




ECONOMIC CONDITIONS: 1815 & 1914



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ECONOMIC CONDITIONS 1815 & 1914

BY
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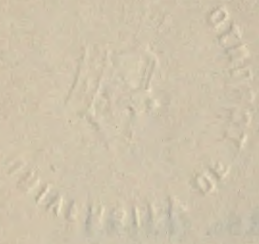


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ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

1815 & 1917



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PREFACE

THIS essay was originally written under the title of "The Economic Condition of the People of England in 1815 in Comparison with the Present Day," and won the Paul Philip Reitlinger Prize in the University of London in 1915. The subject was set in the autumn of 1914, and the essay was written before the effects of the war (apart from the confusion at its outbreak) on the national welfare had begun to be felt, or their significance realized. In 1815 the country, with the rest of Europe, awoke from a nightmare of war. In 1914 Europe entered into a second and more terrible nightmare, in which England is more involved than in the previous case.

At the present time when half the able-bodied male population is cheerfully submitting to a complete regimen of work, religion, diet, sleep, clothing, cleanliness, and rate and manner of movement; when the remainder of the population is grumblingly acquiescing in the restrictions of lighting facilities, the regulation of food and drink supply and other annoyances; when economic England has become England at war, war being the negation of economics; and when, to quote a *true* statement by the German Chancellor,

“the spiritual and material progress which were the pride of Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century are threatened with ruin;” this survey of the effect of a century’s progress on the economic conditions of the people of England, is published in the hope that, as the history of the past century has displayed the ability of the “people” to occupy fitly a position of ever-growing importance in the economy of the nation and to deal successfully with internal problems, so the development of that ability will, in the present century, extend with salutary results to the wider and more intricate field of international problems.

H. R. HODGES.

December 1916.

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ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

1815 AND 1914

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE importance of the date "1815" for the purpose of comparison with the present day is due to circumstances which may well be described by the following quotations: "The history of the nineteenth century begins about 1780 when the cotton inventions of Arkwright and others were taking effect and when the Bridgewater canals and improved roads were making transport comparatively cheap and easy,"¹ but "During the course of the [Napoleonic] War, England suspended almost all internal improvement."² "The year 1815, indeed, marks an epoch. . . . Twenty-five years before as it seemed Europe had fallen into a dream; the dream had rapidly grown into a nightmare, and now the world, having by dint of desperate effort thrown off the incubus and

¹ Lord Welby, *Journal of the Statistical Society*, January 1915.

² C. A. Fyffe, "History of Modern Europe," popular edition, p. 367.

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waked, looked forward to a life of sober reality, a period not of dreams but of facts.”¹

The fact that the year 1815 so excellently marks the date of the “awakening” to a life of sober reality renders it peculiarly difficult to estimate the condition of the people of the time. The economic stirrings prior to the outbreak of the Napoleonic Wars were overshadowed by and subordinated to a state of affairs in which the economic machinery was deranged. On the other hand, the immensity of the development in all branches of human activity in the hundred years following 1815 invests the inquiry with great interest.

“Few perhaps realize that the whole framework of modern life is economic . . . fewer still know how new a thing that framework really is—that it began with machinery and steam and has been built up within a century.”²

Although, in view of these statements, the warning of Maitland, that economic history is not catastrophic, may not be applicable to the nineteenth century, nevertheless, Mr. L. L. Price’s remark that people are too prone to think that changes are not only catastrophic but simultaneous and uniform is only too true. In some places we find survivals, in others anticipations, for in economic matters inertia is great, and in the nineteenth century the forces to overcome that inertia have been partial in appli-

¹ Alison Phillips, “Modern Europe,” p. 1.

² William Smart, “Economic Annals of the Nineteenth Century,” vol. 1801-20.

cation. The history of the first decades of the century is largely the history of the growth of that highly praised freedom to do those things which appeared to the practical men of the time to be beneficial—a freedom which took its origin in the revolutionary effects of the introduction of machinery and steam.

One particular aspect of this *laissez-faire* movement needs special attention. Bagehot, in dealing with the “postulates” of political economy, treated transferability of labour and capital as the two most important assumptions underlying economic argument; and in comparing the economic condition of the people of England in 1815 with that of the people of 1914, the reduction of the “friction” which prevented mobility of labour in 1815 requires special notice.

Mobility of labour may be analysed into two kinds—place-mobility and trade-mobility. Ability to move from place to place depends on legal restriction, and expense of moving; ability to move from trade to trade depends on Trade Union restriction, and the nature of the trades and the extent to which division of labour has been carried. The will to move from place to place or from trade to trade depends upon the spread of information which enables a comparison of conditions to be made, and a state of general education which will enable people to take advantage of information available and give them confidence to trust themselves in new parts or other occupations.

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Locomotion.

Private railways were first brought into use at the beginning of the seventeenth century in the Newcastle collieries, but the first Act of Parliament for the construction of a public railway was passed in 1801, and by 1815 only sixteen such Acts had been passed. The longest railway then contemplated was 26 miles (including branch lines). As late as 1838, G. R. Porter spoke with pride of the existence of fifty-four four-horse and forty-nine pair-horse mail-coaches with an average speed of less than nine miles an hour. This rate of travelling was described by him as being "whirled along," the personal safety of the passengers not being so endangered as might have been expected on account of the improved construction of the coaches and roads and of the superior character of the drivers. This mode of conveyance was "costly." The country in 1815 was, in fact, almost without passenger traffic.

At the present time there are over 16,000 miles of double and single railway line open in England and Wales, carrying passengers at the rate of 1d. a mile to all parts of the country. There are in addition over 2,000 miles of tramways and light railways. Almost every large city has its own tramway system, which plays an important part in conveying workers to and from their work. No less than 2,500,000,000 passengers are now carried yearly on these 2,200 miles of tramway and light railway.

Legal Restriction.

“One instance will show the spirit of the Government in 1815. It was penal for a skilled artisan to seek a better market for his labour by going abroad. He might even be arrested if suspected of meaning to do so.”¹ The motives which prompted this restriction of the workman’s freedom and the conditions which made its enforcement possible have long since disappeared.

There was also the law of settlement, the foundation of which was a statute of 1662, the provisions of which were based on the fact that “by reason of some defects in the law, poor people are not restrained from going from one parish to another, and therefore do endeavour to settle themselves in those parishes where there is best stock”—a state of affairs which is in accordance with modern economics. Abundant evidence as to the extent to which this law was operative was furnished to a Committee appointed in 1815 to inquire into the state of mendicity and vagrancy in the Metropolis and its neighbourhood. In the years 1812–15, when the average expenditure on the relief of the poor was just over six million pounds yearly, a further sum of £330,000 was spent yearly in “law, removals, etc.”

There is, unfortunately, no definite quantitative evidence of the immobility of the population in 1815 compared with 1914. The following figures, relating to a quarter of a century later, emphasize the dif-

¹ Lord Welby, *Journal of the Statistical Society*, January 1915.

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ference. The census returns for 1841 show that per 100 persons enumerated in that year

15·9 in England, and
13·9 in Wales,

were residing out of the counties of their birth. The corresponding figures for England and Wales in 1911, per 100 males and females respectively, were

32·9 males and
35·1 females.

Trade Unions.

While in 1815 lack of education and information, legal restrictions and the expense of travelling hindered place-mobility, there was little restriction on trade-mobility, except indirectly owing to the localization of industries in some cases preventing change of trade without change of place.

Prior to 1825 combinations of workmen were forbidden. To-day the great industries of the country (excluding agriculture) are organized, and "there is . . . pretty general agreement that at present Trade Union ideas and regulations are very inimical, if not hostile, to trade-mobility—the many bitter and prolonged disputes being cited in proof. So long, for instance, as a bricklayer is prevented by his union from doing stone-mason work, or a pattern-maker from being a joiner, it is hopeless to speak of mobility. . . . Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, M.P., gives the reason quite frankly. 'The organization

of labour is absolutely essential in view of the organization of capital, and it is practically impossible to organize labour if there is much fluidity of labour between trade and trade.'"¹

Information and Education.

Prior to 1833 not a penny of public money was spent on education. There existed in 1815 two societies for promoting education. They were the National Schools founded in 1811 by Dr. Andrew Bell, and the British Schools founded in 1814, continuing the monitorial method of teaching favoured by Lancaster. Both classes of school were supported by voluntary effort. Their work was partial and very inefficient. The attitude of the governing class towards the question of popular education is described in a "recollection" of Brougham (who had been chairman of a committee in 1816 appointed to consider the question of public instruction) that he had been accused of aiming at "dictatorship" by "undermining the foundations of all property." This fear of creating popular discontent was so great and persistent that even in 1847 G. R. Porter could say that the feeling "that an agricultural labourer was little above a brute, and that to educate him would merely have the effect of rendering him dissatisfied with his situation of life—is fast giving way to more enlightened and benevolent views."

The state of education, in as far as ability to sign one's own name is a test, in 1815 is shown by an

¹ *Majority Report, Poor Law Commission, 1905, Cd. 4499, p. 348.*

examination of marriage registers for the years 1839-44. Approximately one-third of the men and one-half of the women married in those years were unable to sign their own names.¹ The advance since that time has been enormous. Elementary education was made universally obtainable in 1870, compulsory by Acts of 1876 and 1880, and free in 1891. Not only is elementary education universal, free, and compulsory everywhere until the age of 12 years and in most places until the age of 14 years, but secondary and university education is becoming increasingly popular. Education, moreover, is regarded not merely as beneficial but "as a matter of national importance," "a national investment."²

The benefit to the people themselves is referred to by Sir Robert Giffen in the following terms: The expenditure on the old School Boards "may be regarded as an expenditure for the improvement of the whole people, by which their earning capacity is to be largely improved."³

The increased ability of the people of the country to take cognizance of matters other than the events occurring within the narrow circle of everyday life has called forth the large scale production of literature—newspapers and periodicals. It was not until 2nd November 1816 that the price of *Cobbett's Political*

¹ See G. R. Porter, "Progress of the Nation." Fifty per cent. of the people married were between 20 and 25 years of age, and 25 per cent. between 25 and 30 years of age in 1839-44.

² Marshall, "Principles," 5th edition, p. 216.

³ "Statistics," edited by Henry Higgs, C.B. (1913).

Register was reduced from 1s. 0½d. to 2d. a copy, and it was then addressed, for the first time, "To the Journeymen and Labourers of England, Scotland, and Ireland." The power of Cobbett's writings helped to give the expression of discontent among the labouring classes a new direction, turning their energies from rioting and machine-breaking to political agitation and other less violent methods of drawing attention to their condition. In addition to the function of popular instructor, the newspapers, by reason of their increased use and cheapness, became important means of directing all kinds of employers and workers to all sorts of workers and work respectively.

In 1909 an immense advance on this method of "exchanging labour" was made by an Act establishing State Labour Exchanges, under the direction of the Board of Trade. The work of this new departure is shown by the tables on pages 18 and 19.

It is seen that in 1914 over 2 million individuals effected 3½ million registrations for work; that 1½ million vacancies were notified to the Labour Exchanges, of which over 1 million were filled, 800,000 persons being provided with work at least once during the year.

In each year since the Exchanges opened, the totals have shown an increase, but in all the tables the totals are formed roughly three-fifths of men, one-fifth of women, the remaining one-fifth being boys and girls, boys rather exceeding girls in number.

From Tables II and III it is seen that about one-third of the registrations result in work being

TABLE I.
WORK OF LABOUR EXCHANGES.

Year.	Registrations.	Individuals Registered.	No. of Vacancies.		No. of Individuals given Work.
			Notified.	Filled.	
1911	2,040,447	1,513,369	788,609	621,410	469,210
1912	2,465,304	1,643,597	1,062,574	828,230	573,709
1913	2,965,893	1,871,671	1,222,828	921,853	652,306
1914	3,442,452	2,164,023	1,479,024	1,116,909	814,071
1914. Men	2,316,042	1,381,694	909,383	706,453	507,538
Women	707,071	476,926	312,344	232,935	160,145
Boys	211,898	157,093	157,278	103,280	85,068
Girls	207,441	148,310	100,019	74,236	61,320
Total, 1914 ...	3,442,452	2,164,023	1,479,024	1,116,909	814,071

found; and that three-quarters of the vacancies notified are filled by the Exchanges.

TABLE II.

PERCENTAGES OF NUMBERS REGISTERED FOR WHOM
WORK WAS FOUND.

Year.	Men.	Women.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
1911	27·5	31·7	46·7	42·9	31·0
1912	32·8	32·9	48·2	43·4	34·9
1913	30·8	37·9	54·1	47·1	34·9
1914	36·7	33·6	54·2	41·3	37·6

TABLE III.

PROPORTION PER CENT. OF VACANCIES FILLED TO
VACANCIES NOTIFIED.

Year.	Men and Women.	Boys and Girls.	All.
1912	80·0	69·7	77·9
1913	77·8	65·6	75·4
1914	76·9	69·0	75·5

This work has not superseded that of the newspapers which continue to link up workers and employers.

Casual labour is not included in the above tables. It is clearly a case for organization and regulation, and it receives special attention. In docks, for

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example, the amount of work is fluctuating, and, on account of harbour dues, demurrage, etc., it must be done quickly. The aim is to reduce to as small a number as possible the body of men doing odd jobs for which no skill is required and employment is intermittent. The work of the Labour Exchanges in this respect is shown in the following tables:—

HOP AND FRUIT PICKING.

Year.					Vacancies filled by Labour Exchanges.
1913	...	...	...	...	4,933
1914	...	...	...	...	8,031

GENERAL POST OFFICE—CASUAL HELP.*

Year.	Applications.	Vacancies filled.
1911	—	33,264
1912	—	39,700
1913	46,894	42,343
1914	44,626	35,553

CASUAL REGISTER.

Year.	No. of Men (Individuals) given Casual Employment.	No. of Jobs Given.	Dock.	Cloth (Manchester).	Cotton (Liverpool).
1912	—	224,036	158,881	62,047	3,108
1913	5,510	204,629	133,658	69,013	1,958
1914	5,730	154,967	114,401	38,914	1,652

* Included in tables previously given.

Other help is given to workers, in the form of the payment of fares for travelling to places where employment has been found through the Exchanges.

Years.	No. of Fares Paid.	Amount Advanced (Repayable).
1913	9,200	£2,900
1914	20,800	£7,600
Total 1910-1914 ...	54,800	£18,000

CHAPTER II

POPULATION

IN this chapter will be investigated some of the effects of the changes described in the last chapter by means of which the working population became able to understand its position and fitly to occupy a definite place in the economy of the nation. Although the inquiry relates to the "people of England" the Welsh counties have been included within the definition of "England"; first, and chiefly, because so much statistical information relates to England and Wales as a whole, and because, in dealing with such data, the influence of Wales, on account of the smallness of its population, is not great; secondly, because the counties are linked up industrially with the adjoining English counties.

In spite of the modern practice of regarding the "people" of England as consisting of some large percentage of the population of England measured from the lower end of the social scale, it is inexpedient to attempt to draw a line at any particular class of occupation or income.

The "economic condition" of the people of England may be otherwise described as the state of

their material welfare, the investigation of which, for the purposes of comparison with 1815, covers much more than a statement of wages and prices which for a shorter period is frequently deemed sufficient.

For the purpose of the inquiry the country has been divided into eight areas, in the composition of which attention has been paid to geographical proximity and industrial similarity. The latter consideration has not presented much difficulty in most cases, for the Industrial Revolution was in full progress at the time of the French wars, so that for the most part counties which had made headway in manufactures or mining or were still preponderantly agricultural by 1815, are the leaders of their respective industries to-day. The differences of intensity (of agriculture or manufactures) have, however, become more marked.

The growth of the population of England and Wales in the nineteenth century contrasts strikingly with that of the preceding century, when it is estimated (from parish registers and hearth and poll-tax returns) that the numbers increased only from $5\frac{1}{2}$ millions to nearly 9 millions, two-thirds of the increment taking place after 1760 :—

Year.			Population (thousands).			Increase per cent. in Preceding Decade.
1700	5,475	—
1710	5,240	— 5
1720	5,565	+ 6
1730	5,796	+ 4

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Year.	Population (thousands).			Increase per cent. in Preceding Decade.		
1740	6,064	+ 5
1750	6,467	...	...	+ 7
1760	6,736	...	...	+ 4
1770	7,428	...	...	+ 10
1780	7,953	...	...	+ 7
1790	8,675	...	...	+ 9
1801	8,892	...	...	+ 3

Between 1811 and 1911 the population increased from 10,160,000 to 36,080,000, a $3\frac{1}{2}$ -fold increase. In the decade 1811-21 the rate of increase was 18 per cent. This high percentage is described in Marshall's "Principles" as one of the results of "indiscriminate poor law allowances" and the removal of "the pressure of the great war and the high price of corn."

In the succeeding nine decades the rate of increase has varied between 11 per cent. and 16 per cent.

Decade.	Per cent. Increase of Population. ¹				
1811-21	18·1
1821-31	15·8
1831-41	14·5
1841-51	12·7
1851-61	11·9
1861-71	13·2
1871-81	14·4
1881-91	11·7
1891-1901	11·7
1901-11	10·9

The changes in each of the eight areas into which the country has been divided are set out in the following table:—

¹ Cd. 6399, p. 393.

POPULATION (Thousands).

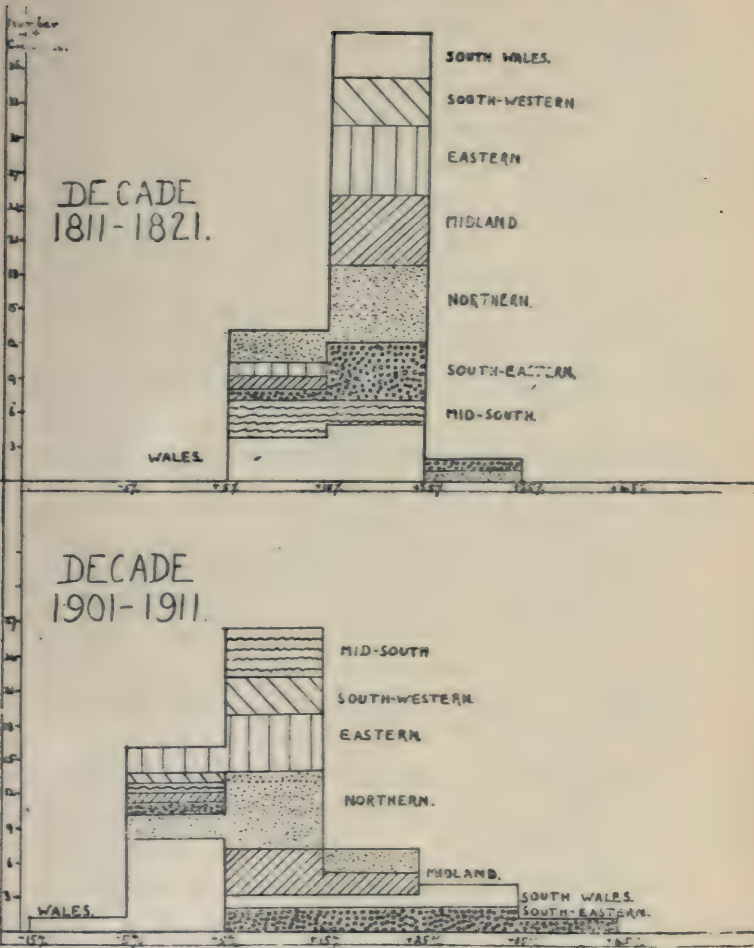
District.	1811.		1911.		Increase per cent., 1811-1911. (5)
	Number. (1)	Increase per cent., 1811-21. (2)	Number. (3)	Increase per cent., 1901-11. (4)	
SOUTH WALES—Monmouthshire, Glamorganshire, Breconshire, Carmarthenshire	262	17	1,736	29	560
NORTHERN—Cumberland, Lancashire, Cheshire, Northumberland, Durham, Westmorland, Yorkshire, Flintshire, Denbighshire	2,681	21	12,339	10	360
SOUTH-EASTERN—London, Middlesex, Essex, Hertfordshire, Surrey, Sussex, Kent, Hampshire...	2,449	19	10,818	12	340
MIDLAND—Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Northamptonshire... ..	1,324	16	5,029	11	280
MID-SOUTH—Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire, Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire	835	15	1,713	6	105
EASTERN—Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Huntingdonshire, Rutlandshire	993	18	1,926	8	94
SOUTH-WESTERN—Cornwall, Devonshire, Dorsetshire, Somersetshire	1,028	16	1,709	5	66
REST OF WALES—Anglesey, Carnarvonshire, Merionethshire, Montgomeryshire, Cardiganshire, Radnorshire, Pembrokehire, Shropshire, Herefordshire	589	12	808	0	37
ENGLAND AND WALES	10,160	18	36,080	11	255

The statement above (page 23, lines 13–16) with reference to the workings of the Industrial Revolution is confirmed by this table. Whether one considers columns (2) or (4), the order of districts is not much different from that in which they are placed by reference to column (5). Examination of the census returns shows that the same order holds good if the rates of increase in any decade of the century be substituted for either of the columns (2), (4), or (5). While, however, the order remains unchanged, it has been ascertained that the range of the increments per cent. has increased in almost every successive decade.

If the individual county rates of increase of population be considered, the increase in the range is, of course, more marked than in the case of the groups. The change is illustrated in the following diagrams and table:—

Decade.	Counties showing the—			
	Smallest Increase in Population.		Greatest Increase in Population.	
		Per cent.		Per cent.
1801–11	Rutlandshire...	0	Merionethshire	34
1811–21	Radnorshire ...	5	Lancashire ...	27
1821–31	Yorkshire (N. Riding) and Merionethshire	3	Monmouthshire	36
1891–1901	Westmorland	– 3	Middlesex ...	46
1901–11	Merionethshire	– 7	Middlesex ...	42

The fact brought to light by the above figures, that those parts of the country (counties, one might say) which were developing manufactures, and in which the growth of population was very rapid in 1815, are



PERCENTAGE CHANGES IN POPULATION OF GROUPS OF COUNTIES
OF ENGLAND AND WALES.

the leaders to-day, has found its greatest exemplification in the case of towns. The manufacturing interests in the towns encouraged migration, so far preventing the rigid enforcement of the Settlement Law. According to Mr. Briggs: "Much of the movement was voluntary, and more, increased mobility must have come even if there had been no revolutions. The old Settlement Laws and the Statute of Apprentices, which regulated entry into trade, were still nominally in force, but were mere survivals and bound to become a dead letter should events turn against them."¹ As we have seen in Chapter I, events did turn against them, but the small headway made by the towns by the first decade of the century appears to afford proof of the efficiency of the physical and legal and intellectual hindrances to movement.

"In 1801 the condition of things was that whilst a commencement had been made in the development of our manufactures and mines, things had not proceeded very far, and there was no town outside London which contained so many as 100,000 inhabitants. The number of those which had at the least 4,000 inhabitants I make to have been 112; and there were smaller towns, ranging from a population of 1,000 upwards, to the number of 457. . . . Even of the smaller towns with 1,000 inhabitants and upwards, as many as 63 were so mixed up with rural populations that I have found it better to merge them in the mass."²

Mr. Welton's evidence is authentic.

¹ "Economic History," p. 216.

² T. A. Welton, *Journal of the Statistical Society*, December 1900, p. 527 seq.

The table on pages 30 and 31 sets out the populations of the largest of the towns (together with their 10-yearly rates of increase) at the first four censuses. The figures are abstracted from "Accounts and Papers" of the 1831 enumeration (vol. 5). It purports to give all the towns in Great Britain having a population of 50,000 or more. Dundee with 45,000 and Hull with 48,000 are, however, included.

Excluding the Scottish towns, there were then, in 1811, seven towns with a population of at least 50,000. By 1821 the number had increased to eight. These eight towns contained, in 1821, 16 per cent. of the whole population of England and Wales.

To compare with this we have, in 1911, no less than ninety-eight towns with a population of at least 50,000. They contained 48 per cent. of the whole population of England and Wales. The distribution of these towns at the respective dates was as follows:—

Districts (as in Table on page 25).	Number of Towns with Population of at least 50,000.	
	1821.	1911.
South Wales	—	6
Northern	2	38
South-Eastern	1	21
Midland	1	17
Mid-South	2	8
Eastern	1	5
South-Western	1	3
Rest of Wales	—	—
Total	8	98

POPULATION OF CERTAIN TOWNS, 1801-31.

Town (or District).	Number (thousands).				Increase, per cent.		
	1801.	1811.	1821.	1831.	1801-11.	1811-21.	1821-31.
	London (City)—Within the Walls	75	55	56	58	- 35	+ 1	+ 3
Without the Walls	82	65	69	68	- 25	+ 6	- 0
Southwark (Borough)	67	72	86	91	+ 7	+ 19	+ 7
Westminster (City)	158	162	182	202	2	12	11
Parishes within bills of mortality	365	499	617	761	37	24	23
Adjacent parishes	118	156	216	294	32	38	36
Metropolis	865	1,010	1,226	1,474	17	21	20
Edinburgh (City)	83	103	138	162	25	34	18
Manchester, Salford, and suburbs	95	116	162	238	22	40	47
Glasgow and suburbs (City)... ..	77	101	147	202	30	46	38
Birmingham and suburbs (City)	74	86	107	142	16	24	33

POPULATION

Leeds ¹	40	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Norwich (City)	37	37	50	61	1	35	22	—	—
Sheffield ¹	33	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Paisley, with the Abbey (Parish)	31	37	47	57	18	28	22	—	—
Nottingham (Town)	29	34	40	51	19	18	25	—	—
Liverpool, with Toxteth Park (Borough)	80	100	132	189	26	31	44	—	—
Bristol, with suburbs (City)	64	76	88	104	20	15	18	—	—
Bath ¹	33	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Newcastle-upon-Tyne, with Gateshead (Town)	37	37	47	58	0	29	23	—	—
Hull, with Sculcoats (Borough)	35	32	42	49	—	29	18	—	—
Dundee	26	30	31	45	13	3	48	—	—
Plymouth, Devonport, and Stonehouse (Borough)	43	56	61	76	30	9	23	—	—
Portsmouth, Portsea, and Gosport (Borough)	48	53	57	63	21	7	11	—	—

¹ Authority, T. A. Welton.

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This again emphasizes the differences noted in dealing with county populations.

Another aspect of the same question is given by the following figures:—

Density of Population (England and Wales).	1801.	1911.
Whole population (per 100 acres)	24	97
Of population of districts whose characteristics were rural in 1911 (per 100 acres)	16	32

The foregoing evidence of the urbanization of the population is emphasized by the table opposite.

From the last column it is seen that after a certain point of size is attained, the rate of increase of population is checked—there is no more room in the town—a point of saturation is reached—the surplus population goes to spread the urban area outside the town boundary. If we deal with the rate of increase of all urban districts as compared with that of the whole country and of rural districts, we see evidence of the same thing.

RATES OF INCREASE OF POPULATION.¹

	1891-1901.	1901-11.
Population of England and Wales	Per cent. 11·7	Per cent. 10·9
(a) Population of 1,137 urban districts	15·2	11·1
(b) " 98 largest towns	15·3	8·7
(c) " 657 rural districts	2·9	10·2
(d) " London	7·3	- 0·3
(e) " 105 entirely rural registra- tion districts	1·3	9·8

¹ (b) and (d) are included in (a). (a) contained 78 per cent. of the population of England and Wales.

URBAN DISTRICTS CLASSIFIED BY POPULATION.

Populations (thousands).	Number of Districts.	Aggregate Population in 1911 (thousands).	Aggregate Population (same Areas) in 1901 (thousands).	Mean per cent. Increase or Decrease.
Over 1,000	1 ¹	4,523	4,536	-0.3
500-1,000	3	1,987	1,872	+6.1
250-500	8	2,640	2,451	7.7
150-250	10	1,915	1,677	14.2
100-150	22	2,632	2,304	14.2
75-100	17	1,435	1,236	16.1
50-75	37	2,172	1,846	17.7
40-50	25	1,101	976	12.9
30-40	50	1,717	1,392	23.3
20-30	72	1,755	1,529	14.8
15-20	84	1,434	1,230	16.6
10-15	147	1,822	1,558	17.0
5-10	255	1,833	1,628	12.6
4-5	107	479	434	10.2
3-4	97	337	313	7.6
2-3	100	250	236	6.2
Under 2	102	137	132	3.5
Total ...	1,137	28,169	25,351	11.1

¹ London (administrative County) reckoned as one district.

While the rate of increase of the total population in the two decades was practically the same, London, the largest urban area, has ceased to grow in numbers. In the 98 largest towns (containing one-half of the population of England and Wales) the rate of increase dropped from 15 per cent. to 9 per cent. In 1,137 urban districts the change was from 15 per cent. to 11 per cent., while in the 657 rural districts there was an increase from 3 per cent. to 10 per cent., and in 105 entirely rural registration districts from $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to 10 per cent.

To conclude, we may say:—

(1) That while in 1801–11 the urban population was growing no faster than the rural population, in 1811–21, and again in 1821–31, the town population began to gain on the rural population in point of numbers.

(2) That during the century the process of urbanization has proceeded at a great rate.

(3) That, at the present day, “the proportion of persons in England and Wales living under urban conditions was 78 per cent. and under rural conditions 22 per cent.”¹

(4) That the process of urbanization has *in places* (the most urban areas) reached “saturation point”—the point at which in the present state of sanitation, building, locomotion, etc., the people have ceased to find it in their interest to increase the density of population.

¹ Preliminary Report of the 1911 Census.

CHAPTER III

FINANCE

BEFORE proceeding to deal with the economic condition of the people of England, in the narrowest sense, we must briefly refer to the important effect of the immobility of population at the beginning of the nineteenth century on the political position of the people, and thus indirectly on their economic condition, and how the changes described in Chapters I and II have aided the amelioration of that condition.

The rural parts of the country in 1815 were in the hands of the justices, bodies of whom, kept select by a high property qualification, and chosen by the county gentry, had enormous powers. The local authority was the parish. It was not until 1834 that the authority of the parish began to be reduced. The control of the highways, paupers, sanitation, police, and the power of levying rates were all parochial. The greatest of these powers was the relief of the poor, a duty which was most inefficiently performed.

In the way of public health administration, all that existed at the beginning of the century was a law as to public nuisances, damage for or restraint of nuisance.

Prior to 1829 there was no professional police. Even then they were introduced into London only. The persons appointed, often unwillingly, by the justices to perform police duties in most cases carried on another occupation.

The care of roads, which had, since 1711, been given to commissions or trusts (of which there existed 11,000 in 1820), in which the manufacturers' need for good communications found expression, was comparatively efficiently performed.

There was, in fact, what has been termed a parochial blight.

In the case of the towns, while external freedom had been attained, internal government had become oligarchical. The proportion of freemen to the town populations is estimated to have decreased from one-third about the year 1680 to one-tenth in 1835. In other words, the governing bodies became "close."

The Commission appointed to inquire into the state of affairs reported, in 1834, that "the corporations look upon themselves and are considered by the inhabitants as separate and exclusive bodies . . . in most places all identity of interest between the corporation and the inhabitants had disappeared." The Commissioners also reported that there was in corporate towns "a discontent under the burdens of local taxation, while revenues that ought to be applied for the public advantage are directed from their legitimate use." Among the uses to which the money was put were enumerated "wasteful benefit of

individuals," "feasting," and "salaries of unimportant officers."

In the words of Seignobos, "English society [*circa* 1814] was based on the distinctions between rich and poor. . . . The whole nation, in the contemplation of the law, was swayed by two rival aristocracies: that of landed proprietors allied with the clergy, supreme in the country parts; and that of capitalists and great manufacturers, supreme in the cities. These were the economic masters of the country."¹

It was this state of affairs which made Disraeli (referring to 1837-38) refer to the two English nations—"the RICH and the POOR"—"between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy . . . ordered by different manners, and are not governed by the same laws."

The state of finance alleged to have existed in the towns by the Commissioners has been noted.

The result of the above-described division of society was that in the parishes "for the most part taxes levied for local purposes in England are voted in parochial assemblies by those who are to pay them or by their delegates."²

By far the largest part of the taxes consisted of an assessment for the support of the indigent poor. From 1812 to 1830 the money so spent scarcely ever fell below four-fifths of the total amount raised by parochial assemblies.

¹ "Contemporary Europe," pp. 20 and 21.

² G. R. Porter, "Progress of the Nation."

PAROCHIAL FINANCE.

(£ million.)

Year.	Total Sum Assessed and Levied.	Expenditure.			Total.
		Poor Relief.	Law, Removals, etc.	Other Matters.	
Average of					
1783-85	2.2	1.9	0.1	0.2	2.2
1803	5.3	4.1	0.2	1.0	5.3
1812-13	8.6	6.7	0.3	1.9	8.9
1813-14	8.4	6.3	0.3	1.9	8.5
1814-15	7.5	5.4	0.3	1.8	7.5
1815-16	6.9	5.7	—	1.2	6.9
1816-17	8.1	6.9	—	1.2	8.1
1817-18	9.3	7.9	—	1.4	9.3
1818-19	8.9	7.5	—	1.3	8.8
1819-20	8.7	7.3	—	1.3	8.7
1820-21	8.4	7.0	—	1.4	8.3

In effect, one may say that in the matter of local finance the welfare of the lower nation was not considered. There was, indeed, slight further provision made by various statutes for defraying certain miscellaneous local public expenses by means of a "county rate" imposed by the justices in their several counties. The principal objects for which provision was made were the repair of bridges, repair and building of gaols, houses of correction, shire-halls, and courts of justice; the construction and support of lunatic asylums; the expense of criminal prosecutions and other judicial expenditure; the expenses of militia and of county elections. The yield of the county rate was, however, very small, averaging £320,000 per annum in 1801-5, £380,000 for 1806-10, £530,000 for 1811-15, and £625,000 for 1815-20.

It is indeed true to say that the only considerable aid or benefit conferred upon the lower nation was that of poor relief, and we shall see that to a great extent this form of relief was in reality an addition to wages paid.

The state of national finance must also be noticed. In the first twenty years of the nineteenth century, national expenditure was, on the average, nine or ten times as great as local expenditure.

In examining the details of the national expenditure, the outstanding feature is the "exceedingly great proportion appropriated to the upkeep of the naval and military forces which the circumstances of the time made it necessary to maintain."¹

The actual position is given in the following tables. It will be noted that in the finance of the central government figures cannot be given separately for England and Wales.

WAR EXPENDITURE.

(£ millions.)

1801 37	1808 45	1815 55
1802 25	1809 48	1816 27
1803 23	1810 48	1817 17
1804 24	1811 52	1818 16
1805 39	1812 57	1819 17
1806 41	1813 71	1820 16
1807 41	1814 72	

¹ G. R. Porter, p. 514.

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CENTRAL FINANCE (UNITED KINGDOM).—(£ millions.)

Year.	Revenue into Exchequer. Produce of Taxes. (1)	Received on a/c of Loans & Exchequer Bills. (2)	Total Raised.	Interest Paid on Debt.	Redemption of Debt.	Current Annual Expenditure.	Total Paid and Expended in the Year.
1792	19	—	19	10	2	8	20
1801	34	27	61	20	—	41	61
1802	36	15	51	20	—	30	50
1803	39	0	47	21	—	28	49
1804	46	15	61	21	—	39	59
1805	51	17	68	22	—	45	67
1806	56	13	69	23	—	46	69
1807	59	10	70	23	—	44	68
1808	63	12	75	23	—	50	73
1809	64	12	76	24	—	52	76
1810	67	8	75	24	—	53	77
1811	65	19	84	25	—	59	84
1812	65	25	90	26	—	63	89
1813	69	40	108	28	—	78	106
1814	71	35	106	30	—	77	107
1815	72	20	92	32	—	61	92
1816	62	1	63	33	—	32	65
1817	52	—	52	31	2	22	55
1818	54	—	54	31	2	21	53
1819	53	—	53	31	3	21	55
1820	54	—	54	31	2	21	54

The position may best be summarized by an extract from Mr. S. Buxton's "Finance and Politics":—

"Twenty-two years later [1815] they emerged from the war—numbering some twenty millions of persons; burdened with a debt of nine hundred millions; with a revenue of nearly eighty, and with an expenditure of a hundred millions, of which the debt now absorbed thirty-two, and the Army and Navy over fifty-six millions. . . . Everything taxed, all industries 'protected,' and wheat at famine prices." Above all—"The excitement and glory of war had vanished." "The rulers were totally out of sympathy with the ruled."

Under taxes in column (1) opposite are included the yields of Customs and Excise, stamps, and the Post Office. Customs and Excise yielded £19 millions in 1801, and the yield rose steadily to £42 millions in 1815. This source of revenue yielded over one-half of the income for each year. In the same period the yield of stamp duties rose from £3 millions to £6 millions; Post Office net receipts from £1 million to £1½ millions.

The source of income which increased most rapidly was that of direct taxation, which mounted from £9 millions in 1801 to £22 millions in 1815.

The position of national and local finance at the present day is vastly different from that existing at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The following table gives a summary of modern local expenditure. The contrast of the latter with the table and the

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particulars of county expenditure in 1815 on page 38 cannot be emphasized by comment.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES' (ENGLAND AND WALES) PAYMENTS. (£ millions.)

Including Loan Charges and out of Loans.

Service.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
EDUCATION—Elementary	25½	25¾	26½
Higher... ..	5	6½	5¾
POOR RELIEF	12¾	12¾	12½
Lunatics and Asylums ...	4	4	4½
HOSPITALS (not Poor Law)... ..	2	1¾	2
HIGHWAYS, BRIDGES, FERRIES	16	16½	16¾
HARBOURS, DOCKS, CANALS, PIERS ...	30 ¹	9	8¾
GASWORKS	7½	7½	7¾
ELECTRICITY LIGHTING (not public) ...	4½	4¾	5½
TRAMWAYS AND LIGHT RAILWAYS ...	9½	9½	9¾
WATERWORKS (excluding M.W.B.) ...	7¾	8	7¾
POLICE	6¾	7	7½
PUBLIC LIBRARIES	¾	¾	¾
PUBLIC LIGHTING	2½	2½	2½
PARKS AND OPEN SPACES	1¾	1¾	2
SEWERAGE, disposal of	6¾	7	6½
OTHER... ..	23	23	24½
Total	166	147	151

¹ Including 22 accounted for by Port of London Authority.

AUTHORITIES SPENDING ABOVE SUMS IN 1909-10.

UNIONS AND PARISHES—In poor relief	15½
In other matters	1¾
Councils and meetings	¼
TOWN AND MUNICIPAL—Police, Sanitary, etc.	94½
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCILS	4½
COUNTY AUTHORITIES	19½
HARBOUR AUTHORITIES	30
OTHER	23

The late Sir Robert Giffen, referring to the growth of local expenditure by 1900 as compared with the first half of the nineteenth century, wrote: "Down to the middle of the century the expenditure of local authorities apart from the expenditure upon relief of the poor did not exceed a few millions sterling. . . . I believe that all this development implies great progress in civilization."¹

In 1815 the local authority (the parish) raised revenue by means of rates levied by those who were to pay them. The sources of modern local revenue may be summarized thus:—

	1909-10. (£ millions.)
Public rates	63
Government aid	21
Tolls, dues, and duties	7
Municipal undertakings	32
Repayments by private persons	1½
Loans	40
Miscellaneous: fees, penalties, sale of property, licences	6½
	<hr/> 168½

¹ "Statistics," p. 255.

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A comparison of the attached summary of modern central government expenditure with the table on page 40 likewise shows great changes.

IMPERIAL EXPENDITURE (UNITED KINGDOM). (£ millions.)

	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.	1912-13.	1913-14.
National Debt services	21½	24½	24½	24½	24½
Payment to local taxation accounts	9½	9¾	9½	9½	9¾
Development and Road Improvement Fund	—	1½	1¾	1½	1½
Other consolidated fund services (civil list, pensions, salaries, courts of justices, etc.) ...	1¾	1¾	1¾	1¾	1¾
Army	27½	27½	27½	28	28½
Navy	35¾	40½	42¾	44½	48¾
Civil Services—					
Public works and buildings ...	3	3	3½	3½	3½
Civil departments	3	3½	4	4½	4½
Law and justice	4	4½	4½	4½	4½
Education, art, and science ...	18	18¾	19	19½	19½
Foreign and colonial services ...	2	2	2	2½	1½
Non-effective and charitable ...	¾	¾	¾	¾	¾
Miscellaneous	½	1	¾	½	½
Insurance and Labour Exchanges (including Old Age Pensions)	8½	9¾	11¾	16¾	19½
Customs, Excise, Inland Revenue, and Post Office... ..	22	24	24½	27	29
Total	158	172	179	189	197

The development of local expenditure which met with Sir Robert Giffen's approval may be measured by the ratio of local to Imperial expenditure in 1815-16 and at the present day.

The ratios ¹ are:—

1814-15	$\frac{8}{106}$	1908-9	$\frac{140}{152}$
1815-16	$\frac{7\frac{1}{2}}{92}$	1909-10	$\frac{166}{158}$
		1910-11	$\frac{147}{172}$
		1911-12	$\frac{151}{179}$

The story of the causes of the immense alterations effected during the century as noted in this chapter needs no long telling. The people have gradually (notably since 1867) acquired a political weight which has been of incalculable economic importance to them. Their economic freedom has been rapidly achieved and is now well within their own hands. "The state seems to be God-given to enable society to organize on a grand scale for the accomplishment of practical ends far beyond the reach of the individual—ends upon which the welfare of the individual depends."²

¹ Of *English* local expenditure to *United Kingdom* central expenditure.

² Carl Plehn, "Public Finance," 2nd edition (1906), pp. 17 and 18.

The comparisons made in this chapter show clearly how, a century ago, the possibilities implied in the existence of "a state" were abused—or perhaps, to be less harsh—not realized, and how great have been the advances made in the nineteenth century towards the accomplishment of those great practical ends upon which the welfare of the individuals composing the State depends.

CHAPTER IV

OCCUPATIONS

THE preceding chapters have compared the numbers and distribution of the people of England in 1815 with the present day; and the change in the nature and extent of State care for the welfare of its people has been illustrated by reference to national and local finance. In the present chapter the occupations of the people will be dealt with. In this connection a statement as to the proportion borne by the occupiable members of the population to the total population at the two dates under consideration, must be made.

It will be recalled that in the first two decades of the nineteenth century there was a great increase in the rate of growth of the population as compared with the rate throughout the eighteenth century. There was accordingly, by 1821, a large proportion of young people.

Since 1876 (or thereabouts) the birth-rate has declined rapidly, and there has accordingly been a decline in the proportion of young people.¹ The

¹ The decline in the infant death-rate is quite recent—since 1900. See Registrar-General's Annual Reports.

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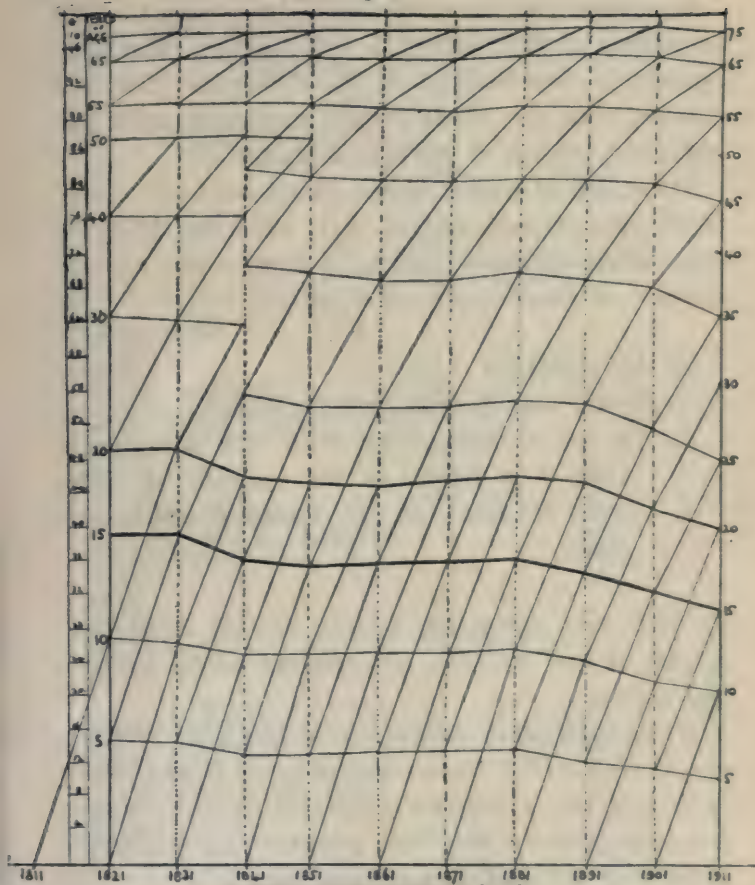
death-rate did not improve much in the first three-quarters of the century, but since then the decline has been rapid in consequence of sanitary improvements and in spite of the rapid growth of urban areas.¹

The results of these changes are shown in the diagram opposite. They may be tabulated:—

Age-group.	Percentage of Population in each Age-group.		
	1821.	1841.	1911.
Under 15 years	39	36	30
15-50 years	46	49	54
Over 50 years	15	15	16
All	100	100	100
Under 20 years	49	50	40
Over 20 years	51	50	60
All	100	100	100

This comparison yields facts of great importance in describing the economic condition of the people. There is, unfortunately, no means of comparing the proportion of persons actually occupied in 1815 with that shown by the recent census returns; but the

¹ The basis of these statements is the Registrar-General's Annual Report.



AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION OF ENGLAND AND WALES,
1821-1911.

great difference of the proportion of persons capable of occupation at the two dates should be borne in mind.

Information as to occupations of the people at the beginning of the century is very scanty. The table opposite is described by G. R. Porter as "the best abstract that has hitherto been attainable upon this important branch of political arithmetic."

There are no earlier figures comparable with these, for in the enumerations of 1811, 1821, and 1831, the information obtained relating to occupations was the number of *families* supported by—

- (1) Agriculture ;
- (2) Trade, manufacture, and handicraft ; or
- (3) All other occupations, with the addition in 1831 of a return of the number of males over 20 years of age classified under nine heads.

In 1801 the occupation census entirely failed from a want of uniformity in enumerating female children and servants.

While a complete comparison of this table with the results of the 1911 Census cannot be made, and while, in view of the fact that the position in 1841 (twenty-five years after the date with which we are concerned) must have changed considerably since 1815, the table on pages 52 and 53 is useful.

The first point of comparison lies in the proportion of occupied to unoccupied (including "retired," pensioners, and persons of independent means). The

1841.

NUMBERS EMPLOYED UNDER VARIOUS HEADS.

ENGLAND AND WALES.

(Thousands.)

	Males.		Females.		Total.
	20 Years and over.	Under 20 Years.	20 Years and over.	Under 20 Years.	
Commerce, trade, and manu- factures	1,750	318	391	159	2,619
Agriculture	1,042	162	48	9	1,261
Labour (not agricultural)	483	85	99	7	674
Army (including "on half-pay") and in service of East India Company—					
At home	30	6	—	—	36
Abroad	89	—	—	—	89
Navy and Merchant Service, in- cluding Navy half-pay, Marines, fishermen, etc., watermen—					
At home	88	7	—	—	95
Afloat	80	17	—	—	97
Professions—					
Clerical	20	—	—	—	20
Legal	14	—	—	—	14
Medical	18	—	1	—	19
Other pursuits requiring education	81	11	30	2	124
Government Civil Service	13	—	1	—	14
Municipal and parochial	20	—	2	—	22
Domestic servants	150	84	476	289	999
Alms people, paupers, pensioners, lunatics, and prisoners	65	28	60	23	176
Independent means	119	5	308	14	446
Total occupied	4,062	724	1,416	505	6,707
Remainder of population	239	2,936	3,059	3,157	9,391
Total	4,301	3,660	4,475	3,661	16,098

OCCUPATIONS (CONDENSED LIST) OF PERSONS, MALES AND FEMALES, AGED 10 YEARS AND UPWARDS, AND PROPORTIONS PER 1,000 OF SUCH POPULATION ENGAGED IN THE SEVERAL OCCUPATIONS IN 1911.

(Thousands.)

Occupation.	Population, aged 10 Years and Upwards.			Proportion per 1,000 of Population of 10 Years and Upwards.		
	Persons.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Males.	Females.
Total occupied and unoccupied	28,519	13,662	14,857	1,000	1,000	1,000
Retired or unoccupied	12,232	2,206	10,026	429	161	675
Engaged in occupations	16,287	11,456	4,831	571	839	325
1. General or local government	289	244	45	10	18	3
2. Defence of the country	206	206	—	7	15	—
3. Professional occupations	717	370	347	25	27	23
4. Domestic offices	1,895	161	1,734	66	12	117
5. Commercial occupations	790	663	127	28	49	9
6. Conveyance of men	1,447	1,417	31	51	104	2

OCCUPATIONS

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7. Agriculture	1,297	1,259	33	45	92	3
8. Fishing	25	25	0.1	1	2	—
9. Mines, etc.	1,045	1,039	6	37	76	0.4
10. Metals, machines, etc. ... ..	...	...	...	1,470	1,882	87	51	101	6
11. Precious metals, etc. ... ..	...	...	...	292	300	33	8	15	2
12. Building and construction ... ..	...	...	...	1,039	1,034	5	36	76	0.3
13. Wood, furniture, etc. ... ..	...	...	...	284	254	30	10	19	2
14. Brick, cement, etc.... ..	...	...	...	174	135	39	6	10	3
15. Chemicals, oil, etc.... ..	...	...	...	178	138	40	6	10	3
16. Skins, leather, etc.... ..	...	...	...	114	83	30	4	6	2
17. Paper, prints, etc. ... ..	...	...	...	348	226	122	12	17	8
18. Textile fabrics ... ..	...	...	...	1,314	570	744	46	42	50
19. Dress... ..	...	...	...	1,195	439	756	42	32	51
20. Food, drink, etc. ... ..	...	...	...	1,388	914	475	49	67	32
21. Gas, water, etc. ... ..	...	...	...	57	87	0.1	3	6	—
22. Other general and undefined	752	610	142	26	45	10
23. Unspecified or not occupied	12,232	2,206	10,026	429	161	675

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proportion of occupied persons to unoccupied persons was in 1841—

$$\frac{61}{100}$$

and in 1911—

$$\frac{81}{100}$$

a 33 per cent. increase.¹

On page 48 attention was drawn to the changes in the age constitution of the population. From the table on that page it will be seen that the proportions of the number of persons between the ages of 15 and 50 years to the number of persons below and above those ages respectively were in 1841—

$$\frac{96}{100}$$

and in 1911—

$$\frac{117}{100}$$

an increase of 22 per cent.

The proportions borne by the number of occupied persons to the numbers unoccupied, distinguishing males and females, were:—

Year.	Males.	Females.
1841	135	23
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
1911	186	34
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
Increase per cent.	38	48

¹ I.e. 16,300,000 occupied.
 12,200,000 unoccupied over 10 years of age.
 7,900,000 under 10 years of age.

These figures emphasize the changes in the relations of the numbers of earners to the numbers of dependents; but the following presentation of the same facts gives a more concise idea of the changes.

	1841.	1911.	Per Cent. Increase.
Number occupied per 100 of population ...	38	45	18
" " 100 males	57	65	14
" " 100 females	19	25	32
Numbers aged 15-50 years per 100 of population	49	54	10

The conclusions are that the proportion of male persons occupied has increased not less than the proportion capable of being employed; and that the employment of women has increased at a much greater rate than the proportion of women between the ages of 15 and 50 years, in spite of the great decline in the numbers employed in agriculture.¹

The number of women who, to-day, are engaged in duties other than the management of a household is, however, small. The family is still the economic centre to the support of which the earnings of the various occupied members, and the work of the "unoccupied," are directed; and some attention must be given to the changes in the means by which this support is obtained. A broad outline of the changes which have occurred is given by the diagram on the

¹ See *Journal of the Statistical Society*, June 1907. Paper by Lord Eversley.

next page, which is based (for the years 1841–81) on the results obtained by Mr. Booth from a study of the census returns;¹ and (for the years 1891–1911) on the results obtained by Mr. J. W. Nixon, who has diligently pursued Mr. Booth's methods of classification.

The portion of the diagram 1811 to 1841 is based upon the results of the censuses of those years:—

ENGLAND AND WALES.

Year.	Total Number of Families.	Percentage Supported by—			Total.
		Agri- culture.	Trade and Manu- factures.	Other.	
1811	2,142,147	36	45	19	100
1821	2,493,423	34	47	19	100
1831	2,911,874	29	42	29	100

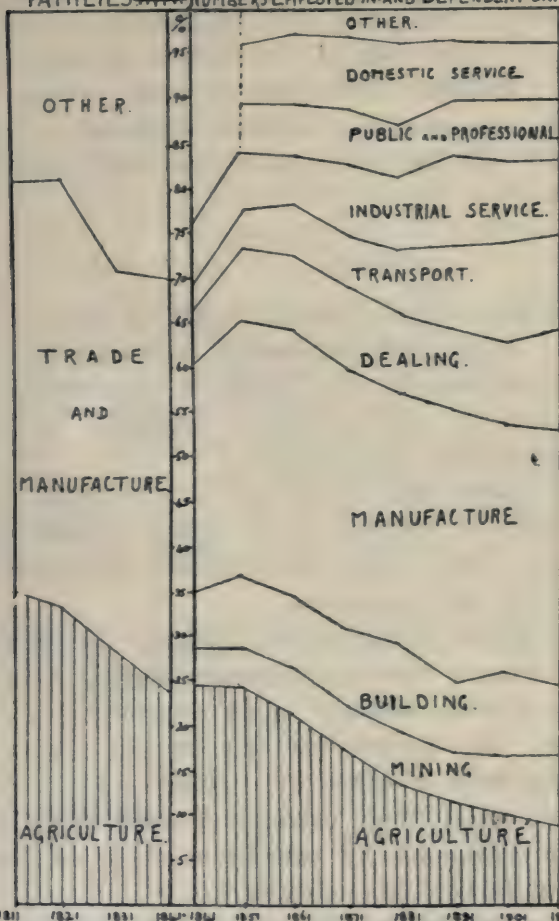
In 1841 the classification by occupations referred to individuals and not to families. The continuance of the decline of agricultural families is, however, shown by the following table taken from the census:—

PERCENTAGE OF MALES OVER 20 YEARS OF AGE ENGAGED IN—

Year.	Agriculture.	Trade and Manufactures.	Other.	All.
1831	32	39	29	100
1841	26	43	31	100

¹ See *Journal of the Statistical Society*, June 1886.

FAMILIES ||||| NUMBERS EMPLOYED IN AND DEPENDENT ON.



PERCENTAGES OF THE POPULATION OF
ENGLAND AND WALES
SUPPORTED BY CERTAIN GROUPS OF OCCUPATIONS,
1811 - 1911.

If we assume that the number of males over 20 years of age who were engaged in agriculture bore the same ratio to the number of agricultural families in 1841 as in 1831, it would appear that in 1841 the number of families supported by agriculture¹ was $23\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the total number of families, i.e.—

$$\frac{26}{32} \times 29 = 23\frac{1}{2}.$$

This percentage is almost exactly the same as that arrived at by a different method (examination of the census returns) by Mr. Booth, as representing the percentage of the population supported by agriculture in 1841, 24·3 per cent.

The shaded area at the foot of the diagram may therefore be regarded as providing a satisfactory measure of the decline of agriculture as a means of supporting the population.

The decline, moreover, was general. In all parts of the country there was, without exception, a decline in the numbers engaged in and supported by agriculture. The decline was also regular; that is to say, the order in which the counties stood (relative to each other) when arranged in order of the proportion supported by agriculture was not much different in 1841 from that in 1811.²

The percentages of the population of each of the groups of counties, on page 25 above, supported by agriculture in 1821 were:—

¹ In the sense used by the enumerators of 1831.

² *Vide* Porter, "Progress . . ." [1847], pp. 58, 59.

	Per cent.		Per cent.
South Wales ...	... (49) ¹	Mid-South ...	... 50
Northern ...	... 31	Eastern ...	... 59
South-Eastern ...	... 37	South-West ...	... 43
Midland ...	... 36	Salop and Hereford ...	... 53 ²

These percentages were not very different from those obtaining in 1811, and may therefore be regarded as applying to 1815, when as we have seen no less than one-third of the families in England drew their chief support from agriculture. The position of this industry in 1911 as a wage provider is vastly different. The proportion of the population engaged in and dependent upon it has fallen to $\frac{1}{11}$. For the purpose of comparing the distribution of the industry over the country with the distribution in 1821 as given above, we may refer to the 1911 census returns, on which the following table is based:—

PROPORTION OF THE MALE POPULATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE COUNTIES OF ENGLAND AND WALES ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURE.³

	Per cent.		Per cent.
South Wales ⁴...	... 10	Mid-South ...	... 21
Northern ...	... 15	Eastern ...	... 33
South-Eastern ...	... 11	South-Western ...	... 21
Midland ...	... 13	Salop and Hereford ...	... 31

¹ Monmouth only; there being no data for the other counties of this group.

² Salop and Hereford are the only two counties of the "Rest of Wales" group for which there are data.

³ Details given in Census, 1911, vol. x, "Occupations."

⁴ Monmouth, 6 per cent.; Glamorgan, 3 per cent.; Brecknock, 20 per cent.; Camarthen, 18 per cent. In the other districts, the homogeneity of the groups in this respect is much greater.

Particular note must be made of the fact that all the county boroughs are excluded from the above table. The county boroughs contain about 17 million persons out of the total population of 36 millions in England and Wales. In these boroughs the proportion of the males engaged in agriculture was, with three exceptions, less than 3 per cent.,¹ so that the percentages given in the table relate to that half of the population which is living in the more rural parts of the country. Although this table is not numerically comparable with that given for the year 1821, it shows that the variations between the different parts of the country with regard to agricultural employment are much greater to-day than in 1815. If the county boroughs were included with their containing or adjoining counties the variations would be more marked, for in those groups of counties and county boroughs in which the proportion of agricultural workers in the non-county borough population is smallest, the proportion of the total population living in the county boroughs is greatest.

In other words, the non-agricultural counties of to-day are more distinctly non-agricultural (in comparison with the agricultural counties) than were those of 1815. There has also been localization and intensification of the manufacturing areas; whole spaces of land have become entirely urban either for residential or manufacturing purposes; and although these urban areas cover a small portion of the surface

¹ Eastbourne, 3½ per cent.; Hastings, 3¾ per cent.; Canterbury, 6 per cent.

of the country, their saturation is proceeding rapidly. Already 17 million people live in county boroughs, and 78 per cent. of the whole population lives under urban conditions.

If we turn to occupations other than agriculture, we find that although the classification of occupations in 1811-31 was:—

1. Agriculture,
2. Trade and manufactures,
3. Other,

we are warned, as might be expected in the light of experience of later enumerations, that owing to the uncertainty and inconsistency of the classification throughout the country, it is advisable to treat the two non-agricultural groups together. The persons collecting and tabulating the returns, however, could hardly fail to distinguish from all others those families who draw their support from agricultural occupation.

The growth of these groups from 1811 to the present day is shown in the diagram on page 57, while since 1841 we have the classification of Mr. Booth and Mr. Nixon. While Mr. Booth places reliance on the comparison as far back as 1851, and while he gives his results for 1841,¹ the usefulness of the comparison for the purpose in hand should not be over-estimated.

¹ "Our picture of what has happened would be much more complete if we could go back to 1801, but we can only do this by drawing largely upon the imagination."—Mr. Booth in *Journal of the Statistical Society*, June 1886, p. 328.

In the case of agriculture, in which probably of all industries the least changes have occurred, the methods and nature of the work and the conditions under which the work is done do differ to such an extent from the methods and conditions of 1815 as to make a comparison of earnings subject to many qualifications. In other industries the differences are much greater, and the limitations are accordingly increased. These revolutions in industries have practically amounted to the creation of new occupations, although old names are used. Instead of attempting what is likely to prove to be an immense and inconclusive series of statements, it would appear to be sufficient, if not more fruitful, to consider the movement of wages as a whole, and to consider the effects of the forces which have been at work in all industries altering the nature of the work and the conditions under which it has been done.

We may therefore proceed to contrast the nature of the occupations pursued in 1815 with those of the present day as shown in the diagram on page 57. The striking feature of the diagram is the change in the importance of agriculture. In the literature of the nineteenth century, the adjective "poor" has commonly been applied to a country in which the proportion of people engaged in agriculture has been large. This use of the term "poor" is justified historically by the development in the "progressive" countries of the world from agriculture to manufacture; and in England by the fact that at the

beginning of the century agricultural workers were almost entirely pauperized, while to-day their earnings are lower, on the whole, than those of the workers in any other body of workers sufficiently homogeneous to form a measurable group.

It is an economic fact of importance that there is a tendency for persons to enter those trades in which the rate of remuneration is relatively high, and to leave those in which it is relatively low.

The average wages of the occupied population of a country may therefore rise without any change in the rate of wages paid in each occupation, solely on account of a change in the distribution of the population among the various industries.

A few remarks on the changes in the nature of the occupations of the people and in the conditions of work will form a necessary prelude to the consideration of the change in remuneration. An outline based on the diagram on page 57 will suffice.

Building.

As far as one can judge, building has occupied much the same position as a branch of human activity in England throughout the century. The population has increased fairly regularly and houses have had to be built to accommodate it. The influence of machinery is probably felt least of all in the building trades. Bricks, putty, wood, the trowel, hod, saw, plane, hammer, and chisel, all worked or wielded by hand, are still used. Modern building with iron and concrete constructions have enabled larger buildings

to be erected, but greater speed in construction has tended to counterbalance the addition of labour to be performed on them.

The stability of this group of occupations is shown by the fact that the men employed in them form from 7 per cent. to 10 per cent. of the occupied males in almost every county and county borough of England.

The exceptions are a few of the newer progressing county boroughs, e.g.—

Bournemouth, 12 per cent. ; Croydon, 13 per cent. ; Eastbourne, 13 per cent. ; and Wales and East Anglia, where the population has increased very slowly throughout the century and is now stationary, the proportions being from 5 per cent. to 7 per cent. In the county boroughs of these districts the proportion is about 7 per cent.

Although the use of machinery has not affected the building industry, the building trades (unlike agriculture) have developed considerable trade union organizations. The economic position of workers in the building trades has, for this reason (among others), improved more than that of agricultural workers. The trade unions have obtained standard rates of wages and the limitation of hours.

“In the building trades—over eight hundred local agreements are in operation regulating wages and hours and other conditions of labour.” The areas covered by those agreements are distributed all over England. “In addition there are many districts in which though there are no signed agreements, the same rates are operative.”¹

¹ Cd. 6054, 1912.

Mining.

The figures for mining (see diagram) include all kinds of mining, the chief of which, however, is coal-mining, the growth of which has evoked much comment throughout the century. At the present time the production of coal is over twenty times the estimated production in 1800.¹ The value of the coal produced in the last fifteen years is estimated to be over two-thirds of the total value of all minerals produced in England. The only other considerable mining industry is that of iron-mining, which, however, is very far behind coal-mining as an employer of labour. The outputs of copper, lead, tin, and zinc are now quite small.

In 1815 the North-Eastern coalfields were far and away more important than any other. The South Wales output was quite insignificant. The position to-day in the different groups of counties is as shown in the table at the foot of the next page.

The localization is, of course, enforced and it is very intense.

In this industry the workers are strongly organized and form at the present day a well-paid body of the

¹ Estimated total production of coal:—

Year.	Million Tons.			
1800	10
1850	56
1900	225
1910	264
1911	271

See D. A. Thomas, *Journal of the Statistical Society*, September 1903.

community. Since about 1880 the sliding-scale method of adjusting remuneration has come into operation. The strong organizations have helped to build up the political power of "the miners," which is now very considerable, and has resulted in the passage of many measures by Parliament in their favour.¹ The importance of the improvement in the conditions in mines is increased by the fact that the proportion of the male population engaged in coal-mining is now much greater than in 1815.²

Transport.

The tremendous growth of the numbers employed in transport needs no further comment (*vide* Chapter I). The huge railway service has grown

PERCENTAGE OF OCCUPIED MALE POPULATION ENGAGED IN COAL- AND SHALE-MINING IN COUNTIES (c.) AND COUNTY BOROUGHES (c.B.) OF ENGLAND AND WALES.

<i>South Wales.</i>		<i>Northern.</i>		<i>Midland.</i>	
c. Monmouth	42	c. Northumberland	34	c. Derby ...	29
c. Glamorgan	44	c. Durham ...	39	c. Notts ...	25
c. Brecon ...	25	c. Yorkshire, W.R.	21	c. Staffs ...	15
c. Carmarthen	18	c. Denbigh ...	21	c. Leicester	14
—		c. Flint ...	14	c. Warwick	10
c.B. Merthyr ...	48	c. Lancashire ...	11	—	
		c. Cumberland ...	16	c.B. Stoke ...	15
		c. Yorkshire, N.R.	8	c.B. Dudley...	10
		—		c.B. Walsall...	8
<i>Others.</i>					
c. Gloucester...	7	c.B. S. Shields ...	15		
c. Somerset ...	5	c.B. Gateshead ...	11		
		c.B. Rotherham ...	20		
				Elsewhere	
				inconsiderable.	

¹ The first act regulating conditions of work in mines was passed in 1842.

² The proportion has doubled since 1841.

up entirely within the century. Great railway centres have sprung up (Swindon, Crewe, Rugby, Doncaster), and in London are situated the head offices, employing large clerical staffs.

Motor transport has largely displaced horse transport.

Canals have almost entirely lost their importance.

Under the remaining heads—manufacture, dealing and industrial service—are accumulated the vast changing mass of activities in which are swallowed about half of the occupied male population. The outstanding trades are: textile, iron and steel manufacture, and engineering—all highly organized trades, the developments of which have a considerable written history. The rest is a multitude of clerks, retail traders, and the vast mass of ungraded workers of all kinds.

In the case of those trades in which there has been any semblance of organization, legislation and industrial disputes have raised the workers from the intolerable conditions of toil which existed at the beginning of the century. All have, however, benefited by the continual interjection of the law into industrial matters. From the reign of the manufacturers supported by the *laissez-faire* economists to the modern State regulation is a far cry. Three great extensions of the franchise and the realization of the dogma expressed by Jevons, that "if on a calculation of the factors which enable man to forecast the results of a given policy on the general welfare,

the balance was against individual liberty, that liberty must make room for the intervention of the State," have brought about a revolution in the attitude of the leaders and the people towards the question of State regulation and control. Limitation of hours of labour, sanitation of factories, machine-fencing, and the innumerable miscellaneous requirements which it is the duty of the unique English "inspectorate" (introduced in 1834) to see are fulfilled, are now customary and no longer odious.

In 1909, a new departure of great significance was made. In that year the Trade Boards Act was passed, having for its object the abolition of sweating by the establishment of Trade Boards with power to fix minimum rates of wages in those trades in which "the rate of wages prevailing in any branch of the trade is exceptionally low as compared with other employments." Minimum rates of wages have been or are in course of being fixed for all workers in the chain, lace finishing, paper box, tailoring, sugar confectionery and food preserving, hollow-ware, and tin box and canister trades, and for female workers in the shirt-making trade.

Without entering into detail, we may say that the minimum time rates for male workers are about 6d. an hour, and for females $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. or $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. an hour. If piece rates are paid, each piece rate must be sufficient to yield to an ordinary worker, in the circumstances of the case, at least the equivalent of the minimum time rate. The number of workers to whose employment these minimum rates are

applicable is not far short of one million—and that million may roughly be taken to be the workers in the seven lowest-paid definitely distinguishable trades.

The condition of workers when not actually at work has also received the attention of the Legislature. The beneficent work of the National Insurance Act (Health and Employment), 1911, and the Workmen's Compensation Act have come further to shield the unfortunate from the cold blast of ruthless individualism which spelt in sickness the Poor Law Infirmary and in distress the Workhouse.

CHAPTER V

REMUNERATION

FINALLY, we come to the remuneration of the workers under the above-described conditions.

Agriculture.

The great changes of the latter half of the eighteenth century had not left agriculture untouched. The revolutions in the methods of farming, the enclosing of the land, and the disappearance of the small-holders who worked on the land and whose families partly supported themselves by home industries, were by 1815 nearly completed. This statement with regard to enclosing is borne out by the statistics (estimates) on the opposite page. The enclosures that had taken place prior to 1780 are deemed, however, by one eminent authority to have consisted "largely of old enclosures or the lord's demesne land lying side by side with the open fields."¹ He adds: "The truth is that the life of the common field system was still the normal village life of England."

The effect of the great war, affording a great protection to English wheat-growers, was to expedite the enclosures.

¹ Hammond, "Village Labourer," p. 42.

Precise statistics of the extent of enclosure are not to be had, but there have been various careful estimates.

LEVY:—"Large and Small Holdings," p. 24.

Years.	Number of Acts.	Area Affected.
1702-60	246	400,000 acres
1760-1810	2,438	5,000,000 ,, (nearly)

JOHNSON:—"Disappearance of Small Holdings," p. 90, based on Dr. Slater's detailed estimate ("English Peasantry and Enclosure . . .," Appendix B).

Years.	Common Field and some Waste.		Waste only.	
	Acts.	Acreage.	Acts.	Acreage.
1700-60	152	237,845	56	74,516
1761-1801	1,479	2,428,721	521	752,150
1802-44	1,075	1,610,302	805	939,043
Total ...	2,706	4,276,868	1,385	1,765,711

Evidence of a Commons Committee (Select Committee, 1844): --

Before 1800	...	...	...	1,700 private Acts.
1800-44	...	...	...	2,000 ,, "

PORTER:—"Progress of the Nation" (1847), p. 154. From Committee of Commons. 1797. and brought to date, 1844, by Porter.

Years.	Acres Enclosed.			
1760-69	704,550
1770-79	1,207,800
1780-89	450,180
1790-99	858,270
1800-09	1,550,100
1810-19	1,560,990
1820-29	375,150
1830-39	248,880
1840-44	120,780
Total	7,076,610

The result of the sudden transition *was* catastrophic, and the events of the enclosure period were not confined to any one part of the country. They mark a national revolution making sweeping and profound changes in the form and character of agricultural society in England.¹

By 1815 the labouring classes had been rendered literally landless. Their relations with the ruling caste have been partly dealt with in Chapter III.

It has been well said of the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century that the "history of agricultural distress is the history of agricultural abundance," and the history of the first fifteen years of this period forms no exception to this statement.

In the speech of the Prince Regent on the occasion of the opening of Parliament in 1816, it was stated that "the manufactures, commerce, and revenue of the United Kingdom" were in a "flourishing condition." The omission of agriculture was significant.

The prices of wheat before the harvest in the following years were:—

				Per Quarter.	
				s.	d.
1808	...	...	...	74	6
1809	...	...	...	100	0
1810	...	...	...	120	0
1811	...	...	...	104	0
1812	...	...	...	136	0
1813	...	...	...	136	0

¹ Cf. Hammond, p. 42.

That was the period of great enclosures—"an affair of grasping ignorance—a scramble for excessive gain."¹

In 1814, with fear of peace and abundance, the prices fell to an average of 75s.; in 1816 the cry of "distress" was at its height. In this manner agricultural "distress" has been associated with cheap corn, while "good" years have been years of high prices. The complete absence of sympathy between the landlords and the landless—the complete divorce of the ruling class from the labourers at this period is emphasized by the very comparison of this association with the condition of the workers at this time.

The parochial nature of life in 1815 was described in the chapters on the growth of population and finance, in which it was seen that the provision of poor relief was by far the most important local function.

The extent of this poor relief as a means of support has been commented on by many writers, two of whom may be quoted.

Miss Martineau said: "The squire, the clergyman, and the farmer constituted themselves a tribunal for the suppression of vice and the encouragement of virtue, and they succeeded in producing either desperation or hypocrisy amongst the *entire labouring population*. . . . Parish functionaries were led away into the belief that they were the great patrons of the *whole labouring population*. . . . They almost forced pauperism upon the *entire working community*."

¹ Miss H. Martineau, "History of the Thirty Years' Peace."

Seignobos wrote: "Now as nearly all the lands of England belonged to the gentry, the English peasants had ordinarily no means of self-support, so the *greater number of them* fell into the class of assisted poor."¹

These statements, however, appear to be too sweeping.

The nature of the pauperization is far better expressed by Porter,² who, after an examination of the statistics of Poor Law expenditure, made the following statement:—

"One of the greatest evils which had grown up under the administration of the old Poor Law was the practice of paying the wages of labour partly out of rates levied for the relief of the indigent poor. . . . Under such a system the labourer in an *agricultural* district was inevitably rendered a pauper."

Porter draws a distinction between the agricultural labourer and the town worker, a distinction most properly drawn; and to this extent he modifies the bold assertion of Miss Martineau, who, however, in view of the overwhelmingly rural nature of life in 1815 may be partly forgiven.

An effect of this state of affairs in agricultural districts in 1815 is to make it impossible to make use of such agricultural wage statistics as exist. The conclusion of Dr. Bowley³ as to the condition of agricultural labourers from 1795 to 1821 is: "Sometimes by adjustment of wages, sometimes by adapta-

¹ "Contemporary Europe," p. 21.

² "Progress . . ." [1847], p. 90.

³ "Wages in the United Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century," p. 31.

tion of relief, the receipts of the labourer were made just sufficient to support him and his family whatever the price of wheat."

This conclusion is supported by the fact that although the fluctuations of the prices of wheat from 1801 onwards were very great, the quantity of wheat purchasable at those prices by the sums expended on the relief of the poor fluctuated very little.

The loss of the cottage industry contributed to this degradation, but in view of the facts as to the actual condition of the agricultural labourers, investigation is superfluous.

Such was the condition of at least one-third of the population of England in 1815.

Other Industries.

"In a commercial country like England, every half-century develops some new and vast source of public wealth, which brings into national notice a new and powerful class. A couple of centuries ago, a Turkey Merchant was the great creator of wealth; the West Indian Planter followed him. In the middle of the last century appeared the Nabob. . . . The expenditure of the revolutionary war produced the Loan-monger, who succeeded the Nabob; and the application of science to industry developed the Manufacturer."¹

"Manufactures and commerce," said the Prince Regent, "are in a flourishing condition." During the time that war was devastating the Continent,

¹ Disraeli, "Sybil," published in 1845.

the woollen, cotton, coal, and iron industries had made great progress; but in manufacturing industry, as in agriculture, the progress of the employers was not a guide to the condition of the workers. Their discontent found expression in rioting, machine-breaking, and incendiarism. Already, in 1812, the Commons had, in alarm at the outbreaks, passed an Act "for the more exemplary punishment of persons destroying or injuring any stocking or lace frames or other machines or engines used in the framework knitting manufactory or any articles or goods in such frames or machines." The workers' attitude towards machinery was a result, first of their actual discomfort, but chiefly of the fact that they had no other means of redress. The cessation of rioting is attributed by Miss Martineau not to the repressive effect of the criminal law of the time, but to the reduction of the price of *Cobbett's Register* from 1s. 0½d. to 2d. a copy (in November 1816), which enabled it to be read "on nearly every cottage hearth in the manufacturing districts of South Lancashire, Leicester, Derby, and Nottingham." Cobbett directed his readers to the true cause of their suffering—misgovernment.

In 1815, however, the happy event had not occurred.

In the midst of the turmoil of war and rioting, money wages in industry other than agriculture had been rising. The following figures¹ show that by the

¹ Mr. G. H. Wood, *Economic Journal*, 1899, pp. 588-92. Mr. Wood states that most of the authorities mentioned by Miss Hopkinson and Dr. Bowley in a complete bibliography of wage statistics (*Economic Review*, October 1898) have been consulted.

years 1810-16, money wages generally were near the culminating point of a great rise. This conclusion is based on figures for many different industries and districts.

INDEX NUMBERS OF WAGES BETWEEN 1790 AND 1860.

Year.		Index Number.	Year.		Index Number.
1790	...	72	1824	...	112
1795	...	82	1831	...	103
1800	...	93	1840	...	100
1805	...	104	1845	...	99
1810	...	122	1850	...	102
1816	...	115	1855	...	116
1820	...	109	1860	...	116

[1840 = 100]

The details on which the above index numbers are based cover 23 districts and nearly 50 different occupations, and show a maximum in 1810 in all the districts except Leeds, where the highest point was in 1816, 129 as compared with 115 in 1810; and in Macclesfield, where the number for 1816 was 114, and for 1810, 107.

“The high figure for 1810 seems inflated at first sight, but it rests on better evidence than any other except those for 1840, 1850, and 1860. The figure for 1790 also rests on good evidence.”¹

For the purpose of comparison with the present day, Mr. Wood's excellent index number for the years 1810-40 may be supplemented by figures from Dr. Bowley's "Wages in the United Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century," and another index number by Mr. Wood for the years 1860-1906. The evidence of the last two since 1880 is supported by a Board of Trade index number.

¹ *Economic Journal*, 1899, p. 592.

78 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS: 1815 & 1914

The series are combined in the following table, the figures in parentheses being those previously published:—

Year.	Wood.		Bowley.		Wood.		Board of Trade. ¹			
					Unweighted.	Weighted, allowing for Change in Numbers employed.				
1810	(122)	103	—	—	—	—	—			
1816	(115)	99	—	—	—	—	—			
1820	(109)	94	—	—	—	—	—			
1824	(112)	98	—	—	—	—	—			
1831	(89)	89	—	—	—	—	—			
1840	(100)	86	(89)	85	—	—	—			
1845	(99)	84	—	—	—	—	—			
1850	(102)	88	(90)	86	(65)	90	(56)	88	—	
1855	(116)	100	—	—	(73)	101	(65)	102	—	
1860	(116)	100	(105)	100	(72)	100	(64)	100	—	
1866	—	—	(117)	112	(79)	110	(74)	116	—	
1870	—	—	(119)	113	—	—	—	—	—	
1871	—	—	—	—	(82)	114	(77)	120	—	
1874	—	—	(142)	135	(92)	128	(87)	136	—	
1877	—	—	(135)	119	(89)	124	(85)	133	—	
1880	—	—	(129)	123	(86)	119	(82)	128	(81)	123
1888	—	—	(132)	126	(87)	121	(84)	131	(84)	128
1886	—	—	(130)	124	(85)	118	(83)	130	(81)	123
1890	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(90)	137
1891	—	—	(144)	137	(92)	128	(91)	142	(91)	138
1896	—	—	—	—	(92)	128	(91)	142	—	—
1900	—	—	—	—	(100)	139	(100)	156	(100)	152
1906	—	—	—	—	(100)	139	(101)	158	(98)	149
1912	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(100)	152

¹ For Building, Coal-mining, Engineering, and Textiles only.

These figures are given in the diagram opposite.

The footnotes to the diagram are taken from an article on "Wages" by Dr. Bowley in the "Dictionary of Political Economy," except for the years since 1904.

which are given by Mr. W. T. Layton in "Capital and Labour."

The conclusion with regard to money wages is that on the average the wages of the non-agricultural classes of the population were in 1913-14 between 50 per cent. and 60 per cent. above the level of 1815.

The general movement of agricultural wages since 1840 (when the evil effects of the "old" Poor Law had disappeared and agricultural wages were measurable) has been similar to that of wages in general, and the index of the level of wages in general is only affected to the extent of 1 or 2 per cent. by the exclusion of agriculture.¹

That the movement of wages is general, that the wages in all trades tend to move in the same direction and to the same extent, has been shown to be true of the years 1790-1860 by Mr. Wood's collection of data.

The same is shown to be true for the years 1840-91 by a diagram given by Dr. Bowley in "Wages in the United Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century," and since 1891 by Index numbers published by Mr. Wood and by the Board of Trade.

The fluctuations in individual trades are, of course, wider than in the average for all trades, but the general progress is the same.

So far, then, the comparison with 1815 is favourable,

¹ For confirmation see "Wages in the Nineteenth Century," p. 132, and Cd. 7131/13, p. 82.

but the "things that matter" are not the money receipts but the commodities obtainable with the money. Ever since the study of working-class conditions has existed, the difficulty of discovering exactly how the people fare has been encountered. In the present century the difficulty is almost resolved into the discovery of reliable statistics of retail prices. To attempt to deal with retail prices of a century ago is a hopeless task.

In the way of general price movements, it must suffice to say that according to the calculations of Jevons and Sauerbeck, the average of wholesale prices of general commodities in England for the years 1912-14 was between one-half and two-thirds of the average for 1810-20. The relations of retail prices of the commodities purchased by the people to the wholesale prices at the two dates are mysterious and indefinite.

We are, however, very fortunate in possessing reliable statistics of the changes in the prices of wheat and bread.

PRICE OF WHEAT PER QUARTER.

(Gazette averages.)

	s.	d.		s.	d.
1808	...	74	6	1908	32 0
1809	...	100	0	1909	36 11
1810	...	120	0	1910	31 8
1811	...	104	0	1911	31 8
1812	...	136	0	1912	34 9
1813	...	136	0	1913	31 8
1814	...	75	0	1914	34 11

82 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS: 1815 & 1914

The price of the quartern loaf and the price of wheat in the two periods were:—

Years.	Average Price of Quartern Loaf.	Gazette Average of Wheat per Quarter.
1800-9	d. 12	s. d. 85 0
1810-19	13	91 0
1900-4	5·3	28 0
1905-9	5·7	31 0
1910	5·9	31 8
1911	5·5	31 8
1912	5·8	34 7
1913	5·8	31 8
1914	5·8	34 11

Besides noting the change in the level of the prices of wheat and bread, it must be observed that in the earlier period the prices were subject to very great fluctuations, while in the modern period the changes have been, on the whole, very slow and very small.

The importance of bread as a food at the present day is very great, as will be seen from the table opposite.

The amount spent on bread and flour is seen to be exceeded only by that spent on meat. The fact that "urban population" may be considered to cover about three-quarters of the population at the present day must be remembered. Sir Robert Giffen drew attention in the *Statistical Society's Journal* to the accompaniment of urbanization or industrialization of the population by the change from a wheat to a

WEEKLY BUDGET OF URBAN WORKMEN'S FAMILIES IN 1904 (Cd. 3864/08).

AVERAGES OF BUDGETS COLLECTED.

Number of family budgets	289	416
Range of incomes of families	25s. to 30s.	30s. to 35s.
Average income	27s.	33s.
Average number of children at home ...	3·3	3·2

Expenditure on Food.

	Cost.		Cost.	
	s.	d.	s.	d.
Bread and flour	3	4	3	3½
Meat (by weight)	3	5	4	3½
Other meat (including fish)	0	9	0	10
Bacon	0	9	0	10
Eggs	0	8½	0	11
Fresh milk	1	0	1	3
Cheese	0	5½	0	6
Butter	1	7	1	10
Potatoes	0	10	0	10
Vegetables and fruit	0	7	0	10
Currants and raisins	0	2	0	2
Rice, etc.	0	5	0	6
Tea	0	11	1	1
Coffee, cocoa	0	3	0	3½
Sugar	0	10	0	11
Jam, etc.	0	5	0	6
Pickles	0	2	0	3
Other	1	4	1	6½
Total	17	10	20	9

meat diet; and he published evidence to show that prior to 1840 meat was hardly ever eaten by the working classes.¹

The change in the price of bread has therefore permitted considerable improvement in the standard of living of the working classes. Even to-day, when wheat is very cheap, the price of bread is of great importance, and a consideration of the high prices of 1800-20, in the light of the evidence of the greater importance of bread as an article of diet in those years as compared with to-day, indicates one of the chief causes of working-class discontent in 1815 and the preceding years.

In view of the fact that prior to 1850 only small improvement in the condition of the people could have been made (see page 79, footnotes to diagram),² the diagram opposite, although it refers only to the years subsequent to 1860, is valuable evidence. It presents pictorially the results of Mr. G. H. Wood's manipulation of statistics of consumption, which resulted in his obtaining an "index number of consumption—a unique measure based on the percentage changes in the consumption per head of the enumerated commodities." Mr. Wood's figures relate

¹ "Progress of the Working Classes." Attention has already been drawn to the predominantly rural nature of life in 1815.

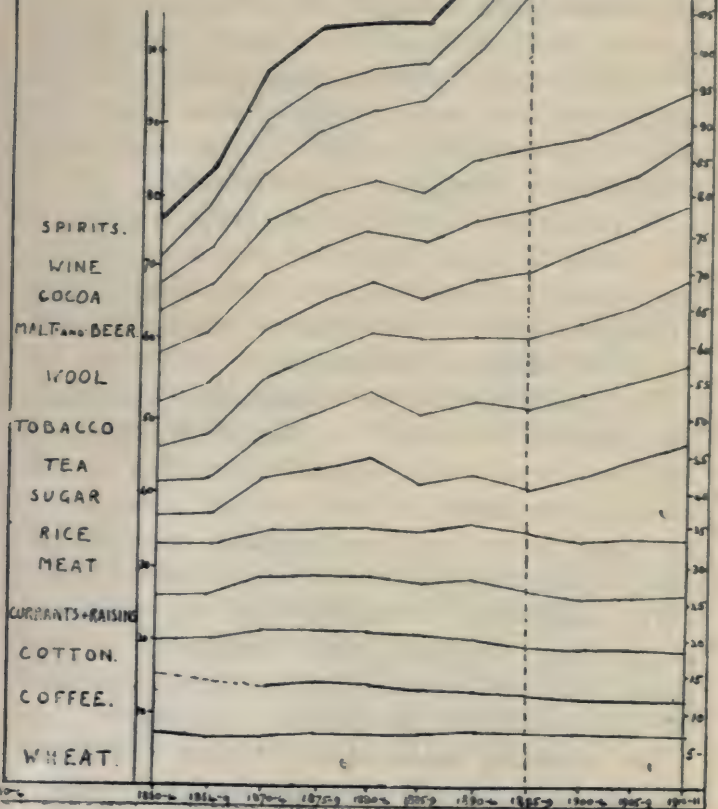
² Mr. Sidney Webb is responsible for the assertion that "there seems to be reason to believe that in 1837 some large sections of the dim inarticulate multitude were struggling in the trough of a century's decline in all that makes life worth living for."

CONSUMPTION PER HEAD

OF CERTAIN COMMODITIES :

FIVE-YEARLY AVERAGES OF
MR. G. H. WOODS' INDEX NUMBERS.

Average of 1870-74 100



to the years 1860-99, since which date I have continued his method. Ignoring the immense increase in the consumption of cocoa (which appears in the diagram out of all proportion to its importance), it is seen that since 1860 the consumption per head of the commodities included in the calculation has increased by 42 per cent. This is the increase shown by arithmetically averaging the individual rates of increase; but Mr. Wood, in his paper, showed conclusively that the difference between the arithmetic average and the average obtained when each commodity is assigned a "weight" proportional to its importance in consumption is inconsiderable.

To the great changes for the better which have been made in these fifty years must be added the improvement of 1850-60, when "real wages" were "rising considerably," and the improvement of 1815-50, when real wages were rising slowly.

The general result of an inquiry into "real wages and standard of comfort" by Mr. G. H. Wood in 1909 was that "the standard of comfort of the British wage-earner is now, on the average, not less than 50 per cent. and probably nearer 80 per cent. higher than that of his predecessor in 1850."

The conclusion is, roughly, that nine-tenths of the working population (and dependents) at the present day are individually nearly twice "as well off" as two-thirds of the population in 1815.

The remaining one-tenth in 1915 and one-third in 1815 consists of the agricultural workers and dependents. Their position in 1815 has been dealt with at length,

At the present day they form the lowest paid body of labourers pursuing a definite industry. Since 1840 we have seen that their earnings have increased relatively as much as those of the non-agricultural classes.

An attempt to compare the improvement since the beginning of the century was made by Thorold Rogers (quoted by Cunningham), who calculated the quantity of wheat which agricultural earnings would have purchased at the various dates given below.

The comparison has been brought up to date:—

				Quarters.					Quarters.
1789	...	...	...	8	1874	...	...	...	16
1807	...	...	...	11	1891	...	...	...	22
1810	...	...	...	6 $\frac{3}{4}$	1895	...	...	...	32
1823-55	...	...	...	10	1908	...	...	...	28
1859	...	...	...	15	1912	...	...	...	24
1867	...	...	...	11					

The features of the table are (1) the fluctuation in the war period (when wages were supplemented by poor relief); (2) a stationary period from the close of the war until 1850. Since 1850 the position has improved at least two-fold.

Women.

The position of women in industry has an important bearing on the economic position of the family. With regard to the latter there are no data as to the composition of working-class families prior to those published in "Livelihood and Poverty,"¹ as the result of investigations made in four English towns.² By

¹ By Dr. Bowley and A. R. Burnett-Hurst (G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 1915).

² Reading, Northampton, Warrington, and Stanley.

reverting to the figures in a previous chapter, however, we see that whereas in 1821 in every 100 of population there were 39 below the age of 15 years, in 1911 there were only 30 (the numbers below the age of 20 years being 49 and 40 respectively). In other words, for every 100 people over 15 years of age, in 1821 there were 64 under that age, and in 1911 43 under that age. If the age limit be placed at 10 years the proportions would be 100 : 37 in 1821 and 100 : 27 in 1911.

There was then, evidently, a considerably heavier burden on the family earnings in 1815 as compared with 1915. In spite of the absence of statistics, in view of the magnitude of this change, it is safe to say that all classes of workers must have been affected.

With regard to women's wages, the available evidence (most of which is summarized by Mr. G. H. Wood in Appendix A to "A History of Factory Legislation," Hutchins and Harrison) shows that their wages have increased at almost the same rate as men's.

The lack of legislative regulation in 1815, which permitted women and children to work in mines and factories for very long hours, has been remedied. The employment of women in agriculture has practically ceased, while there have come into existence occupations which can be carried on by women, in which regulations as to hours, sanitation of work-place, and, in a number of cases, wages, are enforced by Government departments under Acts of Parliament.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

To turn from this review of the great improvements of the century in the economic condition of the people—one of the results of vast material progress achieved by overcoming natural physical hindrances and economic inertia—to a consideration of the actual achievements creates at first a hopeless feeling—so much progress and so little satisfaction.

The struggle for existence appears not to have abated; all the works of science and art have not produced happiness.

The reasons appear to be that "Men do not desire to be rich, but to be richer than other men."¹ "We are dissatisfied because we compare our progress with that of our neighbours instead of with that of our forbears."²

These reasons, however, give only part of the answer. The complete answer is—that men compare their condition not only with that of their forbears, not only with that of their neighbours, but with what might be.

¹ J. S. Mill, "Posthumous Essay on Social Freedom,"

² Hartley Withers, "Poverty and Waste,"

The meaning of "what might be" has been recently brought home to many by the publication of the results of an honest inquiry into the conditions of the working classes in four English towns, under the title of "Livelihood and Poverty."

Among the fair and reasonable statements contained in the book are:—

1. In Stanley "one-half of all the working-class houses in that town are overcrowded."

2. "Twenty-seven per cent. [of the children living in the four towns investigated] are living in families which fail to reach the low standard taken as necessary for healthy existence."

3. "Of households living in poverty, the cause is to be found in the fact that the chief wage-earner's income is insufficient for his family of three children or less in 26 per cent. of the cases, and his inability to support his family of four children or more in 45 per cent.," the other cases being caused by accidents (sickness, death, unemployment, or irregularity of work).

As Mr. B. S. Rowntree remarked in reviewing this work, no country is worthy of the name of "great" which permits such things to exist. The realization of these facts and the desire to alter the state of affairs has already found expression in many Acts of Parliament.

The past has been devoted to the accumulation of wealth, the future is to its more equal distribution.

Viewed in this way, the non-material progress of the people of England assumes great importance. The consideration of the rise from the state of servility which existed in 1815, to the present state in which the "people" is becoming identified with the "nation," indicates how the improving condition of the people gradually fitted them to play increasingly important and difficult rôles in the national deliberations and decisions whereby their material welfare has been improved, and shows also the strength of the people to improve still further their own conditions. For further progress in the latter no prayer for revolutionary changes will avail or is needed; the true greatness of the English nation will be achieved in the "English" way.

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