and economic condition of the country. The *laissez faire* policy had led to a practical abandonment of industrial regulations of every kind, and manufacturers were much more free to expand their business, and take advantage of fresh openings, than would have been possible in the old days. The man of enterprise had his reward, and the industrial and agricultural revolutions were doubtless accelerated by the political events of the time. The ultimate result was the triumph of England; and the gain to the country, as measured by the volume of trade and the increase of shipping, was immense[2]. But if we take the welfare of the community as a criterion, the subject assumes a very different aspect; pauperism abounded and the burden of poor rates was a heavy charge[3]. The increased rapidity of the transition was in itself an aggravation of the misery it entailed; the speculative character which business assumed was inconsistent with the steady maintenance of a standard of comfort, and the occasional interruptions from which the various textile trades suffered in turn were most disastrous. To contemporary observers much of the suffering of the time, and especially the distress after the peace, was inexplicable; though the teaching of Adam Smith might have given them a clue to explain the main features of the situation[4]. England had become a great commercial nation; her prosperity had ceased to depend primarily, as it did in the sixteenth, and even in the seventeenth century, on the prosperity of the landed interest[5]. It rested on the fluctuating basis of trade. This

*the community as a whole suffered*

[1] *Annual Register*, 1816, Preface iv.

[2] The Government was thus enabled to obtain an enormously increased revenue from customs; these increased from £3,948,000 in 1794 to £10,321,000 in 1810. *Reports*, 1828, v. 610, 625.

[3] *Reports*, ix. 139. [4] See above, p. 596. [5] See above, pp. 112, 386.



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country could only be flourishing when her neighbours were sufficiently well off to be good customers for her goods. So long as the exhaustion, due to the war, continued on the Continent there was little room for fresh activity at home. Agricultural land will recover from the devastating effects of war in a year or two, if seed and stock and labour are available[1], but trade connections may not be easy to reestablish, and purchasing power does not recuperate at short notice.

*from the fluctuations in trade.*

**257.** It would be impossible to follow out the ramifications of the influence of these political changes in detail, but an attempt may be made to point out some of their effects on the main factors in production. The changing conditions of war and peace had grave results upon the supply of materials for some of the staple trades. Spanish wool was used for many fabrics, and certain branches of trade relied almost entirely on Saxony wool. The interruption of communications—apart from all questions of Napoleonic policy—could not but cause distress. The cotton trade, which depended exclusively on imported materials, was on the whole well supplied by English shippers; but the loss of Tobago[2] was severely felt at the time, and the war of 1812, by cutting us off from Carolina, caused a serious scarcity.

*During the war industry suffered from want of materials,*

*from the uncertainty of sales,*

The influence of the changing political conditions in opening and closing foreign markets was very noticeable at the time[3], though the development of clandestine trade was so great, that the actual distress due to this cause was probably less than might have been anticipated. There seem to have been curiously discriminating changes of foreign demand, for

[1] J. S. Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, Bk. i. v. § 7.

[2] *Parl. Hist.* xxii. 778.

[3] The war had something to do with bringing in the low rates of spinning in 1793. "In several villages where the spinners could get a shilling for jenny-spinning before the war they were taken off threepence when the war broke out. In these very villages, one of which I have lately visited, in Huntingdonshire, fivepence are now taken off, in some sixpence, and even sevenpence. So that in many places the poor, if they can possibly help it, will not spin at all. There is indeed no sale for the yarn, and on conversing with a gentleman who has large concerns in the wool trade and in whose county I met with many spinners who had sevenpence in the shilling taken off, he assured me he should lose in the course of the last six months a thousand pounds by the war." *The Complaints of the Poor People of England*, 1793. Brit. Mus. C. T. 104. 11.

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finished wares obtained a sale, during times of war, when half manufactured goods, like cotton yarn, were no longer exported[1].

*and the interruption of the food supply,*

So far as the industrial population was concerned the keenest distress arose when the fortunes of war deprived us of access to regions from which food could be obtained, in a season when the home supply had fallen short. This was the case in the last years of the Revolutionary War (1801–2), and again in 1811. It is probable that the disturbed state of the country, which called forth the Combination Acts and expressed itself in the Luddite Riots, was more directly connected with this cause, than with political disaffection, or the introduction of machinery.

*and all capitalists were affected by the variations in credit*

While labour bore the brunt of the distress it cannot be said that capital went scatheless. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, the large employers of labour, both in manufacturing and tillage, had become accustomed to rely on borrowed capital; the terms, on which bankers would be willing to make or renew advances, were of vital importance for the conduct of business affairs. The losses, which merchants and manufacturers sustained from the difficulties caused by the wars, in connection with the transport of goods, would have been comparatively trivial, if they had not served as the occasion for reckless speculation and subsequent contractions of credit.

*and the consequent crises.*

The alternation of peace and war gave rise to conditions which inevitably called forth a series of commercial crises. When prices are high and the prospects of trade are good, all merchants and manufacturers are inclined to increase their business as much as possible, and the banks are ready to advance them capital for the purpose on their personal credit. The bills which thus get into circulation are a practical addition to the paper-money of the country, and the issue and acceptance of so much paper tends to raise prices still farther, and to encourage merchants to engage in larger transactions. If the bankers are not alive to the danger of this state of affairs, they may foment the evil by continuing to lend readily; they have it in their power to check the speculative enthusiasm by raising the terms on which they are prepared to

[1] See above, p. 634.



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grant loans. When the period of increasing inflation is allowed to continue too long, some unlooked-for incident may force the banks to reconsider their position, and suddenly refuse to continue the accommodation they have been giving to merchants and manufacturers. As a consequence, some traders, who are really quite solvent, may have great difficulty in obtaining money with which to pay their way, and will be forced either to realise their stocks at great loss, or to suspend payment. The bills of such a firm will at once become discredited, and those who hold them will have increased difficulty in discharging their own obligations, so that one firm after another may be dragged into the vortex and go down.

*There was frequent temptation to over-trading,*

Illustrations of the manner in which political changes affected the state of commercial credit have already been given in connection with the over-trading which occurred, on the cessation of hostilities with the American colonies in 1782, and again after the years of rapid progress which were suddenly checked by the outbreak of the Revolutionary War in 1793. The 'short and feverish peace' of 1803 did not last long enough to allow of a serious development of speculative trading, but the conditions of business in 1809–10 lured many merchants to disaster. The high range of prices in England gave an unhealthy impulse to importation, and there was also a development of speculative trading with South America[1]. The sudden closing of the Baltic trade seems to have been the chief incident which brought about the actual collapse, which was extraordinarily severe, and from which there was little opportunity to recover. It is, of course, true that the alternations of peace and war were not the only causes at work in producing these results; the bad times in 1793 and 1797 were connected with the progress of the industrial revolution. The sinking of capital in factories and machinery and the making of canals[2] caused an internal drain on the reserve of the banks[3]; these years were in some ways an anticipation of the troubles caused by the railway mania[4]; still the political storms were the most important factors in bringing about sudden fluctuations in trade and credit.

[1] Tooke, *History of Prices*, I. 276, 303. [2] Macpherson, *Annals*, IV. 226.
[3] Nicholson, *Principles of Political Economy*, II. 210.
[4] See p. 826 below.

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To some extent the difficulties of private traders were due, not to the conditions of commerce, but to the state of public credit, and the extraordinary demands of the Government upon the resources of the Bank of England. This comes out very clearly in the financial history of the four years which followed 1793. At that time Pitt succeeded in carrying a measure, which had been intended to protect the Directors in meeting the convenience of the Government, but which really gave the ministers of the day irresponsible control over the management of the Bank. In the original Act which created the Bank, the legislature had been careful to provide against the lending of money to Government without the permission of Parliament; but a practice had grown up of advancing sums to the ministry, which might amount to £20,000 or £30,000 at a time, in payment of bills of exchange. The Directors however had some doubts as to the legality of the practice; and endeavoured to procure an Act of Indemnity for these transactions in the past, as well as powers to continue them to a limited amount such as £50,000. Pitt succeeded in passing the Bill without any specified limitation, and he was therefore able to draw on the Bank as freely as he chose, trusting to the unwillingness of the Directors to dishonour his bills. In December 1794, the Directors began to find themselves in a position of great difficulty, as their reserve was very low[1],

*while Pitt used his power of borrowing*

[1] This was partly due to the war expenses abroad which were estimated at £32,810,977 for the years 1793–7, and partly to the advancing of loans to the Emperor and the King of Prussia. *Third Report from Committee of Secrecy*, in *Reports*, XI. 122. There was also an internal drain. "In addition to these causes of actual expence, your Committee think proper to advert to various circumstances, which may contribute either to the delay of the due return of commercial dealings, or require enlarged means of circulation in the country. Of this nature are, the habit of the British merchant to give longer credit to the Foreign merchant than he receives in return; the change of the course of trade since the War, and the opening of new accounts with new customers; the circuitous remittance of money from various parts, in consequence of interruptions in the means of direct communication, and the state of some of the countries from which considerable remittances are due: To these are to be added the increase of domestic commerce, the increase of manufactures for home consumption, the general spirit of internal improvement in agriculture, and in the formation of canals and other public works: To these may also be added, as producing a further necessity for a greater quantity of circulating medium, other causes of a different nature, and in other respects of an opposite tendency, and particularly the increased price of freight, shipping, insurance, demurrage, and a variety of other articles, generally affecting the trade of the country, both in its former and in its increased state; the advanced price of labour, and of all the necessaries of life, and almost every kind of commodity. Added to all these circumstances, the operations and expences of the War may be supposed to require a greater quantity of circulating medium for internal as well as for external purposes." *Third Report*, in *Reports*, XI. p. 123.



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and they made repeated representations to Pitt to reduce his demands. Their remonstrances were ineffective, and they did not perhaps show as much firmness as might have been desirable in the face of the continued drain of gold. They did however contract their issues to commercial men to such an extent as to cause great complaint in the City[1], while Pitt continued to press for further advances. He had more than once promised the Directors to make payments which would reduce the advances on Treasury Bills to £500,000, but in June 1796, the debt amounted to £1,232,649, and he succeeded in obtaining £800,000 in the July, and a similar sum in the August, of that year[2]. The Bank was perfectly solvent[3], and might have succeeded in weathering the storm,

*so persistently*

[1] "It appears, on the other hand, to have been the opinion of persons engaged in commercial and pecuniary transactions, that the diminution of Bank notes since December 1795, so far from tending to secure the Bank from the danger of a drain of Cash, by contracting their engagements within a narrower compass, has in effect contributed to the embarrassment which they have lately experienced, by reducing the requisite means of circulation, diminishing the general accommodation by way of discount, and thus occasioning a more pressing demand for specie, for which the Bank itself is the readiest as well as the ultimate source of supply.

"There appears to Your Committee good reason to apprehend, that the country Bank notes in circulation have been reduced one-third from the time of the difficulties in 1793 to December 1796, and that they have since that period suffered a still further diminution; and from hence has been inferred the necessity of providing from the Bank an adequate supply of their notes to compensate for this chasm in the circulation of the country.

"Your Committee conceive it may be thought important to state, that the amount of the Cash and Bullion in the Bank, during a great part of the year 1782, and a very considerable part of the year 1784, was below the amount at which it stood in any part of the year 1796; and that, during the whole of 1783, the amount was lower, and during some parts of that year was considerably lower than it was on the 26th of February last; and that the Bank did not at those periods lessen the amount of their discounts or notes, and the circulation of the country suffered no interruption." *Third Report*, in *Reports*, XI. p. 123.

[2] Macleod, I. 523.

[3] The Bank was perfectly solvent at the time of the suspension. "Your Committee find, upon such examination, that the total Amount of Outstanding Demands on the Bank, on the 25th day of February last (to which day the Accounts could be completely made up) was £13,770,390; and that the total Amount of the Funds for discharging those Demands (not including the permanent Debt due from Government of £11,686,800, which bears an interest of Three per Cent.) was on the same

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but for unlooked-for difficulties which arose during the month of February 1797.

*and political affairs were so threatening*

In December 1796, the French expedition which had been prepared for the invasion of Ireland was dispersed, but the mere attempt created a sense of insecurity which was felt in all parts of the country and especially on the coasts. The excitement among the neighbouring farmers caused a run on the bank at Newcastle[1], and the Bank of England was quite unable to meet the demands for cash which came upon it from all quarters. The Directors were obliged in self-defence to curtail their issues; and as private bankers found it necessary to take a similar course, the mercantile community were put to the greatest straits in order to meet their engagements. Still, in spite of all efforts at retrenchment, the reserve at the Bank fell so low, that Pitt consented to issue an order suspending the obligation of the Bank to pay its notes in coin. When relieved from this necessity, the Bank was able to lend more freely and thus

*that the Bank had to suspend cash payments,*

25th day of February last £17,597,280; and that the result is, that there was on the 25th day of February last a surplus of effects belonging to the Bank beyond the Amount of their Debts, amounting to the sum of £3,826,890, exclusive of the above-mentioned permanent Debt of £11,686,800 due from Government.

"And Your Committee further represent, that since the 25th of February last considerable Issues have been made by the Bank in Bank Notes, both upon Government Securities and in discounting Bills, the particulars of which could not immediately be made up; but as those Issues appear to Your Committee to have been made upon corresponding securities, taken with the usual care and attention, the actual Balance in favour of the Bank did not appear to Your Committee to have been thereby diminished." *First Report*, reprinted in *Reports*, XI. p. 120.

1 "Your Committee find, that in consequence of this apprehension, the farmers suddenly brought the produce of their lands to sale, and carried the notes of the Country Banks, which they had collected by these and other means, into those banks for payment; that this unusual and sudden demand for Cash reduced the several Banks at Newcastle to the necessity of suspending their payments in specie, and of availing themselves of all the means in their power of procuring a speedy supply of Cash from the metropolis; that the effects of this demand on the Newcastle Banks, and of their suspension of payments in Cash, soon spread over various parts of the country, from whence similar applications were consequently made to the metropolis for Cash; that the alarm thus diffused, not only occasioned an increased demand for Cash in the country, but probably a disposition in many to hoard what was thus obtained; that this call on the metropolis, through whatever channels, directly affected the Bank of England, as the great repository of Cash, and was in the course of still further operation upon it, when stopped by the Minute of Council of the 26th of February." *Third Report*, in *Reports*, XI. pp. 121–2.



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succeeded in restoring mercantile credit. The restriction on cash payments was continued, when the crisis was past[1], so that the Bank might be free to provide a generally acceptable paper currency, and save the commercial world from further disaster. The discretionary power vested in the Directors served as a safety valve. It was extremely convenient to traders to be able to count on facilities for borrowing, without having their claims to consideration automatically limited in consequence of the extraordinary demands which Government made for military purposes.

*and an issue of inconvertible notes provided the requisite circulating medium, and allayed the panic.*

**258.** Such were the immediate effects of the finance of the period upon commerce and industry; it must be remembered, however, that a great part of the burden of the expenditure was deferred, and has been borne by subsequent

*Much of the fiscal burden was deferred,*

1 The following Resolution was agreed to by the Court of Directors of the Bank on Thursday the 26th October, 1797:

"RESOLVED, That it is the opinion of this Court, That the Governor and Company of the Bank of England are enabled to issue Specie, in any manner that may be deemed necessary for the accommodation of the Public; and the Court have no hesitation to declare, that the affairs of the Bank are in such a state, that it can with safety resume its accustomed functions, if the political circumstances of the country do not render it inexpedient: but the Directors deeming it foreign to their province to judge of these points, wish to submit to the wisdom of Parliament, whether, as it has been once judged proper to lay a restriction on the payments of the Bank in Cash, it may, or may not, be prudent to continue the same."

"Your Committee having further examined the Governor and Deputy Governor, as to what may be meant by the political circumstances mentioned in that Resolution, find, that they understand by them, the state of hostility in which the Nation is still involved, and particularly such apprehensions as may be entertained of invasion, either in Ireland or this country, together with the possibility there may be of advances being to be made from this country to Ireland; and that from those circumstances so explained, and from the nature of the war, and the avowed purpose of the enemy to attack this country by means of its public credit, and to distress it in its financial operations, they are led to think that it will be expedient to continue the restriction now subsisting, with the reserve for partial issues of Cash, at the discretion of the Bank, of the nature of that contained in the present Acts; and that it may be so continued, without injury to the credit of the Bank, and with advantage to the Nation.

"Your Committee, therefore, having taken into consideration the general situation of the country, are of opinion, that notwithstanding the affairs of the Bank, both with respect to the general balance of its Accounts, and its capacity of making payments in Specie, are in such a state that it might with safety resume its accustomed functions, under a different state of public affairs; yet, that it will be expedient to continue the restriction now subsisting on such payments, for such time, and under such limitations, as to the wisdom of Parliament may seem fit." *Appendix, Third Report*, in *Reports*, XI. p. 192.

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generations. Pitt was keenly alive to the disadvantages of public borrowing, and endeavoured to avoid it; but circumstances were against him. He was alarmed by the rate at which the debt was increasing; £121,000,000 had been added during the American War[1]; the amounts were large, and the terms which ministers made with the public creditors were extravagant; instead of borrowing at a high rate of interest, in the hope of subsequently financing the debt, they borrowed at a low rate of interest, and were forced to offer all sorts of extra inducements. Thus in 1782 for every £100 subscribed, the Government allotted £100 in the three per cents., £50 in the four per cents. with an annuity of 17*s.* 6*d.* for seventy-eight years[2], and extra inducements were given in floating the loans by connecting them with lotteries[3]. The permanent indebtedness was swelled from time to time by funding Exchequer and Navy Bills[4], and in 1786 the debt amounted to £245,466,855, involving an annual charge of £9,666,541[5]. Pitt set himself to reduce this terrible indebtedness, and established a Sinking Fund, by means of which he was able to pay off about £10,000,000, before the exigencies of the Revolutionary and the Napoleonic Wars rendered fresh borrowing inevitable. The main outlines of the scheme which Pitt introduced[6] had been formulated by

*and while Pitt's Sinking Fund,*

[1] Sinclair, *History of the Public Revenue*, II. 93.

[2] 22 Geo. III. c. 8.

[3] Hamilton, *An Inquiry concerning the Rise and Progress of the National Debt of Great Britain* (1814), p. 212.

[4] Sir John Sinclair thus describes the progress of the debt. "At first when a nation borrows, it is under the necessity of providing a fund for defraying not only the principal but the interest of its debts. The creditor is afterwards perfectly satisfied, if he is secured in the punctual payment of the interest, knowing perfectly well that his capital will at any time fetch an adequate value in the market: and in process of time he is contented without any fixed security either for his principal or interest, except the general faith and credit of the public. In this manner the unfunded debt of the nation has arisen. At present it consists of Exchequer Bills, of bills granted by the navy and victualling boards, and of various claims and other expenses." *History of the Public Revenue*, III. 258. Hamilton points out that "the funded capital has been increased in a manner different from loans. Exchequer and Navy Bills have been funded to a great extent. That is, instead of paying these bills, capital in one or more funds has been assigned to the holders on such terms as they were willing to accept of." *Inquiry concerning the Rise and Progress of the National Debt*, 64.

[5] Fenn, *Compendium of the English and Foreign Funds*, 5.

[6] 26 Geo. III. c. 31.



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Dr Price[1], and it avoided the errors which had rendered Walpole's Sinking Fund nugatory[2]. There was now ample security that the money set aside every year should really be devoted to the reduction of debt, and not diverted, as Walpole's Sinking Fund had been, to bear the ordinary expenses of government. According to Pitt's scheme £1,000,000 a year was paid to commissioners who were to invest in the National Debt, until a sum stood in their names which gave an income, along with the £1,000,000 contributed by the country, of £4,000,000 a year[3]. With the £4,000,000, which thus became their annual income, they were to buy up additional portions of the National Debt, the dividends of which should be extinguished[4]. In this way it was hoped that the charge for interest would be gradually reduced while the principal debt would be transferred to the credit of the commissioners at the rate of £4,000,000 a year. Upon paper, the scheme appeared to be admirable[5]; and it had many merits; indeed it was in its very plausibility that its chief danger consisted, as it appears to have lulled the mind of the ministers and the public into a false sense of security in the matter of borrowing[6]. Possibly the vast additions to the debt would have taken place under any circumstances; as a matter of fact £271,000,000 was borrowed during the Revolutionary War, and £618,000,000 in the struggle with Napoleon; but it seems probable that the House of Commons was much more complacent over this unexampled increase of the National

*which avoided the mistakes in Walpole's scheme,*

*inspired mistaken confidence,*

[1] *The State of the Public Debts and Finances* (1783), p. 29; also see the Introduction.

[2] Price, *Observations on Reversionary Payments* (1773), 163.

[3] 26 Geo. III. c. 31, § 20.

[4] This provision was repealed in 1802 (42 Geo. III. c. 71). An admirable history of the Sinking Fund will be found in the *Explanatory and Historical Notes of the Several Heads by Public Income and Expenditure*, which forms Appendix 13 to the *Account relating to Public Income and Expenditure*, 1868–9. *Accounts and Papers*, 1868–9, xxxv. 1197, printed pagination 713.

[5] For a very sanguine view of the operation of the Sinking Fund see G. Rose, *A Brief Examination into the Increase of the Revenue, Commerce and Manufactures of Great Britain from* 1792 *to* 1799, p. 26.

[6] This was a point on which Cobbett laid stress, "By giving people renewed confidence in the solidity of the Funds and Stocks it rendered Government borrowing more easy." *Paper against Gold* (1815), I. 65. Cobbett was a vigorous critic of the Sinking Fund in 1803 and onwards (*Noble Nonsense* (1828), p. 10), before Hamilton wrote or Grenville was convinced of its futility.

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Debt, because they were under the impression that a self-acting mechanism for paying off debt was in operation, and that, however recklessly they borrowed, the Sinking Fund would soon suffice to set things straight.

The Sinking Fund did not provide new sources of wealth, as it did not afford means of either using the land, or applying labour to better advantage. It did not give us fresh resources, it only served as a new method of keeping account of the monetary resources at the command of the community; there could be no real discharge of debts when the available income did not exceed expenditure[1]. It was an entire mistake to suppose that the country was becoming more solvent[2] when the Government borrowed large amounts on one side, and paid off small amounts on the other[3]. Indeed during some part of the operation of the Sinking Fund, which existed from 1786 to 1829[4], things were really going from bad to worse, as new debt, incurred at high rates of interest, was used to pay off sums that had been borrowed on easier terms[5]. There was a curious irony in the fact that the

*it served to encourage reckless borrowing.*

[1] This was the point insisted on by Hamilton, "The excess of revenue above expenditure is the only real Sinking Fund." *Inquiry*, p. 10.

[2] Grenville [*Essay on the Sinking Fund* (1828)] discussed the principles of a sound scheme and showed the inutility of all borrowed sinking funds, and the impossibility of deriving benefit from a sinking fund which continued to operate in times of deficient revenue (p. 72), since the discharge of debt could only take place through the existence of surplus revenue. Price had made it an essential that the fund should continue undiverted in time of war as well as of peace. *State of Public Debts*, 35.

[3] During the period from 1793 to 1829 there was only one year (1817) in which money was not raised by loan in order to aid the Sinking Fund. *Accounts relating to Public Income and Expenditure*, Appendix 13, 1868-9, xxxv. printed pag. 718.

[4] 10 G. IV. c. 27.

[5] *Fourth Report from Select Committee on Public Income and Expenditure*, 1828, v. 557. The case is stated more fully in a subsequent paper. "The actual result of all these Sinking Fund operations was that the total amount of £330,050,455 was raised at £5. 0*s*. 6*d*. per cent. per annum to pay off debt carrying interest at 4½ per cent. per annum. The difference between these two rates is 10/6 per cent. per annum, amounting upon the total capital sum of £330,050,455 to £1,627,765 per annum, which may be set down as the increased annual charge of our Funded Debt, and a real loss to the public from this deceptive Sinking Fund System, without taking into account the expenses of management of the Sinking Fund, and the increased amount of capital of debt, consequent upon the practice of borrowing on less advantageous terms, far larger sums than were required to meet the actual public expenditure." *Accounts relating to Public Income and Expenditure*, Pt. II., Ap. 13, 1868-9, xxxv. 1202, printed pag. 718.



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system which Pitt introduced, in his anxiety to reduce the debt of the country, should have operated so as to add to the burden of national obligations, and should by the mistaken expectations it engendered have served as an incentive to reckless borrowing.

*After the suspension of cash payments*

**259.** It has been pointed out above that the suspension of cash payments enabled the Bank of England to give increased accommodation to the public, and thus to restore commercial credit[1]; but the measure which effected this desirable result entirely changed the character of the paper currency of the country. The value of the bank-notes was no longer based on that of the precious metals; they had really become inconvertible; it was only by the exercise of great judgment in restricting the issues of paper, that the Directors could hope to maintain the notes at par. As a matter of fact, they failed sufficiently to limit the quantities which were put in circulation, with the result that the country began to suffer from the evils of a depreciated currency. The ulterior and indirect effects of the pressure, which Pitt put on the Bank in 1797, were seriously felt during the first quarter of the nineteenth century; prices were inflated, and the exchanges with foreign countries tended to be unfavourable. It may be impossible to gauge the precise amount of mischief which was due to this cause in particular, we can only note it as a serious aggravation, and as one which affected all classes, rich and poor. Depreciation of the circulating medium rendered the purchasing power of money less at a time when wages generally were low, and were falling. The evils are well stated by the Committee which was appointed to investigate the subject.

*there was no check on the unconscious depreciation of the currency*

"Your Committee conceive that it would be superfluous to point out, in detail, the disadvantages which must result to the country, from any such general excess of currency as lowers its relative value. The effect of such an augmentation of prices upon all money transactions for time; the unavoidable injury suffered by annuitants, and by creditors of every description, both private and public; the unintended advantage gained by Government and all other debtors; are

*by the over-issue of paper,*

[1] See above, p. 694.

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consequences too obvious to require proof, and too repugnant to justice to be left without remedy. By far the most important portion of this effect appears to Your Committee to be that which is communicated to the wages of common country labour, the rate of which, it is well known, adapts itself more slowly to the changes which happen in the value of money, than the price of any other species of labour or commodity. And it is enough for Your Committee to allude to some classes of the public servants, whose pay, if once raised in consequence of a depreciation of money, cannot so conveniently be reduced again to its former rate, even after money shall have recovered its value. The future progress of these inconveniences and evils, if not checked, must at no great distance of time work a practical conviction upon the minds of all those who may still doubt their existence[1]."

*which tended to raise general prices and reduce the purchasing power of wages.*

Curiously enough, controversy raged for many years on the simple matter of fact as to whether the notes of the Bank of England had depreciated or not. There was no doubt that the value of notes relatively to gold had changed; and that whereas the Mint price of gold ought to be £3. 17*s.* 10½*d.* an ounce, the market price in 1810 had risen to £4. 10*s.* 0*d.*[2], while the rates of exchange with Hamburg had fallen 9 per cent. and with Paris 14 per cent. The Directors of the Bank of England, the Government of the day, and the mercantile community generally were of opinion that there had been no depreciation of notes up to 1810, but that gold had been very scarce and had risen in value. On the other hand the experts, who sat on the Bullion Committee of the House of Commons, were clear that the monetary phenomena of the day, and especially the foreign exchanges, were inexplicable on any other hypothesis than that of the depreciation of the circulating medium. Even as late as 1819[3] the majority of the Directors adhered to the view which the Bank had persistently maintained, that since the public were always ready to accept their notes there could not be a real depreciation of value. According to their opinion, the fact that

*The authorities of the Bank contested the fact of depreciation*

[1] *Report from the Select Committee on the High Price of Gold Bullion*, in *Reports*, 1810, p. 31.

[2] McLeod, *Theory and Practice of Banking*, II. 29.

[3] McLeod, *Theory and Practice*, II. 80.



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paper-money circulated freely, showed that it retained its value; after all, this only meant that so long as the credit of the Bank was good, its paper-issues were valuable; but it did not prove, as the Directors thought, that the paper retained its original value. They and their supporters were ready to argue that, in so far as there was a marked divergence between the value of gold and the value of a note, this was due, not to a depreciation of the paper, but to an appreciation of gold, brought about by an unusual continental demand, owing to the requirements of the French armies and an increased disposition to hoard[1]. Experience was being gradually collected however; and as it accumulated, the fact became clearer that an over-issue of notes was the real cause of the trouble. There had been an enquiry, in 1804, into the reasons for the extraordinary difference between gold prices and paper prices in Dublin, and for the unfavourable state of the exchanges between Dublin and London[2], and good grounds had been shown for believing that the phenomena were due to the greatly increased circulation of notes by the Bank of Ireland[3]. The monetary conditions, into which the Bullion Committee was appointed to enquire in 1810, were similar in every respect, and that enquiry resulted in an admirable report in which the Committee showed that a real depreciation of notes had occurred[4]. It insisted that the Directors should

*but recent experience in Ireland*

*rendered the true state of the case clear to the Bullion Committee,*

[1] *Report from the Select Committee on the High Price of Gold Bullion*, 1810, III. 2.

[2] *Report of the Committee on the Circulating Paper, the Specie, and the Current Coin of Ireland*, 1804 (reprinted in 1810). *Accounts and Papers*, 1810, III. 385.

[3] McLeod, *Theory and Practice*, II. 13. There was a difference of twelve per cent. in the exchanges at Belfast, where Irish bank-notes did not circulate, and at Dublin, where they did.

[4] "Upon a review of all the facts and reasonings which have been submitted to the consideration of Your Committee in the course of their Enquiry, they have formed an Opinion, which they submit to the House:—That there is at present an excess in the paper circulation of this Country, of which the most unequivocal symptom is the very high price of Bullion, and next to that, the low state of the Continental Exchanges; that this excess is to be ascribed to the want of a sufficient check and control in the issues of paper from the Bank of England; and originally, to the suspension of cash payments, which removed the natural and true control. For upon a general view of the subject, Your Committee are of opinion, that no safe, certain, and constantly adequate provision against an excess of paper currency, either occasional or permanent, can be found, except in the convertibility of all such paper into specie. Your Committee cannot, therefore,

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be guided by the state of the exchanges in making their issues[1]. But the opposite party were not prepared to give

but see reason to regret, that the suspension of cash payments, which, in the most favourable light in which it can be viewed, was only a temporary measure, has been continued so long; and particularly, that by the manner in which the present continuing Act is framed, the character should have been given to it of a permanent war measure." *Report from the Select Committee on the High Price of Gold Bullion*, in *Reports*, 1810, p. 30.

[1] "It is important, at the same time, to observe, that under the former system, when the Bank was bound to answer its Notes in specie upon demand, the state of the Foreign Exchanges and the price of Gold did most materially influence its conduct in the issue of those Notes, though it was not the practice of the Directors systematically to watch either the one or the other. So long as Gold was demandable for their paper, they were speedily apprized of a depression of the Exchange, and a rise in the price of Gold, by a run upon them for that article. If at any time they incautiously exceeded the proper limit of their advances and issues, the paper was quickly brought back to them, by those who were tempted to profit by the market price of Gold or by the rate of Exchange. In this manner the evil soon cured itself. The Directors of the Bank having their apprehensions excited by the reduction of their stock of Gold, and being able to replace their loss only by reiterated purchases of Bullion at a very losing price, naturally contracted their issues of paper, and thus gave to the remaining paper, as well as to the Coin for which it was interchangeable, an increased value, while the clandestine exportation either of the coin, or the Gold produced from it, combined in improving the state of the Exchange, and in producing a corresponding diminution of the difference between the market price and Mint price of Gold, or of paper convertible into Gold.

"It was a necessary consequence of the suspension of cash payments, to exempt the Bank from that drain of Gold, which, in former times, was sure to result from an unfavourable Exchange and a high price of Bullion. And the Directors, released from all fears of such a drain, and no longer feeling any inconvenience from such a state of things, have not been prompted to restore the Exchanges and the price of Gold to their proper level by a reduction of their advances and issues. The Directors, in former times, did not perhaps perceive and acknowledge the principle more distinctly than those of the present day, but they felt the inconvenience, and obeyed its impulse; which practically established a check and limitation to the issue of paper. In the present times, the inconvenience is not felt; and the check, accordingly, is no longer in force. But your Committee beg leave to report it to the House as their most clear opinion, that so long as the suspension of Cash Payments is permitted to subsist, the price of Gold Bullion and the general Course of Exchange with Foreign Countries, taken for any considerable period of time, form the best general criterion from which any inference can be drawn, as to the sufficiency or excess of paper currency in circulation; and that the Bank of England cannot safely regulate the amount of its issues, without having reference to the criterion presented by these two circumstances. And upon a review of all the facts and reasonings which have already been stated, Your Committee are further of opinion, that, although the commercial state of this Country, and the political state of the Continent, may have had some influence on the high price of Gold Bullion and the unfavourable Course of Exchange with Foreign Countries, this price, and this depreciation, are also to be ascribed to the want of a permanent check, and a sufficient limitation of the paper currency in this Country." *Report from the Select Committee on the High Price of Gold Bullion*, 1810, III. 20, 21.



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in; the House of Commons rejected Mr Horner's resolutions, which were based on the report of the Committee, by a majority of two to one[1], and subsequently passed a measure[2] which rendered the refusal to accept bank-notes at their face value as the equivalent of gold[3] as a misdemeanour. The victorious, though mistaken view was so strongly held, that a favourable opportunity, which occurred in 1816, of restoring the currency to its metallic basis was lost[4]; and it was not till 1819 that the soundness of the principles of the Bullion Report was recognised, and that the younger Sir R. Peel, who had voted in the majority in 1810, brought in a Bill for the resumption of cash payments. There was some fear that a contraction of the circulating medium would be injuriously felt in the City[5]; and the period of inflated prices had lasted so long, that question was raised[6] as to the fairness of insisting that contracts for payments, agreed on under the old conditions, should be enforced without modification on the basis of the restored standard. But any injustice to individuals arising from this cause appears to have been very slight, and the advantage to the community of re-establishing a sound currency was incalculable.

*and their principles were adopted in 1819,*

*when cash payments were resumed.*

**260.** The bearing of the suspension of cash payments on the welfare of the working classes was so remote that they did not recognise it; but the high price of food was a grievance of which they were well aware, and it obviously aggravated their sufferings and roused their passions. The rioting of which we hear, was occasioned in some cases by the introduction of machinery; but these outbreaks usually occurred in

*The working classes suffered from the high price of corn,*

[1] McLeod, *op. cit.* II. 54.

[2] 51 Geo. III. c. 127.

[3] This was occasioned by Lord King's conduct in issuing a circular to his tenants giving them notice that rents were to be paid in gold. Cobbett, *Paper against Gold*, I. 456.

[4] From July 1816 to July 1817 the market price of gold did not exceed £3. 19*s.* 0*d.* per ounce. The exchanges with the Continent for a very considerable portion of that period were in favour of the country; but Parliament though desirous of restoring the currency to a cash basis determined to continue the suspension temporarily so as to give the Directors time to prepare for the change (56 Geo. III. c. 21). *Second Report from the Secret Committee on the expediency of the Bank resuming Cash Payments*, 1819, III. 3, 4.

[5] A petition signed by 500 merchants was presented against the Bill, McLeod, II. 79.

[6] Compare the debates in the Commons in 1822 and 1823, McLeod, *op. cit.* II. 99, 103.

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times of dearth, and there were bread riots in many places where no industrial improvements were being made. The average price of corn during the twenty-five years which terminated with the Battle of Waterloo was very high, and there were not a few periods which might be rightly described as times of famine. This state of affairs, which contributed so much to the distress of the transition, was to some extent a result of the Industrial Revolution. Apprenticeship, and the difficulty of finding an opening to start as a domestic worker had been a barrier to early marriage, but this was broken down; there was ample opportunity for obtaining houses near the factories, and the war on cottages no longer served to check the establishment of new households. As early as 1792, attention was called to the way in which the development of industrial employment, along with other causes, had given rise to a fresh demand for the means of subsistence[1]. The great increase of the cotton manufacture, and the rise of new towns, where the spinners and weavers lived, reacted on agricultural enterprise, the demand for food was greater than ever before[2]; and as active efforts had been

*which was partly due to the increased demand*

[1] The relation of these phenomena had been admirably stated in anticipation by Sir J. Steuart. *Works*, I. 155. The influence of commerce and artificial wants in promoting the growth of population is very clearly put by Caldwell, *Enquiry*, in *Debates*, 747 (1766), and still earlier by William Temple, a clothier of Trowbridge, in his *Vindication of Commerce and the Arts* (1758), pp. 6, 20, 74. He criticises W. Bell, whose *Dissertation on Populousness* (1756), p. 9, had advocated the development of agriculture as the best expedient for bringing about an increase of population; this essay, which obtained a Member's Prize at Cambridge, achieved some celebrity, and was translated into German by the Economic Society of Berne (*Kleine Schriften*, 1762). Temple's *Vindication* was published under the pseudonym I. B., M.D.; see Brit. Mus. 1029. e. 9 (16), (McCulloch, *Select Tracts on Commerce*, p. xii); I feel confident that he was also the author of the anonymous tract *Considerations on Taxes as they are supposed to affect the price of labour in our manufactories*, subsequently enlarged into an *Essay on Trade and Commerce* (1770), Brit. Mus. 1139. i. 4; the arguments of the *Vindication* are reproduced, and there is a similarity in style and arrangement. This is confirmed by an examination of the amusing autograph MS. notes in Temple's copy of *A View of the Internal Policy of Great Britain*, 1764 (Brit. Mus. 1250. a. 44). Temple also wrote a refutation of part of Smith's *Chronicon Rusticum*, as I gather from Smith's reply, *Case of English Farmer* (Brit. Mus. 104. m. 27).

[2] Governor Pownall "entered into an explanation of the actual state of the supply and consumption of the kingdom; and shewed that the present difficulties did not arise from any scarcity; that there was as much, if not more corn grown than formerly; but, from the different circumstances of the country, the consumption was considerably more than the supply; and that this disproportion



made to meet these requirements[1], by facilitating the import- A.D. 1776 —1850.
ation of food, opportunity was given for a further growth of numbers. It was obvious that population was increasing on every side; and the anxiety, which had been felt in regard to the alleged decrease in the number of the people and inability to maintain our naval and military position[2], was seen to be groundless. According to Chalmers' *Estimate*[3], there was an addition to the population of 2,830,000 in the years between 1689 and 1801; and this would, on the ordinary reckoning, necessitate an additional annual supply of nearly three million quarters of grain[4]. But it was held that the demands of the public had increased more rapidly than the numbers, as it was believed that habits of luxury and wastefulness[5], which had come into vogue, made still larger quantities requisite.

*of the manufacturing population.*

During the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars there was no serious alarm about the numbers of men, but the very gravest anxiety was felt as to the supply of food. England was far better provided, than ever before, with the means of victualling her navy; the development of stock-breeding, on

*There were large supplies of meat;*

arose from the late immense increase of manufacturers and shopkeepers, the prodigious extent of our commerce, the number of people employed by Government as soldiers, sailors, collectors of revenue, &c., &c., and also the prodigious number of people who live upon the interests of the funds; also the great increase of the capital, the manufacturing and seaport towns; that the surplus which we used to produce was about 1-36th part of the whole growth; and that anyone might consider, whether the number of people he had mentioned were not more than one 36th of the whole people; and that therefore the real fact was, we had no longer a surplus." *Parl. Hist.* XVII. p. 476.

[1] The severe distress which was experienced in the winter of 1782–3 was referred to in the King's Speech as requiring the "instant interposition" of Parliament (*Parl. Hist.* XXIII. 209). A Committee was appointed which heard a considerable amount of evidence, and recommended modifications in the arrangements for the external trade in corn. *Reports*, IX. 27, 34. See below, p. 726.

[2] Dr Richard Price, in his *Essay on the Population of England* (1780), argued that population was decreasing, and adduced interesting statistical arguments in support of his view; but the Rev. J. Howlett showed (*An Examination of Dr Price's Essay* (1781), p. 80) that his reasoning was illusory. Cf. also W. Wales, *Inquiry* (1781), pp. 35, 67. At the same time, the opinion that there was a serious danger to the country from an insufficient population, was commonly held and found frequent expression; as in the speeches of Chatham or Shelburne, on the anxiety about defence at home caused by the loss of men in the American War (*Parl. Hist.* XIX. 599; XXI. 1036). The success achieved by Malthus, in investigating the doctrine of population, is most easily measured, when we read such speeches; they were impossible after the *Essay on Population* had made its mark.

[3] Chalmers' *Estimate* (1804), p. 221.

[4] *Ib.* 315.

[5] *Ib.* 316.

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the lines suggested by Mr Bakewell, had been widespread, and sheep and cattle were raised for the sake of the carcase[1], rather than for the wool or for draught. Some complaint was made that this form of pasture farming was pursued at the expense of tillage; but the increase of cattle-breeding was chiefly due to the careful cultivation of turnips, and the farmer really had an additional inducement to improve his system of cultivation. Still, though the supply of butchers' meat was enlarged, there was very serious difficulty in meeting the increasing demand within the country for cereals; and one Committee of the House of Commons after another[2] investigated the prospects of the harvest, and advised on the best means of providing for the population. An elaborate system of registration had been devised[3], by which information could be obtained as to the price and probable stocks of grain throughout the country, and the problem was faced,

*great pains were taken to manage the supply of corn to advantage,*

[1] Sir John Sinclair wrote in 1795: "The difference between the size of cattle and sheep now, and in the reign of Queen Anne, when half the stock of the kingdom were fed on Commons, is hardly to be credited. In 1710, the cattle and sheep sold at Smithfield Market, weighed, at an average, as follows:—Beeves, 370 lb.; Calves, 50 lb.; Sheep, 28 lb.; Lambs, 18 lb. Now it may be stated, Beeves, 800 lb.; Calves, 143 lb.; Sheep, 80 lb.; and Lambs, 50 lb. The increase is principally, if not solely, to be attributed to the improvements which have been effected within these last 60 years, and the feeding of our young stock, in good inclosed pastures, instead of wastes and commons." *Reports*, IX. p. 204, note.

[2] 1774. A Committee to consider the methods practised in making flour from wheat. 1783. A Committee to take the Act for regulating and ascertaining the Importation and Exportation of grain...into consideration (two reports). 1795. Select Committee to take into consideration the present High Price of Corn (five reports). 1800. Committee to consider means of rendering more effectual the Act for better regulating the Assize of bread (two reports). Committee to consider the present High Price of Provisions (six reports). 1801. Committee appointed to consider of the present high price of provisions (seven reports). There was besides, a Committee on the corn trade between England and Ireland, in 1802, and Committees on the improvement and enclosure of waste, unenclosed and unproductive lands, in 1795, 1797 and 1800. The reports of these Committees will be found in the reprints of the *Reports of the Committees of the House of Commons* (1803), IX.

[3] The duty on importation which had been imposed under Charles II. (22 C. II. c. 13) varied, according as English corn was being sold above or below a definite price. According to 1 James II. c. 19, the justices of each county were to certify the "common market price of middling English corn." The necessity of knowing the price of corn for fiscal purposes led to several changes in administrative machinery (2 Geo. II. c. 18; 14 Geo. III. c. 64). A system of registration of the price of corn at the different markets was instituted in 1769 (10 Geo. III. c. 39); a paid inspector for London was appointed in 1781 (21 Geo. III. c. 50), and ten inspectors were instituted for the maritime counties in 1789. 29 Geo. III. c. 58.



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under parliamentary control, in much the same spirit in which it had been dealt with by the Commissioners of Grain and Victuals[1] and the Clerks of the Market, under Elizabeth and the earlier Stuarts[2].

*and to encourage the importation*

Since 1773, when additional facilities had been given for the importation of corn[3], England had been becoming more and more dependent on regular supplies from abroad; in years when the crops at home were short, it was obviously wise to try and make up the deficiency by procuring grain from other European countries, from the United States[4] or even from India. There was some discussion in 1795 as to

[1] See above, pp. 86 and 96. In March 1801, the Committee on the High Price of Provisions report that they "have received information respecting the situation of certain parts of the country, namely, about Braintree, Bocking, Halstead, and Coggleshall, in the county of Essex; the parish of Foleshill near Coventry; and the townships of Dewsbury, Ossett, Ovenden, Clayton, and Northowram, in the West Riding of the county of York; to which they feel it indispensable to call the serious attention of the House. From the extreme dearness of Provisions, combined with the temporary and partial interruption of some branches of Manufacture, the pressure upon the above-mentioned places is become so great as to require immediate relief, beyond what their own means are in the present moment capable of affording." *Reports*, IX. p. 138.

[2] Compare also the Lord Keeper's letter to the Worcestershire Justices. Willis Bund, *Worcestershire County Records*, 398.

[3] See below, p. 724.

[4] The stocks in all these areas were discussed by the same Committee in December 1800. They say, "Setting aside, for the present, the consideration of the further supply of Grain which may be received from Europe, the first Object to which Your Committee will advert, is, the Importation from the United States of America. There is a peculiar advantage attending the supply from this quarter, that some part of it may be expected to arrive during the next month, and will continue during that period of the year when the importation from Europe is usually interrupted by the frost. The harvest in Canada is stated to have been abundant, and an Importation may be expected from that country, amounting at least to 30,000 quarters. In addition to this supply of Wheat and Flour, a considerable quantity of Rice may be drawn from different parts of the World. From the Southern States of North America, Your Committee are informed that a supply may be obtained of 70,000 barrels (each weighing 5 cwt.), of which a part will probably arrive in January, and the remainder successively in the ensuing months.

"From India, a much larger quantity may ultimately be expected; but, as little, if any, of what may be obtained from thence by the means of ships which have sailed from this country, can arrive before the beginning of October 1801, Your Committee have confined their estimate, in this view of the subject, to that part which may be sent from India in country or neutral ships, in consequence of orders dispatched from hence in September last: This has been stated at from 7,000 to 10,000 tons (equal from 28,000 to 40,000 barrels of 5 cwt. each). The latter quantity is represented as the most probable of the two; and if sufficient shipping should be disengaged in India, it may rise to a much greater amount. It seems therefore not unreasonable to expect from that quarter, in the months of

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the relative advantage of organised import on the part of the government[1], or of leaving the matter in the hands of private traders acting under the stimulus of a bounty[2], and it is needless to say that the latter course was preferred. At the same time, attention was given to the possibility of introducing rice[3], maize[4], or other food stuffs from abroad, and to

*of food from abroad,*

August and September, about 35,000 barrels; which, added to the importation from America, will amount to 105,000 barrels." *Reports*, IX. p. 126.

[1] The Committee in 1795 "proceeded to enquire what measures, in the judgment of these persons, afforded the best probability of obtaining such a supply. They thought it right to bring distinctly under their consideration the alternative of leaving the whole care of such purchases to the Executive Government, who would (it was conceived) be in such case the only purchasers, and be publicly known to be so; or of leaving the same to the speculation of individual merchants, encouraged by a liberal bounty on importation, and by a public declaration on the part of Government (as soon as such declaration shall be practicable) of the quantity which they may then have at their disposal, in consequence of former orders, and of their intention to give no further orders for the purchase of Corn, and to sell what may have been procured in limited quantities, and at the market price. It appeared to Your Committee to be the preponderant opinion amongst those persons to whom this alternative was stated, that, upon the whole, the restoration of the trade in Corn to its natural channel, with the additional encouragement of a bounty, was the most eligible mode of endeavouring to procure from foreign parts, such supplies as those markets might be found able to furnish. Your Committee were further confirmed in this opinion by the information they received from some of their Members, that there were merchants who had stated to them their readiness, under those circumstances, to engage in speculations to a large extent. After a full consideration and discussion of this important point, Your Committee were of opinion, 'That it was expedient for the Executive Government to desist from making any further purchases of Corn; and that a bounty should be granted upon the importation of certain sorts of Grain into this country, for the encouragement of private speculation'." *Reports*, IX. p. 45.

[2] The payments were considerable, and at least brought temporary relief. The Committee on Waste Lands point out "that the bounties paid on grain imported for one year ending 5th of January 1797, amounted to no less a sum than £573,418. 4*s*. 9*d*., a sum borrowed under all the disadvantages of raising money in time of war....It is impossible here not to remark an unfortunate prejudice which exists, regarding the expenditure of any part of the public income in promoting the improvement of the country. The sum above-mentioned was paid out of the public treasury by bounty or premium on foreign Corn imported. Had any person proposed to lay out that sum, or even one year's interest thereof, in promoting cultivation at home, in defraying the expence of private Acts of Inclosure, or removing other obstacles to improvement, it would have been considered an extraordinary proposition, hardly entitled to serious consideration. But let that money be sent out of the country, or let it be expended in promoting foreign agriculture and extraneous improvements, and it is immediately held forth as a wise and provident application of the treasure of the Public." *Reports*, IX. p. 224.

[3] *Reports*, IX. 92.

[4] "The Importation of Indian Corn has also been encouraged by the prospect of a liberal bounty. The excellence of that grain, as the food of man, cannot be



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the cultivation of potatoes at home[1], while every pains was taken to prevent any waste in the use of grain of any sort[2]. Distillers were obliged to stop working, and the manufacture of starch was checked[3], while recommendations were issued[4], and apparently acted on to some extent, as to the duty of the

*and to discourage waste.*

doubted, as it forms the chief subsistence of the southern part of the United States of America. The use of it here has however been hitherto so little known, that it is difficult to estimate either what quantity may be expected, or in what proportion it may be introduced into the consumption of this country; but as it is also applicable, with the greatest advantage, to the food of cattle, hogs, and poultry, it cannot fail to operate, either directly or indirectly, as a valuable addition to the general stock of Grain." *Reports*, IX. 126.

[1] The Committee on the High Price of Provisions resolved in Feb. 1801,

"That it is the opinion of this Committee, That that part of the United Kingdom called Great Britain be divided into Twelve Districts; and that Premiums, not exceeding in the whole the sum of £12,000 be offered for the cultivation of Potatoes by Proprietors and Occupiers of land, not being Cottagers.

That it is the opinion of this Committee, That Premiums to the amount of £13,000 be offered for the encouragement of the culture of Potatoes by Cottagers in England and Wales, to be distributed in sums not exceeding £20, for each district or division in which Magistrates act at their Petty Sessions in their several counties; and that such Day Labourer, Artificer, or Manufacturer, being a Cottager in each of the said districts or divisions, who shall raise on land in his occupation in the present year, the largest average crop of Potatoes per perch:—

| | |
|---|---|
| In not less than 12 square perch of land . . . . . | £10 |
| To the second largest crop on do. . . . . | £6 |
| To the third largest crop on do. . . . . | £4." |

*Reports*, IX. p. 132.

[2] "Your Committee have heard, with very great concern, that from the mistaken application of the charity of individuals, in some parts of the country, Flour and Bread have been delivered to the poor at a reduced price; a practice which may contribute very considerably to increase the inconveniencies arising from the deficiency of the last crop: And they recommend that all charity and parochial relief should be given, as far as is practicable, in any other articles except Bread, Flour, and Money, and that the part of it which is necessary for the sustenance of the poor, should be distributed in soups, rice, potatoes, or other substitutes. Your Committee are of opinion, that if this regulation was generally adopted, it would not only, in a very great degree, contribute to economize at this time the consumption of Flour, but that it might have the effect of gradually introducing into use, a more wholesome and nutritious species of food than that to which the poor are at present accustomed." *Reports*, IX. p. 68.

[3] 41 G. III. c. 3. The Committee anticipated the following results from this measure, "The quantity of Wheat which will be saved for Food by the prohibition of the manufacture of Starch from that Grain, will be about 40,000 quarters. In consequence of the stoppage of the Distilleries, at least 500,000 quarters of Barley, which would have been consumed in that manufacture, will remain applicable to the subsistence of the People; but as it may be supposed that eleven bushels of Barley are not more than equivalent to one quarter of Wheat, this can only be stated at 360,000 quarters." *Reports*, IX. p. 126.

[4] The King, in answer to an address on the subject from the two Houses of Parliament, issued a proclamation "most earnestly exhorting and charging all

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rich to exercise economy in their households[1]. But such measures were regarded as special and temporary methods of dealing with the distress, and it was generally felt that the only real cure lay in making the most of the English soil. Each experience of temporary distress gave a stimulus to the

those of Our loving subjects who have the means of procuring other Articles of Food than Corn, as they tender their own immediate interests, and feel for the Wants of others to practise the greatest Economy and Frugality in the Use of every species of Grain; and We do, for this Purpose, more particularly exhort and charge, all Masters of Families to reduce the Consumption of Bread in their respective Families, by at least One Third of the Quantity consumed in ordinary Times, and in no case to suffer the same to exceed One Quartern Loaf for each Person in each Week; to abstain from the Use of Flour in Pastry, and, moreover, carefully to restrict the Use thereof in all other Articles than Bread; And do also, in like Manner, exhort and charge all Persons, who keep Horses, especially Horses for Pleasure, as far as their respective circumstances will admit, carefully to restrict the Consumption of Oats and other Grain for the Subsistence of the same." 3 December, 1800 [Brit. Mus. 1851. d. 2 (2)]. Compare also *Reports*, IX. 126.

[1] The Committtee of 1795 considered the possibility of sumptuary legislation on the lines of the Assize of Bread, but discarded it as they entertained "great hopes, that without applying this principle to the present case, the general impression produced by the late distress, and continued by the present scarcity, will incline men of all descriptions to unite voluntarily in the only measure which can give effectual and immediate relief; and they conceive that if this House should give to such a measure the sanction of its example and recommendation, there could be little doubt of its being immediately adopted by a proportion of the community sufficiently numerous to secure the attainment of the object in view.

"Your Committee beg leave to submit this suggestion for the wisdom of the House; and they hope it will not be thought beyond the line of their duty, if upon an occasion so urgent in point of time, they presume also to suggest the principal points which such an engagement ought, in their humble opinion, to embrace. To reduce the consumption of Wheat in the families of the persons subscribing such engagement, by at least one-third of the usual quantity consumed in ordinary times.

"In order to effect this purpose, either to limit to that extent the quantity of fine Wheaten Bread consumed by each individual in such families; Or, to consume only mixed Bread, of which not more than two-thirds shall be made of Wheat; Or, only a proportional quantity of mixed Bread, of which more than two-thirds is made of Wheat; Or, a proportional quantity of Bread made of Wheat alone, from which no more than five pounds of Bran is excluded.

"If it should be necessary, in order to effect the purpose of this engagement, to prohibit the use of Wheaten Flour in pastry, and to diminish, as much as possible, the use thereof in other articles than Bread.

"By one or more of these measures, or by any other which may be found equally effectual, and more expedient and practicable, in the respective situations of persons subscribing to ensure to the utmost of their power the reduction above mentioned.

"This engagement to continue in force until fourteen days after the next Session of Parliament, unless the average price of Wheat shall, before that time, be reduced to an amount to be specified." *Third Report*, in *Reports*, IX. p. 54.



efforts of public spirited and philanthropic men to remove all obstacles to the increase of the area of tillage. A.D. 1776 —1850.

*With the view of increasing the home production of corn,*

**261.** There were improvers who saw with alarm that the readiness to rely on imported corn was a hindrance to the development of our own agriculture to its highest capacity, and viewed this trade with regret[1]; and a general consensus of opinion had been reached as to the necessity of doing away with the wasteful methods of cultivation in common fields, and facilitating the enclosure of land. The Board of Agriculture, under the presidency of Sir John Sinclair, moved earnestly in the matter, and it was fully discussed by Committees of the House of Commons in 1795, 1797 and 1800. The chief obstacle to carrying out this improvement lay in the heavy expenses, parliamentary and legal, which had to be borne, as well as the costs of obtaining surveys and erecting fences. It appeared that if a General Enclosure Act were passed, it would cause a considerable saving in the outlay involved[2]. This would be an encouragement to proprietors to proceed with schemes of the kind; while it was also believed that, if the expenses were reduced, the real gain, which sometimes accrued to the cottagers[3], would be more generally realised.

*enclosure was pushed on,*

[1] The Committee of 1797 on the Cultivation of Waste lands endorsed the view that "nothing can more clearly exemplify the advantages resulting from agricultural industry, than the flourishing state of this country, for many years posterior to the Revolution; during which period, with but few exceptions, considerable quantities of Corn were annually exported. By means of that exportation, large sums were brought into the kingdom, yet the price was steady and uniform, and in general rather low than otherwise. The farmer, however, was satisfied, because he considered himself under the special protection of the legislature, and had a reasonable prospect of having his industry rewarded. But since importation has been relied on, the consequences have been of a very opposite nature. The prices have been often high, and always unsteady. High prices occasion public discontent. With unsteady prices, it is impossible for the landlord to know what he ought to demand, nor the tenant what rent he ought to pay. To persons of small or even moderate incomes, also, such a circumstance is extremely injurious. When prices are high, they can scarcely procure for themselves and their families a sufficient supply of wholesome provisions; when low, they are too apt to run into a system of expence, which it is not easy afterwards to relinquish; whereas, when the price is steady and uniform, they can make their expenditure tally with their income. The system therefore of encouraging agriculture, and promoting the exportation of a surplus on ordinary occasions, which in unfavourable seasons can be retained at home, is the only mode of securing the comfortable subsistence of the great body of the people." *Reports*, IX. pp. 224–5.

[2] *Reports*, IX. 230.

[3] Davis, *Oxford Report*, quoted in *Reports*, IX. 204 n.

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"It is impossible," said Sir J. Sinclair, "to suppose that the Poor should be injured by that circumstance, which secures to them a good market for their labour (in which the real riches of a Cottager consists) which will furnish them with the means of constant employment, and by which the Farmer will be enabled to pay them better wages than before. If a general Bill for the improvement of Waste Lands were to be passed, every possible attention to the rights of the Commoners would necessarily be paid; and as inclosures, it is to be hoped, will, in future, be conducted on less expensive principles than heretofore, the Poor evidently stand a better chance than ever of having their full share, undiminished. Some regulations also must be inserted in the Bill, to secure the accommodations they may have occasion for, by inlarging, where circumstances will admit it, the gardens annexed to their respective cottages, giving them a decided preference with respect to locality over the larger rights; throwing the burden of ring fences upon the larger Commoners, and allotting, where it is necessary, a certain portion of the Common for the special purpose of providing them with fuel; and thus the smallest proprietor will in one respect be obviously benefited, for any portion of ground, however inconsiderable, planted with furze or quick growing wood, and dedicated to that purpose solely, would, under proper regulations, be as productive of fuel, as ten times the space where no order or regularity is observed. If by such means the interests of the Cottagers are properly attended to, if their rights are preserved, or an ample compensation given for them; if their situation is in every respect to be ameliorated, it is hoped that the legislature will judge it proper and expedient, to take such measures as may be the best calculated for bringing into culture so large a portion of its territory, though it may not accord with the prejudices of any particular description of persons, whose objections evidently originate from the apprehension, rather than the certainty of injury, and who will consider it as the greatest favour that can be conferred upon them, when the measure is thoroughly understood[1]."

*in the belief that the whole rural population would be benefited,*

[1] *Reports*, IX. p. 204



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In accordance with these views a *General Enclosure Act*[1] was passed in 1801; the work of breaking up the common fields and utilising the common waste for tillage went on rapidly in all parts of the country, but the anticipations of the expert as to the boon which would be conferred were not realised. The social effects of the change, in practically extinguishing the class of small farmers and introducing a body of tenants who worked large holdings, have been already considered[2]; it is necessary, however, to look at the results of the movement as it affected the cottagers and labourers.

*but this hope proved mistaken,*

As one consequence of the change the labourer became more entirely dependent on the wages he earned from his employer than had formerly been the case. In some cases, cottagers, who had no legal rights, had encroached upon the waste, and the owners had connived at the practice, and allowed them to keep a cow[3], and to take a little fuel[4]. But when the common waste and common fields were alike enclosed, there was no longer any opportunity for the labourer to exercise such privileges and add to the family resources. Even those labourers who had legal rights of this kind, of which the commissioners could take account, were seriously injured by enclosure[5]. The capitalised value of pasture rights was exceedingly small, and the scrap of land, allotted to a cottager, might be of little use to him, either as garden ground or for keeping a cow[6]. When judiciously assigned[7], allotments were most beneficial, as was shown by the evidence collected in 1843[8]; but those who urged that distress in rural districts should be systematically dealt with on this plan[9], failed to get a hearing[10].

*The labourer lost the old opportunities of supplementing his income*

*and was not often provided with a useful allotment*

[1] 41 Geo. III. c. 109. [2] See above, p. 558.

[3] *General Report on Enclosures drawn up by order of the Board of Agriculture* (1808), p. 12. Brit. Mus. 988. g. 14. [4] *Ib.* p. 160.

[5] A summary of the facts will be found in the *General Report of Enclosures drawn up by order of the Board of Agriculture* (1808), App. IV. p. 150.

[6] A commissioner of enclosures, in looking back on the effects of twenty enclosures in which he had taken part, "lamented that he had been accessory to injuring two thousand poor people at the rate of twenty families per parish." *Annals*, XXXVI. 516.

[7] For some unsuccessful experiments see p. 667, n. 2, above.

[8] For the experience of the Labourers Friend Society compare 3 *Hansard* LXVIII. 191, also *Reports* 1843, VII.

[9] The practical difficulties, both administrative and technical, were considerable. See pp. 714 n. and 744 n. below.

[10] 3 *Hansard*, LXVIII. 857.

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*Generally speaking the labourer*

Arthur Young, who had done so much in advocating enclosure, was greatly distressed to find that the labourers had suffered so severely. He set himself to collect evidence[1] on this special point in 1800, and found that out of thirty-seven enclosed parishes for which he had full details, there were only twelve in which the labourers had not been injured. From the fact that there were twelve, he rightly argues that it was possible to carry out enclosure, and to obtain all the national benefit which it afforded, without perpetrating such injustice on the poor; but he urges that in all future acts of enclosure special care should be taken to insert clauses which would adequately protect the labourer in his accustomed privileges[2]. Even if this had been attended to most strictly,

[1] *Annals*, XXXVI. 513.

[2] Sir G. Paul urged (*General Report on Enclosures*, p. 19) that it was possible to do much to replace the labourer in his old position by granting allotments. Investigation as to different parts of the country showed that the pauperism was much worse in some districts than in others; and a comparison of different parishes served to bring out the fact that where the labourers had land of their own to work, they were much less likely to lose the spirit of independence; see especially Mr Gourlay's long paper on the Lincolnshire cottagers in the *Annals*, XXXVII. 514; Arthur Young seems to have believed that the general formation of suitable allotments would enable the labourers to maintain themselves. The desire of doing so would render them diligent and independent, while even the prospect of sooner or later obtaining such a cottage and allotment would give the labourer a prospect in life which would have a beneficial effect. It was however a *sine qua non* with Arthur Young that these allotments should be forfeited by men who became dependent on the rates (*Annals*, XXXVI. 641, and still more strongly XLI. p. 214), as he desired to make them the means of encouraging independence and not merely a method of relieving the poor. Arthur Young was of course aware that many Irish cottiers and French peasants led a miserable existence, despite the fact that they had little farms of their own. He was clear that the labourers' allotments should be of such a size that they could be really made to answer, and he therefore desired that the allotments should be rented. After his experience of the French peasantry he would not dare to trust the English labourer with the fee simple of the land, as he feared that this would inevitably lead to subdivision. This has not been sufficiently taken into account by those who have quoted his phrases about the 'magic of property,' and represented him as approving of a peasant proprietary. He advocated a system by which the peasantry might have the opportunity of using land on their own account, but he thought it was undesirable that they should own it. His remarks coincide in many points with those of Sir James Steuart (*Works*, I. p. 112).

It was by no means easy to lay down in general terms the size and nature of the allotment which would be really satisfactory. In the grazing counties, it was proposed to assign the labourer a garden, and enough grass for a cow. A poor family



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however, the labourers' condition was changed for the worse by the extinction of small farms; in the old days there had always been a possibility that he might become an independent farmer, but he was practically precluded from obtaining such capital as was requisite for working a large farm. He was thus cut off from any hope of bettering himself, or becoming his own master; through the progress of enclosure he was rendered entirely dependent on his wages as a labourer[1], and at the same time he was deprived of any prospect of ever being more than a wage-earner, and of attaining an improved status.

*and was deprived of the hope of rising in the world.*

**262.** At the very time when the rural labourer was

which could keep a cow was as well off as if they had five or six shillings of parish allowance (*Annals*, XXXVI. 510); and Arthur Young's idea of suitable land seems always to have been such land as would enable them to keep one cow, or at all events some sort of stock (*Ib.* 541). Sir John Sinclair discusses how this might be managed in connection with arable allotments, and in counties where little or no grazing land was available (*Ib.* XXXVII. 232), and he lays down the following principles (*Ib.* 233).

"1st. That the cottager shall raise by his own labour some of the most material articles of subsistence for himself and his family.

"2nd. That he shall be enabled to supply the adjoining markets with the smaller agricultural productions; and

"3rd. That both he and his family shall have it in their power to assist the neighbouring farmers, at all seasons of the year, almost equally as well as if they had no land in their occupation."

The last of these touches on the crucial difficulty. If the labourers' allotments demanded more than 'the leisure hour horticulture' (*Annals*, XXXVI. 352), it would interfere with the labourers' employment and consequently with his wages. The problem therefore of providing suitable allotments was of this kind,—that the labourer should have so much land as would enable him to keep a cow, but not enough to interfere with his ordinary work for an employer. There was a very general feeling, at the beginning of this century, that this problem did not present insuperable difficulties; but it is obviously one which is not capable of solution in general terms by such a formula as 'three acres and a cow.' A good deal of attention was given to this mode of affording assistance to cottagers, but it may be doubted how far it produced the improvement that Arthur Young had hoped for, as those who received allotments were not thereby excluded from participation in poor relief. On the other hand, there were many economists who were inclined to condemn the arrangement, as they held that such assistance would, like parish allowances, lower the rate of wages; while Malthus and his followers regarded it as an inadequate solution of the recurring problem presented by the pressure of population. See below, p. 743 n. 2. I am inclined to believe that these doctrinaire criticisms prevented the scheme from being so generally tried as might have been desirable. Had it been more generally adopted, and subsistence-cultivation reintroduced even to a small extent, the fall of prices in 1815 could surely not have been attended by such distress, and there would have been less excuse for an expedient like the Corn Law of that year.

[1] See p. 723 below.

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becoming dependent upon his earnings, it was notorious that his wages were insufficient for the maintenance of himself and his family. The policy of a living wage, for which the cotton weavers vainly contended in 1813, had found many advocates in the rural districts in the preceding decade; there was a very general feeling in favour of reintroducing the practice of assessing wages in accordance with the price of corn[1], and it seems to have been generally, if not universally agreed, that this was the fair principle on which to proceed[2]. There was, however, a great difference of opinion as to whether this should be done by authority, or whether it could be brought about in the ordinary course of bargaining between employers and employed. Arthur Young's correspondents were of opinion that the law would be inoperative. It was urged that the inefficient labourers, if they had to be paid the full wages appointed by law, would find no employment at all[3]. Others feared that such a measure would cut down the earnings of all to the same level, and thus discourage the more industrious men[4]. Besides this, it was clear that wages were rising, slowly but surely, and this gave some reason for hoping that they would reach a level which would serve to maintain the labourer in comfort, without legislative interference[5]. On the other hand, it was argued that "to expect that the farmers and other employers of the poor should generously come forward, and of their own accord vary and increase the wages of their workmen, in exact proportion to their varying and increasing necessities, is utterly hopeless; they will no more do it than they would make good roads without the aid of turnpikes, or the prescription of statutes enforced by the magistrates, though both one and the other would be often really and truly their interest[6]." The Suffolk justices petitioned in favour of a legislative regulation of

*It appeared impracticable to reintroduce the assessment of wages,*

[1] Davies, *Case of Labourers*, 106; also Pownall, *Considerations on Scarcity*, reprinted from *Cambridge Chronicle*, 1795.

[2] Mr Howlett, whose opinion was worthy of great respect, held that corn did not form such a predominating element in the labourers' expenditure that wages should be regulated by it alone. He was however strongly of opinion that the labourer's income should be regulated by law on the basis of the food, fuel, and clothing necessary for a family in each district. *Annals*, xxv. 604, 612.

[3] *Annals*, xxv. 618; xxxvi. 270.

[4] *Ib.* xxv. 502, 626.

[5] *Annals*, xxv. 565.

[6] *Ib.* xxv. 612.



wages, and Arthur Young appears himself to have inclined to approve this policy[1]. On the whole it appears that this

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[1] *Ib.* 640. There was no more interesting argument in support of the proposal, however, than that of the Norfolk labourers who held a meeting in Heacham church (Nov. 5, 1795) "in order to take into consideration the best and most peaceable mode of obtaining a redress of all the severe and peculiar hardships under which they have for many years so patiently suffered. The following resolutions were unanimously agreed to:—

"1st. The labourer is worthy of his hire, and that the mode of lessening his distresses, as hath lately been the fashion, by selling him flour under the market price, thereby rendering him an object of a parish rate, is not only an indecent insult on his lowly and humble situation (in itself sufficiently mortifying from his degrading dependence on the caprice of his employer), but a fallacious mode of relief, and every way inadequate to a radical redress of the manifold distresses of his calamitous state.

"2nd. That the price of labour should, at all times, be proportioned to the price of wheat, which should invariably be regulated by the average price of that necessary article of life; and that the price of labour, as specified in the annexed plan, is not only well calculated to make the labourer happy without being injurious to the farmer, but it appears to us the only rational means of securing the permanent happiness of this valuable and useful class of men, and, if adopted in its full extent, will have an immediate and powerful effect in reducing, if it does not entirely annihilate, that disgraceful and enormous tax on the public—the POOR RATE.

"Plan of the Price of Labour proportionate to the Price of Wheat.

When wheat shall be

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| £14 | per last, | the price of labour | shall be | 14*d.* | per day. |
| £16 | ,, | ,, | ,, | 16*d.* | ,, |
| £18 | ,, | ,, | ,, | 18*d.* | ,, |
| £20 | ,, | ,, | ,, | 20*d.* | ,, |
| £22 | ,, | ,, | ,, | 22*d.* | ,, |
| £24 | ,, | ,, | ,, | 2/- | ,, |
| £26 | ,, | ,, | ,, | 2/2 | ,, |
| £28 | ,, | ,, | ,, | 2/4 | ,, |
| £30 | ,, | ,, | ,, | 2/6 | ,, |
| £32 | ,, | ,, | ,, | 2/8 | ,, |
| £34 | ,, | ,, | ,, | 2/10 | ,, |
| £36 | ,, | ,, | ,, | 3/- | ,, |

And so on, according to this proportion.

"3rd. That a petition to Parliament to regulate the price of labour, conformable to the above plan, be immediately adopted; and that the day labourers throughout the county be invited to associate and co-operate in this necessary application to Parliament, as a peaceable, legal, and probable mode of obtaining relief; and in doing this, no time should be lost, as the petition must be presented before the 29th of January, 1796.

"4th. That one shilling shall be paid into the hands of the treasurer by every labourer, in order to defray the expenses of advertising, attending on meetings, and paying counsel to support their petition in Parliament.

"5th. That as soon as the sense of the day labourers of this county, or a majority of them, shall be made known to the clerk of the meeting, a general meeting shall be appointed, in some central town, in order to agree upon the best and easiest mode of getting the petition signed; when it will be requested that one labourer, properly instructed, may be deputed to represent two or three

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measure, which was advocated in more than one session by Mr Whitbread[1], was generally considered impracticable; while there seemed to be a danger that it would deprive inefficient men of all employment and would depress the earnings of the more industrious men.

There was very little prospect that effect would be given to this proposal after 1795, when a simpler expedient for amplifying the receipts of the rural labourers began to be adopted. Owing to the wool famine and the decay of spinning, the women and children were left without their usual employment, and the rural labourer was deprived of an important subsidiary source of family income. The evil was severe, but it was probably regarded as merely temporary; spinning had been plentiful and well paid at Reading in 1793[2], but it appears to have been very much less remunerative, and harder to get, in subsequent years, and there doubtless seemed to be good reasons for taking exceptional steps to tide over a period of bad trade, which might perhaps be of no long continuance. The Berkshire justices met in the Pelican Inn at Speenhamland to consider the situation, and agreed to the following resolutions: "1. That the present state of the poor does require further assistance than has generally been given them. 2. That it is not expedient for the magistrates to grant that assistance by regulating the wages of day labourers according to the directions of the statutes of the 5th Elizabeth and 1st James; but the magistrates very earnestly recommend to the farmers and others throughout the county, to increase the pay of their labourers in proportion to the present price of provisions; and agreeable thereto, the magistrates now present have unanimously resolved that they will, in their

*and in a period of severe distress the justices began*

contiguous parishes, and to attend the above intended meeting with a list of all the labourers in the parishes he shall represent, and pay their respective subscriptions; and that the labourer, so deputed, shall be allowed two shillings and six pence a day for his time, and two shillings and six pence a day for his expenses.

"6th. That Adam Moore, clerk of the meeting, be directed to have the above resolutions, with the names of the farmers and labourers who have subscribed to and approved them, advertised in one Norwich and one London paper; when it is hoped that the above plan of a petition to Parliament will not only be approved and immediately adopted by the day labourers of this county, but by the day labourers of every county in the kingdom.

"7th. That all letters, *post paid*, addressed to Adam Moore, labourer, at Heacham, near Lynn, Norfolk, will be duly noticed." *Annals*, xxv. 504.

[1] *Parl. Hist.* xxxii. 700, xxxiv. 1426. [2] *Annals of Agriculture*, xx. 179.



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several divisions, make the following calculations and allowances, for the relief of all poor and industrious men, and their families, who, to the satisfaction of the justices of their parish, shall endeavour (as far as they can) for their own support and maintenance; that is to say, when the gallon loaf of seconds flour, weighing 8 lbs. 11 oz. shall cost 1*s.*, then every poor and industrious man shall have for his own support 3*s.* weekly, either procured by his own, or his family's labour, or an allowance from the poor-rates; and for the support of his wife, and every other of his family, 1*s.* 6*d.* When the gallon loaf shall cost 1*s.* 6*d.*, then every poor and industrious man shall have 4*s.* weekly for his own support, and 1*s.* 10*d.* for the support of every other of his family. And so in proportion, as the price of bread rises or falls (that is to say) 3*d.* to the man, and 1*d.* to every other of his family, on every 1*d.* which the loaf rises above 1*s.*[1]." Occasional out-door relief had been given in many parishes, but these justices now made use of their powers under Gilbert's Act[2], to give it systematically, and to the able-bodied poor. The example they set was generally followed, and received legislative endorsement in the same year, as an Act was passed which rendered it possible for the overseers, in parishes which had not come under the provisions of Gilbert's Act, to pursue the same course, and gave the justices power to order the granting of out-door relief[3]. This practice must have tended to check the rise

*to grant allowances to the families of able-bodied men systematically*

[1] Pashley, *Pauperism and Poor Laws* (1852), 258; compare also the table in *Annals of Agriculture*, xxv. 537, and see p. 765 below.

[2] 22 Geo. III. c. 83, § 32. See above, p. 578.

[3] The Act of 1723 had given any parish power to establish houses for the poor, and to refuse all out-door relief to those who would not go into them, but this was amended in 1795, as it was "found to be inconvenient and oppressive, inasmuch as it often prevents an industrious poor person from receiving such occasional relief as is best suited to the peculiar case of such poor person, and inasmuch as in certain cases it holds out conditions of relief injurious to the comfort and domestic situation and happiness of such poor persons." The workhouse test was thus abolished under 36 Geo. III. c. 23. An effort appears to have been made to retain it in certain districts in the Eastern Counties, where Houses of Industry had been established (*Ib.* § 4) under private Acts of Parliament. Ruggles gives a very favourable account of these establishments and contrasts them with the ordinary poor-houses, *History of the Poor* (1797), 308, 324. He held that they were beneficial in every way, and could be so managed as to diminish rates (*Ib.* 333). But these parishes were unable to resist the tendency of giving out-door relief (*Ib.* 315) though they struggled against it. *Rules and Orders for regulating the meetings and proceedings of the Directors and for the better governing, regulating and*

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of wages which would naturally have followed in the circumstances of the times, from the increased area under tillage; in some districts an increase of money wages appears to have occurred in spite of it[1]. No obvious opportunity of discontinuing this system arose, and what had been introduced as a temporary expedient became a permanent practice. Whatever excuse there may have been for adopting this course at first, its ultimate effects on rural society were most disastrous. By securing an income to all the labourers, it offered a direct encouragement to carelessness on the part of the men, so that the farmers complained they could not obtain efficient labour; while the remaining members of the community had a grievance, inasmuch as they contributed, through the rates, for the payment of services rendered to other people. Altogether this custom tended to degrade the character of the labouring class[2]. The Committee which investigated the subject in 1824 went back to first principles in making their reports. "There are," they said, "but two motives by which men are induced to work: the one, the hope of improving the condition of themselves and their families; the other, the fear of punishment. The one is the principle of free labour, the other the principle of slave labour. The one produces industry, frugality, sobriety, family

*and with disastrous results*

*in pauperising the population,*

*employing the poor of the Hundreds of Loes and Wilford* (1792), [Brit. Mus. C. T. 104 (3)], p. 3.

[1] Bowley, *Wages in the United Kingdom*, 39.

[2] The demoralising effects became apparent to one observer at least before it had been in operation many months (*Annals*, xxv. 634). "From what will follow, emulation and exertion will be totally destroyed; a man working extra hours, etc., not doing it for his own benefit, but that of the parish. This has been the effect of a plan recommended by our magistrates; which, notwithstanding, I cannot but highly approve, as founded on liberal principles, and perhaps as little exceptionable as anything which could have been adopted.

"The effect of this is, that an industrious fellow, who heretofore has earned his fourteen shillings per week, will now only earn the price of day labour (nine shillings); nor will I blame him, for extraordinary exertions should have extraordinary reward; nor can a man be expected to work over-hours for the relief of the poor-rates. Another effect is, those who work none, receive as much as those who do; but this *we* have remedied, by saying, a man having no debility ought to earn nine shillings. The profligate part of the women have destroyed or have no wheels, and say they cannot earn anything unless supplied by the parish. Our rates are thus risen to about three times their usual quantum, which makes the farmers highly dissatisfied. * * *

"To avoid this table, the parish are at this moment in the act of beginning a work-house; but, fortunately for the industrious poor, the bill for the relief of the poor in their own houses meets that oppression."



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affection, and puts the labouring class in a friendly relation with the rest of the community; the other causes, as certainly, idleness, imprudence, vice, dissension, and places the master and the labourer in a perpetual state of jealousy and mistrust. Unfortunately, it is the tendency of the system of which we speak, to supersede the former of these principles, and introduce the latter. Subsistence is secured to all; to the idle as well as the industrious; to the profligate as well as the sober; and, as far as human interests are concerned, all inducement to obtain a good character is taken away. The effects have corresponded with the cause. Able-bodied men are found slovenly at their work, and dissolute in their hours of relaxation; a father is negligent of his children; the children do not think it necessary to contribute to the support of their parents; the employers and the employed are engaged in perpetual quarrels, and the pauper, always relieved, is always discontented; crime advances with increasing boldness, and the parts of the country where this system prevails are, in spite of our gaols and our laws, filled with poachers and thieves[1]."

*while by-occupations and village industries decayed,*

This picture of the effects of the allowance system is sad enough; and it must be remembered that there were other influences at work which made for the disintegration of village life. The Industrial Revolution tended to diminish the opportunities for industrial, as distinguished from agricultural employment in rural districts[2]. The concentration of spinning in villages, and later in factory towns, was one of the steps in the process by which the differentiation of town and country became complete. In old days[3] a considerable number of trades were represented in each village, but in recent times the services of the village artisan are hardly required. Tiles and slates have taken the place of thatch, and the husbandman, who has skill as a thatcher, has fewer opportunities of adding to his income. The capitalist farmer in all probability prefers the goods, which he buys for less money at a distance, to the local wares; as a consequence there have come to be fewer by-occupations than before.

[1] *Reports, etc.* 1824, vi. 404.

[2] On the old state of affairs compare A. Young, *Annals*, xxxii. 220.

[3] See above, pp. 502, 564. J. Cowper, *Essay proving that enclosing etc.*, p. 8.

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"Hitherto[1] the rude implements required for the cultivation of the soil, or the household utensils needed for the comfort of daily life, had been made at home. The farmer, his sons, and his servants, in the long winter evenings carved the wooden spoons, the platters, and the beechen bowls; plaited wicker baskets; fitted handles to the tools; cut willow teeth for rakes and harrows, and hardened them in the fire; fashioned ox-yokes and forks; twisted willows into the traces and other harness gear. Travelling carpenters visited farm-houses at rare intervals to perform those parts of work which needed their professional skill. The women plaited the straw for the neck-collars, stitched and stuffed sheepskin bags for the cart-saddle, wove the straw or hempen stirrups and halters, peeled the rushes for and made the candles. The spinning-wheel, the distaff, and the needle were never idle; coarse home-made cloth and linen supplied all wants; every farm-house had its brass brewing kettle....All the domestic industries by which cultivators of the soil increased their incomes, or escaped the necessity of selling their produce, were now supplanted by manufactures."

*and the tendency to migrate to towns increased.*

While by-employments were dying out, there was also a tendency for weavers and other craftsmen to migrate from the villages to the towns[2], and this would certainly affect the village prosperity by reducing the demand for its produce. The small manufacturing population created a demand on the spot; and articles could be sold which might not perhaps bear the expense of transport to the towns. It might appear that the villager would gain by the improvement in production and would pay less for his clothes[3]; but the double cost of carriage, of his produce to the town and his purchased cloth to the village, would diminish his receipts, and might enhance the price which he had formerly paid, so that his gain from this source would hardly be appreciable. This destruction of local demand was certainly an important matter,

[1] Prothero, *Pioneers*, 67. For an interesting picture of village life in Hampshire at a later date, see Thorold Rogers, *Six Centuries*, 502.

[2] This trend of the industrial population had been foreseen by Sir J. Steuart, *Works*, I. 113.

[3] On the change in the habits of farm servants compare *Select Committee on Agriculture*, in *Reports*, 1833, v. questions 6174–7, 10324 f.



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at the time when steam was superseding water-power. In the first days of the factory industry, there were many villages situated on a stream with sufficient force to drive a single mill, and village factories, as we may call them, flourished for some time in many places. When, however, improved machinery was introduced, they were no longer remunerative and had to be closed[1]. Neither agriculture nor manufacture offered good employment in rural districts, and village life in all its aspects seemed to present a succession of pictures of misery and decay[2].

*The Corn Law of 1689*

**263.** The increasing distress in the country, at a time when so much was being done to foster the landed interest, was a standing puzzle to the men of the time. The matter becomes easily explicable, however, when we bear in mind certain conditions of agricultural production, which were very imperfectly understood at the beginning of last century. The points will become clearer if we go back to a still earlier period in order to obtain a retrospect of the policy which had been pursued in regard to corn.

*was successful in its double object for many years;*

The Act of 1689[3], which allowed a bounty on exportation when the price of wheat fell below 48*s.* a quarter, was, by a general consensus of opinion, successful, both in maintaining prices at a steady level, and in giving a stimulus to English agriculture, during the first half of the eighteenth century[4]. In some succeeding years, however, the supply fell short, and it became necessary to introduce occasional measures both for suspending exportation and encouraging the import of grain. In 1772, Governor Pownall, while introducing a bill for the purpose of giving temporary relief, proposed a series

[1] One such mill, originally a paper mill (Nash, *Worcestershire*, 1782, II. 232) and subsequently a silk mill, existed at Overbury in Worcestershire. The proprietors were accustomed to get the work done almost entirely by apprentices, and their apprentices who had served their time and could obtain no employment were a serious evil in the villages.

[2] Compare the description of the rural population in Wakefield's *Swing unmasked*, 9, and *England and America*, I. 44.

[3] See above, p. 541.

[4] The Corn Bounty Act of 1689 had apparently served its purpose on the whole, for a considerable period (Thaer, *Beytrage*, II. 149—162). The measure had been framed "so as to prevent grain from being at any time either so dear that the poor cannot subsist, or so cheap that the farmer cannot live by growing of it." C. Smith, *Considerations on the Importation and Exportation of Corn* (1759), p. 72. Compare also Naudé, *Getreidehandelspolitik*, 117, and p. 711 n. 1, above.

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of resolutions, which fundamentally changed the whole system of policy, in the hope that the constant tinkering, which had gone on in recent years, would no longer be necessary. His scheme, which was in its main features embodied in the Act of 1773[1], was an endeavour to keep the price of corn steady, at about 48*s.* the quarter, by giving facilities for importation duty free, when English corn was selling at a higher rate. As his speech explains, "the end proposed by this Bill is that of creating an influx of bread corn for home consumption, in case of internal scarcity; and an aid to our foreign trade in case of our not having a quantity of corn adequate to that important and beneficial commerce. This purpose is conducted under such regulations as shall prevent any interference with the landed interest. In other words (said he), if I may be permitted to use an allusion to natural operations, it means to introduce into our supply an additional stream, and to fix such a wear at such a height as shall always keep the internal supply equal, and no more than equal, to internal want, yet preserve a constant overflow for all the surplus, so as never on one hand to endanger the depression of the landed interest, nor on the other the loss of our foreign market for corn—by our not being able, as has been the case for several years past, to supply the demands of that foreign market—as it is hoped that this measure will be formed into a permanent law. It is meant by the provisions in the Bill formed for the carrying it into execution—that its operations may go on, as the state of things does actually and really require, not as the interests of designing men may wish and will them to go; that this commercial circulation of subsistence may flow through pools whose gates are to open and shut as the state of the droughts, and floods, and tides may require, not to consist of sluice-doors which are to be locked up and opened by the partial hands and will of men[2]."

*that of 1773 was intended*

*to secure a food supply, either from home or abroad, at a steady price;*

This measure may be regarded as of the nature of a compromise; in so far as they accepted it, the representatives of each of the historic parties departed from the traditional policy which was associated with Whigs and Tories respectively. The Whigs, who had been eager to encourage

[1] 13 Geo. III. c. 43.

[2] *Parl. Hist.* XVII. pp. 477–478.



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commerce in such a way as to stimulate employment, were accepting a measure that exposed the British agriculturist to foreign competition. The Tory, who had advocated foreign commerce in the interest of the consumer, looked askance at it, when it threatened to undersell his tenants in the home market. Like other compromises, the measure failed to satisfy any one, and it did not even answer the expectations of its author. Englishmen found that they could not count upon a steady stream from other countries, as the interruptions to commerce, and demands abroad, might render it impossible for merchants to supply the deficiencies caused by a poor harvest at home. In bad years the consumer suffered, while the foreign corn which was imported might be warehoused and increase the stock of corn, so that the English producer would find prices range very low in some ordinary years. The effort to maintain a steady price, partly from the home supply and partly from foreign sources, proved a failure[1]; and in the last decade of the eighteenth century the most prominent agriculturists of the time demanded a return to the policy of stimulating home production. Sir John Sinclair argued that the passing of a general Inclosing Bill was "the first and most essential means of promoting the general improvement of the country; and the importance of that measure has not as yet perhaps been so distinctly stated as it deserves. In general, those who make any observations on the improvement of Land, reckon alone on the advantages which the landlord reaps from an increased income; whereas, in a national point of view, it is not the addition to the rent, but to the produce of the country, that is to be taken into consideration. It is for want of attending to this important distinction, that people are so insensible of the wonderful prosperity that must be the certain result of domestic improvement. They look at the rental merely, which, like the

*but Parliament reverted to the principle of promoting native production*

[1] Arthur Young's protest against the changes introduced by the Act of 1773 on the ground that the price at which export was permitted should not be too low, was justified by events. He held that, with the increasing demand and increasing difficulties of production, the farmer in 1770 ought to be able to calculate on a higher price than he could look for in 1689, and that the legislature should endeavour to keep the price of corn as steadily as possible at this higher level. Parliament had attempted instead to make corn cheaper, with disastrous results, to the consumer in bad years, and to the producer in good ones (*Annals of Agriculture*, XLI. p. 308).

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hide, is of little value, compared to the carcase that was inclosed in it. Besides, the produce is not the only circumstance to be considered: that produce, by the art of the manufacturer, may be made infinitely more valuable than it originally was. For instance: If Great Britain, by improving its wool, either in respect to quantity or quality, could add a million to the rent-rolls of the proprietors of the country, that, according to the common ideas upon the subject, is all the advantage that would be derived from the improvement: but that is far from being all, the additional income to the landlord could only arise from at least twice the additional produce to the farmer; consequently, the total value of the wool could not be estimated at less than two millions: and as the manufacturer by his art would treble the value of raw material, the nation would be ultimately benefited in the amount of six millions per annum. It is thus that internal improvements are so infinitely superior, in point of solid profit, to that which foreign commerce produces. In the one case, lists of numerous vessels loaded with foreign commodities, and the splendid accounts transmitted from the Custom House, dazzle and perplex the understanding; whereas, in the other case, the operation goes on slowly, but surely. The nation finds itself rich and happy; and too often attributes that wealth and prosperity to foreign commerce and distant possessions, which properly ought to be placed to the account of internal industry and exertion. It is not meant by these observations to go the length that some might contend for; namely, to give any check to foreign commerce, from which so much public benefit is derived; but it surely is desirable that internal improvement should at least be considered as an object fully as much entitled to attention as distant speculations, and, when they come into competition, evidently to be preferred[1]." So far as external commerce is concerned

*in* 1791,

effect had been given to these views by the Act of 1791[2], which repealed all the existing corn laws; it aimed at keeping the price ranging between 46*s.* and 54*s.* the quarter. A bounty of 5*s.* was to be paid on the export of wheat when

[1] *Reports*, IX. pp. 209–210.

[2] 31 Geo. III. c. 30. On the working of this measure see *Reports*, 1803–4, V. 699, 793, and the amending Act of 1804, 44 Geo. III. c. 109.



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the price was as low as 44*s.*, but on the other hand a prohibitive duty was levied on importation when the price was below 50*s.*, and only 6*d.* a quarter was charged on imported wheat when the price rose above 54*s.* The interruption to commerce, even though no serious effort was made to cut off our food supply during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars[1], seems to have given a practical and effective protection to home production; prices rose and the process of bringing additional land into cultivation went on apace.

*and gave an unhealthy stimulus to tillage for a time.*

As a matter of fact, however, the advantages to the community generally, which Sir John Sinclair had anticipated, did not arise. By far the greater part of the gain which came from the war prices went to the proprietors of land. Agriculturists took in new ground and had recourse to inferior soil and worse situated land, but additional supplies could only be obtained at an increasing rate of cost[2]. Those men, who had good and well situated arable land, were able to obtain the same high price, as was necessary to recompense the man who worked under less favourable conditions. The advantage which accrued from the superior properties or exposure of the land, did not affect the labourers at all, and could only go temporarily to the tenant during the period of his lease; the gain was eventually transferred to the owners of property, whether they were enterprising or not. As recourse was had to worse soil and the margin of cultivation descended, the land-owner and the tithe-owner gained. The rise of prices, which rendered more strenuous tillage possible, swelled their incomes immensely[3]. Though the farmer might

[1] See above, p. 684.

[2] This law of diminishing return is a simple statement of a physical fact; it was brought into prominence by Ricardo, who made it the basis of his doctrine of Rent. It is well to remember too that the form of expression used by Ricardo might have been suggested by the actual occurrences of his time. Farming in 1815 was still largely extensive; a fall of prices resulted immediately in certain land going out of cultivation. If prices rose again it might be predicted with certainty that the same land would be brought back again into cultivation. It was thus perfectly possible to point out the land that was on the margin of cultivation and which paid no rent. Now that land is carefully prepared and drained, and the soil made, the conditions are very different; and the language which applied to a time when most English farming was still extensive, is not exactly suitable to modern conditions when tillage is so highly intensive (Prothero, 104). In bad times land may fall out of condition, but not immediately out of cultivation.

[3] These were the facts for which Ricardo's theory of Rent afforded the

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get high profits occasionally during the wars with France and the United States, a sudden fall of prices ensued at the times when importation became possible, and this proved disastrous to the men who were cultivating inferior lands or who had a very small capital. Similar results occurred in years of plenty, when prices dropped suddenly[1]. On the whole there was an immense stimulus to agriculture, and the landed proprietors gained largely; but, like other trades, farming was subject to fluctuations, and the business of the tenants had a much more speculative character than formerly.

*The landlords were threatened with ruin at the Peace,*

The prospect of peace in 1815, and of the importation of cereals grown in America and the Baltic lands to English ports, suddenly opened the eyes of landed proprietors to the instability of their prosperity. A fall of prices would have placed many of the land-owners in grave difficulties; there had, of course, been an unprecedented rise of their incomes during the war. Rents had increased, as it was said, about seventy per cent. since the war began; and few of the land-owners had realised that their gains were merely temporary. They had burdened their land with jointures, or mortgaged it to make real or fancied improvements; and thus, when there began to be a difficulty about getting rents paid, there was a general feeling among the landlords, that if there was a fall either of rents or prices, they would be unable to meet the obligations which they had incurred. It was necessary that the inflated prices of the war period should be maintained somehow, if the landed proprietors, as a class, were to be saved from ruin. As the whole course of agricultural improvement had been pressed on by their enterprise, and to some extent at their cost[2], it appeared that the agricultural

explanation. There must have been much land in his time which was actually on the margin of cultivation, and was sown with corn or not, according to the prospects of a high or low price. In giving his explanation a general form, Ricardo enunciated a doctrine which applies to differential advantages of every kind; but the public did not sufficiently appreciate the fact that the payments made by the tenant to the landlord are not merely differential, but at all events include the landlord's share of profit for the capital which he has sunk in the land (Cunningham, *Modern Civilisation*, 161). The mistaken impression thus diffused tended to increase the irritation which was felt in the commercial community against the landed interest.

[1] Arthur Young, *Annals of Agriculture*, XLI. p 309.

[2] The cost of actual enclosure, and of erecting buildings suited to the improved system of cultivation, had been largely defrayed at the expense of the landlords.



system of the country would go to pieces if they became bankrupt, while the finance of the realm would be thrown into disorder. In any case they could urge that they had an equitable claim for the fullest consideration, owing to the incidence of national and local taxation. It was on these grounds that a stringent Corn Law was passed in 1815, by which the importation of foreign corn was prohibited, so long as the price of wheat did not rise above 80*s.*[1].

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*The Act of 1815 was passed*

It was possible to urge, and to urge in good faith, that the course which was so essential to the landlords as a class was also beneficial to the community. There was an obvious political danger in allowing the country to be normally dependent for its food supply on foreign sources; the nation had experienced the misery of famine, during the recent wars, at the times when the harvest had fallen short and the interruption of commerce had prevented adequate importation. It was plausible to insist that the country must endeavour to raise her own food supply from her own area, and not be dependent on maritime intercourse for the necessaries of life; and it seemed possible that by artificially maintaining a high price, agricultural production might be so stimulated as to call forth an ample supply in good years, and a sufficient supply in bad ones. This was only, after all, a modification of the immemorial policy of the country[2], in seeking to foster a vigorous rural population and provide adequate food.

*on plausible grounds,*

*but in the interest of the landlords as a class,*

But times had changed since the English Revolution. The public interest no longer coincided with the private interests of the landlord class, as had been approximately the case in 1689[3]; it had come to be closely associated with the private interest of the manufacturers. The hardware and textile industries were becoming the chief source from which the wealth of the country was derived. Shipping was needed, to fetch materials and to carry away finished goods; it had long ceased to have much employment in exporting our surplus corn. Maritime prosperity was bound up with the development of industry; the shipping interest was indifferent to the maintenance of English tillage; and might even be opposed to it, since the regular importation of corn would

[1] 55 Geo. III. c. 26.

[2] See above, p. 85.

[3] See above, pp. 541, 542.

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open up lines of steady trade. It was clear, moreover, that for the well-being of the manufacturing interest, cheap food was of the highest importance. The corn law of 1689 had tended to increase the normal food supply of the country and to make prices steady; it had not been inconsistent with the interests of the capitalist employer, and it had made for the comfort of the labourer on the whole. But the attempt to maintain a high price, so as to extort a sufficient supply from the soil of England, imposed a very serious burden on all consumers. Had it been in the clear interest of the community, it might have been borne patiently; but this was not the case. The policy was only in the obvious interest of a class, and as it could be depicted as demanding the sacrifice of the masses of the population for the benefit of a small class, it was resented accordingly.

*to the detriment of consumers.*

The issue, which had been concealed when the compromise of 1773 was adopted, came into clear light in 1815. Industrial progress had changed the internal balance of the economic powers within the realm. The policy of stimulating agriculture, to meet both home requirements and foreign demand according to circumstances, was ceasing to be practical in 1773; in 1815 it was an utter anachronism. The advocates of protection failed to recognise that under altered circumstances, the measures which had served to stimulate agriculture in the eighteenth century were no longer applicable. The conditions of the problem of the food supply had entirely changed, at the time when the home demand increased so much that England ceased to be a corn-exporting country. So long as it had been possible to count upon outflow, it was feasible by legislative regulation to affect its rate, and thus to keep up a steady supply within the country; but when the range of home prices was so high that there was no foreign demand for English wheat, the mere prohibition of import, except at famine prices, could have no effect in rendering the conditions of agriculture stable. Indeed, the new enactment only served to exaggerate the variations which necessarily occurred with differences in the seasons; the effect of the Corn Law of 1815 was to render farming a highly speculative business. The normal food production, with the existing methods, was insufficient

*It did not serve to control prices so as to encourage*



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for the population[1]. In years of scarcity a comparatively small deficiency in the crop immediately caused a startling rise in price. Encouraged by these rates, farmers would break up more ground and take crops on a larger area, but a year or two of lower prices would soon compel them to give up the task of trying to grow wheat, except on their better land; the uncultivated area was often left wild, without any attempt at laying down pasture. The most serious of these variations of price occurred just after the conclusion of the war. In January 1816, notwithstanding the protective legislation, wheat was selling at 52*s.* 6*d.*[1]; owing to a deficient harvest in 1816, not so much in our own country as abroad, the price rose very rapidly, and in June 1817 stood at 117*s.*[2]. Similar startling fluctuations characterised the end of the period, and rendered the farmer's business a constant speculation in which hundreds were ruined[3].

*steady agricultural improvement.*

Under these circumstances it was true that only a section of the landed interest, the proprietors and the tithe-owners, gained by the continuance of the traditional policy with regard to corn, while the mischievous consequences of the dearness of bread were felt by consumers in all classes. The uncertainty and scarcity in regard to food, which had been temporarily introduced by the war, continued to cause increasing distress. No substantial difference was made by the sliding scale of 1828[4], which permitted foreign corn to be imported and warehoused, on the payment of duties, if it was sold for consumption at home. Some relaxation was indeed allowed in the famine year of 1823, but on the whole the system of protection was strictly maintained, but with more and more hesitation[5], till it was at length abandoned in 1846[6].

[1] The Committee of 1821 believed that enough wheat was grown for the requirements of the country, *Report from Select Committee to whom the several Petitions complaining of the depressed state of agriculture were referred* (*Report, etc.*, 1821, IX. 9); while that of 1833 recognised that we were dependent on foreign supplies "in years of ordinary production." *Ib.* 1833, V. 5.

[1] Tooke, II. p. 4. [2] Tooke, II. 18.

[3] One Parliamentary Committee after another reported on the state of the agricultural interest. In 1821 it was shown that there had been many failures among the farmers in Dorsetshire in the preceding years. *Reports*, 1821. IX. 138.

[4] 9 Geo. IV. c. 60.

[5] Sir R. Peel's sliding scale in 1842 was quite an inadequate reform.

[6] 9 and 10 Vict. c. 22.

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*The working classes not only failed to obtain redress under the existing laws*

**264.** The anomalies of the system of representation at the beginning of last century were a discouragement to the artisans in seeking for redress on conservative lines. The operatives and labourers had reason to be embittered at the failure of the government to administer the law of the land as contained in the Statute book, and to enforce reasonable rates of wages by authority. It was a still greater grievance that they were prevented from trying to do their best for themselves, and that all attempts on their part at collective bargaining were treated as criminal. The measures which had been devised in old days for the protection of the workman were allowed to become a dead letter, while those which limited his powers of self-defence against capitalist oppression were re-enacted[1] in a more stringent form. The passing of the Combination Act of 1799[2], which was amended and reaffirmed in 1800[3], was on the face of it a piece of gross injustice; and the information regarding the history of the measure is so slight, that there is great difficulty in understanding the reason for inflicting it. There was much distress in the country, and long debates took place in both houses in 1800 on the best methods of alleviating the general suffering; but there were no special features in the economic conditions of the day which render the introduction of such a drastic measure at all intelligible.

*but suffered from the passing of a new Combination Act*

*in a time of political panic,*

It seems reasonable to suppose that the motives, which weighed with the Government of the day in 1799, were political and not merely economic. This bill gave an additional weapon to deal with those who were concerned in any outbreaks which might arise in a period of scarcity, and it provided an engine for suppressing seditious societies, which might cloak themselves under a pretence of trade objects[4].

[1] See Vol. I., also S. and B. Webb, *Trade Unionism*, 63.

[2] 39 Geo. III. c. 81. *An Act to prevent unlawful combinations of workmen.*

[3] 39 and 40 Geo. III. c. 106. The principal modification was the addition of §§ 18 to 22 which gave greater facilities for arbitration between masters and men on any trade disputes, and § 17 which rendered combinations among masters illegal.

[4] This view is confirmed by the fact that a very severe measure against debating societies passed in the same year. 39 Geo. III. c. 79. The only suggestion I have come across of a connection between workmen's societies and seditious gatherings occurs in April 1801, before the Combination Acts had rendered Trade Societies criminal. "At the same period seditious emissaries were first detected endeavouring to excite insurrection among the manufacturers of different parts of Lancashire. This was to be done by associating as many as possible under the sanction of an oath, nearly similar to that adopted in London and which, with an account of the secret sign which accompanied it, has been transmitted from various quarters to Government and laid before your Committee; dangerous meetings were disguised, as in London, under the appearance of Friendly Societies, for the relief of Sick Members." *Second Report from Committee of Secrecy relative to State of Ireland. Reports*, reprints, 1801. First series, x. 831.



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The measure seems to have been rushed through the House of Commons under the influence of panic; its earlier stages were taken on three successive nights[1]. There were no petitions in its favour and there is no report of any debate in *Hansard*; it was not introduced because of pressure from the outside, but it was hurried on by Government. The Bill was not accepted so readily when it was introduced into the House of Lords. The London artisans had come to hear of the proposal which was being pushed on so fast, and the Calico Printers petitioned the Lords against it. Counsel was heard on their behalf, and the opponents of the scheme thought it worth while to divide the House, though the Government carried the day. But the matter did not rest here, as there were numerous petitions from all parts of the country pointing at the injustice of the Act and demanding its repeal[2]. The matter came up for re-consideration in the next session; but whatever may have been the original motives for introducing the Bill, there were, in the then temper of the legislature, valid economic grounds for maintaining the measure. Parliament had honestly considered the practicability of fixing a minimum rate of wages, and had come to the deliberate conclusion that any attempt to do so would be futile so far as the labourers were concerned, and would

*and despite protests against its injustice.*

[1] 17, 18, 19 June, 1799. *Commons Journals*, LIV. pp. 653, 662, 666.

[2] *Commons Journals*, LV. 645. The London petition runs thus: "That during the last session, an Act was passed to prevent unlawful Combination of Workmen, ...and that the said Act by the Use of such uncertain Terms, and others of the same Nature, has created new Crimes of boundless Extent, to which are affixed Fines, Forfeiture and Imprisonment,...and that in many Parts of the said Act, the Law is materially changed to the great Injury of all Journeymen and Workmen; and that, if it be not repealed it will hereafter be dangerous for the Petitioners to converse with one another, or even with their own Families; and that its immediate Tendency is to excite Distrust and Jealousy between their Masters and them, and to destroy the Trades and Manufactures it purports to protect."

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probably be mischievous to trade. They might readily believe that if a fixed minimum of wages, even when it emanated from public authority, was an evil and tended to aggravate distress, the attempts of private individuals to take the matter into their own hands, and enforce such regulations by the strength of a combination, were still more to be deprecated; this seemed to be doing a bad thing in the worst possible way. There was a diametric opposition between the operatives, whose chief aim was to uphold the Elizabethan policy, and the legislature, which regarded the old system as mischievous, and felt justified in treating all efforts to restore it indirectly as criminal.

*Friendly Societies continued to exist,*

The Act did not affect associations which existed for approved objects, but merely the employment of the powerful weapon of combination for purposes which the legislature regarded as mischievous[1]. There was at this time a very general interest in Friendly Societies, and a desire on the part of the Government to give them a better status. The Act, which Mr Rose had carried through in 1793[2], had encouraged these societies to bring their constitutions and rules before the justices for approval; and conferred on them a definite legal status if they did so; as these bodies were able to use their funds to assist their members when out of work or when travelling in search of it[3], a considerable field of activity in connection with trade affairs was open to them There appear to have been many such societies in all parts of

[1] "All contracts...made...between any journeymen manufacturers or other workmen...for obtaining an advance of wages,...lessening or altering their or any of their usual hours or time of working...or for preventing or hindering any person or persons from employing whomsoever he, she or they shall think proper to employ in his her or their business, or for controlling...any person or persons carrying on any manufacture, trade, or business, in the conduct or management thereof, shall be...illegal." 39 Geo. III. c. 81.

[2] 33 Geo. III. c. 54. *An Act for the Encouragement of Friendly Societies.*

[3] A clear account of the objects of one of these societies will be found in the evidence given before a Committee of the House of Commons in 1794. It is clear that an out-of work benefit was allowed and it was also stated that there was not one out of a hundred of the Woolcombers that did not belong to some society. William Eales' evidence, C. J. XLIX. p. 323. The practice of associating for trade objects and other benefits had existed among the wooicombers for many years. See above, pp. 508 and 652 n. 3.



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England[1]. and the total membership was enormous[2]. Just because there were such facilities for the formation of legitimate associations, the Legislature would have less scruple in prohibiting the formation of trade societies, and the diversion of the activities of friendly societies to purposes of which neither the legislature nor the justices approved[3].

*but associations for trade purposes were liable to prosecution;*

From this point of view, the determination of the legislature to maintain these Acts becomes intelligible, and we can also get clearer light on the difficult question as to the

[1] Very full information in regard to these societies in the Newcastle district is preserved in five volumes in the British Museum, marked 8275. bb. 1—5. Most of the societies confined their benefits to sick members and superannuation, and make no explicit provision for out-of-work benefits. This occurs, however, in the Clerks' Society (rule 11, 1807), a member of which who lost his employment was allowed 10*s.* a week for 26 weeks. In the society instituted among Messrs Angas' coachmakers, temporary loss of work (p. 19) is acknowledged to be a case of "difficulty and distress, that its benevolence cannot relieve in any competent degree"; this society's rules had several fines for industrial offences, and are framed from a capitalist standpoint. The Maltsters' Society (1796), apparently of small masters, also took cognisance of trade offences (rules 4, 16). The Masons, rule 20 (1811), recommends "that all persons thereto belonging do encourage one another in their respective trades and occupations"; this probably refers to dealing at one another's shops; but it appears that the trade ideas and benefit club aims were not kept distinct.

[2] Compare the interesting statistics for each county appended to Mr George Rose's *Observations on the Poor Laws*, 1805. He gives the total membership for England and Wales at 704,350 (Table, Appendix); in 1815 it had increased to "925,439 being about one-thirteenth part of the population." Bechey, *Constitution of Friendly Societies* (1826), p. 49.

[3] The justices had no authority to enquire into the real as distinguished from the ostensible objects of an association applying to them. "Every Society which professed to provide for sickness or old age and declared no unlawful purpose was necessarily admitted." *Report from the Select Committee on the Laws respecting Friendly Societies* (1825), IV. 326, printed pagn. 6. Mr Bechey quotes the allegation that the Friendly Societies "have been too frequently converted into engines of abuse by paying weekly sums to Artisans out of work, and have thereby encouraged combinations among workmen not less injurious to the misguided members than to the Public Weal." *Constitution of Friendly Societies* (1826), 55. Some instances were noted in Lancashire about 1815. "The regulations of hatters, small-ware weavers and other trades, have appeared in print and are of the most tyrannical and arbitrary character, and are well known to be enforced with the most rigid severity. Societies are formed of persons carrying on the same business, ostensibly for the laudable purpose of relieving the members in time of sickness, but in reality for the maintenance of illegal combinations, from the funds of which a supply is obtained for the most illegal purposes. On the 6th or 7th of March 1817, a supply of £20 was sent from a Society of Cotton Spinners for the purpose of assisting in the illegal object of a body of several thousand persons proceeding in regular array to London, under pretence of presenting a petition to the Prince Regent." W. D. Evans, *Charge to the Grand Jury*, 17, a tract to which my attention has been directed by Mr S. Webb.

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enforcement of the Acts. The general impression created by the careful investigations of Mr and Mrs Webb[1] is that the Act, though enforced spasmodically and occasionally with great severity, remained to a considerable extent a dead letter. The workman had on the whole been endeavouring to insist that existing laws should be carried out: and the mere fact of combination for this purpose could hardly be regarded as illegal. The Glasgow Cotton Weavers were allowed to combine to obtain a decision on the rates of wages; but their leaders were arrested as criminals, when they tried to enforce the rate themselves and organised a strike[2]. In various trades the practice of arranging a list at a conference between masters and men was in vogue[3], and though this might have easily led to breaches of the Combination Laws, it was apparently held that, where the masters were ready to meet the men in conferences publicly called, the idea of conspiracy hardly came in. There certainly were cases when the masters had a very strong case under the Acts, and did not invoke their assistance[4]; so that it is probably true to say that, on the whole, the law was not often set in motion, and that things went on in an ordinary way, as if no such statute was in existence[5]. In case of any dispute between masters and men, or of a strike, the employers were able to have recourse to this Act at any moment, and summarily to crush all opposition; and the severe sentences which were inflicted under the Act on Bolton Calico Printers in 1817, and on the Sheffield Scissors Grinders in 1816, must have rankled deeply in the minds of the victims. It is impossible to say to what extent the existence of the Acts, even when spasmodically enforced, affected rates of pay or increased the privations of the working classes, but there can be no doubt that they added immensely to their sense of wretchedness and helplessness. The impotence

*though this was not systematically enforced,*

*an intense sense of injustice was roused.*

[1] *Hist. of Trade Unionism*, 58, 65.

[2] See above, p. 638.

[3] Lists of Prices were agreed on by the London Printers in 1805, and by the London Coopers in 1813, 1816, and 1819; by the Brushmakers in 1805, and there were strong societies among the Cabinet Makers in Edinburgh, London and Dublin. Webb, *op. cit.* 66—68.

[4] See above, p. 642 n.

[5] See the quotation from George White in Webb, *op. cit.* 68.



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of the artisans is the prominent feature of the time. Nor were their leaders inclined at first to take any part in legislative movements for improving any particular social conditions; their energies were entirely absorbed in the effort to obtain a share of political power[1], in the hope that they could then remedy all their wrongs. Their keenest feeling was a sense of the injustice done them, and of the hopelessness of attaining real redress until they had an effective voice in the government of the country.

*The reluctance of Parliament*

**265.** While the working classes were waiting angrily for the power and opportunity of giving effect to their views, Parliament seemed to be singularly supine. At no previous time of widely diffused suffering throughout the country had the Legislature been content to remain so inert as it was in the period after the long wars. An impression began to be disseminated that the propertied classes were wholly indifferent to the sufferings of the poor. But this was not the case; the inaction of the House of Commons was due to the opinion, which had become more and more prevalent among educated men, that any interference on the part of the Government was injurious to the material prosperity of the community, and that no legislative remedy could be devised which would really mitigate the miseries of the poor. It was not so much that Parliament failed to devise satisfactory remedies, during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, as that the Legislature regarded itself as excused from attempting to find either palliatives or a cure.

*to attempt remedial legislation*

*was due to the influence of economic experts,*

The paralysis which affected State action during this period, was chiefly due to the influence of the economic experts of the day. Ricardo, Malthus, the elder Mill and other writers of the school of Adam Smith, were clear and vigorous thinkers, who were keenly interested in developing the science which he had founded. They added immensely to the understanding of some aspects of social and economic progress; but as guides on practical matters they were most misleading. They were wholly unaware that the principles they enunciated were only true under certain limitations.

[1] Adolph Held, *Zwei Bucher zur socialen geschichte Englands*, p. 340.

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Adam Smith's practical sense had saved him from the exaggeration into which they fell; he dealt with concrete instances and the actual life of a nation. His disciples followed him in separating out the economic side of human life, but they treated it as if it were an independent entity, and not as conditioned by the political circumstances of the community, and by the personal welfare of the citizens. It is convenient for purposes of investigation to separate the economic from other aspects of society; but the student who allows himself to forget that he is dealing with an abstraction, and that the economic factors and functions he studies have no separate existence of their own, is not likely to deal wisely and judiciously with practical issues. The principles of Natural Liberty, which formed the basis of Adam Smith's criticism of actual measures, were accepted by his disciples as an ideal which they strove to realise. Even if Ricardo and the Manchester School were right in thinking that a thorough-going acceptance of *laissez faire* was essential, in their age, for the most rapid accumulation of material goods, it did not necessarily follow that this policy was the wisest for the personal welfare of individuals generally, or the continued maintenance of sound national life.

*who concentrated their attention on national wealth,*

*and were uncompromising advocates of* laissez faire.

The National Wealth, of which Economic Science treats, is after all an abstraction; the component parts, of which it actually consists, are by no means the same in different countries, or in the same country at different times. Hence, free play for the economic forces, which form and maintain the actual national wealth at any given time and place, must necessarily work out somewhat differently at distinct stages of social development. At the beginning of the nineteenth century England had reached a phase of her history when capital had become the predominant factor in her material prosperity. Her political power rested on the expansion of her commerce, rather than on the resources of her soil; and the moneyed men had completely asserted a right to be treated with greater consideration than the landed interest. In manufacturing also, the triumph of capitalism had been complete, as machinery rather than human labour had become the more important element in the production of goods.



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National interests seemed to be involved[1] in giving play to the captains of industry to manage their own affairs without let or hindrance. Those who regarded freedom for enterprise as an ideal, were inclined to insist that it was a natural right which had been preserved by constitutional safeguards[2]. A Committee of the House of Commons gave a new reading of the rights of Englishmen. "The right of every man to employ the Capital he inherits or has acquired according to his own discretion without molestation or obstruction, so long as he does not infringe on the rights or property of others is one of those privileges which the free and happy Constitution of this Country has long accustomed every Briton to consider as his birth-right[3]." The body to whom these words were addressed had definitely adopted the standpoint of the economic experts of the day, and they in turn constituted themselves the apologists of the enterprising capitalists. In looking back we can see that, while it was necessary to sweep away the barriers to industrial progress, something might have been done to mitigate the evils by which the change was accompanied. But the House of Commons came to believe that all attempts at interference with the free play of enterprise were mischievous, and the language adopted by economic experts accentuated the differences and widened the breach between the various elements in the community. The practical partisanship of such classical writers as Ricardo, Malthus, and Mill, together with the pronouncements of the Manchester School, comes out in the attitude they took towards those who laid stress on elements other than capital in national prosperity. In the early part of the nineteenth century, the working classes continued to hold to the Elizabethan view of the duty of the State to foster a busy and prosperous working class; and economic experts denounced them for their ignorance, and solemnly warned as to the consequences of their shortsighted folly. The landed interest, who adhered to the traditional principle as to the necessity of protecting and encouraging agriculture, in order to maintain the food supply

*The vigour with which they insisted on free play for capital as a right,*

*and denounced traditional views*

*as to the duty of the State to labourers*

*and the expediency of fostering a native food supply,*

[1] On the fact that the promotion of national economic interests must always favour the interests of certain classes to the disadvantage of others, see above, p. 16.

[2] On the tradition of freedom in economic matters, see above, p. 286.

[3] Quoted by S. and B. Webb from *Reports*, 1806, III. 12.

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of the country, were held up to scorn for their selfishness. The economic science of the day supplied admirable weapons for mutual recrimination, and helped to embitter the relations of class with class; but the general policy which it approved was that of letting things drift, and the House of Commons was nervously afraid of taking any step which, in the opinion of economic experts, might in any way injure the trade of our merchants and manufacturers.

*increased class bitterness.*

This indisposition to act was specially noticeable in regard to matters which affected the well-being of the working classes. The masters at the beginning of last century do not appear to have been unscrupulous advocates of their own interests; some of them were prepared to accept the legislative interference which was demanded by the hands. The thoroughgoing support of the capitalist position was undertaken by economic experts, and the doctrines they propounded led men to think that the sufferings of the poor were not only their misfortune but their fault, and that to try to aid them was foolish and mischievous. This was the impression produced on public opinion by the theory of the Wages Fund and the teaching of Malthus in regard to population.

*The Classical Economists*

The Classical Economists were apparently unaware that in their studies of particular problems they were necessarily examining the phenomena in a form which was determined by the conditions and circumstances of their own time. Their analysis was acute and of permanent value; but in attempting to give the results they reached a scientific character, the economists were occasionally guilty of hasty generalisation. Political Economy co-ordinates recent experience and lays down the 'law[1]' as to what will happen so long as social and physical conditions remain unchanged; but social and physical conditions are always changing, and throwing the formulae of the economist out of date. The positive doctrines of the classical economists were received with exaggerated deference in their own day as if they had enunciated maxims which hold good for all time; a reaction has since set in, and their teaching has been unduly

*generalised from the special conditions of their own day*

[1] On the confusion consequent on the use of this term in Economics, see Cunningham, *A Plea for Pure Theory*, in *Economic Review*, II. 37, 41.



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disparaged. It is possible, however, at this date to give them discriminating appreciation. The doctrine of the Wages Fund, and the popular dread of over-population, were well-founded in fact, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century; but in so far as the teaching, which was true in the exceptional conditions of the time, was formulated in principles which were supposed to be valid for all future ages, it was mistaken and misleading.

*and put forward a doctrine of the Wages Fund which condemned*

The exponents of the Wages Fund maintained the position that it was impossible for combinations of workmen to raise wages. They held that the rate of wages was necessarily determined by the relation between the numbers applying for work and the fund set apart by the capitalists for the payment of wages. This principle is convenient for purposes of special analysis; at any given moment there is, as a matter of fact, a wages fund which consists of all the money available there and then for paying labour. It is altogether a mistake, however, to suppose that this sum is in any sense fixed; as it is constantly fluctuating, according as masters find it worth their while to set a greater or a smaller amount of labour at work. The Classical Economists were guilty of neglecting this constant fluctuation in the sums assigned to the payment of wages; the circumstances of their time did not allow them to observe it. As a matter of fact the wages fund was practically stationary during the period of depression which succeeded the war. This fund appeared to be fixed, because the conditions which would have enabled masters to raise wages were rarely realised. This was particularly true of those trades in which the cost of production by machinery and by hand were nearly balanced. If the rates of payment to labour were raised, then production by hand would be unremunerative, and it would be displaced by the introduction of machines; or on the other hand, if prices improved and it became profitable to manufacture on a larger scale, it would pay to introduce machines rather than to increase the number of hands. The competition of machinery gave a regular fixity to the wages fund at this time; but the Classical Economists allowed themselves to generalise from the circumstances of their own day, as if they were normal for all time.

*all efforts on the part of labourers to raise wages,*

*since they were ineffective at that juncture.*

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They did not attempt to investigate the conditions which tend to render the wages fund steady for a time, and preclude the increase of the labourers' wages during that period. The labourers were poorly paid, not because the wages fund was invariable, but because the introduction of machinery was restricting it at the time; this was precisely the view taken by the labourers, though they gave it less cumbrous and more forcible expression.

While economists denounced the ineptitude of all efforts on the part of labourers to raise the rates of wages, they were equally scornful of all philanthropic proposals for ameliorating the condition of the poor. All poverty was said to be due to the increase of population at a more rapid rate than the increase of the means of subsistence; and it seemed to follow that any charity, which gave the opportunity for more rapid multiplication, would increase the evil it professed to relieve.

*The Malthusian doctrine*

This was the position of the followers of Malthus, and his mode of statement gave some excuse for the exaggeration; he based his doctrine on a very careful inductive argument. He cites instances from every age, from every climate, and from every soil, to show that there is everywhere a tendency for population to increase faster than the means of subsistence; and he draws from it the inevitable conclusion that the anxiety which politicians displayed, to provide conditions for the growth of population as an element in national power, was quite illusory. The difficulty lay, not in the birth-rate, but in the raising of children to be efficient men and women; a low rate of infant mortality seemed to him to be on the whole the best guarantee for a sound and well-nourished population.

*as to the difficulty of procuring subsistence,*

The conditions of society, at the time when Malthus wrote, were such as to render the truth of his principle obvious when once it was stated. On the one side there was the greatest difficulty in procuring additional means of subsistence; the war imposed hindrances to the purchase of supplies from abroad; and though agriculturists were busy in ploughing up waste ground and taking in a larger area for the cultivation of wheat, they were finding that the task of adding to the regular produce became harder and harder.



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The means of subsistence could only be procured with a severer strain at that time; the obstacles, that had thus to be overcome, are much less noticeable in our days, when the powers of purchasing food are freely used, and the skill in producing it has advanced beyond anything that Malthus could anticipate. In his days, and so far as the outlook could be forecast, he was justified in urging that the available means of subsistence were being increased but slowly, if at all.

*and the rapid growth of population*

With population it was different. The rapid development of cotton-spinning had called new towns into existence; and the newly-expanding industries were, as Sir James Steuart foresaw[1], stimulating the development of population. Besides this, there was an accidental and unwholesome stimulus given by the arrangements of the poor law. The allowances per head, per child, rendered it a distinctly profitable speculation for the ordinary labourer to marry, and claim parish assistance for his offspring; and there was every reason to fear that the eighteen-penny children would replenish the whole land with hereditary paupers. On every hand it was obvious that population was increasing; and that the numbers, which were added, were brought into the world without any real attempt being made to provide, by additional effort, for their subsistence.

*was a convincing statement*

The circumstances of the times conspired to render the tendency, which Malthus noted, specially dominant; at his time and under the existing circumstances it was working in the fashion that he describes. He regarded the tendency for population to increase as a physical force, which could only be effectually controlled by a stronger sense of duty acting under better social conditions. He was a little apt to underrate the contributory circumstances that might tend to modify[2] the recklessness he deplored; but he never forgot

[1] See above, pp. 494, 704.

[2] Malthus lies especially open to this charge in his controversy with Arthur Young in regard to pauperism. Malthus would have absolutely abolished the relief of the poor by the State; as he proposed that children born after a certain date should be excluded by statute from any claim for relief. In this way he believed that pauperism would be gradually extinguished, and that self-reliance and better conceptions of parental responsibility would be formed, if the pressure of circumstances were brought to bear. Arthur Young, on the other hand, believed that his independence of spirit would be fostered by giving the labourer

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that the impulse was one that was susceptible of moral control. He has managed, however, to leave a somewhat different impression of his doctrine, that population tends to increase faster than the means of subsistence increase, by formulating it as if it were a law of physical nature. The preventive checks, which are brought to bear by rational self-control, do not occupy so prominent a place in his essay as to have sufficiently attracted the attention of his readers. At a time of rapid transition and extreme fluidity, rational foresight has little to go upon, and it could not prove an effective force during the Industrial Revolution. Hence it follows that Malthus, looking at the circumstances of his own era, formulated the principles of population in terms which give an exaggerated impression of the remorselessness of the tendency for a redundant population to arise. What he said was fully justified in his day; but circumstances have so far changed since, that the mode of statement he adopted needs to be modified if we would put, in simplest form, the truth about the increase of population as it generally occurs[1] We may see that there were in his time unwonted obstacles to procuring food by human exertion, whether directed to industry or to tillage; while there were, both in the development of the factories and in the nature of the poor-relief, unusual hindrances to the operation of the preventive checks.

*of the facts in his time,*

more interests and responsibilities in life, and allowing him to have, under proper safeguards, the use of suitable land together with a cow. To Arthur Young, Malthus' scheme seemed drastic (*Annals*, XLI. 221) and impracticable; while Malthus contended that Arthur Young's suggestions gave no immunity (*Essay*, III. 353) from the recurrence of the danger. It was obvious that in so far as the spirit of independence was not cultivated by giving the labourer land, his enlarged resources would only tend towards the increase of population in the same way as the parish allowances had done. From the premises he laid down Malthus' argument was sound: the mere fact that Arthur Young insisted on so many safeguards in connection with his proposal, shows that he did not regard it as a complete panacea. On the other hand Malthus had no practical suggestion to make with the view of cultivating the spirit on which he laid such stress. He had more sympathy with Arthur Young's proposals than might appear (*ib.* 365), but he argued that they were no complete remedy. His followers interpreted him however as if he had condemned benevolent action as such; they feared that improvements in the labourers' condition would be inevitably followed by an increase of population, and they desisted from the schemes on which Arthur Young had relied for improving, not merely the condition, but the character of the labourer (*Annals*, XLI. 230). The admirable report of the committee on allotments in 1843 seems to have had no practical effect. See above p. 713.

[2] See Cunningham, *Path towards Knowledge*, p. 25.



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It was little wonder that population sprang forward apace, or that the truth of his doctrine was so terribly confirmed, when the death-rate of the factory towns, and the visit of the cholera, demonstrated the potency of the positive checks. In so far as his teaching induced a sense of hopelessness, and a feeling that no real amelioration was possible, it was very mischievous; it gave the capitalist an excuse for disclaiming any responsibility for the misery among his operatives, and raised a barrier against all attempts at improvement by legislative enactment.

*but left the mistaken impression that all philanthropic effort was necessarily futile.*

This was, as we shall see, the most disastrous result of the *laissez faire* attitude taken by the exponents of economic science; the labourers were ignorant, though not so ignorant as was alleged, and their favourite projects would probably have proved injurious to the country; the landlords were selfish, though there were many plausible excuses for maintaining the old policy as they tried to do; but it had ceased to be beneficial, and it was rightly condemned. Unsympathetic criticism that has a basis of truth is much less harmful than exaggerated approbation; and it was most unfortunate that the most advanced science of the day should insist on free play for the capitalist, as a right, while it provided him with excuses for neglecting his responsibilities.

## IV. Human Welfare.

*English public opinion*

**266.** During the twenties, and still more in the thirties and forties, a considerable change came over public opinion on industrial questions. Unexampled progress had been made during the last decade of the eighteenth, and the beginning of the nineteenth century, but there was no reason to believe that Englishmen were either better or happier. There seemed to be no result that was worth having; and the detached attitude which economic experts assumed was not reassuring. They appeared to confine themselves to the study of ways and means, without endeavouring to form a clear and positive conception of the end to be pursued. The economist of the early part of last century was ready to explain how the greatest amount of

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material wealth might be produced, but not to discuss the uses to which it should be applied; he was prepared to show on what principles it was distributed among the various individuals who formed the nation, and to leave the question of consumption to each personally. But philanthropic sentiment and religious enthusiasm were not content to leave the matter there, and public opinion was gradually roused to demand that practical statesmen and their expert advisers should look farther ahead. Under the influence of these larger views, John Stuart Mill gave a new turn to economic study. He was not satisfied with discussing mere material progress. He could contemplate a stationary state with calmness; he could not but dwell with bitterness on the great misery which accompanied increasing wealth; and he tried to formulate an ideal of human welfare in his chapter *On the Probable Futurity of the Working Classes*[1]. In this way he succeeded in indicating an end towards which the new material resources might be directed, and thus restored to Economics that practical side, which it had been in danger of losing since the time of Ricardo. It is important that we should have a method for isolating economic phenomena and analysing them as accurately as may be, and this Ricardo has given us; but it is also desirable that we should be able to turn our knowledge to account,—to see some end at which it is worth while to aim, and to choose the means which will conduce towards it; this we can do better, not merely intuitively and by haphazard, but on reasoned grounds, since the attempt was first made by Mill.

*under the influence of John Stuart Mill*

The change was not only noticeable in the economic literature of the day, it comes out clearly in the work of the Legislature. Under the guidance of the *laissez faire* school Parliament had been inclined to hold its hand altogether, lest its action should only work mischief. The dominant party were satisfied, in accordance with the views of experts, to provide the conditions which tended to the most rapid material progress, in the expectation that if they sought this first, all other things would be added thereto, gradually and indirectly. From the time of the Peace of 1815 onwards, however, and more obviously in the Reformed Parliament,

*became dissatisfied with the mere consideration of means*

[1] *Principles of Political Economy*, Bk. IV. c. 7.



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there were signs of a determination to treat human welfare, in all its aspects, physical and moral, as an object of which definite and direct account should be taken by Parliament in the work of legislation.

The elements of which human welfare consists are very various, and there have been and are very different views current of the relative importance of the factors which contribute towards it. Material conditions, and personal faculties and character, react on one another; there may be great diversity of opinion as to the best starting-point to take in trying to introduce improvement. Even greater difficulties arise in regard to the means to be adopted; the habits and character of the individual are to a large extent formed by the society in which he lives; while it is also true that the tone and institutions of society can be modified by the individuals of whom it is composed. Wide divergences in regard to social questions of every sort are likely to follow from differences of opinion, or inability to form opinions, on the relations of Man and his environment, and on the mutual connections between human society and individual lives. But those who disagree on fundamental principles may yet chance to find themselves, from time to time, in the same camp They may agree that a step should be taken in some definite direction, possibly for incompatible reasons, and because they cherish opposite anticipations as to the results to be expected. The advocates of any movement for social amelioration may have very different views as to the precise importance of the object which they desire; and there may also be casual conjunction among the opponents of a proposed change. Even those who are most closely agreed, in their aims and objects, may be much divided on questions of expediency, and have very different views as to the wisest course to pursue at particular junctures. As the force of the *laissez faire* movement was dissipated, a fusion of conflicting principles and views occurred, and a new body of legislation on social and industrial topics eventually emerged; but it is difficult to assess the precise influence of each of the distinct parties, and groups, in shaping the course that was actually taken. The intervention of the Legislature was experimental

*and began to feel after a better ideal of human life,*

*and to work at the conditions*

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and tentative; the final form which each measure assumed was the result of compromise; it is singularly hard to trace the connection between opinion and action. There was, at least, a very general consensus of feeling that something must be done, and that it was worth while for the State to make definite efforts to foster and promote human well-being. We can follow the course of affairs most easily if we fix our attention in turn on subjects which successively attracted the consideration of Parliament. There were (*a*) some measures which tended to the amelioration of existing conditions by giving a better status to the workman personally; (*b*) some which were specially directed to improving the conditions of work in various callings; while (*c*) others embodied attempts to ensure more favourable conditions of life.

*which were necessary to realise it.*

*Attempts had been made to put down the cruel treatment of parish apprentices,*

These objects had not of course been wholly ignored even in the days when the Industrial Revolution was in full swing, and *laissez faire* was dominant. The horrors of the slave trade[1] and the condition of pauper apprentices generally had deservedly excited commiseration and called forth legislative interference[2] and charitable efforts[3], and Acts were passed for improving the position of Scotch colliers[4], for protecting sailors[5] against evils precisely similar to those to which Mr Plimsoll afterwards called attention[6]. Some pains were taken to define their proper rations[7], and attempts were made to secure the humane treatment of Lascar and other Asiatic sailors during their sojourn in this country[8]. The continued interest which was shown in improving the condition of negro slaves, and the diplomatic engagements with

[1] See above, pp. 477, 607.

[2] "Whereas many grievances have arisen from the binding of poor children as apprentices by Parish officers to improper Persons and to Persons residing at a distance from the Parishes to which such poor Children belong, whereby the said Parish Officers and Parents of such Children are deprived of the opportunity of knowing the manner in which such Children are treated and the Parents and Children have in many Instances become estranged from each other,' etc. 56 Geo. III. c. 139

[3] A philanthropic society for training and apprenticing neglected children of both sexes was founded in 1788, and organised an industrial school called the Philanthropic Reforms in S. George's Fields. *An account of the nature and views of the Philanthropic Society*, 6.

[4] See above, p. 531.

[5] 31 Geo. III. c. 39; 3 and 4 Vic. c. 36.

[6] 3 Hansard, ccxiv. 1319.

[7] 30 Geo. III. c. 33. This Act only applied to the African trade.

[8] 54 Geo. III. c. 134.



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other lands, into which we entered with the view of benefiting them, are an interesting evidence of a wider range of humanitarianism than had been observable before. English philanthropy showed itself in many directions; it was a sentiment which was aroused by human misery and degradation, either at home or abroad; thus it gave rise, on the one hand, to protective measures on behalf of certain classes of the community, and on the other, to cosmopolitan intervention in favour of down-trodden races. This sentiment was closely connected with the evangelical revival[1] and with religious activity at home and abroad.

*and other abuses at home and abroad,*

The importance of this humanitarian and philanthropic movement became more obvious in 1796, in a time of serious privation, when the *Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor* was founded by Dr Shute Barrington, Bishop of Durham, and Sir Thomas Bernard[2]. Their energy came to be more and more concentrated in promoting the spread of education[3], and in this matter the economic experts and philanthropists could make common cause. There was a free field to work in, for the educational facilities, which had been compatible with the ages of civic economy and domestic manufacture,

*and positive efforts to better the condition of the poor,*

[1] The association of religion and philanthropy was very close among the prominent men of the so-called 'Clapham Sect.' Hutton, in *Social England*, vi. 20. The precursors of the evangelical movement had taken a different line, as they retained the Puritan attitude both in regard to slavery and the reckless treatment of natives. Whitefield complains when writing in Georgia (1738), "The people were denied the use both of rum and slaves * * * So that in reality to place people there on such a footing was little better than to tie their legs and bid them walk." Tyerman, *Whitefield*, i. 141.

[2] Holyoake, *Self-help, a hundred years ago*, p. 19.

[3] The *Reports of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor* show an increasing interest in this matter, especially as the Malthusian doctrine took firmer hold, and the advantages of parochial charities or cheap foods came to be questioned. (See a paper read at the Owestry Society, *Remarks on the Present State of the Poor*, 1826; Brit. Mus. 8277. c. i. (2) p. 16.) The formation of the British School Society (1808) and the National Society (1811) is additional evidence of the importance attached to it. The immediate effects promised well. "Last August (1807), being at Rodburgh, in Gloucestershire, I (Dr Haygarth) inquired what effect had been produced upon the inhabitants by the introduction of machinery into the woollen manufactures of that valley, fearing to receive a very unfavourable report. But I was informed that the poor manufacturers had lately become much more orderly, sober, and industrious; and as a proof of the truth of this remark the landlord of the Inn assured me that he now sold £300 worth less of ale and spirits in a year than he had done fourteen years ago. This change in the behaviour and morals of the people he wholly ascribed to the effect of their education by dissenters." *Of the Education of the Poor* (1809), p. 39 (Brit. Mus. 288. g. 17).

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were unsuited to the wants of the new era. Apprenticeship had offered a system of training, not only in the skill of a craft, but for the duties of life in a particular calling and a definite social status. There was need to substitute some system, which should be adapted for the wider prospects which were opening up, and which should treat each child as a unit in the State. It was possible for the manufacturers to urge that the discontent, and still more the violence, of the operatives was due to their ignorance, and that education was the means which would enable them to act not from short-sighted passion, but from an enlightened self-interest. The education of the poor thus came to be undertaken on a large scale, partly out of charity[1] and partly as a work to which the governing classes applied themselves in mere self-defence.

*by providing new means of education,*

*were generally welcomed.*

The philanthropists could not count, however, on the interested support of manufacturers, when they turned their attention to the conditions under which the great staple industries of the country were carried on; and the best scientific opinion of the day was inclined to condemn any interference by the State, as useless when it was not mischievous. Economic experts were on the whole opposed to the protective legislation which was brought forward in the interests of women and children. They had foretold the ruin

[1] Godwin had been one of the most effective advocates of the diffusion of education, from the desire of letting the poor see where their true interest lay (*Political Justice*, I. 44). The earliest efforts of Government were deliberately confined to supplementing voluntary agency, and any other course appeared to them injurious. "In humbly suggesting what is fit to be done for promoting universal education, your Committee do not hesitate to state that two different plans are advisable, adapted to the opposite circumstances of the town and country districts. Wherever the efforts of individuals can support the requisite number of schools, it would be unnecessary and injurious to interpose any parliamentary assistance. But your Committee have clearly ascertained, that in many places private subscriptions could be raised to meet the yearly expenses of a school, while the original cost of the undertaking, occasioned chiefly by the erection and purchase of the school-house, prevents it from being attempted. Your Committee conceive that a sum of money might be well employed in supplying this first want, leaving the charity of individuals to furnish the annual provision requisite for continuing the school" (*Third Report of Select Committee on the Education of the Lower Orders*, in *Reports*, *1818*, IV. 59). In accordance with these views Lord Althorp succeeded in 1833 in obtaining some grants to defray the first cost of elementary schools. The work of adult education which was being vigorously carried on in Mechanics' Institutes, though begun somewhat earlier, received a new impulse at this time.



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of this trade or that, and had prophesied ultimate and serious loss[1]. It seems as if it would have been impossible for the humanitarians, even with the sympathy of some of the landed gentry and the approval of unrepresented artisans, to make any impression on the phalanx opposed to them, if it had not been for the results obtained by Robert Owen. In his mills at New Lanark he realised the ideals of the humanitarians of the day. His system attracted very general attention, and though it was not destined to last, it sufficed to demonstrate that extraordinary improvement, in conditions of work and habits of life, was not by any means necessarily incompatible with commercial success. From the first he made the condition of the living machinery the main object of his consideration; and what he accomplished was wonderful. In the sphere which came within his own control, he anticipated most of the reforms which were carried through subsequently by legislation. But the principles by which he accounted for his own success, and on which he based his advocacy, were not generally acceptable, so that comparatively few of those who admired him were able and willing to work with him. His enthusiasm and personal character commended him to a wide and influential body of the public, but his economic principles[2] roused the scorn of the experts[3], and his attitude towards Christianity alienated the sympathy of some of his supporters.

*Robert Owen had extraordinary practical success*

*at New Lanark,*

Robert Owen had already acquired considerable experience in the cotton trade in Manchester before 1797, when an opportunity occurred for him to take over the management of mills at New Lanark. The situation was excellent, as there was abundance of water-power, and labour had been

[1] It was in no small degree the work of John Stuart Mill that this opposition has so greatly ceased; and that economists have so largely devoted themselves to the conscious and reasoned pursuit of philanthropic objects. It was in connection with the abolition of slavery that the forebodings of the economists were most nearly fulfilled; Cairnes, the most brilliant of the followers of Mill, in his *Slave Power* demonstrated the economic weakness of the system which the philanthropists condemned on moral grounds.

[2] He was opposed to the doctrines of Malthus, he advocated the limitation of machinery, and cherished some curious notions about the currency. *Life of R. Owen*, written by himself. Supplementary Appendix, 266.

[3] Compare the criticism in the *Edinburgh Review* (Oct. 1819), XXXII. 467.

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attracted in considerable quantities from the Highlands. The mills had been admirably managed by Mr David Dale, who had established them[1], and Owen made few changes at first. After he had had fourteen years' experience, the business at New Lanark was reconstructed on lines which gave him a freer hand to develop educational institutions[2]; these were partly supported by the profits of a shop at which articles of good quality were sold in small quantities at moderate prices. About the same time he formulated his doctrines more definitely in his *New View of Society*[3]; he insisted on the

*not only in his schools and co-operative store, but*

[1] See the account by Sir T. Bernard in the *Reports of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor*, II. 251. Mr Dale took workhouse children at an early age, but though they were well fed and cared for, Owen regarded the arrangement as injurious and discontinued it. *Reports, etc.* 1816, III. 254.

[2] Owen's evidence before the Committee in 1816 is very instructive. "There is a preparatory school into which all the children, from the age of three to six, are admitted at the option of the parents; there is a second school, in which all the children of the population from six to ten are admitted; and if any of the parents from being more easy in their circumstances and setting a higher value upon instruction, wish to continue their children at school, for one, two, three or four years longer, they are at liberty to do so.

"A store was opened at the establishment into which provisions of the best quality, and clothes of the most useful kind were introduced, to be sold at the option of the people, at a price sufficient to cover prime cost and charges, and to cover the accidents of such a business, it being understood at the time that whatever profits arose from this establishment these profits should be employed for the general benefit of the workpeople themselves; and these school establishments have been supported as well as other things by the surplus profits, because in consequence of the pretty general moral habits of the people there have been very few losses by bad debts, and although they have been supplied considerably under the price of provisions in the neighbourhood, yet the surplus profits have in all cases been sufficient to bear the expense of these school establishments; therefore they have been literally supported by the people themselves.

"I have found other and very important advantages in a pecuniary view from this arrangement and these plans. In consequence of the individuals observing that real attention is given to their comforts and to their improvements, they are willing to work at much lower wages at that establishment." He added an example of a man getting 18*s.* a week, who went to Glasgow for 21*s.* and was glad to come back for 14*s.*

The schools did not succeed in Manchester because the children could go into the manufactories younger. Owen only took them at 10. "I found that there were such strong inducements held out, from the different manufactories in the town and neighbourhood, to the parents, to send the children early to work, that it counterbalanced any inclination such people had to send them to school." *Reports*, 1816, III. p. 256, printed pagination 22.

[3] "Any general character from the best to the worst, from the most ignorant to the most enlightened, may be given to any community even to the world at large, by the application of proper means; which means are to a great extent at the command and under the control of those who have influence in the affairs of



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possibility of so moulding the characters of individuals that they might find personal happiness in conduct which conduces to the common good, and he supported his principles by facts drawn from experience among his own workmen. For the next ten years the arrangements and organisation at New Lanark attracted thousands of visitors; as Owen appeared to have demonstrated the possibility of providing the best conditions for the training of children, and bringing elevating influences to bear on the hands, in connection with the working of a large mill. The success which was due to his personal business ability, he himself regarded as testifying to the wisdom of his doctrines; his desire to give them more thorough effect, led to differences with his partner, and in 1829 he severed his connection with New Lanark. From this time he became more of a dreamer and lost much of the remarkable influence he had exercised; the failure of experiments to organise establishments on his principles at Orbiston[1], and at New Harmony[2] in Indiana, discredited him still farther; but the impression created by his work at New Lanark had been invaluable in convincing the public that deliberate attempts to improve the condition of the operatives were far from hopeless. Others were inspired to emulate his example, and it is hardly possible to exaggerate the effect of the impulse he gave to the work of social amelioration. His influence was felt in many ways, but it was in connection with factory reform that it proved most potent. He did not attempt to adapt the system of by-gone days to the needs of the present[3], but he boldly made a new departure, in the hope of introducing an infinitely better future. The improvement of character was the aim he put chiefly before him, but, as a means to that end, he became the pioneer of industrial reform. He fought all the evils of the day,—the stunting of children in mind and body, insanitary conditions of work and life, and truck; he demonstrated

*in managing his mill so as to contribute to*

*the elevation of the operatives in character.*

men. *A New View of Society or Essays on the principles of the formation of the Human Character preparatory to the development of a plan for gradually ameliorating the condition of Mankind.* First published in 1813 (1816), 19.

[1] This was conducted, after 1826, on communistic principles.

[2] Booth, *Robert Owen*, 97—104.

[3] As had been done in the first Factory Act. See above, p. 631.

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the practicability of improvement by setting an example, and he was ready to join in inducing the Government to enquire into the system and introduce remedial legislation[1]. But this was not a task that could be carried through at once. It required a long continued agitation, and years of legislative and administrative activity, to bring up the conditions of textile industry in the country generally to those which he had voluntarily introduced in connection with his own works.

*The status of workmen was improved*

**267.** The influence of the economic experts had been used for the most part to justify the views of the capitalists and manufacturers. Their main efforts had been directed to sweeping away restrictions on the employment of capital, but they were after all in sympathy with any changes which gave greater freedom and independence to the labourer. So far as his position was concerned, the principles of *laissez faire* had a constructive, as well as a destructive tendency. There were various ways in which the individual labourer was hampered in the effort to obtain employment on the best terms available. His opportunities for bargaining were restricted by the legislation which prevented him from enjoying freedom of movement, and also by the Combination Acts which refused him the liberty to associate himself with his fellows for the prosecution of their common interests. These limitations, on whatever grounds they might be excused, were infractions of personal liberty, and as such seemed to be inconsistent with generally accepted principles.

*by altering the conditions for the settlement of the poor,*

In regard to the restrictions on freedom of movement there was, about 1820, a general consensus of opinion in favour of sweeping them away. The hindrances which prevented artisans from travelling within the country had never been intentionally imposed; they had grown up incidentally since the Restoration in connection with the administration of the poor law. The overseers of each parish were careful to prevent any artisan from being hired for a year, as that period of service gave him a settlement or the right to relief in his new locality[2]. As a consequence the eighteenth century

[1] See below, p. 776.

[2] The Act had the effect of gradually revolutionising the conditions of employment in rural districts. "The fear that in hiring a servant or treating a servant in any way that might be construed into a yearly hiring, the employer, for the temporary advantage of the service which he could obtain nearly as well in another way, should subject himself and all his parish to a permanent charge, operated immediately to put an end throughout England and Wales to all permanent and annual hirings. Previously, the Statutes of labourers and the habits of the country made the yearly service the common rule in all such transactions; but from the time when the Acts of William's reign gave the settlement by a year's hiring and by a year's service, it became necessary to make a break in the engagement and employment, or to make the contract but a part of the year. The interval of non-employment thus caused, being almost universally at one time—Michaelmas,—became a time of idleness and corruption, especially to the younger people.

"The practice of keeping in the same house, whether of the gentry, the farmers, the tradesmen, or the artisans, of young lads and maids as part of the family, which had been universal before, was now as universally abandoned; an irretrievable national loss, by which a valuable moral education and an economical and industrial training of the very poorest and most numerous class of the people was sacrificed for ever.

"The servants thus thrown out, the young people thus cut off from permanent, comfortable and improving employment, were made an incumbrance of the over-peopled cottages, of their families, idlers on the road side or common, and with fearful rapidity the tenants of the parish houses, and the dependents on parochial relief. The more mature in age became the frequenters of the ale-shops, the complaint of the growth of which accompanied the progress of able-bodied pauperism and of poaching, and other rural crimes from this time forwards." Sir G. Coode, *Report on the Law of Settlement*, in *Reports*, 1851. XXVI. 272, printed pag. 78.



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labourers were almost as closely astricted as the mediaeval villeins to the places of their birth for permanent engagements. This restriction, the injustice of which had been denounced by Tucker[1], was first set aside in the case of members of Friendly Societies by Mr Rose's Act[2], and according to a subsequent measure, no person was liable to removal until he had actually become chargeable[3]. The Act of 1834[4], by abolishing settlement by service, did away with the motive for preventing the incursion of new comers; and the legislation of 1865, which constituted one year's continuous residence a title to irremovability, and abolished removal from one parish to another within the same union, has gone a long way to reduce the mischief of the system to a minimum[5].

*and by repealing the restrictions on emigration,*

The restrictions on the emigration of artisans were of a different character; these had been originally introduced with a view to protecting our own industries, and preventing the disclosing of trade secrets to foreigners[6]. The hardship

[1] *Manifold causes of the Increase of the Poor* (1760), p. 6. Also by A. Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, 58, 191.

[2] 33 Geo. III. c. 54.

[3] 35 Geo. III. c. 101.

[4] 4 and 5 W. IV. c. 64.

[5] Mackay, *op. cit.* III. 364.

[6] See above, p. 587.

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caused by these measures was generally admitted; and a Parliamentary Committee of 1819, on the Relief of the Poor[1], expressed a decided opinion that "all obstacles to seeking employment wherever it can be found, even out of the realm, should be removed and every facility that is reasonable afforded to those who may wish to resort to our own colonies, for it seems not unnatural that this country should at such a time recur to an expedient which has been adopted successfully in other times, especially as it has facilities for this purpose which no other state has ever enjoyed to the same extent, by the possession of Colonies affording an extent of unoccupied territory."

In 1824 a Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to make enquiries and take steps for the removal of these disabilities. Huskisson and other statesmen, who were adherents of the school of Adam Smith, were quite ready to recognise the injustice of imposing any obstacles on freedom of individual movement and were prepared for the repeal of the Acts against emigration[2], but they were by no means clear that it was wise to remove the Combination Laws. Baneful as the Acts were, in creating an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust and forcing the artisan into criminal surroundings, there was some doubt as to the probable effects on the industry of the country, if the measures were repealed, and liberty of association extended to the artisan as well as to other Englishmen. The question of including these Acts in the measure, which was being framed for the removal of other restrictions, long hung in the balance; but some of the most eminent *laissez faire* economists had the courage of their principles. McCulloch, who was then editor of the *Scotsman* newspaper, was fully convinced on this point, and in a trenchant article in the *Edinburgh Review*[3] he demonstrated the injustice of the Combination Laws, and argued that no serious mischief could result from their repeal. It is scarcely likely, however, that the experiment would have been tried, if it had not been for the vigour with which

*as well as by the repeal of the Combination Acts.*

[1] *Reports*, 1819, II. 257.

[2] This was effected by 5 Geo. IV. c. 97, *An Act to repeal the Laws relative to Artificers going into foreign parts.*

[3] Jan. 1824, Vol. XXXIX. 315.



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Francis Place, a London tailor[1] who had been deeply impressed by the injustice and impolicy of the Acts[2], marshalled the evidence against them, and the sturdiness with which Joseph Hume fought for repeal. He insisted on including the Combination Laws in the reference to the Select Committee, he drafted the resolutions[3] which were based on the evidence presented, and he succeeded in carrying the measures with a minimum of discussion in both Houses[4].

*Despite an outbreak of strikes,*

And then the trouble began. The immediate effect of the repeal was the outbreak of a number of strikes, which could not now be suppressed in the old fashion; the forebodings of the opponents of repeal were confirmed, and the expectations of Place and his friends were completely falsified[5].

[1] This remarkable man, with the assistance of the *Gorgon*, organised the whole campaign which was eventually successful; he convinced both Hume and McCulloch, the public champions of the cause, of the mischief wrought by the Acts. Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, 88.

[2] He was specially impressed by the injustice committed in the prosecution of the *Times* printers in 1810, when curiously enough this case proceeded under the common law of conspiracy and not under the Combination Act of 1800 at all. *Place Papers*, Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. 27801, p. 282. The men were imprisoned for two years, whereas three months was the greatest penalty that could be inflicted under the Act of 1800. The *Times* wrote in a leader on the subject (June 4, 1824), *Place Papers*, 27801, p. 164. "The aggrieved party did not choose to prosecute upon the Combination Laws, and for an obvious reason, because he knew that by those laws the offenders could only be sentenced to two or three months' imprisonment, and that they had funds subscribed to maintain all of them in idleness for a much longer period. He therefore went upon the Common Law of the land for conspiracy, and obtaining sentences of two years', of eighteen months' and of nine months' duration (though he himself sued for a remission to the penitent as soon as they were penitent) yet he by that method ruined their funds whilst he was anxious that their persons should suffer as little as possible." Under these circumstances it is very singular that Place should have taken this case as typical of the injustice wrought by the Acts. He writes "It was this prosecution and its fatal consequences that made me resolve to endeavour to procure the repeal of the laws against combination of workmen." (Place, in Brit. Mus. Additional MSS. 27, 798, p. 7 back). It is still more singular that he should have been so satisfied with the repeal of the Acts when the Common Law remained. The statement of the *Times* does not seem to have been taken into account by a recent commentator on the law of combination. Wright (*Law of Criminal Conspiracies and Agreements*, p. 56) holds that there was no rule of common law that combinations for controlling masters were criminal in the 18th century, and that cases decided since 1825 afford a "modern instance of the growth of a crime at common law by reflection from statutes and of its survival after the repeal of those statutes."

[3] *Sixth Report of Committee on Artisans and Machinery* (1824), v. 589.

[4] Wallas, *Life of Francis Place*, 216. 5 Geo. IV. cc. 95, 97.

[5] Place persisted in his opinion that the repeal of the laws would bring about a disuse of combination eventually, though it was obvious that it had not done so at once. "Temporary associations, or combinations, as well of masters as of men,

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McCulloch had argued that peaceful combinations among workmen might raise the rate of wages in any trade, if they had fallen below the normal level; he held that combinations were powerless to raise wages above the natural rate. He argued that if they did so temporarily, there would be a diminution in the opportunities of employment offered by masters, and that this would soon work the needed cure, without legislative intervention; he was quite convinced that the working classes incurred heavy losses and could not possibly gain by engaging in strikes. It was a great disappointment to the men, who had worked so hard in the cause of repeal, that the first use which the working classes made of their freedom was to embark in a course of conduct that their advocates, as well as their opponents, regarded as necessarily mischievous, not only to the country as a whole, but to the operatives in particular. The dislocation of business in many places became very serious. The Thames shipbuilding trade was completely disorganised; despite the efforts of Hume and Place to prevent them[1], the Glasgow cotton-weavers came out on strike; and there were similar trade disputes in many parts of the country.

*which disappointed the advocates of repeal,*

*the Combination Acts were not reimposed,*

It was little wonder that the great shipowners and other employers[2] were roused to demand the re-enactment of the laws which had been so recently repealed, and drafted a bill to be laid before Parliament. Mr Huskisson had been much influenced by the ship-builders[3], and the opinion he had held as to the necessity of retaining the Combination Laws was so far confirmed by the results, that he was glad to have another Committee on the subject. According to Place[4], he intended to hold a formal enquiry, and thus give apparent sanction to the determination he had already taken to carry the shipowners' bill for re-enacting the laws. Hume and Place set themselves to balk this design: the operatives, who had formerly been

must occasionally take place; money matters can be regulated in no other way and by no other means; but beyond these there will be very little association of any kind, nothing deserving the name of combination in the sense this word is usually understood." *Observations on Mr Huskisson's Speech on the Laws relating to Combinations of Workmen* (1825), p. 21.

[1] Wallas, *Life of Francis Place*, 218.

[2] The great strike of woolcombers at Bradford was imminent, and the employers urged the desirability of re-enacting the Laws. Burnley, *Wool and Wool-combing*, 168. [3] Wallas, *Life of Francis Place*, 226. [4] *Ib.* 226.



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apathetic on the subject, were now keenly alive to the advantage of retaining their new-found freedom; and on the main issue they were successful, for Trade Unions were permitted to exist, but the operatives and their friends were defeated on one very important point. The Act of 1824[1] had protected combined workmen from prosecution for criminal conspiracy under the common law, and this privilege was not continued[2]; though the enacting clauses of the Act of 1825 appeared to Place to confer this immunity[3]. The responsible authorities, however, construed the Act differently; being disinclined to give the unions free scope to develop, they took advantage of every opportunity to show the suspicion they felt[4]. Henceforward Trade Unions had a legal right to exist, but their members were in constant danger of overstepping the narrow limits within which combined action was admissible[5]. But agreement

*and the right of forming Trade Unions was established;*

[1] 5 Geo. IV. c. 95 § 2.

[2] It seems that the Committee hoped that the operation of the Common Law should be in future rendered more favourable to the workmen. "Your Committee however in recommending that the common law should be restored are of opinion that an exception should be made to its operation, in favour of meetings and consultations amongst either masters or workmen, the object of which is peaceably to 'consult upon' the rate of wages to be either given or received, to agree to co-operate with each other in endeavouring to raise or lower it, and to settle the hours of labour; an exception, they trust, which, while it gives to those in the different classes of masters and workmen the ample means of maintaining their respective interests, will not afford any support to the assumption of power or dictation in either party to the prejudice of the other, least of all that assumption of control on the part of the workmen in the conduct of any business or manufacture which is utterly incompatible with the necessary authority of the master, at whose risk and by whose capital it is to be carried on." *Report from the Select Committee on the Combination Laws* (1825), IV. 508.

[3] Wallas, *op. cit.* 238. Place evidently had no great confidence in this view, however. The nature of the difference between the two Acts may be rendered clear when we recall the fact that a recurrence of the printers' prosecution and sentences in 1810, which would have been prohibited by the Act of 1824, was perfectly possible under the Act of 1825. See above, p. 757 n. 2.

[4] When, in August 1833, the Yorkshire manufacturers presented a memorial on the subject of "the Trades Union," Lord Melbourne directed the answer to be returned that "he considers it unnecessary to repeat the strong opinion entertained by His Majesty's Ministers of the criminal character and the evil effects of the unions described in the Memorial," adding that "no doubt can be entertained that combinations for the purposes enumerated are illegal conspiracies, and liable to be prosecuted as such at common law." Webb, *Trade Unionism*, p. 127.

[5] "Although combination for the sole purpose of fixing hours or wages had ceased to be illegal, it was possible to prosecute the workmen upon various other pretexts. Sometimes, as in the case of some Lancashire miners in 1832, the Trade Unionists were indicted for illegal combination for merely writing to their employers that a strike would take place. (R. v. Bykerdike, 1 Moo and Rob, 179, Lancaster Assizes, 1832. A letter was written to certain coal-owners, 'by order

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to engage in a strike had ceased to be in itself criminal; the weapon which the operatives thus secured was one which might be used very unwisely and foolishly, but it was something to have a weapon, and to be able to try to enforce their own side in trade disputes. In 1824 the operatives had been fairly successful in bringing pressure to bear[1] on their employers; but owing to the depressed state of trade, the conditions in the following years were less favourable, and the unions failed in their attempts to stop the reduction of wages. The most severe contest occurred in the wool-combing trade at Bradford; a strike was organised by a large union among the hands, which received much support from sympathisers in other towns. The committee were able to pay as much as £800 or £900[2] a week to the men on strike, and the operatives succeeded to a very large extent in boarding out their children during the summer months; the men appeared to be holding well together, while there were some dissensions among the masters, who had entered on an aggressive policy and were endeavouring to break up the union altogether. The Leeds wool-combers joined those of Bradford in their strike; but, after standing out for twenty-two weeks, the men were forced to give in on every point, and returned to work at the wages which they had been receiving five months before; this, according to the contention of the masters, was the highest rate that the trade would bear. The loss in wages amounted to £40,000, though something like half this sum had been received in the form of subscrip-

*the men were defeated in the struggles at Bradford*

of the Board of Directors for the body of coal-miners,' stating that, unless certain men were discharged, the miners would strike. Held to be an illegal combination. See *Leeds Mercury*, May 24, 1834.) Sometimes the 'molestation or obstruction' prohibited in the Act of 1825 was made to include the mere intimation of the men's intention to strike against the employment of non-unionists. In a remarkable case at Wolverhampton in August, 1835, four potters were imprisoned for intimidation, solely upon evidence by the employers that they had 'advanced their prices in consequence of the interference of the defendants who acted as plenipotentiaries for the men,' without, as was admitted, the use of even the mildest threat. (*Times*, August 22, 1835.) Picketing, even of the most peaceful kind, was frequently severely punished under this head, as four Southwark shoemakers found, in 1832, to their cost. (*Poor Man's Guardian*, September 29, 1832.) More generally the men on strike were proceeded against under the laws relating to masters and servants, as in the case of seventeen tanners at Bermondsey in February 1834, who were sentenced to imprisonment for the offence of leaving their work unfinished. (*Times*, February 27, 1834.)" Webb, *Trade Unionism*, pp. 127–8.

[1] Webb, *Trade Unionism*, p. 99.

[2] Burnley, *Wool and Wool-combing*, 169.



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tions to the union. When the work was taken up again some seventeen hundred men found that their places were occupied and that they could not return to the employment they had given up[1]. Their union was broken up; and a six months' strike among the carpet-weavers at Kidderminster was also a disastrous failure. The repeal of the Acts seemed to have done nothing for the benefit of the operatives; but, though the loss from trade disputes has been very great, it was an immense advantage to the community that these differences could be fought out above-board and not by secret and criminal means, while the working classes have gained enormously in self-respect and independence by the fact that they were not debarred from fighting their own cause. The moral effect of the repeal, in removing the sense of helplessness and apathy which had oppressed the working classes, was extraordinary, and it marks an era in the history of Trade Unions. Hitherto they had either been secret societies of a most unwholesome type, since they could only hope to attain their objects by criminal action, and were sometimes held together by a species of terrorism, or they had been constituted as Friendly Societies and engaged surreptitiously in trade affairs; but from this time onward the action of Trade Unions, which existed for the purpose of maintaining the standard of life[2] among a particular class of artisans, could be clearly differentiated from other benefit societies.

*and Kidderminster,*

*but by combining to maintain the standard of life*

The changed status which the artisans secured by the

[1] The Bradford manufacturers were inclined to forestall the recurrence of such demands by the introduction of machinery. Though so many years had elapsed since Cartwright's wool-combing machine had been invented, it had not as yet been generally introduced; despite the commotion which had attended its first introduction some thirty years before, the wool-combers appear to have believed that the scare was idle, and that machines could not really compete with hand labour, except perhaps in wools of a special sort, the combing of which was badly paid. In 1825, the men still shared this confidence, and the assertion that the masters would introduce machinery was regarded as an empty threat. There can be but little doubt that the events of that year, disastrous alike to masters and men, gave a stimulus to the improvement and introduction of machinery, and before 1845 the trade was completely revolutionised.

[2] *The Select Committee on Manufacturers' Employment* (1830) recognised the advantage which accrued to the London tailors and other organised trades from the fact that they had funds from which an out-of-work benefit was paid. They proposed the extension of friendly societies which should have this object, but which would not as they hoped act as combinations to keep up the rate of wages in the manufacture of articles of export. *Reports*, 1830, x. 228.

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repeal of the Combination Acts had very little immediate and apparent result as gauged by the improved terms they obtained from their employers, but for all that it was of fundamental importance. The alliance which Place effected between the advocates of artisan interests and the Radicals in Parliament was exceedingly significant; eventually it proved to be extraordinarily fruitful. To the public the Trade Union appeared to be an immoral terroriser, oppressing the individual; but the Radicals, whom Place instructed, insisted that the questions which had been raised should be decided in such a sense as to give legal protection to the individual labourer in asserting his claims. The Radical sense of justice demanded that the labourer should be in the same position as the employer in this matter, and that the combination of labourers should not be regarded as a crime, when the combinations of masters were permitted to exist. The Radical sense of justice was also involved in the assertion of the principle which lay at the basis of Trade Union agitation up till 1875,—that no action which was legal, if done by other persons for other purposes, should be condemned as criminal when it was done by a Trade Union for trade purposes.

*they have, with the assistance of the Radicals,*

*secured a large measure of freedom for joint action.*

The association of labour movements with Radicalism has brought about a new cleavage in English political life. Hitherto the landed gentry had been inclined to take the responsibility of doing their best to protect the labourer from the capitalist and moneyed man; but they were now viewed with suspicion by the artisans, for the corn-law agitation had opened up a wide gulf between the industrial and agricultural interests. Nor were the Whigs, who came into power with the Reform Bill, inclined to break with their capitalist connection, and to trust the artisan with any real power in the matters which concerned him most deeply. The Radicals had insisted that he should have fair play, so far as the administration of the law was concerned; and this result was attained in 1875 by measures[1] passed in the first House of Commons in which the power of the enfranchised artisans was clearly felt[2].

[1] The Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act and Employers and Workmen Act (38 and 39 Vict. 86, 90).

[2] Webb, *Trade Unionism*, 270. The fact that the Conservatives were then in power did not greatly affect the attitude of working class leaders towards political parties.



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**268.** The poor law system, as administered during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, was not the least of the evils of the time. It was terribly costly in money[1] and threatened to bring utter ruin on some of the rural districts[2], while the burden of maintaining the system pressed very heavily on men who were little able to bear it. The methods of relief[3] adopted were demoralising. Sometimes assistance was given to the able-bodied poor in the form of food, or of fuel; more frequently they were enabled to obtain house-room on favourable terms, either by exemption from the rates[4], or grants towards the payment of rent[5]. There were also various

*The methods adopted for the relief of the poor*

[1] The average charge in 1748, 49, 50 had been £689,971 yearly. In 1776 the whole sum raised expended on the poor was £1,556,804; on the average of the years 1783, 1784, 1785, the sum expended on the poor was £2,004.238; in 1803 the sum expended on the poor was £4,267,965; in 1815 the sum expended on the poor amounted to £5,072,028. *Report from the Select Committee on Poor Laws* (1817), VI. 5, also App. C, *Reports*, 1821, IV. 277.

[2] The inhabitants of the parish of Wombridge in Salop stated that "the annual value of the lands, mines and houses in this parish is not sufficient to maintain the numerous and increasing poor, even if the same were to be set free of rent." *Report from the Select Committee on the Poor Laws* (1817), VI. 158, App. D.

[3] Mackay, *Public Relief of Poor*, pp. 52, 58—68.

[4] *Report*, 1834, XXVII. p. 9. The evidence in regard to S. Clement's, Oxford, is interesting. "The rents are, in fact, levied to a considerable degree upon those who pay rates. In the first place, by the abstraction of so much property from rateable wealth, the remainder has to bear a heavier burden; secondly, the rents are carried to as great a height as possible, upon the supposition that tenements so circumstanced will not be rated; the owner, therefore, is pocketing both rate and rent; and thirdly, the value of his property is increased precisely in proportion that his neighbour's is deteriorated, by the weight of rates from which his own is discharged. Neither is this all; as it is always regarded by the tenant as a desirable thing to escape the payment of rates, the field for competition is narrowed, and a very inferior description of house is built for the poor man. In order to make out a case for the non-payment of rates, it is necessary to have inconveniences and defects; and thus it happens that a building speculation, depending upon freedom from rates for its recommendation, always produces a description of houses of the worst and most unhealthy kind. Those who would build for the poor with more liberal views, and greater attention to their health and their comfort, are discouraged, and a monopoly is given to those whose sole end is gain, by whatever means it may be compassed."

[5] *Report*, 1834, XXVII. p. 9. "The payment of rent out of the rates is nearly universal; in many parishes it is extended to nearly all the married labourers. In Llanidloes out of £2,000 spent on the poor, nearly £800, and in Bodedern out of £360, £113, are thus exhausted. In Anglesea and part of Caernarvonshire, overseers frequently give written guarantees, making the parish responsible for the rent of cottages let to the Poor....Paupers have thus become a very desirable class of tenants, much preferable, as was admitted by several cottage proprietors, to the independent labourers, whose rent at the same time this mode of relief enhances. Of this I received much testimony; amongst others, an overseer of

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*by providing employment*

arrangements for securing employment to the poor; this was sometimes done by a parish when paupers were employed on the maintenance of roads[1], or even on the work of a small farm taken for the purpose[2]. In other cases the paupers were roundsmen set to work by private persons, but partly at the parish expense[3]. Another practice which was specially

Dolgelly stated that there were many apartments and small houses in the town not worth to let £1 a year, for which, in consequence of parochial interference with rents, from £1. 14*s.* to £2 was paid: and the clerk to the Directors of Montgomery House of Industry mentioned an instance of a person in his neighbourhood who obtained 10 cottages from the land owner at a yearly rent of £18, and re-let them separately for £50; eight of his tenants were parish paupers.

"This species of property being thus a source of profitable investment, speculation, to a considerable extent, has taken that direction."

[1] The pauper labour was so unprofitable that this practice was being discontinued in 1834. "The superintendent of pauper labourers has to ascertain, not what is an average day's work, or what is the market price of a given service, but what is a fair day's work for a given individual, his strength and habits considered, at what rate of pay for that work, the number of his family considered, he would be able to earn the sum necessary for his and their subsistence; and lastly, whether he has in fact performed the amount which, after taking all these elements into calculation, it appears that he ought to have performed. It will easily be anticipated that this superintendence is very rarely given; and that in far the greater number of the cases in which work is professedly required from paupers, in fact no work is done. In the second place, collecting the paupers in gangs for the performance of parish work is found to be more immediately injurious to their conduct than even allowance or relief without requiring work. Whatever be the general character of the parish labourers, all the worst of the inhabitants are sure to be among the number; and it is well known that the effect of such an association is always to degrade the good, not to elevate the bad. It was among these gangs, who had scarcely any other employment or amusement than to collect in groups and talk over their grievances, that the riots of 1830 appear to have originated" (*Report*, 1834, xxvii. p. 21). At Eastbourne, where the pauper labourer received sixteen shillings and the independent workman was only paid twelve, no wonder that two women there should complain of the conduct of their husbands in refusing to better their condition by becoming paupers. *Ib.* p. 23.

[2] See. in regard to the farm of the incorporated parishes in the Isle of Wight, *Report*, xxvii. 23; also for cases in East Anglia, App. A, pt. i. 346.

[3] "The Parish in general makes some agreement with a farmer to sell to him the labour of one or more paupers at a certain price, and pays to the pauper, out of the parish funds, the difference between that price and the allowance which the scale, according to the price of bread and the number of his family, awards to him. In many places the roundsman system is effected by means of an auction. Mr Richardson states that in Sulgrave, Northamptonshire, the old and infirm are sold at the monthly meeting to the best bidder, at prices varying, according to the time of the year, from 1*s.* 6*d.* a week to 3*s.*; that at Yardley, Hastings, all the unemployed men are put up to sale weekly, and that the clergyman of the parish told him that he had seen ten men the last week knocked down to one of the farmers for 5*s.*, and that there were at that time about 70 men let out in this manner out of a body of 170." *Report*, 1834, xxvii. p. 19.



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injurious to the chances of the non-pauper in securing employment was the labour-rate. By this system a ratepayer was obliged to employ a certain number of pauper labourers in accordance with his assessment; and to pay them regulated wages without reference to their work[1]. An employer might thus be forced to dismiss good hands in order to give employment to inefficient paupers. But by far the most common form of relief was the granting of money allowances to supplement wages according to a definite scale[2], though the practice of different counties was dissimilar, and some had hardly adopted it at all[3]. The granting of allowances per child has been freely stigmatised as a mischievous stimulus to population[4]; as a matter of fact it was much worse; there is some evidence to show that it acted as a direct

*and granting allowances*

[1] *Reports, etc.*, 1834, xxvii. 108.

[2] The calculations for the original Berkhampstead scale have been preserved by Eden, *The State of the Poor*, i. 577. The Cambridge scale issued by the magistrates for the town of Cambridge on 27 November, 1829, was as follows—

"The Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor are requested to regulate the incomes of such persons as may apply to them for relief or employment, according to the price of fine bread, namely,

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| "A single woman, the price of | . . . . | 3½ | quartern loaves per week. |
| "A single man | ,, . . . . | 4½ | ,, ,, |
| "A man and his wife | ,, . . . . | 8 | ,, ,, |
| ,, ,, | and one child the price of . | 9½ | ,, ,, |
| ,, ,, | and two children ,, . | 11 | ,, ,, |
| ,, ,, | and three ,, ,, . | 13 | ,, ,, |

"Man, wife, four children and upwards at the price of 2½ quartern loaves per head per week.

"It will be necessary to add to the above income in all cases of sickness or other kind of distress; and particularly of such persons or families who deserve encouragement by their good behaviour, whom parish officers should mark both by commendation and reward." *Reports, etc.*, xxvii. 13.

[3] In Northumberland, Cumberland, Lincolnshire, and parts of Worcestershire and Staffordshire, there was very little ground for complaint; in Suffolk, Sussex, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Dorsetshire and Wiltshire, things were at their worst. There was a serious difference in the rates of wages, and amount of relief allowed in the Wigan and in the Oldham districts of Lancashire. *Report from the Select Committee on Labourers' Wages*, 1824, vi. 405.

[4] "A surplus population is encouraged; men who receive but a small pittance know that they have only to marry, and that pittance will be augmented in proportion to the number of their children. Hence the supply of labour is by no means regulated by the demand, and parishes are burdened with thirty, forty, and fifty labourers, for whom they can find no employment, and who serve to depress the situation of all their fellow-labourers in the same parish. An intelligent witness, who is much in the habit of employing labourers, states that, when complaining of their allowance, they frequently say to him, 'We will marry, and you must maintain us'." *Report from Select Committee on Labourers' Wages.* 1824, vi. 404.

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incentive to immorality[1]. But the most patent evils arose from the fact that this scheme tended to render the inefficient pauper comfortable, at the expense of the good workman who really tried hard to earn his own living. The whole system must have had the effect of diminishing the rates of wages[2], and forcing men to depend upon assistance in one form or another from the rates. It was essential, if the rural population were to be rescued from dull acceptance of a miserable dependence[3], that the system should be fundamentally changed.

*were most demoralising*

In probing the existing evils, and devising possible remedies, several of the economic experts of the day did excellent service. Under any circumstances it would have been difficult to transform the system, but the task was rendered specially hard, since there were so many persons who had come to be directly interested in the maintenance of abuses and were opposed to any reform[4]. Some interesting

[1] Aschrott, *The English Poor Law System*, p. 30.

[2] "The practice of paying the wages of manufacturers out of the rates is strongly illustrated in the case of Collumpton, at a short distance from Tiverton, where the weaving of serge and cloth is carried on by two manufacturers...one of these manufacturers however receives at present regular annual payments from the parishes in the neighbourhood to employ their paupers, the sums paid being less than the cost of their support by the parishes...the first effect of such a measure was to increase the number of persons unemployed at Collumpton and consequently to reduce wages" (*Reports, etc.* 1834, XXVII. 43). This was not a solitary case. "A manufactory worked by paupers is a rival with which one paying ordinary wages of course cannot compete, and in this way a Macclesfield manufacturer may find himself under-sold and ruined in consequence of mal-administration of the Poor Laws in Essex." *Ib.* 43. Similar evidence comes from Leicestershire. "From the practice of parish officers, where trade is perhaps suffering under temporary depression, soliciting work for the number of men on their hands from the various manufacturers (at any price), and making up the remainder necessary for the support of their families out of the poor rate, good trade becomes in a great measure annihilated. Stocks become too abundant, and when a demand revives the markets are not cleared before a check is again experienced, the same practice is renewed by the parish officers, and thus the wily manufacturer produces his goods, to the great emolument of himself, half at the cost of the agricultural interest." *Ib.* 43.

[3] See above, p. 720.

[4] There was no end to the ramifications of the mischief in these pauperised parishes; many of the workhouses, which had once existed, had fallen into decay; and there was a great deal of perfectly safe business to be done in providing for the requirements of the paupers and obtaining payment from the parish. "The owner of cottage property," said Mr Nassau Senior, "found in the parish a liberal and solvent tenant, and the petty shop-keeper and publican attended the Vestry to vote allowances to his customers and debtors. The rental of a pauperised parish was, like the revenue of the Sultan of Turkey, a prey of which every administrator hoped to get a share." (*Edinburgh Review*, Vol. LXXIV. p. 23.)



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enquiries had been instituted by a Select Committee in 1817; but no useful result accrued from their labours. Matters dragged on till the Reformed Parliament set to work to investigate the subject with characteristic energy, and a Royal Commission was appointed in 1832.

*under various forms of administration.*

The Report of the Commission[1] testifies to the most curious variety in regard to the machinery for the administration of relief in different districts[2], and to the disastrous results of the policy which had been generally pursued[3]. There were some exceptions which proved the rule. At Southwell in Nottinghamshire, Sir George Nicholls had given great attention to the management of the workhouse; under his advice out-door relief was refused to the able-bodied, and given but rarely to others. The rates were reduced by this means between 1820 and 1823 from £2,006 to £517, and they remained at the latter figure[4]. Similar experience was adduced from Bingham and Cookham and Hatfield[5], where the able-bodied men were only allowed the opportunity of work at less than the current rates of wages; but on the other hand there were parishes where the pauper appeared to be supreme. At Cholesbury in Buckinghamshire, the poor-rate had risen from £10. 11*s.* in 1801 to £367 in 1832. Here the whole land was offered to the assembled poor, but they thought it wiser to decline and have it worked for their advantage on the old system[6]. This was an extreme instance of an evil that existed in different degrees throughout the country generally. The Report of the Commissioners helps us to understand how this disastrous state of affairs had been brought about; their suggestions as to remedial legislation were based on a careful diagnosis of the nature of the disease.

The whole machinery which had been created by the Elizabethan statute had got out of working order; the control which had been exercised by the Council in the period

[1] *Report from Commissioners for inquiring into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws.* (*Reports, etc.*, 1834, XXVII.)

[2] Many parishes retained the Elizabethan system, some were incorporated under Gilbert's Act, and some had private Acts. See p. 578 above.

[3] See above, 719 n. 3.

[4] Nicholls, *Hist. of Poor Law*, II. 229, 230; Becher, *The Anti-pauper System* (1828), 18.

[5] *Reports*, 1834, XXVII.

[6] Ashcrott, *op. cit.* 32.

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before the Civil War had ceased to be effective. Here and there exceptional men devoted themselves to grappling with the difficulties of the task in the early part of the nineteenth century, and the poor relief in their localities was admirably managed; but there were no means of bringing the practice in other places up to this standard. Throughout the country generally the local authorities, whether parochial overseers or county justices, varied between a policy of extreme severity and one of unwise laxity. The duty of the overseers, as they had for the most part understood and acted upon it, had been that of defending the parish against the establishment of new claims upon it, and of relieving the poor without any unnecessary cost. The tradition of the office had been one of harshness; this is the impression conveyed by Dr Burns' pungent sentences in 1764. "The office of an overseer seems to be understood to be this: to keep an extraordinary look-out to prevent persons coming to inhabit without certificates, and to fly to the justices to remove them; and if a man brings a certificate, then to caution all the inhabitants not to let him a farm of £10 a year, and to take care to keep him out of all parish offices; to warn them, if they will hire servants, to hire them half-yearly,.....or, if they do hire them for a year, then to endeavour to pick a quarrel with them before the year's end, and so to get rid of them. To bind out poor children apprentices, no matter to whom, or to what trade, but to take especial care that the master live in another parish[1]." It does not appear that there had been any marked improvement in the intervening period[2]. Certainly in those

*Neither the overseers*

[1] Burn, *History of Poor Law*, 211.

[2] See Gilbert, *Considerations on the Bills for the Better Relief and Employment of the Poor* (1787), p. 11. Also the statement in 1834: "As a body I found annual overseers wholly incompetent to discharge the duties of their office, either from the interference of private occupations, or from a want of experience and skill; but most frequently from both these causes, their object is to get through the year with as little unpopularity and trouble as possible, their successors therefore have frequently to complain of demands left unsettled and rates uncollected, either from carelessness or a desire to gain the trifling popularity of having called for fewer assessments than usual. In rural districts the overseers are farmers; in towns generally shopkeepers; and in villages usually one of each of those classes. The superiority of salaried assistant-overseers is admitted wherever they exist, and in nearly all the instances where a select vestry has fallen into desuetude, the assistant-overseer has been retained. In short so bad is the annual system considered, that an enactment was frequently proposed for compelling all parishes to appoint and remunerate permanent overseers." *Reports*, 1834, XXVII. p. 56.



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parishes where the Elizabethan administration was retained and the office was an annual one, the duties were discharged in a most perfunctory manner[1].

It cannot be said, moreover, that the supervision exercised over these parochial officers by the county magistrates was either judicious or effective. They appear to have been disinclined to support the overseers in any case whatever. The officials had got a reputation for harshness; and the justices seem to have thought that the easy course was also the safe one, and as a matter of fact they almost invariably supported the claims of applicants for relief, however undeserving they might be[2]. There seems to have been a

*nor the justices*

[1] The system of farming the poor-house presented the means by which the overseers could get rid of their responsibilities at least cost. It appears to have had disastrous results according to Sir W. Young, *Considerations on the subject of Poor-houses or Work-houses*, 1796, p. 8, and it does not even seem to have been economical. Compare *A Charge to the Overseers of the Poor*, by Sir T. Bernard. "We find, from the different returns throughout the kingdom, that, where workhouses have been farmed, though there was some saving at first, yet in a few years the expenses have thereby been greatly increased, and the poor-rate accumulated to an alarming amount. Where, indeed, a principal land-owner, or land-occupier, of a parish can be induced to contract for the parish workhouse, he has an interest in the permanent improvement of its condition, and in the diminution of the distresses of the poor; but where a vagrant speculating contractor visits your parish, with a view of making his incidental profit by farming your workhouse, we trust you will consider the Christian principle of doing as you would be done by; and that you will not confide the poor, whose guardian and protector it is your duty to be, to one, into whose hands you would not trust an acre of your land, or any portion of your own property." Hunter, *Georgical Essays*, II. 179.

[2] "Dr Webb, Master of Clare Hall, the present Vice-Chancellor of the University, has acted as county magistrate for more than sixteen years; and being resident a great part of the year at his vicarage in Littlington, he has personally superintended the relief of the poor in that parish, as well as in Great Gransden, in Huntingdonshire, where the college has been obliged to occupy a farm of 700 acres, in consequence of their not being able to obtain a tenant for the same at any price. He is strongly of opinion that a great part of the burthen of actual relief to the poor arises from the injudicious interference of magistrates, and the readiness with which they overrule the discretion of the overseers. He has attempted in both the parishes above-mentioned to introduce a more strict and circumspect system of relief—with great success in Littlington, as appears by the descending scale of poor-rates in that parish since 1816;...the population at the same time having nearly doubled itself since 1801....In Gransden he has found less success, being seldom personally present there, and acting principally through his bailiff. Also he had had less time by some years for effecting any steady improvement in that parish. He showed me, however, by a reference to the books, that he had made the practice of allowing relief to married men, when

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misplaced sense of duty in this matter[1], and the liberal spirit in which they treated the particular cases which came before them, rendered it almost impracticable for a capable overseer[2] to render the parochial administration even temporarily efficient. As the Commissioners reported of the greater part of the districts they had examined, "the fund, which the 43rd of Elizabeth directed to be employed in setting to work

employed by individuals, in respect of their families, entirely disappear from the late accounts. The principal impediment to the introduction of a better system, he found in the power of the pauper, when refused relief by the overseer, to apply to the bench in petty sessions; which nothing but the advantage of an intimate knowledge of his own parishioners, and of uniting in himself the functions, not the office, of overseer and magistrate, enabled him, by perseverance, to overcome. The following case is a sample of their unwillingness to take the circumstances or character of the applicant into due consideration. He refused relief (Nov. 27th, 1829) to Samuel Spencer, knowing him to have received a legacy of 400*l.* within two or three years before the application. The man applied to the bench in petty sessions, where Dr Webb produced to them an extract from the will (proved 1826), and the assurance of the executor that he had paid the pauper money since proving the will, to the amount above-mentioned. Notwithstanding this, they made an order of relief; and the man (able-bodied) has been from time to time on the rates ever since." *Extracts from Information received*, pp. 125, 126. *Appendix to First Report from the Commissioners on the Poor Laws*, 1834, XXVIII. p. 240.

[1] Prebendary Gisborne in writing on the duty of magistrates as regards the poor, seems to think, that their sole function was to be merciful, and not to help to render the system efficient. *Enquiry into the Duties of Man* (1795).

[2] "At Over," says Mr Power, "a village not far from Cottenham, I found a person of great judgment and experience in Mr Robinson, the principal farmer in that place. He is now serving the office of overseer for the fourth time. At present there are 40 men and more upon the parish; the average during eight months is 25. Part of this arises from farmers living at Willingham and Swavesey, occupying about one-fifth of Over parish; these persons employ none but Willingham and Swavesey labourers; it arises also in part from the growing indifference to private employment generated by the system of parish relief. A man with a wife and four children is entitled to 10*s.*, and more from the parish for doing nothing; by working hard in private employ he could only earn 12*s.*, and the difference probably he would require in additional sustenance for himself; consequently all motive to seek work vanishes. Coming into office this year, Mr Robinson found 12 married men on the box, some of the best men in the parish; he knew they could get work if they chose at that time; he set them to work digging a piece of land of his own at 3*d.* a rod; they earned that week only about 7*s.* 6*d.* each, though they might have earned 12*s.*; and the next week they disappeared to a man. He complains bitterly of the obstruction given to these exertions by the decisions of the magistrates; they are always against him, and he regrets some unpleasant words spoken to him very lately by one of the bench. On one occasion he had refused payment of their money to some men who would not keep their proper hours of work upon the road; they complained to the bench at Cambridge, and beat him as usual, and returned to Over, wearing favours in their hats and button-holes; and in the evening a body of them collected in front of his house, and shouted in triumph." *Reports*, 1834, XXVII. 77.



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children and persons capable of labour, but using no daily trade, and in the necessary relief of the impotent, is applied to purposes opposed to the letter, and still more to the spirit of that Law, and destructive to the morals of the most numerous class, and to the welfare of all[1]."

*exercised effective control; and*

Considerable changes were needed to give effect, under altered circumstances, to the aims which the Elizabethan legislators had had in view. The Commissioners of 1832 advocated the introduction of one type of administrative machinery throughout the country generally[2], and advised the appointment of a Poor-law Commission, which might be a permanent authority in all matters of administration, and which might use its influence to bring up the practice of the local functionaries in every part of the country to a satisfactory level[3]. There was need for the reintroduction of a central authority to exercise a general supervision, as the Council had done in Elizabethan times.

*there was need for a central authority*

They also proposed to adopt the safe course of being guided by actual experience in regard to the granting of assistance, and laid down the principle "that those modes of administering relief, which have been tried wholly or partially, and have produced beneficial results in some districts be introduced with modifications according to local circumstances, and carried into complete execution in all[4]." The first recommendation which they made was that "of abolishing all relief to able-bodied persons or their families except in well regulated workhouses." The re-institution of a workhouse test[5], which had been abandoned in 1782 and 1795, was the corner-stone of the new policy[6]; but in order that this position might be secured, it was necessary that proper management

*to introduce a better policy.*

[1] *Reports*, 1834, XXVII. p. 8.

[2] On the whole they recommended the system which was in vogue in the Gilbert incorporations as a model for general adoption.

[3] *Reports*, 1834, XXVII. 167. [4] *Ib.* 1834, XXVII. p. 146. [5] See above, 719 n. 3.

[6] It is extraordinary to see how many years passed, after the House of Commons was convinced of the necessity of recasting the system, before the change was actually carried out. The *Report* of the Commons Committee in 1759 advocates a scheme which is similar in many features to that actually adopted (*C. J.* XXVIII. 599); it appears to have been the basis of Mr Gilbert's first bill which passed the House of Commons in 1765 (*C. J.* XXX. 164) and was read a second time in the House of Lords (*L. J.* XXXI. 107) but never became law (*Parl. Hist.* XVIII. 544 and XXII. 301).

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should be introduced, as the condition of the existing houses, especially in small parishes, was disgraceful in the extreme[1].

*The Poor Law Commission*

The Act of 1834, which embodied the recommendations of the Commissioners in a less stringent form than they would themselves have desired, was passed by large majorities[2]. The new system did not get into complete working order for nearly ten years; but during that period, local administration was transferred to Boards of Guardians, elected for the purpose in each newly constituted union, and they employed salaried relieving officers[3]. A central authority was created in the Poor Law Commissioners, who were charged with the administration and control of public relief, and were empowered to make rules for the management of the poor, the government of workhouses, and the education and apprenticeship of poor children. Much of their time, during the first years of the Commission, was taken up with the formation of unions of parishes for the provision of workhouses, with introducing a proper classification of the inmates, and similar regulations in regard to discipline and diet, and with the laying down of orders in regard to the administration of relief. They were also given power to remove any workhouse master and any paid officer for incompetence, and without their permission no salaried officer might be dismissed. In this way the permanent officials were taught to look to the central government for orders rather than to the local board. Permanence was assured to them only if they obeyed the orders of the central government. The Act further directed the Commissioners

*reformed the workhouses*

[1] A. Young, *Conduct of Workhouses*, 1798, in *Annals*, xxxii. 387. Also the following remarks of the Commissioners. "In such parishes, when overburthened with poor, we usually find the building called a workhouse occupied by 60 or 80 paupers, made up of a dozen or more neglected children (under the care, perhaps, of a pauper), about twenty or thirty able-bodied adult paupers of both sexes, and probably an equal number of aged and impotent persons, proper objects of relief. Amidst these the mothers of bastard children and prostitutes live without shame, and associate freely with the youth, who have also the examples and conversation of the frequent inmates of the county gaol, the poacher, the vagrant, the decayed beggar, and other characters of the worst description. To these may often be added a solitary blind person, one or two idiots, and not unfrequently are heard, from amongst the rest, the incessant ravings of some neglected lunatic. In such receptacles the sick poor are often immured." *Reports*, 1834, xxvii. 170.

[2] 4 and 5 Will. IV. c. 76.

[3] Under the new *régime* the overseer was relieved of much of his responsibility and sank into the position of a rate-collector.



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to make rules for outdoor relief. These rules, which forbade relief to the able-bodied, were only applied at first in the worst districts, but were gradually extended to the whole country[1]. During the commercial depression of 1836, a great strain was put upon the new system, and the Commissioners came in for a full share of that unpopularity which the officials, under the older system, had so studiously endeavoured to avoid. Indeed there seemed to be some doubt as to whether Parliament would renew their powers, at the end of the five years for which they had been appointed. But the account of the work they had actually done, which they laid before Parliament, spoke strongly in their favour. Their powers were continued, from year to year, until 1842, and then for five years; before this term of office expired, they drew up the General Order of 1847; this lays down rules for continuing to work the new system[2] which the Commissioners had introduced. The public were beginning to realise, moreover, that the functions which had been discharged by the Commissioners could not be discontinued; and the Poor Law Board was organised as a permanent Government department in 1847[3]. The whole of England was divided into eleven districts, over which Inspectors were appointed. It became their duty to see that the orders of the central authority were carried out, while supervision over local bodies could be exercised by the systematic audit of their accounts. The new department was also brought into closer relations with the House of Commons. The Commissioners had been occasionally placed in a disagreeable position from the fact that there was no official to defend their conduct when it was criticised in Parliament; but under the new Act the President of the Board was eligible to sit in Parliament and

*and abolished out-door relief for the able-bodied;*

*it has been reorganised as a permanent department.*

[1] This was done by the Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order of 1844.

[2] Aschrott, *op. cit.* 47. Sir I. F. Lewis, Sir J. G. Shaw-Lefevre, and Sir George Nicholls were the three Commissioners who accomplished this great work. Chadwick was their secretary. Their action, of course, was deeply resented by the paupers and those who were interested in the abuses of the old system; but it also found many critics among doctrinaire politicians, who were afraid of the influence of centralised departments, and anxious that those who raised the money for the rates should have a full responsibility for the manner in which it was employed. McCulloch, *Principles of Political Economy*, 424.

[3] The Poor Law Board was merged in the Local Government Board in 1871.

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answer for the proceedings of his department, or initiate legislative improvements. By the establishment of a central authority with a power of control, similar to that which had been exercised by the Council in the time of Elizabeth, the worst evils which had characterised the long era of chaos were brought to an end. But the new administrative system, in all its parts, was the creation of Parliament; it was in complete accord with the institutions of a country which, while still preserving a monarchical form of government, had come to be very democratic in fact.

**269.** When Parliament was dealing with such matters as the removal of the personal disabilities of workmen and the reform of poor law administration, the philanthropists and the economists could unite in approving the changes. It was a different matter, however, when public attention was called to the baneful conditions under which work was carried on. Antagonism began to develop at once. The economists believed that any shortening of hours would certainly involve a reduction of the output, and that a reduction of wages must necessarily follow. They were of opinion that this decrease of command over the comforts and requisites of life would be fraught with serious evil for the poorer classes. Since it involved this prospective loss of wages and food, any gain to health, that might accrue from shortened hours, seemed to them wholly illusory. The agitators seemed to be mere sentimentalists, who wilfully shut their eyes to plain facts; the crusade might have appeared more reasonable, if the English manufacturers had had a monopoly and could conduct their business as they pleased; but in the existing conditions of trade, the employers felt that they were not free agents, and resented being branded as criminals. Foreign tariffs were prohibitive, and foreign industry was advancing; and as the restrictions on the import of corn hindered the sale of our goods abroad, manufacturers found it difficult to make any profit. It was stated in 1833 that for the seven preceding years, the cotton-spinners had hardly been able to carry on business at all[1], that the trade was in a most uncertain condition, and that capital was

*The Economists feared that any shortening of hours*

[1] 3 Hansard, XIX. 807.



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being frightened away to new investments[1]. The philanthropists were inclined to assume that English textile manufacturers had such a commanding position that, even if the hours were reduced and the cost of production increased, we could still hold our own. Many of the operatives hoped that, when the product was limited, prices would rise and their own wages would improve[2]. But this optimist view had little to support it. The cotton manufacture was springing up, both in the United States and in France; the annual output of these two countries alone was two-thirds of that of Britain[3], and there was a real danger of driving away trade, and therefore employment, altogether. As Lord Althorp said, when criticising the original form of the Factory measure in 1833, "Should its effect be (and he feared it was but too reasonable to apprehend it might be) to increase the power of foreigners to compete in the British market, and so to cause the decline of the manufacturing interest of the country * * * so far from a measure of humanity it would be one of the greatest acts of cruelty that could be inflicted[4]." Under these circumstances it is impossible to regard the opponents of the Factory Acts as necessarily callous to human suffering.

*would drive away trade*

*and add to the distress of the artisans,*

At the same time the economic experts concentrated their attention so much on the production of increased quantities of material goods, as the only means by which amelioration could be effected, that they seemed to attach very little importance to measures for the direct protection of human life, even in cases when there was no reason to fear foreign competition. The chimney-sweep boys were a class who were subjected to brutal ill-treatment; an attempt had been made to regulate the trade in 1788[5], but this measure was very ineffective, to judge by the shocking revelations which were made before the Parliamentary Committee of 1816[6]. The *laissez faire* economists were not easily impressed however, and their quarterly organ, after reciting some of the

*but they were not ready to welcome interference even where foreign competition was impossible.*

[1] *Reports, etc.*, 1833, XX. 54, 371.
[2] *Ib.* XX. 40.
[3] 3 Hansard, XIX. 911.
[4] *Ib.* 221.
[5] 28 Geo. III. c. 48.
[6] *Report from the Committee on Employment of Boys in Sweeping of Chimnies. Reports*, 1817, VI. 171.

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terrible suffering that was wantonly inflicted, continues: "After all we must own that it was quite right to throw out the Bill for prohibiting the sweeping of chimneys by boys—because humanity is a modern invention; and there are many chimneys in old houses that cannot possibly be swept in any other manner[1]." The agitation on the subject continued, however, and much more stringent rules were successfully introduced in 1834[2].

*From the influence of Robert Owen*

In the meantime, public attention was being steadily directed to the factory children, and to the prejudicial effects of the long hours during which many of them were accustomed to work. The Act of 1802 was easily evaded, as children who were not regularly apprenticed did not obtain protection under it. The impulse for a fresh agitation on the subject was given by Robert Owen[3], who aimed at reconstituting the conditions of factory life, so that a better type of factory operative might be developed. He did not aim merely at protecting individuals, but at introducing a better system. In 1815 he published his *Observations on the effect of the manufacturing system, with hints for the improvement of those parts of it which are most injurious to health and morals,* and endeavoured to interest Sir Robert Peel in the passing of a fresh Act, which should render some of the changes he had made at New Lanark, compulsory on other employers; he was particularly anxious that no child of less than ten years of age should be set to work in a mill, that until they were twelve they should only work six hours, and that the hours of labour should be reduced to ten and a half for all[4]. A Select Committee was appointed to consider the matter, and much interesting evidence was put on record[5], but no immediate action was taken; the Act which was passed in 1819[6] greatly

[1] *Edinburgh Review*, 1819, xxxii. 320. The radical paper, the *Gorgon*, was also inclined to sneer at the House of Commons for "its ostentatious display of humanity" in dealing with "trivialities" like the Slave Trade, the climbing boys, and the condition of children in factories, p. 341 (13 March, 1819).

[2] 4 and 5 Wm. IV. c. 35.

[3] See Sir R. Peel's evidence in the *Report of the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on the State of the Children employed in the Cotton Manufactures of the United Kingdom* (1816), iii. 370.

[4] Robert Owen, *Observations*, p. 9.

[5] *Reports* (1816), iii. 235.

[6] 59 Geo. III. c. 66. It prohibited the labour of children under nine years of age and fixed a limit of 12 hours, but even this might be exceeded to make up for stoppages due to want of water-power.



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disappointed Robert Owen's hopes. It did not insist on a ten hours limit, and its provisions remained inoperative; there was not sufficient inducement offered to stimulate the efforts of the common informer to enforce its provisions[1], and comparatively little improvement resulted from the measure.

*an agitation began against the overworking of children,*

No considerable share of public attention was directed to the subject till 1830, when Mr Richard Oastler began a crusade on the subject in Yorkshire[2], and Michael Sadler took the matter up and obtained a Committee of the House of Commons; he arranged to bring a number of witnesses from the factory districts in order to establish his point that legislative interference was necessary. The session had closed, however, before the evidence which the employers[3] desired to put in could be heard; and the sense of this onesidedness rankled in their minds, while the assertions were in many respects untrustworthy[4]. Still, the allegations were so frightful that many people believed that immediate action was necessary at any cost; and the proposal, in the following year, to have a Commission was treated as a mere excuse for delay[5]. Public feeling was greatly excited, and a Bill was introduced by Mr Sadler, and in the following session by Lord Ashley[6], but it was obviously impossible to attempt a remedy until the charges were thoroughly sifted, and an opinion could be formed as to the extent and character of the evils. A Commission of enquiry was appointed, which was excellently organised, and obtained an extraordinary amount of accurate information in a short space of time.

*and a Commission was appointed to enquire*

The Commission of 1833 specially addressed their enquiries to the alleged degradation of the population as a

[1] A reward was offered for the common informer; but as no one but the workmen employed in the mill were in a position to give information, and they would have lost their employment if they had come forward to initiate proceedings, the whole was inoperative. Hutchins and Harrison, *op. cit.* 36.

[2] Alfred [Samuel Kydd], *History of the Factory Movement*, i. 96. His interest in the position of the slaves abroad led him to consider the condition of operatives at home. The movement for factory reform was thus directly associated with the Anti-Slavery agitation.

[3] 3 Hansard, xv. p. 391

[4] See the opinion of Mr Drinkwater and Mr Power, *Reports*, 1833, xx. 491, 602.

[5] 3 Hansard, xvi. 640.

[6] Mr Sadler failed to obtain re-election in the first reformed Parliament.

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national evil; and hence the points, which demanded attention, were the influence of the Factory system on the children who would grow up to be workers, men and women, of the next generation. If there was physical and moral taint at these sources, the future of the English race was imperilled[1]. The overworking of children, resulting as it often did in physical deformity, occurred very generally, but there were different degrees in which the evil existed in different branches of the textile trades, and it is necessary to consider them separately.

*into the conditions of their employment in the woollen,*

i. With regard to the woollen trade, it appears that there were considerable differences between the conditions in the West of England and those which existed in Yorkshire. The Medical Commissioners, after visiting the Stroud Valley, gave exceedingly favourable testimony in regard to the conditions of work in that district[2], and indeed, throughout the West of England district; though the trade was declining[3] and several mills had been shut up. The Commissioners particularly testified to the kindly interest which the employers in this district took in their hands[4]; and though there were many matters in which amelioration was possible, they found that the employers were, on the whole, ready to make any improvements, the desirability of which was pointed out; they could find no evidence that seemed to them to justify legislative interference. The employers in Yorkshire were equally sure of their position; the trustees of the White Cloth Hall at Leeds met the Commissioners with a petition for exemption from any proposed legislation, on the ground that there were no abuses in their trade which called for it, but they failed to establish their case. Parts of the work were very dirty, though Mr Power, the District Commissioner, appears to have been satisfied, after his enquiries, that these operations were not deleterious[5]. From his remarks, it seems, that the one point on which he was thoroughly dissatisfied was the early age at which children went to work in these mills[6]. "The grand evil," which offered the supreme ground

[1] *Reports, etc.*, 1833, xx. 39, 51.
[2] *Ib.* 1833, xxi. 16.
[3] *Reports, etc.*, 1833, xx. 951, 960.
[4] *Ib.* 1006.
[5] *Reports*, 1833, xx. 601.
[6] *Ib.* 602, 604.



for legislative interference, was "the liability of children to be exposed, during a very tender age, to confinement, and a standing position for a period daily," which was "often protracted beyond their physical power of endurance[1]."

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ii. This cause of mischief was common to all the textile factories; but there were special evils which were peculiar to the linen trade. Owing to the nature of the material, it was convenient to spin and weave flax when it was wet; and, as a consequence, the workers were subjected to a continual spray, from which special clothing was unable to protect them adequately; while they were also forced to stand in the wet, and their hands were liable to constant sores from never being dry. Long-continued work of this kind was fraught with serious mischief, and the Commissioners felt that every effort should be made to reduce these causes of discomfort[2]. There was besides a process known as heckling[3], which was almost entirely done by children. The machines used in heckling were not large, so that there could be great numbers working in each room; the children had to be on the alert all the time, and to be so quick that the strain on

*linen,*

[1] The culpability of parents for the overworking of children in their own homes was recognised by the Children's Employment Commission, who stated that children have a right to protection against the abuse of parental power (*Reports*, 1864, xxii. 25, 26). The case of sending them to work in unwholesome conditions is less clear: "Up to a certain period of life, the children are absolutely dependent on their parents for support; and before that period it is that a tyranny is often imposed on them, beyond their physical powers of endurance. I have found undoubted instances of children five years old sent to work thirteen hours a day; and frequently of children nine, ten and eleven consigned to labour for fourteen and fifteen hours. The parents, at the same time, have appeared to me, in some of these instances, sincerely fond of their children, and grieved at a state of things they considered necessary to the subsistence of themselves and families. The parental feeling, however, is certainly not displayed in sufficient intensity to be trusted on this point, as will have been gathered most abundantly from the evidence which I have heretofore submitted to the Central Board; I allude both to evidence derived from the parents themselves, and particularly to that of the masters of workhouses in Leeds and the neighbourhood; from whom it appears, that although the difference in income from a child employed as compared with that from a child unemployed at the age of nine or ten, is only 1*s.* or at most 1*s.* 6*d.* in the week, it never happens that they attempt to excuse the non-employment of their children at that age, by alleging the length of the factory hours, or that, in fact, they seek to evade their employment there in any way, at as early an age as they can induce the masters to take them." *Reports*, 1833, xx. 604.
[2] *Reports, etc.*, 1833, xx. 328.
[3] *Ib.* 600.

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them was very considerable; while a frightful amount of dust was set free in the process, and the state of the atmosphere in the room was exceedingly bad.

*cotton and*

iii. The conditions of cotton-spinning were similar, in many ways, to those of flax, though there was nowhere so much dust as in the heckling rooms, and no wet spinning, but the temperature in which the hands worked was often very high; to this, the operatives did not object, but it was unwholesome, and there is no reason to believe there had been any improvement in the state of things which existed in 1816.

*silk mills.*

iv. The silk mills, in 1833, were generally speaking in a most unsatisfactory condition[1]. The work was chiefly done by girls who were parish apprentices, and there was grave reason for complaint as to the demoralising effect of huddling them together during their years of service, as well as of the reckless manner in which they were cut adrift when they had served their time.

In attempting to estimate the general result, it is well to bear in mind that, in 1833, weaving-sheds were not a regular department of a mill, and that the mill hands were chiefly engaged in preparing the materials and in spinning, though in some cases the work of cloth dressing had been added.

*The early age of employment was a general evil,*

Though there were some differences in the machinery employed, the necessity of standing for long hours and of stooping was similar in most of them; and there is abundant evidence that many children were crippled for life and that young women were seriously injured by their occupations. The worsted-spinning at Bradford had a special notoriety in this respect[2]. The Commissioners rightly connected it with the very early age at which children went to work, and the long hours during which they were employed, and the medical testimony proved that mischief of this kind was common in all the great industrial centres[3]. The Commissioners are careful to note that the physical evils due to

[1] In this branch of industry, as in the woollen trade, the arrangements in the West of England district were so good that the Commissioners saw no cause for legislative interference. *Reports*, 1833, xx. 968 (Ap. B. 1, 70).

[2] *Reports*, 1833, xx. 603. [3] *Ib.* 32—35.



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the over-fatigue of children were prevalent in the well-managed, as well as in the badly-managed mills.

For after all there were mills and mills; and though there was room for improvement in all of them, the crying evils were much more pronounced in some cases than in others. In every respect the small mills were decidedly the worst[1], they were carried on by men who had but comparatively little capital, and who had to compete against the better machinery and better power of their neighbours[2]. These smaller mills were in much greater need of supervision than the others. The cases where children were severely punished by the workmen they assisted were not so common as was popularly supposed, but it was clearly established that this practice was carried on by some of the slubbers[3], though on the whole the evil was abating in 1833[4]. It does not seem that the connivance of the masters in such cruelties was proved, and in some cases they endeavoured to prevent them[5]. In fact this abuse appears to have been chiefly due to a few of the more dissipated workmen. In regard to matters of morality, too, the smaller mills had a bad reputation. They were carried on by men of a specially coarse type, who were particularly inclined to tyrannise over a class but slightly beneath them, yet completely in their power[6]; there had been some improvement, but in all respects the small factories were unfavourably distinguished[7]. In fact, it is obvious that the worst evils occurred, not where the capitalist was so powerful that he could do as he liked, but in cases where the capitalist was struggling for his very existence, and was forced to carry on the trade in any way he could.

*and the small mills had a specially bad reputation,*

Similarly, the small factories were the worst places in regard to length of hours, as it was most difficult to enforce any limitations[8]. The old-fashioned mills were dependent on

[1] *Reports*, 1833, xx. 25, 63. [2] *Ib.* xx. 20, 24, 1840; xxiii. 248.
[3] *Ib.* 1883, xx. 23, 28, 49. [4] *Ib.* 26. [5] *Ib.* 28. [6] *Ib.* 20.
[7] F. Engels, *Condition of the Working Classes*, p. 148. *Reports*, 1833, xx. 24, 136, 145.
[8] An illustration of this difficulty occurs in the case of the girls who worked as dressers in the manufacture of Brussels carpets at Kidderminster; the conditions of employment are thus described: "The working hours are extremely irregular,

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*while the irregularity of water-power gave an excuse for working excessive time.*

water-power; but in many instances the supply was insufficient and the mill worked with great irregularity. Under such circumstances the hands were obliged at times to work for long hours when the water was available, in order to make up for a deficiency in their wages, owing to the time when they had been left idle from the deficiency of power. This irregularity of employment was only too apt to render the men dissipated, as they were forced to alternate periods of excessive work and of entire idleness. They frequently had to put in extra hours without extra pay, in order to make up for stoppages; by far the worst cases, in connection with the treatment of children, were due to instances where they were under the control of men who were working irregularly and with whom they had to keep pace[1]. The race between steam- and water-power was not finally decided in 1833; but water-power was long considered cheaper, even though steam was preferred, as without it the manufacturers could not count on a constant supply of power. It is thus obvious that at the time of the Commission things were already beginning to mend. The little mills, and water-mills, were the worst in every respect, but they were dying out in competition with

from two causes: the chief of these is the dissipated habits of many of the weavers, who remain idle for two or three days, and make up their lost time by working extra hours, to finish their piece on Saturday. All the work is paid by the piece. The other cause is, that the weaver has often to wait for material from the master manufacturer, when particular shades of colour may have to be dyed for the carpet he is weaving. In both cases this irregularity tells very severely on the drawers, who must attend the weaver at whatever time he is at work: they are often called up at three and four in the morning, and kept on for sixteen and eighteen hours. The drawers are entirely under the controul of the weavers, both as to their time of work and payment; the masters neither engaging them, nor exercising any farther controul than requiring them to be dismissed by the weaver in cases of misconduct. It appears to us that this power of overworking the drawers calls for interference on the part of the legislature, if an efficient remedy can be found: but this will be difficult, from the system of the trade. The looms belong to the master manufacturers, and are, in most cases, in what is termed his factory; that, however, is not one large building, but several small houses, generally two, seldom three stories high. If there were one building, that could be closed by one key, the masters could prevent the weavers working at irregular hours; but it appears, from the evidence of Mr Thomas Lea, that there are only two factories in the place where this could be done. The keys of the smaller workshops are entrusted to foremen, and sometimes a journeyman, and it would be very difficult to prevent the evasion of any regulation for opening and closing them at fixed hours." *Reports*, 1833, xx. 909.

[1] *Reports, etc.*, 1833, xx. 12, 15, 16.



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*The evils which were brought to light had attached to cottage industry,*

the large capitalists who worked by steam. The Report of the Commission of 1833 enables us to form an opinion as to the reasons which rendered it necessary to legislate in regard to these deplorable evils. Very many of them were not by any means new, though the introduction of the factory system had served to bring them into light. The sanitary conditions, under which cottage industry were carried on, were perpetuated in the earlier factories, and parents may occasionally have been harsh masters to the children who helped them[1]. Still, the evil, in its obvious forms, was of recent development, and there was much mutual recrimination at the time in regard to its cause. Colonel Williams probably expressed the commonest opinion, both in the House and out-of-doors, when he said that "this practice of overworking children was attributable to the avarice of the masters[2]." Mr Hume, on the other hand, defended the capitalists, and as he had presided over the Select Committee, which reported against the Combination Laws, his opinion on industrial conditions was entitled to respect. He held that the distress of the country was wholly due to the corn laws, and laid the blame on the owners of land[3]. Mr Cobbett, who was member for Oldham and had abundant opportunity of forming a judgment in his own constituency, exonerated the employers. He held that the immediate blame lay with the parents, but that they should not be too harshly judged, as they were driven to it by the pressure of taxation, which as he believed was the ultimate reason of their distress[4].

[1] The Commission of 1833 called for no evidence as to the overworking of children who assisted their parents at home, but there is no reason to believe that they fared better than their companions in the mills. In only one point, and that a most important one, was it alleged that the condition of the domestic workers was preferable. Parents could look after their own children and the elder girls if they worked at home, whilst the factories had an evil repute. Careful parents had to choose between bringing up their children to an overcrowded and underpaid trade, and the risk of placing them in demoralising surroundings (*Reports, etc.*, 1833, xx. 532, 538). The bad repute of factories was not improbably due to their being the resort of apprenticed children and a shifting population, when they were first organised. At the same time it is probable that these evils diminished, as the smaller mills were broken up; and Mr Bolling, the member for Bolton, appears to have regarded the charges against the factories as illusory, so far as his constituency was concerned (3 Hansard, xix. 910).

[2] 3 Hansard, xv. 1160. [3] *Ib.* 1161. [4] *Ib.* 1294.

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*and parents deserve a large share of blame*

So far as the parents are concerned, it is probably true that many of the baser sort were very reckless in regard to the treatment of their children, and were not unwilling to sacrifice them in order to profit by their earnings; but there were many who felt the evils most bitterly, and who petitioned for an alteration[1]. At the same time, it is difficult to exonerate them altogether, if, as seems to have been the case, their wages were as good or better than those of other labourers. Mr Power, the Assistant Commissioner, seems to have felt this, when he wrote that "children ought to have legislative protection from the conspiracy insensibly formed between the masters and parents to tax them with a degree of toil beyond their strength[2]." It is probable that the opportunity of obtaining the children's earnings was a temptation which few parents could resist, even though they might afterwards deeply regret it, when the employment resulted in the deformity of their children. There is no difficulty in reconciling the two statements, that on the one hand the parents frequently succumbed to this temptation, and that on the other they were anxious to have the temptation removed.

So far as the landlords, and the corn laws, are concerned, little need be said. This was a cause which affected the textile industries, like other industries, as it rendered food dear to all labourers; but it will not serve to account for the special mischiefs of the factory system.

*as well as masters.*

With regard to the masters, it may be stated at once that it is impossible to exonerate them from all blame, as many of them had been exceedingly careless about a matter which lay entirely within their control, and to which no allusion has yet been made. The frequency of accidents in the mills, with injury of life and limb, was a feature which specially shocked the public, and it seems to have been clear that many of the accidents were preventable, and need not have occurred, if certain machines had been properly fenced[3]. So long as any part of the evils were due to arrangements directly under the master's control and with which no one

[1] 3 Hansard, xvi. 642.
[2] *Reports*, 1833, xx. 604.
[3] *Ib.* 76.



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else could interfere, it is clear that the blame lay with them or with their agents[1].

*The Commissioners of 1833 tried to isolate the question of child labour,*

It was much easier to report on the extent of the evil and to analyse its causes, than to devise a satisfactory remedy. Enthusiasts like Owen would have tried to introduce an ideal system for all those who worked in the mills. But the Government were forced to move more slowly, and to content themselves with attempting to prohibit or limit the recognised evils. The overworking of boys and girls seemed to stand by itself; the mischief was most patent, and as the children were obviously unprotected and unable to protect themselves in any way, there was a much stronger case for interference than there seemed to be in regard to adult labour of any kind. The operatives were naturally anxious to have the systematic reform, which Owen had initiated, carried through in its entirety by the State[2]; but this was a proposal which the Commissioners did not endorse; they tried to put forward a discriminating scheme, by which the question of child labour should be isolated and dealt with separately, while they thought the hours in which other workmen were employed should be a matter of agreement, so long as the very wide limit introduced in 1802[3] was not exceeded. The Commissioners did not feel that Owen's principle of a Ten Hour Day was the right one, as it would not in itself afford sufficient relief to the children[4], while it appeared to be unnecessary, and possibly

[1] The punishments which Lord Ashley proposed to inflict on employers in connection with accidents in their mills were very severe. Parliament appears to have supposed that they were so excessive that they would never have been enforced. 3 Hansard, xix. 223.

[2] The operatives believed that the shortening of their hours would lead to a rise of wages (*Reports, etc*, 1833, xx. 39, 51), and advocated it on this account; but their wages were good when compared with the payments in other callings (*Reports, etc.*, 1833, xx. 307, 1008, and xxi. 31, and especially 65), and the Commissioners would have deprecated any change that would seriously interfere with market conditions.

[3] Hutchins and Harrison, *op. cit.* 17. This was hardly a new limitation, as it closely resembles the recognised day labour of the sixteenth century. Vol. i. 535.

[4] The following instances of excessive work on the part of the young were specially referred to by the Commissioners. "Am twelve years old. Have been in the mill twelve months. Begin at six o'clock, and stop at half past seven. Generally have about twelve hours and a half of it. Have worked over-hours for two or three weeks together. Worked breakfast-time and tea-time, and did not go away till eight. Do you work over-hours or not, just as you like?—No; them as

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*and hoped that shifts would be organised.*

injurious, so far as adults were concerned[1]. The Commissioner proposed instead, that shifts should be arranged[2], and that the labour of children should be so organised that they should work in the same mills, but for shorter hours than the adults. An experiment of this kind was tried with great success in

works must work. I would rather stay and do it than that any body else should come in my place." * * * "Have worked here (Milne's) two years; am now fourteen; work sixteen hours and a half a day. I was badly, and asked to stop at eight one night lately, and I was told if I went I must not come back." "I have worked till twelve at night last summer. We began at six in the morning. I told book-keeper I did not like to work so late; he said I mote. We only get a penny an hour for over-time." "We used to come at half-past eight at night, and work all night, till the rest of the girls came in the morning. They would come at seven. Sometimes we worked on till half-past eight the next night, after we had been working all the night before. We worked in meal-hours, except at dinner. I have done that sometimes three nights a week, and sometimes four nights. It was not regular; it was just as the overlooker chose. Sometimes the slubbers would work on all night too, not always. The pieceners would have to stay all night then too. They used to go to sleep, poor things! when they had over-hours in the night." "In 1829 they worked night and day. The day set used to work from six till eight and nine, and sometimes till eleven or twelve. The children who worked as pieceners for the slubbers used to fall asleep, and we had much trouble with them." *Reports*, 1833, xx. 16.

[1] It appeared probable to the masters and economic experts that a reduction of hours would involve a reduction of wages.

[2] The difficulty which they tried to meet is well stated by the Commissioners: "The great evil of the manufacturing system, as at present conducted, has appeared to us to be, that it entails the necessity of continuing the labour of children to the utmost length of that of the adults. The only remedy for this evil, short of a limitation of the labour of adults, which would in our opinion create an evil greater than that which is sought to be remedied, appears to be the plan of working double sets of children. To this plan there have been intimated to us great objections on the part both of masters and of workmen: on the part of the masters, because it will be attended with inconvenience, and somewhat higher wages: on the part of the workmen for various reasons; 1st, Because when working by the piece increased expense in hiring or increased trouble in teaching children will necessarily diminish their net earnings:—2nd, Because by a more general limitation to ten hours they expect to get twelve hours' wages for less work:—3rd, Because the reduction to half wages or little more of the children reduced to six or eight hours' work must necessarily in so far tend to reduce the earnings, and consequently the comforts of the family:

"There can be no doubt, from the whole tenor of the evidence before us, that the plan of double sets will be productive of more or less inconvenience and expense to the manufacturer. It has appeared to us, however, that the same objections must attach more or less to any change of the present modes of working; but we consider the object aimed at by the working of double sets, namely, that of counteracting the tendency to an undue employment of infant labour, to be such as more than compensates for the sacrifice to be made in attaining it. And no other mode of effectually accomplishing that most desirable object has occurred to us likely to be attended with so little evil or suffering as that which we have ventured to recommend." *Reports*, 1833, xx. 57.



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Messrs Marshall's flax-mills at Holbeck, near Leeds. This was, however, a difficult arrangement to carry out, and in country villages it was not easy to find a double shift of child labour. The manufacturers disliked a proposal that would hamper them, and the parents were on the whole glad to get an income from the children's labour; still this suggestion went on the line of least resistance, and Government carried a Bill which practically gave effect to the recommendations of the Commission. The chief debate was upon the proposal to limit the work of those under eighteen to ten hours. Lord Ashley was defeated on this point, as the Government thought it necessary to go farther and limit those under fourteen to eight hours; and from the time of this defeat, the Bill became a Government measure to which Lord Ashley gave independent support. And in the main the recommendations of the Commissioners were accepted by Parliament[1]. By the Act of 1833 the employment of children under nine years of age was forbidden. The time of work for children under thirteen years old was limited to nine hours, and for young persons, of from thirteen to eighteen years, to twelve hours; and night work was prohibited, i.e., work between 8.30 p.m. and 5.30 a.m. But the real importance of the measure lay in the fact that new administrative machinery was now created. Previous Acts had failed partly, at least, because there had been no sufficient means of enforcing them. The establishment of local inspectors was originally suggested by the masters, apparently as a means of seeing that their neighbours did not indulge in unfair competition by evading the law, and the operatives viewed it with suspicion. In the form in which the proposal was incorporated in the Act it created an independent body of men, acting under a central authority, who have proved to be not merely a means of enforcing but of amending the law. "The introduction of an external authority, free from local bias and partiality, greatly improved the administration of the law, lessened the friction between the manufacturers and operatives, and provided a medium of communication between the Government and the people at a time when knowledge of industrial matters was scanty in the extreme[2]."

*Limits were imposed on the employment of children,*

*and inspectors under a central authority were charged with enforcing the Act.*

[1] 3 and 4 Will. IV. c. 103.

[2] Hutchins and Harrison, *op. cit.* 40.

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*The over-working of children could not be checked effectively*

The Act of 1833 had endeavoured to isolate the question of child labour, but as a matter of fact this could not be done. The children assisted the work of adults, and the masters were inclined to evade the restrictions on the time when boys and girls were employed, as this was the way in which the customary hours for men could be most conveniently maintained. The inspectors found that it was practically impossible to check the time during which any one boy or girl remained at work, as the machinery was kept running for longer hours than those in which children might be legally employed[1]. The intimate connection between the various elements in the organisation of a factory had been asserted by the advocates of a Ten Hours Bill all along[2], and the nature of the changes which were necessary, in order that the measure passed in 1833 might be rendered effective, was only gradually recognised. In 1844 another step was taken, and the argument for State-interference on behalf of children was extended; a strong case had been made for legislative action to protect adult women, both as regards the mischief of physical injury, and their own inability to drive independent bargains, and it was enacted that women were to be treated as young persons[3]. In 1847 the hours for young persons and women were still further reduced by the passing of the Ten Hours Bill, and it was generally expected that this new restriction would have the effect of limiting the hours during which the machinery was kept in motion. When trade revived in 1849, however,

*till the hours for women were restricted;*

[1] After 1833, though there was a twelve hour day, it might be worked between 5.30 a.m. and 8.30 p.m. and meal times might be distributed as the employer chose. Those who were working had to do double work, while others were having meals—thus demanding a greater intensity of effort from those at work. It was quite impossible to tell whether any particular persons had had meals, or whether they were working over-hours or not, since the employer could always plead that they began late.

[2] "The mistake of Parliament," said Mr Hindley, the member for Ashton, "has arisen from supposing that they could effectively legislate for children without including adults—they are not aware that labour in a mill is, strictly speaking, family labour, and that there is no longer the system of a parent maintaining his children by the operation of his own industry." Hutchins and Harrison, *op. cit.* 47.

[3] 7 and 8 Vict. c. 15, § 32. The hours of young persons were limited to 12 hours by the Act of 1833.



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*and a normal working day*

the masters found it worth while to keep the machinery going for fifteen hours, and managed to evade the law by means of relay systems[1]. An amending Act of 1850 insisted that the hours of work for protected persons must fall within the twelve hours from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. with an hour and a half for meals, and thus established a normal day for women[2]. Curiously enough, its provisions did not apply to children, and they could be employed on the relay system in helping the men, after the women had left off working. In 1853, the risk of evasion in this manner was brought to an end, the normal working day of ten and a half hours was established by law for all factory workers[3], other than adult males, and it soon became customary for them as well.

*of ten hours and a half was at length established,*

It thus came about that the programme of factory reform which Owen had advocated in 1815 was at length to be generally accepted. Each step was gained in the face of strong opposition, for the economic experts of the day—of whom Mr Nassau Senior was the most effective spokesman—were clear that a reduction of hours would mean such a serious loss to the employers that the trade of the country must inevitably suffer, and the mischievous effects react on the workmen themselves. It was argued that if the last hour of work were cut down, the profit on the capital invested in plant would vanish altogether[4]. Strong in the support of such academic authorities, the employers felt no scruple in evading the law, when they could; but the excuse was a mistaken one. Robert Owen's experience had established the fact that the product in textile trades did not vary directly according to the hours of labour. He found that the influence

*in spite of the forebodings of experts*

[1] Mr Howells thus describes it: "The system which they seek to introduce under the guise of relays is one of the many for shuffling the hands about in endless variety, and shifting the hours of work and of rest for different individuals throughout the day, so that you never have one complete set of hands working together in the same room at the same time." *Reports*, 1849, XXII. 225. The intervals when the hands were not actually working were so short, and so arranged that they might be of very little use either for purposes of rest or recreation. Hutchins and Harrison, *op. cit.* 80, 101.

[2] 13 and 14 Vict. c. 54.

[3] Women, young persons and children might not be employed before 6 a.m. or after 6 p.m. (16 and 17 Vict. c. 104), and they were to be allowed an hour and a half for meals (3 and 4 Will. IV. c. 103 § 6).

[4] N. Senior, *Letter on the Factory Act*, 12.

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of increased care and attention was very noticeable when the hours were shortened, and that waste was avoided. He had for a time reduced the hours of work at New Lanark, without loss; and he found that when they were lengthened again, the product was not increased in proportion to the increase of hours[1]. He had already demonstrated, in his own experience, that the policy of working excessive hours was unsound, not merely on humanitarian, but on economic grounds. As this view was gradually confirmed by subsequent observation, the attitude of public opinion towards restrictive legislation underwent a marked change[2]. The benefits, which accrued to the population employed in textile factories under the modern system of centralised supervision, have been so great that efforts are being steadily pressed on for bringing all sorts of other industries under similar control.

*who ignored the results of Owen's experience.*

**270.** The agitation of the factory operatives for State interference with their hours of labour, which was being carried on so vigorously in 1840 has eventually been successful. There was, however, another class of the manufacturing population who were in a very serious plight, and on whose behalf State intervention was demanded. The hand-loom weavers were suffering from the irregularity and uncertainty of employment; it was impossible for them to maintain a decent standard of comfort, and a commission was appointed in 1839 to see whether anything could be done to place them in more favourable conditions.

*The low standard of comfort of hand-loom weavers*

*was not treated as a subject for State interference.*

The principles of *laissez faire* had such a strong hold that it was not to be expected that the weavers would obtain much support; and as we look back we may see that this was not a case in which it was desirable for Government to interfere. The factory industries were growing; and it was distinctly advantageous to have lines authoritatively laid down along which they should develop. But hand-loom weaving was already doomed; the competition of the power-loom was threatening to drive it out of existence, at all events in some branches of manufacture. The only benefit which could be

[1] *Reports*, 1816, III. 255, 272, also 1833, XX. 194.

[2] The publication of the Reports of the Children's Employment Commission, which was moved for by Lord Shaftesbury in 1861, appears to have been the occasion of this change Hutchins and Harrison, *op. cit.* 150.



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conferred on the weavers was to help them to leave a decaying trade[1]; this was more a matter for individual and charitable action than for administrative interference.

*The power-loom was superseding hand work;*

The competition between hand-weaving and power-weaving brings out one aspect of the case which was less noticeable in connection with spinning. The series of inventions, which led up to the self-acting mule, introduced an extraordinary improvement, in the quality—the firmness and regularity—of the yarn, as well as in the pace at which it could be produced. These advantages occurred to a much smaller extent in weaving; in 1840 it was doubtful whether machines could ever be invented which would weave fabrics of which only small quantities were required or in regard to which there were rapid changes of fashion[2]; while the rates of wages of hand-weavers of low-class goods enabled the employers to produce very cheaply, and there was scarcely any saving in machine production[3]. To some extent the power-loom was better and cheaper; and as it was more readily applicable to some materials and qualities of goods than to others, there was a curious difference in the extent to which it was used in different trades. The real issue, however, lay deeper; it was not so much the competition of a machine with a hand implement, as competition between two systems of industrial organisation. The hand-loom weaver was the last survival of cottage industry; he had been drawn into the capitalist system and become a wage-earner, but he still enjoyed a measure of independence as to his hours of working and his habits of life. He clung to his liberty, and was most reluctant to seek other employment, even when his takings

*and the concentration of weaving in factories*

[1] Mr W. E. Hickson, one of the assistant commissioners in 1840, summarised his opinion thus: "I believe the young men are either earning better wages, or are abandoning the trade. The class entitled to the most commiseration consists of the old, of whom there are many, who, having lived on in hope of better times, while the trade has gradually declined, now find themselves, with failing sight, and failing limbs, strength scarcely sufficient to throw the shuttle, and none to help (their children married and gone away), left to depend upon the miserable pittance they can yet earn at the loom, which they cannot leave till they leave the world and the trade together." *Reports*, 1840, XXIV. 650.

[2] This was the case with Paisley shawls. *Accounts*, 1839, XLII. 543. See also *Reports*, 1840, XXIV. 651.

[3] Mr Symons writes, "The power-loom is applicable to many fabrics which the exceedingly low rate of wages alone enables the hand-loom to obtain." *Accounts*, 1839, XLII. 609.

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were reduced to a starvation point. But the practice of setting labourers to work in their cottages was not convenient to the capitalists. The cottage system gave in many ways opportunity for inefficient work[1], and the employers preferred to have the men under their own eyes. This was the only method by which they could secure punctuality in the delivery of goods[2], and could exercise an effective supervision all the time[3]. One circumstance which specially impressed Mr Hickson was "that the factory system is beginning to be extensively applied to the labour of hand-loom weaving, and that the weavers who now maintain, and may continue to maintain, a successful competition with the power-loom, will not be *cottage weavers*[4], but weavers assembled in factories to work under the eye of a master. There are now many

*gave facilities for supervision*

[1] Mr Hickson reported: "One hundred webs, therefore, in a factory of hand-loom weavers, would be finished even in Manchester, in the time in which 50 would not be finished by an equal number of domestic weavers. But in Ireland the disparity is much more striking. I was assured by Mr M'Cauley of Belfast, that it would be necessary for him to employ 400 country weavers to get him through the same quantity of work in a given time which he could produce from 100 hand-looms employed in his factory, under his immediate superintendence. *Reports*, 1840, xxiv. 648.

[2] Mr Hickson writes: "The cotton-weavers, in most cases, work at home; but the practice is beginning to extend itself of assembling them in factories. There are hand-loom factories, as well as power-loom factories. In large manufacturing towns, a saving of time is regarded as a saving of money. One thousand pounds capital, if it can be returned four times in the year, is equal to a capital of £4,000 returned once; and the interest on £3,000 is the saving effected. Hence the anxiety of every good man of business to despatch his orders quick, and hence the urgency of merchants, when writing to the manufacturer, to ship without delay. In fact, promptitude of execution is often a more important consideration than price. A merchant, not limited by his foreign correspondents, but left to his own discretion, will give his orders to the manufacturer, who, on a given day and month, will engage to have his goods on board a ship in the export docks, and will disregard the offer of another manufacturer less punctual, and more dilatory in the conduct of his business, although cheaper, perhaps by five per cent. On this account factory labour is much more advantageous to the manufacturer than domestic labour. The domestic weaver is apt to be irregular in his habits, because he does not work under the eye of a master. At any moment the domestic weaver can throw down his shuttle, and convert the rest of the day into a holiday; or busy himself with some more profitable task; but the factory weaver works under superintendence; if absent a day, without sufficient cause, he is dismissed, and his place supplied by one of greater power of application." *Reports*, 1840, xxiv. 647–8.

[3] It was difficult to guard against the embezzlement of materials and the fraud of weaving thin. *Accounts*, 1839, xlii. 599.

[4] Mr Hickson speaks of them as "domestic weavers." I have ventured to alter this phrase so as to bring it into accord with the terminology adopted in this volume. See above, p. 497.



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fabrics woven by power at a somewhat dearer rate than the productions of the hand-loom (taking into consideration the cost of machinery, repairs, and the wages of the workers); but the power-loom manufacturer, as before explained, can execute an order with certainty and despatch, from the regularity of his process; while the employer of cottage weavers can never tell within a fortnight or three weeks when every web sent out to the neighbouring villages will be returned. This disadvantage is partly overcome by assembling the weavers in factories, and requiring them to work under superintendence. The system is also favourable to a large manufacturer, in protecting him, to some extent, against the embezzlement of yarn. His property is safe in his own possession, and he runs no risk of the work being taken out of the loom to be sold or pawned by a dishonest weaver. The subjects of wrangling and dispute between his foreman and the men are also less numerous upon the factory than upon the out-door system. The men have not to lose hours and days in dancing attendance upon the foreman's leisure; and the daily inspection of the master enables him to see that his directions are understood and followed by all parties[1]." The struggle, which attracted such attention in 1840, was the last phase of the contest between cottage-industry and factory-industry in the staple manufactures of the country[2].

*and encouraged regularity and honesty,*

As a consequence, the line, between the distressed weavers and the others, is to be drawn between those who took out materials to weave in their own homes, and those who worked in factories, whether at hand- or power-looms. Weaving sheds containing hand-looms were coming to be a common appendage to spinning-mills, and these factory hand-loom weavers had little to complain of[3]. The rates of wages per piece had kept up, at all events in the West of England cloth trade; the trade was on the whole developing, and the factory hand-weavers were apparently absorbed as the power-loom was introduced. The cottage-weavers suffered, however, not so much from low rates of pay as from extreme

*so that cottage weavers had no constancy of employment.*

[1] *Reports*, 1840, xxiv. 683.

[2] Many of the cottage weavers were small farmers and emigration offered the best hope of relieving them. S. J. Chapman, *Lancashire Cotton Industry*, 45.

[3] *Accounts, etc.*, 1839, xlii. 522.

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*The depression during the transition to power weaving*

irregularity of employment. In periods of depression little work was given out, but their earnings in good times were sufficient to keep them from recognising that the trade was terribly overcrowded. Instances of the organisation of hand-weaving in factories had occurred as early as the fifteenth century, and it is hopeless to try and obtain information as to the gradual extension of that system. Some evidence has survived, however, in regard to the introduction of the power-loom, and we are justified in concluding that this would not have occurred unless a thoroughgoing system of capitalist supervision had already come into vogue. It will be convenient to consider the course of the changes in different branches of the textile trades in turn.

*in the linen trade was aggravated by the competition of Irish, and of cotton weavers,*

i. The linen-weavers were reduced to as miserable a condition as any other class of weaver in 1839. Their wages had steadily fallen; they had resorted to strikes, over and over again, but always without success; several distinct price-lists had been issued, as in 1829 and in 1837, but the masters did not adhere to them, and each new list gave greatly reduced figures[1]. This depressed condition was partly due to the competition of Irish immigrants[2], but the trade was also overcrowded by cotton-weavers. The power-loom had been very generally introduced, so far as cotton fabrics were concerned[3], and the cotton hand-weavers took refuge in the linen trade; thus, before the power-loom had been applied to linen fabrics, the artisans were suffering seriously from an indirectly induced competition[4]. The overcrowding of

[1] *Reports*, 1840, xxiii. 317.

[2] *Ib.* 315.

[3] See below, 797, n. 5.

[4] See the statement in regard to Yorkshire linen-weavers. "There are many causes that have been at work in bringing the hand-loom weavers' wages to this starvation price, and we will beg leave to state our opinion of a few of them. The power-loom is one, and though but little progress has yet been made in working linen goods, yet, by having nearly destroyed the cotton-weaving, and greatly injured the stuff and woollen weavers' trade, it has driven many out of those branches into the linen trade, and over-stocked the market with hands; and the manufacturers have taken the advantage, and reduced the wages; but we believe it is nothing to their profit. Now, these power-looms contribute nothing to the revenue; on the contrary, they have been the means of throwing great numbers out of employment, and has (*sic*) brought thousands and tens of thousands to sup the cup of misery even to its very dregs, and, if not speedily checked, will, ere long, bring the whole of the weaving trade to complete ruin. We think at any



this trade was the more remarkable as linen weaving was exceedingly heavy work, in which women did not compete[1]. A.D. 1776—1850.

*and in the silk trade,*

ii. The condition of the silk-weavers is not exactly similar to that of men engaged on other fabrics, as this had always been an exotic trade; from the time of the repeal of the protective legislation in 1824, they had been in great difficulties. Their business was not at all hard to learn, and this manufacture also was overcrowded, as linen-weaving was overcrowded, by men who had drifted into it from a similar calling. When the cloth manufacture migrated[2] from Essex and Suffolk and Norfolk to Yorkshire, the Eastern County weavers took up the silk trade[3]; but even in the best days they had to work at lower prices than the weavers in Spitalfields[4]. In this case they had suffered from every kind of competition; that of women's work, of those who picked up the trade hastily, of foreign weavers, and of the power-loom. There was violent resistance to the introduction of the power-loom at Coventry in 1831[5]; but the trade, as taken up and improved in Manchester and Macclesfield[6], completely undersold the efforts of the Spitalfields and Eastern Counties weavers, among whom, apparently, the feeling against machinery was so strong that no one attempted to introduce it. In the

rate the power-loom ought to pay as much as the hand-loom weaver pays, and then we should have some chance of competing with them. Besides the many indirect taxes that we have to pay to the Government, we have other taxes of a still more grievous nature, and, it is said by many writers, of far greater amount. These taxes cut like a two-edged sword; it is not only the great amount that we have to pay, but at the same time it greatly injures our trade. This tax is what they call 'protecting duties' to the great landed property men of this country, not only the heavy duty on corn, but on every necessary of life, even to an egg." *Reports*, 1840, xxiii. 335.

[1] *Reports*, 1840, xxiii. 191.

[2] The migration of the cloth manufacture from the Eastern Counties to Yorkshire received a considerable impetus during the long war. The flying shuttle and mill yarn were used in Yorkshire about 1800 (*Reports*, 1840, xxiii. 417), and wages there were "comparatively high" (*Ib.* 399), while all machinery appears to have been tabooed in the Eastern Counties (*Ib.* 147), unless in some newly introduced trades (*Ib.* 175). The last remnants of the Eastern Counties' cloth manufacture were the camlets which were made for the China market as long as the East India Company had the monopoly, but when the trade was thrown open in 1833 the Yorkshiremen undersold them in this article also (*Reports*, 1840, xxiii. 142). The West of England manufacture of serges suffered in a similar fashion (*Ib.* 250).

[3] *Ib.* 129.

[4] *Ib.* 125.

[5] *Ib.* 1833, xx. 899.

[6] *Ib.* 1840, xxiv. 653.

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*by the habitual spreading of work.*

southern centres of the trade this employment gave early instances of the phenomena of spreading work, and of an industrial reserve army[1]. One of the Braintree witnesses describes how "a manufacturer would give out work to twelve men, where seven would have been enough to do it, if warp and shute had been given to them as fast as they worked it up. The object of this system evidently was to keep a great number of hands in the trade always at command, in order that when there was a great demand for goods the manufacturer might have it in his power to produce them. * * * Thus the earnings of the weavers were kept down, though they were said to be employed. This system also kept a greater number of hands in the trade and thereby kept up a greater competition for employment, and prevented a rise of price when there was an increased demand for goods[2]."

The chief remedies which the weavers themselves proposed were, either a more rigid system of apprenticeship by which the number of competitors might be kept down, or an authoritative price-list, such as they had had under the Spitalfields Act; but even under that Act they had not enjoyed constant employment, and the system had proved unworkable[3]. It was absurd to ask for elaborate rules of apprenticeship, which were not needed for the purpose of training the workmen properly[4]; this limitation was merely intended to be an arbitrary restriction on the number of competitors[5]. Such an expedient could not possibly help them to stand better against the competition of English machinery or

[1] See above, p. 667.

[2] *Reports*, 1840, XXIII. 126.

[3] As Dr Mitchell, an assistant commissioner, stated: "The Spitalfields Acts secured to the weavers a fixed price for their labour; but no Act of Parliament could secure to them full employment, and when from the caprices of fashion or from any other cause there ceased to be a demand for the goods, a part of the weavers who made them were necessarily out of employment, and such of them as had not laid by some of their earnings to meet an evil day were in distress. There was however, this difference between the periods of distress in those times and the distress at present, that whatever work was given out was paid for at the full price, and when a demand for goods and for labour arose the weavers returned to a state of prosperity, whereas distress now may occasion reduction of wages, and when full employment returns the weaver is not paid as he was before." *Reports*, 1840, XXIII. 200.

[4] The trade was not at all hard to learn (*Ib.* 215).

[5] *Ib.* 221.



foreign workmen. What the commissioner said of weavers in general was specially true of the silk-weaver—"The best friends of the weaver are those who would advise and assist him to transfer his labour to other channels of industry[1]." A.D. 1776 —1850.

iii. The cotton was the first industry in which power-spinning was introduced; there had been a real difficulty in getting weavers in sufficient numbers to work the yarn that was spun, and it was in this trade that the power-loom had been most generally applied at the time of the enquiry. The new mode of weaving had brought about an extraordinary expansion of the trade, and it was said that comparatively few hand-looms had been put out of operation altogether[2]. At the same time part of the work that was done by hand consisted of goods of a class for the making of which wages were so low that machinery did not pay[3]. The competition of Irish immigrants was also severely felt in the West of Scotland cotton district[4]. Wages were exceedingly low, employment for hand-loom weavers was irregular, and in bad times practically ceased.

*The application of power to cotton-weaving was delayed through the cheapness of hand work,*

There had been a great deal of distress among the Scottish weavers both in 1819 and 1826. Large relief funds were started, to which the upper classes contributed more largely than they would have done in England, where the Poor Law afforded so much relief[5]. But the most serious

[1] *Reports*, 1840, XXIV. 659.

[2] "Before passing from the case of cotton-weavers," Mr Hickson writes: "I may express the surprise I felt at the discovery, that, notwithstanding the gigantic competition of the power-loom, the number of hand-looms employed in this branch of the trade of weaving is not only very considerable, but, from universal testimony, almost as great as at any former period.

"After visiting the power-loom factory of Messrs J. and W. Sidebottom at Mottram, where, in one immense apartment, 125 yards in length by 25 yards in width, I saw 620 looms working by power, and producing, almost with the rapidity of light, as much cotton cloth, apparently, as would suffice for the consumption of the whole country, I was struck with the fact as extraordinary, not that the labour of the cotton-weaver at the hand-loom should be ill remunerated, but that his employment should not have been altogether superseded. It would seem, however, that the power-loom had created for itself a market almost sufficient to carry off its own productions, leaving the demand for hand-loom cotton cloth nearly as great as before." *Reports*, 1840, XXIV. 650.

[3] Among these may be specified blue and white stripes and checks for export trade. *Accounts and Papers*, 1839, XLII. 535.

[4] *Reports, etc.*, 1840, XXIV. 644; *Accounts and Papers*, 1839, XLII. 533, 559.

[5] *Accounts and Papers*, 1839, XLII. 523.

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distress occurred throughout all the textile trades after the American panic in 1837; and this exceptional distress had been the reason for appointing a Commission to enquire into the condition of hand-loom weavers generally[1].

*and led in the worsted trade to*

iv. Much of what has been said in the preceding sections applies to woollen, as well as to cotton weaving; but there are several special points in regard to this ancient industry which demand attention. The power-loom had been generally introduced in the worsted trade which centred at Bradford, but it had only been recently adapted to the woollen trade, for which Leeds was the great market[2]. As the power-loom was introduced the market seems to have expanded; or at any rate there was employment for a large number of hands in attending the looms; but still the weavers suffered severely, and were entirely displaced, as the new work was done not by men, but by women and girls, who had been employed to some extent before, but who now seemed to be preferred to the exclusion of male weavers[3].

*labour shifting.*

This was one reason for the distress felt in this industry, but there was also a complaint of some standing in regard to wages. From 1801 to 1815 wages had been exceptionally high in the cloth trades in Scotland, as well as in Yorkshire. The special advantages of that kingdom were attracting to it the employment which had been previously diffused through other districts; and though wages had not fallen back below the eighteenth century standard of comfort, the weavers had never reconciled themselves to the loss of the prosperity they had enjoyed during the war[4]. And indeed, though the rates of wages had apparently kept up, the work had become somewhat harder, as heavier cloths were being made[5]. In Scotland the wages of woollen-weavers were higher than those of cotton-weavers, especially in the Galashiels district, where they made a class of goods which was in great demand and in the production of which there was little competition[6].

*The woollen weavers had lost their abnormally high rates*

[1] *Reports*, 1840, xxiv. 642 [2] *Ib.* xxiii. 431. [3] *Ib.* 431.

[4] *Reports*, 1840, xxiii. 339. *Accounts and Papers*, 1839, xlii. 563. The decline of wages was partly to be ascribed to the number of discharged soldiers who took up an easily learned employment and "exchanged the musket for the shuttle." *Ib.* 568. [5] *Reports*, 1840, xxiii. 397.

[6] *Accounts and Papers*, 1839, xlii. 570. "As the weavers possess and equitably exercise the power of preserving a just remuneration for their labour, there is no excess of hands. The masters everywhere expressed themselves desirous not to lower wages, fearing that their profits would likewise fall." See also *Ib.* 555, 556.



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*and suffered a period of depression.*

As in the spinning-mills, so in regard to the manufacture of cloth, the wool trade in all its branches appears to have been on the whole better conducted than the other trades; but the chief distress was in the West of England[1], whence the migration to Yorkshire was still continuing; in that region

[1] Mr Austin, one of the assistant commissioners in 1840, reported: "Twenty-three years ago the whole of the preceding great clothing district was in its most flourishing condition; the manufacturers were at least twice as numerous as at the present time, and employment could be had at good wages by all who were willing to obtain it. About this time the Corn Laws and the Resumption of Cash Payments Acts were passed; the trade fell off. (One manufacturer states that 25 years ago 200 pieces of cloth were manufactured in a week, and now not above 100. This ruin of the cloth trade following so closely on the heels of the corn law, was naturally considered as an effect of that law.) Many manufacturers failed, or gave up business, and the sufferings of the manufacturing labourers, for want of work, was extreme. The usual measures were resorted to, such as altering roads and allotments of land (which brought many to permanent out door work), charitable donations, etc. At that time parish relief was also among the means of subsistence within their reach; the number of weavers gradually diminished, but there are still one-third more than the trade requires, or is likely to require. Power-looms are not extensively used in this district, and have not been the cause directly or indirectly of lowering the wages (which in fact have remained stationary for many years); but it is to be feared that their introduction into the neighbouring county (Gloucestershire), and the effect produced on the wages there, will ere long be felt in this part of the country." *Reports*, 1840, xxiii. 277. In the progress of society the introduction of more powerful methods of production was inevitable, and cannot be a matter for regret; the attractive power of capital and the higher wages it offered had broken up the old system, and the misery which followed was chiefly due to extraneous causes, for the large mill-owners never initiated a decline of wages. "A reduction of wages," according to Mr Hickson, "is never the act of a prosperous manufacturer trading to the full extent of his capital. It begins with those whose capital would otherwise be idle and with the unemployed. A weaver having tried in vain to obtain work at the old standard of wages offers his labour at a lower rate and thereby tempts the manufacturer to make up stock for which there is no immediate demand. When the weaver does not succeed even on these terms in procuring employment, his next attempt is to manufacture upon a small scale on his own account. * * * The weaver in Ireland having no capital on which to fall back, cannot hold his little stock, as a large manufacturer would do, but is obliged to sell at a sacrifice, and by so doing brings down prices and the value of the labour more rapidly and to a lower point than ever happens in this country. In England wages though slow to rise are as slow to fall. The large manufacturer is the first to gain the advantage of an improvement in trade, but losses on stock upon which full wages have been paid in the hope of prices which cannot be realized, fall exclusively upon himself. It is true he then sets about a reduction of wages but before he can effect it perhaps trade revives and prices show a tendency to advance, he is induced to go on as before." (*Reports*, 1840, xxiv. 660.)

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there had never been the same jealousy of machinery, and there was reason to believe that the introduction of the power-loom would invigorate the trade and provide increased occupation[1]. No measure which Parliament could have taken would have served to prevent the fall of wages under these circumstances; the policy of attempting to lay down a minimum rate and fix living wages had been abandoned[2], the scheme which Owen had advocated[3] of limiting the out-put of machinery in the interest of the hand workers would have been disastrous to the trade of the community[4]. No legislative enactment was the outcome of this inquiry; and improvement in wages has been gradually brought about with the steady increase of trade, especially since 1850, and the success with which Trade Unions have urged their demands from time to time. It is in districts where cottage industry survives that the starvation wages and unsanitary conditions[5], which were common in the thirties and forties, till prevail.

*State action seemed impracticable:*

*but there has been improvement of wages from other influences,*

[1] Labour shifting had to be taken into account (*Reports*, 1840, XXIII. 431).

[2] It would have been a great advantage if the rate of pay could have been maintained. The Report of the Select Committee on Manufacturers' Employment points out the important difference which arises in a falling market, according as masters maintain the rate of pay and diminish the employment, or try to force the market by giving an increased out-put at a lower rate of pay. *Reports*, 1830, X. 227.

[3] *Life of Robert Owen.* Sup. Ap. p. 55.

[4] One of the most interesting parts of the Commissioners' Report contains the results of the enquiry they instituted in regard to the condition of hand-loom weavers on the Continent. Their comfort contrasted strikingly with the misery of the operatives at home. In Austria, in Switzerland, the work was done, as had been formerly the case in England, by the peasantry. Weaving was a by-occupation (*Accounts*, 1839, XLII. 623, 629); though wages were low, the people were able to live in comfort, as they had two mainstays to the household. Only in one country did they report a state of affairs that at all corresponded with the condition of the English operatives, this was in Normandy (*Accounts*, 1839, XLII. 639): the only Scottish weavers who are specified as having a by-occupation were those of Largs, who did a little fishing (*Ib.* 519). In this case also weaving was practised as a sole occupation by those who had no other means of support. The English weavers were dependent on the fluctuating basis of trade instead of the solid basis of land. They were exposed to all the variations of circumstances which might arise from changes in foreign markets or contractions of credit. When times were bad they suffered far more severely than the continental peasant, who had his holding to rely on, and though they might get far higher wages than he ever dreamed of, they were not able to recoup themselves for losses in bad times.

[5] Mr Hickson's comparison is very instructive: "With regard to health, having seen the domestic weaver in his miserable apartments and the power-loom weaver in the factory, I do not hesitate to say that the advantages are all on the side of the latter. The one if a steady workman confines himself to a single room, in which he eats, drinks and sleeps, and breathes throughout the day an impure air. The other has not only the exercise of walking to and from the factory, but, when there, lives and breathes in a large roomy apartment, in which the air is constantly changed. * * * The reason of the better morals of the factory hands was said to be, 'regularity of hours; regularity therefore of habits, and constant superintendence through the great part of the day. I believe * * * that journeymen tailors, journeymen shoemakers, domestic weavers, and all classes employed at piece-work, at their own homes, will be found to yield more readily to the temptations of idleness and intemperance than the classes who have to attend a warehouse or shop, or to work in a factory. One of the greatest advantages resulting from the progress of manufacturing industry is its tendency to raise the condition of women," by offering an alternative employment to the needle. "The consciousness of independence * * * is favourable to the development of her best moral energies." *Reports*, 1840, XXIV. 681.



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The evidence adduced before the Commission on hand-loom weavers seems to show that, even at that date, the evils which had been brought to light by the Industrial Revolution, or arose in connection with it, were beginning to pass away. The conditions of sanitation and ventilation in the factories were coming to compare favourably with those which prevailed in the cottages, and the moral tone of the factories had distinctly improved[1]. It certainly appears that in 1840 the stigma, which had formerly attached to operatives in the cotton-mills, was no longer deserved; at all events, the domestic weavers scarcely maintained their reputation as examples of honest toil[2]. The Commissioners gathered the impression[3] that the older generations of weavers were a fine class of men, though other evidence seems to show that there were black sheep among them; but the trade had been decaying since the great war, and those, who had been brought up in it, under the new conditions of great irregularity and poor remuneration, were of the type of dissipated men, and alternated periods of very severe work with periods of entire and not always involuntary idleness. That they were thus demoralised was undoubtedly their misfortune rather than their fault, but the fact is worth

*and the conditions for health of*

*factory employment compare favourably*

[1] Gaskell notes that there had been an improvement in this respect before 1833. *Manufacturing Population in England*, 66. See Webb, *Industrial Democracy*, II. 497.

[2] As early as 1833 the Glasgow weavers had a very bad reputation. *Reports*, 1833, XX. 299.

[3] *Accounts*, 1839, XLII. 609.

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noting. It shows that the Industrial Revolution was becoming complete, and that the workers who were not only better off as far as wages went, but better in character, were those who had cast in their lot with the new order of things[1]. The six years of factory inspection had doubtless contributed to raise the tone among mill-workers; the conditions of life in factory towns, especially with regard to intellectual improvement, and even in some quarters in regard to sanitation and the housing of the poor, were better than in rural districts. In the opinion of one at least of the Commissioners migration from the country to the towns was but the means by which the population obtained better opportunities of employment and ultimately better conditions of comfort[2].

*with those that characterised cottage industries.*

**271.** There was plenty of room for effort to improve the conditions of work in other industries than the textile trades. The Commission of 1833 had called attention to the state of affairs which existed in the potteries and other employments, but it seemed impossible to bring them under any system of inspection and supervision at that time. The manufacturers were inclined to allege that there was need for reform in connection with rural labour, and that the landowners, who had voted for factory regulation, were by no means blameless. In 1843 special Poor Law Commissioners were appointed to investigate the condition of women and children in agriculture. But when they met, it soon became clear that there was no real case for enquiry. The transition in the rural districts, and disappearance of small farms and cottage industries, had been accompanied by much misery; but the new economic relationships which had been established, under capitalist employers, were not on the whole oppressive[3]. Agricultural

*The conditions of work in various industries were the subject of enquiry,*

[1] *Reports*, 1840, xxiv. 631. Robert Owen's experiment at New Lanark was perhaps the first instance of a well-regulated factory population, but it did not stand alone, as we may see from the account of Mr Ashton's mills at Hyde. *Ib.* 682.

[2] *Reports*, 1840, xxiv. 677.

[3] There were however some peculiar cases of contract in different parts of the country which required attention. The worst evils connected with parish apprentices were a thing of the past. It had been the practice of overseers to take the children of parents who had parish allowances, and to assign them by lot to farmers to whom they were bound till they were twenty-one years of age. In some exceptional cases everything went well, but much more commonly the system worked badly, alike for the apprentice who was bullied, and for the master who exacted unwilling service. There were some remains of the system in Devonshire as late as 1843 (*Reports, etc.*, 1843, xii. 59), but the worst evils had been corrected in 1816 (56 Geo. III. c. 139).

In the neighbourhood of Castle Acre, in Norfolk, a system of 'ganging' had grown up within very recent years. The parish of Castle Acre was held by several proprietors who did not attempt to limit the cottages; it thus came to be overcrowded with the surplus population of all the surrounding district. There was no sufficient employment for them in Castle Acre, and in many of the neighbouring parishes the farmers were short-handed, so that it was convenient to organise gangs; these worked in the fields under an overseer who had taken a contract for doing a certain piece of work. The gangs were often composed of children, and the overseer was a sweater; the system was thoroughly bad, but it appears to have been quite exceptional even in Norfolk, and unknown elsewhere (*Reports, etc.*, 1843, xii. 237).

There was also a special custom in Northumberland, where farm labour appears to have been in great demand. The villages were so few and distant that cottages were built on each farm; the labourer was engaged for a year, and was bound to furnish the labour of a woman on the farm as well as his own. The system appears to have been advantageous in many ways to the labourer, but it was said that the houses provided were inferior to cottages which were rented in the usual way. Still there was little substantial grievance in the system, but the name of the bondager roused sentimental objections, of which Cobbett made himself the exponent.

Certainly the Northumbrian labourers seem to have been well off as compared with those in the southern counties. See especially the very complete labourers' budget. *Ib.* 318.



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labour was not prejudicial to health in any obvious way, and young children were not employed at all.

There was, however, another large and growing industry in which a strong case for State intervention was made out, so soon as the matter was investigated. The degradation of the mining population was not in any sense due to the introduction of machinery, and was only indirectly connected with the Industrial Revolution. The grievances, in so far as they affected adults, had been brought about by the increased development of capitalist organisation, and a change of system. It appears that in old days it had been the habit of the miners to undertake work in a particular seam, and that an element of speculation entered into the terms they made[1]. The basis on which wages were paid by the capitalist

*and a strong case was established for interfering in regard to mines,*

[1] This was most obviously true of copper and lead mining, but appears to have held good of coal mining as well. Prebendary Gisborne wrote, "Hence there is a fundamental diversity between the gains of the miner and those of the husbandman. The husbandman, in general, earns a fixed sum per week. If he sometimes undertakes task work, the amount of his earnings may still be foreseen with tolerable accuracy; and it has a known limit in the strength of his body and in his skill in this particular sort of work. But the pay of the miner depends upon

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employer had survived from the time when this older practice had been generally current. There came, in consequence, to be elements of uncertainty, and serious deductions from the miner's pay, which prevented him from receiving a regular reward for the time spent at his work[1].

*when a Commission reported in 1840.*

This matter, however, like all questions in regard to adult male labour, lay outside the scope of the investigation which was undertaken on the motion of Lord Ashley. He had been taunted with a special animus against factory-owners, and in 1840 he proceeded to move that a Commission should be appointed to investigate the whole subject of the employment of women and children in collieries and mines[2]. In 1842, the Commission presented their Report[3], which revealed such a disgusting and brutalising state of affairs, that there was a unanimity of opinion in favour of an immediate measure of redress. This was all the more

chance. The working miner is almost always in some measure a gambler, and embarks in the adventures of the mine. In common, the miner is not disposed to adjust the scale of his expenses to the *average* of his earnings. Being accustomed to the occasional receipt of considerable sums of money, money too which has flowed in suddenly upon him. rather from good fortune than from proportionate exertions, he often raises his expenditure and mode of living to a pitch, to which the labourer in agriculture ventures not to aspire. He feeds on better diet, and wears clothes of finer materials than the husbandman.

"And, in general, he persists in this manner of life, in spite of a change of circumstances. He is buoyed up with the sanguine hopes of a gamester: and for what he cannot pay to-day draws on the favourable luck of to-morrow. This natural propensity is cherished and aggravated by the ease with which he obtains credit, in comparison of those classes of labourers whose gains though steady, are limited. If he happens to be unsuccessful, he is trusted nevertheless at shops, and permitted to run up long scores at public-houses, through the hopes entertained by the shopkeeper and the publican that a day will come when fortune will smile on the debtor. Thus the habits of the miner are seldom interrupted by any rubs and difficulties which may teach him caution. He has less occasion than most other men to dread the immediate inconveniences of poverty; and does not willingly learn the necessity of frugality and forecast." *Georgical Essays*, by A. Hunter, Vol. II. (1803), 49, *On the Situation of the Mining Poor*, by Rev. T. Gisborne.

[1] This state of things constituted a ground of appeal to the public. "Let me tell you, brave men, that the great object which you at present seek becomes pretty generally known to the public, to consist simply in getting twelve hours wages for every twelve hours you labour, as no other men on earth have ever been required to toil." *An earnest Address and Urgent Appeal to the People of England in behalf of the oppressed and suffering Pitmen of the Counties of Northumberland and Durham*, by W. Scott, 1831, p. 19. On the irregularity of payment to lead miners, see F. Hall, *Appeal to the Poor Miner* (1818), p. 40.

[2] 3 Hansard, LV. 1260.

[3] *Reports*, 1842, XV. XVI. XVII.



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important as the evils were increasing with frightful rapidity, and were to some extent an indirect consequence of the Factory Act of 1833. The education clauses in that Act had resulted in the discontinuance, in many districts, of the employment of children in factories who were under thirteen years of age. There was, however, nothing to prevent their working in mines from very early years and for the longest hours. "Amongst the children employed," as Mr Hickson writes, "there are almost always some mere infants * * *; the practice of employing children only six and seven years of age is all but universal, and there are no short hours for them. The children go down with the men usually at 4 o'clock in the morning, and remain in the pit between 11 and 12 hours." To ascertain the nature of the employment of these young children, he went down a pit 600 feet deep. The galleries were secured by traps or doors to prevent inflammable drafts. "The use of a child six years of age is to open and shut one of these doors when the trucks pass and repass. For this object the child is trained to sit by itself in a dark gallery for the number of hours I have described[1]." In some of the collieries young girls as well as boys appear to have been employed, and the British parent who could no longer exploit his children in factories forced them to go to work in the neighbouring mines. This is one of the pieces of evidence which goes to show that the capitalist was not solely to blame in regard to the maltreatment of children, but that there was at least a reckless connivance on the part of the parents. This fact became still more obvious when colliers worked their own children in this way; they had not, generally speaking, the excuse of poverty, as their wages ranged considerably higher than in other callings[2]. The measure, which was passed, followed on the lines which had proved successful in regard to factories, by arranging for the employment of inspectors, but in other ways the circumstances of the case demanded special treatment. Boys under ten years of age were not to be employed in the pits, and the

*The employment of young boys in mines*

*had been increasing,*

*but was now prohibited,*

[1] *Reports*, 1840, XXIV. 687.

[2] *Reports*, 1840, XXIV. 688. Their average wages, according to the Report, were 24*s.* a week, cottage rent-free, garden ground and coal free.

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underground work of women and girls was to cease absolutely within a specified time, which it was hoped might allow for their obtaining employment in other callings[1]. There were also careful provisions with regard to the prevention of accidents; and the period of apprenticeship was defined so as to avoid the recurrence of that practical bondage which was once so common in Scotland[2].

*as well as that of women underground,*

*and a system of State inspection was organised.*

In this way the exercise of constant State supervision, both in regard to factories and mines, came to be recognised as desirable, with a view to securing the welfare of the labouring population. There was no conscious abandonment of the principles of *laissez faire*. The advocates of interference were content to maintain that they were dealing with exceptional cases. Still the recognition of the fact that there were exceptions, which demanded special treatment, brought about an important new development in practice. The exclusion of women and mere children from mines became so complete, that the excuse of legislating on their behalf could no longer be maintained. The inspectors of mines were as a matter of fact chiefly concerned in enforcing laws and suggesting improvements in the conditions under which work was done by adult men.

*The conditions in which labourers lived*

**272.** The State had done a great deal for improving the conditions in which the operatives worked before any necessity was felt for legislating in regard to the homes in which they lived. It was at the centres of the cotton manufacture that the difficulty first attracted attention, and it came into prominence, not as a sign of poverty[3], but as presenting a

[1] 5 and 6 Vict. c. 99. [2] *Reports*, 1844, XVI. 9. See above, p. 531.

[3] It is most remarkable to find that public attention was still forced to the old, rather than to the new social difficulties, in regard to the whole question of poor relief. The insuperable problems of our time seem to be those connected with great cities,—with great masses of men huddled together, where there are none of the middle and upper classes to attend to the ordinary machinery of government in the widest sense of the word. So far as the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834 are concerned these difficulties might scarcely have existed. That they did exist and were very real we know from other sources. Dr Chalmers had endeavoured to organise a system of relief in Glasgow, which should be given on grounds of charity, and which should not have the demoralising effects of the aid that could be claimed as a matter of right (*Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns*, II. pp. 225—365: *Political Economy*, *Works*, XIX. 400). He was not apparently aware that the legal relief, which he denounced, had been, as a matter of fact, the outgrowth of a system of voluntary and charitable assistance, such as



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danger to health. In Manchester, and the towns round it, there was a vast increase of population, and as early as 1795 Dr Aikin[1] and Dr Percival called attention to the miserable character of their accommodation. The sudden flocking of the population to these towns was the occasion of overcrowding in its worst forms, and gave the speculative builder a magnificent opportunity for erecting insanitary dwellings. Friedrich Engels' painstaking description of the housing of the Manchester poor is well worth perusal[2]. The evil had then been of long standing, and was probably connected with the decay of municipal institutions which was so noticeable in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. In mediaeval times the townsmen had been eager for the maintenance of public health, but it was only after the Municipal Reform of 1833[3] that administrative authorities were available to attempt to deal with the new problem. Even then an outside stimulus was needed: not till the cholera appeared, and it became obvious that the condition in which the labourer constantly lived was a source of public danger in

*attracted attention*

*at the outbreak of cholera in 1831*

he highly extolled. The changed character of poor relief in modern times is but an instance of the alteration which has taken place in regard to so many duties; as they become common, they also become secularised. There was less difference between the law in England and Scotland than is generally supposed, though there was a very great difference in the administration. *Reports*, 1839, XX. 168.

[1] J. Aikin, *A description of the country from thirty or forty miles round Manchester*, 1795, p. 192.

[2] Engels, *Condition of the Working Class*, pp. 24—66.

[3] The increased efficiency of municipal institutions reorganised under parliamentary authority has been one great factor in progress. The old state of affairs is thus described: "In conclusion we report to your Majesty that there prevails amongst the inhabitants of a great majority of the incorporated towns a general and in our opinion a just dissatisfaction with their Municipal Institutions; a distrust of the self-elected Municipal Councils; whose powers are subject to no popular control and whose acts and proceedings being secret are unchecked by the influence of public opinion; a distrust of the Municipal Magistracy tainting with suspicion the local administration of justice, and often accompanied with contempt of the persons by whom the law is administered; a discontent under the burthen of Local Taxation, while revenues that ought to be applied for the public advantage are diverted from their legitimate use, and are sometimes wastefully bestowed for the benefit of individuals, sometimes squandered for purposes injurious to the character and morals of the people. We therefore feel it to be our duty to represent to your Majesty that the existing Municipal Corporations of England and Wales neither possess nor deserve the confidence or respect of your Majesty's subjects, and that a thorough reform must be effected before they can become, what we humbly submit to your Majesty they ought to be, useful and efficient instruments of local government." *Municipal Corporations Commission Report*, in *Reports, etc.* 1835, XXIII. 49.

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times of pestilence, were serious measures taken to improve industrial dwellings and to remedy the defective sanitation of our great towns.

There is a curious parallelism between the history of the first great outbreak of cholera in Europe and the accounts of the Black Death; though there are also marked differences. Each originated in the East, though not at the same point; each travelled in the course of trade to Europe, though along different routes; and each ran a most devastating course when it reached this island, though one ravaged the country generally, and the other fastened especially on the insanitary areas of towns, and the poorest and famished inhabitants. The character of the disease was well known to medical men; they watched its course from Bombay through Astrakhan to Riga, and predicted with considerable accuracy the points which it was likely to attack[1]. The first case was noticed at Sunderland in 1831; from that place it seems to have spread through the Tyne district; and outbreaks followed shortly after in many of the seaport towns and manufacturing districts[2]. The most serious epidemic occurred at Bilston in the Black Country, where out of a population of 14,492 there were no fewer than 3,568 cases in seven weeks, and of these 742 proved fatal. The textile districts round Manchester and in the West Riding suffered severely, and the outbreak in Glasgow was very serious. Typhoid had been prevalent in similar areas for many years, and nothing had been done; and even after the cholera scare, some years elapsed before it was felt requisite to take general action in regard to insanitary conditions[3]. Public opinion was gradually impressed, as to the necessity of Governmental action, by the investigations instituted by the Royal Commissioners for enquiring into the state of large towns and populous districts; they insisted that much of the disease in the country was due to preventable causes, and that, in many districts, improved

*in insanitary districts,*

*and after thorough enquiry*

[1] R. Orton, *An Essay on the Epidemic Cholera of India* (1831), 462–469.

[2] Compare the table in Creighton, *History of Epidemics in Britain*, II. 821.

[3] The influence of the cholera epidemic in 1831 in leading to some immediate though minor reforms locally, and the effect of the later visitations in 1849 and 1854 in inspiring the Legislature to renewed activity, is pointed out in the *Second Report of the Royal Sanitary Commission* (1871), xxxv. 10—14.



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drainage, or a sufficient water-supply, would contribute to a diminution of mortality[1]. They also pointed out that the injury to health, which arose from noxious manufactures, might be minimised by proper precautions[2]. The Public Health Act of 1848[3] was based on their recommendations; it created a central authority[4] to take steps through the action of inspectors for constituting local boards; the powers given under the Act provided for the removal of nuisances, and for insisting that any new buildings[5] erected should conform with a new standard of sanitary requirement. Additional powers were conferred from time to time[6], as to the removal of nuisances and insanitary property, but so long as the Local Boards were separate and independent bodies little progress was made in enforcing the Acts. Since the constitution of the Local Government Board in 1871[7], there has been more possibility of bringing pressure to bear on the local authorities, and of exercising some control over sanitary conditions in all parts of the country. The analogy of the system of factory and mining reform has not been followed very far, however, as various aspects of the sanitary problem are dealt with by different departments, instead of being committed to one central authority, and there is not sufficient staff for constant inspection.

*a Health Department was organised*

*but on an inadequate scale.*

In the meantime a beginning was made in dealing with another side of the problem. It was not only necessary to see to the qualitative conditions of the labourers' dwellings, but to take steps with a view to providing an amount of accommodation that should meet local requirements, without serious danger of overcrowding. Lord Shaftesbury's Labouring

*The work of providing for the housing of the poor*

[1] *Reports of Commissioners for inquiring into the State of Large Towns*, 1845, xviii. 7.

[2] *Reports*, 1845, xviii. 51.

[3] 11 and 12 Vict. c. 63.

[4] The Central Board was reconstituted in 1854, and in 1858 its powers were transferred to the Privy Council.

[5] The Report of the Select Committee of 1840, which contains some interesting statistics as to the rapid growth of Manchester, Glasgow, and other factory towns (*Reports*, 1840, xi. 279), advocated the introduction of a General Building Act. Rules were laid down for London in 1844 (7 and 8 Vict. c. 84) and permissive powers were conferred on local authorities generally in 1858.

[6] 18 and 19 Vict. c. 121 and 29 and 30 Vict. c. 90.

[7] The necessity of better sanitary administration was one of the chief reasons for taking this step. *Reports*, 1871, xxxv. 37.

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Classes Lodging-House Act[1] empowered local authorities to purchase houses, which should be used under their control for the letting of lodgings; and the series of Torrens and Cross Acts[2] not only deal with the demolition of insanitary property, but authorise the building and maintenance of improved dwellings by municipalities.

*has been partly dealt with by building societies,*

This difficult problem has not been entirely left to public authority however, as much useful work has been done, through the frugality and enterprise of the higher grades of artisans, in providing themselves with comfortable houses. This has been effected in many cases by the agency of building societies, which enable their members to save money and then to lend to one another on excellent security and easy terms, so that they can build their own houses and eventually live rent free. This form of self-help was put on a legal basis by an Act in 1836[3] and has been very widely taken advantage of, though it appears that its popularity among artisans has been declining in recent years.

*though the problem is increasingly difficult.*

There is no question in regard to which it is more difficult to lay down the limits of interference by public authority with private transactions than that of the housing of the poor. The standard of sanitary requirements is changing rapidly, as medical science throws fresh light on the causes of disease, and the evils of overcrowding become more patent. It has often been found hard to bring home the responsibility for the insanitary state of property to the proper person; and it may be physically impossible to provide sufficient accommodation, within a limited area, at prices which the poor can afford to pay. Recent improvements in rapid transit are doing something to simplify the problem, but public authority seems to be placed in the dilemma of attempting, either to force individual builders and landlords to carry on their business under unremunerative conditions, or to provide shelter by its own action for the poorest classes in the community at the expense of the rest.

[1] 14 and 15 Vict. c. 34.

[2] These were consolidated in the Housing of the Working Classes Act in 1890.

[3] 6 and 7 William IV. c. 32, *An Act for the Regulation of Benefit Building Societies.*



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We are not concerned with the solution of this difficulty, however, but only with the fact that since 1845 serious attempts have been made to face it. During the second quarter of the nineteenth century administrative machinery had been created to supervise the conditions of work in many trades and to deal with the conditions of life in general. Henceforth account was to be taken of the principal conditions of welfare, so far as the poorest members of the community were concerned. At first sight it seems to be a return, under new forms, to the paternal government of the Tudor and Stuart monarchy; but the difference lies deeper than in the fact that the new administrative bodies derive their authority from statute and not merely from the Crown. The new conception of human welfare is larger; the aims of modern officials are more ambitious. Just as we have learned that national wealth consists of the aggregate of individual wealth at least, whatever else it may include, so do we recognise that the aggregate of individual welfare constitutes a large part of national welfare. The Stuarts aimed at promoting definite and important national interests, if need be at the expense of individual interests[1], while modern legislation aims at having a regard to all private interests—chiefly by giving them free play, but also, by fostering them when necessary—as the true means of promoting national interest. At no other period have such pains been taken to secure the healthy development, physical and moral, of the rising generation in all parts of the realm, or has there been such completely organised national machinery for exercising a control over the conditions in which work is done.

*The new administrative machinery for social purposes is very different from that of the Stuarts in its aims and methods.*

## V. Facilities for Transport.

*The demands of manufacturing districts*

**273.** The staple industries of the country had been revolutionised by the introduction of machinery, before serious efforts were made to bring inventive power to bear on improving facilities for transport within the country and by sea. The system of internal communication, both by land and water, had been enormously improved during the last quarter of the eighteenth and the first of the nineteenth century, but

[1] See p. 17 above.

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it failed to keep pace with the increasing demands which had arisen in the manufacturing districts. There was such a congestion of traffic on the canal between Liverpool and Manchester that the proprietors were able to charge very heavy rates. Any scheme, which offered a prospect of establishing a successful competition and bringing about a fall in the cost of carriage, was sure of an eager welcome from the mill-owners; and the project of building a railway, to be worked by locomotive engines, was readily taken up, and obtained Parliamentary sanction in 1825. George Stephenson had already rendered steam-traction a practical success, on a small scale, at Killingworth; and the Stockton and Darlington Railway had been empowered to use the new motor in 1823. The object of the projectors was to obtain a better mode of hauling heavy goods, and they seem to have had no idea of the high rate of speed at which the trains would run; Stephenson had estimated it at fourteen miles an hour. The formal opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, saddened as it was by the accident which caused Mr Huskisson's death, impressed the public mind with the extraordinary possibilities of the railway engine. It was at once obvious that the new system was not only preferable for hauling heavy goods, but for rapid communication as well; the mails were transferred to the Liverpool and Manchester Railway soon after it was opened, and year by year, one or another of the well-appointed coaches, which had been the subject of so much pride, was forced off the road. Ever since 1830 the building and improving of lines of railway has gone on steadily; goods can now be profitably carried at rates which were impossible before, and there has been an extraordinary saving of time as well. As Professor Levi wrote in 1872, "Before the railway was established between Liverpool and Manchester there were twenty-two regular and seven occasional extra coaches, which if full would carry 688 persons. The railway carried in eighteen months 700,000 persons, or on an average 1,070 per day. The fare per coach was 10/- inside, 5/- outside; by railway 5/- inside, 3/6 outside. By coach it took four hours to go from Liverpool to Manchester or *vice versa*, by railway $1\frac{3}{4}$ hours. The rate of goods was 15/- per

*for improved transport*

*were met by the development of railway enterprise,*



ton, by railway 10/8. By canal, goods took 20 hours, by railway 2 hours[1]."

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None of the other improvements of the nineteenth century awakened so much foreboding as was roused by the railways at first, and in no other case has the boon to the public been so immediate and obvious. The profits of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway were so large that the market price of the shares doubled; and the development of traffic was such that the waggons, which had carried goods for long distances before, might have been absorbed in the subsidiary employment of taking goods to and from the stations. The loss involved, in superseding the old methods of transport by a new one, was comparatively slight, and a wonderful stimulus was given to business of every kind. Under the new Poor Law the labourer was much more free to migrate, and the railway gave him facilities to transfer his labour to the districts where it was most wanted. The saving of time and money was a boon to the capitalist, and the rapidity of transit by rail rendered it possible to fetch fruit, dairy produce, fish and other perishable goods, from long distances, to markets in London and other large towns. All classes in the community, both producers and consumers, have derived some economic advantage from increased facilities for intercommunication.

*which was a boon to the public generally,*

The introduction of railways has also served to accelerate some of the changes which were already at work in English economic life. The effect of the factory system had been to concentrate industry in certain localities, where power or materials were easily obtainable. Manufacturing on a large scale, with much division of labour, became more feasible when there were better means of distributing the goods and finding a market in the most distant parts of the country. This concentration of labour in factories has had a corresponding effect on rural districts; there has been an increased differentiation between town and country, and diminished scope for the employment of the village artisan, or for the tradesman who catered, in market towns, for a rural neighbourhood. The introduction of railways has given an immense

*but it accelerated the decline of rural life in England,*

[1] Leone Levi, *op. cit.* 193.

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stimulus to the material prosperity of the country as a whole; but there are districts which have profited little, if at all, by the change, while the increase of wealth in the progressive centres has been unexampled.

Great as was the impulse which was given to economic progress by the building of railways in England, the revolution they effected in other lands was even more remarkable. Distances in Great Britain are comparatively short, and the obstacles to internal communication by road, or water, are not insuperable; railways only served for the most part to improve existing lines of traffic. In America the conditions were entirely different; railways rendered it possible to establish direct connection between the Eastern and the Middle States; the great plains, beyond the Alleghanies, which had been dependent for all their traffic on the Ohio, the Tennessee and the Mississippi, now found means of direct access to the Atlantic coast, and the railways have enabled successive generations of pioneers to push farther and farther West. Steam traction shows itself at its best in hauling freight over great distances; it is under those circumstances that the full convenience of the railway system comes out most clearly. The United States had begun to supply this country with cereals to some extent, before and during the Napoleonic War, but it has only been as a consequence of the introduction of railways that the English farmer is regularly and ordinarily exposed to competition with the wheat growers of the most fertile regions of the West. The development of the railway system in America has done much to deprive the landed classes in England of the natural protection, which was afforded by distance and difficulty of transport[1].

*especially after the system was introduced in America.*

*The application of steam power*

The application of steam power to shipping has had somewhat similar results. At first it was introduced in connection with internal communications in canals. The *Charlotte Dundas* was the first steam-tug that ever plied; in 1803 she was at work on the Forth and Clyde Canal. A more ambitious attempt was successfully carried out in America in 1807, when regular communication by steam-packet was established on the Hudson, between New York

[1] *Reports*, 1888, XLV. 362.



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and Albany. Farther progress was comparatively slow, as it was not till 1820 that steamers were employed between Dublin and Holyhead; and it was only in 1838 that the first Transatlantic voyages were attempted. The *Enterprise* had made the voyage to Calcutta in 1827, but this proved unremunerative, and the difficulties of obtaining fuel and working engines in the tropics, rendered the success of such long and distant trips problematical. Still the new invention opened up a prospect of rendering communication with India much more rapid, and the Government, along with the East India Company, organised a system for reopening the old route to the East through Egypt. This was a scheme which we inherited from Napoleon, and it was well-adapted for the early days of steaming, as the long voyage was interrupted by a brief journey overland. In 1835 steamers were regularly passing between Bombay and Suez, while the English Government despatched vessels to convey letters to Alexandria[1]. The detailed facilities for this overland route were carried out by Lieutenant Waghorn; and the dromedary post which had been organised by Bagdad, Damascus, and Beyrout was superseded.

*to ocean transport was more gradual,*

The superiority of the steamer in regularity and punctuality was obvious from the first, so far as passenger traffic was concerned; and the increase of steam-shipping went on side by side with that of sailing-vessels for thirty years. Steam had no such superiority over sailing as to supersede the older system on the water, in the rapid manner in which the locomotive asserted its superiority on land. Gradually, however, the regularity and punctuality of steam-ship voyages began to tell for freight, as well as for travellers, and since 1860 the increase of steam-shipping appears to have occurred to some extent at the expense of the sailing-vessels. The new motor power has played a part in the recent development of British commerce. This has been advantageous to the manufacturer, as giving facilities both for the purchase of materials and the sale of goods, but the landed interests have derived little advantage and have been exposed to keener competition. On the whole it would seem that the

*and it has greatly benefited the commercial*

*but not the landed interest.*

[1] Lindsay, *Merchant Shipping*, IV. 358.

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introduction of improved facilities for traffic has tended to depress the landed interest relatively to the merchant and manufacturer.

*Under the influence of new conditions*

**274.** The development of the means of transport during the first half of the nineteenth century was accompanied by considerable changes in business organisation. The new undertakings, which were called for in order to carry on the trade of the country, were on such a scale that they offered a field for associated rather than private enterprise. This form of trading had been greatly discredited[1], since the era of speculation, when the South Sea Scheme had been floated. In 1719 the Bubble Act was passed[2], which prohibited the formation of companies with transferable shares, unless they obtained incorporation by charter from the Crown or by Act of Parliament. Unincorporated companies had no legal existence, since they could neither sue nor be sued, and they were not partnerships, as the shares were being constantly transferred; they were an anomaly in the business world, since contracts could not be enforced or debts recovered. Even the chartered corporations had an unfair advantage in trade; as the members were only liable for the amount of their contribution, and no individual was personally responsible for the debts incurred by the corporation. When in 1825 the Bubble Act was repealed[3], and opportunity was given for the formation of joint-stock companies, pains were taken to protect the public in their dealings with companies. Power was given to the Crown, when granting a charter of incorporation to a trading company, to render the members who composed it personally liable for the whole or any part of the debts of the corporation.

*facilities were given for the formation of joint stock companies*

From this time onwards, when the complete responsibility of the members of corporations was secured, there has been a tendency to facilitate the formation of joint-stock companies rather than to discourage them. In 1844 arrangements were made by which trading companies could obtain a Certificate of Incorporation[4] on simple conditions and without the delay and expense which were involved in appealing to

[1] Napier, in *A Century of Law Reform*, 580. [2] 6 Geo. I. c. 18, § 18.
[3] 6 Geo. IV. c. 91. [4] 7 and 8 Vict. c. 110.



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the Crown or Parliament. A still more remarkable change occurred in 1855[1], when the principle of the limited liability of shareholders, which previous generations had considered to be so dangerous, was recognised as reasonable. Companies, with shares of £10 and upwards, could henceforth be formed, the shareholders of which were not, in the event of the bankruptcy of the company, liable for more than the amount of their shares. The Company Acts were consolidated in 1862[2], and greater opportunity was given than before for obtaining a number of small contributions towards the large capital which was necessary to carry on the trade of the world.

*with limited liability,*

*and these were largely used*

There had been some discussion, during the eighteenth century, as to the kinds of business for which Company organisation was adapted, and Adam Smith had laid down the canon that it could only be suitably introduced in cases where the conduct of affairs could be reduced to some sort of routine; but owing to changed circumstances it was possible to bring much of the external traffic of the realm under these appropriate conditions. The business of carrying became more completely differentiated from that of trading in goods, and companies were formed to organise and maintain fleets of steamers and sailing-vessels, which should ply at regular intervals between definite ports. In 1840, a firm of ship-owners, which was already responsible for the conveyance of mails to the Peninsula, was reconstituted on a joint-stock basis, and obtained such a command of capital as to be able to provide a regular service of steamers between London and Alexandria, and between Suez and Bombay[3]. Similarly the partnership of Messrs Cunard, Burns, and McIver, to whom the contract[4] for conveying the Atlantic mails by steamer was given in 1838, was the foundation of the Cunard Company. Communication with the West Indies was accelerated by the formation of the Royal Mail Steam-Packet Company, which started on a large scale; the venture did not prove remunerative at first, and the company only maintained its

*for trans-oceanic shipping.*

[1] 18 and 19 Vict. c. 133. [2] 25 and 26 Vict. c. 89.
[3] Lindsay, *History of Merchant Shipping*, IV. 388.
[4] *Ib.* 180.

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existence through the aid of considerable subsidies granted by Government[1]; the Pacific Steam Navigation Company had even greater difficulty in developing the trade which was necessary to render their enterprise profitable. It was only gradually that the conditions, in which the competition of steamers, whether under company or private management, with sailing-vessels could be successfully carried on, came to be better understood.

These new shipping companies had no pretensions to exclusive rights, and were in this way entirely unlike the great trading companies of the seventeenth century. The regulated companies had for the most part been thrown open about the time of the Revolution, and during the eighteenth century they seem to have gradually lost their practical importance, but the two great joint-stock companies were retained. The conditions, which had rendered company trading with Hudson Bay desirable, still prevailed; but the very success of the East India Company, in the exercise of its political and military powers, removed the excuse for continuing its exclusive trade. The fact that a stable Government had been established, rendered it possible for any Englishman to trade with India, without causing difficulties with the native potentates. In 1813 the trade to India was thrown open to all British subjects[2]; but the Company still retained a monopoly of the trade with China, and controlled the supply of tea. This had become an article of common consumption in England during the eighteenth century, and the Company appeared to reap a large profit from the terms on which they supplied it. The controversy, which arose on this subject, was a curious echo of the seventeenth century debates on well-ordered trade, though the point in question was the dearness of an import[3], and not the diminution of the vent for English cloth[4].

*The trade of the East India Co. to India was thrown open in 1813,*

[1] Lindsay, *History of Merchant Shipping*, IV. 295.

[2] The Company continued to transmit a certain quantity of goods to this country, as that was the most convenient form in which to make their remittances, but they practically ceased to take any part in the export trade from this country. Mill, *History* (Wilson), IX. 332.

[3] There is a certain analogy with the fourteenth century disputes about the vintners and the high price of wine. Vol. I. p. 318.

[4] On the complaints which were urged against the Merchant Adventurers for their stint see above, p. 231 n. 4.



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The Company were able to limit the quantity of tea imported and thus to control the price. The method of sale had been defined by the Act of 1784, when it was determined that the Company should, four times a year, put up for auction a quantity of tea, which they supposed would meet the demand. The upset price was to be such as would defray the prime cost, freight, etc. The Company however calculated these various items on a system which gave rise to much complaint. It was held that, if they pushed the sale of English manufactures in China, they could procure the goods on far cheaper terms, that their charges for freight were excessive, and that their costly establishments were an unnecessary burden. The merchants pointed out that the price of tea in Hamburg was about half of that paid at the East India auctions in London; but the Company retorted that the critics took no account of the difference of quality. The interest of the English consumers prevailed, however, against a privileged body of traders; and the China trade was thrown open in 1833.

*but the exclusive trade with China was retained till 1833,*

The difficulties which have been found since that time, in maintaining satisfactory political relations with the Chinese authorities, and in affording protection to and exercising authority over European traders, have been very great: it may at least be doubted whether the old method of trading, through an exclusive company, was not after all well adapted to the circumstances of the country. Till 1833 all trade between the Chinese and the outside world had been carried on through the agency of a corporation of native merchants known as the Co-hong, who seem to have exercised the same sort of privileges which were formerly bestowed on Gilds merchant. They were responsible for one another's debts, an arrangement which enabled some of them to trade recklessly on credit, and caused frequent difficulty[1]; and a Hongist was responsible for the good behaviour of each foreign merchant[2]. An exclusive mercantile company, like the East India Company, was organised on lines which they understood; but the Chinese had no respect for the civilisation, or powers, of European States. The policy of the East India Company,

*and the abandonment of well-ordered trade through the Hongists*

[1] J. F. Davis, *The Chinese* (1840), 46.

[2] *Ib.* 47, 60.

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and of the central Chinese Government, had harmonised in regard to the smuggling of opium. The East India Company were anxious to maintain their monopoly in the growth[1] of Indian opium, while the Chinese desired to limit and control the consumption of the drug. Opium had been regularly imported under a duty till 1796, when the importation was prohibited; and systematic smuggling was subsequently developed on a large scale[2].

*in favour of open competition had disastrous results,*

Dire confusion in regard to this and all other branches of commerce followed from the sudden suppression of the exclusive powers of the Company. The attempt to establish political, as distinguished from commercial relations, was a failure, for when Lord Napier arrived in Canton, in 1834. as the direct representative of the British Crown, the Chinese Government treated him with contempt. The new commercial methods did not commend themselves to the Chinese; the Hongists were dissatisfied with the change, and demanded that the English should elect a commercial chief to control their shipping[3]. The English merchants too, as isolated individuals, had greater difficulties about recovering debts than in former days[4]. All regulation was at an end; the illicit trade in opium, against which the Chinese had protested, was now carried on without disguise at Canton; and the enforced surrender by British merchants of a large quantity of the drug led to the necessity of armed intervention. The so-called Opium War

[1] The East India Company had endeavoured to put down the growth of the poppy in Rajputana; though the treaties by which the suppression of the cultivation was secured could not be strictly enforced, they did succeed in greatly limiting the trade. Mill, *op. cit.* IX. 174.

[2] The opium which was thus smuggled was mostly grown in Mahoor and other Rajputana States, whence it was conveyed to Karachi to be shipped. Much of this contraband business was chiefly carried on by the Portuguese at Macao, and by other traders, most if not all of them British, at Lintin, a small island at the mouth of the Canton river. Davis, *op. cit.* p. 49.

[3] This was much needed, as some of the British traders were mere buccaneers, who were prepared to indemnify themselves by acts of reprisal on their own account (Davis, 57). The Chinese were quite incapable of controlling their own subjects. About 1810 the seas were completely infested by a body of pirates, known as Ladrones, who were latterly commanded by a woman (*Ib.* 34). We can perhaps find a parallel in Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with the Rovers of the Sea (Vol. I. p. 366), or Victual Brothers.

[4] Davis, *op. cit.* 59.



was concluded in 1842 by a treaty, under which Hong-kong was ceded to England, and trade at Shanghai, Canton, Amoy, Ningpo, and Foo-chow-foo was opened to British subjects; while the monopoly of the Hongists, as the agents for foreign trade, was entirely done away. A.D. 1776 —1850.

For good or for evil, the system of relieving the Government of responsibility for distant trades, by conferring combined political and trading rights on an exclusive company, had come to an end. The East India Company had lost its trading character, and continued as an administrative body for political and military purposes till the outbreak of the Mutiny in 1857, when the governmental system of India was reconstructed. The other great seventeenth century company which survived, retained its character as a trader, but had lost much of its political significance[1]. Since the conquest of Canada, the forts on Hudson's Bay had ceased to be the outposts of English encroachment on the sphere of French influence. In so far as the company form has been retained in more recent times in connection with the development of Borneo or of Rhodesia[2], there is no real reversion to the old type. The company system has been adopted, not as a means of relieving the Government of responsibility, but as an administrative form through which the duty of the State, for the protection of English traders and of native races, can be most effectively exercised.

*when the last remnant of monopoly in ocean trade was given up.*

In the same decade, in which the last vestiges of monopoly in the foreign trade of the country were being broken down, it became necessary to guard against the danger of a new monopoly arising in connection with internal communications. In countries where railways had been built by the State, the difficulty of protecting the public welfare from private interests did not arise; but in England, the development of the new system of transport was left to associated enterprise, and was effected by joint-stock companies. The legislature had anticipated that the roads laid down by the railway companies would be available for private persons to run their own engines and waggons, subject to the payment of tolls. It

*The danger of monopoly growing up for internal communication*

[1] See above, p. 279 n. 4.

[2] Nicholson, *Political Economy*, II. 254.

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soon became clear, however, that this plan was impracticable, and that it was necessary that there should be on every line "one system of management under one superintending authority, which should have the power of making and of enforcing all regulations necessary for the protection of passengers, and for duly conducting and maintaining this new mode of communication. On this account it is necessary that the company should possess a complete control over their line of roads, although they should thereby organise an entire monopoly of the means of communication[1]." So soon as the actual condition of affairs was recognised it was felt that these private companies should be "so controlled, as to secure the public, as far as possible, from any abuse which might arise under this irresponsible authority." It was necessary on one hand to provide that every reasonable precaution should be taken to insist on the safety of the travelling public, and on the other to see that the companies did not charge excessive fares. An important step in this latter direction was taken by the Act of 1844, which rendered the running of trains at the fare of one penny a mile obligatory[2], while the establishment of a Railway Commission[3], in 1873, has afforded the means of exercising a constant supervision over rates in the public interest. This was a remarkable development of State interference; it could no longer be treated as exceptional action in order to protect those who were too helpless to protect themselves; there was here a definite revolt from *laissez faire*, and an assertion of the necessity of controlling the manner in which business was carried on, so that there should be due regard to public welfare.

*led to the interference of Government on behalf of the public*

*and to the institution of the Railway Commission.*

*The inadequacy of the credit system for modern requirements*

**275.** The increase of commercial intercourse, which occurred during the earlier part of the nineteenth century, involved a great development of the credit system of the country. Several changes in the organisation and management of banks were brought about, for experience was growing, and the necessity of altering financial practice had been forced

[1] *Report*, 1839, x. 133; second report, p. vii.
[2] 7 and 8 Vict. c. 85.
[3] 36 and 37 Vict. c. 48.



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upon the attention of the country by the recurrence of commercial crises.

*was brought out by the crisis of 1825,*

There was wide-spread and severe disaster in 1825. The failure of Spain to retain her hold over her colonies had opened up Mexico and Spanish South America as fields for the sale of English goods, and the investment of English capital. This gave rise to a sudden development of mining speculation[1], and a large exportation of English manufactures; while there was also a considerable response on the part of the English public to the demands of the new republican government for loans for public purposes[2]. As a consequence a rapid drain of gold began, and the Bank failed to check it by contracting its issues; since large quantities of paper were put into circulation by the country banks, and merchants were compelled to realise, there was an inflation of prices. After credit had thus unduly expanded, the Bank decided that a sudden change of policy was necessary, and in May 1825 contracted its issues. Alarm spread, and many of the country banks were unable to meet their engagements, or honour the notes which they had issued; a deficiency of the circulating medium was in consequence brought about. It became impossible to borrow money on any terms[3], and numerous important firms failed; but the Bank had been able to hold its own, partly by utilising £1 notes; bullion began to come from France; and the Bank, by issuing freely as soon as the worst was over, replaced the gap in the circulating medium that had been caused by the discredit of the notes of country banks.

*which led to a renewed agitation against the monopoly of the Bank of England*

The disasters of the time were alleged to be due to the policy which had been pursued in granting a monopoly to the Bank of England, as against other companies[4]. This was

[1] McLeod, *Theory and Practice of Banking*, II. 110.
[2] The conversion of the English debt in 1824 and reduction of interest on 4 per cent. stock to 3½ per cent. caused investors to look out for foreign securities that offered higher rates. *Ib.* II. 108.
[3] The usury laws, which rendered interest above 5% illegal, proved an obstacle to prevent lenders from offering money at the high rates which the state of the market justified. *Ib.* 112.
[4] This was Lord Liverpool's opinion: "What was the system in existence at present? Why the most rotten, the most insecure, the very worst in every respect that could possibly be conceived. Any petty tradesman, any grocer or

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said to have prevented any general development of banking facilities throughout the country, such as had occurred in Scotland through the competition of powerful banks. The Bank of England took some steps to follow the example of the Scotch banks, by starting branches in Leeds, Liverpool, Birmingham, and other towns[1]. At the same time, a measure was passed which broke down the monopoly of the Bank of England in the provinces, as it allowed the formation of joint-stock companies, to carry on banking business at any place which was distant more than sixty-five miles from London[2]; but comparatively little progress was made[3]. Joint-stock enterprise laboured under many disadvantages[4], and it was only after 1838, when these banking companies obtained power to sue and be sued[5], that they began to increase not only in numbers, but in reputation as substantial undertakings; additional facilities for forming such banks were given in 1844[6].

*and to the development of provincial banks,*

Even before the commencement of provincial joint-stock banking, the question had been raised as to whether the charter of the Bank of England really prevented the starting of new banking companies[7], or whether it merely prevented a new banking company, when started, from engaging in certain kinds of business. When the Bank charter was renewed in 1833 the Directors endeavoured to secure a definition of their claim which would strengthen their position, but the Government refused to impose any new restriction, and set the matter at rest by a declaratory clause[8]. Advantage was at once taken of the permission, thus accorded, to organise the London and Westminster Bank. It had no power to issue notes; but it was in a position to receive deposits, and make advances to traders. The success, which attended its operations, gave the public a new conception of the nature of banking business, and showed that this might be largely developed, without interfering with the responsibility of the Bank of England in issuing notes.

*and of banks with power of issuing notes in London.*

cheesemonger, however destitute of property, might set up a bank in any place, whilst a joint-stock company, however large their capital, or a number of individuals exceeding six, however respectable and wealthy they might be, were precluded from so doing." *Hansard*, N.S. XIV. 462.

[1] McCulloch, *Dictionary* (1840), 76.

[2] 7 Geo. IV. c. 46. [3] McLeod, *op. cit.* II. 383. [4] See above, p. 816.

[5] 1 and 2 Vict. c. 96. [6] 7 and 8 Vict. c. 113.

[7] Mr Joplin argued in 1823 that the existing charter of the Bank did not exclude joint-stock companies. McLeod, *op. cit.* II. 384.

[8] 3 and 4 Will. IV. c. 98, § 3.



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Such was the state of affairs in 1844, when an opportunity occurred of revising the terms on which the charter of the Bank was granted[1]. Sir Robert Peel treated the difference which had emerged, between the issue of notes and dealing in other forms of paper-money[2], as a matter of principle, and divided the Bank of England into two departments; one of these carried on banking, in competition with other institutions, while the other was concerned with the issue of notes. It was his opinion that the inflation of prices in 1825, and the crisis of 1837, had been due to over-issues of notes, and that the power of augmenting the circulating medium should be restricted. This view had been gaining ground for some time; it had so far met with acceptance that the issue of £1 notes had been discontinued in England[3]. By the Act of 1844 it was determined that no new institution should have a right of issuing notes, and provision was made with a view to extinguishing the right in the case of existing banks, or of transferring it to the Bank of England[4]. Sir Robert Peel desired to get the whole business of issuing notes concentrated in the hands of the Bank of England. He refused, moreover, to leave any discretion to the directors in the management of this Issue Department. £14,000,000 in Government securities was to be transferred to the issue department, and for every note that was issued beyond this amount, bullion was to be retained in the vaults of the Bank. It was hoped that in this way the currency of the country would be mechanically kept on the same level as if it actually consisted of gold[5], and that variations in credit would not react on the ordinary circulating medium.

*By the Act of 1844 the responsibility for issuing notes*

*was concentrated in the Bank of England,*

[1] The privileges conferred in 1833 did not actually expire till 1855, but Parliament had a right of revision in 1841. 3 *Hansard*, LXXIV. 720.

[2] He distinguished between paper currency and paper credit. 3 *Hansard*, LXXIV. 734.

[3] 7 Geo. IV. c. 6. [4] 7 and 8 Vict. c. 32.

[5] Sir R. Peel said in introducing his measure:—"My first question, therefore, is, What constitutes this Measure of Value? What is the signification of that

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*but this did not prevent the occurrence of crises.*

The expectations of Sir Robert Peel were soon to be falsified, however; before three years had elapsed a very serious crisis occurred. This had not been brought about by over-trading and the inflation of prices; indeed it followed a period of commercial depression, which was chiefly due to the vigour with which railway enterprise was taken up, and the fact that the ordinary course of commercial transactions was dislocated.

*The large amount of capital sunk in railway enterprise*

In the autumn of 1845, 2,069 miles of railway were opened, with a capital of £64,238,600; while 3,543 miles of railway were in progress, involving capital to the amount of £74,407,520[1]. Of course there was no immediate return on this large amount of capital; it was for the time absolutely sunk; the investment of so much money, in forms that were not immediately productive, had the result of injuring many branches of industry, and depressing commerce. In so far as the wealth devoted to railway enterprise was withdrawn from circulation in the form of wares, the effects were for the time being disastrous. The proprietors had less means available to purchase goods. Capitalists found that their sales diminished; they were unable to replace their stock of materials, or to continue to pay wages, until their stores of finished goods were realised; and a general stagnation resulted[2]. As Mr Wilson puts it,—"Let

word 'a Pound,' with which we are all familiar? What is the engagement to pay a 'Pound'? Unless we are agreed on the answer to these questions it is in vain we attempt to legislate on the subject. If a 'Pound' is a mere visionary abstraction, a something which does not exist either in law or in practice, in that case one class of measures relating to Paper Currency may be adopted; but if the word 'Pound,' the common denomination of value, signifies something more than a mere fiction—if a 'Pound' means a quantity of the precious metals of certain weight and certain fineness—if that be the definition of a 'Pound,' in that case another class of measures relating to Paper Currency will be requisite. Now, the whole foundation of the proposal I am about to make rests upon the assumption that according to practice, according to law, according to the ancient monetary policy of this country, that which is implied by the word 'Pound' is a certain definite quantity of gold with a mark upon it to determine its weight and fineness, and that the engagement to pay a Pound means nothing, and can mean nothing else, than the promise to pay to the holder, when he demands it, that definite quantity of gold. * * * We want only a certain quantity of paper, not indeed fixed and definite in nominal amount, but just such a quantity, and that only, as shall be equivalent in value to the coin it represents." 3 *Hansard*, LXXIV. 723, 736.

[1] Wilson, *Capital, Currency and Banking*, p. VI.

[2] The doctrine that demand for commodities is not demand for labour, is often stated in a form which neglects the necessity for the replacement of capital, by the sale of goods which have been actually produced. Unless capital is replaced by sale and thus realised, it cannot be transferred to other directions of employment. The permanent effects of increasing unproductive, at the expense of productive consumption, are frequently dwelt on in economic treatises, but the railway mania illustrates the mischiefs which may temporarily arise, from a sudden increase of productive consumption, and a sudden cessation of the ordinary consumption, whether productive or not.



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us suppose manufacturers in Lancashire paying five millions of pounds in wages; that money is expended in provisions, clothing, &c., by their work-people; and a very large portion in commodities produced abroad; such as the sugar, tea, coffee, a great part of the material of their clothes, &c.; but all these commodities are paid for by a portion of their labour exported in the form of cotton goods. But on the other hand, suppose five millions paid for wages on railways[1]; the same portion goes for the consumption of imported commodities, tea, sugar, coffee, materials of clothing, &c., but no portion whatever of their produce is exported, or can be so, to pay for those commodities. Again, with respect to the money paid for iron; the demand for this article increases the quantity made, which is all absorbed in these undertakings, but the largest portion of the price goes to pay wages, which are again to a great extent expended in articles of foreign import, while no equivalent of export is produced against them, so that a large portion of the whole money expended in railways is actually paid for imported commodities, while no equivalent of export is produced. Now this state of things acts in two ways on the commerce of the country, next upon the exchanges, and quickly upon the money market. The extraordinary expenditure at home increases very much the consumption of all commodities, both of foreign import and home production, and raises their price, as is the case at this time. The high price of foreign commodities induces to a large importation; the high price and home demand for domestic produce cause a decreased export. The exchanges are thus turned against us, and we must remit money for the payment of that balance created by the use of those foreign commodities consumed in

*and the necessity for large payments abroad,*

[1] As wages are paid in coin, not in paper, large permanent works are apt to cause an internal drain on the reserve of the Bank, and thus to entail difficulties in regard to credit. Nicholson, *op. cit.* II. 210.

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this country by those, no part of whose produce had been exported to represent their consumption. One of the most certain symptoms that can be shown of an undue absorption of capital going forward in internal investments, is when we see our imports increasing more rapidly than our exports, or when the former are increasing and the latter are diminishing[1]."

The phenomena thus described continued to manifest themselves for several years; and their effects were in many ways peculiar; in none more so than in bringing about large payments for customs and excise, so that there were prosperous budgets while trade was generally speaking depressed[2]. The irony of the situation seemed complete, when an abundant harvest induced a crisis, by bringing about a fall in the price of corn. During the preceding years there had been large importations of cereals from the United States, which were partly occasioned by the potato famine in Ireland. The Liverpool merchants were unable, in the autumn of 1847, to obtain the prices they anticipated; several firms collapsed, and more than one of the Liverpool and Manchester banks stopped payment. The position of the Bank of England seemed critical, as the reserve was reduced, during the last fortnight of October, from over £3,000,000 to £1,600,000[3]. Paper of every sort was so discredited that there was great difficulty in carrying on monetary transactions, and at last the Government yielded to the pressure of mercantile opinion and suspended the Bank Act, so that notes could be issued, while at the same time the rate was raised to 8 %. The mere knowledge that reliable paper was forthcoming served to allay the tension, and the Bank did not find it necessary, after all, to issue notes beyond the number permitted by the Act of 1844.

*together with a sudden change in the corn trade from a good harvest,*

*brought about the crisis of 1847.*

The incident did much to discredit the reputation of Peel as a financial authority. The measure, which had been intended to prevent the inflation of prices, had served to check the action of the Bank in intervening to redress the

*The Bank justifies its position,*

[1] Wilson, *Capital, Currency and Banking*, p. xvii.
[2] Northcote, *Twenty Years*, 83.
[3] Palgrave, *Dictionary*, s.v. *Crisis*.



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mischief and restore confidence. The current diagnosis of the causes of a crisis seemed to be mistaken, as the disaster of 1847 had followed on a period of depression, when the issue of notes had been well below the average. The only speculation that occurred took place in connection with railroad shares, and had no influence on general prices. Subsequent experience has confirmed the view that the importance of bank notes, as an element in commercial transactions, is not so great as had been supposed; but the result of the legislation of the period has been to give much greater freedom for banking. The unique position of the Bank of England now consists chiefly in its responsibility for maintaining a reserve on which the fabric of credit ultimately rests. The granting of permission to found a number of rival institutions has been amply justified. There has been an increasingly wide and varied experience as to the guidance of commercial affairs through the increased facilities of credit which are afforded to the community.

*not so much by controlling the issue of notes*

*as by maintaining the reserve.*

**276.** These great improvements in the means of transport and in the facilities for trade synchronised with a change in the commercial policy of the realm. The principle of *laissez faire*, which had been adopted with regard to industry, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, was gradually recognised as applicable to the foreign commerce of the country. Under the mercantile system, in its various phases, an effort had been made to regulate the maritime trade, so as to build up the power of the country by the Navigation Laws, to stimulate industry by protective tariffs, and to foster agriculture by means of Corn Laws. Those objects were to some extent incompatible, and the means, which were adopted for pursuing one of these ends, were apt to prove injurious as regards another. The thirty years, which succeeded 1820, saw a complete abandonment of the old method of interfering with the course of trade. The first step in revolutionising English policy was taken by the merchants of London, who presented a petition in 1820[1], which lays down the principles of

*The new conditions of commerce*

*gave rise to an agitation by London merchants*

[1] *Hansard*, N.S. I. 179. The petition led to the appointment of a Committee of the House of Commons, the report of which expresses a general agreement with the views of the merchants. *Ib.* II. 546.

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*against the system of commercial regulation*

unrestricted commercial intercourse. They laid stress on the desirability of enquiring into the effects of the existing system and seeing how far it had induced the depression of which they complained. They also noted that the maintenance of protective tariffs of any kind in England provoked retaliatory measures on the part of other nations, and that English trade was seriously affected by restrictions imposed in foreign countries.

There was one small but immediate measure of relief. Since 1714 the importers of tobacco, rice, and other colonial products had had the opportunity of depositing goods under bond in warehouses, without paying customs, and with a view to subsequent exportation. This privilege was extended to all merchants importing goods of any sort[1], in the hope of making England a depôt, not only for colonial produce, but for all kinds of merchandise. The same object was put forward in the following session as a reason for greatly modifying the Navigation Laws. The question as to whether these Acts were beneficial or not had been much debated in the seventeenth century[2], but in the nineteenth there seemed to be a general consensus of opinion as to their operation. An opponent of any change admitted that the navigation policy in vogue, "is certainly not favourable to the growth of our own foreign commerce, or of that opulence which arises out of it, but while it makes commercial profit a subordinate object, it lays the foundation of naval power[3]." The advocates of abandoning the system did not disparage it; but argued that it had served its political purpose[4], and that the shipping of the country might be trusted to flourish so long as commerce prospered. "What," Mr Wallace asked, "was the best and truest support of the navy, but a large, extensive, and flourishing commerce? He did not know a country in the world that had a great navy without an extensive commerce, neither did he know any State that had a flourishing commerce without being at the same time a great naval power[5]." As things stood, the colonial trade was

*through the Navigation Acts.*

[1] 1 George IV. c. 7. [2] See above, p. 210.
[3] Mr Marryat in *Hansard*, N.S. v. 1300.
[4] Mr Wallace in *Hansard*, N.S. VII. 714. [5] Mr Wallace in 3 *Hansard*, VII. 713.



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entirely confined to British ships, and must pass directly between the mother-country and the colonies; but countries which had shipping of their own, including not only the European countries but the United States and Brazil, could have commercial intercourse with Britain, either in their own or in British ships. The measure of 1822[1] repealed disabilities which had been imposed out of antagonism to the Dutch[2], but made no substantial change in our relations with other maritime nations; so far as they were concerned, a far more important step was taken in the following years, when power was given to the Crown to agree by treaty to reciprocal trade with any country on equal terms[3], and to refrain from continuing the discriminating duties which were imposed on goods imported in foreign ships[4]. By this means the danger of retaliatory duties being maintained by foreign powers was averted, as all the leading commercial nations entered into agreements for reciprocity in this matter[5].

*Reciprocal trade under treaties was adopted with several maritime powers,*

There was also a considerable relaxation in the navigation policy as regards the colonies, for they were allowed to export their produce direct to foreign ports in Europe, instead of being obliged to ship them by way of the mother-country[6]. At the same time, a revised tariff embodied the principle of giving preference to colonial products in the English market[7], and a serious attempt was made to bring about increased economic co-operation between the different parts of the Empire, while intercommunication was still to be carried on in British Shipping. In 1845 it appeared that this policy was on the whole working satisfactorily, and the Navigation Acts were codified[8]. But grievances arose, and British shippers were accused of making use of their

*and preferential tariffs were arranged within the Empire.*

[1] 3 George IV. c. 43. [2] *Hansard*, N.S. VII. 715.
[3] 4 George IV. c. 77.
[4] Huskisson in *Hansard*, N.S. IX. 793.
[5] Leone Levi, *op. cit.* 166 n. [6] 3 George IV. c. 45.
[7] Hills, *Colonial Preference* in *Compatriot Club Lectures*, 285.
[8] In 1844 a Committee of the House of Commons was appointed on the mercantile marine at the instance of shipowners, who desired protection against colonial shipping. Lindsay, *Merchant Shipping*, III. 70. See Mr Labouchère's speech on the products of the inland States. 3 *Hansard*, XCVIII. 997.

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monopoly of the colonial trade to charge excessive freights[1]. The Irish famine had led to a temporary suspension of the Acts, so far as the importation of cereals was concerned; as Canada had been, for a time, on the same level with the States in regard to shipping facilities, the prospective reimposing of the restrictions brought the agitation to a head[2]. Instead of endeavouring to modify the conditions so as to meet these special circumstances, Labouchère moved for the entire abandonment of the principle of granting any preference to British shipping in ocean trade, and, in spite of effective protests[3], the Navigation Acts were repealed[4].

*The special privileges of English shippers were done away in* 1849,

England's maritime power had grown up under the protecting influence of the Navigation Acts. Long custom appears to have set at rest the doubts which were expressed in the seventeenth century as to the effects of the Acts; and there was grave anxiety as to the maintenance of our naval supremacy under a system of competition. It would appear that when protection was withdrawn the shipowners were somewhat aggrieved[5], but that a new spirit of enterprise was developed in the trade. Had the old methods of ship-building been retained, however, it would hardly have been possible for England to reassert her supremacy in ocean trading. The advantage which America possessed, in timber and naval stores, would almost certainly have told in her favour; but the aspect of affairs was entirely changed by a new application of engineering industry, and the introduction of iron ship-building. Preliminary experiments had been so far successful, that Messrs Laird of Birkenhead began the

*but owing to the introduction of iron ship-building,*

[1] The United States had rapidly recovered from the destruction of their marine, which had taken place during the war of 1812, and were engaged in an eager contest with Great Britain for the command of the carrying trade on the Atlantic (Lindsay, *Merchant Shipping*, IV. 165). The Canadians complained bitterly that the better facilities for shipping, which the States enjoyed, placed the British colonists at a disadvantage in supplying the English market; and the West Indian planters also insisted that the freights charged were higher than would be the case, if competition were allowed between English and foreign shipowners (3 *Hansard*, XCVIII. 1002).

[2] *Reports, etc.* 1849, LI. 149.

[3] Cunningham, *Rise and Decline of Free Trade*, p. 69.

[4] 12 and 13 Vict. c. 29.

[5] Compare Disraeli's speech (Dec. 3, 1852) in introducing his unsuccessful attempt to bring the financial and commercial systems of the country into line. 3 *Hansard*, CXXIII. 839.



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building of iron ships for ocean traffic in 1832[1], and the conditions of the competition for marine supremacy were entirely changed. It is impossible to say how much of the increased prosperity which has attended British Shipping is due to a change of policy, and how much to the application of engineering skill in giving increased facilities for ocean traffic, but the expansion of foreign trade in the twenty years which followed the repeal of the Navigation Laws was unprecedented. The total imports and exports of British and foreign produce almost trebled[2], and English shipping interests shook off for a time their anxiety as to being outdone by their competitors in the United States.

*English maritime supremacy has been successfully maintained.*

**277.** In spite of all these new openings and increased facilities, it was impossible for trade to make rapid progress in the twenties and thirties, as it was hampered by the burden of taxation which was part of the heritage of the long war. The demands of Government had been gradually worked up till, in 1815, they had attained enormous dimensions. The debt stood at £860,000,000, or about £43 per head of the population; and the revenue, which was required to defray the interest on the debt and the necessary expenses of government, amounted to seventy-four millions and a half; a quarter of the sum had sufficed before the long war. As a necessary result, taxes had been laid upon everything that was taxable and there was no incident of life in which the pressure of taxation was not felt. Sidney Smith's immortal summary can never be surpassed, "Taxes upon every article which enters into the mouth, or covers the back, or is placed under the foot—taxes upon every thing which it is pleasant to see, hear, feel, smell or taste—taxes upon warmth, light, locomotion—taxes on everything on earth, and the waters under the earth—on everything that comes from abroad or is grown at home—taxes on the raw material—taxes on every fresh value that is added to it by the industry of man—taxes on the sauce which pampers a man's appetite, and the drug that restores him to health—on the ermine which decorates the judge, and the rope which hangs the criminal—

*Commercial progress was hampered by*

[1] Lindsay, *Merchant Shipping*, IV. 90.

[2] Bowley, *England's Foreign Trade*, Diagram I.

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on the poor man's salt, and the rich man's spice—on the brass nails of the coffin, and the ribands of the bride—at bed or board, couchant or levant, we must pay:—The school-boy whips his taxed top; the beardless youth manages his taxed horse, with a taxed bridle, on a taxed road; and the dying Englishman pouring his medicine, which has paid seven per cent., into a spoon that has paid fifteen per cent., flings himself back upon his chintz bed, which has paid twenty-two per cent., makes his will on an eight pound stamp, and expires in the arms of an apothecary, who has paid a licence of £100 for the privilege of putting him to death. His whole property is then immediately taxed from two to ten per cent. Besides the probate, large fees are demanded for burying him in the chancel. His virtues are handed down to posterity on taxed marble, and he will then be gathered to his fathers to be taxed no more[1]."

*the pressure of taxation,*

[1] Sidney Smith, *Works* (1839), II. 13. *Edinburgh Review*, XXXIII. (Jan. 1820), p. 77. The following summary, extracted from Mr Dowell's work, II. p. 257, gives a convenient view of the nature of the taxation levied in Great Britain in 1815.

| | | £ |
|---|---|---|
| **I. Direct Taxes.** | | |
| The land tax | | 1,196,000 |
| The taxes on houses and establishments | | 6,500,000 |
| Property and income tax | | 14,600,000 |
| Property insured | | 918,000 |
| The tax on succession to property | | 1,297,000 |
| Property sold at auction | | 284,000 |
| Coaches, posting and hackney cabs | | 471,608 |
| Tonnage on shipping | | 171,651 |
| | Total | £25,438,259 |
| **II. Taxes on Articles of Consumption.** | | |
| Eatables: Salt | 1,616,671 | |
| Sugar | 2,957,403 | |
| Currants, &c. | 541,589 | |
| Drinks: Beer, malt, hops | 9,596,346 | |
| Wine | 1,900,772 | |
| Spirits | 6,700,000 | |
| Tea | 3,591,350 | |
| Coffee | 276,700 | 22,065,168 |
| Tobacco | | 2,025,663 |
| Coals, raw materials for manufactures, buildings, ship-building and other trades | | 6,062,214 |
| Manufactures | | 4,080,721 |
| **III. Stamp Duties.** | | |
| Bills and notes | | 841,000 |
| Receipts | | 210,000 |
| Other instruments | | 1,692,000 |
| | Total | £67,530,688 |



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In imposing these burdens, successive ministers had been unable to keep any definite principles in view. The Government had been living from hand to mouth, and had been forced to have recourse to every possible source of revenue, without having much respect, either to the pressure on the taxpayer, or to the influences of the tariff on economic progress. So soon as the war was over, an attempt was made to render the pressure of taxation less onerous. The income tax seems to have been the most serious burden; public opinion was strongly set against it, and it was repealed in 1816[1]. A corresponding boon was given, at the same time, to the masses, as the last additions to the malt tax were also abandoned; though it was necessary to increase the excise on soap, in order to make up the deficiency which these remissions caused.

*which was reduced*

The next steps in financial reform show a reversion to the point of view which had been adopted by Walpole; as serious efforts were made for modifying our fiscal system so as to give freedom for the development of industry and commerce; Robinson and Huskisson set themselves to reduce and remove the taxes on raw materials. This was done in regard to raw silk; while at the same time the strict monopoly of the home market, which the silk manufactures had hitherto possessed, was withdrawn, and foreign silks might be imported on paying a thirty per cent. duty. Huskisson pursued the same course in regard to other trades; the duties on copper, and zinc, and tin, were reduced to half the former amount; the duty on wool was also halved, and at the same time the very high tariffs on foreign manufactures of different sorts were reduced. Thus in 1824 and 1825 very considerable reductions, as well as simplifications, were made in our tariff, and on principles which relieved the manufacturing interest.

*with the view of encouraging industry, before*

The various Chancellors of the Exchequer were able to proceed gradually with the remission of taxation, but in 1836 the commercial outlook became most threatening. The crisis of 1837, followed as it was by commercial stagnation, told

[1] The income-tax had been dropped in 1803, but immediately re-imposed. Vocke, *Geschichte der Steuer des Britischen Reichs*, 527.

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seriously on the revenues; the deficit in 1838 was about a million and a half; in 1839 nearly half a million; in 1840 a million and a half; and in 1841 a million and three quarters; and in 1842 more than two millions[1]. Under these circumstances it was necessary that financial affairs should be thoroughly overhauled, and this was done by Sir Robert Peel in his great budget of 1842. In imitation of the policy of Pitt, he determined to make a temporary provision for the expenses of government, until the new changes had had time to operate[2]. With this view, he desired to re-impose an income tax of sevenpence in the pound for a period of five years, so that he might be free to deal in earnest with the reform of the tariff. This was a great task; but it was one for which there had been considerable preparation. The principles on which it should proceed had been worked out in 1830 by Sir Henry Parnell, in his treatise *On Financial Reform*, and a Select Committee of the House of Commons had considered the subject in 1840[3]. Peel hoped to revive our manufacturing interest, by abolishing or reducing the taxes on raw materials, and half-manufactured goods. For the first two years the expected revival did not occur, but the reduction of import duties continued; in 1845 matters were pressed still further. There was a great simplification of the customs, and the duties on four hundred and thirty articles of an unimportant kind, which produced but little or

*Peel undertook the reform of the fiscal system.*

*Under reduced rates*

[1] Northcote, *Twenty Years*, pp. 6, 12.

[2] Northcote, pp. 17, 61.

[3] This report contains some severe criticism: "The Tariff of the United Kingdom presents neither congruity nor unity of purpose; no general principles seem to have been applied. * * * The Tariff often aims at incompatible ends; the duties are sometimes meant to be both productive of revenue and for protective objects, which are frequently inconsistent with each other; hence they sometimes operate to the complete exclusion of foreign produce, and in so far no revenue can of course be received; and sometimes, when the duty is inordinately high, the amount of revenue becomes in consequence trifling. They do not make the receipt of the revenue the main consideration, but allow that primary object of fiscal regulations to be thwarted by an attempt to protect a great variety of particular interests, at the expense of the revenue, and of the commercial intercourse with other countries. Whilst the Tariff has been made subordinate to many small producing interests at home, by the sacrifice of Revenue in order to support these interests, the same principle of preference is largely applied, by the various discriminatory Duties, to the Produce of our Colonies, by which exclusive advantages are given to the Colonial Interests at the expense of the mother country." *Reports*, 1840, v. 101.



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no revenue, were swept away[1]. So far as the effects on the revenue of the country were concerned, Peel's anticipations were at length fully justified[2]. Under the reduced rates trade revived, and the income obtained from this branch of taxation did not eventually suffer. From the increased volume of trade, Government was able to levy at low rates an income which was practically equivalent to the sums which had been obtained under the high tariffs which had so injuriously affected our trade. The success which attended this change in policy was admirably summarised by Mr Gladstone in justification of the still greater changes which he carried through[3]. "I wish, however, Sir, to show more particularly the connection that subsists between commercial reforms, as affecting trade and industry, and the power to pay the high taxes you have imposed. These two subjects are inseparably locked the one in the other. You shall have the demonstration in figures. I again ask you for a moment to attend with me to the experience of two periods. I take the ten years from 1832, the crisis of the Reform Bill, down to 1841, during which our commercial legislation was, upon the whole, stationary; and I take the twelve years from 1842 to 1853, within the circuit of which are comprehended the beneficial changes that Parliament has made. In the ten years from 1832 to 1841 this was the state of things:—You imposed of Customs and Excise duties £2,067,000, and you remitted £3,385,000, exhibiting a balance remitted over and above what you imposed of £1,317,000, or at the rate of no more than £131,000 a year. Now observe the effect on the state

*trade revived*

[1] Northcote, *Twenty Years*, p. 66. This wholesale reduction of tariffs, though welcomed by the manufacturers, was not universally approved. Those who relied on commercial treaties as means of opening or of securing foreign markets were somewhat alarmed, as we removed one by one charges which might have formed the basis of negotiation with other countries.

[2] He had said: "I have a firm confidence, that such is the buoyancy of the consumptive powers of this country, that we may hope ultimately to realize increased revenue from diminished taxation on articles of consumption." 3 *Hansard*, LXI. 437.

[3] A principle which cannot be traced in Peel's financial measures underlay those of Mr Gladstone, who was more completely swayed by Cobden. (See p. 840 n. 1, below.) It was Gladstone's effort to relieve the masses of the people as consumers, and the mercantile and manufacturing capitalists. In pursuing this object he and his followers have deliberately granted this relief at the expense of the landed interest, by the extension of the succession duties in 1853, and the death duties in 1894.

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of the revenue. During these ten years the Customs and Excise increased by £1,707,000, or, at the rate of £170,000 a year; while the increase of the export trade was £15,156,000, or, at the annual rate of £1,515,000. Let us next take the twelve years from 1842 to 1853. You remitted during that period of Customs and Excise £13,238,000, and imposed £1,029,000, presenting a balance remitted of £12,209,000, or, an annual average of £1,017,000. What was the effect on revenue? The Customs and Excise increased £2,656,000, or, at an annual rate of £221,000. When you remitted practically nothing, your Customs revenue, in consequence of the increase of the population, grew at the rate of £170,000 per annum; and when you remitted £1,017,000 a year, your Customs and Excise revenue grew faster than when you remitted nothing, or next to nothing at all. I ask, is not this a conclusive proof that it is the relaxation and reform of your commercial system which has given to the country the disposition to pay taxes along with the power also which it now possesses to support them? The foreign trade of the country, during the same period, instead of growing at the rate of £1,515,000 a year, grew at the rate of £4,304,000."

*and revenue expanded.*

The effect of Peel's measures was to demonstrate how much the trade and industry of the country might be encouraged by the re-adjustment of fiscal burdens, but it was none the less a complete realisation of the principle of *laissez faire* in fiscal arrangements. The taxation of the country was arranged simply and solely with reference to revenue; all attempts to foster an element in national economic life at the expense of others were abandoned.

*The change of system was tided over by the temporary imposition of*

This change could not have been carried through successfully, but for Peel's care to provide a temporary source of revenue, in order to allow time for trade to respond to the stimulus of reduced tariffs. The particular expedient he adopted, of imposing an income-tax for a time, proved to the public what large supplies might be obtained from this source. Once again its fruitfulness was remarkable. A tax of this type[1] had afforded the means by which Pitt maintained the struggle with France, under unexampled conditions of discouragement in 1798, and it served as the source on which

[1] Vocke, *Geschichte der Steuer*, p. 523.



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Peel relied in carrying through his reconstruction of our fiscal system in the interest of trade. The tax thus introduced, as a temporary expedient, proved so successful that it has since become part of the ordinary revenue system of the country. The budget of 1845 was unexpectedly epoch-making, since it marks the beginning of a new development of direct taxation.

*an income-tax,*

This result was not attained without a struggle. Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton was the mouthpiece of those who believed that this powerful fiscal instrument should be reserved for use on special emergencies[1]; but it has been too convenient to be lightly sacrificed, and it cannot be regarded as inequitable. Indeed, it may be said that by the imposition of this tax the means were at last available for redressing the injustice of which the landed interest had complained for a couple of centuries[2], and for forcing the moneyed men to pay on the income derived from accumulated wealth. It is not clear that Peel would have had any scruple in retaining the income-tax as a permanent thing, or that Pitt[3] would have regarded it as unfair; but there was much room for question as to whether it was expedient in the new conditions of English life. The basis of general prosperity had shifted from the landed to the trading interest; and it was possible to argue that the well-being of the public was advanced by fostering the enterprise of the country in every way. Mr Gladstone was persistent in his opinion as to the demerits of this tax, and attempted to do away with it in 1853, in 1863, and again in 1874[4]. He believed that the tax was objectionable, in so far as it fell upon the active business energy of the day; he desired to give relief "to intelligence and skill as compared with property[5]." But in this, as in other financial matters, practical convenience has had an overwhelming influence. The country was uneasy about the probity of the funding system, in the early eighteenth century, but no statesman, when really pressed, could dispense with it, and the income-tax when re-introduced could not be discarded; it had come to stay.

*which has been retained as a regular charge*

*owing to its convenience.*

**278.** The application of *laissez faire* principles to our commercial system aroused comparatively little opposition, as

[1] 3 *Hansard*, CXXVI. p. 455. [2] See above, p. 425. [3] *Parl. Hist.* XXXIII. 1086.
[4] S. Buxton, *Mr Gladstone*, pp. 120, 127, 129. [5] 3 Hansard, CXXV. 1422.

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*The economic and political antagonism was roused against the Corn Laws*

regards the modifying of the Navigation Laws and the readjustment of the tariff. It was a very different matter when an attack was made on the legislation which interfered with free trade in corn, and afforded special protection to the landed interest. The controversy thus aroused was not merely, or even chiefly, of economic interest; its far-reaching political importance was foreseen from the first[1]. The formation of the Anti-Corn-Law League in 1839[2], with the agitation which was organised by Cobden and Bright, was a serious attempt to educate the minds of the citizens of a great country on a question of public interest. The force of Radicalism, as a power in the State, was increased immensely; it had already associated itself with the interest of working men by the attitude which some of its leaders had taken in regard to the Combination Laws, and the progress of Trade Unions; and now it rallied the masses, who required bread to eat, under its banner. The days, when the Tory could pose as the friend of the people in their contest with ruthless employers, were over, and the Conservatives, who had prided themselves on their patriotism, were astonished and indignant to find themselves denounced as selfish drones in the community.

*as recast in 1815,*

The contest in regard to the Corn Laws was of course determined by the new character which they had assumed in 1815. It was then that a measure was definitely passed to protect the landlords, and to enable them to maintain the burdens which had fallen upon them, or which they had too readily undertaken[3]. From that time onwards, it was possible to represent the Corn Laws as a merely class measure, and to treat the whole question, as the advocates of the League habitually did, as that of a tax imposed upon the community

[1] Cobden appears to have been chiefly attracted to the subject at first, because it offered a field for political agitation. "We must choose," he wrote in 1838, "between the party which governs upon an exclusive or monopoly principle, and the people who seek, though blindly perhaps, the good of the vast majority. If they be in error, we must try to put them right, if rash to moderate, but never never talk of giving up the ship....I think the scattered elements may yet be rallied round the question of the corn laws. It appears to me that a moral, and even a religious spirit may be infused into that topic, and if agitated in the same manner that the question of slavery has been, it will be irresistible." Morley, *Life of Cobden*, I. 126.

[2] It was enlarged in this year from an Anti-Corn-Law Association which had been formed in 1838. Ashton, *Recollections of R. Cobden and the Anti-Corn-Law League*, 23.

[3] 55 Geo. III. c. 26.



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in the sole interest of a special class. Who were the landlords, and what had they done, that they should be thus favoured? And when the question was put in this way, it was obvious that there could be but one answer. An arrangement, which pressed heavily upon the community, must be allowed to drop; even though it did enable the class on whom a large share of national, and the chief burden of local taxation ultimately fell, to meet the demands of the State. It was as a class question that the matter was discussed, and decided; and the sense of bitterness it roused was not allayed when the repeal was effected. Some of the legislation of the latter half of the nineteenth century seems to have been affected by an unworthy desire to retaliate on the landed proprietors for the special indulgence they had secured for a generation[1].

*since they benefited a particular class*

*to the disadvantage of the manufacturing interest.*

The case against the Corn Laws was so strong that, when once the issue was fully raised, repeal was inevitable. On the one hand there was all the evidence of the Commission on hand-loom weavers, which showed that the limitation of the food-supply was the greatest grievance to the operative classes; owing to the large proportion of their earnings which was spent in food, their power of purchasing clothes was curtailed, and the home demand for manufactures was checked. The Corn Laws also interfered indirectly with our foreign commerce; the high tariff on imported corn introduced an obstacle to the export of our manufactures. There were many of our customers who had not the means of paying for our goods; the Baltic ports and the United States were regions from which food might have been obtained, but for

[1] Mr Gladstone's Budget of 1853 was regarded at the time as an intentional blow at the landed interest as such. Disraeli said: "I have shown you that in dealing with your indirect taxation you have commenced a system and you have laid down a principle which must immensely aggravate the national taxation upon the British producer. I have shown you in the second place that while you are about to pursue that unjust and injurious policy, * * * while you are aggravating the pressure of indirect taxation upon the British producer, you are inflicting upon the cultivator of the soil a direct tax in the shape of an income tax, and upon the possessor of the soil a direct tax in the shape of a tax upon successions. * * * I will not ask you was it politic, was it wise, or was it generous to attack the land, both indirectly and directly, after such an immense revolution had taken place in those laws which regulated the importation of foreign produce. * * * I will remind you that the Minister who has conceived this Budget * * * is the very Minister who has come forward and in his place in parliament talked of the vast load of local taxation to which real property is exposed." 3 *Hansard*, CXXVI. 985

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this there was, owing to the Corn Laws, no market in England; suitable return cargoes could not be readily secured, and commerce languished in consequence. The controversy would undoubtedly have been protracted for a longer period, if it had not been for the ghastly picture presented, in Ireland, of the horrors which might arise from an insufficient food-supply. In 1845 the harvest was a failure, and prices rose rapidly; Sir Robert Peel was inclined to open the ports, and allow, for a time at least, the admission of foreign corn, on a merely nominal duty. But there are some measures which, if adopted once, are adopted permanently. Sir James Graham[1] and other members of the Cabinet saw that the suspension of the Corn Laws would in itself be an admission that the system aggravated the evils of scarcity, and that, if this point was conceded, the whole system would have to go. For this the Cabinet were not prepared; and Sir Robert Peel placed his resignation in the hands of the Queen. As no other Government could be formed, however, he returned into office on December 20th, 1845, with the full determination of carrying through the repeal of the Corn Laws. The subject was debated at great length in January and February 1846, and the Government proposals were carried by a majority of ninety-seven[2]. There was to be a temporary protection, by a sliding scale, which levied four shillings when the price of corn was fifty shillings a quarter, and instead of this comparatively light duty, a merely nominal tax of one shilling a quarter was to be levied after February 1st, 1849. Even this nominal duty has been more recently removed.

*The Irish famine rendered suspension inevitable,*

*and the repeal followed in* 1846.

In the hubbub of conflicting interests the fundamental issue, which was involved in this change of policy, was completely obscured. The measures, which gave encouragement to tillage, had not been originally introduced with any view of benefiting the landlord class; the object of earlier measures, and of the great Corn Law of 1689, had been to render a larger and more regular supply of food available for the community. If the Corn Laws were defensible, they were defensible as a benefit to the nation as a whole; the underlying aim of the original system had been to call forth sufficient sustenance for the English population. In this

*The policy of fostering a home-grown food-supply*

[1] Dowell, II. 329.

[2] 9 and 10 Vict. c. 22.



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they had succeeded till 1773; but the history of English agriculture, since the Peace, appeared to show that they were succeeding no longer. In so far as the British agriculturist, with protection, failed to supply the British nation regularly, with sufficient food, on terms that were not exorbitant,—in so far protection was a failure; and according to this, the deeper test, which was but little argued at the time, the Corn Laws were completely condemned; they had failed to provide the nation with a sufficient food-supply of its own growth.

*was discarded as a failure,*

In ceasing to rely for our food-supply on our own soil, and in deliberately looking to trade as the means whereby we might procure corn, we were throwing aside the last elements of the policy which had so long dominated in the counsels of the nation, and were exposing our very existence to a serious danger[1]. A home-grown food-supply was a chief element of power[2]; since no enemy, however strong his navy might be, could succeed in cutting off our supplies. It gave the opportunity for maintaining a large population, accustomed to out-door exercise and in good condition for fighting; but these elements of power were now forgotten, in the desire to have food, in as large quantities, and at as low rates, as possible. We reverted from the pursuit of power in our economic policy to the pursuit of plenty[3]. This object was put forward not merely with regard to the luxuries of the rich, as had been the case under Edward III., but was forced upon us by the requirements of the labourer and the artisan.

*and the landed interest was relegated to a secondary place in the state.*

The nation, in abandoning the traditional policy of relying for its food-supply on the corn grown within its boundaries, deliberately relegated the landed interest to a subordinate position in the economy of the State. Under the fostering care of the State, the landlords had enjoyed a great deal of

[1] See above, p. 684, on the corn supply in the Napoleonic Wars.

[2] Compare Strafford's effort to keep Ireland politically dependent by making her economically dependent for clothing, and for salt to preserve meat, her staple product. *Letters*, I. 193. See above, p. 368.

[3] See above, Vol. I. p. 416. The triumph of this policy was commemorated by the Anti-Corn-Law League with a medal, which is figured on the title-page, by the kind permission of the authorities of the British Museum, from the example in their possession.

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prosperity, and they had been encouraged to do their best. There had been steady progress during the eighteenth century, and this continued in the nineteenth. The chief new departure[1] which occurred was the systematic introduction of thorough drainage. This practice had been locally pursued in Essex since the seventeenth century; but it was made the subject of experiments by Mr Smith of Deanston. By taking the water off the land, he improved the quality of the soil, and greatly increased the number of days when it was available for working. His experiments were first published in 1834; but so rapidly did they take hold of the public mind that, in 1846, Parliament consented to grant loans to landlords to carry out these improvements[2].

*but the work of improvement was taken up by substantial tenants*

It was no longer the case that improvement was introduced exclusively, or even chiefly, by the landlord class; a new class of tenant farmers had arisen[3] who were not only possessed of capital, but capable of employing it in introducing scientific methods of farming. They were ready to have recourse to manures of many kinds, in order to restore the fertility of land from which large crops were frequently extorted, and they were able to make the business pay, by combining corn-growing with the raising of stock. The full effects of foreign competition were not felt immediately, as the Russian war cut off the Baltic supply for a time, and the American Civil War checked the growth of the grain trade from the United States. Since 1874, the prices of corn and of stock have been alike affected by greatly increased importation from abroad; the free-trade policy at length resulted in a state of affairs in which the farmer could no longer pay his way, and a fall in rents became inevitable. The depression of the landed interest has been so serious, that proprietors have been without the means of attempting to introduce improvements, while there is less reason than formerly to

*before the full effects of foreign competition were felt.*

[1] There was also a great increase in knowledge of methods of manuring the land, since agricultural chemistry was coming to be pursued as a branch of science and not treated as mere rule of thumb. It was found that there were valuable elements in all sorts of refuse, as for example in bones, while the better means of communication rendered it more possible for farmers to avail themselves of fertilisers which were not native to their own district. Prothero, *Pioneers*, 99.

[2] Prothero, *op. cit.* 97–98.

[3] *Ib.* 111.



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count on an adequate return, in rent, for money sunk in an estate. The stimulus to enterprise in the management of land, which was afforded by the prospect of gain, has been withdrawn, with the result that the gentry are more apt to devote themselves to remunerative forms of sport, and less inclined, than was once the case, to be pioneers in the work of agricultural improvement.

*The depression of the landed interest was specially noticeable*

**279.** The changes, which tended to depress the landed interests in England, must necessarily have told with even greater effect upon the fortunes of such a purely agricultural country as Ireland. There were, moreover, special circumstances which aggravated the evils in the sister island, while there was no compensating advantage. Ireland had suffered from English jealousy, and her lot remained pitiable when she entered on an ill-assorted partnership. Her economic development had been subordinated for generations to that of England, and she had no great increase of prosperity when the two countries were united in 1800. It is very difficult to estimate the precise economic effects of that Act, though the rapid increase of population renders it probable that the wealth was larger than before. In some respects there was improvement; the special legislation, which had been designed to promote English interests, had been abandoned; but, on the other hand, Irish manufacturers did not enjoy the extravagant encouragements which they had received in 1784. Her lot was cast in with that of England, and the stream of her economic history has been mingled with that of the larger country, but the results worked out in different ways. Just because the industrial resources of Ireland were so little developed, she was able to obtain only a comparatively small share in any of the prosperity which English merchants and manufacturers enjoyed; on the other hand, she suffered with the agricultural interests in England, but much more severely[1].

*in Ireland after the Union,*

*for she could not take advantage of the new commercial prosperity*

The chief gain which accrued to England, during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, was the monopoly which she practically secured of the shipping of the world. The United States was a real competitor; but England obtained a

[1] The subject is discussed in detail by Miss Murray, *History of Commercial and Financial Relations between England and Ireland*, 342.

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position which she had never attained before. Ireland, however, had little or no mercantile marine; the profits of the carrying trade, and of the trade with distant countries, were not for her. What she could do was to provide for the victualling of vessels, as well as to furnish supplies of sail-cloth; the Irish salt beef, which ships obtained at Cork, had a high reputation, but a certain new activity in these trades was almost the only advantage which accrued to Ireland from the great commercial monopoly by which England gained so much.

So far as articles of export were concerned too, she was not able to supply the goods which were so much sought for abroad, and by means of which England was able to force unwilling nations to purchase her wares. Cloth was needed for the French and Russian armies, and this cloth was procured from English looms; but the Irish woollen trade was unimportant[1]. The cotton manufacture, which developed so enormously in England during the war, had been scarcely introduced into Ireland, though much had been spent on it in 1784 and succeeding years. Linen, the one department in which Ireland excelled, was hardly a fabric for which foreign countries looked to England at all[2]. Hardware, in which England did such a large business, had ceased to be an Irish manufacture, and the sister kingdom was practically debarred from all the advantages which came to England during the time of war-prices and commercial monopoly. On the other hand, Irish industry felt the disadvantages to which English manufacturers were exposed. A silk manufacture had been galvanised into existence by encouragements similar to those which the Spitalfields Act[3] gave in England; but the weavers were of course dependent on material brought from abroad;

*by obtaining markets for manufactures,*

[1] So long as water-power was the chief agent employed in manufacturing, Ireland offered, in some districts, great attractions to capital, and the woollen trade obtained a measure of protection. There was however even a more decided objection among Irish than among English workmen to the introduction of machinery, and the progress was not very rapid; with the more general adoption of steam-power, the advantage which Ireland had possessed was neutralised. Martin, *Ireland before and after the Union*, 70, 72, 73.

[2] Both the quantities manufactured, and the quality of the goods produced, serve to show that the trade was steadily advancing. Martin, *op. cit.* 75.

[3] See above, pp. 519, 795.



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and the Berlin Decrees caused a silk famine in 1809, which reduced them to dire distress[1]. In so far as the war-prices gave a stimulus to agriculture, the Peace must have brought a reaction similar to that which, despite the action of the Corn Law of 1815, was so seriously felt in England.

While Ireland had shared but little in the prosperity of war times, she undoubtedly suffered from the succeeding depression. The conditions of life were exactly those which made her feel the brunt of the trouble most severely. In England, where there was large capital, the distress did to some extent act as a stimulant to call out more skill and enterprise; in Ireland, where farming had not yet become a trade[2] but was an occupation by which men procured subsistence, the slightest signs of increased prosperity acted directly in encouraging an increase of population, while the pressure of distress could not force on any improvement; it only rendered labourers more miserable than before. The wretchedness in England was so great, that there was little inclination to attend to the condition of the Irish; though in 1822, and in 1831, when the potato crop was short, some public liberality was shown on their behalf. These years, however, were but a premonitory symptom of the frightful disaster of 1845 and 1846, when the state of Ireland was forced upon public attention, by the outbreak of the potato disease; the late crop of potatoes, on which the people depended for food, was entirely lost. As they had obtained fair prices for other produce, they might have got through the disaster with comparatively little help, and the Government contented itself with purchasing £100,000 worth of Indian corn, and forming depôts where relief was administered. In the following year, however, the destruction caused by the disease was complete; though both public and private charity were largely exerted, the shameful admission remains that very large numbers died through starvation, or from those fevers which are directly due to insufficient nourishment. Public works were opened, and there was very wide-spread sympathy shown to the Irish sufferers from all parts of the world.

*and subsistence farming was maintained*

*with disastrous results in the famine.*

[1] Martin, 87.

[2] On this change in England, see pp. 109, 545.

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The Irish famine was the direct occasion of breaking down the policy of agricultural protection; the importation of food-stuffs was temporarily encouraged for the sake of the starving peasantry; but the complete abandonment of the Corn Laws proved to be a very serious blow to the more energetic elements in the population. The Irish farmer and stock raiser had had an advantage, since the Union, over the agriculturists of other regions, in supplying the English market; but under the system of Free Trade this advantage was lost; the prices of produce fell rapidly. Numbers of the peasantry were forced to migrate; on numerous estates, which had been burdened with obligations, the rents fell so much that their nominal owners were hopelessly impoverished.

*The repeal of the Corn Laws deprived Ireland of an advantage in the English market,*

It is idle to speculate as to the remedy which might have been most wisely brought to bear on this disastrous state of affairs; but the direct application of the results of English experience to the Irish problem seems to have done more harm than good. In 1860, it seemed that agriculture might be made to flourish if all restrictions were removed, so as to allow the ready transfer of land; if it passed under the control of wealthy men, who could apply capital to develop, and introduce, improved methods of tillage, there appeared to be good reason to believe that Irish agriculture would recover, as English had already done, from the first effects of exposure to free competition. But the social conditions and traditions of Ireland rendered it exceedingly difficult to carry through an effective reform of the methods of agricultural production; the habits of the peasantry were unfavourable to improvement, either by spirited proprietors, or enterprising tenants. As the proprietary changed, the land passed into the hands of owners who abandoned serious attempts to initiate progress, and had less scruple in accepting rack rents than the easy-going men they had displaced. The Irish cottiers had neither the independence, nor the foresight, which were necessary[1] to make the system of free competition tolerable. After some experience of *laissez faire*, in conditions to which it was inappropriate, there was a sudden reversion to a system which seemed altogether an anachronism.

*and the State has neither succeeded in attracting capitalist farmers*

[1] Nicholson, *Principles of Political Economy*, III 167.



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The authoritative fixing of rents was adopted by the Government as the only means of protecting the peasantry from the evils of reckless competition. The system of natural liberty had been tried, and in one department of life after another it had been found necessary to introduce a corrective. Administrative organs had been instituted in England for protecting children from over-work, and for controlling the conditions of labour in factories and mines, as well as for seeing to sanitary welfare. In Ireland, however, the swing of the pendulum has gone much farther, inasmuch as it has led to judicial interference in the terms of the bargain between landlord and tenant. Still, startling as it appears, this case does not stand alone; the State had already undertaken to protect the public against monopolies in transport or lighting by fixing a maximum of railway rates and of gas dividends; the justification for the fixing of rents lay in the belief that in the conditions of life in Ireland, and in the presence of the land hunger they engendered, there was need to protect the peasantry against the owners of the soil.

*nor in developing a peasant proprietary.*

There is a curious monotony in the story of English influence on the agricultural interest in Ireland. Racial animosity, religious differences, and political contests were always at work in one form or another; the land never had such rest that a sense of security could grow up, or that the country could become an attractive field for the investment of capital by moneyed men, either as proprietors or tenants. It was still more unfortunate that, from its near neighbourhood, Ireland was destined to be affected by all that was done for the benefit of England; the Corn Bounty Act depressed her tillage, in the interest of English producers. While industrial protection was in vogue in England, little stimulus was given to real improvement of any kind in Ireland, but her whole system suffered a severe blow when protection was withdrawn, and the interests of the agricultural community were subordinated to the welfare of a manufacturing population. The régime of ill-assorted companionship has been almost as baneful as the period of jealous repression and Protestant ascendancy.

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*The economic principles of* laissez faire *in commerce,*

**280.** The policy of non-interference has never been applied consistently to Ireland. From her geographical position she necessarily stood in close relations to England, and it was not deemed possible for the predominant partner to let her go her own way either economically or politically. The case of the transoceanic Colonies was altogether different; abundant reason could be alleged, which commended itself to the statesmen of the early part of the nineteenth century, for letting them severely alone. The opinion was freely mooted that the founding of colonies had been in itself a mistake, since the country got little or nothing out of them, either in the way of wealth or prestige, and was only burdened with cost in administering and protecting them. Sir John Sinclair's utterances are so far typical of educated opinion on the public questions of the day that it is worth while to quote the views he has put on record. He pointed out that the North American Colonies had cost us £40,000,000, and the wars in which we had been involved in consequence of possessing them amounted to £240,000,000 more. "It is the more necessary," he adds, "to bring forward inquiries into this branch of our expenditure, as the rage for colonisation has not yet been driven from the councils of this country. We have fortunately lost New England, but a New Wales has since started up. How many millions it may cost may be the subject of the calculations of succeeding financiers, unless by the exertions of some able statesman that source of future waste and extravagance is prevented[1]."

*combined with a belief that the colonies were an expense to the mother country,*

The men in this period who considered not only British interests in the colonies, but British responsibilities as well, had little opportunity of giving effect to their views[2]. The Colonial department maintained the traditions of bureaucratic administration, as it had been carried on in the eighteenth century[3]. There was no intelligent discussion in Parliament

*and that they would gain by independence,*

[1] *History of the Public Revenue of the British Empire* (1790), II. 87.

[2] Cunningham, *Wisdom of the Wise*, 43.

[3] Mr Buller's scathing description of the system is all the more severe, as he was careful to avoid any attack upon individuals personally. "Thus, from the general indifference of Parliament on colonial questions, it exercises, in fact, hardly the slightest efficient control over the administration or the making of laws for the colonies. In nine cases out of ten it merely registers the edicts of



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of colonial affairs, and Radical sentiment was roused, both by the inefficiency of the system, and by pretensions to authority over distant and unrepresented communities. The example

the Colonial Office in Downing-street. It is there, then, that nearly the whole public opinion which influences the conduct of affairs in the colonies really exists. It is there that the supremacy of the mother-country really resides: and when we speak of that supremacy, and of the responsibility of the colony to the mother-country, you may to all practical intents consider as the mother-country—the possessor of this supremacy—the centre of this responsibility—the occupants of the large house that forms the end of that *cul-de-sac* so well known by the name of Downing-street. However colonists or others may talk of the Crown, the Parliament, and the public—of the honour of the first, the wisdom of the second, or the enlightened opinion of the last—nor Queen, nor Lords, nor Commons, nor the great public itself, exercise any power, or will, or thought on the greater part of colonial matters: and the appeal to the mother-country is, in fact, an appeal to 'the Office.'

"But this does not sufficiently concentrate the mother-country. It may, indeed, at first sight, be supposed that the power of 'the Office' must be wielded by its head: that in him at any rate we have generally one of the most eminent of our public men, whose views on the various matters which come under his cognizance are shared by the Cabinet of which he is a member. We may fancy, therefore, that here, at least, concentrated in a somewhat despotic, but at any rate in a very responsible and dignified form, we have the real governing power of the colonies, under the system which boasts of making their governments responsible to the mother-country. But this is a very erroneous supposition. This great officer holds the most constantly shifting position on the shifting scene of official life. Since April, 1827, ten different Secretaries of State have held the seals of the colonial department. Each was brought into that office from business of a perfectly different nature, and probably with hardly any experience in colonial affairs. The new minister is at once called on to enter on the consideration of questions of the greatest magnitude, and at the same time of some hundreds of questions of mere detail, of no public interest, of unintelligible technicality, involving local considerations with which he is wholly unacquainted, but at the same time requiring decision, and decision at which it is not possible to arrive without considerable labour. Perplexed with the vast variety of subjects thus presented to him—alike appalled by the important and unimportant matters forced on his attention—every Secretary of State is obliged at the outset to rely on the aid of some better informed member of his office. His Parliamentary Under-Secretary is generally as new to the business as himself: and even if they had not been brought in together, the tenure of office by the Under-Secretary having on the average been quite as short as that of the Secretary of State, he has never during the period of his official career obtained sufficient information to make him independent of the aid on which he must have been thrown at the outset. Thus we find both these marked and responsible functionaries dependent on the advice or guidance of another; and that other person must of course be one of the permanent members of the office. We do not pretend to say which of these persons it is, that in fact directs the colonial policy of Britain. It may be, as a great many persons think, the permanent Under-Secretary; it may be the chief, it may be some very subordinate clerk; it may be one of them that has most influence at one time, and another at another; it may be this gentleman as to one, and that as to another question or set of questions: for here we get

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of the United States, and the rapidity of their growth, offered a striking contrast to the slow development of Canada[1], the West Indies, the Cape, and Australia. The *laissez faire*

*rendered the English public indifferent*

beyond the region of real responsibility, and are involved in the clouds of official mystery. That mother-country which has been narrowed from the British isles into the Parliament, from the Parliament into the executive government, from the executive government into the Colonial Office, is not to be sought in the apartments of the Secretary of State, or his Parliamentary Under-Secretary. Where you are to look for it it is impossible to say. In some back room—whether in the attic, or in what story we know not—you will find all the mother-country which really exercises supremacy, and really maintains connexion with the vast and widely-scattered colonies of Britain. We know not the name, the history, or the functions of the individual, into the narrow limits of whose person we find the mother-country shrunk. * * * The system of intrusting absolute power (for such it is), to one wholly irresponsible is obviously most faulty. * * * It has all the faults of an essentially arbitrary government, in the hands of persons who have little personal interest in the welfare of those over whom they rule—who reside at a distance from them—who never have ocular experience of their condition—who are obliged to trust to second-hand and one-sided information—and who are exposed to the operation of all those sinister influences which prevail wherever publicity and freedom are not established. In intelligence, activity, and regard for the public interests, the permanent functionaries of 'the Office' may be superior to the temporary head that the vicissitudes of party politics give them; but they must necessarily be inferior to those persons in the colony, in whose hands the adoption of the true practice of responsible government would vest the management of local affairs." Mr Buller's *Responsible Government for the Colonies*, quoted by Wakefield, *Art of Colonisation*, 283—288.

[1] Lord Durham's Report draws a vivid picture of the contrast, which he ascribes principally to the different systems adopted in the disposal of public land. "On the American side all is activity and bustle. The forest has been widely cleared; every year numerous settlements are formed, and thousands of farms are created out of the waste; the country is intersected by common roads; canals and railroads are finished, or in the course of formation; the ways of communication and transport are crowded with people, and enlivened by numerous carriages and large steam-boats. The observer is surprised at the number of harbours on the lakes, and the number of vessels they contain; while bridges, artificial landing-places, and commodious wharves are formed in all directions as soon as required. Good houses, warehouses, mills, inns, villages, towns, and even great cities, are almost seen to spring up out of the desert. Every village has its schoolhouse and place of public worship. Every town has many of both, with its township buildings, its book-stores, and probably one or two banks and newspapers; and the cities, with their fine churches, their great hotels, their exchanges, court-houses and municipal halls, of stone or marble, so new and fresh as to mark the recent existence of the forest where they now stand, would be admired in any part of the Old World. On the British side of the line, with the exception of a few favoured spots, where some approach to American prosperity is apparent, all seems waste and desolate. There is but one railroad in all British America, and that, running between the St Lawrence and Lake Champlain, is only 15 miles long. The ancient city of Montreal, which is naturally the commercial capital of the Canadas, will not bear the least comparison in any respect with Buffalo, which is a creation of yesterday. But it is not in the difference between the larger towns on the two sides that we shall find the best evidence of our own inferiority. That painful but undeniable truth is most manifest in the country districts through which the line of national separation passes for 1,000 miles. There, on the side of both the Canadas, and also of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, a widely scattered population, poor, and apparently unenterprising, though hardy and industrious, separated from each other by tracts of intervening forest, without towns and markets, almost without roads, living in mean houses, drawing little more than a rude subsistence from ill-cultivated land, and seemingly incapable of improving their condition, present the most instructive contrast to their enterprising and thriving neighbours on the American side." *Reports*, 1839, XVII. 75.



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school argued that it would be wise to cut the colonies adrift and leave them to work out their own destiny.

*to the retention of the Colonies;*

This attitude of lofty indifference in regard to Colonial possessions was sufficiently irritating to the Englishmen who had made their homes in distant parts of the Empire; but occasional interference proved even more galling than habitual neglect. In one way or another dominant British sentiments,—philanthropic and economic,—made themselves felt, and influenced the Colonial authorities to give effect to measures which were deeply resented by the men whose interests were immediately affected, at the Cape, in the West Indies, and Canada. The strong objection which was officially taken to any extension of our Colonial responsibilities was re-enforced by a desire to mete out fair treatment to the native races. To the Home Government, it seemed important to refrain from encroaching upon them in any way[1]. The invasions of the Kaffirs, who were immigrating southwards, exposed Cape Colony to great danger, and an attempt was made to raise a barrier by planting the neighbourhood of Port Elizabeth with English and Scotch settlers, and for a time to maintain a belt of unoccupied area. As the white population in South Africa increased troubles ensued, for which English public opinion, stirred by the representations of a Congregational missionary[2], was inclined to lay the entire blame upon the Dutch element in the population. According to the theory of the Home Government the Kaffirs were regarded as forming a civilised state, which could be relied on

*while the colonists were irritated by occasional interference,*

*on behalf of native races in South Africa,*

[1] This had been the American policy recommended by the Home Government immediately after the conquest of Canada from the French. Attempts were made to prevent the plantation of the plains west of the Alleghanies.

[2] Rev. J. Philip, whose *Researches in South Africa* gave a very one-sided representation of affairs.

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to carry out treaty obligations, and to maintain an efficient frontier police. But this system did not work in practice; the homes and farms of British subjects were constantly raided; the fact that no punishment followed was interpreted by the natives as a sign of mere weakness, and the life of the farmers became intolerable. In 1836 the great emigration of the Dutch began towards regions beyond the Orange River, where they hoped to be able to carry out their own system of dealing with frontier troubles by organised commandos. The inability of the Home Government to grasp the actual difficulties of the situation and its susceptibility to the opinions of enthusiasts and doctrinaires, bore fruit in vacillation and mismanagement, and sowed the seeds of bitter hatred between two races that might easily have amalgamated at the Cape as completely as they have done in New York.

*and of negroes in the West Indies.*

The newly aroused sentiment, as to the duties of Englishmen towards African races, gave rise to difficulties, not only in the Dark Continent itself, but in the West India islands, where the planters had been so long dependent on imported labour. The humanitarian movement, for putting down the traffic in slaves, had been aroused by the misery it caused in Africa and in the Middle Passage; but the logical result was an agitation against the existence of slavery in British possessions, and this was headed by Lord Brougham. The British Government paid a sum of twenty millions in compensation to the planters when slavery was abolished in 1834. This was of course not a full compensation, as the value of West Indian slaves was said to be forty-three millions[1]. It might of course appear that the command which the planters had over a resident labouring population would enable them to carry on their operations without a full compensation for the money they had invested in stocking their estates with negroes. But as a matter of fact, and when viewed retrospectively, it is difficult to say that any compensation would have made up to the planters for losing control over their hands. There undoubtedly are populations who

[1] The compensation appears to have varied from a quarter to a half of the sworn value of slaves of different classes and ages. *Accounts*, 1837–8, XLVIII. 680.



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would be stimulated to greater exertions by the sense of freedom; but the West Indian negro, at all events, preferred to be idle and poor[1], rather than to exert himself even for comparatively high wages. The whole management of the estates was disorganised; and though the planters strove vigorously to manage their business on new lines, the effort was very severe and many of them were ruined in the attempt. When the hope of continued protection was withdrawn, and they were exposed to the competition[2] of the slave-grown sugar on neighbouring islands, their condition became desperate. Slave labour was less expensive than free labour in this particular case, and the sugar growing in Cuba and Brazil received an immense stimulus; as a consequence the traffic from Africa, which we had done so much to put down, revived anew and eluded the efforts we made to check it. In more recent times the islands have also suffered from the State-aided production of beet-root sugar on the Continent; so that the emancipation of the slaves may be regarded as marking the beginning of the decline of that great sugar industry which was so highly prized in the eighteenth century.

*The long protected sugar industry has suffered severely,*

The question of the treatment of coloured races did not come into prominence in connection with Canada, partly because the Hudson's Bay Company appears to have

[1] On a corresponding condition in Ireland compare Ricardo, *Letters to Malthus*, 138, 139. The pleasure of pure idleness is seldom sufficiently recognised by modern economists in working out the calculus of measurable motives. It was perhaps overrated in the eighteenth century. "Mankind in general are naturally inclined to ease and indolence; and nothing but absolute necessity will enforce labour and industry. * * * Those who have closely attended to the disposition and conduct of a manufacturing populace have always found that to labour less, and not cheaper, has been the consequence of a low price of provisions." *Essay on Trade*, pp. 15, 14. In spite of the operation of this principle the standard of comfort throughout the country generally seems to have risen during the eighteenth century. Arthur Young frequently calls attention to the increase of tea-drinking, and wheat-flour was again replacing rye (*Farmer's Letters*, 197 and 283; C. Smith, *Three Tracts*, 79). Another writer in 1777 treats butter as a new luxury among cottagers, *Essay on Tea, Sugar, White Bread and Butter* (Brit. Mus. 8275. aaa. 10). There is much interesting evidence as to the actual standard of living of the labourers in different counties in Davies, *Case of Labourers* (1795). See also J. W., *Considerations* (1767), for the estimated budget of a clerk on £50 a year.

[2] 8 and 9 Vict. c. 63. The preferential sugar duties were finally withdrawn in 1874.

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awakened to a new sense of responsibility to the Indians at an early date in the nineteenth century. The interruption of trade during the Napoleonic War[1] had brought the Company to the verge of ruin; and the Indians, who had come to be dependent for their very existence on supplies of ammunition from Europe, were reduced to a state of terrible distress[2]. The most serious economic difficulties, in connection with the remaining British possessions on the American Continent, arose in consequence of the new economic policy which England was adopting. The complications which occurred in regard to the importation of cereals from Canada were the occasion of the repeal of the Navigation Acts, and the adoption of Free Trade led, in 1860, to the discontinuance of the preference which Canada had enjoyed, since 1803, for the supplying the mother-country with timber[3], while the West Indies suffered in a

*Protection was withdrawn from Canadian lumber in accordance with Free Trade doctrine.*

[1] The exportation of furs for sale at the markets of Leipsic and Frankfort became impossible for some years after 1806. Willson, *The Great Company*, 362.

[2] In a petition sent in 1809 to the Chancellor of the Exchequer the Company states that "the nations of hunters taught for one hundred and fifty years the use of fire-arms could no more resort, with certainty, to the bow or the javelin for their daily subsistence. Accustomed to the hatchet of Great Britain, they could ill adopt the rude sharpened stone to the purposes of building, and until years of misery and of famine had extirpated the present race they could not recur to the simple arts by which they supported themselves before the introduction of British manufactures. As the outfits of the Hudson's Bay Company consist principally of articles which long habit have taught them now to consider of first necessity, if we withhold these outfits we leave them destitute of their only means of support." Beckles Willson, *Great Company*, p. 363.

[3] The Northern Colonies had never had such favour bestowed upon them as the West Indian Colonies; but lumber, one of their principal products, had been protected by a discriminating duty. This pressed very heavily on timber imported from Memel and the North of Europe. During the war the duty on European timber per load of 50 cubic feet was raised from 6*s.* 8*d.* to 65*s.*, while the duty on colonial timber was never more than 2*s.* and that was removed before the close of the war. In 1821, in accordance with the recommendations of a Parliamentary Committee, the rate on European timber was fixed at 55*s.* and on colonial at 10*s.* (Porter, *Progress of Nations*, 374), and this appears to have had the effect of greatly invigorating the colonial timber trade. It was, however, alleged that the effect of these duties was to render timber dear in this country, to put a premium on the use of inferior qualities, and to encourage owners to use ships which had better have been broken up for fuel. There was consequently a steady attack upon the timber duties, as there had been on the sugar duties; but as they did not affect an article of ordinary domestic consumption, comparatively little public interest was aroused on the matter, and Canada continued to enjoy the advantage of this tariff till 1860 (Dowell, *op. cit.* II. 358).



similar fashion by the abandonment of the system which had secured them a monopoly of the English sugar trade. There was ample excuse for the feeling, which spread through the Colonies, that their interests and sentiments were entirely ignored; and their loyalty was in consequence subjected to a very severe strain.

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During this period of indifference and estrangement, however, there was a stream of emigration which increased in volume, from all parts of the British Isles to the trans-oceanic Colonies. The first considerable movement was organised by Lord Selkirk, as a means of assisting the tenantry who were displaced from the Sutherland estates in 1803. One batch of emigrants was settled in Prince Edward's Island; and a much more ambitious scheme was carried out, in conjunction with the Hudson's Bay Company, for planting territory on the Red River in Rupert's Land. The immigrants were not all well adapted for the rough and laborious life of pioneers, and they suffered from the bitter quarrels between the Hudson's Bay Company and their rivals in the fur trade—the North West Company, who inherited the business which had been organised by the French—till the two bodies were amalgamated in 1821. The settlement had been recruited from the ranks of foreign soldiers, who had taken part in the war of 1812, and despite political complications with the United States, its success was so far assured as to direct serious attention to this form of enterprise.

*Emigration was encouraged by Lord Selkirk*

The pressure of circumstances led to the formation of the Canada Company, which was organised in Scotland, for effecting settlements in the Huron tract. Among its most prominent men were John Galt and William Dunlop, who were drawn from the literary coterie which was associated with *Blackwood's Magazine*. The settlers were men of a different type from the poverty-stricken and broken-spirited Highlanders, on whose behalf Lord Selkirk had exerted himself, as they had both the means and the capacity to face the difficulties of pioneer life[1]. A similar middle-class settlement

*and the Canada Company,*

[1] The home conditions which have rendered any considerable section of the population desirous to emigrate have varied greatly at different times. (See

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had been carried out, partly at Government expense, in the east of Cape Colony in 1820[1].

*and the advantages of systematic colonisation,*

The condition of affairs which had been brought about in England by the Industrial Revolution, predisposed several of the leading economists of the time to look favourably on emigration as the best remedy for existing evils. They made a careful diagnosis of the ills that affected society, and came to the conclusion that territorial expansion and emigration would afford the greatest measure of relief. The leading exponent of these new views was Mr E. G. Wakefield, and he succeeded in rallying round him a very remarkable group of men; expression was given to his views by Dr Hinds, the Dean of Carlisle, by Mr Charles Buller in the House of Commons, and most important of all by John Stuart Mill in his *Principles of Political Economy*. Mr Wakefield and his coadjutors were theorists; they arrived at their views on a question of practical political administration by reasoning based on accepted economic doctrines.

*as a means of relieving England from redundant population and a plethora of capital,*

Since the time of Malthus it had become a commonplace to maintain that there was a redundancy of population in the country[2]; but the colonising school maintained that this redundancy was felt in every class of society, and not merely among the poorest[3]. They also urged that England was suffering from a plethora of capital; they argued that the steady formation of capital, while no new fields for enterprise were available, led in an ordinary way to feverish competition

above, p. 345.) In this connection the following sentences are of interest. "Towards 1825, the year of the organization of the Canada Company, the reduced scale of the Army and Navy and the economy introduced into all departments, withdrew many sources of income. Manufactures and trade were only advantageous when carried on upon a large scale, with low profits upon extensive capital. There remained only the learned professions, with clerkships in banks, insurance companies and similar establishments. For these pursuits an increased population, and the rapid growth of education, caused a keen competition. This secured for national purposes a great degree of talent; but the pressure on the middle classes grew yearly heavier. There were many who possessed small capital—from five hundred to one thousand pounds—but it was not everyone who possessed the judgment and industry required for a life in the bush." Lizars, *In the Days of the Canada Company*, 19.

[1] Egerton, *A Short History of British Colonial Policy*, 272.

[2] Emigration seems to have been looked on as the best means of relieving this country of pauperism (*Reports* 1826, IV. 4), and an immense amount of attention was given to it. See the Index in *Reports* 1847, LVIII. pl. 4.

[3] Wakefield, *A View of the Art of Colonisation*, 66, 74.



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among capitalists at a very narrow margin of profit, and occasionally, by a not unnatural reaction, to outbursts of wild speculation and consequent waste of capital[1]. From their point of view what we needed was additional land. "Neither by improvements of agriculture, nor by the importation of food, if these fall short of the power of the people to increase, is the competition of excessive numbers in all classes diminished in the least. By whatever means the field of employment for all classes is enlarged, unless it can be enlarged faster than capital and people can increase, no alteration will take place in profits or wages, or in any sort of remuneration for exertion; there is a larger fund, but a corresponding or greater increase of capital and people, so that competition remains the same, or may even go on becoming more severe. Thus a country may exhibit a rapid growth of wealth and population—such an increase of both as the world has not seen before—with direful competition within every class of society, excepting alone the few in whose hands very large properties have accumulated. * * * We trace the competition to want of room; that is to a deficiency of land in proportion to capital and people or an excess of capital and people in proportion to land. * * * If we could sufficiently check the increase of capital and people, that would be an appropriate remedy, but we cannot. Can we then sufficiently enlarge the whole field of employment for British capital and labour, by means of sending capital and people to cultivate new land in other parts of the world? If we sent away enough, the effect here would be the same as if the domestic increase of capital and people were sufficiently checked. But another effect of great importance would take place. The emigrants would be producers of food; of more food, if the colonisation were well managed, than they could consume; they would be growers of food and raw materials of manufacture for this country; we should buy their surplus food and raw materials with manufactured goods. Every piece of our colonisation, therefore, would add to the power of the whole mass of new countries

*were expounded by Wakefield.*

[1] Wakefield, *Art of Colonisation*, 76. Mr Wakefield's letters are well worthy of perusal, as the observations of a judicious and far-seeing man on the actual condition of and probable changes in England. See especially pp. 64—105.

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to supply us with employment for capital and labour at home. Thus, employment for capital and labour would be increased in two places and two ways at the same time; abroad, in the Colonies, by the removal of capital and people to fresh fields of production; at home, by the extension of markets, or the importation of food and raw materials[1]."

*His views were partly adopted in the development of Australia and New Zealand,*

These enthusiasts for colonisation were more successful in their analysis of existing conditions than in their practical efforts in regard to the planting of new lands. The promoters of new enterprises were obliged to oppose the traditional policy of the Colonial Office, and they are hardly to be blamed for the defects of schemes which had only given a partial embodiment to their views. They regarded economic considerations as of primary importance in connection with colonisation, but they did not neglect political and social points as well. In 1830 they established a society for promoting systematic colonisation; from that time onwards they were increasingly successful in obtaining public attention. They failed to get their principles thoroughly and consistently applied in any region, but they were able to introduce important modifications in the plans that were carried out with regard to South Australia[2]; and Wakefield had a large share in promoting the Company which colonised New Zealand[3]. They had to insist once more on the common-sense principles which had been set forth by John Smith in regard to Virginia. They held that a serious wrong had been done in the preceding half-century, since emigration had been for the most part the mere deportation of convicts[4] and paupers, instead of the systematic planting of a civilised community. It may, however, be doubted whether any other means of securing the migration of a white population

[1] Wakefield. *Art of Colonisation*, 91.

[2] Jenks, *History of the Australian Colonies*, 129. [3] *Ib.* 172.

[4] The transportation of convicts chiefly to the southern States had gone on till the Declaration of Independence, at the rate of about 500 a year (Egerton, *op. cit.* 262). A Parliamentary Committee was appointed on the subject in 1779, and a statute empowering the King in Council to create Convict Settlements was passed in 1783 (24 Geo. III. c. 65). Another Committee on Transportation was appointed in 1837, and reported against the continuance of the system (*Reports*, 1838, XXII. 46), which was still retained in New South Wales, Van Diemens Land, Bermuda, and Norfolk Island.



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had been previously available[1], and whether it was not, in the existing economic conditions, the best available means for developing the new lands. But a time had arrived when a better system of recruiting the population could be introduced, and Mr Wakefield rightly attached great importance to every circumstance that might induce good citizens to emigrate; he was anxious that they should have full political freedom and abundant opportunity for the exercise of their religion[2]. Besides laying stress on the quality and character of the emigrants, Mr Wakefield insisted on the importance of attracting capital to the Colonies, and the formation of capital in the Colonies. The first point of his programme, which Government adopted[3], was the proposal to discontinue the practice of making free grants of land; he urged that by selling the unoccupied land it would be possible to prevent too great diffusion, and to form a fund which might serve to promote and assist the emigration of selected labourers[4].

*He helped to create a new enthusiasm for colonial empire at home;*

The agitation which was commenced by Wakefield is important as marking the beginning of the reaction against the indifference with which the Colonies had been regarded. The movement did not make much headway at once, but it has grown in strength, and given rise to the intense enthusiasm for imperial development, which was exhibited at the Great Jubilee of Queen Victoria. Wakefield did not regard the settling of new lands as a mere relief to congestion at home; he believed that this form of enterprise would react on the old country, so as to insure still greater prosperity than before. "Colonisation," he insists, "has a tendency to increase employment for capital and labour at home. * * * The common idea is that emigration of capital

[1] Australian public opinion in 1840 appears to have still been divided on the question whether it was desirable to dispense with this method of recruiting the labouring population. Merivale, *Lectures on Colonisation* (1861), 355.

[2] Wakefield, *Art of Colonisation*, 55.

[3] In 1831 a new departure was taken in the mother colony of Australia, as Lord Ripon instituted the system of disposing of land by public auction; but the practice of making free grants was not altogether discontinued till 1838. In 1840 the Colonial Land and Emigration Commission was created, and the rule was laid down that the proceeds of land sales should be held in trust by the Imperial Government for the benefit of that part of the colony in which the land was situated. Jenks, *op. cit.* 62.

[4] Wakefield, *Art of Colonisation*, 44.

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and people diminishes the wealth and population of the mother-country; it has never done so, it has always increased both population and wealth at home[1]." "Every fresh importation of food by means of exporting more manufactured goods is an enlargement of the field of production, is like an acreable increase of our land; and has a tendency to abolish and prevent injurious competition. This was the best argument for the repeal of our corn laws[2]." Mr Mill re-enforced a similar doctrine. "There needs be no hesitation," he says, "in affirming that colonisation, in the present state of the world is the very best affair of business in which the capital of an old and wealthy country can possibly engage[3]." The necessity of preserving coaling stations and harbours for our commerce, such as Vancouver, has been another motive which has brought the economic importance of distant possessions into light, and has contributed not a little to the change of sentiment on the subject.

The sense of grievance on the part of colonists was greatly reduced, when the wise policy of granting them the fullest possible measure of responsible government was initiated. The seventeenth century tradition of political institutions had been perpetuated in all the Colonies, and the assemblies had had power to harass but not to control the executive authority. The problem of developing effective administration by a representative body was worked out in Canada under circumstances of exceptional difficulty, from the conflict of interest between the two provinces, from the traditions of the French population in Quebec[4], and the pretensions of the loyalist refugees and older colonists in Toronto[5]. The wisdom and courage of Lord Durham did much to solve the difficulty in Canada; the system he established was adopted in 1855, with appropriate modifications, in Australia[6], and through Mr Wakefield's influence in New Zealand as well[7]. The importance of Lord Durham's achievement was very imperfectly appreciated at the time;

*and steps were taken both in Canada*

*and New Zealand to introduce responsible government*

[1] Wakefield, *Art of Colonisation*, 92. [2] *Ib.* 89.
[3] *Principles of Political Economy*, Bk. v. ch. xi. § 14 (People's edition, p. 586).
[4] Bourinot, *Canada under British Rule*, 125. [5] *Ib.* 140.
[6] Jenks, *History of the Australian Colonies*, 238. [7] *Ib.* 247.



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but we can see, as we read his report. how clearly he realised the magnitude of the interests involved in North America alone. "An almost boundless range of the richest soil still remains unsettled, and may be rendered available for the purposes of agriculture. The wealth of inexhaustible forests of the best timber in America, and of extensive regions of the most valuable minerals. have as yet been scarcely touched. Along the whole line of sea-coast, around each island, and in every river, are to be found the greatest and richest fisheries in the world. The best fuel and the most abundant water-power are available for the coarser manufactures, for which an easy and certain market will be found. Trade with other continents is favoured by the possession of a large number of safe and spacious harbours; long, deep and numerous rivers, and vast inland seas, supply the means of easy intercourse; and the structure of the country generally affords the utmost facility for every species of communication by land. Unbounded materials of agricultural, commercial and manufacturing industry are there: it depends upon the present decision of the Imperial Legislature to determine for whose benefit they are to be rendered available. The country which has founded and maintained these Colonies at a vast expense of blood and treasure, may justly expect its compensation in turning their unappropriated resources to the account of its own redundant population; they are the rightful patrimony of the English people, the ample appanage which God and Nature have set aside in the New World for those whose lot has assigned them but insufficient portions in the Old. Under wise and free institutions these great advantages may yet be secured to your Majesty's subjects; and a connexion secured by the link of kindred origin, and mutual benefits may continue to bind to the British Empire the ample territories of its North American Provinces, and the large and flourishing population by which they will assuredly be filled[1]." He concluded with a vigorous protest against the prevailing carelessness. "It is by a sound system of colonization that we can render these extensive regions available for the benefit of the British people. The mis-

*in the hope of helping to plant English institutions and strengthen English influence throughout the world.*

[1] *Reports*, 1839, xvii. 7.

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management by which the resources of our Colonies have hitherto been wasted, has, I know, produced in the public mind too much of a disposition to regard them as mere sources of corruption and loss, and to entertain, with too much complacency, the idea of abandoning them as useless. I cannot participate in the notion that it is the part either of prudence or of honour to abandon our countrymen, when our government of them has plunged them into disorder, or our territory, when we discover that we have not turned it to proper account. The experiment of keeping Colonies and governing them well ought at least to have a trial, ere we abandon for ever the vast dominion which might supply the wants of our surplus population, and raise up millions of fresh consumers of our manufactures, and producers of a supply for our wants[1]."

[1] *Reports*, 1839, XVII. 118.

# POSTSCRIPT.

*The treatment of the recent economic history of England*

**281.** THE story of the growth of English Industry and Commerce has not come to an end; and no narrator can pretend to follow it to the close; he is forced to choose some point at which he thinks it convenient to break off the thread. There are many reasons why it seems wise to the present writer not to attempt to enter on the recent economic history of the country, or to delineate the course of affairs since 1850. At that period the abandonment of Mercantilism had become complete, and the reaction against *Laissez Faire* had begun to make itself clearly felt, so far as the regulation of industry and of internal transport are concerned.

*presents unusual difficulties,*

The treatment of recent history would necessarily be different from that which has been attempted in dealing with the affairs of other days. Contemporaries enjoy an admirable position for chronicling events and putting on record vivid descriptions of passing occurrences, but they are not necessarily better fitted than those who look on from a distance, to analyse the conditions which have brought about a change. Since economic causes do not lie on the surface, there is all the more danger that men may fail to appreciate the really important forces that are at work in their generation. It does not come easy to everyone to hold himself severely aloof from the interests and sentiments of his own day, so that he can hope to form the dispassionate judgment which is possible in tracing the course of affairs in bygone times. The financial and economic history of England, during the last fifty years, has been deeply affected by the personal influence of Cobden's most notable disciple. Men, who have felt the magnetic attraction which Mr Gladstone exercised, are hardly fitted to judge how far the extraordinary development of particular sides of economic life, which took

place under the fiscal and legislative measures he carried, has been altogether wholesome. It will be for future ages to decide whether he was the wisest of democratic leaders, or the greatest of unconscious charlatans.

*especially in view of the development of political life*

Nor does it seem possible to apply the method which has been pursued throughout the foregoing pages, in tracing the fortunes of the English people for nineteen hundred years[1], to the industrial and commercial growth of the last half-century. It has been the object of this book to co-ordinate the story of economic life with that of political development, and to bring out the relations between the two. In each era political aims have affected the direction and manner of economic growth; the story of material development is only intelligible, when the underlying sentiments and objects are clearly understood. But with the fall of the Mercantile System, the power of the English realm, in its narrower sense, which was for centuries the determining factor in shaping the economic growth of the country, has ceased to be treated as an adequate, far less as an exclusive object of consideration. There is a far wider outlook before us in discussing the economic policy of the realm, and we have hardly yet focussed our view as to the direction in which we may most wisely try to move. Account must be taken of the great communities and dependencies beyond the sea, both as regards our political institutions, our naval and military expenditure, and our material prosperity. Not till the new forms, which the life of the British Empire is assuming under our very eyes, are more clearly defined, will it be possible to trace the process of economic readjustment which has been involved in attempting to meet these new requirements. Political and economic factors react upon one another; the doctrine of *laissez faire* has vanquished the narrower nationalism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; but has it said the last word in regard to our mercantile relations with all parts of the world? We have discarded this doctrine, deliberately and finally, in regard to the conditions of industrial life, and the management of traffic within Great Britain. Who shall say what the issue will be when the

*throughout the British Empire.*

[1] B.C. 55 to A.D. 1850.



question of its continued applicability to English commerce is once fairly raised[1]?

*Laissez faire in commerce was long ago accepted as an ideal by individuals, both in England*

The entire abandonment of national commercial regulation, either through Navigation Laws or by means of tariff, was an ideal which was hailed with enthusiasm by many writers at the close of the eighteenth century. Sir John Sinclair held very decided views on the subject. "It is unnecessary," he wrote in advocating a general colonial emancipation, "to point out the advantages which Europe in general would receive were such an important alteration to take place in the situation and circumstances of the most fertile and valuable provinces which the world contains. My breast glows at the idea that a time may possibly soon arrive when the ships of Denmark, of Sweden, and of Russia, of Holland, of Austria, of France itself, and of Great Britain shall no longer be debarred from sailing to the coasts of Chili and of Peru, or be precluded by any proud monopolist from exchanging the commodities of Europe for the riches of America; and when every state, in proportion to the fertility of its soil, and to the industry of its inhabitants, may be certain of procuring all the necessaries and the conveniences of life. With such a new and extensive field opened to the exertions of mankind, what discoveries might not be expected, what talents might not break forth, to what a height would not every art and science be carried? The mind of a philanthropist need not be overpowered with the magnitude and importance of the ideas which present themselves to his view, when he can figure, for a moment, mankind united together by mutual interest, and bound by the ties of commercial intercourse to promote the general happiness of the species[2]."

*and America,*

It seemed to many people, however, that the best chance of realising this ideal was in a new country, where there was less respect for a traditional policy or for vested interests, and many economists looked hopefully to the United States to be the pioneer of Free Trade. Jefferson, who was much influenced by French writers, expressed himself decidedly on

[1] Mr Chamberlain's speech on May 15, 1903, marks an epoch, as it recognised the necessity of bringing our economic policy into accord with Imperial ideas.

[2] Sinclair's *History of the Public Revenue*, II. 105.

the subject. "I think," he wrote in 1785 to John Adams, whose views, like those of Franklin, were in close accord with his own, "all the world would gain by setting commerce at perfect liberty[1]." But events proved too strong for the young Republic. Both France and England were anxious to maintain their own commercial systems, and though it was possible to adjust trade differences with France[2], the English shipowners were unwilling that the Americans should compete with them on even terms in any branch of trade[3]. Had the Bill[4] which Pitt drafted in 1783 been adopted, America might have grown up as a Free Trade state, but Fox and his supporters[5] succeeded in maintaining the exclusive policy of the Navigation Act. American statesmen had reason to fear that their nascent commerce would be crushed out of existence. It thus came about that, under English influence, the inclinations of the leaders of opinion in America were modified[6]; the transatlantic Republic, which adopted internal freedom of commerce and industry with enthusiasm, did not rely on the new principles for foreign trade, but set herself to carry on the old nationalist tradition in the New World.

*and roused the enthusiasm of the opponents of the Corn Laws,*

The ideal of perfectly free commercial intercommunication was not abandoned, however; it took a hold of the imaginations of the Englishmen who agitated against the high protective duties on corn, which pressed so severely after 1815 on the manufacturers and the poor. The principles of the Anti-Corn-Law League were so clear that anyone who opposed them seemed to be actuated by selfish prejudices rather than by any reasonable objection. The Free Traders were convinced that if England took the bold course, and abandoned her merely nationalist system, all other countries would be inspired by her example. The national prosperity of England has increased by leaps and bounds since 1846, far beyond the

[1] Randolph, *Memoirs, Correspondence, etc. of Thomas Jefferson*, I. 264. On political grounds Jefferson would have preferred that American citizens should keep to rural pursuits and not develop commerce, or manufacturing. Tucker, *Life of Jefferson*, I. 200, also *Notes on Virginia*, 275.

[2] McMaster in *Cambridge Modern History*, VII. 323. [3] See p. 674 above.

[4] *Commons Journals*, XXXIX. 239; Leone Levi, *op. cit.* 57.

[5] Compare Disraeli's speech in 3 Hansard LXVI., Feb. 14, 1843.

[6] Austin, *Soundness of the policy of protecting domestic Manufactures*, 1817. Hamilton, *Report on Manufactures*, pp. 4, 31.



expectations of those who advocated a change in our fiscal policy—but there is little disposition on the part of other peoples to follow the line we have pursued. Indeed, the attitude of a country, which poses as a great example to other nations, is not necessarily attractive. It is less likely to call forth enthusiastic imitation than to give rise to carping criticism. The expectations of Cobden have been falsified[1]; other nations are inclined to imitate the steps by which England attained to greatness, and to try to build up a commercial and industrial system by the protectionist methods she pursued in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, rather than to take over her recent policy ready made. It may be pointed out with truth that the system of unfettered intercourse was opportune for England, because she had reached a particular phase of development as an industrial nation, but that it is not equally advantageous to countries in which the economic system is less advanced[2]. The Free Traders made the error which was so common among the economists of the day[3], and based on the particular conditions of England, a maxim which they regarded as of universal validity. Cobden had no scruple in separating himself from the thorough-going Free Traders[4] and falling back upon a system of commercial treaties in 1860. But his anticipations as to the collapse of protectionism in France[5] have not been realised; the network of treaties which was framed, has not secured a gradual advance towards universal Free Trade[6]. The rise of national enthusiasms, both on continental Europe and in America, has had its natural result in kindling an increased desire for national economic life; and England has bereft herself of the means of bargaining[7] with any foreign country, so as to make better terms for the admission of her goods. A modification of our fiscal system, which would enable us to offer free import for the corn of Canada, India, Australia, and other parts of the Empire, would secure us an ample food supply; we would then be able to impose duties on the goods imported from countries which endeavour to exclude our manufactures;

*but their expectations as to the action of other nations have not been fulfilled.*

*It may be wise to abandon commercial laissez faire for the sake of securing our food supply,*

[1] Cobden, 15 Jan. 1846; *Speeches*, I. 360.

[2] List, *National Political Economy*, 186.

[3] See above, p. 740.

[4] Morley, *Cobden*, II. 338. [5] *Ib.* II. 246. [6] *Ib.* II. 343.

[7] Fuchs, *The Trade Policy of Great Britain and her Colonies*, XXIX. 201.

and thus have a prospect of either obtaining a revenue, or of inducing our neighbours to give us better terms. It seems as if a time were coming when it would only be by specific agreement that we shall have access to markets in which to dispose of the wares with which we purchase the necessaries of life, and of industrial activity. The imposition of retaliatory tariffs on protectionist countries may be forced upon us as the only means of strengthening our business connection[1] with the great self-governing colonies, and of thus securing the command of supplies of food and raw materials. It is possible that England would by this means not only ward off the dangers which threaten her very existence, but enter on a path by which the completest economic co-operation between the distant regions which form parts of the Empire may be most quickly and easily realised.

*and securing an open door for our manufactures.*

The persuasive force of economic principles becomes greater when concrete instances, which affect immediate interests, can be adduced in supporting them. The manufacturers in 1846 realised that by the adoption of Free Trade and the admission of foreign cereals, the demand for our manufactures would be enormously increased[2]. They had such a belief in the superiority of our methods of production, and the eagerness of foreigners to buy on the cheapest terms, that they could not conceive that any market which was once open to our goods would ever be deliberately closed against us. Circumstances have so far changed, and our industrial rivals have so far developed in efficiency and in commercial influence, that the question is forced upon public attention whether it is prudent for us to continue to trust entirely to *laissez faire*, or whether we are not compelled to take active measures to retain and extend the market for our goods. Under changed conditions there may be a new reading of the Whig commercial tradition,

*This course would harmonise with traditional Whig views of the benefit of commerce,*

[1] Such retaliation is quite different in economic character from any scheme for reverting to the protection of home industries, as it was in vogue in the eighteenth century, or is maintained in any country which regulates economic life on a strictly National basis. Huskisson attempted to modify our tariffs in such a fashion as to create new ties of common interests throughout the Empire, but his plan would not be applicable to present conditions. (Cunningham, *Wisdom of the Wise*, 50.) The scheme for an Imperial Zollverein is discussed sympathetically by Lord Elgin, who regarded it as no longer practicable, *Letters and Journals*, 61. But it may still be possible to introduce particular measures that benefit the mother-country and some particular colony too, without attempting to impose one system on all the members of the Empire.

[2] Morley, *op. cit.* I. 141.



which insisted on the advisability of managing trade so that it might react on home industry[1]. Our manufacturers may recognise that some leverage is necessary if we are to secure an open door for the sale of our goods. A duty on the corn imported from countries which tax our manufactures heavily would be the most obvious mode of bringing pressure upon customers who look to us for the sale of their products. In so far as such duties yielded a revenue, they would be in accordance with the fiscal tradition of the Tories[2], which has always favoured schemes for placing the burden of taxation on as wide a basis as possible, instead of concentrating it on a single class. A modification of our fiscal policy, which shall bring it into accord with the fundamental economic views of each of the historic parties, and shall render it more acceptable to the developing British colonies, may not occur immediately; but many circumstances are tending in that direction[3].

*in stimulating industry,*

*and with the Tory tradition as to distributing the burden of taxation.*

**282.** The trend of events during the last fifty years is particularly difficult to interpret because the half century has been one of such rapid changes. In this it is comparable with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries rather than with any other period. The facilities of transport, which had been introduced during the preceding decades, have been rapidly developed, and cosmopolitan organisation of intercourse is beginning to show itself. The importance to the whole world of a postal and telegraphic service is clearly felt[4], and the primacy of cosmopolitan over territorial interests is recognised, in the denationalisation of certain great waterways, such as the line of lakes in North America, and the Suez Canal; there is a curious contrast with the mediaeval demarcation of marine spheres of influence, or the seventeenth century claims of the English to the Sovereignty of the Seas. Attempts to secure cosmopolitan agreement as to the standard of value show a new desire among the peoples of mankind to meet the common convenience[5]. The days of the supremacy of the nation as the unit for economic regulation seem to be passing away, as civic economic institutions and intermunicipal commerce have been merged, but not lost in national economic

*Recent history presents a parallel with that of the sixteenth century,*

*in the substitution of a new basis for economic organisation;*

[1] See p. 457 above.

[2] See p. 600 above.

[3] Fuchs, *Die Handelspolitik Englands* (1893), p. 312.

[4] Wells, *Recent Economic Changes*, 32.

[5] Cunningham, *Western Civilisation*, II. 264.

life. Cosmopolitanism has hitherto failed to suppress the national 'will to live'; indeed, there has been a fresh development of patriotic sentiment in new lands[1], as well as in the old world, but it need not necessarily express itself in international and inter-racial competition all over the world. Patriotic traditions and aspirations may have full scope in nationalities, which are yet federated, for common political action and conscious economic co-operation, in one great Empire.

*in the effects of the discoveries of gold and silver*

The rapidity of change has also been stimulated by the success which has attended gold-mining during the last half-century. The discovery of gold in California in 1849 and the working of the Australian diggings in 1851 added immensely to the world's stock of gold. This has been estimated as £560,000,000 in 1848, while it is believed that no less than £240,000,000 had been added before the close of 1860 —or an increase of nearly fifty per cent[2]. The effects of the opening up of these sources of supply have been many and far-reaching. The most obvious has been a rapid fall in the value of gold, and, as a consequence, a rapid rise in prices in England, since gold is now the standard of value. We have very full records of the prices of commodities of all sorts for the period 1845—50, before the influence of the newly discovered gold was felt; and we see that in 1853 general prices ranged 11·3 per cent. higher, and that the increase went on till, in 1857, there had been a rise of no less than 28·8 per cent. on the prices for the quinquennial period which closed in 1850[3]. The changes in prices have been accompanied by variations in the relative value of the two precious metals; from 1850 till 1870 gold slightly depreciated relatively to silver; though this has been obscured in retrospect by the still greater changes of an opposite kind which occurred through the opening up of the silver mines in Nevada, and the new demands for gold which were set in motion by the alteration of the German monetary system in 1872, when gold was adopted in place of a standard that had been practically bi-metallic. The corresponding movements, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, resulted in a difference of the rating of gold in different countries, all of which were chiefly silver-

*on prices*

*and on the relative value of the precious metals;*

[1] R. C. Jebb, *Studies in Colonial Nationalism*, 1.
[2] Jevons, *Investigations in Currency and Finance*, 65.
[3] Jevons, *Ib.* 47. See Append. G.



using; in recent years it has brought about a marked cleavage between the gold-using and the silver-using countries. The financial and commercial relations between England and India have been altered; Indian production, both of raw products and textiles, has been stimulated by the high silver prices which could be obtained in gold-using countries, and in England the agricultural interest appears to have been depressed by the importation of grain ripened in a silver-using country[1], while English manufactures cannot be so profitably exported to the silver areas[2]. The remarkable development of trade, from 1850 to 1874, appears to be directly connected with the rise of prices which followed the discoveries of gold[3], while the subsequent depression is equally clearly connected with the dislocation which has been due to the fall in the value of silver relatively to gold[4]. The material prosperity of England is dependent on trade, and the main influences which have affected her industrial and agricultural life during the last half-century have originated in events which occurred in distant parts of the world.

*in the facilities for the formation of capital;*

The parallel, between the period which followed the discovery of the New World and the last half-century, holds good, not only in regard to prices, but in other ways as well. There has been an unprecedented opportunity for the formation of capital; and the new means of communication which have been opened up, have made it possible for enterprising men to invest it, in developing the resources and industry of any part of the globe. In the sixteenth century England was a backward country, and capitalists seeking for investments looked towards it from all the continental monetary centres. During the last half-century London has been the city in which financial business has been chiefly concentrated, and English capital has flowed out to engage in industrial and commercial and engineering undertakings in our colonies, in foreign countries, and in uncivilised lands.

There is another aspect in which the parallel holds good; the addition which accrued to the world's bullion—stimulating

[1] *Report of Gold and Silver Commission*, in *Reports*, 1888, XLV. 331.
[2] Bowley, *England's Foreign Trade*, 98.
[3] Nicholson, *Money and Monetary Problems*, 180.
[4] Ll. Price, *Money and its Relation to Prices*, 181.

as it did the industry and commerce of the time—appears to have produced a general diffused increase of comfort, in England at all events, but it certainly led to the accumulation of large fortunes. This was also the case in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the moneyed class rose in importance; there was a steady trend of new men, who had been successful in the City, to fill up the ranks of the landed gentry; but the merchants and financiers continued to grow in wealth and power. The farmers of the taxes under Charles I., the goldsmiths in the Restoration period, and the company promoters of the time of Queen Anne were men who often rose from small beginnings to be the possessors of large fortunes. The new accession of wealth during the last half-century has brought about an improved standard of comfort among the working classes generally[1] and among the middle classes, and modern conditions have also afforded opportunities for the accumulation of unprecedented fortunes in business. The poor are not growing poorer, but the very rich are becoming much richer. There were not a few complaints of the disintegrating influence which the absentee landlords and new men exercised in Elizabethan and Stuart times, and the millionnaire of the present day also seems to find it difficult to choose, among the various continents, the one in which he prefers to make his headquarters, to discern his duty to his neighbours there, and to do it.

*in the building up of great fortunes,*

*and in changes in business organisation,*

The rise of individuals to great wealth, in the seventeenth century, was associated with changes in the methods of business organisation. The civic and municipal gilds had fallen into decay, and the companies, which strove to carry on a regulated trade on national lines, failed to justify their existence. Commerce came to be conducted on new principles, and each individual was free to push his business as best he could; or it was handed over to joint-stock companies which enjoyed large concessions and judicial and military status. The whole of the elaborate system, by which efforts had been made in the Middle Ages to secure and enforce good order in commercial transactions, or in industrial life, broke down utterly and for ever. Free competition triumphed over the methods of careful organisation, and the right to freedom in bargaining,

[1] Giffen, *Essays in Finance*, Second Series, 405



which had been traditionally maintained outside municipal boundaries, asserted itself in the seventeenth century. In recent years there have been similar changes; the competition of comparatively small capitalists with one another can no longer be assumed; immense strides have been made in the way of organising business management, so as to control the whole process of production in some great department of industry. The growth of trusts in America, which are profoundly affecting English industry, both by their example and by the competition they carry on, is in many ways alien to English commercial tradition. The sentiment in favour of publicity in transactions, and the competition of buyers and sellers in a market, has never obtained such a hold in America as it had in English life. The mediaeval dislike of forestalling and regrating—of private bargaining outside the market—never seems to have crossed the Atlantic; and there has in consequence been greater opportunity for organising systems of control, which embrace the production of the material for some manufacture and the distribution of the product by retailing agents. It is not possible for all the buyers and sellers, who are practically interested in transactions in some class of goods, to meet on the same spot; the old methods of securing publicity are inapplicable; "common estimation" can no longer be discerned from the higgling of the market. The facilities for transport are so great, that buyers of the produce of Virginia or California are to be found all over the globe. The postal service and the electric telegraph bring buyers and sellers from distant regions into communication; while they help to diffuse information publicly through the newspapers, they have a still greater effect in giving extraordinary facilities for private communication. Since the seventeenth century, when business became a matter of private enterprise, it has tended more and more to take a speculative character. Reliable private information and judicious forecasts of probable changes are the chief elements in planning and carrying through a successful deal. The methods, which are appropriate for transactions involving considerations of world-wide supply and demand, are completely different from those which were

*which have been facilitated by the telegraph system.*

in vogue a hundred years ago. The competition of small capitalists, within the limits of a single country, is being rapidly superseded as the determining factor in price; a revolution is occurring, similar to that by which private enterprise ousted civic regulation and well-ordered trade. In every particular, the transition which has been recently taking place corresponds to the changes which occurred after the discovery of the precious metal in the New World, save that, in modern times, the movements are more rapid and more widespread in their effects.

*Whereas Elizabethan statesmen aimed at promoting National Power*

**283.** The parallel between the economic conditions of the Elizabethan age, with which this volume opened, and those of recent times in England is clear enough; but there are differences which are well worth noting. The object which Lord Burleigh and many succeeding generations of statesmen kept steadily before them was that of building up English power and prestige. They were determined that the nation should be free, economically and politically, to live her own life, and work out her destiny in the world for herself, uncontrolled by the Pope, or any of the Roman Catholic powers. Their whole scheme of industrial and commercial life was devised with a view of fostering the elements that made for national power. Adam Smith and the classical economists did not really abandon this point of view; they only insisted on a new means of obtaining the recognised end of political economy, as they understood it. They pointed out that wealth of any kind was the source of power, and that *laissez faire* principles were favourable to the rapid increase of wealth, both individual and national, and therefore to the increase of the power of the nation. The change, which occurred in nineteenth century opinion, was somewhat deeper; it depended on new views, not of the means to be used, but of the end to be pursued. The welfare of the people committed to their charge was not left out of account, or forgotten, by the statesmen of the Elizabethan and Stuart period, but their chief care was for national power; in the last half century, national power and prestige still kindle the keenest enthusiasm, but the main thought and effort of public men is given to the improvement of the condition of the masses of

*and the means of attaining it,*

*nineteenth century public opinion*



the people. There has been a conscious effort to preserve the welfare of the community, in all its various aspects, and a tendency to disparage the ambition for national power; this finds its fullest expression in Socialism, but it has influenced public opinion in many ways, and affected governmental action. There has at least been a noticeable change in the stress laid on these different objects. In 1850 England had consciously discarded the old scheme for fostering the various factors of national power, but assiduous thought has been constantly given to the elements which go to constitute human welfare, and to the best means of attaining them either by State action or associated effort. It has been possible to trace the influence of philanthropic sentiment in checking abuses of many kinds, but it is not easy to delineate with any precision the positive conception of welfare on which it has been based. We are forced to separate it from the ideals of religion altogether, though these may do much to mould the personal attitude towards social duty[1]. Religious motives have done and may do much to stimulate to philanthropic action; but the aims which are comprised in the current ideals of welfare are purely mundane. They cannot be universal, similar for all human beings alike, but must be adapted to the temperament and conditions of different races; they cannot be eternal, since they concentrate attention on earthly existence. They offer a practical aim, which is attractive to many whose enthusiasm is not kindled by ideal objects. Among the conditions of welfare in human life, a supply of the comforts and conveniences of life occupies a large place; the increase of material goods affords the possibility of leisure, and freedom from constant drudgery; these are conditions without which high national attainment in literature or science or art do not seem to be possible. Hence the classical political economy of Adam Smith and his successors has a permanent importance; the causes of the wealth of nations, the increase of physical resources, and of

*is concentrated on the Welfare of the masses,*

*and the conditions for realising it,*

[1] On the different attitude taken to work—as a matter of expediency or of duty—see Cunningham, *Gospel of Work*, p. 54. The influence of religion is treated more generally by Professor Nicholson in his excellent chapter on the *Relation of Political Economy to Morality and Christianity*, in *Principles*, III. 427. See also Cunningham, *Modern Civilisation*, 189.

national prosperity have an abiding interest. But it is important to remember that the Science of Political Economy, as they formulated it, only deals with one aspect of human life,—or with the material and physical conditions of existence and progress, rather than with life itself[1]. These constitute a very important aspect; and they are very difficult to deal with, as the severance between private and public interest, or the divergence of temporarily conflicting interests, is more marked in this connection than in the other elements of welfare. The interests of landed and moneyed men, or of capital and labour, or of an old and an undeveloped country, often are distinct, and the chief problem of modern political life is to prevent any one interest from becoming dominant and allowing itself to pursue its own advantage in disregard of the common weal.

*so as to afford excuse for exclusive attention*

*to the interests of labour in England*

Since 1832, when England became consciously democratic, and still more since 1874, when the new principles were more thoroughly applied, the physical well-being of labour has been kept very prominently in view by English legislators and administrators. Political power rests with the working classes, and they may possibly use it so as to burden the owners of property unduly, and prevent the formation of capital, or so as to harass employers in the

[1] An attempt has been made by Jevons and his followers to revolutionise Political Economy and to recast it in a form in which it appears to offer a scientific account of Human Welfare. They start from the conception, which Adam Smith discarded, of value-in-use, instead of value-in-exchange, and explain transactions in terms of the degrees of utility or disutility involved. This is a convenient mode of statement for treating certain problems, particularly those of consumption, but the analysis of subjective motives has always seemed to me a cumbrous and inconvenient way of approaching the facts of the actual exchange of goods, as it goes on in the world. It is comparatively easy to take a certain type of human being and analyse his probable conduct, but the principles thus obtained are not real generalisations from observed fact (Cunningham, *Plea for Pure Theory*, in *Economic Review*, II. 35). It is difficult to see within what limits they are applicable, or what corrections it is necessary to apply in order to make them the basis of practical maxims. According to Adam Smith's treatment exchange-value is the fundamental conception; and in modern life the conditions of exchange dominate over the methods of production and the terms of distribution. The most recent English writers, Professor Nicholson in his elaborate treatise, and Mr Devas in his manual, while embodying the results obtained on the new methods, show a decided reaction against the mode of statement introduced by Jevons, and a tendency to revert to the objective treatment which was adopted by Adam Smith and the Classical Economists.



management of their business; in either case the community will suffer, and the working classes will have to bear their share in the general disaster. But on the other hand, there is good reason to hope that they will attain to such a measure of political wisdom, and such a sense of political responsibility, as to endeavour to avoid these dangers, and so may refrain from pushing the interest of their class beyond the point where it ceases to be consonant with the well-being of the community as a whole. The accentuation of this element of care for labour, which is a characteristic feature of modern English life, is reproduced in the daughter communities which have grown up during the last half-century. Labour is the predominant factor in the political life of Australia and New Zealand; the conditions of labour occupy much of the consideration of the legislature, and the welfare of labour takes a very prominent place in the conception of the welfare of the community.

*and her colonies;*

In other modern States this is not the case to nearly the same extent. Among continental peoples, the necessity of maintaining large military organisations is still regarded as paramount. Power rather than Welfare is the main object of economic policy; France, Germany, and Russia are necessarily pursuing a course that is more closely parallel to that of England in the seventeenth century, than to that of England to-day. In Germany in particular the efforts of the government to retain the mastery, and yet to exercise it benevolently, bear a curious analogy to the work of the Council under James I. and Charles I. In America, with the extraordinary possibilities of settling on the land which it offers, the necessity of taking active steps to promote, or to protect, the interests of labour have never been recognised. There may be a change in this respect, now that the field for extension is so clearly defined[1], but up to the present time the government has been inclined to give facilities for the accumulation and profitable employment of capital, as the best expedient for promoting the development of industrial employment and the good of the community. So far as the American economic system is concerned, it appears to be

*while the policy of other countries is more concerned with National Power,*

*or the interests of capital.*

[1] F. J. Turner, *Significance of the Frontier in American History*, 199.

generally thought that if attention is given to the interests of capital, those of labour will also be saved indirectly, but none the less really and in the best way. Unlike as Russia, Germany, and America are in many ways, they are similar to one another and distinguished from England by this common feature, that in all of them labour is still struggling for primary consideration at the hands of the government. It is not yet secure in the enjoyment of the power of association to attend to its own interest, and is apt, from a sense of official want of sympathy, to ally itself with the socialist and anarchist opposition to the established order.

*The power of labour is shown in the respective policies of England and her colonies,*

It is not a little curious to notice that, in the different circumstances of the mother-country and the colonies, the same cause, the dominance of labour, has brought about an opposite influence to bear on economic policy. In England the working classes have become firmly attached to the free trade principles which tell in favour of cheap food to the consumer; in Victoria and some other colonies, they are more inclined to adopt a policy which favours producers. But the power of this factor in national life is shown, not only in the trend of legislation, but in the character and work of the associations of English working men. In various ways they have contributed to the maintenance of a high standard of comfort. This has been the direct object of Trade Unions, and whether their existence has been a contributing cause or not, there can be little doubt that the working classes generally, and the skilled artisans in particular, have attained to a much greater command over the comforts and conveniences of life than they formerly enjoyed. Friendly Societies continue to flourish and to guard their members against the risk of being submerged through the loss of health or other unforeseen occurrences. In addition, by means of the Co-operative movement, the poor consumer has been able to bring effective supervision to bear on the quality and price of the goods supplied to him. The guarantee which the Assize of Bread and Ale were supposed to afford can be much more completely brought into operation, and at far less cost, by the agency of these great trading bodies. On all these sides a remarkable system of self-help has been organised, and the labourer has

*and in the development of Trade Unions,*

*Friendly,*

*and Co-operative Societies.*



been able to protect himself against the degrading influence of reckless competition, and to secure that a measure of the increasing wealth of the realm shall be diffused so as to give better opportunities of welfare to the masses of the people.

*The English conception of welfare is distinct from that of other peoples, and includes*

**284.** A consideration of the course of recent legislation and the working of English institutions seems to show that the conception of welfare, as it presents itself to the English mind now-a-days, is not identical with the views that are cherished in other communities. The differences come into clearer light when we turn from questions connected with the diffusion of material wealth, to the moral elements which are involved in the idea of well-being. In all economic conceptions there is relativity; while on one side there are material objects, on the other we have the human beings by whom these objects are used; varieties of disposition and temperament must introduce considerable differences in the aims they cherish. These are perhaps of greater importance with respect to the influence exercised on subject peoples, than in connection with the condition of the citizens themselves.

*a deep regard for historical tradition*

There are two points in the mental attitude of Englishmen which are at least less noticeable in other communities. There is, for one thing, a remarkably strong historic sense, and regard for tradition. We have long prized our own, we have more lately learned to be respectful in our attitude towards those of other races. The sentiments of other peoples, as embodied in their literature and institutions, have been treated with marked tenderness, during the greater part of the nineteenth century. So far are we from trying to stamp them out, and force English ways and habits of thought upon other peoples, that we are sedulous in the effort to exercise our influence to preserve and foster rather than to supersede. There was no similar feeling among English statesmen of the seventeenth century; the aim of James I. and of Strafford and Laud was to assimilate the institutions and habits of thought of the realm of Great Britain and Ireland to one model, by recasting the ecclesiastical system of Scotland and bringing about thorough changes in the social conditions of Ireland. In Ireland that effort for assimilation has gone on, though in recent years there has been a reaction, and more attempt has

been made, for good or evil, to govern Ireland according to Irish ideas, and to introduce and diffuse a wider acquaintance with the Erse language and literature. The Scotch failed in their endeavour to impose their habits of thought and institutions on England, as the price of their assistance in the Great Rebellion; and since the Restoration the effort at expanding the English model, and introducing it in all parts of the English realm, has been abandoned. The North American colonies were allowed to develop on their own religious and social lines, and at the Union in 1707, the Scottish ecclesiastical institutions and the Scottish legal systems were preserved intact, and side by side with those of England. The right and freedom for different nations to preserve their own language and traditions and sentiments within a single political community has been acknowledged, and this is the basis of English policy in all parts of the world. There is no other great civilised community in modern times which has shown itself ready to take this line; in the United States the need of assimilating the alien elements which immigrate there is constantly before men's minds. The Tories and Loyalists were thrust out after the successful struggle against the British Crown[1], and there is a determination so far as possible to keep out those who do not easily adapt themselves to American conceptions of citizenship. In Russia and Germany the pressure of the military system renders still more active measures inevitable; and the troubles in the Polish provinces of Prussia and in Finland, mark the contrast between the prevailing ideas in England and in other great States upon the respect to be shown to racial sentiment and tradition.

*and an abandonment of the desire to assimilate other peoples to the English model,*

*as well as a high respect for human life,*

It is perhaps less obvious that in England there is a remarkably highly developed care for human life as such. The difference on this point between all Western peoples and savage tribes or the civilisations of the East is very marked; and when East and West come in contact, there is a tendency for the higher races to take the savage or half-civilised at their own valuation. In England, since the agitation against the slave-trade began, there has been a serious effort to apply

[1] McMaster in *Cambridge Modern History*, VII. 307.



the European estimate of the value of life to the coloured peoples with whom we come in contact. In the two branches of the Anglo-Saxon race there appears to be some divergence in this matter; the attitude of aloofness towards the negro which characterises the United States generally, and the long frontier wars with the Indians, have tended to produce a tone of sentiment in regard to black, red, and yellow races with which the Englishman does not find himself in full sympathy. At the same time the horror of grandmotherly interference by the Government appears to be stronger in America than in Europe generally or in England, and the sense that it is the business of the individual to take care of himself and preserve his own life militates against the exercise of police supervision and protection on a large scale. There are no means of gauging it accurately or instituting a definite comparison, but it certainly appears that the duty of the State to protect the persons and lives of men of all races alike is less clearly recognised in the United States than it is among the other branches of the English race. It is to a large extent the consciousness of this difference of sentiment which gives the Englishman a feeling of destiny in regard to the exercise of influence over subject peoples. Free play for the men of all races to attain to the best that is in them is the principle which British rule has sedulously endeavoured to realise in all parts of the globe, by introducing institutions for the protection of life and property, and for giving all possible scope to varieties of tradition, sentiment and culture. There is little danger of underrating the greatness of the task that has thus come to our hands. But to men who are men, these very difficulties sound a call of duty; and the best of the coming generation are showing a keen enthusiasm to have their personal part in the mission of England, and to serve their country in any part of the world.

*even in the case of coloured peoples.*

**285.** The only parallel with England in the work on which she has now entered is to be found, not in any of the peoples of the modern world, but in the Roman Empire of ancient times. There is the same complex political problem, from the wide extent of the Empire and from the fact that in so many parts of it two or more races with distinct sentiment

*The Roman Empire had to deal with the same problems,*

and traditions are living side by side on the same soil, and there are pessimists who are always ready to point to the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, as a warning of the fate which is in store for England, since she has undertaken a similar task. But we may remember the differences, as well as the resemblances between the two Empires; whatever the weakness of the English system may be, it does not suffer from the evils which were most noticeable in Rome. The origin of the two Empires is distinct, as the one was formed by military successes, the other by the gradual extension of commerce. The physical character of the two Empires is distinct, as the one stretched over large areas of contiguous territory, traversed by magnificent roads, while the other consists of scattered possessions, to which access is obtainable by sea. The cost of maintaining the defence of the frontiers and communications within a great land empire was enormous, and drained the resources of the Empire; while the navy serves to protect the commerce which is the very basis of England's wealth. Conquered countries were ruined and exhausted by Roman government; but the outlying parts of the British Empire are strong and vigorous communities. The expenses of government and magnificent public works at Rome entailed a burden of taxation which ruined the landed interests and rendered fertile regions desert; while English influence has brought vast tracts under the plough and made provision for a greatly increased population throughout the Empire. The moneyed men were forced to bear a costly and unwilling part in the affairs of State[1]; while the modern system of public borrowing—with all its disadvantages—brings the moneyed men and the Government into partnership, for their mutual advantage. It might be difficult to specify the precise aims which Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius, and Julian set before them; but there was little sign of that constant care for the welfare of the masses of the peoples—of all tribes and languages alike—which is the aim of the ruling race to-day.

*but it was less fitted to grapple with them,*

*from its military origin,*

*its territorial character,*

*and the economic pressure it entailed;*

Striking as are the economic differences between these two great Empires, the political contrasts are even more

[1] Cunningham, *Western Civilisation*, I. 188.



remarkable. Rome did indeed allow—with a half-contemptuous indifference—the subject peoples to retain their own customs and religions, but she encroached more and more upon the political liberties of her most cherished allies, till all were embraced in the iron grasp of one great administrative system. England has set herself from the first to carry out a devolution of authority to the largest extent possible. In 1619 King James granted a constitution under which Englishmen living in Virginia were able to express their views as to the manner in which the government of the colony should be carried on. In one after another of the territories which have been planted since that time, governmental institutions, on the model of those at home, have been created; and efforts are made, not only to enable Englishmen to retain the practice of self-government in their new homes, but to train subject peoples for the discharge of similar responsibilities. As English constitutional liberties have developed, the type of government which is created in the new countries has been modified. The government of the American colonies reflected the ideas of the Stuart monarchy; while the new nineteenth century colonies have been modelled on democratic lines, where authority lies in the hands of a cabinet which is responsible to the citizens for its measures.

*while England has set herself to diffuse political power,*

The contrast is noticeable, too, when we look not merely at the diffusion of political power in the English Empire but at the character of the civil administration. The creation of administrative machinery was the great feature of English economic history in the middle of last century, and a corresponding change was taking place in the government of the country and her dependencies. There are areas where the older type of administration survives, and the officials of a royal household are responsible for the control of public affairs; there is still a castle in Dublin. But, on the whole, it is true that the method of selecting the *personelle* of the administration throughout the various parts of the Empire is wholly appropriate to a democratic realm. The Roman Empire was governed by an official class; there is always a danger that such a caste may become the slave of its own traditions, or that it should avail itself of opportunities of

*and to devise an incorrupt but efficient system of civil administration*

*in conjunction with democratic institutions.*

enriching itself. In England, with the publicity of parliamentary government and the effectiveness of the criticism that is possible under the party system, the difficulty of securing administrative excellence under a democracy has been reduced to a minimum. A method has been devised for obtaining the services of men of capacity and yet subjecting them to the control of independent authorities from outside. There is no official caste, and if we lose something by being careless of expert training and setting amateurs to learn their business by their mistakes, we have a constant supply of men who have intimate relations with the non-official world, and bring their common sense to bear on the problems that present themselves. The Indian Civil Service[1] has given the type on which other administrative bodies have been modelled—in regions where responsible self-government is impossible,—and this service is the product of the East India Company and Parliament. There is an impressive fitness in the fact that the characteristic institution of a commercial empire should have been developed, not solely by the wisdom of political rulers, but also by the sagacity of English merchants guiding a commercial enterprise.

[1] The training of candidates, for posts under the Company, at a college for four years was insisted on by the Act of 1813 (53 *Geo.* III. c. 155, § 46), and an examination for admission was required by 3 and 4 W. III. c. 85, §§ 104—106, and patronage in the nomination of candidates was abolished by 16 and 17 Vict. c. 36. The system which was thus organised was taken over without substantial alteration by the Civil Service Commissioners in 1858 (21 and 22 V. c. 106, § 32). Sir C. E. Trevelyan, who had long experience of the working of the official system in India, was a prime mover in the reform of the Home Civil Service in 1854. *Reports, etc.* 1854, XXVII. p. 8.

# APPENDIX A.

## WAGES ASSESSMENTS, p. 37.

THE nature of the attempts which were made under the Act of 1563 to regulate wages may be best illustrated by the reproduction of one particular example. The specimen selected is a very detailed Middlesex Assessment; it is undated, and appears to have been printed as a form that might be issued from time to time, without substantial alteration. The original is in the British Museum [190. g. 13 (202)].

A list has been added of the examples of assessments, and allusions to assessments, which have come under my notice. The recently published assessment for weavers in Wiltshire in 1602, is of special interest, as well as the reasons alleged by the Grand Jury for regulating wages in 1661. *Hist. MSS. Comm.* 1901, *Various Collections*, I. 322.

### i. THE MIDDLESEX ASSESSMENT OF 166—.

At the Generall Quarter Sessions of the Peace, of our Sovereign Lord the King, held for the County of *Middlesex* at *Westminster* in the said County, upon next after the Feast of *Easter* (to wit) the Day of in the Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord Charles the Second, by the Grace of God, King of *England*, *Scotland*, *France* and *Ireland*, Defender of the Faith, etc. the The Rates of Servants Wages, Labourers, Workmen and Artificers (in pursuance of the Statute of the Fifth of Queen *Elizabeth*, in that behalf made and provided) are rated and assessed by the Justices of the Peace of the said County at the said Sessions assembled (calling to their assistance some others of the discreet Inhabitants of the said County) as hereafter followeth:

And it is ordered by the said Justices, that the Sheriff of the said County shall cause the said Rates to be Proclaimed and Published according to the Statute in that Case also made and provided; and that after such Proclamation and Publication made

of the said Rates, that no person whatsoever (which may be therein concerned) shall (this present Year) presume to give, allow, demand, receive, or take any greater Wages then such as are mentioned in the said Rates; neither shall any Master, or Mistress, entertain or put away any Servant, Workman or Labourer; neither shall any Servant, Workman, or Labourer, depart from any Master or Mistress, which may be mentioned or intended in the said Statute of the Fifth of Queen *Elizabeth* or any other Statute in that behalf provided, without due observation of the said Statutes, under such pains and penalties as are therein respectively mentioned.

*The Rates of Wages for Labourers and Artificers, published within the County of* MIDDLESEX, *for the Year of our Lord*, 166—.

*Artificers working by the Year, find themselves Tools.*

| | | £ |
|---|---|---|
| Free Masons: | Of the best sort, | 12. |
| | Of the second sort, | 8. |
| Carpenters: | Of the best sort, | 12. |
| | Of the second sort, | 8. |
| Joyners: | Of the best sort, | 12. |
| | Of the second sort, | 8. |
| Carvers: | Of the best sort, | 12. |
| | Of the second sort, | 8. |
| Wheelwrights: | Of the best sort, | 10. |
| | Of the second sort, | 6. |
| Rope-Makers: | Of the best sort, | 10. |
| | Of the second sort, | 6. |
| Coller-makers: | Of the best sort, | 10. |
| | Of the second sort, | 6. |
| Bricklayers: | Of the best sort, | 12. |
| | Of the second sort, | 8. |
| Tylers: | Of the best sort, | 12. |
| | Of the second sort, | 8. |
| Blacksmiths: | Of the best sort, | 10. |
| | Of the second sort, | 6. |
| Plowrights: | Of the best sort, | 10. |
| | Of the second sort, | 6. |
| Tanners: | Of the best sort, | 10. |
| | Of the second sort, | 6. |
| Curriers: | Of the best sort, | 10. |
| | Of the second sort, | 6. |



| | | £ |
|---|---|---|
| Wind-millers: | Of the best sort, | 8. |
| | Of the second sort, | 5. |
| Shoemakers: | Of the best sort, | 10. |
| | Of the second sort, | 6. |
| Bakers being Furners[1]: | Of the best sort, | 10. |
| | Of the second sort, | 6. |
| Butchers being Foremen: | Of the best sort, | 10. |
| | Of the second sort, | 6. |
| Brewers: | Of the best sort, | 20. |
| | Of the second sort, | 10. |
| Sawyers: | Of the best sort, | 12. |
| | Of the second sort, | 8. |
| Plaisterers: | Of the best sort, | 12. |
| | Of the second sort, | 8. |
| Taylors: | Of the best sort, | 8. |
| | Of the second sort, | 6. |
| Glovers: | Of the best sort, | 8. |
| | Of the second sort, | 6. |
| Turners: | Of the best sort, | 10. |
| | Of the second sort, | 7. |
| Fletchers: | Of the best sort, | 8. |
| | Of the second sort, | 6. |
| Sadlers: | Of the best sort, | 8. |
| | Of the second sort, | 6. |
| Coopers: | Of the best sort, | 8. |
| | Of the second sort, | 6. |
| Water Corn Millers: | Of the best sort, | 12. |
| | Of the second sort, | 8. |

*Artificers working by the Day from the midst of March to the midst of September.*

| | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Free Masons: | | | |
| Of the best sort with meat and drink, | | | 18. |
| „ „ „ without „ „ | | 2 | 6. |
| Of the second sort with „ „ | | | 12. |
| „ „ „ without „ | | 2 | 0. |
| Carpenters: | | | |
| Of the best sort with meat and drink, | | | 18. |
| „ „ „ without „ „ | | 2 | 6. |

[1] A man who has charge of an oven.

| [Carpenters]: | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Of the second sort with meat and drink, | | | 12. |
| „ „ „ without „ | | 2 | 0 |
| Joyners: | | | |
| Of the best sort with meat and drink, | | | 18. |
| „ „ „ without „ „ | | 2 | 6. |
| Of the second sort with „ „ | | | 12. |
| „ „ „ without „ | | 2 | 0. |
| Carvers: | | | |
| Of the best sort with meat and drink, | | | 18. |
| „ „ „ without „ „ | | 2 | 6. |
| Of the second sort with „ „ | | | 12. |
| „ „ „ without „ | | 2 | 0. |
| Bricklayers: | | | |
| Of the best sort with meat and drink, | | | 18. |
| „ „ „ without „ „ | | 2 | 6. |
| Of the second sort with „ „ | | | 12. |
| „ „ „ without „ | | 2 | 0. |
| Tylers: | | | |
| Of the best sort with meat and drink, | | | 18. |
| „ „ „ without „ „ | | 2 | 6. |
| Of the second sort with „ „ | | | 12. |
| „ „ „ without „ | | 2 | 0. |
| Thatchers: | | | |
| Of the best sort with meat and drink, | | | 12. |
| „ „ „ without „ „ | | 2 | 0. |
| Of the second sort with „ „ | | | 9. |
| „ „ „ without „ | | | 18. |
| A paire of Sawyers: | | | |
| With meat and drink, | | 2 | 0. |
| Without meat and drink, | | 4 | 0. |

*Artificers working by the Day from the midst of September to the midst of March.*

| Freemasons: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Of the best sort with meat and drink, | | | 12. |
| „ „ „ without „ „ | | 2 | 0. |
| Of the second sort with „ „ | | | 10. |
| „ „ „ without „ | | | 20. |
| Carpenters: | | | |
| Of the best sort with meat and drink, | | | 12. |
| „ „ „ without „ „ | | 2 | 0. |



| [Carpenters]: | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Of the second sort with meat and drink, | | | 10. |
| „ „ „ without „ | | | 20. |
| Joyners: | | | |
| Of the best sort with meat and drink, | | | 12. |
| „ „ „ without „ „ | | 2 | 0. |
| Of the second sort with „ „ | | | 10. |
| „ „ „ without „ | | | 20. |
| Carvers: | | | |
| Of the best sort with meat and drink, | | | 12. |
| „ „ „ without „ „ | | 2 | 0. |
| Of the second sort with „ „ | | | 10. |
| „ „ „ without „ | | | 20. |
| Bricklayers: | | | |
| Of the best sort with meat and drink, | | | 12. |
| „ „ „ without „ „ | | 2 | 0. |
| Of the second sort with „ „ | | | 10. |
| „ „ „ without „ | | | 20. |
| Tylers: | | | |
| Of the best sort with meat and drink, | | | 12. |
| „ „ „ without „ „ | | 2 | 0. |
| Of the second sort with „ „ | | | 10. |
| „ „ „ without „ | | | 20. |
| Thatchers: | | | |
| Of the best sort with meat and drink, | | | 8. |
| „ „ „ without „ „ | | | 18. |
| Of the second sort with „ „ | | | 6. |
| „ „ „ without „ | | | 16. |
| A paire of Sawyers: | | | |
| With meat and drink, | | | 20. |
| Without „ „ | | 3 | 0. |
| Sawyers working by the great, | | | |
| For sawing of Boards by the hundred, for every hundred, | | 3 | 0. |
| For sawing of slitting work by the hundred, for every hundred, | | 3 | 0. |

*Husbandmen and Hindes serving by the Year.*

| Carters or Drivers: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Of the best sort, | 8 | 0 | 0. |
| Of the second sort, | 6 | 0 | 0. |
| Of the third sort, | 4 | 0 | 0. |

| | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hindes or Husbandmen: | | | |
| Of the best sort, | 6 | 0 | 0. |
| Of the second sort, | 4 | 0 | 0. |
| Of the third sort, | 3 | 0 | 0. |
| Gardiners: | | | |
| Of the best sort, | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| Of the second sort, | 6 | 0 | 0. |
| Of the third sort, | 4 | 0 | 0. |
| Gardiners working by the day: | | | |
| Without meat and drink, | | 2 | 6. |
| With meat and drink, | | | 18. |
| Of the second sort without meat and drink, | | 2 | 0. |
| „ „ „ with „ „ „ | | | 12. |

*Common Labourers and Workmen by the Day.*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| For mowing Corn and Grass by the day with meat and drink, | | | 12. |
| Without meat and drink, | | 2 | 0. |
| For reaping of Corn with meat and drink, | | | 12. |
| „ „ „ without „ „ | | 2 | 0. |
| For making of Hay with meat and drink, | | | 8. |
| „ „ „ without „ „ | | | 16. |
| Labourers of the best sort from the midst of September to the midst of March with meat and drink, | | | 8. |
| Without meat and drink, | | | 16. |
| The same of the second sort with meat and drink, | | | 6. |
| Without meat and drink, | | | 12. |
| The same of the best sort from the midst of March to the midst of September with meat and drink, | | | 10. |
| Without meat and drink, | | | 18. |
| The same of the second sort with meat and drink, | | | 8. |
| Without meat and drink, | | | 14. |
| Mowing of Grass well grown by the Acre, | | 2 | 6. |
| Mowing of Barley „ „ „ „ | | | 14. |
| Mowing of Oats „ „ „ „ | | | 14. |
| Mowing of Beans by the Acre | | 2 | 6. |
| Reaping, binding and laying in shacks of Wheat or Rie well grown, and not very sore Lidge[1] by the Acre, | | 6 | 0. |

[1] Corn not very badly laid.



| | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Thrashing and making clean Wheat by the Quarter, | | 2 | 0. |
| The like for Rie by the Quarter, | | 2 | 0. |
| The like for Barly by the Quarter, | | | 14. |
| The like for Oats and Beans by the Quarter, | | | 14. |
| For plesheing[1] of a good Quick Hedge by the Rod, | | | 3. |
| Making of a Hedge, Ditch, with double Quick-set, the Ditch being 2 foot and an half deep, 4 foot wide at the brim, and one foot wide in the bottom; for every Pole the workman finding Quick, | | | 14. |
| The same, the Ditch being 2 foot deep, 3 foot wide, and less than one foot in the bottom; for a Pole, | | | 12. |
| Scowring and paring the Bank of an old Ditch, | | | 3. |
| Felling and making tall Wood by the Load, | | | 12. |
| Felling and making Billet by the thousand, | | 2 | 0. |
| Felling and hewing Colewood by the dozen, | | | 20. |
| Felling, making and binding of Faggots, and Brush, or Lash Baven[2] by the hundred, | | 2 | 6. |

*Women serving or working by the Year and by the Day.*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| The best Woman Servant by the year, | 4 | 0 | 0. |
| The second sort by the year, | 3 | 0 | 0. |
| The third sort „ „ | 2 | 0 | 0. |
| Women making Hay by the day with meat and drink, | | | 6. |
| Without meat and drink, | | | 12. |
| The same for reaping Corn with meat and drink, | | | 6. |
| Without meat and drink, | | | 12. |
| The same for other Harvest Work with meat and drink, | | | 6. |
| Without meat and drink, | | | 12. |

[1] Plaiting. [2] Brushwood.

ii. *Wages Assessments and References to Assessments made by the Justices of the Peace*[1].

Norfolk. 9 H. VI. Assessment. Printed in *English Hist. Review*, Vol. XIII.

Northamptonshire, 1560. Assessment among Earl Spencer's MSS., *Hist. MSS. Commission*, II. Ap. 18. Cf. *Economic Journal*, II. 504 n.

Buckinghamshire, 1562. Assessment. *Economic Journal*, Vol. VIII. p. 343.

Rutland, 1564. Assessment. Bodleian, Arch. F. c. 11.

Lincoln (County of), 1564. Assessment in Queen's College, Oxford. Proclamation Book, fol. 77—79.

Southampton, 1564. Bodleian, Arch. F. c. 11, preamble of an Assessment.

Kingston-upon-Hull, 1570. Assessment. Dyson, Proclamation Book. Brit. Museum, G. 6463 (77).

Warwick (Town), 1586. Reference to the practice in *Book of John Fisher*, p. 156.

Chester, City of, 1591. Assessment. Thorold Rogers, *History of Agriculture and Prices*, Vol. VI. p. 685.

Yorkshire (East Riding), 1593. Assessment. Thorold Rogers, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI. 686[2].

Chester, City of, 1594. Assessment. Thorold Rogers, *op. cit.*, VI. p. 685.

Devonshire, 1594. Assessment. Hamilton, *Quarter Sessions Records*, p. 12.

Lancaster, 1595. Assessment. Thorold Rogers, *op. cit.* p. 689.

New Sarum, Wilts, 1595. Assessment in Proclamation Book, Queen's College, Oxford, f. 331.

Higham Ferrers, Northampton, 1595. Assessment in Proclamation Book, Society of Antiquaries.

Cardigan, 1595. Assessment in Dyson, *op. cit.* (331 B.).

London. Reference to almost continuous Assessment, made

[1] As to the rating of Wages by Gilds and Town Authorities, numerous examples are given of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in an article by Miss B. L. Hutchins: *The Regulation of Wages by Gild and Town Authorities. Economic Journal*, Vol. x. p. 404.

[2] In the year 1593 bills were drafted for regulating the wages of weavers and spinners by the piece. The assessment annexed was apparently intended to have statutable authority. S. P. D. El. CCXLIV. 129, 130.



from 1514 to 1607. E. A. McArthur: "Regulation of Wages in the Sixteenth Century," *Eng. Hist. Review*, Vol. XV., and also to assessments for other parts of the country, 1565, 1578, 1581, 1586, 1588, 1590, 1591, 1592, 1593, 1596.

Middlesex. Reference to Assessments in 17th century. See Miss E. A. McArthur, *op. cit.*, p. 455.

Wiltshire, 1602—85. Assessments and continuing orders. *Hist. MSS. Comm.* 1901, *Various Collections*, I. 161.

Yorkshire (North Riding), 1608. Reference to the existence of an Assessment, a gentleman being presented for giving higher wages than those fixed, *North Riding Record Society, Quarter Sessions Records*, ed. Atkinson, I. p. 148. A labourer was also presented at another Sessions (April), for refusing to work for such wages as the statute appointed, *ib.* II. 114, and another instance occurs in the following January, II. 141.

Yorkshire (North Riding), 1610. Two presentments. Vol. II. 202, 220, of men who refused to work at the statute rate testify to the existence of Assessments. A woman was also presented that year for giving too much wages, and two others for refusing to state the amounts their servants received, *ib.* II. 207.

Norfolk, 1610. Assessment. *Eng. Hist. Review*, XIII. p. 523.

Rutland, 1610. Assessment. Thorold Rogers, *op. cit.*, p. 691.

Yorkshire (North Riding), 1613. A man was presented for giving wages contrary to the Statute, *op. cit.*, II. p. 37.

Yorkshire (North Riding), 1614. A man was presented to the justices for refusing to work for statute wages.

Lincolnshire, 1619. Assessment among the MSS. of the Duke of Rutland, *Hist. MSS. Commission*, XII. Ap. iv., p. 455.

Lincolnshire, 1621. Assessment. *Hist. MSS. Commission*, XII. Ap. iv., p. 460.

Cambridge, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, 1630. The Council ordered Assessments to be made in a letter to the justices of these four counties, *English Hist. Review*, Vol. XIII.

Suffolk, 1630. Assessment. *English Hist. Review*, Vol. XII

Norwich, 1630 reported having made an Assessment to the Council, S. P. D. C. I. CLXXVI. 1.

St Albans, 1631. Assessment. Gibbs, *Corporation Records of St Albans*, p. 281.

Hertfordshire, 1631. Assessment. Clutterbuck, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Hertford*, I. p. xxii.

Derbyshire, 1634. Assessment. Cox, *Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals*, II. p. 239.

Yorkshire (North Riding), 1647. A man was presented for paying unreasonable wages to labourers contrary to the law, IV. p. 270.

Nottinghamshire (Mansfield), 1648. Reference to Assessment in George Fox's *Journal*, 1694 (p. 17).

Derbyshire, 1648. Assessment. Cox, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

Essex, 1651. Assessment. Thorold Rogers, *op. cit.*, VI. p. 696.

Devonshire, 1654. Assessment, Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

London, 1655. Assessment in British Museum, 21. h. 5 (61).

Yorkshire (North Riding), 1658. Assessment. *Quarter Sessions Records*, Vol. VI. p. 3.

Middlesex, 166–. Assessment in British Museum, 190. g. 13 (202). See p. 885 above.

Essex, 1661. Assessment. Thorold Rogers, *op. cit.*, VI. 697.

Worcestershire, 1663. Assessment. *Hist. MSS. Comm.* 1901, *Various Collections*, I. 323.

Yorkshire (North Riding), 1680. Reference to the justices having assessed wages, *op. cit.* VII. pp. 34, 45. 57 masters and their servants were presented in the January sessions for giving and receiving more wages than were rated. In the following sessions (18 January) five more masters were presented, and in April 1681 seven more cases were brought up.

Lincolnshire, 1680. Assessment. P. Thompson, *History of Boston*, p. 761.

Suffolk, 1682. Assessment Thorold Rogers, *op. cit.*, VI 698.

Warwickshire, 1684. Assessment. Thorold Rogers, *op. cit.*, p. 699.

Buckinghamshire, 1688. Assessment. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

Yorkshire (North Riding), 1692. Wages ordered to be republished as they were appointed and settled last year. *Quarter Sessions Records*, VII. p. 128.

Yorkshire (West Riding), 1703. Assessment. Thorold Rogers, Vol. VII. p. 610. This Assessment was re-issued in 1704, 1705, 1706, 1707, 1708, 1722.

Shropshire. Reference to Assessments in 1710, 1711, 1712. The Assessment of 1732 is given in full in *Economic Journal*, Vol. IV. p. 516. This was republished in 1733, 1734, 1735, 1738, 1739.

Devonshire, 1712. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 273.



Nottinghamshire, 1724. Assessment in British Museum, 1882. d. 2 (192).

Lancashire, 1725. *Annals of Agriculture*, XXV. p. 305.

Gloucestershire, 1727. *A State of the Case, &c. of the late Commotions* (1757), quoted by Hewins, *English Trade and Finance*, 160.

Kent, 1732. Assessment. Thorold Rogers, *op. cit.*, VII. p. 623.

Gloucester, 1732 Assessment. Id., *op. cit.*, Vol. VII. p. 610

Lincolnshire, 1754. Assessment. P. Thompson, *History of Boston*, p. 766.

The existence of 47 assessments is mentioned by Mr Hewins in his article on "The Regulation of Wages by the Justices of the Peace," in the *Economic Journal*, Vol. VIII. 344. As references are not given to the place and date of these assessments, it is difficult to say how far the instances he has collected coincide with those enumerated above. That they supplement the foregoing list to some extent is clear from the fact that it does not contain assessments from Cheshire, Colchester, Dorset and Somersetshire, though Mr Hewins has come across examples from these places.

# APPENDIX B.

## Enclosure and Depopulation, 1607.

The following paper, endorsed *A consideration of the cause in question before the Lords touchinge depopulation* and dated 5 July 1607, has been preserved among the Cottonian MSS. at the British Museum (Tit. F. IV. f 319). It appears to consist of memoranda for consideration by the Council in connection with the Northamptonshire riots. See above, pp. 102, 103.

JULY 5, 1607. A CONSIDERATION OF THE CAUSE IN QUESTION BEFORE THE LORDS TOUCHINGE DEPOPULATION.

In redresse of these offences. Inclosurs conuertinge of Arrable. *Depopulation* made the pretended causes of this last tumulte. 2 thinges may falle into consideration

**1** Whether the tyme be fitte to gyue remedie, when suche encouragement may moue the people to seeke redresse, by the like outrage, and therfore in Edw: the sixte his tyme the remedie was not pursued untill twoe Yeares after the rebellion of Kette.

**2** Whether these pretended be truly inconvenyent and therfore fitt to consider what iust reason may be alleaged for

**I** *Inclosures* w^ch^ are

1 *Securitie of state from*
- i fforraigne Invadors whoe cannot soe easelie marche spoile and forraye in an enclosed Countrie, as a Champion.
- ii *Domestike commotions* whiche Wilbe preuented when their false pretences (Inclosieurs w^ch^ they use *ad faciendum populum* ar taken awaye.

2 Increase of welthe and people proued
- i *A contrario*: the Nurseries of Beggars are Commons as appeareth by ffenns and fforests of Welthie people the enclosed Countries as *Essex Somersett Devon* &c: ffewell w^ch^ they want in the Champion, is supplied by Inclosures. And laborers, encreased as are their employments by Hedgeinge and ditcheinge.
- ii *A comparatis*: as *Northamptonshire* and *Somersett* the one most Champion, more ground, Litle Waste, the other all enclosed but inferiour in *quantitie* and *qualitie*: Yett by aduantage of seueraltie, and choice of employment exceedinge farre in

People for the Musters of

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Horses | *Northt.* | 20 lances | |
| | | 80 light horse | |
| | *Somersett* | 50 lances | |
| | | 250 light horse | |
| | | 60 petronells | |
| ffoote | *Northt.* | 600 trayned | |
| | | 600 untrayned | |
| | *Somerset* | 4000 trayned | |
| | | 12000 untrayned | |

Profitt or Welthe by the

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Subsidy | *Northt.* | 976^l^. 1^s^. 4^d^ |
| | *Somers* | 3832.12.10 |
| Fiftene | *Northt.* | 963. 0. 0 |
| | *Somers.* | 1138. 0. 0 |
| Tenths cler. | *Northt.* | 217^l^. 0. 0 |
| | *Somers* | 651. 0. 0 |

**II** Leaueinge the Imployment of the ground to discretion of the occupants: soe all the howses and Land may be maynteyned in severalle tenantries, Ingrosinge beinge truly the disease and not conuertinge wiche may be iustified for

1 *Equallitie*, for the Lawe of tillage haveinge Lefte Essex and many other Shires to their choice, and therby noe Inconvenience in the stat found, and that all Arguments alleaged for those Counties will infer as muche for the inland shires of *Northampton Leicester* &c. and because their situation soe remote from any porte or nauigable Ryuer (whearby the charge of carriage farre exceedinge the full worthe of the Corne they sell) leaueth to them a disaduantage only: it weare more iuste to gyue the free employeinge of their ground to suche Husbandrie as will reduce them to an equallitie of benefitt w^th^ the *Nauigable* shires, (w^ch^ is by graseinge (to w^ch^ their soyle is more fitte then other Counties) whearby the vent of suche *their Commodities shalbe more easie* beinge by drifte *and not by carriage.*

2 ffor the true ballanceinge of our beste commodities, Wolle and Corne (whearin the ouerwaight will appear in the Laste) ffor in Henr. the 8. his tyme wolle was the *Todde* vij^d^ and viij^d^. Barlye (the greatest grayne of the Inland shires) vi^d^ and viii^d^ the busheli the one is nowe vsually xxiiij^d^ the todde the other xviij^d^ and xx^d^ the strike Soe Wolle risen above 2 thirdes holdeth almoste a proportion w^th^ all other Comodities treble emproued by the encrease of moneys. And Corne Litle more then doble, is the reason of conuertinge arable to reduce the profites equall to the Husbandman, for keepinge the Land in diuided Tenantry. the good indiuiduall is the good generall: for Corne beinge dearer then Clothe or meat comparatively the Husbandman will plowe: since his only ende is profite. if equall or vnder noe reason to constraine him for that Lawe which divideth labor from profitte (as the Art of tillage) is that w^ch^ causeth the greate difference of the Welthes and abilities of severall shires as the ar oppressed with that *Statute.*

**III** *Depopulation* w^ch^ (as all other engrossement) admitteth noe defence doth iustlie moue a course of remedie w^ch^ muste be for

1 Redresse of what is alredy done either by
- i A newe Lawe (for the ould is defectiue and will hardly support an Information) And to reache to all is moste iust, since by noe reason *Antiquitie* ought to turne mischefe into conuenyencie, when it weare more fitte that he that by Longest offendinge hath done the most preiudice and receyued the beste benefitt, should in the punishment vndergoe the greatest Censure. And therfore it weare conuenyent to tye by Statut, all men to hould as their Demeasne not aboue the 4^th^ parte of any Mannour, the other 3 to be deuyded into tenements and noe one to exceede 100 Acres. And that noe man in the same parishe should keepe twoe such tenementts in his occupation

or
- ii By authoritie of Counsaill, as about the 9 of Henr. 7; 22 Henr. 8; and 4 or 5 of Ed: 6 when the offendors weare called uppe, and weare by order enioyned to reedifie, halfe as many in euery Mannour as they had decayed, and, became bound by recognisance as appeareth in the *Exchequor* in the case of *Andrews of Winwick* and others, from tyme to tyme to maynteyne soe many and soe much Land to them as they were ordered by the Lordes to doe.

or

2 Prevention of that to come. And that may best be to cause throughe the Champion Countries or the whole Kingdome suche a survey to be made by Commission as was 7° of Edw: the first retorned into the Chauncerie and at this daye called the Hundred Rolles expressenge what Lande is the Lordes Demeasne, and the particular nomber of all the howses and quantitie of Lande belonginge to them in euery Parishe in the Kingdome. That done to enioyne in euery Parishe by a newe Lawe that number to be maynteyned: and the *Judges* in their Circuits usually to enquire of all defaults thearin. And that uppon euery decaye or vnpeopleinge of any of those Howses recorded, and noe other w^th^in the space of one Yeare builded w^th^in the same Mannour or neare thear vnto w^th^ a like quantitie of ground annexed to it, it shalbe lawful for the Lord Tresorer and Barons of the *Exchequor* to Lease it for 21^ti^ Yeares only as a Mortmayne, and demise it for that tearme to the King's vse, and retorne it in charge into the *Exchequor.*

By redressinge the fault of *Depopulation* and Leaueinge encloseinge, and conuertinge arbitrable (*sic*) as in other shires the poore man shalbe satisfied in His ende; Habitation; and the gentleman not Hindred in his desier: Improuement. But as thear is now a Labour to sute out Dwellinges for as muche stocke of people as the Comon Wealth will beare it muste likewise be fitt, as good husbandes doe withe their groundes to prouide that you doe not over burthen it. But as they doe w^th^ their encrease remoue them to other places: soe must the state either by transferinge to the Warres or deduceinge of *Colonies* vent the daylie encrease that ells will surcharge the State: ffor if in London a place more contagious then the Countrye the nomber of Cristenings doth weekely by 40 exceede the burialls, and that the Countries proportionally doth equall if not outgoe that rate, It cannot be but that in this State, as in a full bodie theare must breake out Yearely tumors and Impostures as did of late.

# APPENDIX C.

## The Action of James I. and Charles I. in regard to Trade and the Colonies.
pp. 175, 176, 199, 343.

The question as to the success of the early Stuarts in their efforts to promote commerce and colonisation may give rise to much difference of opinion; it is at all events clear that an attempt to control the development of material progress by means of monarchical authority was not likely to be favourably received in the circumstances of the time. The following extracts may serve to show that whether the course they pursued in regard to trade and colonisation was wise or not, neither James I. nor Charles I. was wholly supine or careless in the matter. James I. contemplated the creation of a Council of Trade, and this idea was taken up by Charles I. It had for a time at least regular sittings at which His Majesty was present and himself made suggestions. Not merely was there this activity as regards trade; a special body of Lords Commissioners for the Plantations was created with full powers to control the development of newly settled lands beyond the seas.

i. *Letter of James I. to Commissioners of Trade, on the State of the Woollen Industry.* See above, p. 199. Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. 12,496, f. 113.

Right trustie and welbeloved Councellors and the rest. Wee greete you well.

Not long since, for the more quiet trade and Comerce within this our Kingdome. And for the better advauncement of our Customes, and the keeping of our subiects from Idlenes by restraining of the Woolles of this Realme from exportation and by draping of them all here at home, being the principall staple comoditie of this our Kingdom. Wee did direct a Commission to you touching the advauncement of Trade. And whilest you did attend the service required by that Commission wee founde many particular benefitts to arrise to us and our subiects thorough



your paines and endevors taken in that behalfe. As namely the increase of our Customes, the vent and sale of a greater bulke of Cloth than formerlie was vented. The price of the Woolles risen in many of our Counties to 4$^s$ and 5$^s$ in a Todd more then it was wont to be solde for. The poore Clothiers and Clothworkers were then freed and disburdened of many vexatious and chargeable Suites brought against them by troublesom Informers and Aulnagers. And our Marchants incouraged and perswaded by your care to buy up clothes in a rounder and greater proportion than they were accustomed to doe. But for so much as wee are now given to understand that since you gave over your sitting upon the sayd Commission many things are much out of Frame. The woolles are weekely and familiarly transported into France Holland and other forreine parts to the decay of our Customes and of the quantitie of cloth which was wont to be made yearlie here. Our Clothiers and Clothworkers disquieted and troubled, by unjust suites comenced against them, by Informers, Aulnagers and many other greate disorders and abuses committed by sundrie persons since you neglected your Attendance uppon the said Commission. Theis are therefore to will and require you all delayes and excuses sett aparte, to meete constantlie once a Weeke at Haberdashers Hall about this Commission of Trade. For wee hold it necessarie to keepe that Commission still afoote, seeing nothing can concerne the welfare of our Revenue in point of our Customes more than the due execution thereof. Besides new Accidents doe daylie and ordinarilie befall in matters of Trade which cannot be well reformed or remedied without your travaile and paynes to execute that Commission. And weekely to consult and conferr together how to cutt off all mischiefes and inconvenience which are alreadie crept in or shall hereafter come to your knowledge. So expecting your attendance and care hearunto, And also to acquaint us from time to time with your proceedings herein wee bidd you heartilie farewell.

Given at our Court at Newmarket the 23$^{rd}$ of Januarie 1624.

To our right trustie and welbeloved Cosen and Councellor Henry Vicecount Mandevile President of our priuie Councell and to our right trustie and right welbeloved Councellors Fulke, Lord Brooke, Sir John Suckling Knight Comptroller of our Household Sir George Caluert Knight one of our principall Secretaries Sir Julius Cæsar Knight Maister of the Rolles and to our trustie and welbeloved the rest of our Commissioners for Trade.

ii. *Instructions to the Council of Trade under Charles I.* See p. 175 n. 3. S. P. D., C. I. XLIV. 20.

Whereby a Committee, Lately chosen; Wee have bene certefyed of the diverse and severall causes of the decaye of trade and commerce within our severall domynions, with the remedyes thereof amongst which it was conceived that a standinge Committee of select persons of quallitie, to whom the subiect in cases of difference, disorder, practise and combynacion of trades and artifycers impedymentinge the prosperitie of the kingdome, might haue reference unto, Is both usefull and of necessytie ffor the orderly gouerninge and Ballancinge of trade and redye reformacion of any matter or cause repugnant to, or interruptinge the same ffor which purpose wee have assigned etc. Authorising them to consyder and examyne the seuerall causes of the aforesaid decaye and how the Native Comodities improvinge the revenue of the Land may be vented, the people upon Manufactories or otherwise imployed, and the Nauie by traffique and Commerce increased or any matter, cause, or thinge conducinge to all or any the premisses before specifyed, with power by informacion or otherwise to summon by warrant under theire hands or any VI of them any person or persons knowne, suspected or pryvie to the transportacon of any Woolle, Wooll-fells, Wollen yarne, Fullers earth woad ashes or any other Materyall incident to the makinge of Cloth or other Manufactories, Inhibited by any Lawe or proclamacon; and upon such theire examynacon and conviction, they shalbe by the said Comissioners, turned over to our Attorney Generall to be proceeded against for such their contempt in our high Courte of Starr Chamber And all other persons, in any cases wherein the said Commissioners shall require shall redylie assist and perform such theire orders and directions.

And for the avoyding of Confederacies and combynacions incydent by contynuance of tyme amongst Merchants in Companyes and Corporacions they shall by like authorite survey all such orders and institutions alredy made or hereafter to be made, and the same not to be put in execution without the allowance and approbacion of the said Comissioners: the greater number or any VI of them, in case the said ordynances and Instrucions tend more to the pryvate then publike good, and with like power to consyder how farr the said societies are fitt to be enlarged in Number of traders, As also of vendible returnes for the Eastland Merchants in recouerye of that and the like lost trades. And



how mony the principall thinge whereof our kingdomes neede may be imported and contynued within the same for the redye ballancinge of Comodities in Commerce betweene man and man And further to bringe the Cloth and other the Woollen Manufactories into theire ancyent Credite and estymacion they shall out of the many Lawes alredye made, recollect soe much at present usefull with supply of further observacions and directions incydent to the true makeing, dyeing and dressing as well for the new draperyes as the owld And for that nothinge cann be more hurtfull to any Merchant or tradesman then the wastfull exspence of mony and tyme attendinge litigious suites, in prevention whereof any VI of the said Commissioners nominyated and chosen shall heare and determyne all such differences arising betweene the Wooll grower, Clothyer and Merchant not exceeding the some of 200£ restinge due or in demand either from other unlesse by joynt assent and agreement of all parties from whose sentence noe appeale to be admitted, otherwise they shall only proceed to heare and certefye and for their better informacion and discouverye of the truth in the proceedings herein, they shall examyn upon oath witnesses or parties themselues who uppon notice by warrant as before said shall give them.....

1. That not any Woolls etc. be carryed or transported to any the partes beyond the seas out of his Majesties domynions of England, Scotland or Ireland or any the Isles or Ports thereof And in case Irelande have more then they cann indrape they shall bring them to [ ] there to be stapled, And for the redye vent of the Scottish woolles in respect they have not the use of Manufactory they shall bring them either in wooll or yarne to [ ] there to receive in barter for them Cloth with Libertie to carrye them wheresoever they please paying the ordynarye duties due therin.

2. That Blackes at funeralls be in Cloth and stuffes of English wooll made within the Kingdome.

3. That such Cloth and Stuffes as apprentices servants and labourers doe weare be of English wooll made within the Kingdome.

4. That huswives make not Cloth other then for their owne spending but not to sell to the discouragement of the Clothyer and the Draper.

5. That all false dyeing stuffes be banished and not used in Cloth or Stuffs.

iii. *Minutes of the Committee of Trade.* S. P. D., C. I., CCLXXXIII. 13. p. 176 n.

5 Feb. 1634. His Majesty present.

1. To consider of the booke of Rates.
2. Imposition upon horses.
3. Imposition upon Corne especially Branks.
4. Imposition upon Raw silkes or English manufacturing of it and the law against strangers the manufactors to be Considered of.
5. Improvement upon salt.
6. Retribution of custom and impost to be regulated.
7. Wine 20$^{s}$ per tonn.
8. Groates and threepenies.
9. Refiners of siluer to be suppressed.

The 14 Feb. 1634. His Majesty present.

Mr Serjeant Heath read at the boord a paper of the proposicion of salt, in which among other things it was desired that the salt of Scotland might be limited to the quantity (heere imported) and the price as in former times, of which particular his Majesty comanded a paper by itselfe to be given him, and approved the busines in generall and ordered

1. Letters from the boord to such as had panns and must be compounded with.
2. Defalcacion of imposition in case of disturbance by Warrs etc.
3. The measure Winchester gallons the manner of measuring to be enquired.
4. The price 2$^{s}$ per bushell.
5. A corporacion desired.

[Concern]ing Tobacco. The Lord Treasurer propounded the garbling of Tobacco: ordered the fermors to be spoken with.

The Lord Treasurer acquainted the boord that the fermors complained that the merchants pay them not the custom because the wines are not taken by the vintners. Upon debate it was propounded that the Vintners might have liberty to victuall again paying to his Majesty something upon the consumption of Wyne which was left to the Lord Treasurer to treate his Majestie and the Lordes well approving for the present.



The Lord Privy Seale moued the business to Mr Evelin one of the 6 Clerkes, and thereupon it was debated if the busines of the 6 Clerkes should be compounded. His Majesty resolued that if they wold all compound, the Lord Treasurer shold treate with them all.

21 Feb. 1634. His Majesty present.

Certaine demands of the Company of Vintners presented by the Lord Treasurer for dressing of meate, selling Tobacco, free buying without forestalling, lessening the nomber of licenses as they shall fall voide, etc.

1. Victualling with moderation etc. not disliked.
2. Tobacco as it may stand with his Majesty's proffit.
3. Regrating or reselling of wine aproued.
4. No more licenses, but diminished as they fall. The nomber not to be increased.

for which fauors it is reported to the boord they will pay the King £6000 presently and for hereafter be regulated (by way of setting the price) to pay what shalbe thought fitting to his majesty upon every Tonne.

Resolued that the £6000 shalbe taken with some engagement from the Company before the Lord Treasurer the Lord Cottington and Secretary Windebank to pay the next yeere what shalbe thought fitting upon the Consumption of Wyne. His Majestie required some aduise touching the cause now in hearing about the Londoners plantations in Ireland.

2 Mar. 1634.

Agreed the Vintners shall have leaue to victuall by connivance (by way of probacion) for one yeere, forbidding venson partridges fesants etc.

The Lord Keeper declared to the Company his Majesties pleasure to this effect and so it was resolved:

His Majestie brought a paper to the boord concerning malting, and commanded Mr Attorney to reade it. The project is the makeing the maltsters a Corporacion and regulating the nomber. Those that are to be licensed, to pay 4$^{d}$ or 6$^{d}$ upon the quarter to his Majesty.

When it was demanded what way was fitt to be helde to be[gin] the worke: Mr Attorney answered that diuers have allredy m[ade] voluntary offers to that ende by petition. Wherupon it was resolued that those who have petitioned shalbe

instantly delt with, that the speediest course may be taken for execution: to which ende the Lord Cottington and Mr Attorney are to confer with the parties that sollicit.

14 Mar. 1634. His Majesty present.

The Lord Cottington and Mr Attorney related to the boord the conferences they haue had with Maltsters, and how they offered fines and rentes to be incorporated. Whereupon it was resolued to wait the coming of others out of Yorkshire and then to propound the raising so much upon the quarter.

Manufacture of cardes heere in England to be proposed the Committee.

24 Mar. 1634. His Majesty present.

Salt. The proposition of Murford concerning salte was represented and himselfe came in person.

For the aduancing of this proiect of salt, lent and fasting daies to be strictly obserued.

An act of state to be made that no licences be granted to butchers from the Lords or others of the Counsell.

Malte. A letter drawn by Mr Attorney and now read from their Lordships to the Justices of peace of seuerall counties or to any 2 of them in every diuision to certify the boord what maltsters there are and what nomber fitt to be allowed.

The Lord Cottington made reporte of these particulars following:

The business of the booke of Rates referred to the next session by reason of the indisposicion of S$^{r}$ Abraham Dawes.

Order to be given touching institution of imposicion 13. monethes to be giuen because the East India Company have the like time the order to be drawne by Mr Attorney.

Horses. 40$^{s}$ to be paid for every horse transported and £5 for every mare: this £5 was moued by the King himselfe.

Seacole. The custom abated for Jersey Gernesy Ireland and the poore of London by which the King looses a greate reuenue; the abatement is 12$^{d}$ upon the Caldron in an order to be given to the customers not to give way to this defalcacion 10,000 chaldron of this abated for the poore of London: the King will know whether the poore have really the benefit heerof: the L. Privy Seale gave some account of the well employment of this to the poore of London. Ordered that a certificate be made hereof by the City.



Lead. 20$^{s}$ to be laid upon a fether of lead exported.

Cardes. Cost the King 7 or £800 per ann. out of his purse: the King paid 2/ upon every grosse of cardes: the King receives £50 per ann. and looses £800 the customers forbidden to abate this custom.

Brankes: french wheate to be deported paying 3/4 the quarter.

Magazins of corne in seuerall townes to be considered of.

Irish hides to be marked that they may be transported again as heretofore English hides transported with them here to fore: which abuse hath interrupted this trade and his Majesty looses much by it in his customs.

6 Apr. 1634. His Majesty present.

S$^{r}$ Abraham Dawes delivered his opinion: as much to be sett generally upon all as the impost is allredy which is 5 per cent: whereas his Majestie hath 10 per cent he shall have 15. It will come to betweene 30 and 40 thousand.

His Majesty's subiects in Spaine pay after 30 per cent.

The Lord Keeper proposed that the imposition might be raised rather upon such commodities as come from those nations who lay greatest upon ours, than upon others; but this his Majestie approved not.

S$^{r}$ Abr. Dawes represented that by laying no imposition upon raw silk in K. James time which was done to bring in the manufacture into England: looseth now 15 thousand per ann at the least by reason of the stuffes made here which were wont to be brought from Forain partes. But now that manufacture is managed by aliens and strangers only, and not his Majestie's subiects. To remedy this, an imposicion to be laid upon every loome and to that ende. To know how many strangers loomes there are in England.

A note to be delivered by S$^{r}$ Abr. Dawes as well of these things that are not rated as those that are underrated.

A Privy Seale for renewing the book of rates.

In France they have raised 15 per cent.

To have it generall over all nations as it is in Spaine.

The Lord Privy Seale made a doubt whether this will not decay trade: S$^{r}$ Abraham Dawes assured not.

Besides the merchant will sell his commodity so much the deerer and we are yet under the rate of other nations for the imposicions: especially Spain which is 30 per cent.

Lead. Leade and the ore of it, the transportacion of it to be considered of by Dawes and an answer made by him upon Thursday even sevenight being 16 April Dawes to be admonished to keepe those imposicions secret till his Majestie communicate them to the whole boord and an act of State be made of it. This my Lord Marshall proposed.

Salt. Salt to be considered of by the Committee tomorrow.

Malt. Malt. Mr Dickinson assoured the letters are sent away.

Messengers. The Messingers that failed in the service of the shipping. Mr Attorney gave accompt he hath them in the Star Chamber some of them in the meantime to be suspended.

The Retribution imposicion: the 13. moneths to be understood calendary moneths which are but 12.

Young Cæsar having an offer from his Majesty to have a new grant of the place of one of the six clerkes, but he refused it to the Lord Cottington, and will stand upon the validity of his old patent; an act of state to be made of his refusall Another act of state to be read concerning the rightes of the places of the Six Clerks as they are now settled.

The maritim Countres to be brought into the contribution for shipping the next yeere. The next contributions to be made more equall.

Cardes: the King to be sole merchant of them: and to sell them for 9$^{d}$ the paire. The defalcacion of the 800 per annum allredy setled. Dice in like manner to be sealed and the King the sole merchant. Accompt of this at the next meeting.

Irish hides marking: respited.

16 Aprill 1635. His Majesty present.

The Lord Cottington reported to his Majesty the business of the powder.

His Majesty was pleased to tell us that S$^{r}$ Ar: Mannering and Pitkairne will serve powder within halfe a yeere for so much time of respit they desire at 8$^{d}$ per lb.

Ev: Newport and Sir Jo: Haydon offer to make it with a stock, at 7$^{d}$ the pound.

Six one and one is six parts of saltpeeter one of cole and one of brimstone. If upon his Majesty's stock of £4000 the Earl of Newport and Sir Joh. Heydon will serve it for 7$^{d}$, if upon their owne stock they will serve for 8$^{d}$.



Evelin to furnish powder at 8$^{d}$ for six months after the contract ended 16 last the month. Mr Attorney ordered to call upon Evelin and see this performed.

Two of these saltpetermen that S$^{r}$ John Heydon hath undertaken for, have milles.

Salt. Mr Comptroller gave accompt of what he had done with Murford.

iv. *The Colonial Commission of Charles I.* (S. P. Colonial, VIII. 13). See p. 343 n. 1.

A Commission for the making Lawes and Orders for Government of English Colonies planted in Forraigne parts. 28 Apr. 1634.

Charles by the grace of God King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith etc.

To the most reverend Father in Christe our well beloved and most faithfull Counsellor William by divine providence Archbishop of Canterbury of all England Primat and Metropolitan our well beloved and most faithfull Counsellor Thomas Lord Coventrye Lord Keeper of our Greate Seale of England The most reverend father in Christe our wellbeloved and most faithfull Counsellor Richard by Divine providence Archbishop of Yorke of England primate and Metropolitan our well beloved and most faithfull Cozens and Counsellors Richard Earl of Portland our high Treasurer of England, Henry Earle of Manchester Keeper of our privie Seale Thomas Earle of Arundell and Surry Earle Marshall of England Edward Earle of Dorsett Chamberlin to our most dear consort the Queene And to our beloved and faithfull Counsellors Frauncis Lord Cottington Chancellor and under Treasurer of our Exchequer Sir Thomas Edmonds Knight Treasorer of our Howsehold Sir Henry Fane knight Controller of the same howsehold Sir John Coke knight one of our priuie Secretaries and Sir Francis Windebank knight one other of our priuie Secretaries greeting.

Whereas very manie of our Subiects and of our late fathers of beloved memorie our Soveraigne Lord James, late king of England by meanes of license Royall: Not only with desire of inlarging the Territories of our Empire, But cheifely out of a pious and religious affection and desire of propagating the Gospell of our Lord Jesus Christe with great industry and expenses have caused to be planted large Colonies of the English nation in

divers parts of the world altogether unmanured and voyd of Inhabitants or occupied of the Barbarous people that have no knowledge of divine worship. Wee being willing gratiously to provide a remedy for the tranquility and quietnes of those people And being very confident of your faith wisdome justice and provident circumspection have constituted you the aforesaid Arch bishop of Canterbury [names repeated] and anie five or more of you our Commissioners and to you and anie five or more of you Wee doe give and committ power for the Government and safegard of the said Colonies drawne or without of the English Nation hereafter into those parts shalbe drawne To make lawes constitutions and ordinances pertaining either to the publike State of those Colonies or to the private proffit of them And concerning the lands goods debts and succession in those partes And how they shall demeane themselves against and towards forraigne Princes and theire people, or how they shall beare themselves towards us and our subiects as well in anie forraigne parte whatsoever or on the Seas in those parts or in theire retorne sailing home Or which may appertaine to the maintenance of the Clergi government or the Cure of Soules amongst the people living and exercising trade in those partes by designing out congruent porcions ariseing in Tithes oblations and other things there according to your sound discretions in politicall and Civile causes. And by haueing the advise of two or three Bishops for the settling makeing and ordering of the business for designing out necessarie Ecclesiasticall and Clergi portions, which you shall cause to be called and taken to you. And to make provision against the violators of those lawes constitutions and ordinances by imposing of penalties and mulcts imprisonment if therebe cause and that the qualitie of the offence do require it by deprivation of member or life to be inflicted. With power also our assent being had to remove and displace the Governors or Rulers of those Colonies for causes which to you shall seeme lawfull and others in theire steed to constitute. And to require an accompt of theire Rule and Government And whome you shall finde culpable either by deprivation from the place or by imposition of a mulct upon the goods of them in those partes to be levied or banishment from those Provinces in which they haue bin Governors or otherwise to chastice according to the quantitie of the fault, And to constitute Judges and magistrates politicall and civile for civile causes and under the power and forme which to you five or more of you



shall seeme expedient And to ordaine Judges Magistrates and Dignities to causes Ecclesiasticall and under the Power and forme which to you five or more of you with the bishops vicegerents (provided by the Archbishop of Canterbury for the time being) shall seeme expedient And to ordaine Courts Pretorian and Tribunall as well ecclesiasticall as Civile of Judgments To determine of the formes and manner of proceedings in the same and of appealing from them in matters and causes as well criminall as Civile personall reale and mixt, and to the seats of Justice what maie be equally and wellordered and what crimes faults or excesse of contracts or iniuries ought to belong to the Ecclesiasticall Courts and what to the Civile Court and seate of Justice.

Provided neverthelesse that the lawes ordinances and constitutions of this kinde shall not be put in execution before our assent be had thereunto in writing under our signet signed at least. And this assent being had and the same publikly proclaimed in the Provinces in which they are to be executed wee will and command that those lawes ordinances and constitutions more fully to obtaine strength and be confirmed shalbe inviolably observed of all men whome they shall concerne. Notwithstanding it shalbe lawfull for you five or more of you (as is aforesaid) although those lawes constitutions and ordinances shalbe proclaimed with our Royall assent To change revoake and abrogate them and other new ones in forme aforesaid from tyme to tyme to frame and make as is aforesaid. And to new evills arising or dangers to applie new Remedies as is fitting so often as to you it shall seeme expedient. Furthermore you shall understand that we have constituted you and every five or more of you the aforesaid etc. [names as before]...our Commissioners to heare and determine according to your sound discretions all manner of Complaintes either against those Colonies or their Rulers or governors at the instance of the partie greived or at the accusation brought concerning iniuries from hence or from thence to be moved betweene them and theire members, and to call the parties before you and to the parties or theire procurators from hence or from thence being heard The full complement of Justice to be exhibited. Giving unto you and to anie five or more of you Power, That if you shall finde anie of the Colonies aforesaid or anie of theire cheife Rulers upon the Jurisdiction of others by uniust possession or usurpation or one against an other making greivance or in Rebellion against us by withdrawing from our allegiance or our

mandates not obeyinge consultation in that case with us first had. To cause these Colonies or the Rulers of them for the causes aforesaid or for other just causes either to retorne to England or to command them to other places designed even as according to your sound discretions it shall seeme to stand with equitie Justice or necessitie. Moreover wee doe give unto you or anie five or more of you Power and speciall command over all the charters letters Patents and rescripts Royall of the Regions provinces Islands or Lands in forraigne partes graunted raising colonies To cause them to be brought before you and the same being reviewed If aniething surreptitively or unduly have bin obtayned, or that by the same privilege Liberties or Prerogatives hurtfull to us or our Crowne or to forraigne Princes have bin preiudicially suffered or graunted The same being better made knowne unto you five or more of you To command them according to the lawes and customes of our Realme of England to be revoaked And to doe such other things which to the government proffit and safeguard of the aforesaid colonies and of our subiects resident in the same shalbe necessarie And therefore wee doe command you that about the premisses at daies and tymes which for those affaires you shall make provision That you be diligent in attendance as it becometh you.

Giving in precept also and firmly inioyning Wee do give command unto all and singular Cheife Rulers of Provinces unto which the Colonies aforesaid have bin drawne or shalbe drawne and concerning the Colonies themselves and concerning others that haue anie interest therein That they doe give attendance upon you and be observant and obedient unto your warrants in those affaires as often as and even as in our name they shalbe thereunto required at theire perill. In testimonie whereof we have caused these our letters to be made patent Witnesse ourselfe at Westminster the 28th day of Aprill, in the tenth yeare of our Raigne. 1634.

by writ from the privy Seale

WILLYS.



# APPENDIX D.

## Colonial and Commercial Administration under Charles II. p. 200.

i. *Instructions for the Councell of Trade.* S. P. D., C. II., xxi. 27.

1. You shall take into your Consideracion the Inconueniences which the English Trade hath suffered in any partes beyond the Seas And are to inquire into such Articles of former Treaties as haue byn made with any Princes or States in relacion to Trade and to drawe out such observacions and Resolucions from thence as may be necessary for us to advise or insist uppon in any forraigne Leagues or Allyances that such Evills as haue befallen these our Kingdomes through want of good informacion in those great and publick concernments may be provided against in time to come.

2. You are to consider how and by whome any former Articles or Treaties have byn neglected or violated What new Capitulacions are necessary either to the freedome of Sale of your Commodities of all sorts as to price and payment; to the best expedicion of Justice to the recovery of debts or to the security of Estates of all ffactors and theire Principalls in case of the ffactors death or to the prevencon of those Interrupcions which the Trade and Navigacion of our Kingdomes have suffered by Imbargoes of fforreigne Princes or States or impresting the Shipps of any of our subiects for theire service.

3. You are to consider well the interest of all such Trades as are or shallbe incorporated by our Royall Charters And what jurisdictions are necessary to be obtained from such as are or shallbe in allyance with us for the more regular managment and government of the Trade and of the Members of those our Corporacions in fforraigne ffactories.

4. You are to consider of the seuerall Manufactures of these our Kingdoms how and by what occacions they are corrupted debased and disparadged And by what probable meanes they may be restored and maintained in theyre Auntient goodness and Reputacion And how they may be farther improved to theyre

utmost advantage by a just Regulacion and Standard of Weight Length and breadth that so the Privat and proffitt of the Tradesmen or Merchants may not destroy the Creditt of the Commoditie and thereby render it neglected and unvended abroad to the Great Loss and Scandall of these our kingdomes.

5. You are also to take into your Consideracion all the Native Commodities of the growth and producion of these our kingdomes and how they may be ordered nourished increased and manufactured to the imployment of our people and to the best advantage of the Publick.

6. You are specially to consider of the whole business of the ffishings of these our kingdomes or any other of our distant Dominions or Plantacions, and to consult of some effectuall meanes for the reinforceing encourageing and encreaseing and for the regulateing and carrying on of the Trade in all the partes thereof to the end that the people and Stock and Navigacon of these our kingdomes may be imployed therein; and our Neighbours may not be enriched with that which so properly and advantageously may be undertooke and carried on by our owne Subiects.

7. You are seriously to consider and inquire whether the importacion of forraigne Commodities do not overbaleance the exportacion of such as are native And how it may be so ordered remedied and preparationed that we may haue more Sellers then buyers in every parte abroad.

And that the Coyne and present Stock of these our kingdomes may be preserved and increased, We judging that such a Scale and Rule of proportion is one of the highest and most prudenciall points of Trade by which the Riches and Strength of our Kingdomes may be maintayned.

8. You are to consider and examine by what wayes and meanes other Nacions doe preferr theyre owne growth Manufactures and Importacions and doe discourage and suppress those of these our Kingdomes and how the best Contrivances and Managment of Trade exercised by other Nacions may be rendered applicable and practicable by these our Kingdomes.

9. You are well to consider all matters of Navigacion and to the increase and the securitie thereof.

10. You are throughly to consider the severall matters relateing to money how Bullion may be best drawne in hither and how any obstrucons uppon our Mint may be best removed.



11. You are to consider the Generall State and Condicon of our fforeigne Plantacions and of the Navigacion Trade and seuerall Comodities ariseing thereuppon and how farr theire future improvement and prosperity maybe advanced by any discouragment Imposition or Restraint uppon the importacion of all goods or Comodities ariseing thereuppon and how farr theyre future improvement and prosperity may be advanced by any discouragment Imposicion or Restraint uppon the importacion of all goods or Comodities with which these Plantacions doe abound and may supply these our Kingdomes And you are allso in all matters wherein our forraigne Plantacions are concerned to take advice or Informacion (as occason shall require) from the Councell appointed and sett apart by us to the more perticuler inspeccion Regulacion and Care of our forraigne Plantations.

12. You are to consider how the transportacion of such things may be best restreined and prevented as are either forbidden by the Lawe or may be inconvenient or of disadvantage by being transported out of these our Kingdomes and Dominions.

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(*Endorsed*) Instructions for the Councell of Trade annexed to theire Commission.

ii. *Proceedings of the Council of Trade.* (S. P. D., C. II., xxxi. 62—64.) By his Majesties Councell of Trade.
Thursday 3rd Janry 1660.

The Right Honble the Lord Roberts Reports the delivery of a Paper to his Majesty from this Councell conteyneing theyre opinion and advice in the matter concerning the Exportation of forreine Coyne and Bullyon And that it was his Majesties Pleasure that all future addresses should be made by this Councell should be presented either by a Lord of his Majesties Privy Councell present when the Matters were debated Or otherwise in the absence of such Lord They should be delivered into the hands of one of his Majesties Principall Secretaryes of State by the Secretary attending this Counsell to the end they may come safe to his Majesties handes. Uppon Reading of the third Article of his Majesties Instruccions annexed to the Commission by which this Councell is established which directeth this Councell to consider of all such Trades as are or shallbe incorporated by his Majesties Charters and what Jurisdictions are

necessary to be obteyned from such as are or shallbe in allyance with his Majesty for the more regular Management and Government of the Trade and of the members of such Corporacions and forreigne factoryes Ordered that it be read again Thursday 10 of Jan. and that the Merchant Adventurers of England do in the meane tyme bring in theyre Charter.

Report was this day made by the Committee in the busines concerning the Trade of the Merchants of London into the East Indyes.

Ordered that it be reported to his Majesty by the Lord Roberts.

The Business concerning free Portes moved and ordered to be resumed that day seavenight.

The Petition of diuers Workemen who have provided necessaryes for this Councell and want theire money read and committed.

Tuesday, Jan. 8th 1660.

The right Honble the Lord Brouncher Reports the delivery of Certayne Papers from this Councell conteyneing theyre opinion and humble advice to his Majesty uppon the Petition of the Merchant Adventurers concerning the States of the United Provinces of the Netherlands for theyre Breach of Articles uppon severall Treatyes to Sr Edward Nicholas Kt one of his Majesties Principall Secretaryes of State to be presented to his Majesty.

Uppon informacion given to this Councell of great deceipts used in the weights and standards of gold and silver Ordered that it be referred to the Committee to examyne the severall weights and standards of the Exchequer the Tower of London and of Goldsmiths hall And to call before them such of the officers of the Minte and other persons and to send for such Papers Books and Records as may be usefull to them And to report to this Councell what they find.

A Petition from severall Merchants Clothyers and others of Exon and Devon complayneing against the Company of Merchant Adventurers of England for ingrossing that Trade and for imposeing many restrictions and interrupcions uppon the Makers of Wollen Manufactures was now presented and read And thereuppon Ordered That the debate heereof be resumed on this day seavenight and that Mr Doncaster by whome this Petition do then attend this Cooncell.



Ordered that this Cooncell be adiourned to some more Convenient place and that the Secretary of this Cooncell do endeauour to provide the same and report therein to this Cooncell this day seven night.

The debate concerning Free Portes beeing now entred uppon it was after some tyme spent therein Ordered That it be referred to the Committee to consider and report how many free Portes may be fitt to be made in his Majesties Domynions and in what place how the same may be effected and under what Rules of Regulation and Government.

Uppon a Debate concerning Convoys for Merchants att Sea Ordered That it be referred to the Committee to Consider and report how many Convoys will be necessary to be setled and in what places to be constantly attending and to digest such a forme and modell of Government therein as may be fitt for this Cooncell to propose to his Majesty therein.

Thursday the 10th Jany 1660.

According to former Order Mr Squibb appeard before this Councell and brought with him and presented the same to this Cooncell diuers Papers conteyneing a Report from a former Comittee of the Abuses used and of the wayes and meanes by which to improue the Manifactures of this kingdome, the Consideracion whereof is referred to the Comittee who are desyred to report what may be fitt for this Councell to offer to his Majesty therein.

Ordered that the Charter of the Merchant Adventurers be brought into this Counsell and there Contynue till farther Order.

Day beeing prayed for the bringing of it in and granted but not brought in further day prayed and not brought in.

Upon a mocion that before the Treaty with the King of Denmark be concluded some express provision may be made for his Majesties men of Warr to pass through the Sound into the Baltique Sea. That the Dane be desyred to resigne Trincombe Barr And that a free Trade may be given by that King to the English into Island. Ordered that it be referred to the Committee to consider and report therein to this Counsell which report is now reddy.

Uppon a mocion made that Banckes may be sett up in England as in Holland and of the great advantage that ensew to

his Majesty therby Ordered that it be referred to the Committee to consider and report heerin to this Counsell.

Uppon a debate of Corporacions uppon the third Article of his Majestyes instructions Ordered that letters be written by this Cooncell to the Merchants of all the Outports giveing them notice of the Incorporacion of the Spanish and Portugall Merchants And that it be referred to the Committee to Consider and Report therein to this Cooncell.

Thursday 17th Janʸ 1660.

There was now presented to this Cooncell his Majesties Order of reference uppon the Petition of Mr Squibb with certayne Papers thereunto annexed conteyneing a Report of the Causes of the decay of the Vent of our English Clothes and Certaine Remedyes to prevent the same which beeing read It was thereuppon

Ordered that it be referred to the Committee to consider of the perticulers thereof and to Report what may be fitt for this Cooncell to present to his Majesty therein.

There was allso this day presented to this Cooncell A Petition from diuers Clothyers and others of the Citty of New Sarum complayneing of the decay of theyre Trade by the importacion of Dutch Cloth and praying that the ymportacion thereof maybe prohibited soch Petition beeing read it was thereuppon very much debated and Ordered That it be referred to the Comittee who are to consider thereof and to report theyre Opinions to this Cooncell.

For the more speedy dispatch of Business Ordered That there be only one Committee of this Cooncell to make Inspeccion into all matters brought before this Cooncell and to prepare them for the Cooncells Debate.

Ordered that the Coonsayle sitt only uppon Thursdayes in the afternoone till farther Order.

Ordered uppon debate of the business concerning Convoys That the officers of his Majestyes Navy be desyred to be att this Cooncell on Tuesday next.

Uppon debate of the business concerning Charters It was this day ordered That the Merchant Adventurers Charter brought into this Cooncell by former Order be referred to the Committee.

Ordered uppon the Petition of diuers Workemen and others who haue provided necessaryes for this Cooncell that it be referred



to the Comittee to consider and report how money may be raysed for payment of them.

Thursday 24th Janʸ 1660.

A Petition recommended to this Cooncell by the right Honrble the Lord high Treasurer conteyneing the desyres of diuers Merchants Factors and others for the setling of a Composition trade in Dover as formerly was this day read And after very much debate therein Ordered that it be referred to the Committee who are desyred to consider thereof and to report theyre opinions what may be fitt for this Cooncell to present to his Lordship as theyre opinion therein.

Ordered that untill the Causes now depending before this Cooncell be fully heard and determyned That no new Causes or matters be taken into Consideracion except such as relate to forreigne Treatyes or shall Come recomended to this Cooncell by his Majesties speciall order.

Uppon a mocion now made That a Peremptory day may be assigned for a full debate of the Merchant Adventurers Charter and the Constitution and Practice of that Fellowship Ordered That it be the next matter to be debated after those now depending shall be heard.

This day 7 night Peremptory is given to Mr Doncaster to make good the matters conteyned in a Petition by him presented to this Cooncell in the name of certeyne Clothyers and others of Exōn and Devon complayneing against the Merchant Adventurers Charter for beeing a Monopoly of the Trade of Cloth.

A list of the nomber of Shipps and of the severall Portes and places att which they should be constantly attending for the Convoy of Merchants was read and agreed to in parte and

Ordered that before it be presented to his Majesty or that this Cooncell deliuer any possitive opinion therein That it be referred to the Comittee to reduce the nomber and in respect of his Majesties great Charge and small receipts of his Revennue to lessen the Charge as much as may be and that such a nomber be only proposed as shall be necessary for the present and Convenyent for his Majesty to allow to that purpose.

Uppon reading of a Petition from the Governour Assistants and Fellowship of the Merchants of Eastland Complayneing against the Swede for Monopoliseing of Pitch and Tarr and for

venting the same att excessiue rates and under hard Restricions to the English

Ordered That it be referred to the Comittee to report therein together with those other matters that are before them concerning the Swede.

There was now brought in, read and allowed a Report from the Comittee in relacion to the King of Denmarke and desyreing That in this Treaty with that Kinge That it may be insisted uppon That free Passage may be allowed to his Majesties Men of Warr through the Sound That a Port called Trinicombe Barr if that King incline to parte with it may not be Disposed of by that King but to the English East India Company they giveing reasonable satisfacion for the same And That the English may have a free Trade into Island. All which beeing assented unto

Ordered That it be forthwith Reported to his Majesty as the Opinion and advise of this Cooncell And that the Lord Broonker and Mr Anthony Ashley Cooper be desyred to present the same accordingly.

Uppon debate of a Petition formerly presented to this Cooncell by the Clothyers of new Sarum

Ordered that Comittee do consider and Report by what wayes and meanes it comes to pass That the Dutch can afford theyre fine Clothes cheaper than we doe and what may be the remedyes. How the importacion of Dutch Clothes may be prevented and whether the importacion of Forreigne Cloth be preiudiciall to the Manifacture of this Kingdome And the officers of the Customes are desyred to Certify what Customes they haue received for Dutch Clothes imported Complaint being againe made to this Cooncell by diuers Workemen for want of money It was thereuppon

Ordered That the Lord Brounker, Mr Slingsby and the Secretary of this Cooncell do attend the Lord Treasurer therein and report his Lordships pleasure to this Cooncell.

Thursday 31 Jany 1660.

The Lord Broonker etc. Report the Commission by which this Cooncell is established to be defective in the directive parte for money to be payd out of the Exchequer and thereoppon

Ordered That his Majesty or One of his Majesties Principall Secretaryes of State be attended therein by the Lord Broonker and Mr Coventry and that a Privy Seale be desyred of his



Majesty to supply the defects of the Commission and his Majestyes pleasure therein reported to this Cooncell.

A list of such shipps as are thought necessary by this Cooncell to be allowed for Convoys Reported and allowed But

Ordered That till the business of Free Portes be reddy That the Convoys be not reported to his Majesty.

Ordered That in the business concerning Free Portes and of the Composition Trade att Dover the Commissioners of his Majesties Customes be desyred to bring in theyre Opinion in writeing on Tuesday next As to what Places it may be fitt to make Free Portes. How many and under what Regulacions And likewise what amendments they thinke fitt to be made in the Articles for settling the Composition trade of Dover what the Auntient rates were and what they conceiue may be fitt to be payd now in these tymes wherein there is no Warr to his Majesty Or whether to Contynue it in the same way for the tyme to Come as it hath byn in tymes past.

By Command from his Majesties Cooncell for Trade.

G. DUKE.

(*Endorsed*) Councell of Trade
2nd Jany 1660.

# APPENDIX E.

## Complaints from the Counties, 1659. p. 179.

The blight which had fallen on the economic life of the country during the Interregnum was alluded to in the addresses which were sent from different counties to General Monk in 1659. It may be added that the complaints here printed occur in letters sent by supporters of the parliamentary party; they demand the 'restauration' of the ejected members of the Long Parliament. There may be good grounds for discounting the statements of the anonymous author of the *World's Mistake in Oliver Cromwell*, but this evidence is entirely different in character. It is interesting to compare the Declaration of the supporters of the Good Old Cause in Gloucester in 1659 with that of the Royalists in 1660. (Brit. Mus. 190. g. 13 (302 and 303).)

*Devonshire.* Brit. Mus. 190. g. 13 (300).

A Declaration of the Gentry of the County of Devon. Met at the Generall Quarter Sessions at Exeter, for a Free Parliament. Together with a letter from Exeter.

To the Right Honourable William Lenthall, Speaker of the Parliament.

We the Gentry of the County of *Devon*, finding ourselves without a Regular Government, after your last interruption, designed a publick Meeting, to consult Remedies, which we could not so conveniently effect till this Week, at our *Generall Quarter Sessions* at *Exon*: Where we find divers of the Inhabitants groaning under high Oppressions and a generall defect of Trade, to the utter ruine of many, and fear of the like to others, which is as visible in the whole County, that occasioned such disorders, that were no small trouble and disturbance to us; which, by God's blessing upon our endeavours, were soon supprest and quieted, without Blood. And though we find since our first purposes, an alteration in the state of Affairs, by your Re-assembling at the Helm of Government, yet conceive, that we are but in part Redrest of our Grievances; and that the chief Expedient for it will be the recalling of all those Members that were secluded in 1648, and sat before the first Force upon the *Parliament.* And also by filling up the vacant places. And all to be admitted, without any Oath and Engagement, previous to their Entrance. For which things, if you please to take a speedy course, we shall defend you against all Opposers, and future Interrupters, with our Lives and Fortunes. For the Accomplishment whereof we shall use all Lawfull Means, which we humbly conceive may best conduce to the Peace and Safety of this Nation.

Exon. 14 of Jany, 1659.

Sir

The Inclosed is a Copy of what this Grand Meeting, to which the most Considerable of the Gentry have Subscribed. Mr Bampfield, Recorder of Exon, is gone this night Post to deliver it to the Speaker. That the Cornish men have done more is no Newes.

This City in very great numbers, Loudly exprest their desires for a Free Parliament. The Apprentices and Young men of the City got the Keys of the Gates, and keep them lockt, without taking notice of the magistrates, and lesse of the Souldiers.



*Kent.* Brit. Mus. 190. g. 13 (306).

The Declaration of the Nobility, Gentry, Ministry and Commonalty of the County of Kent. Together with the City and County of *Canterbury*, the City of *Rochester*, and the Ports within the said County.

Having with sadness weighed the multiplied calamities wherein we are at present involved, how friendless we are Abroad, and how divided at home; the loud and heart-piercing cries of the poore, and the disability of the better sort to relieve them; the total decay and subversion of Trade, together with the forfeiture and loss of honor and reputation of the Nation, and (what is more dear to us than all these) the apparent hazard of the Gospel through the prodigious growth of Blasphemies, Heresies and Schism, all of which own their birth to the instability of our Governors, and the unsettlement of our Government. Lastly, how in all these, an universal ruine threatneth us, and wil (if not timely prevented) doubtless overwhelm us. We thought it our bounden duties, both as Christians, out of tenderness to our Religion, as Englishmen, to our Country, and as Friends, to our selves and our Relations, to represent and publish to the world our just griefs for, and our lively resentments of this our deplorable condition, and to seek all lawful and probable means to remedy and redress the same.

Wherefore having the leading Examples of the renowned Cities of *London* and *Exeter*, together with the Counties of the West, before our eyes; and the clamours and out-cries of the People alwaies in our ears, (whereof the one encourageth, and the other enforceth us to this our Declaration) we thought that we would not be silent at such a time, when our silence would speak us to be either Assentors to our own ruine, or Abettors of such proceedings as have neither Law nor Equity to support them.

We therefore, the *Nobility Gentry Ministry* and *Commonalty* of the County of *Kent*, together with the City and County of *Canterbury*, the City of *Rochester* and the Ports within the said County, do by these Presents unanimously Declare, that our desires are for a Full and Free PARLIAMENT, as the only probable means, under God, to lead us out of this Maze and Labyrinth of confusions in which we are at present engag'd; that is, that the

old secluded Members, so many of them as are surviving, may be readmitted into the House, and that there may be a free Election of others to supply the places of those which are dead, without any Oath or Engagement previous to their Entrance, these we shall own as the true Representatives of the People; these we shall with our Lives and Fortunes, to the uttermost of our power, assist and with all cheerfulness submit to, and acquiess in whatsoever they shall Enact or Ordain.

Thus concluding, that all publick spirited men, and good Patriots, wil with all readiness join and concur with us in a matter of so universal concernment, and that we shall find Opposition from none but such as prefer their own private Interests and temporal respects, to their Religion and laws of the land; we shall as boldly subscribe our Names as we do heartily declare our Desires.

(Undated.)

Compare also the following letter. Brit. Mus. 190. g. 13 (355).

To the Supreme Authority The Parliament of the Commonwealth of England Assembled at Westminster.

The hearty Congratulations and humble Petition of thousands of well-affected Gentlemen Freeholders and Inhabitants of the County of Kent and City of Canterbury.

...Wherefore we take boldnesse humbly to offer at present to your grave and serious Considerations, These few particulars following.....

That you would be mindfull for the quickning of Trade so much decayed, principally that of Clothing which greatly concerns this County; the fail wherof hath greatly impoverished and ruinated many families.

4 June, 1659.

*Lincoln.* Brit. Mus. 190. g 13 (310).

The Declaration of the Gentry, Ministers, Free-holders of the County and Citty of Lincolne.

Wee the Gentry, Ministers and Freeholders of the County and Citty of Lincolne, being truly sensible of our Misseries and Greivances, namely the sad consequents of intestine Warre, the fear of *Invasion* from abroad, at the time of our Distractions and Divisions both in CHURCH and *State*, the violent alteration of GOVERNMENT, the heavy imposition of unheard of TAXES; All



of which of late Yeares hath ruined our TRADE, and impoverished the whole *Nation*, and are all occasioned by reason of the many Violences and Breaches made upon our known established *Lawes* and Fundamentall Liberties, *Doe therefore* humbly propose and declare (having first met and consulted, as other Countryes have done) that the onely remedy for our said Grievances, will be for *A Free Full* PARLIAMENT, speedily to be called and assembled to sit according to our said knowne established *Lawes*, wherein the Free votes of all Free People of this *Nation* might be included.

1659.

*Norfolk.* Brit. Mus. 190. g. 13 (311).

The Declaration of the Gentry of the County of Norfolk and of the County and City of Norwich.

We the Gentry of the County of *Norfolk*, and County and City of *Norwich*, being deeply affected with the sence of our sad Distractions, and Divisions, both in Church and State, and wearied with the miseries of an Unnatural Civil War, the too Frequent Interruptions of Government, the Imposition of several heavy Taxes, and the loud Out-cries of multitudes of undone, and almost Famished People, occasioned by the General decay of Trade, which hath spread itself throughout the whole Nation, and these Counties in particular; and having met together, and consulted what may best remedy and remove our and the Nations present Grievances and Distractions, Do humbly conceive, that the chief Expedient will be, the recalling of those Members that were secluded in 1648 etc.

This declaration subscribed by three hundred Gentlemen, was delivered to the Hon. Will. Lenthal Speaker of the Parliament; on Saturday the eight and twentieth of January 1659 By the Lord Richardson, S$^{r}$ John Hobart and S$^{r}$ Horatio Tounsend, Baronets.

*Warwick.* Brit. Mus. 190. g. 13 (316).

Wee the Knights, Gentlemen, Ministers, and Free-Holders of the County of Warwick.

Being deeply affected with, and sadly sensible of the present Miseries, which both our Selves and the whole Nation groan under, We can no longer forbear to express our Griefs, and declare our Desires and Thoughts of the most probable means (by

Gods assistance) to give some remedy to our present sufferings, and prevent those yet greater Calamities which threaten our speedy and utter Ruine. The cause of our present Calamities (we conceive) proceeds from the many Revolutions, through Male-Administration of Government, and want of the right Constitution of Parliaments: And that after all our great and intolerable Sufferings, the vast expence of Blood and Treasure, for our Rights and Liberties, and Priviledges of Parliament (which we take to be the good old Cause) we, with most of the Counties of this Nation, have not our Representatives in a Free Parliament etc.

"Subscribed by many Thousand hands."

*Yorkshire.* Brit. Mus. 190. g. 13 (317).

The Declaration of Thomas Lord Fairfax And the rest of the Lords, Knights Esquires Citizens Ministers and Freeholders of the County and City of York.

Whereas this Famous County, Honoured formerly for its puissance and strength by which they have always been taken for the Bulwork of this Nation, are now reputed so inconsiderable that they have not at this time a Representative in Parliament: and being deeply sensible of the Confusions and Distractions of the Nation, the particular Decay and Ruine of the Cloathing Trade of this County, which necessarily bears an influence upon the Publick: as also the Future Evils that will attend this *Vacancy* of *Government* during the imperfection and incompleatness of *Our Parliaments*, whose entireness, and *Full Number* hath been in *all times* (as to a *Right English Constitution*) the only *conservation* of our *Liberties* etc.

Leeds. Feb. 13. 1659.

An Extract of a Letter from York dated the 31 of Dec. 1659 concerning the Lord Fairfax's Raising that County in Arms against illegal Taxes and Free quarter and for the Freedom of Parliament as it was in the Year 1648.

Brit. Mus. 190. g. 13 (248).

..."And the Trade of Cloathing being dead, by reason of the Warres with *Spain*, makes those Parts rise in abundance, to do anything for the having of *a Free Parliament* which (they think) will procure the opening of Trade again."



*London.* Brit. Mus. 190. g. 13 (123).

A Letter agreed unto and subscribed by the Gentlemen, Minister, Freeholders and Seamen of the County of Suffolk presented to the Right Honorable, the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Common Councell of the Citty of London Assembled Jan. 30. 1659.

Right Honorable

Please you to accept this Paper as a testimony, that we are highly and gratefully sensible of those Breathings and Essaies towards Peace, which your Renowned City has lately declared to the World. And we earnestly wish, that our serious and unanimous Concurrence, may ripen them to a perfect Accomplishment. We are willing to consider it as an Omen of Mercy, when we observe the Nation in generall, lifting up its Vowes to Heaven for a Free and Full PARLIAMENT. 'Tis that alone in its Genuine Sense, which our Laws prescribe and present to us, as the Great Patron and Guardian of our Persons, Liberties and Proprieties, and whatsoever else is justly pretious to us. And if God shall, by your hand lead us to such an obtainment, after-ages shall blesse your Memory. 'Tis superfluous to spread before you, your Merchandise decay'd, your Trade declin'd, your Estates wither'd. Are there not many within your Walls, or near them, that in your ears deplore such miseries as these? Your Lordship may believe, that our Prayers and Persons shall gladly promote all lawfull means for our Recovery. And we entreat, that this cheerfull suffrage of ours may be annex'd, as a Labell to your Honorable Intendments.

1659.

The Engagement and Remembrance of the City of London Subscribed by 23500 hands.

Brit. Mus. 190. g. 13 (249).

...Not to insist upon the losse of Trade; how many Thousand Families have nothing now to do, but Begg and Curse these Wretches.

Dated in MS. Dec. 1659.

# APPENDIX F.

## Statistics of Progress.

It is with some hesitation that I append a few statements of statistics; information in a numerical form has an appearance of accuracy and completeness which may be misleading. While there is an abundance of reliable information for last century on many points connected with population and trade, the data for earlier times are often uncertain, and estimates must be made to do duty for actual enumeration. When an attempt is made at comparison there is no sufficient basis to work upon. It may be convenient, however, to reproduce figures given by some well-known investigators, as the best available.

Political Arithmetic, the mere counting up of similar objects or amounts at two different periods, may be very instructive up to a certain point. It serves to show the direction of change at a glance—whether e.g. shipping was increasing or declining—and to measure the amount of change in a given time. It may be advantageously employed to bring out the growth of some particular industries, the progress of commerce, shipping, and of population. The graphic method offers a convenient means of bringing before the eyes some of the changes in the prosperity of the country, as indicated by a comparison of revenue with indebtedness and of population with pauperism. Miss E. A. McArthur of Girton College, who constructed these diagrams, has kindly allowed me to insert them.

I. The progress of particular industries is illustrated by the following figures. The first Table shows the rapid progress which took place in the woollen manufactures of the West Riding during the second quarter of the eighteenth century. The second shows the progress of the woollen manufacture in Great Britain, so far as that is indicated by the accounts of the raw material imported, of the quantities of wool grown there is no trustworthy information; and the third gives the quantities of cotton wool imported. The fourth gives the quantities of pig-iron made in Great Britain, since coal-smelting began.



i. *Progress of Woollen Manufacture.* Massie, writing in 1764, says that the exports of woollen manufacture, which under Charles II. and James II. "did not much exceed the yearly value of one million pounds, amounted in 1699 to almost three millions sterling, from which vast sum, with occasional ebbings and flowings our annual exports of Woollen Manufactures have gradually risen to full four millions of late years." *Observations on New Cyder Tax*, p. 1. Detailed statements of the values of woollen manufactures exported for every year from 1697—1781 will be found in *Considerations upon the present state of the Wool Trade* (1781), p. 83 [Brit. Mus. 1103. a. 3 (10)]. These are continued to 1840 in Bischoff, II. Ap. VI. The highest point reached was £7,900,000 in 1833. These tables also give the price of wool for each year, but do not discriminate the qualities for which these varying prices were charged.

*No. of Pieces*[1] *of Broad Woollen Cloth manufactured in W. Riding*, 1726—1750, extracted from Registers books kept in said County[2]:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1726 | 26,671 | 1739 | 43,086½ |
| 1727 | 28,990 | 1740 | 41,441 |
| 1728 | 25,223½ | 1741 | 46,364 |
| 1729 | 29,643½ | 1742 | 44,954 |
| 1730 | 21,579½ | 1743 | 45,178½ |
| 1731 | 33,563 | 1744 | 54,627½ |
| 1732 | 35,548½ | 1745 | 50,453 |
| 1733 | 34,620 | 1746 | 56,637 |
| 1734 | 31,123 | 1747 | 62,480 |
| 1735 | 31,744½ | 1748 | 60,705½ |
| 1736 | 38,899 | 1749 | 60,447½ |
| 1737 | 42,256 | 1750 | 60,964 |
| 1738 | 42,404 | | |

ii. *Foreign and Colonial Wool imported into England* (the United Kingdom from 1766—1857):

| | lbs. | | lbs. | | lbs. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1766 | 1,926,000 | 1800 | 8,609,000 | 1840 | 49,436,000 |
| 1771 | 1,829,000 | 1810 | 10,914,000 | 1850 | 74,326,000 |
| 1780 | 323,000 | 1820 | 9,775,000 | 1855 | 99,300,000 |
| 1790 | 2,582,000 | 1830 | 32,305,000 | 1857 | 127,390,000 |
| 1799 | 2,263,000 | | | | |

*An account of the woollen trade of Yorkshire*, by E. Baines, in T. Baines, *Yorkshire, Past and Present*, I. 637. Cf. also Bischoff, II. App. II.

[1] Until 1733 or 1734 there were between 30 and 40 yds. in each piece—since then the length has been gradually increased, and each piece is now (1764) near 70 yards.

[2] Massie, *Observations on the New Cyder Tax* (1764), p. 3.

iii. *Cotton Wool imported. Returns from Records by Custom House.*

| | lbs. |
|---|---|
| 1697 | 1,976,359 |
| 1701 | 1,985,868 |
| 1710 | 715,008 |
| 1720 | 1,972,805 |
| 1730 | 1,545,472 |
| 1741 | 1,645,031 |
| 1751 | 2,976,610 |
| 1764 | 3,870,392 |

Baines, *Hist. of the Cotton Manufacture*, 109.

*Cotton Wool imported for spinning*[1] *into England and Scotland*, 1781—1832.

| | lbs. | | lbs. | | lbs. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1781 | 3,198,778 | 1799 | 43,379,278 | 1816 | 93,920,055 |
| 1782 | 11,828,039 | 1800 | 56,010,732 | 1817 | 124,912,968 |
| 1783 | 9,735,663 | 1801 | 56,004,305 | 1818 | 177,282,158 |
| 1784 | 11,482,083 | 1802 | 60,345,600 | 1819 | 149,739,820 |
| 1785 | 18,400,384 | 1803 | 53,812,284 | 1820 | 144,818,100 |
| 1786 | 19,475,020 | 1804 | 61,867,329 | 1821 | 123,977,400 |
| 1787 | 23,250,268 | 1805 | 59,682,406 | 1822 | 135,420,100 |
| 1788 | 20,467,436 | 1806 | 58,176,283 | 1823 | 191,402,503 |
| 1789 | 32,576,023 | 1807 | 74,925,306 | 1824 | 149,380,122 |
| 1790 | 31,447,605 | 1808 | 43,605,982 | 1825 | 228,005,291 |
| 1791 | 28,706,675 | 1809 | 92,812,282 | 1826 | 170,500,000 |
| 1792 | 34,907,497 | 1810 | 132,488,935 | 1827 | 264,330,000 |
| 1793 | 19,040,929 | 1811 | 91,576,535 | 1828 | 222,750,000 |
| 1794 | 24,358,567 | 1812 | 63,025,936 | 1829 | 218,324,000 |
| 1795 | 26,401,340 | 1813 | 50,966,000 | 1830 | 259,856,000 |
| 1796 | 32,126,357 | 1814 | 60,060,239 | 1831 | 280,080,000 |
| 1797 | 23,354,371 | 1815 | 99,306,343 | 1832 | 277,260,490 |
| 1798 | 31,880,641 | | | | |

Baines, *Hist. of the Cotton Manufacture*, in *Hist. of the County Palatine and Duchy of Lancaster*, vol. II. 496.

iv. *Quantity of Pig-Iron made in England, Wales, and Scotland*, 1740—1852.

| | Tons | | Tons | | Tons |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1740 | 17,350 | 1806 | 258,206 | 1839 | 1,248,781 |
| 1788 | 68,300 | 1825 | 581,367 | 1847 | 1,999,608 |
| 1796 | 125,079 | 1830 | 678,417 | 1852 | 2,701,000 |

Scrivenor, 136 (ed. 1854), 256, 302.

II. The Increase of the Commerce of the country is shown by the tables of exports and imports; these are taken for the longest period where comparison is possible, as the change from

[1] In spinning this, allowance for loss 1¾ oz. per lb. should be made, to estimate total amount of yarn spun. Baines, II. 502.



official to real values, though giving greater accuracy, renders it less easy to indicate the rate of change. To this is added Chalmers' table of the increase of shipping. (*Estimate*, 234.)

i. *Official Value of Exports and Imports.*

*Exports.*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| England | 1613[1] | 2,487,435 | Misselden, *Circle of Commerce*, 121. |
| | 1622 | 2,320,436 | ,, ,, ,, 128. |
| | 1662 | 2,022,812 | Macpherson, *Annals of Commerce*, II. 707. |
| | 1688 | 4,310,000 | Davenant, *Works*, II. 270. |
| | 1699 | 6,788,166 | Macpherson, *Annals*, II 707. |
| | 1720 | 6,910,899 | ,, ,, III. 116. |
| | 1730 | 8,548,982 | ,, ,, III. 160. |
| | 1740 | 8,197,788 | ,, ,, III. 227. |
| | 1750 | 12,699,081 | ,, ,, III. 283. |
| | 1760 | 14,694,970 | ,, ,, III. 339. |
| | 1783 | 13,896,415 | *Finance Reports*, 1797, II. 22, 36. |
| | 1796 | 29,196,198 | |
| Gt Britain | 1798 | 27,317,057 | |
| | 1800 | 34,381,617 | *Accounts and Papers*, 1830, XXVII. 208—11. |
| United Kingdom | 1805 | 31,064,492 | |
| | 1810 | 43,568,757 | |
| | 1815 | 58,624,550 | |
| | 1820 | 48,951,537 | *Accounts and Papers*, 1833, XLI. 48. |
| | 1825 | 56,320,182 | |
| | 1830 | 69,691,303 | |
| | 1835 | 91,174,456 | *Accounts and Papers*, 1851, XXXI. 170. |
| | 1840 | 116,479,678 | |
| | 1845 | 150,879,986 | |
| | 1850 | 197,330,265 | *Accounts and Papers*, 1852—53, LVII. 198. |

*Imports.*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| England | 1613 | 2,141,151 | Misselden, *Circle of Commerce*, 122. |
| | 1622 | 2,619,315 | ,, ,, ,, 129. |
| | 1688 | 7,120,000 | Davenant, *Works*, II. 270. |
| | 1720 | 6,090,083 | Macpherson, *Annals*, III. 116. |
| | 1730 | 7,780,019 | ,, ,, III. 160. |
| | 1740 | 6,763,778 | ,, ,, III. 227. |
| | 1750 | 7,772,039 | ,, ,, III 283. |
| | 1760 | 9,832,802 | ,, ,, III. 339. |
| | 1783 | 11,651,281 | *Finance Reports*, 1797, II. 22, 36. |
| | 1796 | 21,024,866 | |
| Gt Britain | 1798 | 25,122,203 | |
| | 1800 | 28,257,781 | |
| United Kingdom | 1805 | 28,561,270 | *Accounts and Papers*, 1830, XXVII. 209. |
| | 1810 | 39,301,612 | |
| | 1815 | 32,987,396 | |
| | 1820 | 32,438,650 | *Accounts and Papers*, 1833, XLI. 48. |
| | 1825 | 44,208,807 | |
| | 1830 | 46,245,241 | |
| | 1835 | 48,911,543 | *Accounts and Papers*, 1851, XXXI. 170. |
| | 1840 | 67,432,964 | |
| | 1845 | 85,281,958 | |
| | 1850 | 100,460,433 | *Accounts and Papers*, 1852—53, LVII. 198. |

[1] In 1570 the official value of Exports and Imports according to a State Paper in the Cotton Collection is given as £26,665 and £45,356 (Hall, *Customs*, vol. II. App.). It may be doubted however whether this was not a partial return for the purpose of a contemporary agitation against foreign competition, i.e. to show that the "balance of trade" was against England.

ii. *Increase of Shipping.*

| THE EPOCHS. | | THE SHIPS CLEARED OUTWARDS. Tons ENGLISH. | Do. FOREIGN | TOTAL. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Restoration ..... | 1663, 1669 | 95,266 | 47,634 | 142,900 |
| The Revolution ..... | 1688 | 190,533 | 95,267 | 285,800 |
| The Peace of Ryswick... | 1697 | 144,264 | 100,524 | 244,788 |
| The last years of William III. ..... | 1700, 1701, 1702 | 273,693 | 43,635 | 317,328 |
| The Wars of Anne ..... | 1709 | 243,693 | 45,625 | 289,318 |
| | 1712 | 326,620 | 29,115 | 355,735 |
| The first of George I.... | 1713, 1714, 1715 | 421,431 | 26,573 | 448,004 |
| The first of George II. | 1726, 1727, 1728 | 432,832 | 23,651 | 456,483 |
| The peaceful years ..... | 1736, 1737, 1738 | 476,941 | 26,627 | 503,568 |
| The War of ..... | 1739, 1740, 1741 | 384,191 | 87,260 | 471,451 |
| The peaceful years . ... | 1749, 1750, 1751 | 609,798 | 51,386 | 661,184 |
| The War of ..... | 1755, 1756, 1757 | 451,254 | 73,456 | 524,710 |
| The first of George III. ..... WAR: | 1760 | 471,241 | 102,737 | 573,978 |
| | 1761 | 508,220 | 117,835 | 626,055 |
| | 1762 | 480,444 | 120,126 | 600,570 |
| PEACE: | 1763 | 561,724 | 87,293 | 649,017 |
| | 1764 | 583,934 | 74,800 | 658,734 |
| | 1765 | 651,402 | 67,855 | 719,257 |
| | 1766 | 684,281 | 61,753 | 746,034 |
| | 1767 | 645,835 | 63,206 | 709,041 |
| | 1768 | 668,786 | 72,734 | 741,520 |
| | 1769 | 709,855 | 63,020 | 772,875 |
| | 1770 | 703,495 | 57,476 | 760,971 |
| | 1771 | 773,390 | 63,532 | 836,922 |
| | 1772 | 818,108 | 72,603 | 890,711 |
| | 1773 | 771,483 | 54,820 | 826,303 |
| | 1774 | 798,240 | 65,273 | 863,513 |



*Increase of Shipping (continued).*

| THE EPOCHS. | | THE SHIPS CLEARED OUTWARDS. Tons ENGLISH | Do. FOREIGN. | TOTAL. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WAR: | 1775 | 783,226 | 64,860 | 848,086 |
| | 1776 | 778,878 | 72,188 | 851,066 |
| | 1777 | 736,234 | 83,468 | 819,702 |
| | 1778 | 657,238 | 98,113 | 755,351 |
| | 1779 | 590,911 | 139,124 | 740,035 |
| | 1780 | 619,462 | 134,515 | 753,977 |
| | 1781 | 547,953 | 163,410 | 711,363 |
| | 1782 | 552,851 | 208,511 | 761,362 |
| | 1783 | 795,669 | 157,969 | 953,638 |
| PEACE: | 1784 | 846,355 | 113,064 | 959,419 |
| | 1785 | 951,855 | 103,398 | 1,055,253 |
| | 1786 | 982,132 | 116,771 | 1,098,903 |
| | 1787 | 1,104,711 | 132,243 | 1,236,954 |
| | 1788 | 1,243,206 | 121,932 | 1,365,138 |
| | 1789 | 1,343,800 | 99,858 | 1,443,658 |
| | 1790 | 1,260,828 | 144,132 | 1,404,960 |
| | 1791 | 1,333,106 | 178,051 | 1,511,157 |
| | 1792 | 1,396,003 | 169,151 | 1,565,154 |
| WAR: | 1793 | 1,101,326 | 180,121 | 1,281,447 |
| | 1794 | 1,247,398 | 209,679 | 1,457,077 |
| | 1795 | 1,030,058 | 370,238 | 1,400,296 |
| | 1796 | 1,108,258 | 454,847 | 1,563,105 |
| | 1797 | 971,596 | 379,775 | 1,351,371 |
| | 1798 | 1,163,534 | 345,132 | 1,508,666 |
| | 1799 | 1,145,314 | 390,612 | 1,535,926 |
| | 1800 | 1,269,329 | 654,713 | 1,924,042 |
| | 1801 | 1,190,557 | 767,816 | 1,958,373 |
| PEACE: | 1802 | 1,459,689 | 435,427 | 1,895,116 |
| WAR: | 1803 | 1,245,560 | 543,208 | 1,788,768 |
| | 1804 | 1,248,796 | 553,267 | 1,802,063 |
| | 1805 | 1,284,691 | 572,961 | 1,857,652 |
| | 1806 | 1,258,903 | 538,700 | 1,897,603 |
| | 1807 | 1,190,232 | 600,840 | 1,791,072 |
| | 1808 | 1,153,488 | 272,104 | 1,425,592 |
| | 1809 | 1,318,508 | 674,680 | 1,993,188 |

III. The PROGRESS OF THE REVENUE and the increased CHARGE ON THE NATIONAL DEBT are shown in the first diagram: the figures on which it is based are as follows:

i. *Revenue. England*, 1660—1789. *Great Britain and Ireland*, 1792—1850.

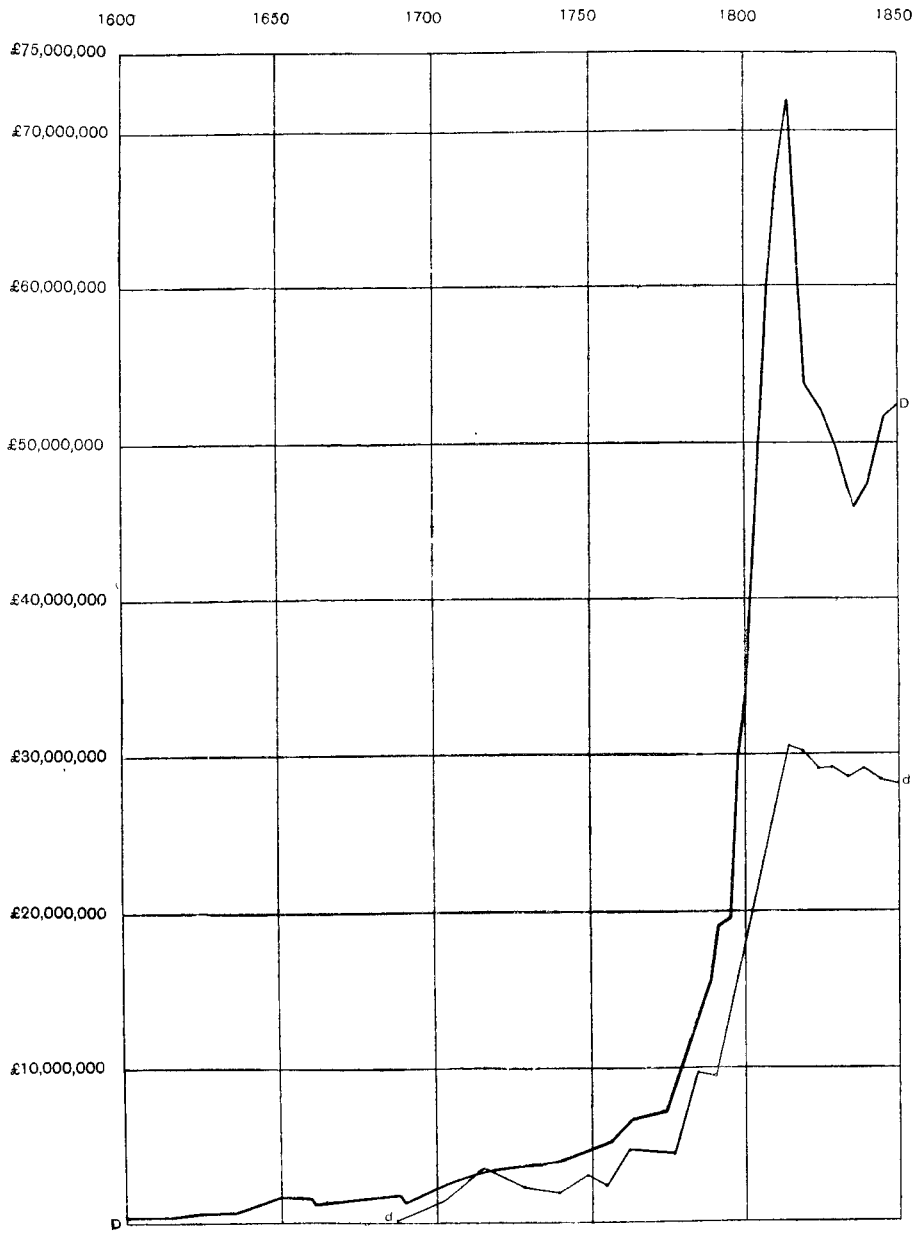
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1660 | £1,200,000 | Dowell, *History of Taxation*, II. 17. |
| 1690 | 1,200,000 | ,, ,, ,, II. 41. |
| 1712 | 3,043,000 | *Statistical Journal*, XVIII. 250. |
| 1740 | 3,997,000 | |
| 1756 | 5,150,000 | |
| 1762 | 6,711,000 | |
| 1774 | 7,137,000 | |
| 1784 | 12,995,000 | |
| 1789 | 15,460,000 | |
| 1792 | 18,900,630 | *Reports*, 1828, V. 610—645. |
| 1795 | 19,657,993 | |
| 1800 | 33,069,775 | |
| 1805 | 50,348,263 | |
| 1810 | 66,704,985 | |
| 1815 | 71,900,005 | |
| 1820 | 53,880,373 | |
| 1825 | 52,065,389 | |
| 1830 | 49,889,995 | *Accounts and Papers*, 1841, XIII. 188. |
| 1835 | 45,893,370 | |
| 1840 | 47,351,563 | |
| 1845 | 51,719,118 | *Accounts and Papers*, 1851, XXXI. 166. |
| 1850 | 52,177,141 | |

ii. *Annual Charge on the National Debt.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1688 | £39,855 | Sinclair, *History of the Public Revenue*, Part II. 93. |
| 1702 | 1,310,942 | |
| 1714 | 3,351,358 | |
| 1727 | 2,217,551 | |
| 1739 | 1,964,025 | |
| 1748 | 3,061,004 | |
| 1755 | 2,396,717 | |
| 1762 | 4,840,821 | |
| 1776 | 4,476,821 | |
| 1784 | 9,669,435 | |
| 1790 | 9,479,572 | |
| 1815 | 30,458,204 | *Reports*, 1828, V. 657. |
| 1820 | 30,147,801 | |
| 1825 | 29,197,187 | *Accounts*, 1851, XXXI. 166. |
| 1830 | 29,118,859 | |
| 1835 | 28,514,610 | |
| 1840 | 29,381,718 | |
| 1845 | 28,253,872 | |
| 1850 | 28,091,590 | |

IV. The INCREASE OF POPULATION is also shown by a diagram, and is compared with the annual charge for poor-relief, so far as it was reported to Parliament. The figures are as follows:

DIAGRAM I. See Appendix p. 934.




D = Revenue d = Annual Charge on National Debt

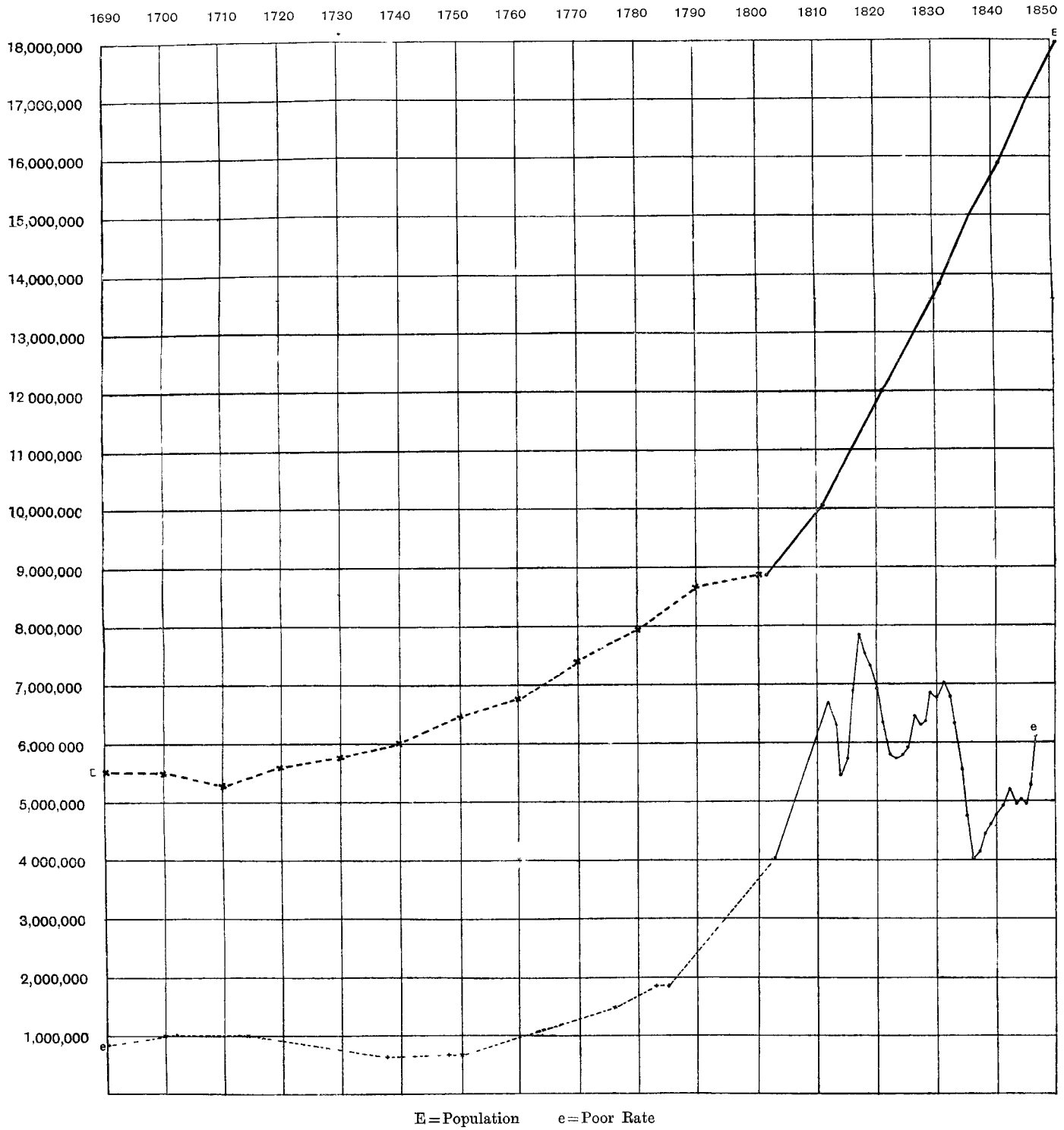
## i. *Population of England and Wales.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1688 | 5,500,520 | G. King in Davenant, *Works*, II. 184. |
| 1700 | 5,475,000 | *Statistical Journal*, XLIII. 462. |
| 1710 | 5,240,000 | |
| 1720 | 5,565,000 | |
| 1730 | 5,796,000 | |
| 1740 | 6,064,000 | |
| 1750 | 6,467,000 | |
| 1760 | 6,736,000 | |
| 1770 | 7,428,000 | |
| 1780 | 7,953,000 | |
| 1790 | 8,675,000 | |
| 1801 | 8,892,536 | *Accounts and Papers*, 1852–3, LXXXV. XXXIII. |
| 1811 | 10,164,256 | |
| 1821 | 12,000,236 | |
| 1831 | 13,896,797 | |
| 1841 | 15,914,148 | |
| 1851 | 17,927,609 | |

## ii. *Poor-rate.*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Average, | 1748–49–50 | £689,971 | |
| | 1776 | 1,521,732 | |
| Average, | 1783–84–85 | 1,912,241 | |
| | 1803 | 4,077,891 | |
| March, | 1812–13 | 6,656,105 | |
| | 1813–14 | 6,294,584 | *Reports*, 1821, IV. 277. |
| | 1814–15 | 5,418,845 | |
| | 1815–16 | 5,724,506 | |
| | 1816–17 | 6,918,217 | |
| | 1817–18 | 7,890,148 | |
| | 1818–19 | 7,531,650 | |
| | 1819–20 | 7,329,594 | |
| | 1820–21 | 6,958,445 | |
| | 1821–22 | 6,358,703 | |
| | 1822–23 | 5,773,096 | |
| | 1823–24 | 5,734,216 | |
| | 1824–25 | 5,786,991 | |
| | 1825–26 | 5,928,502 | |
| | 1826–27 | 6,441,088 | |
| | 1827–28 | 6,298,000 | |
| | 1828–29 | 6,332,410 | |
| | 1829–30 | 6,829,042 | |
| | 1830–31 | 6,798,889 | |
| | 1831–32 | 7,036,968 | *Accounts*, 1845, XLI. 393. |
| | 1832–33 | 6,790,800 | |
| | 1833–34 | 6,317,255 | |
| | 1834–35 | 5,526,418 | |
| | 1835–36 | 4,717,630 | |
| | 1836–37 | 4,044,741 | |
| | 1837–38 | 4,123,604 | |
| | 1838–39 | 4,406,907 | |
| | 1839–40 | 4,576,965 | |
| | 1840–41 | 4,760,929 | |
| | 1841–42 | 4,911,498 | |
| | 1842–43 | 5,208,027 | |
| | 1843–44 | 4,982,096 | |
| | 1844–45 | 5,039,703 | *Accounts*, 1847, XLIX. 51. |
| | 1845–46 | 4,954,204 | *Accounts*, 1847–8, LIII. 181, 183. |
| | 1846–47 | 5,298,787 | |
| | 1847–48 | 6,180,765 | *Accounts*, 1849, XLVII. 615. |

DIAGRAM II. See Appendix p. 935.



iii. *The rate and distribution of the increase of population during the eighteenth century* is excellently shown in the following table quoted from Chalmers. (*Estimate*, 216.)

A Comparative View of the Number of Houses, in each County of England and Wales, as they appeared in the Hearth-books of Lady-day 1690; as they were made up at the Tax-office, in 1708—1750—1781; and, as they appear from the enumeration of 1801.

| Counties. | No. of Houses, 1690. | No. of Houses charged, 1708. | No. of Houses, charged and chargeable, 1750. | No. of Houses, charged and chargeable, 1781. | No. of Houses, enumerated, 1801. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Inhabited. | Uninhabited. |
| Bedfordshire | 12,170 | 5,479 | 6,802 | 5,360 | 11,888 | 185 |
| Berks | 16,996 | 7,558 | 9,762 | 8,227 | 20,573 | 622 |
| Bucks | 18,688 | 8,604 | 10,687 | 8,670 | 20,443 | 543 |
| Cambridge | 18,629 | 7,220 | 9,334 | 9,088 | 16,159 | 312 |
| Chester | 25,592 | 11,656 | 16,006 | 17,201 | 34,482 | 1,139 |
| Cornwall | 26,613 | 9,052 | 14,520 | 15,274 | 32,906 | 1,472 |
| Cumberland | 15,279 | 2,509 | 11,914 | 13,419 | 21,573 | 872 |
| Derby | 24,944 | 8,260 | 13,912 | 14,046 | 31,822 | 1,369 |
| Devon | 56,202 | 16,686 | 30,049 | 28,612 | 57,955 | 3,235 |
| Dorset | 17,859 | 4,133 | 11,711 | 11,132 | 21,437 | 825 |
| *Durham | 53,345 | 6,298 | 10,475 | 12,418 | 27,195 | 1,171 |
| York | 121,052 | 44,779 | 70,816 | 76,224 | 168,439 | 6,418 |
| Essex | 40,545 | 16,250 | 19,057 | 18,389 | 38,371 | 1,027 |
| Gloucester | 34,476 | 13,285 | 16,251 | 14,950 | 46,457 | 1,715 |
| Hereford | 16,744 | 6,913 | 8,771 | 8,092 | 17,003 | 941 |
| Hertford | 17,488 | 7,447 | 9,251 | 8,628 | 17,681 | 491 |
| Huntingdon | 8,713 | 3,992 | 4,363 | 3,847 | 6,936 | 136 |
| Kent | 46,674 | 21,871 | 30,029 | 30,975 | 51,556 | 1,413 |
| Lancashire | 46,961 | 22,588 | 33,273 | 30,956 | 114,270 | 3,394 |
| Leicester | 20,448 | 8,584 | 12,957 | 12,545 | 25,992 | 742 |
| Lincoln | 45,019 | 17,571 | 24,990 | 24,591 | 41,395 | 1,094 |
| London, &c. | 111,215 | 47,031 | 71,977 | 74,704 | 112,912 | 5,171 |
| Norfolk | 56,579 | 12,097 | 20,697 | 20,056 | 47,617 | 1,523 |
| Northampton | 26,904 | 9,218 | 12,464 | 10,350 | 26,665 | 736 |
| *Northumberland | (included in Durham) | 6,787 | 10,543 | 12,431 | 26,518 | 1,534 |
| Nottingham | 17,818 | 7,755 | 11,001 | 10,872 | 25,611 | 542 |
| Oxford | 19,627 | 8,502 | 10,362 | 8,698 | 20,599 | 594 |
| Rutland | 3,661 | 1,498 | 1,873 | 1,445 | 3,274 | 87 |
| Salop | 27,471 | 11,452 | 13,332 | 12,895 | 31,182 | 929 |
| Somerset | 45,900 | 19,043 | 27,822 | 26,407 | 48,040 | 2,136 |
| Southampton, &c. | 28,557 | 14,331 | 18,045 | 15,828 | 38,284 | 906 |
| Stafford | 26,278 | 10,812 | 15,917 | 16,483 | 45,521 | 2,003 |
| Suffolk | 47,537 | 15,301 | 18,834 | 19,589 | 32,253 | 552 |
| Surrey, &c. | 40,610 | 14,071 | 20,037 | 19,381 | 46,072 | 1,514 |
| Sussex | 23,451 | 9,429 | 11,170 | 10,574 | 25,060 | 718 |
| Warwick | 22,400 | 9,461 | 12,759 | 13,276 | 41,069 | 2,946 |
| Westmoreland | 6,691 | 1,904 | 4,937 | 6,144 | 7,897 | 315 |
| Wilts | 27,418 | 11,373 | 14,303 | 12,856 | 28,059 | 1,170 |
| Worcester | 24,440 | 9,178 | 9,967 | 8,791 | 26,711 | 1,109 |
| Anglesea | South and North Wales. | 1,040 | 1,334 | 2,264 | 6,679 | 127 |
| Brecon | | 3,370 | 3,234 | 3,407 | 6,315 | 479 |
| Cardigan | | 2,012 | 2,542 | 2,444 | 8,819 | 221 |
| Carmarthen | | 3,985 | 5,020 | 5,126 | 13,449 | 371 |
| Carnarvon | | 1,583 | 2,366 | 2,675 | 8,343 | 129 |
| Denbigh | | 4,753 | 6,091 | 5,678 | 12,621 | 427 |
| Flint | | 2,653 | 3,520 | 2,990 | 7,585 | 194 |
| Glamorgan | | 5,020 | 6,290 | 5,146 | 14,225 | 537 |
| Merioneth | | 1,900 | 2,664 | 2,972 | 5,787 | 193 |
| Monmouth | | 3,289 | 4,980 | 4,454 | 8,948 | 417 |
| Montgomery | | 4,047 | 4,890 | 5,421 | 8,725 | 223 |
| Pembroke | | 2,764 | 2,803 | 3,224 | 11,869 | 398 |
| Radnor | 7,921 | 2,092 | 2,425 | 2,076 | 3,675 | 212 |
| | 1,319,215 | 508,516 | 729,048 | 721,351 | 1,574,902 | 57,529 |



# APPENDIX G.

## Some Difficulties in the Interpretation of Historical Statistics.

It is rarely possible to obtain reliable and precise information in regard to affairs in the past, so that it is all the more tempting to try to make the most of the figures which do survive, and draw as much as possible from them. The interpretation of quotations of prices and other information of a similar kind is beset by many difficulties. It must be remembered that statistics only serve to set economic problems before us in a very precise form; the greatest care and skill is needed to solve the questions they present for our consideration. Figures, however correct they may be, show the amount of some changes, but they do not in themselves give us any light as to the reason of the changes, or as to ulterior results brought about in social life, or economic conditions. These must be the matter of carefully reasoned enquiry. An illustration from the subject of pauperism may bring out the extremely limited character of the information we get from figures. It is perfectly clear that the sums expended on the relief of the poor diminished during the earlier part of the eighteenth century; but the figures in themselves and by themselves do not tell us whether this was due to greater strictness of administration, or to improved trade and better employment. The figures give us the combined effect of both causes, and do not help us to discriminate the action of one from that of the other. There are always many influences at work in any social movement, and we have no sufficient means of discriminating the precise effect exerted by any one factor singly.

A number of complex considerations are involved even in the apparently simple attempt to compare the prices charged for a particular commodity at different times and under different circumstances. Any single quotation of price is a summary statement of the value of a commodity in terms of some form of

money. But neither the measure of value nor the thing measured can be regarded as constant. There have been changes in the range of general prices which have originated in alterations in the circulating medium; and on the other hand there are very few commodities—besides precious stones—in regard to which we can be certain that the quality has remained unaltered. The quality of a pound of mediaeval beef probably differed considerably from the prime cuts of the present day[1]; and at all events, the ox or the sheep was undoubtedly inferior to modern breeds in size and weight. These are the difficulties which must be faced, before satisfactory data can be obtained from mere quotations of price, for discussing such an apparently simple matter as the differences in the value of the same object in the same country at two different periods. Indeed an enquiry that seems to be very roundabout may prove much more instructive. The study of the relative prices of two or more commodities at different times, enables us to evade some of the confusions which arise from changes in the value of the Circulating Medium. Professor Nicholson has shown from his admirable chapter on this subject[2] how much light may be thrown on social and economic changes by the careful pursuit of this line of investigation.

The difficulty is greatly enhanced if we set ourselves to compare such ill-defined *quanta* as the "material comfort" of the labourer in different centuries. To solve the question at all we must know (*a*) not only what he could get by paying for it, as compared with what the modern labourer can get, but we must take account (*b*) of cases where the modern labourer has to pay for things which the mediaeval labourer got for nothing, and (*c*) of things which the modern labourer habitually uses, and which the mediaeval labourer never had at all. That is to say, to estimate the standard of comfort, we must not only know (*a*) the *purchasing power of wages*, but take account (*b*) of the increased necessity of *purchasing* fuel in modern times, and (*c*) of the increased use of tea, tobacco and so forth. These last obviously imply a change in the standard of comfort, for the better if they are additional luxuries, and for the worse, if they are substitutes for things containing more sustenance.

There is a further difficulty; it is now recognised that the question of a labourer's comfort depends, not merely on his own

[1] H. Hall, *The Roast Beef of Old England*, in the *Antiquarian*, 1882.

[2] *Principles of Political Economy*, III. 65.



wages, but on the family income[1]; Le Play and his school have put this matter beyond discussion. Before, then, we can get satisfactory information regarding the standard of comfort we must know what opportunities there are for bye-employment and domestic industry.

These considerations are all necessary to get any statement on the subject which shall be worth having; but they are so complicated, that it seems impossible to give each of them their due weight. On this ground Professor Thorold Rogers has taken the bold course of simplifying the problem as much as possible, by leaving these confusing elements on one side[2]. He takes individual earnings as typical of family earnings, and discusses the standard of comfort of the labourer on the simpler issue of the purchasing power of his wages. But the quotations for rates of wages, on which he relies, are often statements of payments made *per day;* if the standard of comfort is to be estimated by the *free income*, which the labourer had (for clothes, &c.) after purchasing necessary food, it is necessary to know how regularly he was employed. Where we do not know this, we are forced to assume it, so as to discuss the problem at all. But regularity of employment depends on (1) opportunity of employment, and (2) on willingness to work; and these are uncertain elements which make it very difficult to hazard a reasonable assumption for any period in the past.

There are two periods during which it appears, from comparing the price of food and the rates of wages, that the labourer must have been specially well off, viz. 1401–1499, and 1701–1766. But it seems very doubtful whether there was much regularity of employment at either time. The evidence of the decay of towns

[1] The family is an element of uncertainty both as to income and expenditure. The difficulties of comparing the price of labour in our land in different centuries, are brought out in a few sentences about the price of labour in different states at the same date. "1st. The necessaries of a family is a vague term. 2dly. A family is vague; it may be four or ten persons. 3dly. A day's work is vague; it may be six hours or sixteen. 4thly. The quantity of labour in a state is uncertain. 5thly. The seasons and weather are various as to heat and cold, which must vary the price of labour. 6thly. The value of money is different, so that in one country an ounce of silver will purchase a sack of wheat, and twenty days' labour; in another but a bushel, and five days' labour. What a perplexity arises hence! But when the price of labour is talked of, and compared between two states, &c., all these ought to be considered." [Temple] *Considerations on Taxes*, p. 42 n.

[2] "I assumed that the peasant and the artisan work 300 days in the year. It is quite possible that they did not get so much employment, perhaps that they worked more days, or on certain occasions increased their earnings by bye-employments, by the labour of their wives, their sons, and their daughters. But in calculations such as I am making, provided you take what it may be conceived the workmen could not do without, the comparison is made more obvious if the fewest and simplest factors are taken." *Agriculture and Prices*, v. 618.

(Vol. I., pp. 453, 507), and increase of sheep-farming (Vol. I., pp. 403, 526) goes to prove that there were many districts where employment was not to be had at all regularly during the fifteenth century. Again, the constant complaint of laziness in the eighteenth century seems to show that the labourers, who had the opportunity of working, often preferred to take out their enjoyment in the form of idling. (See above, pp. 566, 855 n. 1.)

It has been the habit of economists from the time of the statute of Elizabeth to think of wages as varying according to the plenty and scarcity of the time; that is, that when food is dear wages should be high, and that wages may be low when food is cheap. But Temple, if he was the author of the *Essay on Trade and Commerce*, gives expression to an opposite view. "It is the quantity of labour and not the price of it, that is determined by the price of provisions and other necessaries." (p 40.) According to his observations, when men could easily earn a living, they would not work more than half their time, but when food was dear, they were ready to put in six days a week. This doctrine, which was formulated after experience of a period of comparative plenty, was certainly confirmed during the miserable days which succeeded the peace, when the men were accustomed to labour for excessive hours because food was so dear.

Where there are high rates of wages and plenty of employment is to be had, it is clear that the labourers have an opportunity of raising their standard of material comfort. There are too many pessimists who call attention to the strength of human passions, and human folly, and who despair of these opportunities being ever well used. The followers of Malthus are inclined to say that if food is cheap, there will only be a reckless increase of the population; teetotalers are inclined to insist that high wages too often mean a large drink bill; and others may urge that high wages only lead to idleness and dissipation. With so many temptations at work, it need be no matter for surprise that during all these centuries of increasing wealth, the labourers' standard of comfort has changed but little for the better; that while many have risen out of the labouring class, the standard of the class has been hardly altered at all. But at least the experience of the past may help us to understand that no permanent improvement is necessarily brought about by increased opportunities for material well-being, but only by the intellectual and moral changes which



enable men to take advantage of the opportunities that offer, be they great or small.

From the foregoing remarks it appears that very little reliance can be placed on conclusions drawn from quotations of prices as to the actual material comfort enjoyed by the labourer at any period. At the same time, as the question is constantly raised, it may not be out of place to give the calculations made by Arthur Young and commended by Tooke, for what they are worth.

PRICES AND WAGES IN ENGLAND, 1200 to 1810.—Comparative Statement framed by Arthur Young in 1812, upon the principle of representing the facts of 1810 by the number twenty (20), and the facts of the preceding periods by the proportion (in figures) borne by them to that Number.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Food. | | | | Other Articles. | | | | Wages. | |
| Periods. | | Wheat. | Barley and Oats. | Beef, Mutton, Veal, Pork, Bacon, Butter, Cheese. | Victualling Office. Beef and Pork. | Wool (*Combing*). | Horses. | Coals at Bethlehem Hospital. | Manufactures at Greenwich Hospital. | Agricultural Labour. | Carpenters and Masons. |
| 100 | 1200–99 | 5½ | 4¾ | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3½ | ... |
| ,, | 1300–99 | 6¼ | 5 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 4¾ | 4½ |
| ,, | 1400–99 | 3 | 2¾ | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5½ | 5¾ |
| ,, | 1500–99 | 6 | 4¾ | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5½ | 4½ |
| ,, | 1600–99 | 9¼ | 8¼ | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 8 | 7 |
| ,, | 1700–99 | 9¼ | 11¼ | 10¼ | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 12½ | 11½ |
| 66 | 1701–66 | 7¾ | 7¼ | 7½ | 7¼ | 12 | 15¾ | 13½ | 14½ | 10 | ... |
| 23 | 1767–89 | 11 | 11 | 11½ | 11 | 15⅓ | 17¼ | 14⅓ | 14 | 12½ | ... |
| 14 | 1790–1803 | 13 | 16¼ | 16½ | 17 | 16⅙ | 19½ | 15¾ | 15½ | 16¾ | ... |
| 7 | 1804–10 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| 34 | 1767–1800 | 12 | 11½ | 13¼ | 12⅓ | 12 | ... | 14¼ | 15¾ | 14 | ... |

NOTE.—This Table may be read thus:—The price of a given quantity of, say, wheat (col. 3), was represented in 1810 by the number 20; and the price of the same quantity of wheat in coinage, of the same weight and fineness, was, in the period, say 1500—99, represented by the number 6; hence, the price of wheat in 1810, compared with 1500—99, had risen 233 per cent.

The "Manufactures at Greenwich Hospital" (col. 10) include shoes, stockings, hats, and mops.

Arthur Young combined several of the separate elements together, in order to simplify the general view, and the following were the results, viz. :

*Combinations obtained from the preceding Table.*

| 1 | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 5 | | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Periods. | Wheat, Barley, and Oats *united.* (Cols. 3 and 4.) | – | *Wheat* and Beef, &c. *united.* (3 and 5.) | – | *Corn* and Beef, &c. *united.* (3, 4, and 5.) | – | Labour, Corn, and Beef, &c. *united.* (3, 4, 5, and 11.) | – | Labour singly. (11.) |
| 1200–99 | 5 | – | .. | – | .. | – | ... | – | $3\frac{1}{2}$ |
| 1300–99 | $5\frac{1}{2}$ | – | ... | – | .. | – | .. | – | $4\frac{3}{4}$ |
| 1400–99 | 3 | – | ... | – | ... | – | ... | – | $5\frac{1}{2}$ |
| 1500–99 | 5 | – | $5\frac{1}{4}$ | – | ... | – | ... | – | $5\frac{1}{2}$ |
| 1600–99 | $8\frac{3}{4}$ | – | 8 | – | ... | – | ... | – | 8 |
| 1700–99 | $10\frac{1}{4}$ | – | $9\frac{1}{4}$ | – | ... | – | ... | – | $12\frac{1}{2}$ |
| 1701–66 | $7\frac{1}{2}$ | – | $7\frac{1}{2}$ | – | $7\frac{1}{2}$ | – | $8\frac{1}{4}$ | – | 10 |
| 1767–89 | 11 | – | $11\frac{1}{4}$ | – | $11\frac{1}{4}$ | – | $11\frac{1}{2}$ | – | $12\frac{1}{2}$ |
| 1790–1803 | $14\frac{1}{2}$ | – | $14\frac{3}{4}$ | – | $15\frac{1}{2}$ | – | 16 | – | $16\frac{3}{4}$ |
| 1804–10 | 20 | – | 20 | – | 20 | – | 20 | – | 20 |
| 1767–1800 | $11\frac{3}{4}$ | – | $12\frac{3}{4}$ | – | $12\frac{1}{4}$ | – | 13 | – | 14 |

According to these figures, it is obvious that the periods during which a given quantity of *Labour* would command the largest quantity of *Food*, were the periods 1400–99 and 1701–66. Tooke, *Prices*, VI. 391.

For more recent periods it is possible to express the variations in the purchasing power of money by means of an index number, which is obtained by stating the price of each of a number of commodities in any subsequent year in the form of a percentage of the price of the same commodity in 1845—50, and then taking the sum of these percentages for the whole number of commodities. This is the plan adopted by the *Economist*, based on the figures for twenty-two articles. It gives 2947 as the index number for 1873, or an average rise of from 100 to 134. Want of data renders it impossible to calculate these changes for the sixteenth, seventeenth, or eighteenth centuries.

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