Observation, Surveillance, Voyeurism, and the Making of the Middle Class in Victorian England

By

Meghara Eichhorn-Hicks
M.A., University of Kansas, 2013

Submitted to the graduate degree program in English and the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

_____

Chair: Kathryn Conrad

_____

Dorice Williams Elliott

_____

Ann Wierda Rowland

_____

Anna Neill

_____

Ann Schofield

Date Defended: 15 December 2021

The dissertation committee for Meghara Eichhorn-Hicks certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

Observation, Surveillance, Voyeurism, and the Making of the Middle Class in Victorian England

Chair: Kathryn Conrad

Date Approved: 15 December 2021

Abstract

In the early nineteenth century, the rise of industrialism and the accelerated enclosure of farmable land combined to drive England's rural population into rapidly growing urban centers. London, in particular, was ill-equipped to deal with the resulting population boom, and laborers and vagrants were forced into the twisting alleyways and hidden courtyards of the slums, where poorly constructed housing and a lack of sanitation created dangerous living conditions. The newly emerging middle class, anxious about their close proximity to crime and disease, was eager to both see into the hidden slums, and draw their inhabitants out into the light of day. This resulted in two social trends; first, civic establishments like parks and museums were opened to members of the lower classes where, it was hoped, they would observe and emulate the behavior of their "betters" and, in turn, become more readily observable themselves. The second trend was a proliferation of writers, whether social scientists, journalists, novelists, or philanthropists, who entered the slums to observe the circumstances of poverty for themselves. The newspaper articles, sanitation reports, guidebooks, religious tracts, novels, and political cartoons that resulted from these expeditions repeatedly engage in three ways of looking at the lower classes: observation, surveillance, and voyeurism. All this watching, reading, and writing resulted in an extensive body of text in which the middle class constructed an overview of poverty and the poor in London. Since much of this discourse is rooted in a fear-based middle-class imagination rather than firsthand knowledge of the lower classes, it can be said that the sensationalism and scare tactics that appear in many of these texts often reveal more about the writers than their subjects. By reading the negative space of these narratives—that is, reading the lower class as a depiction of what the middle class *is not*, or as what the middle class fears—we are able to elicit a greater

understanding of how middle-class identity is formed, shared, and performed during the early- and mid-nineteenth century.

Acknowledgments

This dissertation would not have been possible without the guidance and friendship of my advisor and committee chair, Dr. Kathryn Conrad. Whether in seminars, conference rooms, meetings, or bars, she has been a guiding light and inspiration to me throughout my time at KU. I am so grateful for all that you've taught me, in and out of the classroom, since I entered the program as an MA student. Because of you, I will always have an awesome band name at the ready should I ever choose to go on the road.

I would also like to thank the members of my committee who have guided me through this process. Dr. Dorice Williams Elliott, Dr. Ann Wierda Rowland, Dr. Anna Neill, and Dr. Ann Schofield: your feedback, participation, and kindness have been invaluable, and I will always be grateful to you.

Finally, I am deeply indebted to my friends and family for their support. To my parents, Mary and Tracy Eichhorn-Hicks: thank you for your constant love, support, and faith in me. I love you both so much, and I couldn't have done this without you. To my mother- and father-in-law, Linda and Charles Steinkamp: your time and encouragement made it possible for me to finish this dissertation, for which I am more grateful than I can say. To my wonderful husband, Justin Steinkamp: you are my sounding-board and the person who makes me laugh every day. I love you. Thank you for supporting me during this crazy final push. And finally, to Beckett: you are my inspiration and the light of my life, even if you like to smash the keyboard while mom is trying to write.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction: A Changing Landscape

In 1790, a young inventor named Oliver Evans patented his plan for a mechanized flour mill. This "automatic mill" was capable of processing 300 bushels of grain each hour, an amount that constituted a "vast improvement over mills fed by hand" (Briskin 94). With his patent in hand, Evans joined the ranks of inventors who were working to streamline manufacturing processes across the industrial sector to increase production and profit. Samuel Crompton's spinning mule, for example, allowed a single operator to work more than a thousand spindles at the same time, Edmund Cartwright's power loom combined the production power of hundreds of hand-loom operators, and James Watts's steam engine harnessed the energy to make all this new machinery run. Until this point, Alan Briskin notes that invention "was always tied to the wondrous." The most advanced engineering practices of any age prior to the eighteenth century were used "to build monuments to religious celebration or memorial, amphitheaters for performance, [or] sites for athletic competition" (95). Machines that drastically increased the output of flour or fabric without the need for a corresponding output of labor could indeed be considered "wondrous," but only if they were used to lift the burden of labor. Instead, the nineteenth century saw workers begin to "serve the machine: watching it, tending to its upkeep, [and] tallying its daily production" in an effort to accommodate the "ever-increasing production" of goods (Briskin 96). Factories added more automatic flour mills, spinning mules, and power looms to increase production, and since they didn't require much skill to operate, they presented an opportunity for anyone seeking employment to earn a wage. Agricultural workers, women, children, and the people whose cottage industries had been rendered obsolete by this new machinery flocked to England's industrial towns, which had seemingly sprung from the earth overnight. The result was widespread and rapid change to England's landscape, population

centers, and social classes. Over the course of the nineteenth century, politicians, social critics, scientists, historians, and writers produced a flood of shifting theories about how these changes affected the population's organization, health, and character.

There was great concern surrounding England's shift from an agricultural to a manufacturing economy. In *Notes on a Tour of the Manufacturing Districts of Lancashire* (1842), William Cooke Taylor attributes this to the fact that the "steam-engine had no precedent, the spinning-jenny is without ancestry, the mule and the power-loom entered on no prepared heritage: they sprang into sudden existence like Minerva from the brain of Jupiter" (3). Rapid changes in manufacturing wrought sometimes drastic changes to the English landscape, as well. Edward Palmer Thompson recounts the tale of an "aristocratic traveller" who, upon vising Yorkshire in 1792, "was alarmed to find a new cotton-mill in the 'pastoral vale' of Aysgarth." The "great flaring mill" now stood where there had been, until recently, only a peaceful landscape, and the aristocrat complained that, between the constant "clamour" of machinery and the altered scenery, "all the vale is disturb'd" (189). The whir of machinery and the constant ringing of bells pierced the former tranquility, and the stream had been diverted from its picturesque waterfall to power the mill's great wheel; the pastoral landscape had been transformed into a landscape of production.

More alarming still were the perceived changes to the population that inhabited this landscape. Thompson notes that "the working population" that flocked to the mills was seen as somehow "new." A rural magistrate visiting the recently industrialized countryside in 1808 recalled that "[the] instant we get near the borders of the manufacturing parts of Lancashire, … we meet a fresh race of beings, both in point of manners, employment and subordination." A few years later, in 1815, Robert Owen remarked that "the general diffusion of manufactures

throughout a country generates a new character in its inhabitants … an essential change in the general character of the mass of the people" (qtd. in Thompson 190). Few of these accounts put a finger on what, exactly, was different about this "fresh race of beings" that had come to seek employment in the mills and factories, and instead manage only to describe their vague perception that the people were changing alongside the landscape. Taylor describes a growing sense of "anxiety and apprehension almost amounting to dismay" when he "passes through the masses of human beings which have accumulated round the mills and print works" (4). Factories have been erected, like the "great flaring mill," where there once were verdant pastures, and they in turn have attracted "crowded hives" of workers. This population, "like the system to which it belongs, is NEW," but more alarming is its rapid, steady growth:

> it is hourly increasing in breadth and strength. It is an aggregate of masses, our conceptions of which clothe themselves in terms that express something portentous and fearful… as of the slow rising and gradual swelling of an ocean which must, at some future and no distant time, bear all the elements of society aloft upon its bosom, and float them Heaven knows whither. There are mighty energies slumbering in these masses … The manufacturing population is not new in its formation alone: it is new in its habits of thought and action, which have been formed by the circumstances of its condition, with little instruction, and less guidance, from external sources. (4-5)

The "masses" represent something "portentous and fearful"; they are a gathering force, like the "swelling of an ocean" which, when it has become strong enough, will have the power to shift the foundation of British culture, custom, and tradition, and bear it along on its current to an unforeseen destination. At play are issues of power and control; the manufacturing population is a sudden behemoth that operates of its own accord, "with little instruction, and less guidance" from their social and economic "betters." If the "frighteningly large masses of

apparently masterless men" were not closely observed and kept under control, its members might have the power to permanently alter the character of the nation (Thompson 189).

1.1 *Ways of Looking: Observation, Surveillance, and Voyeurism*

At the heart of this project are interactions between the "masterless men" that emerged amid England's rampant industrialization in the early nineteenth century, and the members of the middle class who found this group's newly acquired freedom to be "portentous and fearful." These interactions were rare since members of the middle class were, according to Friedrich Engels, "seldom in a position to catch from the street a glimpse of the real labouring districts" (47). Worse still, as Dorice Williams Elliott points out, "[most] middle-class people, even many family members of factory owners, had never been inside a factory and had probably never seen a factory worker, except at a distance" (379). London's laborers may as well have been invisible to their superiors, tucked away inside the city's factories by day, and hidden among the twisting alleyways and courtyards of the slums by night. Rather than rejoice at the absence of a rough, poverty-stricken crowd of laborers, however, the middle class worried about how they would choose to spend their time without the guidance of their "betters." Their lower-class counterparts in domestic service worked under the strict oversight of a paternalist structure, which granted employers responsibility for the moral education of their servants as if they were members of the family. Factory workers, however, were regarded with suspicion since they were responsible for governing their own morals, leisure hours, and family life, which the middle class did not believe they were capable of doing successfully without instruction and oversight.

The anxieties of the newly emerging middle class were heightened by an increase in discourse about the close proximity of their own homes to the slums where the lower classes lived. The slums were considered breeding grounds for disease, and it was believed that serious

infections like cholera could spread through the air and infect everyone nearby. In Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* (1852), for example, the notorious slum called "Tom-all-Alone's" makes "messengers" of the wind, who "serve him in hours of darkness" (708). In the night, when London's respectable residents sleep, Tom's "corrupted blood … propagates infection and contagion … through every order of society up to the proudest of the proud and to the highest of the high." Since disease makes no exception for social status, the middle class became more determined to identify and address the sources of infection in London's slums. To do so, they would have to enter the hidden enclaves of the poor and perform their own investigations of life therein.

Visibility was key to relieving middle-class anxieties about the poor in London's slums. On one hand, the lower classes needed to be drawn out of their hidden dens into public spaces where their hygiene, behavior, and amusements could be more easily policed. On the other hand, members of the middle classes needed access to the slums so they could personally oversee the housing and sanitation issues that posed public health threats to the city. Two major social trends resulted from the desire to see the lower classes and their living conditions; first, civic establishments like parks and museums were opened to members of the lower classes. Under the guise of providing a space where laborers and the poor could better themselves and seek out wholesome recreation, the middle class created environments in which they could also be easily observed. Like Jeremy Bentham's panopticon—a prison-in-the-round with an unseen guard placed at its center, his gaze trained on the imprisoned population at moments and intervals unknown to them—public spaces were employed to function as disciplinary spaces. Michel Foucault uses the term "deinstitutionalization" to refer to the process by which disciplinary structures like prisons, schools, or military barracks "emerge from

the closed fortresses in which they once functioned and … circulate in a 'free' state" (211). In a deinstitutionalized panopticon, the population internalizes the regulation of behavior by employing the surveilling gaze to police itself and enforce tacitly agreed-upon norms. The parks, museums, and galleries that opened their doors to the lower classes thus became sites of surveillance and discipline where the mysterious residents of the slums could be more easily policed.

The second social trend that resulted from middle-class desire to see the poor and their living conditions was one in which respectable members of society delved into the slums to observe the circumstances of poverty for themselves, and then produced and disseminated texts about their experiences. Social scientists, journalists, novelists, missionaries, and philanthropists flocked to the slums to spend anywhere from an evening to several months among the poor. The newspaper articles, sanitation reports, guidebooks, religious tracts, novels, and political cartoons that resulted from these excursions were marketed to a middle-class reading audience eager to hear about what really went on in those dark dens of iniquity. The texts produced spanned from the sensational to the scientific; some aimed to instill outrage in their readers over the treatment of laborers, some attempted to devise a taxonomy of the poor, and others merely gawked at the savagery of life in the slums, painting vivid pictures of crime and degradation.

This project takes as its central focus the middle-class production of cultural discourse about London's poor and working classes from the beginning of the nineteenth century through the 1860s, paying particular attention to how various 'ways of looking' are employed to construct specific narratives about London's poor. This period of time begins at the approximate moment when the nebulous idea of the middle class, which saw its hazy formation in the late-eighteenth century, begins to take on more concrete definition. By beginning with its formation,

we can observe the way the middle-class gathers power and exerts its socioeconomic position throughout the Victorian era.[1] I consider three ways of looking—observation, surveillance, and voyeurism—that are used to varying effects in newspaper articles, novels, religious tracts, travelogues, political cartoons, and other widely-disseminated texts of the era. Through the discourses of science (observation), law and order (surveillance), and entertainment (voyeurism), the middle class engages in a constant cycle of watching, writing, and reading about the lower classes in an effort to demystify the dark spaces of the slums where they live, and diffuse the group's dormant power that threatens to permanently alter England's cultural identity.

All this watching, reading, and writing results in an extensive body of text in which the middle-class presents an imagined construction of the lower classes and the slums in which they reside. Though some poetry and novels attempt to frame individual (fictional) laborers as three-dimensional and sympathetic, the vast majority of texts produced in this vein consider their subjects as threatening masses, individual specimens to be studied, or dangerous criminals. These texts often serve to emphasize the vast, undeniable differences between the lower and middle classes, paying particular attention to—and even exaggerating—the most squalid, deplorable, immoral aspects of life in the slums. In fact, the tendency to present the threat of the lower classes "in a stylized and stereotypical fashion" facilitated "by the mass media" in this way constitutes a "moral panic," a term coined by Stanley Cohen that refers to an event where a "condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal

---

[1] In his study of the creation the middle class, Robert John Morris identifies the group's formation as occurring "[somewhere] between 1780 and 1850" (1).

values and interests" (9). In these situations, "moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people," and "socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions." The moral barricades in this case are manned by the "right-thinking" middle class, whose preoccupation with watching the poor, laboring, and deviant populations is an attempt to assuage the fears associated with moral panic.

Since much of the discourse produced about the lower classes is rooted in a fear-based middle-class imagination rather than firsthand knowledge of the lower classes, it can be said that the sensationalism and scare tactics that appear in many of these texts often reveal more about the writers than their subjects. By reading the negative space of these narratives—that is, reading the lower class as a depiction of what the middle class *is not*, or as what the middle class fears—we are able to elicit a better understanding of how middle-class identity is formed, shared, and performed. For this reason, though the project centers on texts about London's poor and laboring population, it is *not* an exploration of the working classes' own thoughts about their place in England's social, political, and economic systems. Rather, it considers the ways in which the middle class jockeys to delineate their own social standing by setting it in opposition to their construction of a largely fictionalized lower class.

The middle-class authors of the texts in question tend to reveal something about themselves, their anxieties, and their opinions about class based on the type of gaze they choose to employ. Those who take an observational view often produce texts that are scientific in nature; these writers study the habits of their subjects, drawing conclusions about their health, lifestyle, and character in much the same way an ornithologist might observe the mating habits of the European robin. In the early nineteenth century, when "science began to outstrip religion as the major cultural force," the rampant popularity of natural science, ethnography, and psychology

caused the language and tenets of each to bleed over into other, non-scientific genres (Cooter 2). It is no coincidence that at the moment when religion (which relies on belief in what cannot be seen) becomes subordinate to science (which relies on empirical observation), there occurs a simultaneous drive to equip amateur naturalists with the tools to see, record, organize, and display any specimen they encounter. At the same time, amateur physiognomists roam the streets of London, peering into the faces of strangers in an effort to "read" each person's internal character as it is written upon their visage. Throughout the nineteenth century, science mobilizes an army of observers, charging not only naturalists and physiognomists, but also phrenologists, mesmerists, travel writers, and sociologists with the task of imposing order through classification.

Those who engaged in surveillance tended to have more punitive goals; they were interested in crime rates, police presence, and bringing about the cessation of whatever nefarious activities were taking place in London's back alleys. The formation of the Metropolitan Police Service in 1829 was accompanied by the publication of a slew of newspapers dedicated to reporting solely on crime. Suddenly, every respectable member of the middle class was a sleuth, and every member of the lower classes was assumed to have deviant tendencies. While members of the middle class weren't often solving real crimes, they did police social decorum among themselves and members of the lower classes. In the deinstitutionalized panopticons of the British Museum, the National Gallery, the Great Exhibition of 1851, and the Royal Parks, for instance, they upheld standards of etiquette for all in attendance. Hygiene was one obvious marker of acceptability, and while residents of the slums were welcomed into these spaces, "'verminous person' (mostly vagrants)," according to Nan Dreher, were not (246). Aside from people who appeared to be dirty, unkempt, or homeless, however, standards for entry were not

necessarily predicated on class. Rather, anyone who "defied the culture of respectability" was banned from these public forums, be they iconoclastic aristocrats (an admittedly rare occurrence) or loose-moraled members of the lower classes (249). Those who did not abide by the social contract forged by the surveilling middle-class were ejected from public spaces and even, on occasion, physically punished for their indiscretions.

The final way of looking at members of the lower classes, voyeurism, involves exploration of the shocking, sensational, and titillating aspects of life in London's most debauched haunts. The term "voyeur," in its original French, translates to the rather innocuous, "one who sees." Over time, however, the term has evolved to include the added connotation of "sexual stimulation or satisfaction derived principally from looking," and is used to refer to peeping Toms and any kind of "unduly prying observer" ("Voyeurism"). Though this sexualization of the word didn't technically come into use until 1900, the term's evolution throughout the nineteenth century indicates a rise in "watching" for the purposes of excitement and titillation, which necessitated the change. Despite its technically anachronistic use when applied to the nineteenth century, voyeurism remains the term that best describes the thrill of excitement that runs through a person when they clandestinely look at something they know they shouldn't.

The rampant popularity of "slumming" that began in the mid-nineteenth century offers an excellent example of how voyeurism was employed by the middle-class. In Seth Koven's *Slumming* (2006), he explains that even the most respectable members of the upper and middle classes engaged in cross-class performances of poverty in order to pass undetected through the slums and see for themselves the destitution and degradation they had previously only read about in books. Slumming was, at times, sexual in nature; when James Greenwood disguised himself

as a beggar to see what life was like in the Lambeth Workhouse in 1866, he discovered that "public authorities were using public money to create the conditions that encouraged the most vicious male members of the metropolitan underclass to engage in sodomy" (Koven 41). When "A Night in the Workhouse," appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, people began to imagine "the precincts of poverty" as "'queer' and 'eccentric' spaces" in which slum tourists "could explore and represent heterodox sexual desires and practices." Some went to see if reports of lower-class women with loose morals were true, and others engaged the services of prostitutes. While these overtly sexual escapades certainly fall under the category of voyeurism, so, too, do trips into the slums for less salacious reasons; for our purposes, voyeurism applies to any kind of clandestine "watching" that thrills or excites the watcher.

1.2 Enclosure and Urbanization

In order to better understand the moral panic over slums and the poor in early Victorian London, it is first necessary to consider the circumstances of class formation in greater detail. It is obvious that the rapid growth of the factory system drew workers from the countryside with the promise of steady wages, but it is also worth considering what other factors were at play that brought about this shift toward industrialism. Arguably the most important factor was the "wholesale enclosure" and privatization of land which began as early as the twelfth century and sped considerably between 1760 and 1820 (Thompson 198). Prior to enclosure, most of England operated on a traditional open field system, in which a village, church, or local estate had several hundred acres of land at their disposal that was made available to local subsistence farmers. During the process of enclosure, common land was privatized, and estates shut out the small farmers they had previously allowed to farm there. For many, the transition to a system of enclosure was as jarring as the introduction of mills to England's pastoral landscapes and

signified another major cultural shift for the country. Many feared that enclosure would deplete the villages and hamlets that were organized around common land and force the peasantry to abandon the wholesome countryside for the corrupt city; this fear inspired a slew of poetic laments over the destruction of the pastoral ideal in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.

Oliver Goldsmith mourns the changes enclosure brings to "Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain" in his 1770 poem, "The Deserted Village" (line 1). When the "bold peasantry, their country's pride," loses the right to use the village's common land, it falls into "shapeless ruin" and the children who would inherit the "innocent" pastoral lifestyle of their parents are instead forced to "leave the land" (lines 55, 47, 50). These children turn to cities for employment, and the "poor houseless shivering female" Goldsmith uses as his example is corrupted by the urban environment and is "lost to all; her friends, her virtue fled" (lines 326, 331). Meanwhile, the wealthy landowner that benefits from enclosure luxuriates in his newly expanded demesne, where he:

> Takes up a space that many poor supplied;
> Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
> Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds:
> The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
> Has robbed the neighbouring fields of half their growth (lines 276-300)

Goldsmith condemns the personal wealth and greed that have brought about the destruction of the traditional rural community and, in the midst of the enclosure movement, offers a cautionary tale to those who have it in their power to prevent the corruption of the rural idyll. Despite the poem's popularity—it accumulated "six editions in the first six months of its publication"—the process of enclosure is not slowed by his warnings (Mitchell 123). Fifty years later, once the

enclosure of England's common land was nearly complete, John Clare takes up Goldsmith's lament. In his 1820 poem, "The Mores," he nostalgically recalls a time when:

> Unbounded freedom ruled the wandering scene
> Nor fence of ownership crept in between
> To hide the prospect of the following eye
> Its only bondage was the circling sky (lines 7-10)

The time before enclosure is one of freedom, in which "cows," "sheep," and presumably men roamed freely across open land, unchecked by concerns over property rights and boundaries (lines 25, 27). By the 1820s, however, the language of surveillance has crept into the poetic conversation about enclosure. The lack of fences demarcating one landowner's fields from another's ensures a measure of privacy; there is no place for "the following eye" to observe either the animals or their owners, thus ensuring a life free from the "bondage" of both enclosure and surveillance. But the future brings with it "the pressures of enclosure, privatization, and improvement," ushering in a new era in which the freedom of the open land system is eliminated, the wholesome peasantry crowds into the urban landscape, and surveilling eye that jealously guards the wealth of the few extends even into pastoral spaces (Landry xx).

Once crowded into England's ever-growing urban environments, a new set of concerns arose about how poor living conditions, long hours in badly ventilated factories, and low forms of urban entertainment would affect the workers' mental, physical, and moral health. England's economic system operated on a *laissez faire* model, which called for minimal government interference in the nation's capitalist industrial economy. In the early nineteenth century, especially, in the midst of England's great shift from an agrarian to an industrial system, self-reliance was the rule of the day. It is for this reason, Peter Bartrip asserts, that the formative period from 1800 to 1830 was characterized by "an absence of legislation" that might have

helped mitigate the deplorable conditions of factory workers. In 1825, the country entered a period of "'constant parliamentary activity to abolish the restraints on individual freedom," and it wasn't until around 1865 that a period of "state intervention" began "for the purpose of conferring benefit upon the mass of the people" (63). Up until this time, the ruling classes generally agreed that the goal should be to increase production by any means necessary, and the laboring population had little help from the government in securing reasonable wages, safe housing, or healthy working conditions. Worse still was the pervading sense that the lower classes were not meant to have these things; they existed solely to prop up the classes above them and enable their luxurious lifestyles. In his *Memoir on Pauperism* (1835), Alexis de Tocqueville characterizes the plight of the working class as not only necessary for the economic success of the country, but as their divinely ordained purpose: "[in] the total fabric of human societies, I consider the industrial class as having received from God the special and dangerous mission of securing the material well-being of all others by its risks and dangers" (23). England's laborers were thus cast as martyrs for the cause of industrial capitalism.

The notion that the suffering of England's laboring population was necessary for the good of the country was such a pervasive idea in the first half of the century that it was satirized in an issue of *Punch* in 1843. A full-page cartoon titled "Capital and Labour" depicts a subterranean space where laborers mine gold along cramped and dangerous-looking shafts (**Figure 1**). In the foreground, gaunt children huddle together in fear, a skeletal mother cradles her sleeping infant, and a few old men—their bodies bent and disfigured from years of unregulated working conditions—lean on canes and crutches. To the left of the scene stands Laetitia, the Roman goddess of gaiety, whose presence symbolizes hope, prosperity, abundance, and stability. She and Cupid are separated from the miserable laborers by a thick wooden

door bearing two locks labeled “CHUB” and “BRAMA”—one for Jeremiah Chubb, who patented an “unpickable lock” in 1818, and the other for Joseph Bramah who, in 1784, designed a lock so impregnable that he placed one in his shop window along with a sign offering 200 guineas to anyone who could design an instrument that could pick it (Churchill 52). Laetitia and Cupid are barred from entering the laborers’ domain by the two locks, as well as a corpulent foreman who lounges on a pile of gold on the other side of the door, keys dangling from his belt. Meanwhile, this foundation of hopelessness and despair props up an upper level, where

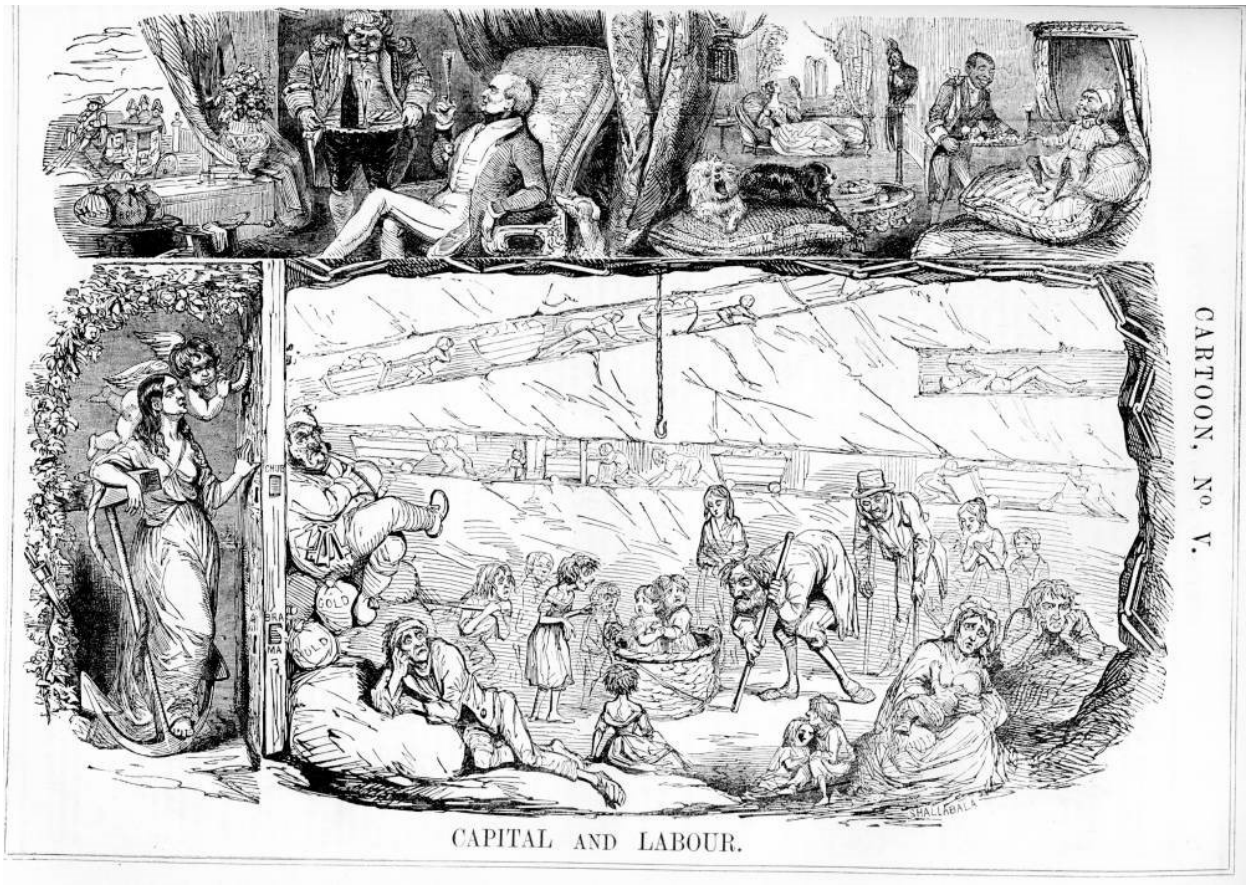


Figure 1: "Capital and Labour," *Punch*, vol. 5, p.48

wealthy men and women reap the benefits of the labor below. Richly dressed men lounge on cushions while servants offer trays of champagne and other delicacies; bags of gold from the mines below sit close at hand. In the background, a woman lounges on a chaise, mirror in hand,

admiring her own fashionable dress and elaborate hairstyle. The windows are thrown open to reveal liveried carriages and spouting fountains, and everyone present enjoys the fresh air that is denied to those who toil below.

Though it is clear that the cartoon is pointing out how England's vast wealth is only made possible by the exploitation of the working class, it is accompanied by a brief commentary in which the author mocks Tocqueville's notion that the working class must suffer for the good of the nation:

> It is gratifying to know that though there is much misery in the coal-mines, where the "labourers are obliged to go on all-fours like dogs," there is a great deal of luxury results from it. The public mind has been a good deal shocked by very offensive representations of certain underground operations, carried on by an inferior race of human beings, employed in working the mines, but *Punch*'s artist has endeavoured to do away with the disagreeable impression, by showing the very refined and elegant result that happily results from the labours of these inferior creatures. The works being performed wholly under ground, ought never to have been intruded on the notice of the public. They are not intended for the light of day, and it is therefore unfair to make them the subject of illustration. When taken in conjunction with the very pleasing picture of aristocratic ease to which they give rise, the labours in the mines must have a very different aspect from that which some injudicious writers have endeavoured to attach them. (48)

The author haughtily insists that the "inferior race of human beings" is "not intended for the light of day," and if anyone finds depictions of their suffering offensive, they should simply redirect their gaze to the happy outcome of their labor and enjoy the "very pleasing picture of aristocratic ease to which they give rise." The writers at *Punch* mock the idea that the laborers' plight is necessary if England is to produce the luxurious lifestyle to which most of its citizens aspire, and allude to the fact that the extreme disparity between the nation's rich and poor must be addressed rather than justified or ignored.

Of course, not everyone bought into the idea that the working classes had to suffer in order for the nation's higher orders to prosper. Many members of the middle class were interested in easing the burden of the working class, whether for the sake of their humanity, or a more self-interested concern about how the byproducts of poverty—like poor sanitation, cholera outbreaks, and criminal activity—might affect their own well-being. Nearly every day, London's newspapers and periodicals published some lament over the spread of disease in the slums, pickpockets in the East End, or the popularity of gin palaces and public houses among the working classes. The concern that laborers had no access to the healing and moralizing influence of nature was matched by anxiety over the idea of the city's homeless beggars camping out in the Edenic Royal Parks. Meanwhile, the middle class agreed that laborers should attend church on Sundays for the good of their souls, get exercise each day for the good of their bodies, and take great care with their hygiene and appearance if they cared to better themselves and emulate their superiors. Still, little was said about the low wages and long hours that prevented laborers from doing these things.

1.3 Middle-Class Control of Cultural Discourse

Nevertheless, members of the middle-class were seen as more sympathetic than the aristocracy to the plight of the poor due, in large part, to their position as intermediaries between the two groups. According to Philip Davis, the middle class "was the new centre of consciousness, the go-betweens who were neither aristocratically aloof from the forces of economic change nor utterly crushed by them" (23). This afforded them a level of sensitivity to the social and economic fluctuations of class, and even contributed to a sense of responsibility "to find the voice that the underclasses lacked." H.W. Wong suggests that this group, which found itself in a position of "economic supremacy by dominating capital and the means of

production," therefore also controlled "the production of cultural discourse," and set about defining each class, its members, habits, and behaviors (81). Popular newspapers like the *Times*, which had a predominantly "middle-class … readership," and the *Illustrated London News*, which was "the self-identified vehicle of respectable middle-class taste," served as mouthpieces for middle-class thought, and were among the most powerful forces that helped define the emerging class boundaries (O'Brien 75, Rodrick 2). These and other newspapers "consistently located the working classes in a cultural realm distinct from that of the middle and upper classes," thereby creating and enforcing distance between the emerging middle class and the lower orders from which they hoped to distance themselves (O'Brien 134).

Despite their lack of firsthand knowledge about the lower classes and the slums, middle-class writers nevertheless exerted control over the production of cultural discourse and filled in gaps in their understanding by constructing an imaginary lower class based on their own assumptions, fears, and anxieties. Anne Baltz Rodrick explains that at this time, "notions of 'the criminal' were being radically redefined, often by members of a middle class still preoccupied with self-definition and seeking to combat its own fears and insecurities … by criminalizing previously tolerated behavior" (2). According to Wong, it became increasingly obvious that "the class of criminals, living in slums and dark street corners, is a geographical imagination originating from those who are richer and superior" (81). There were, of course, problems with crime, extreme poverty, and lack of access to sanitation in many of the city's worst areas, but writers tended to focus on the worst examples of these problems in order to shock, entertain, and elicit sympathy from their readers. It was not long before these extreme examples of life in London's slums began to eclipse, in the collective imagination of the middle class, the more mundane tales of laborers working long hours for low wages.

1.4 Understanding Social Class

In order to understand how the middle class produces the cultural discourse that delineates one economic group from another, we must first pause to consider what is signified by the term "class" in the first place. What is "class"? More specifically, what are the social and economic divisions that separate one class from another? Where are these lines drawn, and who decides where they fall? Since class is, according to John Goodridge and Bridget Keegan, "a moveable feast," and even Raymond Williams calls its definition "obviously difficult" owing to "its range of meaning and … its complexity in that particular meaning where it describes a social division," we must take a historical view of how the term shifted over the course of several centuries in order to answer these questions (1; "Class" 60). Williams tries to give a historical-semantic explanation of how the term evolved, noting that the "Latin word *classis*," as it applied to the identification of groups based on property ownership in ancient Rome, "came into English in 1C16 in its Latin form" (60). Throughout the seventeenth century, the term was increasingly applied "as a general word for a group or division," but it had not yet taken on the strict economic and even vocational parameters we are used to associating with the concept of class today. In fact, according to Williams, our understanding of class "in its modern social sense, with relatively fixed names for particular classes (lower class, middle class, upper class, working class and so on)," did not come into regular use until "the period between 1770 and 1840," when the Industrial Revolution shattered previously held notions of social structure and reorganized them in terms of production and earning potential ("Class" 61). This period therefore becomes an era of transition in which the rapid rise of new economic systems allows vast sums of money to filter into the hands of uneducated, lower-class factory owners, necessitating a reconsideration of class definitions and dynamics.

During this period of change in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, the notion of social class maintains its correlation with wealth as it relates to familial legacy and inheritance, but it begins to place more emphasis on one's personal wealth and earning potential. The idea that "social position is made rather than merely inherited" becomes increasingly important, and notions about social mobility begin to creep into previously held beliefs that "position was determined by birth." Now there was room to move "from one *estate, degree, order* or *rank* to another," but the very fact that movement from a lower socioeconomic group to a higher one was possible brought about a heightened awareness of the social divisions that made movement necessary in the first place (Williams "Class" 61-62). In order to cross into a new social class, everyone involved in the socioeconomic system had to be made acutely aware of where the divisions were and what lay on either side of them. Since, as mentioned above, the middle class had control of the discourse, they set about constructing narratives for the upper, middle, and lower classes in which the differences between them were exaggerated and made to appear more pronounced.

1.5 *The Upper Classes*

Despite the emerging possibility of moving between social groups, the upper echelons of British society—variously referred to as the upper class, ruling class, superior class, or aristocracy—remained firmly in the grip of a select few. The peerage—those upon whom a monarch has bestowed the title of duke, marquess, earl, viscount, or baron,—composed the House of Lords. Members of this class were not only politically important, but they were also "invariably hugely wealthy and possessed of gigantic landed estates" (Pool 35). The gentry ranked immediately below the peerage, and included non-peerage nobility like baronets, knights, and great landowners with distinguished family names. Though there was a wide dispersal of

wealth and importance across the ranks of peerage and gentry, they were united in the fact that they did not work for wages: their income was passive, their titles (if any) were (mostly) inherited, and the only way for an outsider to break into their social circles was through marriage. Even the middle-class factory owners who amassed a great deal of wealth in a short period of time at the onset of the industrial revolution were barred from inclusion in this group. They could purchase a title and an estate, of course, but class was still not purely monetary; it also involved breeding and taste, and anyone desperate enough to maneuver their family into the upper class with "unearned" titles and ostentatious displays of wealth demonstrated that they had neither.

Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) offers an example of how two different classes thought about wealth, privilege, and social mobility. The novel's string of misunderstandings begins when the parson erroneously informs John Durbyfield that he is "the lineal representative of the ancient and nightly family of the d'Urbervilles, who derive their descent from Sir Pagan d'Urberville, that renowned knight who came from Normandy with William the Conqueror" (Hardy 2). Inspired by this newly acquired illustriousness, John and his wife send their daughter, Tess, to the nearby d'Urberville estate to "claim kin," not knowing that Simon Stoke-d'Urberville had no right to the name either, having merely found it in a book and adopted it to conceal the unsavory source of his wealth: manufacturing in the industrial north. Both parties use the d'Urberville name as a way to rise above their current social class; the Durbeyfields hope that Tess's beauty will "lead to some noble gentleman marrying her," thereby elevating her (and them, by proxy) above her station. For his part, Stoke understands enough of social class to know that the new money of the manufacturing class is not

enough to make him welcome among the southern elite, and hopes that the name of an old noble family and a newly constructed estate will be enough to fool them into accepting him.

1.6 The Middle Classes

Because membership in the upper class was the most difficult to achieve, it is also the easiest to identify and define. The lines between the middle and lower classes, however, were more difficult to discern and easier to transgress, owing in part to the fact that both groups were mostly composed of wage-earners. There was a vast difference between a doctor and a factory worker in terms of education and income, but the mere fact of having to work at all gave them something in common that separated them from the upper classes. The middle-class desire to elevate themselves above their "inferiors" therefore required a certain amount of self-conscious definition, and many of the differences between these groups are self-imposed. Add to this fluctuating sense of identity the emergence of a class of wealthy but often uneducated factory owners and industrialists, many of whom were once factory hands themselves, and the already blurred lines between middle and lower class become even more difficult to identify. Factory owners and manufacturers were not considered members of a particularly "respectable" class until later in the nineteenth century. During a factory workers' strike in Manchester in 1818, a "Journeyman Cotton Spinner" addressed a crowd of disgruntled laborers and articulated his own frustration with members of this newly formed class who were so similar to the workers they exploited. He describes them as "a set of men who have sprung from the cotton-shop without education or address, except so much as they have acquired by their intercourse with the little world of merchants on the exchange at Manchester." In spite of—or perhaps because of—this social deficiency, they strive to appear superior through "an ostentatious display of elegant mansions, equipages, liveries, parks, hunters, hounds, &c. which they take care to shew off to the

merchant stranger in the most pompous manner." And, in fact, the factory owners in the newer manufacturing towns like Manchester, Bolton, and Birmingham house themselves in "gorgeous palaces" that outstrip the "neat charming retreats you see round London," the nation's true seat of social power. The Cotton Spinner is not impressed by the factory owners' overdone demonstrations of wealth and accuses them of "a woeful deficiency of taste" that betrays their true class status. Even if they "bring up their families at the most costly schools," it is only to "give their offspring a double portion of what they were so deficient in themselves" (qtd. in Thompson 199). The owners themselves still lack the education and taste that would elevate them above common laborers, so the only way to break into a higher social class is through ostentatious displays of wealth and by educating their children alongside members of those privileged classes.

The Journeyman Cotton Spinner's description of the new class of factory owners calls to mind John Thornton's socioeconomic position in *North and South* (1854-55). Thornton is a self-made man; his father's untimely bankruptcy and subsequent suicide forced him to seek work in a draper's shop as a young man, where he rose through the ranks of the workforce to become a wealthy factory owner. His lack of education is a source of self-consciousness, and prompts him to hire Mr. Hale, a former clergyman from the south of England, to fill in the gaps in his knowledge. When Mr. Hale's genteel daughter, Margaret, pays a call on Thornton's mother, she casts a judgmental eye on the *nouveau riche* furniture and décor that has been amassed and arranged "solely to ornament." Instead of providing the warm domestic comfort that

accompanies true taste,[2] the assembled knick-knacks, rugs, and doilies lend a "painfully spotted, spangled, speckled look" to the room, and the overall effect is one of "icy, snowy discomfort" that Margaret finds unpleasant (112). The Hales are not well-to-do, but Margaret has spent the past decade with her wealthy aunt in London where she has been molded into a true gentlewoman through social interaction with the upper class. Thornton, on the other hand, may be wealthy, but he is "not quite a gentleman" (65). His lack of upbringing and education are at odds with his extreme wealth, and he occupies a liminal position between laborer and gentleman. Despite Thornton's superior economic position, he is still subordinate to Margaret's social standing; her education, gentility, and interaction with a higher social set casts her as superior to the self-made, uneducated factory owner.

North and South offers a glimpse into the confusion surrounding social standing at a time when wealth was flowing rapidly into the hands of an unrefined manufacturing class. These wealthy factory owners lacked the gentility needed to gain admission to the upper echelons of society but were too wealthy to be considered working class. It is at least partly for this reason that the middle class, in all its self-conscious striving, emerges as both a term and a concept in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Up until this period, those who were stationed monetarily and socially above the nation's laborers but still worked to earn a living were grouped together with the lower classes under the moniker of the "*common people*" (Williams "Class"

---

[2] Here, and throughout the body of this dissertation, I use the term "taste" to refer to nineteenth-century ideas of "what is appropriate, harmonious, or beautiful; *esp.* discernment and appreciation of the beautiful in nature or art; *spec.* the faculty of perceiving and enjoying what is excellent in art, literature, and the like" ("Taste," OED).

62). Eager to differentiate themselves from poorly paid laborers, those who ranked among the higher orders of wage-earners began to refer to them as members of the "lower classes" which, together with "lowest classes," were common terms by the 1790s (Williams "Class" 64). This left well-paid wage-earners in a sort of no-man's-land, hovering somewhere between laborers and the aristocracy; the terms "*middle classes*," and "*middling classes*," emerged at this time as a way to refer to this group (*Culture* XV). By the 1840s, these terms were used to describe a vast swath of ranks and incomes, which contained a "large number of divisions of status and other kinds within it" (Morris 12). "Middle classes" could refer to everyone from doctors, lawyers, military officers, clergymen, bankers, merchants, shopkeepers, clerical workers, and even some landlords, though each profession afforded a different level of income and social standing. By 1885, however, the Housing of the Working Classes Act offered a neat distinction between laborers "who earn their livelihood by wages and salaries," and members of the middle class "whose livelihood depended on fees (professional class), profits (trading class) or property (independent)" ("Class" 64-5). Neatly ranking them in this way opened the door to the amended class statuses that persist today, like upper- and lower-middle class.

Income, status, and politics each played a role in defining the middle class, but perhaps more important was a demonstrable adherence to middle-class values. For the middle class to exist as its own social caste, separate from and elevated above the "common people," its members had to engage in daily performances of the virtues that set them apart from and above the lower classes. Samuel Smiles lays out the foundation of this middle-class mindset in *Self Help* (1859), a widely circulated work in which he instructs the working classes on how to pull themselves up from poverty by behaving like their more successful counterparts. Since, as historian Asa Briggs points out, "[middle]-class ideals set the standard for the nation," Smiles

encouraged members of the lower class to pursue upward mobility in part by emulating "the virtues of industry, frugality, temperance, and honesty" that the middle class prized (*People* 20; Smiles 252). Of these attributes, Smiles contended that frugality was the greatest marker of success, stating:

> The world … has always been divided into two classes—those who have saved and those who have spent—the thrifty and the extravagant. The building of all the houses, the mills, the bridges, and the ships, and the accomplishments of all other great works which have rendered man civilized and happy, has been done by the savers, the thrifty; and those who have wasted their resources have always been their slaves. It has been the law of nature and of Providence that this should be so; and I were an imposter if I promised any class that they would advance themselves if they were improvident, thoughtless, and idle. (251)

According to Smiles, the middle class was made up of industrious men and women who were responsible for England's greatness by virtue of extreme self-discipline, while the lower classes were poor because they did not demonstrate the same strength of character. It was possible, however, for the lower classes to improve themselves by emulating the behaviors of the middle class and treating middle-class ideals as "a ladder to individual success" (Briggs *People* 19). The performance of middle-class virtues therefore took place when and wherever there was a lower-class audience; servants in the home, workers in the factory, and any members of the lower classes that wandered into civic spaces were encouraged to look to their "betters" for demonstrations of "correct" middle-class behavior.

There were, of course, markers other than frugality and temperance that indicated a person's class status. At home, possessing "at least one servant," was a reliable indication of a household's middle-class status. Elizabeth Langland explains that in aristocratic households, management of servants was placed in the hands of "a capable housekeeper," but the middle-

class Victorian woman was expected to take on the role of household manager herself (46). Her direct interaction with lower-class employees made "[running] a middle-class household" into "an exercise in class management," and the introduction of the "ideological Other (the Worker or Servant)" into the home ushered in complicated and contentious class dynamics (8).

There existed a generally held conviction that the "best servant was an invisible one," and they "were expected to time their work so that they would never meet with the family" (Langland 43). Many homes were even constructed to conceal the servants at work, and included "[back] staircases, hidden doorways, and secluded passageways [that] enabled servants to escape detection as they performed their duties" (43-44). As long as employing at least one servant was a "sign of respectability and an indicator of social status," however, there were times when the servants' presence and even hypervisibility was needed in order for their employers to confirm their social status and perform their rank (Horn 13). Domestic manuals further complicated issues of visibility by stressing the importance of "keeping an eye on servants below stairs," and encouraging employers "to monitor any visitors to the servants' hall, to double-check the kitchen accounts, to enforce strict curfews, and so on" (McCusky 360). In her widely disseminated *Book of Household Management* (1861), Isabella Beeton instructs those who manage servants to be "[constantly] on the watch to detect any wrong-doing on the part of any of the domestics" (21). Vigilant surveillance was necessary to ensure they did not slip into habits of plotting, thieving, and carousing that, it is assumed, came naturally to members of the lower classes. Even though servants were meant to be invisible, there was also an urgent sense that they needed to be watched.

Concerns over visibility in the household didn't end with a strict system of oversight on the part of Victorian housewives. If there was an "ideological Other" in the house that required

monitoring, it was also true that the Other was observing the family's behavior in even their most private moments. Domestic manuals stressed the importance of putting on a demonstration of appropriate behavior for the benefit of the servants, which held that "domestics … invariably partake somewhat of their mistress's character," and will "naturally fix their attention" on "the head of the house" (Beeton 2, 7). Therefore, if members of the household rise early, demonstrate "cleanliness," "frugality and economy," and "high and correct principles," it is expected that their servants will do the same. The anonymously written *Laws of Etiquette* (1836) even suggests that the tone and demeanor with which a member of the household speaks to a servant should be considered a performance of rank:

> there are many little actions which distinguish … a gentleman from one not a gentleman; but there is none more striking than the manner of addressing a servant. Issue your commands with gravity and gentleness, and in a reserved manner. Let your voice be composed, but avoid a tone of familiarity or sympathy with them. It is better in addressing them to use a higher key of voice and not to suffer it to fall at the end of a sentence … the perfection of manners in this particular is to indicate by your language that the performance is a favor and by your tone that it is a matter of course. (188).

Each interaction with a servant in a middle-class home can thus be constituted as a performance. When viewed in this manner, it becomes easier to see how the home "can be decoded so that we recognize it as a theater for the staging of a family's social position, a staging that depends on a group of prescribed domestic practices" (Langland 9). This was the stage upon which "the semiotics of middle-class life" played out, and household manuals provided a script for those who were unsure of the part they had to play.

Domestic manuals made it clear that mistresses and masters of middle-class homes must perform the virtues they hoped to see reflected in their servants' behavior, but there was

nevertheless an accompanying anxiety about being watched by outsiders in their most private spaces. According to Robbins, the "new burden of observing" placed on the middle class "emerged together" with a "fear of being observed" by servants (109). Throughout the nineteenth century, middle-class readers were inundated with tales of spying servants, and often took these fictional representations as proof they were being spied on in their own homes. Anthea Trodd points that while "servants do not generally play prominent roles" in these novels, "they assume high visibility … in plots and subplots involving crime," a trope which "became extremely conventionalized" as the century progressed (46). The sensation novels of Mary Elizabeth Braddon, for instance, appeal to middle-class anxieties by relying heavily on the threat of spying servants to advance the plot. In *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862), the narrator explains that "[amongst] all privileged spies, a lady's-maid has the highest privileges," indicating that the presence of members of the lower classes in the middle-class home meant that there was always someone there to observe, surveil, and even (it was feared) spy on the private moments of middle-class domestic life (Braddon 286). In *Aurora Floyd* (1863), the narrator warns the reader outright that:

> Your servants listen at your doors, and repeat your spiteful speeches in the kitchen, and watch you while they wait at table, and understand every sarcasm, every innuendo, every look, as well as those at whom the cruel glances and the stinging words are aimed. They understand your sulky silence, your studied and over-acted politeness. The most polished form your hate and anger can take is as transparent to those household spies as if you threw knives at each other, or pelted your enemy with the side-dishes and vegetables, after the fashion of disputants in a pantomime. Nothing that is done in the parlour is lost upon these quiet, well-behaved watchers from the kitchen. (51)

Even a polished show of gentility or a carefully controlled tone of voice cannot fool the surveilling eye of the household servants; they are acutely aware of all that goes on behind

closed doors in the middle-class home and make “scandal and gossip” about their employers’ lives the “staple of their talk” (52). Braddon is acutely aware that the surveilling eye is not limited to people in positions of power, and Foucault even makes this point in *Discipline and Punish*:

> Power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up … Any individual, taken almost at random, can operate the machine: in the absence of the director, his family, his friends, his visitors, *even his servants*. Similarly, it does not matter what motive animates him: the curiosity of the indiscreet, the malice of a child, … or the perversity of those who take pleasure in spying and punishing. (202 emphasis mine)

And in fact, Lady Audley’s maid, Phoebe Marks, does "operate the machine” of surveillance when she sneaks into her mistress’s dressing room, discovers evidence of Lady Audley’s secret child, and uses it to blackmail her. It is hardly surprising, therefore, when Aurora Floyd’s housekeeper, Mrs. Powell, eavesdrops on her conversations, learns of her bigamy, and spreads the rumor among the staff. The idea of the spying servant caused the middle-class domestic arrangement to take on a more sinister tone in which the family was subject to surveillance and privacy was never guaranteed. The master-servant relationship was thus characterized by shifting desires: to see and not see; to be seen and not be seen.

1.7 The Lower Classes

Domestic servants were, of course, members of the working class, but they were regarded very differently from factory workers. Elliott points out that even though “they both work at menial labor for a wage” and often share “the same background,” laborers and domestic servants “experienced quite different working and living conditions, identified themselves with

different systems of rank and status, and operated under seemingly different economic systems" (379). Up until the mid-eighteenth century, households with servants operated on a paternalistic model in which, according to Raymond Williams, "family" referred to all members of a household rather than including only "immediate blood-relations" (54; Robbins 111). Under this model, since servants were considered members of the household, they were also considered members of the family. This "paternalistic ideology" drew a line between domestic servants and members of the poor laboring class whose struggle for existence began when paternalism petered out in the eighteenth century. This failure to account for the lower classes was seen as "the masters [having] *expelled*" them from their "proper and traditional place in the family, driving [them] out into the modern world of dangerous, unsupervised mobility" (Robbins 111). The result, as we have seen above, was the "fresh race of beings" that made up the manufacturing population and was free to operate "with little instruction, and less guidance" from members of the upper classes. Fear of these "frighteningly large masses of apparently masterless men" led to a resurgence in paternalism in the early nineteenth century when its "fading power" was "restored by the threat of the new worker unrest" (Robbins 111).

Despite ample encouragement and instruction on how to rise above one's current station, there was a limit to how high most members of the lower classes could hope to ascend. The population that made up England's lowest social orders was vast and diverse, and only those who already hovered near the margin of the middle-class had any real hope of social mobility. Some were skilled artisans who lived very comfortably; others were factory workers who struggled to cobble together enough money to pay rent and buy food for their families; still more made their living by begging and thieving. Considering the range of incomes, professions, and lifestyles that fell under the banner of the lower class, it is no wonder that, as a homogeneous

group, they had so many titles, including the working classes, laboring classes, productive classes, lower classes, lowest classes, lower orders, working poor, and poor. The poorest among them relied entirely on charitable intervention and were occasionally given their own designation as members of the "underclass." They were also assigned various colloquial monikers, like the masses, the mob, the great unwashed, the unwashed masses, and the hoi polloi, among others. These terms were used imprecisely, and more or less interchangeably throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, shifting and fluctuating to include or exclude various elements of the nation's lowest orders. Since the middle class controlled the discourse of class, those who fell below middle-class status—be they skilled artisans or homeless beggars—were often lumped together in a vague, undefined mass of laborers, thieves, and vagrants. Francis Place, a nineteenth-century social reformer and champion of working-class rights, acknowledged the tendency of upper- and middle-class discourse about the lower classes to glaze over their differences when he remarked:

> If the character and conduct of the working-people are to be taken from reviews, magazines, pamphlets, newspapers, reports of the two Houses of Parliament and the Factory Commissioners, we shall find them all jumbled together as the 'lower orders', the most skilled and the most prudent workmen, with the most ignorant and imprudent laborers and paupers, though the difference is great indeed, and indeed in many cases will scarce admit of comparison. (qtd. In Thompson 194)

Thompson points out that different groups that exist under the umbrella of the term "lower orders" may include a wide variety of people and lifestyles, like "the Sunderland sailor, the Irish navvy, the Jewish costermonger, the inmate of an East Anglian village workhouse, the compositor on *The Times*," and even if they are all "seen by their 'betters' as belonging to the 'lower classes,'" the truth is that "they themselves might scarcely understand each other's dialect" (Thompson 194). The proliferation of micro-castes and subcultures within the lower

classes cast a pall of confusion over who, exactly, was included in that group, and added to the sense that they were an anonymous body of people whose customs, behaviors, and lifestyles were foreign and therefore threatening.

1.8 *Class-Consciousness and Conflicting Interests*

Since so many different professions and incomes fell under the term "lower classes," it is no wonder that the term "evades as much as it defines." Brick masons, factory hands, hand-loom weavers, domestic servants, and chimney sweeps had little to do with each other, but all worked for wages, and all were gathered together to make up the great mass of the lower classes. Thompson refers to this unification of seemingly disparate elements as "an historical phenomenon" rather than a structure or category and suggests that any sense of what the group "is" is tied up in the human relationships that exist at any given moment along a historical timeline (9). Context is therefore crucial to our understanding of class; personal interests and alliances are constantly in flux, and shifts in social, political, and economic variables affect the way workers unite with, or stand in opposition to, each other and members of other classes at any given time. Class-consciousness exists when a group "feel[s] and articulate[s] the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs."[3] For the lower classes, this unification can be seen in the formation of political and industrial groups, like "trade unions, friendly societies, educational

---

[3] It is worth noting that men alone did not make up the working class; the women who performed many of the same jobs as men (and others beside) and, to some extent, even the children who guided the shuttles of power looms or swept the chimneys could also "feel and articulate the identity of their interests," though they were often forced to do so in ways that garnered less attention owing to their position as subordinates within the working class community.

and religious movements, political organisations, [and] periodicals" that represent the mindset of the working-class community at a particular point in time (Thompson 194).

Since the class interests that emerge at different points along the timeline of nineteenth century labor are always set in opposition to groups whose interests are different from their own, the history of class and class-consciousness during the era of rapid industrial growth is fraught with conflict. After the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, soldiers returned home to find that their jobs had been rendered obsolete by the introduction of more efficient machinery in both the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. High rates of unemployment were made worse by several years of poor crop yields, and the Corn Laws enforced tariffs on imported food in order to keep the price of domestic crops high. These issues occurred at a time when England's rapid shift from an agricultural to an industrial economy caused the population to migrate to urban centers, but parliamentary boroughs were not shifted or redistributed to represent new census statistics. Boroughs that had once flourished were emptied of all but a few eligible voters, and the lack of a secret ballot left them open to pressure and coercion. These "rotten boroughs," as they came to be known, were granted undue power in Parliament, while the masses crowded into England's urban centers were left without an adequate voice in government. According to *The People's Book*, the 1831 elections resulted in 204 English boroughs sending 406 members to the House of Commons, 132 of whom were elected by fewer than 100 voters, and 88 of whom were elected by fewer than 50 (Carpenter 406).

These factors gave rise to a series of demonstrations and rebellions in which the English working class attempted to assert their rights to employment, food, housing, and parliamentary representation. The Luddite Rebellion of the 1810s, the Spa Fields Riots (1816), the March of the Blanketeers (1816), and the Pentrich Rising (1817) were among the

larger movements organized by disenfranchised workers. Members of the upper classes saw echoes of the French Revolution in the demands of England's laborers and feared they would enact the same kind of bloody overthrow if they weren't placated in some way. Rather than make allowances that would improve the lives of England's workers, however, most MPs dug in their heels and refused to pass any significant reform measures. Frustration among the lower classes reached a peak in 1819, and working-class protesters at a pro-reform rally in Birmingham decided to take matters into their own hands and nominate an MP, though they weren't entitled to one under the current laws. Manchester followed suit, and another massive rally took place in that city's St. Peter's Square where they, too, nominated their choice of representative. Manchester authorities were skittish about the potential for violence, however, and ordered a cavalry regiment to disperse the crowd, at which point they charged them with sabers drawn, killing as many as nineteen and wounding several thousand. The "Peterloo Massacre," as it came to be known, raised the temperature of an already heated political climate.

In 1832, the Reform Act drove a decisive wedge between the middle and lower classes by granting the rights laborers had demonstrated for over the past few decades to only the middle classes. This Reform Act disenfranchised more than fifty rotten boroughs and reduced the number of representatives for another thirty, while distributing nearly seventy MPs among newly populous urban areas. It also granted the right to vote to small landowners, tenant farmers, and any man who paid more than £10 per annum in rent which, in most cases, did not apply to members of the working classes. Socially and politically, the Reform Act granted power to the middle classes and helped separate them from the "common people." It also angered the working classes, inspiring them to combine disparate factions of laborers, each with a different set of complaints, under the banner of one massive, unified sociopolitical movement called Chartism.

When the Chartist political reform movement began circulating petitions for expanded rights for working class men in 1838, it was considered yet another iteration of the socioeconomic unrest that had made the upper classes so uneasy throughout the 1810s. The smaller uprisings that had occurred throughout the previous decades were united under the Chartist mission, which unified the various demands of smaller working-class factions under the People's Charter. In it, they issued six demands: universal suffrage for men over the age of 21; no property ownership restrictions for MPs; annual parliaments; elimination of rotten boroughs and redistribution of representation; payment for MPs; and voting by secret ballot (Working Men's Assn. 1). Despite collecting 1,280,958 signatures from working people across the nation, the House of Commons overwhelmingly rejected the petition by a vote of 235 to 46 (British Library). Thomas Carlyle chastised this decision in *Chartism* (1839), arguing that the very fact of the movement "means the bitter discontent grown fierce and mad," calling it "a new name for a thing which has many names, which will yet have many" (1). He cautioned his readers that "if something be not done" to alleviate the circumstances of poverty, "something will *do* to itself one day, and in a fashion that will please nobody." Yet, despite these warnings, Chartism was a largely peaceful movement, and Davis contends that Chartists "who wished to defeat a market-led society by physical force were in a minority," and most rallies "dispersed peaceably" (48). (48). Gertrude Himmelfarb explains that "England seemed to be making the transition from aristocracy to democracy without violence or civil war," but adds that the "threat of revolution, to be sure, could not be discounted" (2). It was this threat that hung in the air; amidst the contentious political climate and with Carlyle's warning echoing in the ears of the upper and middle classes, it is not surprising that they continued to eye the lower classes with fear and suspicion.

The Chartists renewed their petition in 1842, and again in 1848, but after its initial failure the newspapers had already begun to report on the movement's decline. Carlyle, however, was not so certain of its demise, and advised his readers to proceed with caution: "according to the newspapers, Chartism is extinct … So say the newspapers; —and yet, alas, most readers of newspapers know withal that it is indeed the 'chimera' of Chartism, not the reality, which has been put down" (2). It didn't matter if the failure of the working-class movement was fiction, however, because the middle class controlled the cultural discourse of the most widely read newspapers, adopting a narrative that eased the anxiety of those who viewed Chartism, the working class, and the nation's poor as a threat. There were, of course, Chartist newspapers: the *Northern Liberator*, the *English Chartist Circular*, the *Midland Counties' Illuminator*, *Reynold's Newspaper* and, most prominently, the *Northern Star* all worked to disseminate news and information about the movement, but their readership was limited by the literacy rate among the working classes—they were often read aloud in coffee shops and public houses for just this reason—and failed to attract the diverse reading audience that would be necessary to affect a middle-class mindset.

1.9 *Chapter Overview*

Chapter One considers the period of time surrounding the Select Committee's decision to allow working-class entry to London's Royal Parks. Eighteenth-century pastoral poetry held up the countryside as an Edenic paradise where the wholesome, uncorrupted rural peasantry maintained its innocence through communion with nature. When the onset of the industrial revolution drew agricultural workers from the countryside into the urban environment, members of the upper classes worried they were being corrupted by unhygienic living conditions and a lack of wholesome recreation. The solution, they believed, was to open the Royal Parks to

the lower classes where they could once again commune with nature and return to the innocent pursuits of a healthy peasantry. This would also draw them out of the mystery and disease of the slums and into a space where they could be more easily observed by anxious members of the middle class. Once there, it was hoped that they would learn moral behavior, etiquette, and hygiene through daily association with their betters. In order for members of the middle class to articulate exactly what kind of behavior was desirable, however, they had to define it for themselves and consciously demonstrate it in daily performances of their class. In this way, the middle-class not only turned its own gaze inward, but encouraged the lower classes to meticulously observe these performances of middle-class behavior, dress, and manners. In the process of trying to "reveal" the lower classes, the middle class reversed the roles of observer and observed and placed themselves under their own microscope. The result was a constant cycle of definition and redefinition of what the middle class is, and what it is not.

Chapter Two addresses the impenetrability of London's slums, colloquially referred to as "rookeries," "fever dens," and "devil's acres" in middle-class newspapers and literature. Spurred by fears of choleric miasmas and rampant criminal activity, writers set about shining a light into the slums in order to better understand their poor inhabitants. Their methods and writing styles grew increasingly bold, intrusive, and voyeuristic as the nineteenth century progressed; the Condition of England novels of the 1830s and 40s gave way to domestic travelogues and taxonomies of the poor in the 1840s and 50s, and thrilling tales of crime and adventure appeared in the decades that followed. In their own ways, each of these genres and texts attempted to reveal the conditions of London's most dangerous areas and offer a sketch of the people who lived there. Text-based tourism allowed middle-class readers to delve vicariously into areas they would never otherwise explore, but the increasingly sensational (and decreasingly scientific)

depictions of the poor and working classes in the slums led to a desire on the part of many readers to see for themselves what they had previously only read about. By the 1860s, therefore, middle-class readers who were no longer satisfied with vicarious tourism began to dress up as members of the poor and working classes and embark on their own "slumming parties." Whether for the purposes of philanthropy, scientific inquiry, or voyeurism, middle-class slummers could experience a night, a week, or even a month in the slums and return with their *own* tales to tell.

Chapter Three considers the interaction between the middle and lower classes at exhibits, galleries, and museums. The Select Committee's decision to allow the lower classes entry to the Royal Parks was partially based on a desire to draw them into England's consumer culture; if they could observe the middle class's dress and behavior, they would naturally try to emulate it, and even laborers could learn to want fine ribbons and fashionable clothing, thereby creating more consumers for the ever-increasing supply of goods being produced. Beginning in the mid-1830s, therefore, members of the lower classes could be seen admiring the pictures at the National Gallery or studying the Parthenon Marbles at the British Museum. Their novelty in such grand surroundings, however, as well as suspicion about their expected behavior and criminal proclivities, shifted the gaze of middle-class museumgoers from the antiquities to the members of the lower class. Surveillance of their behavior became most apparent in the months leading up to the Great Exhibition of 1851. England was ready to welcome the world to the Crystal Palace, a purpose-built glass structure in Hyde Park, where they could compare each nation's technological and artistic achievements, and marvel at the machinery that drove the British economy. Despite this grand event, the newspapers focused on concerns over whether the working classes would be drunk when they arrived or scratch their names into the exhibits.

The desire to surveil the working classes was further facilitated by the nature of the exhibition building itself. The Crystal Palace was often compared to a great glass hive through which the attendants could watch and be watched; a panopticon much like Bentham's prison that had become, in the words of Foucault, "deinstitutionalized" to allow the attendant population to surveil and police itself (211).

Chapter 1: "Hemmed in by a vast circle of human inventions": Pastoral Performance and Working-Class Access to Green Space in Regency and Early Victorian London

Pastoral literature gives us a specific sense of nature, the rural, and the countryside by offering vivid descriptions of bucolic scenes and courtship between members of a noble and idealized peasantry. It depicts nature not as it exists at the present moment, but as we imagine it must have existed in the past. It is a wilderness with a temporal sense of place, but no geographical setting; by this I mean that the pastoral locates itself outside the metropolis, but it can't be reached within a day's ride of London. Rather, movement from the urban to the pastoral as we understand it requires the ability to travel through time. It is the idealized wilderness of childhood and the rapidly disappearing landscape threatened by the expanding pavement of urban sprawl, often characterized as Edenic or Arcadian. It instills within the reader a sense of

nostalgia for a time when things were wilder, more natural, and free from issues of modernization that complicate the reader's view of the world.

The pastoral is, furthermore, characterized not only by poetic description of this mythical space, but also by the reader's desire to travel to it; to feel a longing and a sense of nostalgia for it amidst the chaos of urban life. Leo Marx points out that the "dominant motive" of the genre "is generated by an urge to withdraw from civilization's growing power and complexity" and retreat to the simplicity of nature, its opposite (9). In this way, the pastoral draws the idyllic countryside into sharper focus by contrasting it with its urban counterpart; the country is often a mere retreat for a sophisticated speaker who must return to the city in order to share insights gained during their time communing with nature. As Owen Schur puts it, "the bucolic acquires its definition by interacting with its opposite: the bucolic world cannot exist without its urban counterpart" (3). In the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, the pastoral ideal is drawn into sharp focus by way of comparison with an increasingly urban society. The result is the mapping of contrived, man-made pastoral spaces—like parks and promenades—onto the urban environment as a means of negating its absence. These semi-pastoral landscapes cannot, however, be removed from the urban environment and relocated in time. Despite their pastoral mimicry, they are artificial copies of nature that function more like stage sets than wilderness, and that require a theatrical suspension of disbelief on the part of patrons who would engage in the fantasy of escape from the city and immersion in nature. When London's royal parks were opened to the working classes at the beginning of the nineteenth century, there arose a desire to preserve the pastoral illusion by policing patrons' behavior, and these spaces transformed from simple green spaces to exhibitionary complexes of display and surveillance.

1.10 Observing the Urban Environment

In order to better understand how these sites become performative, it is important to look more closely at London's development throughout the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. When Raymond Williams turns his gaze to the rapid growth of urban areas in the first half of the eighteenth century, he notes that "London was not, in the later sense, an industrial city" (147). The spewing smoke of factories had not yet commenced "black'ning"[4] the walls of Blake's churches, but London itself had already begun to take on the challenges of overpopulation commonly associated with the impending Industrial Revolution. Cultural anxiety at the time was largely focused on this swelling population as men and women from the country abandoned their rural communities for "a capital centre of trades and of distribution: of skilled craftsmen in metals and in print; of clothing and furniture and fashion; of all the work connected with shipping and the market." The slums and squalor that emerged from this period were, as Williams point out, "a consequence not simply of rapid expansion, but of attempts to control that expansion" that had taken place since the late sixteenth century. Fears about the spread of disease, vagrancy, and crime gave rise to "repeated attempts to limit the city's growth" by way of a series of bills that limited building and expansion in the metropolis. There were, of course, exceptions made for members of the upper class who could afford to acclimate to the lifestyle of London's wealthy population, but poor laborers from the countryside—"the casualties of a changing rural economy"—were the "explicit objects of exclusion from the developing city" (Williams 145).

---

[4] William Blake. "London." *Songs of Experience*, 1794.

These attempts to exclude the poor from London's environs were ill conceived, as the upper classes required servants to run their households, and unskilled laborers were needed to keep the manufacturing economy thrumming. Hundreds of thousands flooded into the city despite the legislature's best attempts to keep them out, and found that there was no place for them there. The bills that had been intended to prevent the construction of lower-income housing now funneled workers into areas of "overcrowded and insecure speculative building" that had been shoddily constructed in an effort to fit "within the legal limits" of the bills that had attempted to limit the city's growth. These sites of speculative building formed "labyrinths and alleys of the poor" that spread here and there throughout the city to fill what spaces they could find (Williams 145). The cramped residents of these labyrinths inevitably spilled into the city's public spaces where, having no other outlet for recreation, they drew close scrutiny from members of the upper classes who disapproved of their amusements, which often involved bawdy pursuits like drinking, gambling, boxing-matches, and lower forms of theater. London's dramatic growth at the end of the eighteenth century meant it "was being intensely observed…as a new kind of landscape," and "a new kind of society" (Williams 142). As the city's residents tried to ascertain how this new society would coalesce, the visibility of lower-class amusements that took place in civic spaces made them the subject of discussion and concern among the upper classes. The result of this intense observation was a series of detailed writings describing the novelty of life in London for those living outside the thriving metropolis. One such account is found in book VII of William Wordsworth's autobiographical *Prelude*, in which he offers a description of all he saw over the course of several visits to London. Wordsworth—the Romantic Era "poet of nature"—is well known for denouncing urban life in favor of pastoral landscapes and solitary strolls in nature. In his "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*"

(1801), he notes that the "increasing accumulation of men in cities" has produced "a craving for extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies" (231). He blames this desire for sensational entertainment on the "uniformity of...occupations" in London, which has served to "blunt the discriminating powers of the mind" and render urban-dwellers "[unfit]...for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor." This "savage torpor," in contrast with the simple, unadulterated nature of the "low and rustic" peasants of the countryside, demands novelty and spectacle, which is produced in great quantity within the limits of the metropolis (226). But as we have seen, the pastoral cannot exist without comparison to its urban counterpart, and so he engages in a detailed description of the chaos he experienced while observing the lower forms of entertainment in London.

The city is, for Wordsworth, a "monstrous ant-hill" containing an "endless stream of men and moving things;" a dazzling collection of diverse people and exhibits that he finds at turns wondrous and horrifying. He first recounts a visit to Sadler's Wells, a lowbrow theater that was infamous at the time for embodying an atmosphere of debauchery. Here, he recounts visions of "giants and dwarfs, / Clowns, conjurors, posture-masters, harlequins, / Amid the uproar of the rabblement" and recalls the "delight" he felt on observing "crude Nature work in untaught minds" (VII. 271-274; VII.274-275). But his delight evaporates on hearing, for the first time "Since, travelling southward from our pastoral hills...The voice of a woman utter blasphemy— / Saw woman as she is, to open shame / Abandoned, and the pride of public vice" (VII.383-386). Any true pleasure he took in these low forms of entertainment is shattered by the shameful exhibition of a woman whose unnatural behavior, to Wordsworth, showed how removal from nature and immurement within the chaos of the urban environment led the debased population to "[split] the race of man / In twain" while "leaving the same outward form"

(VII.390-391). In his experience, the lewd behavior enacted in the public sphere renders the city grotesque and its inhabitants monstrous.

Wordsworth's view of London is colored by the woman's blasphemy, and from this point in book VII of the *Prelude*, his language mirrors the "[distress] of mind" he feels at witnessing such foul behavior (VII.392). The "foolishness and madness in parade" become his focal point, and he details with increasing rapidity the "anarchy and din, / Barbarian and infernal," which he increasingly views as "Monstrous in colour, motion, shape, sight, sound" (VII.594; VII.686-688). His final descent into the madness of the urban "rabble" takes place at St. Bartholomew's Fair, an annual festival for trade and pleasure that drew crowds from all classes of London society. The event was such a crowded and chaotic experience for Wordsworth that it is only in recollecting his experience in the tranquility of the countryside years later that he is able to take refuge in "the Muse's help" to "lodge us, wafted on her wings, / Above the press and danger of the crowd" and offer a poetic account of the madness he witnessed there:

> Below, the open space, through every nook
> Of the wide area, twinkles, is alive
> ...
> with buffoons against buffoons
> Grimacing, writhing, screaming,—him who grinds
> The hurdy-gurdy, at the fiddle weaves,
> Rattles the salt-box, thumps the kettle-drum,
> And him who at the trumpet puffs his cheeks,
> The silver-collared Negro with his timbrel,
> Equestrians, tumblers, women, girls, and boys,
> Blue-breeched, pink-vested, with high-towering plumes.—
> All moveables of wonder, from all parts,
> Are here—Albinos, painted Indians, Dwarfs,
> The Horse of knowledge, and the learned Pig,

> The Stone-eater, the man that swallows fire,
> Giants, Ventriloquists, the Invisible Girl,
> The Bust that speaks and moves its goggling eyes,
> The Wax-work, Clock-work, all the marvellous craft
> Of modern Merlins, Wild Beasts, Puppet-shows,
> All out-o'-the-way, far-fetched, perverted things,
> All freaks of nature, all Promethean thoughts
> Of man, his dulness, madness, and their feats
> All jumbled up together, to compose
> A Parliament of Monsters. Tents and Booths
> Meanwhile, as if the whole were one vast mill,
> Are vomiting, receiving on all sides,
> Men, Women, three-years' Children, Babes in arms. (VII.682-721)

The masses here are "grimacing, writhing, screaming," amidst the myriad exhibitions of "perverted things" and "freaks of nature," that comprise a "Parliament of Monsters." The exhibits and performances draw a crowd so dense that the booths and tents seem to be "vomiting" men, women, and children as rapidly as a mill might churn out goods through the mass-producing power of machinery. For Wordsworth, the human population of London has become both part of the machinery that drew them there to seek employment, and a menacing blur of debauched humanity. The crowd and the entertainers alike are part of the "blank confusion" of that "mighty City," where "thousands upon thousands of her sons, / Living amid the same perpetual whirl / Of trivial objects" are "melted and reduced / To one identity" with "no law, no meaning, and no end" (VII.722-728).

1.11 *Civic Spaces and Legislative Control*

Wordsworth's account of his experience in London depicts a monolithic city in which the surging, faceless masses engage in dark and troubling pursuits. It was precisely these types of amusements that led to a continuous string of attempts to police the behavior of the lower orders

and take control of the public spaces in which they enacted their leisure activities. In his study of public spaces in the Victorian era, Neil MacMaster notes that the

> traditional "rough" plebeian culture which Victorian reformers were so keen to modify or eradicate—blood sports, fist-fighting, November bonfires, unruly wakes and fairs—was almost by definition centred in the streets, squares and open spaces of the town, and was all the more of an affront to the respectable for being so highly visible and unavoidable. (117)

Control of these public spaces was especially important, as they were considered "symbols of civic authority," where ceremonies, parades, and government buildings were located. They were also adjacent to the town's shops and banks, which were treated as the "prestige [locations] for social intercourse," that drove the city's commerce. Wealth, power, and legislation combined to drive lower class amusements out of these public spaces and either to the outskirts of town or to "underground" locations like slums and public houses that rendered them invisible (118). The public houses were decried for perpetuating the kinds of base amusements the upper classes were eager to eliminate, but the outskirts of town were easier to contest and control. As bonfires and prize fights were pushed to the open fields at the edge of town, they were constantly under threat from urban expansion, and often targeted by city planners as new building sites in a conscious effort to rid the town of the lower classes' "unseemly or threatening pursuits" (117).

As the working classes' sites of leisure and entertainment were being either eliminated or relocated to spaces away from the upper classes' line of sight, there existed a parallel effort to keep their living conditions hidden from view. Here and there throughout the metropolis, often tucked into the unpaved alleys that ran alongside the gracious homes and wide avenues of the city's wealthiest neighborhoods, slums continued to increase; working-class families crowded into single-room dwellings and carried on their lives in a London that was separate from and invisible to the upper classes. In his work on the condition of the working class in England,

Friedrich Engels points out that "a separate territory has been assigned" to the poverty-stricken, "where, removed from the sight of the happier classes, it may struggle along as it can" (Engels 26). By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, it was becoming difficult for the wealthy to ignore the struggle for survival taking place in the alleys behind their elegant homes. The desire to minimize and contain this struggle contributed to George IV's great Regency era project of "metropolitan improvements" that began in 1820.

The scheme for rebuilding the metropolis was undertaken for the explicit purpose of accentuating "the beauty and grandeur of London" while solidifying its reputation as a "great world city" (Nord 25-26). A team of architects, led by John Nash, envisioned a "highly picturesque conception of a garden city for an aristocracy, supported by charming panoramas showing a composition of alluring groves" (Summerson qtd. in Nord 25). Their vision for the London of the future was predicated on the notion that an abundance of green space indicated a culture of health and leisure. Nash and his team landscaped Regent's Park and St. James's Park, connected the two via an extension of Regent Street, and built the Hyde Park arch that frames the main entrance. The result was an increased "quality of theatricality and sheer spectacle" based, in large part, on artfully landscaped green spaces that lent the city "a new aura of artifice" resembling "an enormous stage set" (Nord 26). The performance being enacted on this new set was one of wealth and leisure, and while the direct goal of the metropolitan improvements project was not to push the slums into the wings, it did serve to "reinforce and sharpen the already existing geographic separation between classes" and ensure that "the poor would remain completely out of sight" (Nord 29). The working classes were hemmed in by royal parks to which they were denied access and an ever-expanding urban center that prevented their

movement to the edge of town; they were trapped in their cramped alleys with only public houses and gin palaces serving as sites of recreation.

1.12 The Challenges of Industry

As George IV completed his metropolitan improvements early in the nineteenth century, the industrial revolution approached its zenith, and the mercantile economy that had sustained London throughout the eighteenth century completed its transformation into an industrial one. The dichotomy between country and city sharpened rapidly and dramatically during this time as machinery transformed even more rural occupations into urban ones. The introduction of the spinning jenny in 1764 allowed a single worker to operate over a dozen spindles at once, which drastically increased the output of woven cloth. The spinning mule, introduced a decade later, required only two workers to operate over a thousand spindles at a time. In another decade, the cotton industry began to employ steam engines to run their machinery, and the power loom easily surpassed both of its predecessors. A single weaver could oversee dozens of power looms at the same time, and the production of cloth skyrocketed from tens of thousands of yards produced each year, to over one hundred million.

For hundreds of years, spinning and weaving had been a family occupation carried out in country cottages. Wives and daughters spun yarn to sell or for their husbands and fathers to weave into cloth. Their spatial and economic situation allowed them time to cultivate small plots of land, which provided "leisure for healthful work in garden or field," and as a result of their exposure to nature, these early weavers were "strong, well-built people" whose "children grew up in the fresh country air" (Engels 2). Now, however, bowing to the demands of the market, most weavers were obliged to abandon their cottage industries for the factories that housed jennies, mules, and power looms, and took their place among the machinery in urban

settings. In Book VIII of *The Excursion*, Wordsworth laments the loss of this rural family economy and the condemns the urban, industrial lifestyle that has taken its place:

> The habitations empty! or perchance
> The Mother left alone,—no helping hand
> To rock the cradle of her peevish babe;
> No daughters round her, busy at the wheel,
> Or in dispatch of each day's little growth
> Of household occupation; no nice arts
> Of needle-work; no bustle at the fire,
> Where once the dinner was prepared with pride;
> Nothing to speed the day, or cheer the mind;
> Nothing to praise, to teach, or to command!
> The Father, if perchance he still retain
> His old employments, goes to field or wood
> No longer led or followed by the sons;
> Idlers perchance they were,—but in *his* sight;
> Breathing fresh air and treading the green earth:
> Till their short holiday of childhood ceased,
> Ne'er to return! That birthright now is lost.

Wordsworth was not alone in expressing a sense of nostalgia for the wholesome family lifestyle of the dying cottage industry, however, the factory system continued to grow. By 1834, "over 8,000,000 mule spindles were at work, 110,000 power and 250,000 handlooms...in the service of the cotton industry," which employed "nearly a million and a half human beings" (Engels 7). Wool, linen, flax, and silk manufacturing experienced similar spikes in productivity, which resulted in an explosion in the populations of England's manufacturing towns. In London, "[within] a circle of eight miles from St. Paul's, there were no less than 1,750,000 persons, and the population of the town itself amounted to one million and a half." Among this swelling population there existed a vast disparity in wealth and quality of life. There were those

characterized as "the richest and the poorest men—men whose wealth had never been surpassed by that of any other men, in any times whatever, and the most wretched outcasts, whose miserable condition was not equalled by that of the poor of any other city in Europe" ("Public Health" 1050-1051). Mortality rates rose in the overcrowded slums as starvation and infectious diseases like tuberculosis increased—spurred on by the weakened constitutions of factory workers suffering from occupational illnesses like byssinosis, or "fluff in the lung"[5]—until, by the 1830s, "the position of Britain as the hub of an integrated world economy led to periodic visits from cholera" (Carpenter 121). The working class engaged in a daily struggle for survival, and their living conditions—confined, policed, and restricted as they were—constituted a social crisis on which the middle and upper classes cast a wary eye, lest disease spread beyond the confines of the slums.

So great was the population of poor and starving London residents at the beginning of the nineteenth century that Parliament passed a Poor Law in 1815 requiring each parish to provide enough money to support those who could not work. As the city's population swelled, however, so did the cost of funding the program, the burden of which fell on middle- and upper-class taxpayers. By 1843, conservative outrage led to the passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act, which required poor citizens who could not support themselves—regardless of whether they were elderly or ill—to enter the workhouse if they needed help. There they received clothes and

---

[5] Margaret's working-class friend, Bessy, suffers from byssinosis in Elizabeth Gaskell's Condition of England novel, *North and South* (1855). She explains that "Little bits, as fly off fro' the cotton, when they're carding it, and fill the air till it looks all fine white dust. They say it winds round the lungs, and tightens them up. Anyhow, there's many a one as works in a carding-room, that falls into a waste, coughing and spitting blood, because they're just poisoned by the fluff" (Chapter 13).

food in exchange for a day's manual labor, though conditions were bad, families were separated, and the food provided was insufficient. Many found the Amendment to the Poor Law intolerable and, having no working-class voice to speak for them in Parliament, resorted to rioting and attacking the workhouses as a form of protest.

The lack of working-class political representation added to the social unrest of the era in other ways, as well. Both the middle and working classes were banned from voting, had no peer representation in Parliament, and constituted vast swaths of the population that were prevented from participating in government. In the 1830s, both groups demanded political reform that would more equitably distribute parliamentary representation and expand voting rights to a broader spectrum of the population. The middle class exercised "the power of economic boycott," while the working-class project was characterized by "riots and demonstrations," which linked them, in the minds of the upper classes, to ideas of violence, disorder, and mob mentality (Hobsbawm 55). When the First Reform Bill passed in 1832, it shifted the balance of Parliamentary representation away from "rotten boroughs" in rural districts that had been largely abandoned by their residents, and redistributed MPs among the more densely populated cities and towns across England. It also granted voting rights to men who were considered the head of household and paid at least £10 per annum in rent—a pittance for many middle-class protesters, but one that few members of the working class could afford. As a result, "the demands of the middle-class radicals were met," but London's laborers were denied representation. From this point, "the worker's movement fought and failed alone," and it would be nearly decade before members of the working-class Chartist movement would present their demands for broader and more inclusive reform to the House of Commons.

The riots and uprisings that accompanied working-class efforts to obtain a voice in government contributed to the middle and upper classes' skittishness when it came to matters of working-class unrest, and there existed a well-articulated and much-discussed fear that the unpolished and depraved masses would rise up in revolt against their deplorable living and working conditions. Engels posed this concern as the main issue of the day when he asked:

> What is to become of those destitute millions, who consume today what they earned yesterday; who have created the greatness of England by their inventions and their toil; who become with every passing day more conscious of their might, and demand, with daily increasing urgency, their share of the advantages of society?—This, since the Reform Bill, has become the national question. (17)

Liberal activists and politicians advocated for the demise of the workhouse and factory reform, but the ruling conservatives made only feeble attempts to assuage the workers, whose conditions did not improve. Fears of social unrest and unruly mobs persisted, however, and Parliament began to think of ways to mollify the working men "who no longer plead but threaten" (Engels 17). They speculated that even a demonstration of their willingness to improve the lives of London's poorest citizens would facilitate goodwill and act as a palliative against violence and unrest.

Conservative criticism of the working classes was broad and varied, but inevitably took as its main complaint their general want of moralizing influence. Worse still was the notion that their few leisure hours were spent in "uproarious enjoyments" and "sensual indulgences" which, it was feared, would not only continue until they could be checked by "intercourse with more polished society," but would, "in a few years, like a moral plague, spread over the manufacturing population, wherever they were brought together in numerous bodies" (Gaskell 54). The "moral plague" of the working classes, coupled with their deplorable physical condition, was seen as a threat to the virtue and health of London's more genteel residents. In

fact, the two were seen as inextricably linked; in his lengthy explication on the state of England's manufacturing population in 1833, Peter Gaskell gives voice to the popularly held idea: "[whatever] opinion may be held as to the conditions of society, whether its physical condition is dependent upon its morality, or its morality dependent upon its physical condition, observation teaches that the debasement in the character of the one, invariably leads to a corresponding declension in the other" (213). Worse still, this meant that the "plague" of loose morals of the working classes—linked as it was to physical health—could, left unchecked, inevitably result in the spread of disease among and beyond the confines of the slums and factories. Intervention on behalf of the middle and upper classes' health and even survival was deemed necessary.

1.13 *The Select Committee on Public Walks, 1833*

Using their newly-granted parliamentary representation, the middle classes set about relieving their anxieties about the "spread of infectious disease from the poor" by addressing concerns about public hygiene and sanitation (M. Carpenter 122). Granting the lower classes access to public green spaces was seen as an economical means of encouraging them to take fresh air and exercise, which could only improve their condition. In an 1833 Parliamentary session, Robert A. Slaney, an MP for Shrewsbury, addressed the House of Commons about the need to transition from policing and eliminating lower-class leisure activities to encouraging and facilitating more wholesome behavior. He noted that, "[of] late years, there had been a growing disposition to decry the amusements of the poor, and wakes and fairs had been abolished for their immorality," but argued that "those who abolished them were bound to find a substitute, or to incur the suspicion of canting hypocrisy." There were, in fact, "a few half-sighted politicians" that did attempt to find substitutes but, according to Edward Bulwer Lytton, they were "amusements that brutalize," like "bull-baiting and boxing" (21). In his 1834

essay, “Want of Amusement Among the Poor,” he points out that the members of the upper and middle classes “who turn the people into swine” are the same people who “then boast of their kindness in teaching them to be savage. Admirable philanthropists! The object of recreation is to soften and refine men, not to render them more ferocious” (21-22). Aside from suggestions like these from “half-sighted politicians,” however, few contributed ideas about what the poor should do with the few hours they had outside of work.

Rather than continuously eliminating sites of rough lower-class entertainments, Slaney insisted that allowing London’s workers to enter the more refined social spaces from which they had previously been banned would encourage emulation of middle-class behavior. “Rational recreation” was the key to social control; by providing alternative leisure activities that “stimulated and restored the mind rather than merely debilitated the body,” the lower classes could be lifted up from their savage existence (Bailey). Slaney believed that “if due outlets were provided, the consumption of spirits would decrease, and mechanics, instead of sotting in alehouses, would rejoice in the opportunity of enjoying the open air” (“Public Health” 1054). Bulwer Lytton agreed with Slaney’s proposal, pointing out that the “very essence of our laws has been against the social meetings of the humble, which have been called idleness, and against the amusements of the poor which have been stigmatized as disorder” (21). It was not enough to eliminate low amusements; the middle and upper classes must also provide alternatives if they were to have any effect on the lower classes’ behavior.

Slaney suggested that the government provide more green space within the urban landscape where the working classes could escape the cramped confines of their living and working situations. When Hyde Park was acquired by Henry VIII, wooden fences were erected to keep “the deer in and the poachers out,” and only members of the royal court were permitted

access to the grounds, except on hanging days when as many as 100,000 Londoners would gather in a “carnival-like atmosphere” to watch the proceedings (Foreman 46). In 1620, James I expanded access to “well dressed persons,” and while his son, Charles I technically “opened Hyde Park to the public” in 1637, it was a short-lived egalitarian endeavor. Oliver Cromwell “could see no good use for the park,” and sold it off in three lots, after which time visitors were charged “a toll for entry” of one shilling for a carriage, and sixpence for a horse,” effectively banishing the lower classes (47). When Charles II resumed the throne, he reopened the park to the public, but plague drove thousands to leave their homes and set up “temporary dwellings in Hyde Park’s woods in the vain hope that the scourge would not reach them there,” and “[refugee] camps occupied the park until the last vestiges of the plague disappeared in the Great Fire of London in 1666” (48). The popular “ring” where the city’s wealthy would meet to show off their fine carriages and fashionable attire fell into disuse, and the park was left to vagrants and highwaymen, many of whom continued to camp out in the woods.

When William and Mary moved to Kensington Palace in the 1690s, the criminal population of Hyde Park posed a threat to the King during his daily commute. In consequence, he banned the hackney carriages hired by those who couldn’t afford their own, and ordered the stretch of "the King’s Road,” or “La Route du Roi,” along which he traveled to be lit by oil lamps and patrolled by guards. William’s presence in the park drew the attention and patronage of the aristocracy, who began to ride along the lit road with more frequency, and “Rotten Row,” a corruption of “La Route de Roi,” became fashionable once more (49). The presence of all that wealth parading up and down a single road drew even more thieves to the area until, in 1730, Queen Caroline demanded that “yet more guards” be posted throughout the park. By the

turn of the nineteenth century, the park was used exclusively by "dandies and women in the best society; nor did you ever see any of the lower or middle classes intruding themselves in regions, which by a sort of tacit understanding, were given up exclusively to persons of rank and fashion" (George 169). Through a combination of social regulation and protective surveillance, the parks were kept clear of the "rabble."

It is clear that "[exclusiveness] affected the parks," but not all of them used the same method of segregating or keeping out the lower orders (George 166). St. James's Park was known for "its jostling of classes" each evening, when members of the upper and middle classes would turn out for a stroll. The liberal mixing of upper and middle classes ended when the aristocracy adopted the fashionable habit of dining late, a "dandy affectation" that granted them a stretch of time to themselves at the park during which the middle classes, who rose early to begin work, were sitting down to their dinners (169). At Kensington Gardens, servants were positioned at every entrance "[for] the purpose of regulating the Company," and specifically "to prevent persons meanly dressed from going into the Garden." This did nothing to stop the middle classes from attending, however, and in 1811 Mary Berry, author of *Social Life in England and France* (1831), commented that "the complexion of these gardens is completely altered since I was there of a Sunday morning – always crowded with middling people, yet all the fine ladies used to come and show off their charms to the admiring mob, but now they have nothing to admire but one another." In 1820, the aristocratic Madam de Lieven wrote in a letter which she lamented that the "lovely garden has been annexed as a middle class rendezvous, and good society no longer goes there" (qtd. in George 166).

Aristocratic anxiety about the inclusion of the middle classes at the city's parks did not always extend to London's lower orders because, in addition to the other barriers to entry that existed—like long working hours, entry fees, and dress codes—"citizens[6] and apprentices" were only permitted entry to the parks on Sundays. In "Time Was," one of Charles Jenner's *Town Eclogues* (1772), he describes "that dull day, which ev'ry week affords" when "cits[7] take their weekly meal of air," and "eastward of St. Pauls, the well-dress'd spark, / Runs two long miles to saunter in the park" (8). The division between the East End of London, where the most notorious slums were located, and the West End, where the city's upper and middle classes lived nearer the parks, created an additional barrier. Any "well-dressed spark" who wanted to fill his free afternoon with a leisurely "saunter in the park" must run across the city in his finest clothing in order to do so, demonstrating that the lower classes' desire for a "meal" of fresh air and access to wholesome natural environments was difficult to fulfil even on the one day a week it was permitted.

Since the Royal Parks were effectively off-limits to London's poor, the city's lower-class population could "wander for hours together" through the urban environment "without reaching the beginning of the end, without meeting the slightest hint which could lead to the inference that there is open country within reach" (Engels 23). The city's poor—often cooped up in dark,

---

[6] "Citizens," in this case, is used to refer to "[an] ordinary (city- or town-dwelling) person as opposed to a member of the landed nobility or gentry on one hand or an artisan, labourer, etc., on the other" ("Citizen" OED).

[7] A "cit" is a "citizen (in various senses). Usually used more or less contemptuously, for example to denote a person from the town as opposed to the country, or a tradesman or shopkeeper as distinguished from a gentleman" ("Cit" OED).

overheated factories for up to fifteen hours on six days of the week, and unable to afford the cost of travel on the seventh—were scarcely aware that such a thing as the "country" existed. In fact, according to Slaney, "it was notorious, that there were many hundreds who knew what the country was only by description of the pastoral ruralities of Hampstead and Highgate" ("Public Health" 1053). Gone were the days of cottage industry, when the poor were reared in the imagined pastoral of bucolic cottages, had small gardens to tend, and grew up strong and healthy in the fresh air despite their low economic position. Even the "savage" was more prone to health than residents of London, which Gaskell attributes to "his familiarity with the operations of nature, in all their wild wonders." Meanwhile, the factory worker "knows nothing of nature—her very face is hidden and obscured from him, and he is surrounded and hemmed in by a vast circle of human inventions" (283).

Charles Dickens takes up the idea of the city as an endless obstacle to nature in *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840). Once Nell and her grandfather have lost the business and been evicted from their home, they find themselves homeless in the never-ending sprawl of London. Having determined that a life as beggars in the countryside will be better than anything they can achieve in the squalor of the metropolis, they set out to leave the city. The very idea breathing fresh air and escaping the constant press of urban development inspires them as they travel:

> they had never longed so ardently, they had never so pined and wearied, for the freedom of pure air and open country ... No, not even on that memorable morning, when, deserting their old home, they abandoned themselves to the mercies of a strange world, and left all the dumb and senseless things they had known and loved, behind—not even then, had they so yearned for the fresh solitudes of wood, hillside, and field, as now, when the noise and dirt and vapour, of the great manufacturing town reeking with lean misery and hungry wretchedness, hemmed them in on every side, and seemed to shut out hope, and render escape

> impossible. 'Two days and nights!' thought the child. 'He said two days and nights we should have to spend among such scenes as these. Oh! if we live to reach the country once again, if we get clear of these dreadful places, though it is only to lie down and die, with what a grateful heart I shall thank God for so much mercy!' (325)

The horrors of the city "hemmed them in on every side" and seem to "render escape impossible." If it is difficult for readers of Gaskell's report on the living conditions of factory workers to believe that they "[know] nothing of nature," Dickens's description of Nell and her grandfather's egress from the city allows them to see how it might be possible.

Even as Nell's health deteriorates, it is thoughts of "travelling to a great distance among streams and mountains, where only very poor and simple people lived, and where they might maintain themselves by very humble helping work in farms, free from such terrors as that from which they fled" that gives her strength and allows her to keep trudging toward the natural landscape that promises to be their salvation. After a whole day of walking, however, Nell and her grandfather still find themselves in the city. "Is there no other road? Will you not let me go some other way than this?" her grandfather asks, seeming not to comprehend that the only way out of the city is through it. Nell promises that "Places lie beyond these ... where we may live in peace, and be tempted to do no harm. We will take the road that promises to have that end, and we would not turn out of it, if it were a hundred times worse than our fears lead us to expect" (326). Nell encounters the city as a gauntlet of horrors through which they must pass in order to reach an Edenic countryside. Once there, they will be immersed in a pastoral landscape that offers them relief from the moral ambiguity, sin, and vice that gnaw at the character and integrity of urban dwellers, and tug them down into the city's literal and figurative muck; nature is their salvation.

By the second day of walking, the pair begins to feel as if the city will stretch on forever. Even as they "began to feel that they were fairly on their way," Nell and her grandfather are still mired in urban sprawl:

> A long suburb of red brick houses--some with patches of garden-ground, where coal-dust and factory smoke darkened the shrinking leaves, and coarse rank flowers, and where the struggling vegetation sickened and sank under the hot breath of kiln and furnace, making them by its presence seem yet more blighting and unwholesome than in the town itself--a long, flat, straggling suburb passed, they came, by slow degrees, upon a cheerless region, where not a blade of grass was seen to grow, where not a bud put forth its promise in the spring, where nothing green could live but on the surface of the stagnant pools, which here and there lay idly sweltering by the black road-side. (326)

The city, and even the suburbs that encircle it, are a barrier to nature where "nothing green could live." The barren landscape is vast and hostile, stretching on "far as the eye could see into the heavy distance," where "tall chimneys, crowding on each other, and presenting that endless repetition of the same dull, ugly form, which is the horror of oppressive dreams, poured out their plague of smoke, obscured the light, and made foul the melancholy air." Instead of trees, "strange engines spun and writhed like tortured creatures" atop "mounds of ashes by the wayside ... clanking their iron chains, shrieking in their rapid whirl from time to time as though in torment unendurable, and making the ground tremble with their agonies." In this suburban dystopia, nature has been supplanted by machinery, and the narrator is surprised to find that people can live in such a place. Here and there, however, "[dismantled] houses ... appeared, tottering to the earth, propped up by fragments of others that had fallen down, unroofed, windowless, blackened, desolate, but yet inhabited." The people that live here are slaves to the machinery, and "tended their engines, fed their tributary fire." The hellscape of urban and

suburban industrial London is “interminable,” the stream of pollution that issues from the brick chimneys is “never ceasing,” and nature is entirely absent (326-327).

Dickens’s description of Nell and her grandfather’s attempt to leave the city and gain access to a green space is a hero’s journey through “the blazing jaws” of “every strange machine,” and “maddened men, armed with sword and firebrand” (327). The reward at the end of the journey is the peace and tranquility of the countryside, where “some good old tree, stretching out his green arms as if he loved us, and nodding and rustling as if he would have us fall asleep” welcomes them as none of the poor “savages” in the slums had helped them on their trek through the forbidding city (319). Nell and her grandfather are representatives of the working classes who had never seen the countryside, and who could not reach it themselves without a several-day's journey through the urban landscape. The Select Committee’s concerns about the lower classes’ access to green space can be seen in Nell’s rapidly failing health, and only nature can soothe the agony that the city inflicts.

Lack of access to sufficient green spaces, much less the countryside, was not new to residents of London. Peter Borsay points out that as far back as the seventeenth century, “urban green space began to be consciously conceived of as representative of nature, particularly in London,” where the dense population had “only limited contact with the agricultural world.” Borsay points to this period as the time at which residents of London in particular begin to react against urbanism by crafting their own “idealized notion[s] of nature” (31). These pastoral depictions of the countryside take several forms, but the literary works that result from this reaction are based on classical models of pastoral poetry, like those of Virgil and Theocritus. The genre reemerged in early modern Britain with works like Edmund Spenser’s *Shepheardes Calender* (1579), William Browne’s *Britannia’s Pastorals* (1614), a

collection of eclogues from various poets called *The Shepheard's Pipe* (1614), and Alexander Pope's *Pastorals* (1709), among others. The physical manifestation of this longing for nature, however, appears in the form of "the first conscious identification and landscaping of public urban green space," in "the laying out of Moorfields early in the seventeenth century and the royal parks and commercial pleasure gardens a little later." These green spaces were "highly contrived" and involved "a good deal of human artifice," but were nevertheless indicative of a desire for both relief from the urban condition, and a desire for physical access to idealized pastoral retreats (Borsay 31). In the preface to a collection of these poems, Arthur Henry Bullen explains that by the time seventeenth-century poets are taking up the pastoral model, "[the] groves in which our Strephons and Chloes[8] disport themselves are not the green pleasaunces that listened to the pipings of Nicholas Breton's *Passionate Shepherd*. Our Arcadia is in Hyde Park and the Mulberry Garden; our nymphs are modishly attired, and our love-sick swains are powdered beaux" (xiv-xv). There is no ignoring London's growing urban environment, but the incorporation of pastoral green spaces into the landscape can function as the Arcadian paradise of pastoral poetry. These earliest iterations of parks mapped "nature" onto the urban scenery and mimicked the idealized pastoral retreat, providing spaces into which London's weary residents could escape. It is important to note, however, that this reconstruction of a pastoral paradise was exclusively for members of the upper classes. The noble peasants of Spenser and Bretton's poetry are eliminated and replaced by "modishly

---

[8] Strephon and Chloe are the stars of Sir Charles Sedley's Restoration Era poem, "A Song—Smooth was the water, calm the air," in which a shepherd feeds berries and cream to his beloved at an unnamed time before the growth of London's population.

attired" ladies, and gentlemen in powdered wigs; the parks thus become spaces in which London's elite can not only imagine that they have entered Arcadia, but they can act out the pastoral behaviors that have once again become fashionable.

As London evolved throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the urban condition highlighted bygone eras of a poor but noble peasantry that stood in sharp contrast to the condition and behavior of London's contemporary working poor. Romantic and Victorian notions of nature evolved to assign moral value to interaction with the natural world as a way of assigning meaning to these changes. Nature was considered a balm to the human condition, whereby those who were able to venture into it and appreciate even its "simplest forms," as John Ruskin explains, would realize that the rocks and trees surrounding them were "animated by the sense of the Divine presence," and could even be considered "children of God." Given the opportunity to sit and commune with His creations away from "all the prints and cottons in Manchester," every person may be filled with "obedient, joyful, and thankful emotion" (Ruskin 304-306). This divine communion was all that separated London's manufacturing population from the idealized peasantry of pastoral literature. Wordsworth attributed nobility to them simply because they had a "better soil in which they can attain their maturity" where "the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature" ("Preface"). London's manufacturing population was denied this contact with nature, to which was attributed their immoral behavior. Contact with God's creations was the key to magically transforming the working classes from grimy urchins to noble peasants, and was often characterized in "post-Wordsworthian" nineteenth century fiction as what Rosemarie Bodenheimer calls "a great cleansing agent." She explains that it is "a commonplace in Victorian fiction that sensitivity to nature is a sign of interior virtue; pastoral writing can also erase the

social stains of working-class origin, illegitimacy, or sexual fall by relocating those experiences in a classless, lawless, natural realm" (116). Slaney and his supporters advocated for the lower classes to have the opportunity to relocate their own sins to a natural setting, where they too could be cleansed. He and others believed that if public walks were made available to the working class, they would "function as moral enclaves" where laborers could experience the wholesome, moralizing effects of nature and be transformed from dram-drinking malefactors to the noble peasantry of days gone by.

At the time of Slaney's pitch to Parliament, London had only "three large parks,"—Hyde, Green, and St. James's—which had been claimed as hunting grounds by Henry VIII in the sixteenth century following the dissolution of the monasteries, and primarily used as pleasure grounds for the upper classes in the years since. Only a small section of Hyde Park was open to London's poor, where they could enjoy the outdoors and be kept out of sight of their social superiors. Since it was clear that there was insufficient green space for the millions of Londoners who required fresh air, exercise, and the divine presence of nature, Slaney moved that a Select Committee on Public Walks be formed to scout the best means of acquiring more open space in and around England's great towns and cities, and transforming it into natural landscapes of health, morality, and recreation.

When urban growth began to encroach on Hyde Park at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Hon. William Wyndham stood before the same ruling body and argued for legislation ensuring the preservation of the space, which he referred to as "the lungs of London." Slaney cited this description of the park's purpose when he implored the House of Commons to consider that "if they were then so necessary to the ventilation of the city, how requisite was it now, that its present vast population should have increased means of recreation"

("Public Health" 1052). Furthermore, prior to "the discovery of germs in the 1860s, sunlight and fresh air were believed to inhibit disease," which meant access to parks was vital to the health of the working class and, by proxy, the upper classes (Dreher 249). But lack of adequate parkland and the Enclosure Acts that, since 1773, had begun to transfer once-communal fields, wetlands, and forests into private holdings meant that, "[near] the town and other such places, the working man and his family were met on the road with notices against trespass, and the inhospitable intimation of spring-guns, and steel-traps" ("Public Health" 1053). London's poor were shut out from most parkland, and had no rights to cross enclosed land; they were trapped in the urban landscape with no opportunity to experience the improving effects of nature.

Popular thought at the time held that physical and moral health were inextricably linked, so granting access to parks meant not only an improvement in the moral and physical health of the poor, but also an improvement in their social habits. Through sheer proximity to the middle class and their models of good behavior and fashionable dress, they would "pick up respectable values through a kind of mimicry or cultural osmosis" (MacMaster 119). The park was, for moralizing Victorians, a site of contact with the natural world, and a space wherein the depraved masses could cleanse themselves of the smoke and grime that filled their lungs and polluted their souls. There, in a slice of idealized nature carved out of the city, they could become indoctrinated into middle-class values of dress and behavior.

Not all the motives behind the proposal to open the parks to the general public were so altruistic. Slaney attempted to persuade the more conservative members of the House of Commons to come around to the idea by appealing to their sense self-preservation on behalf of the middle and upper classes. His appeal occurred less than a year after the First Reform Act, which had denied representation and suffrage to the lower classes; this, combined with the social

unrest associated with poor living and working conditions sustained middle-class fears of uprisings, riots, and violence from the working class population. Slaney attempted to persuade his peers to come around to his idea by convincing them that "healthy happy men were not disposed to enter into conspiracies," and any riots or uprisings that had taken place in recent history were due to "[want] of recreation" that "generated incipient disease, and disease, discontent; which, in its turn, led to attacks upon the Government" ("Public Health" 1054). Slaney went on to say that he "much regretted, that, in past legislation, the interests and comforts of the working classes had been too much forgotten," but noted that when "the humbler classes" were made aware of the vast expenditures made in their interest by opening and maintaining the parks, they would "accept it gratefully, and take it as an earnest of the kind intentions of the Legislature towards them" ("Public Health" 1052; 1056). Any attempt to help the poor—even one as feeble as simply throwing open the gates of London's royal parks—was seen as a way for Parliament to demonstrate their commitment to increasing the happiness and well-being of a broad swath of the urban population they had admittedly "forgotten."

Slaney's next appeal was to the pocketbooks of his colleagues and, more specifically, the Vice President of the Board of Trade who was present for his speech. In an increasingly industrial culture, there was a sense that "habits of leisure had to be brought in line with the requirements of efficiency and orderly production," and Slaney argued that the parks would provide a day of rest, fresh air, and exercise would replenish the workers and make them more productive (Malcolmson 98). Furthermore, the scheme would usher the working classes into participation in consumerism: "[the] maidservant and the mechanic's daughter," he reasoned, "took as much pride in displaying her rich ribbons, as a lady her fine equipage, or a duchess her diamonds." According to Slaney, the streak of vanity that runs through all women, regardless of

station or title, would ensure that "the consumption of manufactured goods would be increased by enabling the lower orders...to display their neatness or their finery." He thought the urge to strut and preen ought to be encouraged, "as it promoted cleanliness, decency, and self-respect." In doing so alongside members of the higher classes, the humble workers would also be granted the opportunity to observe and mimic their gracious manners, hygiene, and styles of dress. This would result in an overall improvement in the imitators' health and appearance, casting them as tidier and more respectable actors on the stage of London's parklands. Slaney argued that if millions of members of the working class were barred from "appearing in public walks," England lost "a great stimulus to industry." If, however, they were permitted to enter into the broader social structure and participate in the consumer culture that drove it, industry would "increase in proportion as it afforded the means of indulging in such becoming luxuries" ("Public Health" 1054). In other words, social comparison would stimulate envy and encourage London's laborers to work even harder to accumulate the trappings of industry.

While it's difficult to say which of Slaney's arguments best persuaded the House of Commons to form a Select Committee on Public Walks—and subsequently to throw open the gates of the royal parks to visitors of all classes—it is likely that his economically-driven early-Victorian audience responded favorably to the idea of indoctrinating the lower orders into England's commercial system. The promise of display, comparison, and competition were effective methods of drawing the lower classes out of their underground dens and into the public sphere where they could learn to behave like their betters. The expectation was that they would observe the higher classes and emulate their behavior; the reality was that they were invited into a space where their own behavior could contribute to the illusion of a bucolic retreat, and be more readily monitored. The public park, though designed to mimic the pastoral spaces beyond

the pale of London, could not mimic its idealized location outside the metropolis and beyond the observation and influence of the economic system. Its very designation as a civic space suggested a confluence of London's citizenry, while the Romantic ideal of nature that persisted early in the nineteenth century lauded it as a site of solitude and communion with that which existed beyond the reach of humankind. But promenaders in Hyde Park would find no "pleasure in the pathless woods,"[9] as the paths had been carefully laid out to showcase their manners, company, and finery, and the man-made Serpentine afforded no "rapture on the lonely shore,"[10] as it had been designed as a focal-point for those carefully planned paths. While public walks and the royal parks had always been locations of observation and communion among the upper classes, the invitation to the lower classes to take part in the culture of display transformed the public park into an exhibitionary complex, and the landscape into a site of surveillance and policing.

1.14 Surveilling the Faceless Mob

Much of the anxiety surrounding London's lower classes was spurred by the idea of a faceless mob of discontented laborers always on the verge of a riot or uprising. Wordsworth's fear of the "thousands upon thousands" of people "living amid the same perpetual whirl / Of trivial objects" is attributed to the fact that they are all "melted and reduced / To one identity." Add to this concern the fact that the working classes had been physically separated from the higher orders of society by means of metropolitan improvements and removed from civic

---

[9] Lord Byron. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Stanza CLXXVIII, 1812.
[10] *Ibid.*

spaces through regulation and control of gathering sites, and it becomes easy to see why they constitute a menacing, faceless mass of strangers. Slaney makes it clear that one of the goals of inviting this anonymous body into the public sphere is to allow members of the middle class to identify them as individuals, and in fact to encourage members of the working class to distinguish themselves on their own. The mechanic's daughter, for instance, will try to stand out from the crowd by adorning herself with "rich ribbons" that demonstrate her taste and style. In this way, as Michel Foucault explains, the crowd, "a compact mass, … individualities merging together, a collective effect, is abolished and replaced by a collection of separated individualities." From the perspective of the "guardian," or surveilling eye, this body is "replaced by a multiplicity that can be numbered and supervised" (Foucault 201).

Much of Foucault's work is centered on the idea of "enclosure," and takes easily-ordered structures like prisons, schools, and military barracks as its subjects. He acknowledges, however, that this principle is "neither constant, nor indispensable, nor sufficient in disciplinary machinery." He explains that the mechanisms of disciplinary establishments "have a certain tendency to become 'deinstitutionalized', to emerge from the closed fortresses in which they once functioned and to circulate in a 'free' state; the massive, compact disciplines are broken down into flexible methods of control, which may be transferred and adapted" (Foucault 211). London's green spaces, though fenced, ordered, and patrolled by police officers, constitute public arenas in which discipline and surveillance have become deinstitutionalized. The policing of behavior relies, in large part, on patrons enforcing tacitly agreed-upon norms of acceptable conduct. In her study of civic spaces in nineteenth-century London, Nan Dreher notes that in order to build a "consensus that united park-going residents," it was necessary to establish "boundaries embodying some sort of minority exclusion." Since the

barrier to entry for working class members of the population had been lifted, this discrimination evolved to embody "a more sophisticated rejection of those who defied the culture of respectability," and focused on less overtly class-based disruptive behaviors (248-249).

Parks and, indeed, most public spaces were important to all "Victorians wedded to the concept of urban civilization," as Andy Croll points out in his work on the regulation of behavior in nineteenth-century Britain. For hundreds of years, legislative regulation of these spaces had attempted to clear them of base entertainments and delinquent behavior, and because they were "the sites in which crowds of strangers – often measured in their thousands – were brought together," they functioned as "extremely sensitive indicators of the condition of the population." Peaceful and well-ordered civic spaces were an indication of society's evolution, while those that played host to blood sports, violence, or even simply bawdy behavior indicated that, within the broader society, "the idea of civilization itself was called into question" (252). The stakes were therefore high for those tasked with keeping order in civic spaces, but the police played a surprisingly small role in patrolling urban parks. Dreher notes that "both royal and municipal parks were staffed at much higher levels than parks today," but points out that the staff consisted mainly of "[resident] superintendents," "gatekeepers," and "patrolling park keepers," while only "sometimes" employing police officers. The park-keepers' lack of disciplinary power, however, often rendered them powerless to dole out punishment for misdeeds on park property, so much so that they frequently "had trouble justifying their right to create and enforce rules at all" (250). But moral panic over civic disorder and the potential for deviant behavior to spread and infect others led "the citizenry themselves" to take matters into their own hands and play an important role in "the surveillance project" (Croll 253).

Anyone admitted to civic spaces was expected to observe correct behavior and emulate it, which meant that "all urbanites, both working-class *and* middle-class, were objects and subjects of the disciplinary gaze" (Croll 254, his emphasis). Since few police officers patrolled London's parks, and park employees were not considered to be strong authority figures, it fell to patrons to give voice to moral panic and take action against those who defied the "culture of respectability" (Dreher 251). This could be done in a variety of ways, which included reporting deviant behavior to the police and lodging formal complaints to park authorities, but it most often involved drawing on a consensus of equally outraged patrons to publicly shame transgressors in word or print. Most offenses were mild, and included complaints about "verminous persons" napping on park benches and "courting couples" engaged in all-too-public displays of affection, but park patrons didn't hesitate to mete out judgment on more serious matters, too. Dreher offers an account of one remarkable incident in which a man was caught "'indecently assaulting' a young girl" in Victoria Park—newly developed in 1841 and frequented mainly by members of the working class—but was released when ineffectual "park keepers…decided there was insufficient evidence for prosecution." When the *frotteur* went on his way, a "mob of infuriated park goers" decided that the park keepers had insufficiently punished the offender, and so "chased down the man and killed him" (Dreher 251). Most instances of the public's self-policing behavior did not end in violence, but this event highlights patrons' willingness to carry out an act of capital punishment in their frenzy to maintain social norms—itself an example of performing discipline in the exhibitionary complex of the public park.

Green spaces in Regency and early-Victorian London were thus employed to draw on the pastoral ideal of the countryside by creating urban Arcadias into which members of the upper

class could escape the chaos of modern life. Inviting the working class to enter these spaces and participate in the performance of pastoralism was an attempt to indoctrinate them into systems of health, morality, and commerce that would ensure the preservation of a peaceful and well-ordered culture. Entry to these spaces was predicated on the requirement that they play their roles convincingly, and abandon their debauched forms of entertainment for wholesome recreation that matched the middle class's idealized vision of lower-class behavior, which was founded on scenes depicted in the pastoral literature of the era. Within these artfully landscaped and carefully contrived spaces of display and performance, it was easy to preserve the illusion of the countryside so long as park patrons agreed to participate in a system of self-policing, and to punish those whose behavior would shatter it.

Chapter 2: "We must speak of the dwellings of the poor in crowded cities": Middle-Class Voyeurism, Slumming, and the Attraction of Repulsion in Victorian London

> I turned into an alley 'neath the wall—
> And stepped from earth to hell. —The light of Heaven,
> The common air was narrow, gross, and dim—
> The tiles did drop from the eaves; the unhinged doors
> Tottered o'er inky pools, where reeked and curdled
> The offal of a life; the gaunt-haunched swine
> Growled at their christened playmates o'er the scraps.
> Shrill mothers cursed; wan children wailed; sharp coughs
> Rang through the crazy chambers; hungry eyes
> Glared dumb reproach, and old perplexity,
> Too stale for words; o'er still and webless rooms,
> The listless craftsmen through their elf-locks scowled.
>
> *The Saint's Tragedy,* by Charles Kingsley

In early nineteenth-century textile mills, small children were given the dangerous task of crawling under the working machinery to clear away dust and debris, where they ran the very real risk of losing a limb or being crushed to death. The Factory Act of 1833 attempted to mitigate the unsafe conditions and grueling hours for women and children in textile factories; it banned children under the age of nine from working in them altogether and limited ten- to thirteen-year-olds to eight-hour days, six days a week. Once they turned fourteen, children could work up to twelve hours a day, though further legislation was passed in 1847 that limited working hours for women and children under the age of eighteen to ten per day. It was only when the Factory Act of 1864 was passed that these limitations on the exploitation of certain workers were extended to trades outside of textile factories; even then, men's working hours remained unregulated.

Despite legislation that limited the hours per day a worker could spend bent over the machinery in a factory, it is obvious that the hands had little time away from their places of

employment. When sleeping and eating were factored into their daily schedules, there was almost no time left over to pursue leisure activities. Despite this, the middle and upper classes continued to pontificate about how they believed London's poorest residents should spend what little free time they had left. They should be sure to attend church on the Sabbath, for example, and perhaps take a bit of exercise in one of the Royal Parks. That is what members of the middle class did with their spare time, after all, and it served them well. But even if the working classes could find time to visit the parks, these people who were encouraged to improve themselves by observing their "betters" in an idealized pastoral landscape still had to go home to the squalid, unsanitary, overcrowded conditions in which they lived. Some, likely hoping to escape the horrors of London's slums, made use of the parks in the best way they could, and simply took up residence in Hyde and Regent's Parks. In 1843, the Marlborough Street Police Court reported:

> an average number of 50 human beings of all ages, who huddle together in the parks every night, having no other shelter than what is supplied by the trees and a few hollows of the embankment. Of these, the majority are young girls who have been seduced from the country by the soldiers and turned loose on the world in all the destitution of friendless penury, and all the recklessness of early vice. (London *Times* qtd. In Engels 31)

The members of the middle and upper classes who insisted that the parks could serve the same function as the wilderness or the countryside and act as "a great cleansing agent" for the souls of the poor failed to comprehend the seriousness of London's poverty crisis.

In a moral tract from 1840 aimed at young women who found themselves drawn to the city by the promise of glamorous employment in the houses of the rich, the writer implores them not to exchange the real pastoral setting in which they live for the false paradise of London's parks: "O, ye happy village girls! whom a wise and bountiful Providence has set at a distance

from these suffocating towns and cities which are the cemeteries of nature … Cling to your country homes as the nearest representation this world affords of that Paradise recorded in your Bibles" (*The Servant Girl in London* qtd. in Dyos 14). According to this tract, the city parks were not immune from the corruption and moral pollution of the city; only naturally occurring green space functioned as a moral agent. However, judging by reports on the state of housing and sanitation in London around the time of the Marlborough police report, the young girls sleeping in the park may have had the right idea. While their nights in the open air left them vulnerable, exposed, and unprotected, the undesirable alternative was to find a roof among the overcrowded, unsanitary slums and rookeries that housed many of London's poorest residents.

1.15 The Housing and Sanitation Crisis

In *The Sanitary Evolution of London* (1907), Henry Jepson describes the Victorian era as one in which there had never been "less regard … shown for the condition of the great mass of inhabitants of the metropolis" (78). It was a particularly dismal time for the working classes, and Jepson claims that "in the history of London" there has been "no period when the spirit of commercialism recked so little of the physical condition and circumstances of those upon whom … it depended." Housing was as much at the crux of this system of worker exploitation and economic inequality as the factory system itself, and Jepson addresses this, too, when he points out that other than the Victorian era, there has been "no period when the rights of property were so untrammeled by any consideration for the welfare of human flesh and blood … Never a time in which land-owners, house-owners, and builders did as freely as they liked with their own, regardless of the injury or damage it inflicted on others." Writing in the decade after the close of the Victorian era, Jepson had the benefit of hindsight when he claimed that Victorian housing was constructed and managed without regard for the health and wellbeing of the lower classes

who resided there. But even in the century leading up to Jepson's damning assessment of the condition of London's poor in the nineteenth century, Victorian politicians, social critics, and even novelists had begun prodding at the edges of London's darkest regions.

Middle- and upper-class Victorians were, of course, aware that urban poverty and housing posed a genuine problem, but Parliamentary reform on the matter was marked by indecision and handwringing rather than any decisive action. Anxious headlines about disease, immorality, violence, and uprisings among the lower classes were splashed across the front pages of every newspaper and periodical, yet no significant reform was passed to deal with the overcrowded and unsanitary conditions of these dismal neighborhoods. A closer look at the history of London's planning and construction, however, makes it somewhat easier to understand how the hidden alleyways and fetid courtyards tucked into the city's nooks and crannies eluded any serious attempts at reform until the wholesale slum clearances of the late-nineteenth century.

In his study of England's great towns, Friedrich Engels explains that "one is seldom in a position to catch from the street a glimpse of the real labouring districts." This is no accident; the "hypocritical plan," for concealing the worst areas is, he says, "more or less common to all great cities" (47). England's metropolitan areas were designed so the middle and upper classes would not happen upon members of the working class in the course of their average day, and a person may even "live in [the city] for years, and go in and out daily without coming into contact with a working-people's quarter or even with workers … so long as he confines himself to his business or pleasure walks." These areas are, "by unconscious tacit agreement, as well as with outspoken conscious determination … sharply separated from the sections of the city reserved for the middle-class" (Engels 45-46). Engels uses Manchester as an example of how this can

be accomplished and explains that the thoroughfares of the city are “lined, on both sides, with an almost unbroken series of shops, and are so kept in the hands of the middle and lower bourgeoisie, which, out of self-interest, cares for a decent and cleanly external appearance.” Behind this thin veneer of middle-class respectability, however, “grimy misery lurks to the right and the left” (46, **Figure 2**). Since, as noted in chapter one, London was built with an eye to keeping the poor and working classes out, these slums and alleys sprang up where they may, in the lanes and crevices behind the more intentional and respectable housing and businesses (see fig. 1). As long as they remained tucked out of sight behind the façade of respectability, the city’s crime, misery, and want remained hidden from view.

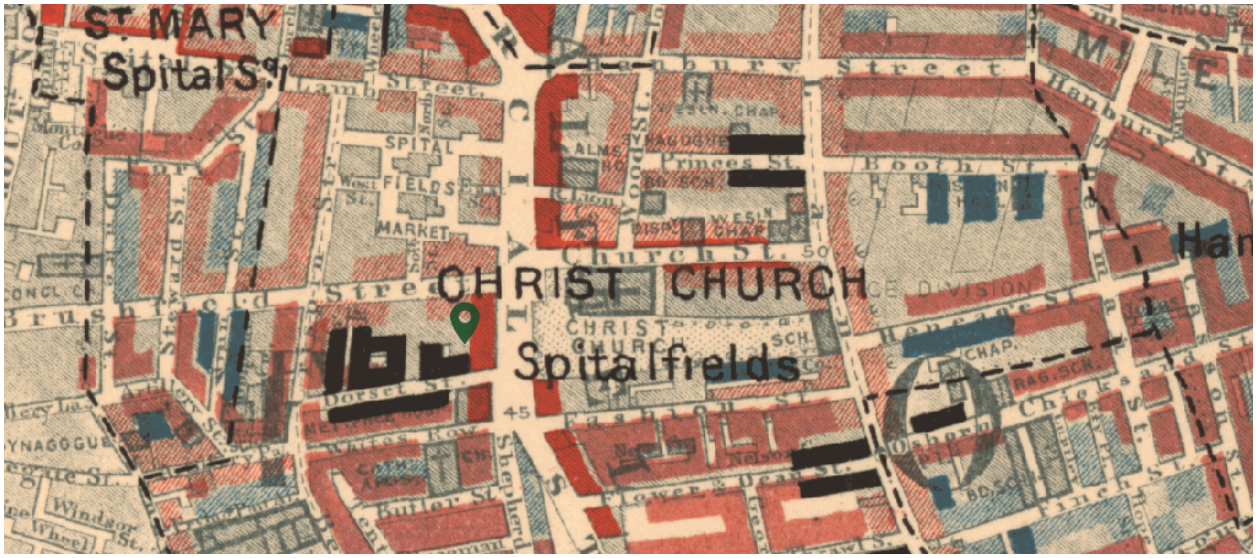


Figure 2: Detail of Charles Booth's *Maps Descriptive of London Poverty*, 1898. Booth classified each area according to the income and social class of its inhabitants. Areas marked in red are "Middle class. Well to-do." Those marked in light blue are "Poor. 18s. to 21s. a week for a moderate family. Those marked in solid blue are “Very poor, casual. Chronic want.” Those marked in black are “Lowest class. Vicious, semi-criminal.” When neighborhoods are viewed from above on the map, it become easy to see examples of Engels’s theory that the middle-class houses and businesses lined the streets, and poorer areas and slums were hidden behind the façade of respectability.

Engels notes that once these territories are “removed from the sight of the happier classes,” the lower class “may struggle along as it can.” The slums are made up of “the worst houses in the worst quarters of the towns,” where one will invariably find “one or two-storied

cottages in long rows, perhaps with cellars used as dwellings, almost always irregularly built … The streets are generally unpaved, rough, dirty, filled with vegetable and animal refuse, without sewers or gutters, but supplied with foul, stagnant pools instead" (26). Standing water was not unique to the slums; the entire city of London struggled with an inadequate sewer system, and human waste drained directly from outhouses into streets and gutters, and from there ran straight into the Thames. London's sewers had not been substantially updated since the sixteenth century and were not designed to keep up with the city's swelling population. By the summer of 1858, the Thames was so polluted with waste that a bout of unusually hot weather caused a noxious odor to emanate from the river strong enough to disrupt Parliament. "The Great Stink," as it came to be known, at least spurred the MPs to action, and construction of the city's updated sewers was underway by 1859. In the meantime, however, newspaper and medical journals fixated on the city's poor sanitation and, according to Haewon Hwang, published "hundreds of articles speculating on the pathology of these deadly diseases" (21). Most of these articles embraced the "'miasmatic' or 'atmospheric' theory" of infection, which held that "inhalation of putrid substances" wafting through the air was the root cause of the spread of infection. Under this theory, one's "proximity to sewers" became a cause for serious concern, and "overcrowding and lack of ventilation were all culprits of the contagion" (21-22). London's invisible slums thus became a locus of concern among sanitation officials, politicians, journalists, and the upper classes, and these groups that were once so happy to ignore the city's "problem areas" were suddenly keen to peer into them to see what dangers lurked there.

In 1801, the census indicates that London's population numbered just under one million people. By 1831, it had swelled to over 1.6 million, and by mid-century, there were more than 2.3 million people crowded into the metropolis. The city grew outward, absorbing neighboring

hamlets and villages, and suburbs appeared at the edges of the urban sprawl, but these areas—where urban planning and the allotment of space contributed to a healthier living environment—were not feasible housing locations for most factory workers. According to Colin Pooley and Jean Turnbull, "even in late nineteenth-century London it was estimated that over three-quarters of trade unionists in South London used no public transport for their journey to and from work … [in part] because of the inability of most working people to afford public transport" (149). Those who worked twelve hours a day for low wages were thus forced to find housing within a short distance of the urban factories where they worked. Often, they were even contractually obligated to rent housing from their employers, which was usually cramped, poorly constructed, and badly maintained.

London's narrow alleyways and hidden courtyards were among the limited areas where housing could be developed, and builders took advantage of the fact that they were hidden from the sight of the middle and upper classes by constructing cheap, poorly ventilated housing with no plumbing, sewers, or sanitation to speak of. Engels calls the construction of this type of housing "totally planless," and explains that the "method of shutting [the poor] up in courts surrounded on all sides by buildings" prevented ventilation and was "injurious to the health of the workers." In these courtyards, he says, the "air simply cannot escape; the chimneys of houses are the sole drains for the imprisoned atmosphere of the courts, and they serve the purpose only so long as fire is kept burning" (Engles 55). In areas where there was more space, factory owners constructed whole rows of cottages at a time. To the casual observer, this new housing appeared sounder than the older, ramshackle towers that leaned precariously against each other along London's hidden alleyways. Engels acknowledges that these new housing schemes did, in fact, look much nicer than the housing in the slums, but points out that an up-close examination of

them reveals shoddy workmanship. He says that "one is inclined to agree with the assertion of the Liberal manufacturers that the working population is nowhere so well housed as in England. But on closer examination, it becomes evident that the walls of these cottages are as thin as it is possible to make them" (57). In addition to thin walls, the floors were usually made of dirt and, since the city's sewers had yet to undergo renovation, there was no plumbing or sanitation aside from a community outhouse. Corners were cut wherever a penny could be saved, and the result was inadequate and often dangerous housing. Nevertheless, the city's poor were desperate to find someplace for their families to live, and eagerly crowded into whatever space they could acquire that was within a reasonable walking distance of their place of employment.

As the century progressed, the city's housing crisis worsened, and the moralizing middle class grew more fervent in their condemnation of the lower classes' behavior and hygiene. Their determination to peer into the slums and root out the sources of miasmatic infection led to an increasing awareness of the squalor in which the lower classes lived. The more the middle class saw of life in the slums, the more concerned they became about not only the diseases that plagued the city's poor, but also about the condition of their souls. Religious men and women loudly denounced drunkenness, prostitution, and "Degrading Amusements" in a profusion of fervent speeches, sermons, and pamphlets. John Knox's 1857 tract, succinctly titled *The Masses Without! A Pamphlet for the Times on the Sanitary, Social, Moral and Heathen Condition of the Masses, Who Inhabit the Alleys, Courts, Wynds, Garrets, Cellars, Lodging-Houses, Dens, and Hovels of Great Britain, with an Appeal for Open-Air Preaching, and Other Extraordinary Efforts to Reach the Perishing Masses of Society,* offers an example of the type of hysterical evangelizing about the condition of the working classes that became popular among protestant missionaries at home. In his list of the "Prominent Evils of Society," the "shocking sanitary

condition of the masses" ranks first, but it is linked to a number of moral failings that he finds almost as deplorable. Knox points out that conditions are "filthy or overcrowded, or imperfectly drained, or badly ventilated, or out of repair," and this has led to "the too frequent occurrence of what may be regarded as a necessitous overcrowding, where the husband, wife, and young family of four or five children are cramped into a miserably small and ill-conditioned room." Worse yet, he says, there are "numerous instances where adults of both sexes, belonging to different families, are lodged in the same room, regardless of all common decencies of life, and where from three to five adults, men and women, besides a train or two of children, are accustomed to herd together like brute beasts or savages" (14-15). Knox earnestly explains that "When their *homes* are bad, it too frequently happens that their *hearts* correspond!" (16). It would be difficult to take Knox's pontificating seriously—especially when he goes on to compare the behavior of "[young] females … in light dresses whirling round in a silly dance … and half intoxicated with beer" to the "savagism, idolatry, and cannibalism in heathen lands,"—if he was alone in his ranting (19). However, the concern over the lower classes' housing and behavior was a popular topic of discussion in more than just religious circles, and even Engels admits that he "must confess that in the working-men's dwellings …, no cleanliness, no convenience, and consequently no comfortable family life is possible." Furthermore, he says, "in such dwellings only a physically degenerate race, robbed of all humanity, degraded, reduced morally and physically to bestiality, could feel comfortable and at home" (63). There existed a consensus that continuing to allow the working classes to live in such squalid conditions would surely result in their regression to a state of complete savagery.

1.16 *Invisible Labor and the Condition of England*

Philosopher and social critic Thomas Carlyle was aware of the dismal living conditions in which Victorian London's poor and working classes lived, and he attempted to shine a light on the housing issue through a series of articles, book-length tracts, and lectures. In *Chartism* (1837), he writes that a "feeling very generally exists that the condition and disposition of the Working Classes is a rather ominous matter at present; that something ought to be said, something ought to be done, in regard to it" (1). Most agreed with Carlyle's assertions that the dismal living conditions in the slums needed to be addressed, but few knew how to tackle an issue that had grown so out of hand. Opening the parks had yielded thin results, and few laborers seemed interested in spending their meager free time in church. But Carlyle insisted that the problem could not continue unchecked, because the "condition of the great body of people in a country is the condition of the country itself." The middle and upper classes needed to either look past the façade of respectability and take steps to treat the cancer of poverty that had silently spread through England's cities or risk the downfall of the great nation. Carlyle's condemnation was directed at MPs who, he argued, "seem oblivious of their duty" to "speak of the Condition-of-England question." According to Carlyle, it was their responsibility "to interpret and articulate the dumb deep want of the people," and they had thus far failed to do so. He claimed they were "either speakers for that great dumb toiling class which cannot speak, or they are nothing that one can well specify" (5). The working classes were thus hidden from view by clever architecture and denied a voice by their parliamentary representatives; invisible and voiceless, they existed more fully as grim spectral figures in the imaginations of the upper and middle classes than they did as Englishmen and women in the halls of Parliament.

Perhaps it was this emphasis on the invisibility and voicelessness of London's poor that inspired a proliferation of middle-class writers to take up their pens and give voice to those who

had none. Beginning in the first decades of the Victorian era, different modes of storytelling—both fiction and nonfiction—were employed to flesh out London's most mysterious residents. Middle-class authors who wrote about the lives of the lower classes had various motivations; most, like Carlyle, Engels, and even Knox, wrote to stimulate outrage and inspire social change, and others hoped simply to entertain. As concern over the health and morality of this group grew, there emerged various ways for the middle class to "observe" the living and working conditions of the poor from the comfort of their own homes. Factory novels, urban travelogues, newspaper articles, missionary tracts, and even police reports were churned out and disseminated among the reading public, and each claimed to speak for this voiceless population of London's poor. At first, methods of reporting on the lives of the working classes were relatively benign, and sought to draw attention to problems with sanitation, drainage, and disease so they might be more expeditiously addressed. As the century progressed, however, writing about the slums and the lower classes became increasingly sensationalized and intrusive, and writers across a variety of genres viewed the city's poverty as a carnival of squalor that could be used to lend their stories more "color." By mid-century, many members of the upper and middle classes had even begun to treat the slums as a kind of amusement park where they engaged in the popular practice of slum tourism, or "slumming" (**Figure 3**). By this point, they were so intrigued by this invisible London and its cast of characters that it became common practice to don the "costume" of a factory worker, impersonate the poor, and plunge into the depths of the slums to see for themselves whether the many reports of squalor, violence, and debauchery were true.

Figure 3: "Doing the slums," Frank Leslie's illustrated newspaper, v. 61, (1885 Dec. 5), p. 245.

Before the extreme dereliction, suffering, and want in London's slums became sites of tourism, however, they were the target of good intentions. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the working class became a popular source of pathos for a group of middle-class novelists who wished to reveal the unjust exploitation of the working class. The novels they produced took up Carlyle's call to thoroughly explore the "Condition of England," and were numerous enough to constitute their own genre. Dorice Williams Elliott explains that these works are "called variously 'factory novels,' 'social-problem novels,' 'condition-of-England novels,' or 'novels with a purpose,'" and all of them were "written by middle class authors"

(380). She emphasizes this point because "[most] middle-class people, even many family members of factory owners, had never been inside a factory and had probably never seen a factory worker, except at a distance" (379). Just as the worst areas of the city were hidden behind their architectural veneer of middle-class respectability, the laborers who lived there were similarly shielded from the middle-class gaze that might otherwise be used to observe or surveil their behavior. The authors of factory novels hoped to shine a light on this shadowy population in the hopes of raising awareness about their living and working conditions, and thus help bring about legislative reform that would improve their lot.

The overarching idea that the working class was invisible, voiceless, and unknown to London's higher classes seems ironic when you consider that most members of London's middle class employed several members of the working class as servants in their own homes. But this "type" of worker was a known quantity; servants may have been ignored or overlooked as fixtures in the home, but the middle class saw and communicated with them daily. Factory workers, on the other hand, existed in a wholly separate world. Their daily work did not bring them into the sphere of middle-class life, so they existed beyond the reach of the middle-class gaze, a fact that rendered them literally invisible in a way that their domestic counterparts were not. Elliott attributes this to the paternalism inherent in middle-class homes: "servants were part of the 'family,'" even if they were "positioned as dependent children who needed constant supervision in return for the protection and patronage they were supposed to need and enjoy" (381). These servants had every opportunity to observe and adopt middle-class taste, behavior, and morality, while factory workers did not enjoy the same improving benefits. They "endured killing hours and were treated like machines at work," but their "leisure hours … were unsupervised and their dress, recreation, and personal relationships were left to their own

discretion." Factory workers not only operated beyond the middle-class gaze, but they were also out of reach of the middle class's moralizing grip, a fact that afforded them "a frightening new kind of freedom" (Elliott 381). The combination of invisibility and independence made them seem more foreign and threatening than domestic servants, especially when reports of their drunken behavior, lack of morals and religion, and unsanitary living conditions filtered back to the middle class through religious tracts and newspaper articles. While domestic servants were treated with suspicion and condescension, factory workers were thought of as a race, or even a species, apart from the middle class.

Rather than enforce these fears with depictions of working-class debauchery, the factory novelists introduced middle- and upper-class readers to working-class characters who were simply trying to make a life for themselves in the unjust, exploitative factory system. Elliott explains that these novels performed important work on behalf of the working class by

> [demonstrating] to thousands of middle-class readers that the factory 'hands' most of them found unfamiliar, frightening, and even dangerous were not essentially different from the familiar working-class people in their own homes. Only their working conditions and the treatment they received from their employers made them seem innately immoral, improvident, and hostile. (387-388)

By familiarizing the middle class with the factory worker, these novels "[increased] sympathy for factory workers," and "demonstrably contributed to protective legislation" on behalf of them (Elliott 388). For these reasons, factory novels can be seen as educational for readers who, until this point, knew only as much about the details of England's factory system as they had read about in newspapers. Now they were privy to more "detailed documentation of the suffering of the poor," including visceral descriptions of slums like those that Engels writes about.

1.17 *The Attraction of Repulsion*

Dickens's factory novels—*Dombey and Son* (1846), and *Hard Times* (1854)—offer several examples of the ways in which these descriptions can be used to elicit both sympathy for the people who reside in these conditions, and fear of the poisonous miasmas that, once expelled from these diseased living spaces, could penetrate the upper-class neighborhoods that border the hidden slums and spread sickness among England's wealthier classes. In *Dombey and Son*, the narrator beckons the reader to follow him into the twisting alleyways and stagnant courtyards of London's worst districts:

> follow the good clergyman or doctor, who, with his life imperiled at every breath he draws, goes down into their dens, lying within the echoes of our carriage wheels and daily tread upon the pavement stones … Breathe the polluted air, foul with every impurity that is poisonous to health and life; and have every sense, conferred upon our race for its delight and happiness, offended, sickened and disgusted, and made a channel by which misery and death alone can enter. Vainly attempt to think of any simple plant, or flower, or wholesome weed, that, set in this foetid bed, could have its natural growth, or put its little leaves off to the sun as GOD designed it. (330)

We are, as the literate readers of the novel, grouped among the middle-class consumers of fiction to whom the narrator relates his tale, so that when "our" carriage wheels pass within inches of these dens of fetid air and disease, we are struck by the idea that no matter where we go in the city, we are always in danger of contagion and disease. Similarly, in Coketown, the fictional manufacturing city in which *Hard Times* is set, the reader is drawn into "the innermost fortifications of that ugly citadel, where Nature was … strongly bricked out" (74). As mentioned in chapter one, the Victorian reading audience considered nature to be a "great cleansing agent," capable of physically and morally redeeming the fallen members of England's lower orders. We are lured into the slums in both of Dickens's factory novels and find them to be so

poisonous that they choke out any hint of the natural world that might counter the effects of moral and industrial pollution.

It is worth noting that Dickens, perhaps more than any other middle-class factory novelist of the era, knew at least a little more about London's slums than most of his contemporaries. A famously prolific walker and noted insomniac, Dickens had a penchant for taking long walks through bad neighborhoods in the dead of night. He delighted in the thrill of danger he felt while on these walks, and describes the desire to wander through the slums and look his fill as "the attraction of repulsion." In John Forster's biography of Dickens, he uses the author's own phrase to describe how, even as a child, Dickens delighted in exploring the slums around St. Paul's Cathedral and Covent Garden:

> To be taken out for a walk into the real town, especially if it were anywhere about Covent Garden or the Strand, perfectly entranced him with pleasure. But most of all he had a profound *attraction of repulsion* to St. Giles's. If he could only induce whomsoever took him out to take him through Seven-Dials, he was supremely happy. "Good Heaven!" he would exclaim, "what wild visions of prodigies of wickedness, want, and beggary arose in my mind out of that place!" (Allen 139; Forster 39; emphasis mine)

Dickens delights in the frisson of danger, disgust, and horror he experiences while touring these low haunts. As an adult, he would plan walks through London's most dangerous slums in the dead of night so he could experience the same attraction of repulsion he felt as a child. In a letter to a friend, he mentioned this habit, writing, "I ... mean to take a great, London, back-slums kind of walk tonight, seeking adventures in knight errant style" (*Uncommercial*). His excitement is characterized by the thrill of adventure and the threat of danger. As an outsider, his tours of the slums take on a voyeuristic quality; though voyeurism is usually associated with a corresponding sexual arousal, the thrill of "getting caught looking" at forbidden things constitutes a similar

sensation. However it is characterized—as a frisson of excitement, the thrill of danger, or the titillation of voyeurism—Dickens's attraction of repulsion is associated with engaging in that which is dangerous and forbidden, and he strove to write in a way that would allow his readers to experience the same sensation. The "wild visions of prodigies of wickedness, want, and beggary" that swam in his imagination when he returned from his night walks in the slums made their way into his novels; most include at least one scene in which he lures the reader into a dark alley and gleefully points to the horrors that lurk there.

In *Bleak House* (1852), as in *Dombey and Son,* we explore another of Dickens's dark haunts when we follow the good doctor Allan Woodcourt into the infamous slum called "Tom-all-Alone's." Dickens's narrator explains that Parliament has engaged in "mighty speech-making … concerning Tom, and much wrathful disputation how Tom shall be got right. Whether he shall be put into the main road by constables, or by beadles, or by bell-ringing, or by force of figures, or by correct principles of taste, or by high church, or by low church, or by no church" (708). But the personification of the slum defies these feeble attempts at reform, and even as the speeches continue, Tom-all-Alone's "goes to perdition head foremost in his old determined spirit." The slum "has his revenge" on the wealthy who waste time arguing over his fate:

> Even the winds are his messengers, and they serve him in hours of darkness. There is not a drop of Tom's corrupted blood but propagates infection and contagion somewhere. It shall pollute, this very night, the choice stream … of a Norman house, and his Grace shall not be able to say nay to the infamous alliance. There is not an atom of Tom's slime, not a cubic inch of any pestilential gas in which he lives, not one obscenity or degradation about him, not an ignorance, not a wickedness, not a brutality of his committing, but shall work its retribution through every order of society up to the proudest of the proud and to the highest of the high. Verily, what with tainting, plundering, and spoiling, Tom has his revenge.

This pestilential slum is a den of contagion, and "the more that is seen of it, the more shocking it must be," to the extent that "no part of it left to the imagination is at all likely to be made so bad as the reality" (708-710). Terror lies in the idea that it cannot be contained; its very existence means that it will spread outside its borders to infect the respectable middle- and upper-class neighborhoods nearby.

Even in texts that are not considered part of the canon of factory novels, Dickens makes use of the working-class slum to color a scene and evoke a sense of danger. In *A Christmas Carol* (1843), we are invited to follow the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come into "an obscure part of town, where Scrooge had never penetrated before." Here, in a "den of infamous resort," the streets are "foul and narrow; the shops and houses wretched; the people half-naked, drunken, slipshod, ugly. Alleys and archways, like so many cesspools, disgorged their offenses of smell, and dirt, and life, upon the straggling streets; and the whole quarter reeked with crime, with filth and misery" (77). In *Oliver Twist* (1837-1839), too, the young orphan is led to the villainous Fagin's apartments through a similar landscape:

> A dirtier or more wretched place he had never seen. The street was very narrow and muddy, and the air was impregnated with filthy odours. There were a good many small shops; but the only stock in trade appeared to be heaps of children, who, even at that time of night, were crawling in and out at the doors, or screaming from the inside. The sole places that seemed to prosper amid the general blight of the place, were the public-houses; and in them, the lowest orders of Irish were wrangling with might and main. Covered ways and yards, which here and there diverged from the main street, disclosed little knots of houses, where drunken men and women were positively wallowing in filth; and from several of the door-ways, great ill-looking fellows were cautiously emerging, bound, to all appearance, on no very well-disposed or harmless errands. (47)

Later, as Fagin flees the police, he seeks out an even lower haunt:

> Near the spot on which Snow Hill and Holborn Hill meet, there opens, upon the right hand as you come out of the City, a narrow and dismal alley leading to Saffron Hill. In its filthy shops are exposed for sale huge bunches of second-hand silk handkerchiefs, of all sizes and patterns; for here reside the traders who purchase them from pickpockets … It is a commercial colony of itself: the emporium of petty larceny: visited at early morning, and setting-in of dusk, by silent merchants, who traffic in dark back-parlours, and who go as strangely as they come. (154)

In each of these examples, hidden labyrinths of filth, poverty, and crime unfurl from otherwise respectable London streets. As the reader is led deeper into these decrepit arteries, offshoots of alleyways and crowded clusters of derelict buildings materialize where unfed, unwashed, and half-clothed denizens eke out an existence. Worse still is the economy of crime that exists here, where an anonymous group of "silent merchants" works against the capitalist profits of the factory system by way of a network of theft and second-hand commerce. The secret world of the slums is thus a threat to the middle and upper classes' health, safety, and to some extent even their economic well-being.

1.18 *The Anonymous Masses of the Poor*

Many of these fictional tours of slums portray the people who live there as anonymous groups rather than charismatic individuals. In *Oliver Twist* we are alerted to the presence of "heaps" of children, who are accompanied by "the lowest orders of Irish," and crowds of "drunken men and women" near Fagin's door (47). In *A Christmas Carol*, the "people half-naked, drunken, slipshod, ugly" prowl the streets at all hours of the day and night. In fact, in almost all these texts, the poor are described as packs, tribes, or even races apart from the voyeuristic middle-class observer. This trend was not only present in fiction written by and disseminated among the middle classes, but also in the cultural and scientific studies of slums

that were increasingly popular in the first decades of the Victorian era. In Manchester physician Peter Gaskell's[11] 1833 study of the health, sanitation, and living conditions of England's manufacturing population, for example, he attempts to summarize the habits and behavior of the working class like they are one static, homogeneous group. He explains, as if sweeping his hand vaguely in the direction of a large crowd, that the "habits of the population" tend toward "improvidence," a "neglect of domestic comforts," and an "indulgence in dram-drinking," which are in large part due to their "general immorality," their "thin and innutritious diet," and their long hours of labor that continue "unremittingly" while "cooped up in a heated atmosphere" (226-227). According to Gaskell, the whole population is miserable, ill, and immoral in exactly the same way because they all have the same degenerative forces weighing on them.

Throughout his report, Gaskell persists in referring to slum-dwellers as one homogeneous body that has been physically deteriorated and morally corrupted. Even though they all "earn wages, which, with proper economy and forethought, would enable them to live comfortably, nay, in comparative luxury," they all waste their money on drink and low amusements (216). Because the great laboring class is made up of impecunious drunkards, pugilists, and gamblers, Gaskell claims they are "in most of their domestic relations upon a level with the savage" (216). George Sims's popular study of London's slums, *How the Poor Live*, was published fifty years after Gaskell's, but Sims still makes the same arguments about the "sameness" of London's lower-class people. He, too, defines the entire population of the slum by their habits, claiming

---

[11] Uncle of Elizabeth Gaskell, the factory novelist who wrote *North and South* (1854-55) and *Mary Barton* (1848), among others

that their penchant for drink "dulls their senses and reduces them to the level of the brutes they must be to live in such sties" (131). London's working class is described as having no variation in character or habit, and they are frequently depicted as savages and brutes. The observational gaze of the middle-class reader sweeps across them and sees the "masses," who are poor and sickly or, more menacingly, they see the "mob," that is violent and agitated. Grace Moore points out that classifying "the urban poor as a separate and savage race was a popular trope employed by many Victorian novelists and campaigners for social reform," and argues that "use of such discourse … sought to reveal the true depth of the divisions between the classes, by suggesting that the poor were a 'race' apart in need of missionary aid." For middle-class readers, it was exciting to learn about the savages in London's slums, and it was simultaneously comforting to be repeatedly reassured that these savages were more akin to the unsophisticated tribes scattered across the farthest reaches of empire than they were to members of the respectable classes.

When writers *did* focus on specific members of the poor and working classes, these characters and individuals were also portrayed as foreign despite the likelihood that they had rarely, if ever, set foot outside the neighborhoods in which they were born. In *Bleak House*, Dickens parodies the way London's poor are depicted as a race apart and uses Jo, a lowly street urchin, to represent the animalistic savagery of those who must eke out a living in slums like Tom-all-Alone's. We meet Jo as Allan Woodcourt leaves the slum, where he spies "a ragged figure coming very cautiously along, crouching close to the soiled walls … It is the figure of a youth, whose face is hollow, and whose eyes have an emaciated glare … He shades his face with his ragged elbow as he passes on the other side of the way, and goes shrinking and creeping on, with his anxious hand before him, and his shapeless clothes hanging in shreds" (713). Our attention is drawn to Jo's methods of moving through the slum; "crouching," "shrinking," and

"creeping" at a safe distance, he is like a stray animal hoping to scavenge a meal but wary of the likelihood that he will suffer some abuse instead.

Allan decides to help Jo find a clean place to sleep and recover from his illness while he hides from Detective Bucket, and as Jo enters the chosen establishment, the narrator offers the following description of him:

> He is not one of Mrs. Pardiggle's Tockahoopo Indians; he is not one of Mrs. Jellyby's lambs, being wholly unconnected with Borrioboola-Gha; he is not softened by distance and unfamiliarity; he is not a genuine foreign-grown savage; he is the ordinary home-made article. Dirty, ugly, disagreeable to all the senses, in body a common creature of the common streets, only in soul a heathen. Homely filth begrimes him, homely parasites devour him, homely sores are in him, homely rags are on him; native ignorance, the growth of English soil and climate, sinks his immortal nature lower than the beasts that perish. Stand forth, Jo, in uncompromising colours! From the sole of thy foot to the crown of thy head, there is nothing interesting about thee. … He is not of the same order of things, not of the same place in creation. He is of no order and no place, neither of the beasts nor of humanity. (724)

Mrs. Pardiggle and Mrs. Jellyby are both philanthropists whose foreign missions for the benefit of the poor in other countries render them blind to the same suffering in their own city. Despite the chance to help improve conditions among London's poor, they cannot be induced to care about Jo's dismal living conditions because he is "not a genuine foreign-grown savage," and is thus not "softened by distance and unfamiliarity." He is made of the same stuff as the "savage," but without the benefit of distance and a sense of the exotic, he is written off as "a common creature of the common streets." As the narrator ruminates on Jo's puzzling existence, however, he seems to realize that Jo does not even rank among the savages and beasts to whom he is compared. Jo is outside of the taxonomic rank; he is "of no order and no place." He is,

furthermore, “neither of the beasts nor of humanity,” occupying a liminal position between animal and human where he is classified as his own species.

1.19 *Natural Science and the Taxonomy of the Poor*

Dickens’s description of Jo’s mysterious taxonomy comes at a time when rapid scientific discovery and global exploration had sparked a craze for natural science and the naming and classification of whatever flora and fauna an amateur scientist could get his or her hands on. The vast reach of the Empire—at its height by the 1830s—provided seemingly endless spaces into which travelers could venture, and they often returned with tales of exotic cultures, or notebooks filled with drawings of foreign plant and animal species. This trend began over a century before Dickens’s *Bleak House* with the publication of Carl Linnaeus’s *Systema Naturae* (1735), in which he presents a system of scientific classification simple enough for casual enthusiasts to both understand and put into practice. The natural science craze that followed continued throughout the Victorian era, during which time a number of prominent writers, politicians, and thinkers took an interest in the subject. Many even joined the Linnaean Society, a popular scientific group that taught amateurs to employ the language and practices of natural scientists and gave them a forum for sharing their discoveries. As more and more amateur naturalists ventured into Britain’s colonial spaces to document what they found there, travel narratives that purported to turn a scientific gaze on the landscapes and communities of faraway places began filtering back to the metropole in greater numbers. These narratives were primarily concerned with “[specimen] gathering, the building up of collections,” and “the naming of new species,” and their popularity added to the growing frenzy for classification and display (Pratt 27). Exhibitions of these souvenirs became a popular way for British people to encounter the farthest reaches of Empire without ever leaving England, and the culture of collection that resulted from

it gave rise to the curiosity cabinets, exhibitions, and even museums that flourished in the decades that followed.

The popularity of scientific discourse flourished throughout the nineteenth century to the point that readers could expect to encounter the language of natural science in everything from poetry to romantic novels. It was embedded in the discourse of daily life and constituted a major source of entertainment for Londoners. The Empire's expansion led to a constant discovery of new tribes and cultures that were filtered back to the metropole by way of adventure and travel narratives and, increasingly, elaborate displays of the colonized people themselves. According to Sadiah Qureshi, "Paying to see living foreign peoples perform was enormously popular in the nineteenth century," and at various points throughout the 1800s, the public would pay "a shilling or more" to attend one of these exhibitions (2). In most cases, they featured a panoramic backdrop depicting a painting of the featured cultural group's landscape, and some even reconstructed replicas of the types of housing they lived in. While a sponsor or host delivered a lecture about the group's "manners and customs," the foreigners would perform everyday tasks, rituals, dances, and songs on the stage. Throughout the century, Londoners paid to see "groups of Sámi, Krenak, Inuit, Anishinaabe, Bakhoje, Zulus, San, Arabs, Pacific Islanders, Australian Aborigines, Indians, Japanese, Ndebele, Chinese, and 'Aztecs.'" These exhibitions were not singular occurrences, but were "profitable, publicly accessible, and among some of the most popular forms of metropolitan entertainment" (2). These exhibitions were presented as being anthropological in nature, so it was natural for the audience to peer closely at the subjects, submitting them to the observational gaze of the natural scientist. It is also true, however, that the spectacle associated with the display of the "Hottentot Venus," for instance, carried heavily voyeuristic undertones. The opportunity to unabashedly gaze at the human form was rare outside

of a medical context, but by casting a veil of scientific observation over what otherwise might be construed as licentious voyeurism, audience members were granted the opportunity to ogle the subjects at length while attributing their interest to scientific advancement.

The spectacle that accompanied the exhibition of foreign peoples thus presented an opportunity for overlap between scientific observation and the thrill of voyeurism, and it was not long before this hybrid gaze was turned toward areas of the metropole that fell outside of the exhibition hall. In 1853, the pages of the *Illustrated London News* were filled with reports of a "peculiar race" of "City Arabs" that were an "increasingly visibly and problematic presence" in Britain's urban centers. They behaved as "young savages," committed "ceaseless depredations," and threated the moral fabric of polite society." The reporter lamented the fact that "they could not be hung, imprisoned, or deported" because they were, in fact, British citizens. They were not "Arabs" in the sense that they had recently arrived in Great Britain; they were British by birth, but they belonged to the separate nation of the poor that existed in the cities' twisting back alleys. They were referred to as "Arabs" because an ethnic classification best characterized their "otherness" among the higher orders of society (Qureshi 17). Edward Beasley points out that modern notions of "race" are very different from those of the Victorians, who—for all their interest in natural science and taxonomy—lacked "any clear idea about the difference between biological and cultural heritability" (48). For this reason, the "City Arabs" were construed as their own "peculiar race" in the same way that "people talked of the 'race' of London chimney sweeps." For Mayhew and his contemporaries, the "racial characteristics of London street people qua street people were a set of *cultural* characteristics" (Beasley 48). By sorting them into a separate racial group, however, it became easier to draw a border around "Darkest London" and the territories belonging to the poor. At a time when anxieties about the lower classes were on

the rise, scientific discourse lent a sense of order and control to writing about the lifestyles and behavior of London's poor. Reading these texts, however, there is a sense that middle-class authors and their readers walk a fine line between wanting to soothe fears of contagion and immorality through use of the scientific discourse of control, on one hand, and the desire to shock (and be shocked), on the other.

As middle- and upper-class Londoners became more accustomed to scrutinizing the customs and behaviors of the lower classes in their own city, it became increasingly clear that their interest was predicated on an imagined construction of the slums that reveled in spectacle and the carnivalesque. Scientific observation without the additional excitement of voyeurism—or the attraction of repulsion—that accompanied it failed to hold the attention of readers and spectators. In one study from 1865, the *Lancet* medical journal commissioned several doctors to investigate sanitary conditions in workhouse infirmaries. Under the workhouse system, established in 1723, any of England's poor who wished to receive government relief were first required to undertake a set amount of labour at a local workhouse. If anyone was deemed too infirm or ill to perform the labor assigned to them, they would be granted relief in the form of money or food. The law was amended in 1834 in an effort to curb the cost of poor relief; MPs wanted to ensure that only the truly needy would seek out the workhouse to obtain food and shelter, and took steps to ensure that conditions in the workhouses were even more dismal than what might be found in the worst slums. The infirmaries associated with these workhouses were correspondingly grim, and reports of inadequate, amateur nursing and widespread infection were a matter of great concern among the nation's healthcare workers.

The *Lancet* sent their chosen doctors to investigate all forty-three of these infirmaries, and they set about building a campaign to address the sanitary conditions among the poor.

According to Seth Koven, "[many] of Britain's most influential poor-law and sanitary reformers threw their weight behind the *Lancet*'s campaign, including the redoubtable champion of modern nursing Florence Nightingale" (25). Despite the impressive roster of reform-minded politicians and healthcare professionals that worked to drum up enthusiasm for the project, however, the articles they published "failed to capture the imagination of the broader public who, understandably, lacked an appetite for administrative details about pauper diets, the cubic space requirements of the sick, and the professional qualifications and emoluments of workhouse nurses and doctors" (Koven 25). The middle- and upper-class reading public did not want purely scientific reports about the poor; they wanted to hear the gory details about life in London's slums and feel the frisson of excitement that accompanied Dickens's attraction of repulsion. Luckily, there were enough texts that addressed the crisis of London's slums that any reader could find one to suit their tastes. Some, like the *Lancet* articles, were clinical and informative, others more closely resembled the popular penny dreadfuls that aimed to thrill readers with tales of the macabre, but most fell somewhere in between and combined scientific classification with salacious descriptions of "darkest London."

1.20 *Domestic Travelogues*

In an article written for *Punch* magazine in 1850, William Thackeray addresses the social criticism and domestic travelogues that had seen a spike in popularity in recent years and notes the way they helped make the upper and middle classes more aware of the suffering of the lower classes than they had ever been before. The "wonders and terrors" of London's slums, he says, "have been lying by your door and mine ever since we had a door of our own. We had but to go a hundred yards off and see for ourselves, but we never did" (354). Thackeray is not among the many writers who traveled into the dark heart of the slums and emerged with incredible tales of

terror and wonder, but he does point out the rise in this trend, and questions the divide between rich and poor that makes this kind of tourism necessary:

> A clever and earnest-minded writer gets a commission from the *Morning Chronicle* newspaper, and reports upon the state of our poor in London; he goes amongst laboring people and poor of all kinds—and brings back what? A picture of human life so wonderful, so awful, so piteous and pathetic, so exciting and terrible, that readers of romance own they never read anything like to it; and that the griefs, struggles, strange adventures here depicted exceed anything that any of us could imagine … But of such a wondrous and complicated misery as this you confess you had no idea? No. How should you?—You and I—we are of the upper classes; we have had hitherto no community with the poor. We never speak a word to the servant who waits on us for twenty years; we condescend to employ a tradesman, keeping him at a proper distance—mind, of course, at a proper distance … we know nothing [of] how pitilessly they are ground down, how they live and die, here close by us at the backs of our houses; until … some prophet like Carlyle rises up and denounces woe; some clear-sighted, energetic man like the writer of the *Chronicle* travels into the poor man's country for us, and comes back with his tale of terror and wonder. (354)

Thackeray conspiratorially confesses that he knows nothing of the suffering of the poor and asks his fellow members of the "upper classes" whether they knew anything about this mess. "No," he agrees, "How should you?" The idea that two nations exist in Victorian England, one for the rich and one for the poor, gained traction when Benjamin Disraeli outlined it in his 1845 factory novel, *Sybil*. In the novel, the radical journalist Stephen Morley explains that the rich and the poor share "no intercourse and no sympathy," and are "as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets; who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners, and are not governed by the same laws" (67).

In London, the two nations could be divided between the West End and the East End, or what H.W. Wong characterized as “the cultivated, rich, and vain, in opposition to the primitive, poor, and dirty” (83). Worse, still, was the fact that “the West End often took advantage of the East End,” to the extent that “the prosperity of the post West End was built upon the hard work of the poor working-class people in the East End to sustain its glory.” England's two nations are therefore not only divided from each other by wildly differing life experiences, but are actually set in direct opposition to each other, with one group’s best interests actively working against the other’s. Even beyond the East/West divide, historians posit that “London was not a single settlement, but rather it consisted of an agglomeration of separate communities each with their own identity” (Pooley et al. 150). Just as the “lower classes” were made up of so many subcultures that “they themselves might scarcely understand each other’s dialect,” the communities these people lived in varied widely as well (Thompson 194). Even though the slums nearest the docks and those close to the textile factories would likely house different subsets of the working class, they were nevertheless grouped together by a middle-class imagination that had little practical knowledge of the people who lived in them. Here again, then, is an example of the way the slums become shrouded in mystery.

The rise in popularity of texts concerned with the suffering of the poor can be attributed, in part, to the curiosity that existed about this vast swath of fellow countrymen and women that the upper classes knew nothing about. While the factory novelists wrote about members of the working class in order to humanize the lesser of these two nations, there were others who opted to treat them as they would any other foreign race or exotic species and “discover” them like a lost tribe in the Amazon. The growing awareness that there were races and species left to be explored in the metropole led to a rise in adventure-themed domestic travelogues like Watts

Phillps's *The Wild Tribes of London* (1855), as well as those that attempted to explore the city on the basis of compiling a scientific catalog of London's poor, like Hector Gavin's *Sanitary Ramblings* (1848), Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851), and John Garwood's *The Million-Peopled City* (1853), among others. Thackeray celebrates the intrepid explorers who were willing to travel "into the poor man's country" on behalf of the upper classes and bring back "tale[s] of terror and wonder" so outrageous that even "readers of romance" had trouble believing them.

The "clear-sighted, energetic man" Thackeray refers to in the passage above is, in fact, Henry Mayhew, who was arguably the best-known literary explorer of slums in mid-century London. He began writing about the poor in a series of letters to the *Morning Chronicle* calling for "an inquiry into the causes of cholera," and in 1849, the newspaper commissioned him to write an article called "A Visit to the Cholera Districts of Bermondsey" (Schroeder). The article was well received, and shortly after its publication he was named "Special Correspondent for the Metropolis," and given a regular column called "Labour and the Poor." The column focused on the living and working conditions among London's vast laboring class and drew a large readership among the middle and upper classes. These articles were a prelude to the publication of his popular four-volume work, *London Labour and the London Poor*, the first volume of which appeared in print in 1851. *London Labour* is a colorful census of the lowest classes in which Mayhew attempts to catalog every person who dwelt in London's slums, and provide descriptions of their trades, occupations, and living conditions.

Mayhew began his career in journalism in the midst of a cholera epidemic, and his now famous piece on the Bermondsey district was pivotal in attracting the attention of a sympathetic reading audience. In the article, Mayhew explores sanitation issues that are similar to those that

the *Lancet* would report on a few years later, but Mayhew indulges the reader in sensational descriptions of the district's shocking living conditions and heart-rending vignettes of the people who have no access to clean drinking water. In Bermondsey, cholera had already killed more than 12,000 people and would kill upwards of 2,000 more before it ran its course. While public anxiety over the spread of disease was not a new concern, the middle and upper classes were morbidly fascinated by the seemingly unbelievable squalor of the slums. Rather than offer up dry tables, charts, and statistics, as the *Lancet* did, Mayhew guides his readers through a detailed hellscape populated by innocent men, women, and children who are doing their best to eke out an existence. Where the *Lancet* relied on the logos of pure science to convince readers that action must be taken, Mayhew leans heavily on pathos and focuses on the suffering of real people to shock his reading audience, and ignite their collective imagination about life in the slums.

From Mayhew's description of the place, it is no wonder the neighborhood was beset with disease. One particular part of Bermondsey, called Jacob's Island,[12] presents an especially alarming example of life in London's worst districts. The area's canals had once drained into the Thames, but were closed off during the course of industrialization; the ditches that remained had no source of egress, and by mid-century, foul, putrid water "the colour of strong green tea" stagnated in a system of interconnected canals (326). These ran alongside the backs of the houses in Jacob's Island where outhouses hung directly over the water; holes cut in the bottoms allowed human waste to drop straight down into the canal. Mayhew writes that he watched "bucket after

---

[12] Dicken's references Jacob's Island in *Oliver Twist*, and calls it "the filthiest, the strangest, the most extraordinary of the many localities that are hidden in London, wholly unknown, even by name, to the great mass of its inhabitants" (317).

bucket of filth splash into it," even as his guide explained to him that "this was the only water the wretched inhabitants had to drink." Only a short distance down the canal from where the buckets were dumped, he saw "boys bathing in" the same water and "gazed in horror" as "a little child … dangled her tin cup as gently as possible into the stream" to retrieve a drink. The living conditions were nauseating, but the gritty details of the residents' suffering made for good reading among the wealthier classes who could never have imagined such horrors on their own. Only after Mayhew hooks his reader by guiding them through a hovel "where an infant lay dead of the cholera," and past the closed shutters of another where "a girl was then lying dead" from the same disease, does he attempt to impart a sentence or two of scientific information from "an eminent writer in toxicology" about the dangers of living too near stagnant wastewater. He ruminates on details that, as he describes it, "made one's blood curdle," before condemning the selfishness of the landlords— "small capitalists [that] reap a petty independence" —who refuse to spend money on improvements. "Until the poor are rescued from the fangs of these mercenary men," he argues, "there is but little help either for their physical or moral welfare" (328).

Mayhew turns a sympathetic eye on the denizens of Jacob's Island, but his readers would likely have inferred that their unsanitary living conditions were a risk to all who lived in the city, from the slums to Belgravia,[13] and regarded them with some suspicion. If the parks were the lungs of London, then the sewers were its bowels, and just now they were not functioning to eliminate waste in a way that would ensure the health of the population. Mayhew recounts the

---

[13] Belgravia is an affluent neighborhood near Hyde Park Corner that was nothing but "mud-banks" and "a few sheds" at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Timbs 43). It was drained in 1829, and all 140 acres were built up with detached mansions; part of this territory is now Belgravia. Illustrator Richard Doyle describes the neighborhood in 1864 as "quiet, stately, wealthy, aristocratic, and somewhat dull-looking" (37).

tale of one resident of Jacob's Island who survived two bouts of scarlet fever, a typhus infection, and the death of his child to Cholera. Mayhew observes that "as the man sat at his meals in his small shop, if he put his hand against the wall behind him, it would be covered with the soil of his neighbour's privy, sopping through the wall." Given this living situation, Mayhew remarks that it is a wonder "that they are not all dead" (328). Rather than drain to a sewer system, or even to the Thames, human waste had nowhere to go and seeped up into the structures, saturating the walls. Haewon Hwang explains that it was common for human excrement to "[pile] up in basement sewers" before it "ran on surface drainages and emptied into the Thames." Much of it "remained stagnant in underground cesspits," where it sent "noxious odours" and "toxic gases up through the floorboards into buildings "with little or no ventilation" (20). Social commentators and doctors alike subscribed to the idea that "the choleraic body and the city were coextensive" and that the diseased body excreted fluid that, "like the London water supply, was clouded with foreign matter" (Erin O'Connor qtd. in Hwang 22). Just as middle- and upper-class Londoners flocked to see the bodies of foreign peoples on display in exhibition halls, they also eagerly consumed Mayhew's intimate accounts of boys bathing in sewage and corpses laid out in the close quarters of the slums. Since these were among the bodies that made up London's choleraic "body," they were made available to the hybrid scientific/voyeuristic gaze of the middle and upper classes.

The city's faulty sewer system ravaged the body of London, which could not be deemed healthy until all of its proverbial systems, organs, and appendages had flushed out any disease-causing pollutants. The poor were among the pollutants that contaminated this body, and as London's sewer system approached a crisis point, many theories were put forward about how best to flush them out: slum clearance and the movement of factories to suburban or even

pastoral settings were foremost among the suggestions. In much the same way the poor were metaphorically equated with the pollutants that contaminated the great body of the city, the corporeal body of a beggar was also considered to be contaminated; a public health risk that demanded attention be paid to it. Secreted away in the slums,—the diseased "arteries of the city"—the poor were hidden by architectural planning, unrepresented in Parliament, uncounted in the census, and rendered anonymous by language that grouped them among the "mob" or the "masses," but now their individual bodies took on greater significance as the fear of disease demanded that they become the focus of public health initiatives (Hwang 28). The beggar's body, both a metaphor for disease and a biological entity, becomes hyper-visible when the public demands that it be placed under observation where it can be monitored by scientists and physicians. Science demands visibility in order to classify, sort, and label specimens for ease of reference; it then mounts those specimens on boards and offers them for display. The voyeuristic desire to experience the thrill associated with the outlandish, the carnivalesque, and the grotesque is still prevalent among the upper and middle classes, but there is an increasing desire to impose order by way of scientific observation.

Mayhew's work increasingly employs this scientific, observational gaze as he adapts and supplements his work for collection in *London Labour and the London Poor*. He veers away from the pathos-driven tales of suffering and disease that he hoped would inspire the upper classes' philanthropy and opts instead to present London's poor as the subjects of a large-scale scientific study. In the preface to the first volume of *London Labour*, Mayhew announces his intention to supply his reader with "information concerning a large body of persons, of whom the public had less knowledge than of the most distant tribes of the earth—the government population returns not even numbering them among the inhabitants of the kingdom" (iii).

Richard Maxwell confirms that the “fifty thousand street-people" that Mayhew sets out to classify could indeed be considered “an undiscovered population, in the sense that no one had thought it worthwhile to investigate them on a large scale or even … to acknowledge them as a group” (91). Just as the factory novelists stepped in to speak on behalf of “that great dumb toiling class that cannot speak,” Mayhew undertakes to fill in the blank spaces on the census map where England’s poorest citizens are unrepresented.

Mayhew must “discover” this lost tribe of people before he can write about them, so it is not surprising when he begins his first volume by comparing himself to James Bruce, the famous eighteenth-century explorer who wrote adventurous accounts of his travels in Ethiopia and northern Africa. By adopting the style and tone of travel narratives made popular by amateur natural scientists and anthropologists who study far-off environments and cultures, Mayhew’s readers are able to treat the domestic subject matter as they would a piece of writing about a lost tribe discovered deep in the Amazon: with a sense of scientific curiosity and clinical detachment. London is no different from the rest of the world, where the tribes of men have divided themselves into two major classes: the nomadic and the civilized tribes. In England, the “civilized” members of society “[recognize] the rights of property,” have “[acquired] wealth,” and “[formed] themselves into a respectable caste” (1). The “nomadic” members of London’s population are parasitic “vagabonds and outcasts” that surround the civilized tribe and live off the scraps of their labor. So it is across the globe: the “Finns” who cultivate the soil are plagued by the wandering vagabond “Lappes,” and the “industrious Fellahs” who sow the earth in North Africa are plagued by the “wild and predatory tribe” of “Arabian Bedouins.” Presenting domestic issues in the style of a travelogue in this way meant that readers were not unduly burdened by the sense that these were their fellow countrymen, or that they even shared the urban landscape

being described. When their attention *was* drawn to the fact that Mayhew's subjects could be found within the metropole, there was relief in treating them as the subjects of scientific observation rather than fellow countrymen and women. These unfortunate masses seemed less threatening when scientists studied their habits, organized them within a familiar taxonomic system, labeled them neatly, and offered them for display to the respectable classes.

In *London Labour*, Mayhew divides his own subjects into three kingdoms: those that *will* work, those that *cannot* work, and those that *will not* work. Mayhew proceeds to further delineate the various elements of the wandering tribes of the metropole by breaking them down into ever more minute categories. Like the Linnaean system of taxonomy set forth in *Systema Naturae* that identifies three kingdoms—plant, animal, and mineral—and further subdivides them into categories for class, order, genus, and species, Mayhew attempts to neatly distribute London's poor among their own groups, creating categories based on their occupations or criminal tendencies. The street-finders or collectors, for example, "may be divided, according to the nature of their occupations, into three classes." The first class "go abroad daily to *find* [things] in the streets; these are the "bone-grubbers and rag-gatherers … pure-finders, and … cigar-end and old wood collectors." The next class is also composed of "*finders*," but their work is "confined to the river"; these are the "dredgermen and nightmen, the sweeps and the scavengers." The final class is not made up of finders, but "*collectors* or *removers* of the dirt and filth of our streets and houses, and of the soot of our chimneys"; these include the "dustmen and nightmen, the sweeps and the scavengers" (136). As he approaches the finer points of his taxonomic system Mayhew's ordering often dissolves into a mix of scientific terms and amusing anecdotes; he tells the story of one "dredgerman," a member of the second class of water-based street-finders, who was "known some years ago as 'the Fish.'" This man "could remain (at least, so say those whom

there is no reason to doubt) three hours under the water without rising to the surface to take a breath. He was, it is said, web-footed, naturally, and partially web-fingered" (137). Mayhew's anecdote, embedded within his taxonomic structure, suggests that certain types of people are genetically evolved to perform this kind of work, and that London's poorest residents are not scavengers, thieves, and prostitutes by chance, but by scientific design.

1.21 Physiognomy and Moral Degeneration

Mayhew was among the first social scientists to delve more deeply into the notion that a large portion of the poor could be construed as a separate "criminal class." Of his three categories of the poor—those that *will*, those that *cannot*, and those that *will not* work—the first two were considered relatively benign; those that will work but simply cannot find employment, and those too old or sickly to perform difficult physical labor posed no real threat to the well-being of the urban community. It was the last group—those that *will* not work—that were cause for concern; these were the morally corrupt nomads, vagabonds, prostitutes, and pickpockets that Mayhew encountered on his travels through the slums. The idea that this group could work if they wanted to, but simply refused, was what set them apart from the more "respectable" members of the lower orders, and they came to be associated with the burgeoning "criminal class" of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. These were not criminals by chance; the criminal class was not made up of starving parents who stole loaves of bread to feed their children, but of "offenders" who were "drawn to crime because of moral degeneracy rather than being driven to it by their material circumstances" (Beier 499). During this time, theories about moral degeneracy held that there were "two factors … in criminal heredity" or two ways in which someone might become grouped among this class: "innate disposition, and … contagion from social environment" (Ellis 332). If someone's parent was a criminal, they stood a

reasonable chance of becoming a criminal, too, and living among a criminal element—even just occupying the same neighborhood—could end in the same result.

Theories about moral degeneration are especially important to consider when it comes to the intense scrutiny of the lower classes that took place among science-minded explorers of the slums. The work of Mayhew and others like him did not focus solely on the squalid physical, architectural, and sanitary conditions of London's worst alleys and neighborhoods; much of it sought to reveal the true character of the people who populated these landscapes as well. Throughout *London Labour*, for example, Mayhew examines the lower classes' dress, behavior, occupations, and living conditions, and often includes detailed descriptions of their facial features. In one vignette about prostitution in London, he recalls visiting a police station near Ship Alley, where he saw "[two] women, both well-known prostitutes … confined in the cells." One of them had been jailed fourteen times for various offenses, and on this occasion found herself locked up for "nearly murdering a man with a poker." Mayhew's description of her focuses primarily on her facial features: "[her] face was bad, heavy, and repulsive; her forehead, as well as I could distinguish by the scanty light thrown into the place by the bullseye of the policeman, was low; her nose was short and what is called pudgy, having the nostrils dilated" (Mayhew 228). This pointed description of the prostitute's facial features and structure helps paint a vivid picture of her countenance for the reader, but the purpose of including it is not necessarily to entertain. Rather, Mayhew includes it so readers that are familiar with the popular study of physiognomy might also "read" her features and draw their own conclusions about her character.

The tenets of physiognomy date back to Aristotle's time, when it was first used as a schema for the "great chain of being," a biological spectrum across which animals and different

tribes and races of human beings were ranked in order from least to most advanced. It was both a method for confirming the cartesian superiority of humans over members of the animal kingdom, and for ranking the ruling culture above the subordinate and often enslaved cultures over which they ruled. Rosemary Jann explains that, in Aristotle's pre-Darwinian Greek tradition, "humans alone possessed a rational or intellectual soul or had an upright posture, but they were still but superior animals whose characters could be read in the bodily signs they shared with the brutes." Using this mindset, "large-minded" humans and animals were identified by a "broad forehead and well-proportioned body," "brutish features" were interpreted as "a sign of moral degeneration," and "hair and skin color [were] taken to reveal the 'natural' inferiority of non-white races" (Jann 2). The danger of including both humans and animals on the same spectrum was that the gap between them could be perceived as too slight, failing to elevate humans above animals to a great enough degree. This problem was confronted by way of "a reassertion of social hierarchy" that placed greater emphasis on "the great range of intellect between the highest and lowest 'races'" (Jann 4). It was fine for humans and animals to share this spectrum as long as "it was the Hottentot, and not the Newton" who was closest to the animals; in this way, the vanity of the civilized European was shielded from the most threatening implications of gradation." This vanity was further protected by the tendency to position "the socially marginal—women, infants, the poor, the mad—closest to animals," which further "reified existing hierarchies" already in existence at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Physiognomy experienced a resurgence in popularity at the end of the eighteenth century with the publication of John Caspar Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy* (1789). In it, Lavater builds on the Greek tradition and claims that a person's character cannot be determined "except by the aid of his external form, his body, his superficies." Therefore, he says, the "material man

must become the subject of observation. All the knowledge we can obtain of man must be gained through the medium of our senses" (7). More specifically, Lavater believed that a few particular elements of the external form revealed the most about "the moral life of man," and they could be read "in the lines, marks, and transitions of the countenance. His moral powers and desires, his irritability, sympathy, and antipathy; his facility of attracting or repelling the objects that surround him; these are all summed up in, and painted upon, his countenance when at rest" (8-9). By following the guidelines he set forth, even an amateur physiognomist could see how different facial features revealed certain things about a person's character and temperament. Depending on its "form, height, arching, proportion, obliquity, and position," for example, a person's forehead could reveal much about their "thought and sensibility," while the "covering, or skin, of the forehead, its position, colour, wrinkles, and tension, denote the passions and present state of mind" (12). In studying the combination of facial structure and skin features, an astute observer could discern not only a person's character, but also their disposition and mood; there were few secrets a person could keep if these facts of their inner life were written plainly on their faces for all to see and interpret.

The idea that one could ostensibly learn to "read" not only the facial features, but even, to a certain extent, the minds of everyone around them appealed to the anxieties of England's upper and middle classes, and contributed to physiognomy's rising popularity. *Essays on Physiognomy* was published more than twenty times in English by 1810, and it spawned a proliferation of texts throughout the first half of the nineteenth century that strove to put the tools for physiognomic analysis into the hands of the general population. Among these different versions was a convenient pocket guide for the physiognomist on the go, and one called *The Juvenile Lavater* (1812) that purported to help young people avoid developing "ugly" features by demonstrating

good behavior and living a moral life (Brewer). The reading public was wild for the discipline and delighted in poring over illustrations that helped them identify those features that were considered desirable, and those that indicated some level of degeneration. By mid-century, the amateur study of physiognomy had become so popular that descriptions of a person's facial features could be used as shorthand character sketches in everything from scientific texts, newspaper articles, and even popular novels (Taylor et al. 4).

Mayhew saw the potential in using physiognomy to help his readers understand his taxonomy of London's poor. There can be no mistaking his belief in the discipline as a psychological tool, as he invokes physiognomy on the first page of the first volume of *London Labour* when he refers to the work of Dr. James Cowles Prichard. Prichard, a respected physician and ethnologist most famous for *A Treatise on Insanity and Other Disorders Affecting the Mind* (1835), was a proponent of Lavaterian physiognomy, and Mayhew cites his assertion that there are "three principal varieties in the form of the head and other physical characters" that help distinguish the vagabond from the citizen. According to Mayhew, these can be divided among the "savage inhabitants of forests" that make up "the rudest tribes of men," those who "wander with their herds and flocks over vast plains," and finally the "most civilized races … who live by the arts of cultivated life" (1). He asserts that the "savage" forest dwellers are characterized by a protruding jaw, the wandering shepherds possess "broad lozenge-shaped faces (owing to the great development of the cheek bones), and pyramidal skulls," and the civilized races have "oval or elliptical" skulls. Mayhew proceeds to winnow Prichard's three races down to two within the English population—"the wandering and the civilized tribes"—and offers his own descriptions of their head shapes and facial features (2). Each civilized tribe, he claims, has "a wandering horde attached," whose members "have frequently a different language from the

more civilized portion of the community, and that adopted with the intent of concealing their designs and exploits from them." In London, the civilized tribe of middle- and upper-class residents who "live by the arts of cultivated life" suffers its own "wandering horde" in the form of "paupers, beggars, and outcasts" who possess "nothing but what they acquire by depredation from the industrious, provident, and civilized portion of the community." If they are not made obvious by their dress, behaviors, haunts, and "slang," this parasitic "horde" of the poor can be distinguished by "the greater development of the jaws and cheekbones" than those of their more civilized superiors. The prostitute in the Ship Alley police station, for example, is set apart from the civilized tribe by more than just her "low" forehead; she also possesses the "heavy" face and "pudgy" nose that further distinguish her as a member of Mayhew's parasitic horde.

Mayhew's use of physiognomy does not always require that he offer a detailed description of each face he encounters; he often includes shorthand references to people's appearances, referring to them as having a "Hebrew" or "Jewish physiognomy" or, more often, the damning assignation of an "Irish physiognomy" (*Vol. 2* 122, 40) He does not elaborate on what these physiognomies entail, but we may infer that his lack of description indicates that the reading audience is so familiar with the physiognomies of various "races" and ethnicities in the city center that the features typical of these groups have been reduced to a keyword for the sake of brevity. This is not surprising when we take into account the fervor for not only natural science and taxonomy, but also for various styles of psychology at the time of *London Labour*'s publication. In their compendium of Victorian era psychological texts, Jenny Bourne Taylor and Sally Shuttleworth delve into the various psychological pseudosciences that emerged throughout the nineteenth century. They explain that "[physiognomy], mesmerism, and phrenology, as they fed into Victorian culture, all offered different forms of reading the 'hidden man'" (3). Much

psychological work at the time focused on "attempts to penetrate external defenses to disclose a concealed domain of inner selfhood," which relied primarily on observation and surveillance. It was both convenient and comforting to imagine that getting to know a person's true character was as simple as studying their face. Taylor and Shuttleworth acknowledge that "[accounts] of people going 'masked through the streets' in order to avoid surveillance when the physiognomic 'epidemic' was at its height may well be apocryphal," but point out that "they clearly illustrate the ways in which these practices were embroiled for the Victorians in issues of power" (3). If middle-class amateur physiognomists could "know" a person before ever even meeting them, it would allow them to ascertain their relative position along the "great chain of being" and give them a way to separate themselves from the "wandering horde" using undeniable racial designations.

The widespread popularity of physiognomy caused its tenets to bleed over into cultural ethnographies and urban travelogues like Mayhew's, as well as into novels and short stories. Taylor and Shuttleworth note that the culture that embraced physiognomy "did not share our sense of disciplinary divisions between 'arts' and 'science', 'theoretical' and 'practical' knowledge," which allowed psychological writers to illustrate their points "through numerous literary allusions and tropes," and even to "[cite] cases from novels as well as real life to illustrate particular arguments" (xv). If stories and anecdotes about individuals could be used to identify entire groups of people, the opposite must be true as well, and many writers of fiction began to employ physiognomy as a way of helping their readers infer more about their characters. Beginning in the Romantic period, fiction writers moved away from "vague references to a handsome or unprepossessing countenance" and began to include "precise delineations of facial contour" (Taylor et al. 4). Jeanne Fahnestock confirms this assertion when

she points out that by 1865, it was common for an author's introduction of a character to include a detailed description that makes reference to a "broad low brow, nose *retroussé*, sensitive nostrils, round cheeks and full pouting lips," for example.[14] Rather than offer a summary of the character's personality, authors in the second half of the nineteenth century opted to give "details of physical description which stood for character traits." Fahnestock points out that "this substitution only worked if writers and readers shared a system of meaning, a code for translating descriptive terminology into aspects of personality. Readers from the 1850s through the 1870s could be relied on to understand something of the code of *physiognomy*," the knowledge of which functioned as a kind of cipher to help them decode a novel's characters (325).

In fact, some of the same industrial novels that attempted to highlight the living conditions of the laboring poor made use of physiognomic descriptions to help readers determine which members of this class were sympathetic, and which were concealing a more malicious character. In Charles Kingsley's *Alton Locke*, for instance, Alton is immediately struck by Lillian Winnstay's beauty when he first sets eyes on her, and describes her as having "skin of alabaster … stained with the faintest flush; auburn hair, with that peculiar crisped wave seen in the old Italian pictures, and the warm, dark hazel eyes which so often accompany it; lips like a thread of vermilion, somewhat too thin, perhaps" (101). She is obviously not perfect—her lips are "too thin," after all—but the fineness and delicacy of her features indicates that she does not fall anywhere near the animals on the great chain of being. But of course, Lillian is a member of the upper class, so it is assumed that she possesses all the ideal attributes of her rank.

---

[14] From Rachel Curtis's *The Clever Woman of the Family* (1865) in Fahnestock.

Physiognomic descriptions are perhaps more useful when they are used to reveal a trait that is not considered characteristic of a person's social class.

In *Hard Times*, Dickens's narrator offers a description of the two factory hands, Stephen Blackpool and Rachel. Though they live in "the hardest working part of Coketown; in the innermost fortifications of that ugly citadel, where Nature was as strongly bricked out as killing airs and gases were bricked in," the two are described in physiognomic terms that allow readers to immediately infer the goodness of their characters. Stephen is "[a] rather stooping man, with a knitted brow, a pondering expression of face, and a hard-looking head sufficiently capacious, on which his iron-gray hair lay long and thin," who "might have passed for a particularly intelligent man in his condition," while Rachel has "a quiet oval face, dark and rather delicate, irradiated by a pair of very gentle eyes, and further set off by the perfect order of her shining black hair" (66, 67). Stephen's thoughtfulness and Rachel's delicacy—traits not typically applied to members of the working class—suggest that they are not only among the best examples of their class, but that they are likely members of that class due to circumstance rather than heredity. It is notable, however, that even though Stephen could pass for "particularly intelligent," the narrator is quick to reassure readers that he is not among "those remarkable 'Hands', who, piecing together their broken intervals of leisure through many years, had mastered difficult sciences, and acquired a knowledge of most unlikely things." Despite his intelligent face, Stephen "held no station among the Hands who could make speeches and carry on debates," and "[thousands] of his compeers could talk much better than he, at any time" (66). In other words, Stephen was no Chartist. Those factory workers who possessed the intelligence that Stephen lacked were considered to be "a dangerous class" and Mayhew reports that in every district where the poor congregate, "one or two of the body, more intelligent than the others, have great influence over them; and these

leading men are all Chartists, and being industrious and not unprosperous persons, their pecuniary and intellectual superiority cause them to be regarded as oracles" (Vol. I, 20). Stephen's visage reveals, however, that though he possesses a charismatic countenance, he poses no threat; he is not among the members of the poor and working classes who strike for better wages or commit heinous crimes, he is simply an efficient cog in the industrial machinery of nineteenth-century England.

1.22 Physiognomy and the Criminal Class

Just as the upper and middle classes relied on descriptions of facial features to better understand the inner workings of the characters in their favorite novels, they were also eager to use the "science" of physiognomy to identify who among that mysterious group of London's poor might be identified as a threat. For those that wanted to relieve their anxieties about the city's lowest orders through various methods of observation and surveillance, physiognomy offered a convenient solution. It is no wonder, then, that the practice spurred the development of several offshoots that were employed to solve larger societal issues. One of these branches involved analyzing facial features specifically to identify a "criminal type." The Italian physiognomist Cesar Lombroso, founder of the field of criminology, believed that criminality was a product of heredity and environment, and that criminals could be identified by the slant of their foreheads, the set of their mouths, or the shape of their eyes. In this branch of study, for instance, Mayhew's jailed prostitute possessed the "low forehead" that Lombroso considered to be "the true criminal type" (195). Lombroso would not write his physiognomy-based manifesto, *Criminal Man*, until 1876, but even decades before he formalized criminology as a specific field of study, others were engaged in similar types of research. As early as the 1840s, a group of British doctors began studying inmates at England's largest prisons to search for patterns in both

the internal and external features of the inmate population in the hope of identifying the symptoms and causes of criminality.[15]

The five major prisons in England—Millbank, Pentonville, Portland, Parkhurst and Dartmoor—began hiring full-time resident physicians in the 1840s, and all of them had official medical staffs by 1850, when Parliament passed the Act for the Better Government and Convict Prisons. It was around this time that "prison doctors began to speculate as to what, in medical terms, constituted the *specificity* of the convict population" (Davie 5). Their unfettered access to prisoners allowed them to look for similarities between them, and autopsies provided them with innumerable opportunities to compare the shape and condition of the organs of the deceased criminals. Constant speculation, study, and observation of the criminal population led to a concerted opinion among these physicians "that there existed an identifiable physical *criminal type* in Britain's convict establishments." These doctors, like Lombroso would a few decades later, believed that some criminals were born while others were victims of circumstance, and that the difference between the two could be read on their facial features.

Physiognomic interest in England's criminal population was widespread, and the upper and middle classes were eager to consume tales about London's thieves, murderers, and prostitutes. The press was already full of detailed reports of "sordid and shocking" crimes, and they were often "written to thrill" in a style that "morphed easily into sensational 'genre fiction'"

---

[15] It is worth noting that these early criminal physiognomists operated on a set of pre-Darwinian tenets, adopted before the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species* (1859). By the time Lombroso formalized the field of criminology in the 1870s, Darwin's theory of evolution positing a common ancestor was widely accepted. Lombroso therefore attributes some criminal behavior to atavism: an aspect of social Darwinism that suggests that criminal behavior is a throwback to a person's primitive, brutish, animalistic origins.

(Breton 244). In fact, crime reporting was so popular that several newspapers appeared throughout the 1830s that were solely dedicated to reporting on the subject, like the *London Policeman* (1833), the *Destructive* (1833), the *People's Conservative* (1834), *Cleave's Weekly Police Gazette* (1834-1836), the *London Dispatch* (1836-1839). These papers attracted a voracious readership eager to read about the "huge degenerate class" that was demonstrably "far from ever attaining respectability" (245). Considering the reading public's appetite for tales of dark deeds and horrific crimes, it is no wonder that, after the publication of *London Labour*, Mayhew turned his attention to this group of London's lowest residents and began writing a new column for the *Morning Chronicle* specifically about crime and punishment. In one article, he observes a new group of prisoners arriving at Pentonville Prison and remarks on the differences between them:

> On descending from the omnibus, the new prisoners were drawn up in five rows on one side of the court-yard. They were of all ages—from mere boys to old men of between fifty and sixty. Nor were their expressions of features less various; some looked, as a physiognomist would say, 'really bad fellows,' whilst others appeared to have even a 'respectable' cast of countenance, the features being well formed rather than coarse, and the expression marked by frankness rather than cunning, so that one could not help wondering what hard pressure of circumstances had brough *them* there. It did not require much skill in detecting character to pick out the habitual offender from the casual criminal, or to distinguish the simple, broad brown face of the agricultural convict from the knowing, sharp, pale features of the town thief. (*Great World* 147-48)

Mayhew relies on the accepted tenets of physiognomy to show his readers the difference between the "coarse" features of the "really bad fellows," and the "well formed" features of those who were tragically driven to the prison yard by "hard pressure of circumstances." The belief that base amusements, unsanitary living conditions, and lack of morals among London's

poor contributed to criminal behavior persisted, and amateur physiognomists continued to study the faces around them for signs of high or low character, hoping to overcome the threat of the faceless, lower-class mob by submitting each individual "specimen" to a scientist's observational gaze. The lower classes, and the criminal class among them, had to be examined minutely and broken into individual parts in order to be overcome.

According to Victor Bailey, this burgeoning criminal class was made up of "the marginal people among the urban poor"—Mayhew's nomadic class of beggars, thieves, and prostitutes—and was considered "the main danger to the social and moral order" (232-35). They were condemned as a criminal class, in large part, because they refused to engage in the kind of legitimate labor that contributed to the country's economic system. By the time the industrial revolution reached its peak in the 1830s, the people of England had begun to see things almost solely in terms of production and profit. If labor increased production and contributed to the marketplace, then a refusal to engage in labor could be seen as working against society's capitalist goals. From this point on, criminals are increasingly portrayed as disturbed individuals whose decisions are based on "moral irregularity." In fact, "many experts and commentators went out of their way to deny any relationship between low wages, poverty and the bulk of crime. They chose rather to stress moral weakness, luxury, idleness, corrupting literature, parental neglect and lack of education" (Ernst). The onus was placed on the criminals' behavior and inherent, degenerative criminality rather than the economic circumstances which drove them to commit a crime in the first place; to place blame on anything else would be to disrupt the economic system that relied on the continued exploitation of its workers in order to keep up with the ever-increasing demands of production.

By the time criminality became associated with nonparticipation in the economic system, the discourse of natural science, as we know, had already saturated middle-class culture. It is no wonder, then, that natural science was presented as a solution to the problem. By the 1830s, social reformers began to make use of "various forms of surveillance, mapping, and scientific explanation" that regarded criminals as "objects to capture, catalog, diagnose, and hopefully tame or reform" (Brantlinger et al. 39). In fact, natural history offered a familiar schema by which these tasks could be performed. Foucault suggests that the chaos of criminal activity can be countered by organizing a "taxonomy of punishments and crimes" (100). Those who wish to enforce law and order should create "a Linnaeus of crimes and punishments, so that each particular offense and each punishable individual might come … within the provisions of a general law" (99). Most well-read members of the middle and upper classes were already well-versed in Linnaean systems, so it made sense that Mayhew's taxonomy of the poor should serve as a jumping-off point for a taxonomy of crime and criminal behavior.

The growing frenzy to "capture, catalog, diagnose, … tame or reform" members of the criminal class fell to the newly formed Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). Prior to 1829, law and order in London was maintained by a confusion of watchmen and constables appointed under the tenets of Henry III's Ordinance of 1252. The city's rapidly growing population required a larger, more organized method of criminal apprehension, however, and Sir Robert Peel introduced the Metropolitan Police Act in 1829. The act created the MPS and established a Metropolitan Police District, which covered "all the parishes of which any part was within twelve miles of Charing Cross or of which the whole was within fifteen miles of Charing Cross" (Briggs 30). Just as the middle class attempted to impose order on the lower classes through scientific observation and the development of new systems of class-based taxonomy, they also

employed the surveilling gaze of the MPS to discipline and control the same worrisome population. Brantlinger and Ulin explain that it was "Glaringly obvious" to most early Victorians that "crime was a severe and perhaps growing problem in … the first half of the 1800s," and the MPS was formed under the belief that "new measures of social control had to be developed to cope with this problem." The result was not only "the reform and regularization of 'policing,'" but also the development of a "policeman-state" (34). Throughout the newly defined District, this surveilling presence was dispatched in an attempt to regulate the behavior of the threatening criminal class. In the decades that followed, newspaper articles and police reports about criminal apprehension caused "the English public … to become interested in the problems of cities," and "night in the European metropolis," in particular, "came to represent a distinctive challenge both for those who policed it and for the bourgeois imagination" (Schlör 47; Beaumont).

During this time, the middle-class imagination was busy churning out images of the slum and its criminal inhabitants, influenced by the ruling anxieties of the day. Novelists seemed to take particular pleasure in describing the city's hidden horrors, and this newly articulated suspicion of "night in the European metropolis" is visible in nearly all of Dickens's novels, where he emphasizes the darkness of the slums even during daylight hours. In *The Old Curiosity Shop*,[16] it is difficult to tell whether it is day or night, as the "tall chimneys, crowding in on each other … poured out their plague of smoke" and "obscured the light" (327). As Nell and her grandfather traverse these grim neighborhoods, the narrator explains that "before, behind, and to the right and left, was the same interminable perspective of brick towers, never

---

[16] See Chapter 1, p. 60.

ceasing in their black vomit, blasting all things living or inanimate, shutting out the face of day, and closing in on all these horrors with a dense, dark cloud" (327). Even during daylight hours, the slums are obscured in darkness, and it is difficult to tell the difference between the dark wrought by pollution, and that of night. The darkness serves as a metaphor for the impenetrability of the slum; it is obscured by darkness, hidden in shadow, and difficult to see, even under the afternoon sun. The middle-class gaze that hopes to impose order by observing and categorizing—or alternately by surveilling and disciplining—the inhabitants that lurk inside are prevented from doing so by the obscuring darkness.

As dark and impenetrable as the slums were during the day, however, they were immeasurably worse at night. Fagin's "emporium of petty larceny," Saffron Hill, "comes alive at dusk." Tom-all Alone's employs the winds as "his messengers, and they serve him in the hours of darkness," dispersing drops of his "corrupted blood" among the neighboring mansions, where it "propagates infection and contagion." As Nell and her grandfather look for a place to sleep on their journey out of the city, Dickens's narrator stresses the horrors of nighttime in the slums:

> but *night*-time in this dreadful spot! —*night*, when the smoke was changed for fire; when every chimney spirted up its flame; and places, that had been dark vaults all day, now shone red-hot, with figures moving to and fro within their blazing jaws … *night*, when the noise of every strange machine was aggravated by the darkness; when the people near them looked wilder and more savage; when bands of unemployed labourers paraded in the roads, or clustered by torchlight round their leaders, who told them in stern language of their wrongs, and urged the on to frightful cries and threats … *night*, when carts came rumbling by, filled with rude coffins (for contagious disease and death had been busy with the living crops) … *night*, when some called for bread, and some for drink to drown their cares; … *night*, which, unlike the night that Heaven sends on earth, brought with it no peace, nor quiet, nor signs of blessed sleep. (327-28, emphasis mine)

Here, the emphasis on the changing conditions of the slums after dark contributes to a sense of danger as the smoke-polluted slums that are "dark vaults" during the day are transformed into a veritable hellscape when night falls. In these even darker hours, a frenzy of "figures moving to and fro" are silhouetted and rendered anonymous against the backdrop of fire. The "strange machine[s]" take on a demonic appearance, and the people who operate them become "wilder and more savage." Hordes of "unemployed labourers" bearing torches roam the streets, gathering around "their leaders" who, it can be imagined, urge them on to violent revolts against the upper classes. The dark of night is a cloak of fire and confusion that conceals criminality and allows bands of disgruntled laborers to gather and plot. There are no individuals, just a faceless mob of angry, animalistic miscreants. Scenes like this fuel the middle-class imagination, igniting fears and anxieties about the growing threat of the criminal class. They do not only appear in fiction, however; the profusion of taxonomical, natural science-based travel narratives begins to wear thin at the approach of mid-century, and scenes of nighttime drunkenness, debauchery, and criminal activity begin to appear in a more sensational brand of domestic travelogue.

Mayhew's *London Labour* may have been among the most widely read domestic travelogues to employ a taxonomy of London's poor, but it wasn't the only text of its kind that sought to turn the contents of the slum out into the light of day. In the years leading up to and surrounding *London Labour*'s publication, others were engaged in similar projects. John Hogg's *London as It Is* (1837), James Grant's *Travels in Town* (1839) and *Shadows of London Life* (1842), Richard Seeley's *Perils of the Nation* (1843), and Thomas Beames's *Rookeries of London* (1851) are a few prominent examples of the genre. Like Mayhew, these authors opted to organize their studies as if they, too, were travelers among the poor, sending back dispatches from the antipodal spaces of the slums. Most even engaged in some level of scientific discourse

when they wrote about disease, contagion, ventilation, and sanitation. It is worth noting that Mayhew's reports "did not … take the reader very far off the streets into the choking wilderness of the slums themselves," but tended to hover near the edges of the true hellscapes (usually in daylight hours), or even encountered his subjects in more well-to-do streets where his beggars and pickpockets were more likely to find a willing donor (Dyos 13). This fact renders Mayhew's text somewhat liminal: a toe dipped in the water of London's underworld. It is not surprising, then, that curiosity about the true nature of the slums, coupled with the popularity of *London Labour*, led amateur researchers to produce a slew of "ethnographic" texts on the topic in which they delved deeper into London's darkest spaces and offered up their own renditions of the "shocking truth" about the city's criminal population. This new iteration of the domestic travelogue was less concerned with scientific research, and more interested in thrilling readers with ever more outrageous tales of adventure.

One example of this kind of text that stands out as particularly salacious is Watts Phillips's *The Wild Tribes of London* (1855), a travel guide to the "districts inhabited by those strange and neglected races" that were so mysterious to middle-class readers. Phillips explains that he began his research by employing his own police guide to lead him through the "labyrinth of poverty and vice," and composed *The Wild Tribes* based on what he saw during his tour (v). His preface is just over a page long and contains a humorous apology for attempting to achieve a larger purpose than merely entertaining his readers. Phillips writes that he "felt that he had a mission" in composing the book. Before he can explain what the mission *is*, he stops to directly address the reading audience that is, he assumes, mutinous at the thought of reading yet another pedantic, scientific, sanitation-focused work on poverty in London: "don't start!" he says to the grumbling reader, "no writer of the present day dare put pen to paper without [a mission]." His

"was to assist in forcing upon the public mind the necessity for *educating* the poor; to prove the fallacy of rearing a boy in vice, and then punishing the man for a 'propensity to crime'" (v-vi). Beyond these few brief sentences, however, there is no impassioned plea for the middle-class reader to open her pocketbook or to donate from his pantry. Phillips has dispensed with a formality of the genre that he acknowledges to be vital, if a bit tired—he has expressed a goal of contributing to the betterment of society—and now he is free to tell the salacious and entertaining tale of his time in the slums without fear of being accused of further exploiting the poor. More importantly, he has subtly promised his reader that the journey they are about to embark on will not waste time on street-sellers and chimney sweeps, but will delve into London's criminal underworld and engage with a more dangerous subset of the lower class who have a "propensity to crime."

Philips begins by suggesting that he and his readers "prepare for our wanderings among the dwellings of the poor, for our journey among the savage denizens of that vast tract that encircles our civilisation like a belt" (7). The narrator includes the reader in the preparations, referring to the impending tour as "our journey." In doing so, he indicates an expectation that readers consider themselves active participants in the tour, and that the text is meant to involve them to a greater extent than the typical urban travelogue. Using the language of popular travel narratives, he warns his readers that their "journey" will undoubtedly bring them into contact with the "savage denizens" of this "vast tract" of the poor, as if they are members of James Bruce's own party of explorers, trekking through Ethiopia in search of the source of the Nile. Once they quit the comfort of their drawing rooms, they will "seek out and enter those miserable homes where 'Fear and Indignation' sit by fireless hearths; where Hunger, gaunt and wolf-like, is ever at hand," and the "twin dragons—Ignorance and Crime" are "ever on watch" (7). While

Phillips's narrator takes on the role of guide to an intrepid expedition of travelers, he simultaneously resembles a carnival barker, encouraging his respectable audience to "step right up" to his house of horrors, where they can ogle and gawk at the savages on display. In fact, this hybrid persona most closely resembles that of the "men of science" who brought exhibitions of colonized peoples back to the metropole for the entertainment of the upper classes. These spectators were willing to pay upwards of a shilling to see a pair of Zulu warriors stand on a stage in front of a panoramic painting of South African scenery, and they were interested in reading about the London poor for much the same reason: both were foreign to members of London's elite, and the foreign was thrilling.

Abandoning the "magic circle of etiquette" that has protected the upper-class members of Phillips's tour group from the slums until this point, the guide leads them "some fifty yards to the left" followed by "an equal number to the right" of "your lordship's door" (9). Here, a mere 100 yards from "the square in which [their] mansion stands," the party approaches a portal to the slums, and the guide dares them to enter:

> Let us cross the road, and pausing before that dark archway, that seems to have retreated from the ill-paved street, and slunk, as it were, into the shadow of the wall, glance into the pandemonium which lies beyond … within its scanty precincts they make room for a whole colony of crime—within that court you shall find another and still another court, winding and twisting like a viper's brood, the one within the other … They swarm with dirty and unwashed men, who bear, Cain-like, on every brow a brand that warns you to avoid them—with rude, coarse women, whose wild language, fierce eyes, and strange lascivious gestures strike terror to the spectator's heart—with children, who bear the tell-tale marks of the prison scissors in their ill-cut air. Such courts are the head-quarters of filth and fever, the abiding-places of ignorance, the nursery of crime. (9-10).

Phillips's readers have been drawn into the narrative; they are members of the party that stands poised to enter this realm of poverty and degradation. They are no longer sheltered observers tucked safely away by their fires but have become travelers in the country of the poor, made to stand at the gateway of "Pandemonium" and stare into the "viper's brood" of winding alleyways that slither here and there, mapping a secret "colony of crime." The reader is ousted from his or her comfortable role as passive spectator—a role they have likely grown used to as consumers of factory novels, urban travelogues, and sanitation reports—and conscripted by the narrator to step right up to the carnivalesque display and follow him through the archway into the hellish sideshow of the slum.

In each of the seventeen chapters that follows, the narrator guides the reader through a notorious area of the city, detailing everything from the layout of the "dingy houses" to the "brokers' shops" that contain "everything, from a pea-shooter to a piano." He withholds no detail, painting a scene that is almost visceral in its consideration of sights, smells, sounds, and even moods. Throughout the text, he maintains a first-person point of view and writes in the present tense. As the group approaches an infamous "house of call," for example, he notes that "the rain is falling heavily as we turn out of the crowded thoroughfare of Holborn into the equally crowded one of Gray's Inn-lane," including the reader in the present moment of discovery. Phillips uses every text-based means of including his reader in the exploration that he can in an effort to achieve an extratextual experience for his reader. The result is a vicarious journey that brings the reader as close to the slums as he or she can get without actually leaving the comfort of their home, far outstripping the thrill and excitement of any domestic travelogue that precedes it. In order to have a more immersive interaction with London's poor, Phillips's

wealthy reading audience would have to actually leave their homes and embark on their own tour of the slums.

The domestic travelogues and factory novels that preceded *Wild Tribes* were written on the pretext of shining a light into the dark spaces of the slums in order to draw attention to London's housing and poverty crises. Writers like Dickens and Mayhew "trawled the back streets and alleyways of London seeking scenes of destitution to reproduce for their eagerly indignant readers," but nevertheless remained "sympathetic outsiders" and mere "observers of life among the poor" (Koven 24). Dickens and his fellow factory novelists may have sensationalized the slums and their inhabitants for the entertainment of their readers, but their ultimate goal was to humanize the anonymous masses of the poor by focusing on individual members of the working classes. Mayhew and his fellow social scientists are guilty of having presented "racialized and alienating images of the urban poor," but they did so with an eye toward rendering individual members of the poor and working classes visible (Qureshi 17). Phillips's contribution to the lexicon, however, marks a point of transition in which the middle-class imagination is no longer satisfied with romanticized tales and pseudoscientific taxonomies of the lower classes. His vague mission statement and sensationalized descriptions of London's lowest haunts make it clear that he is not overly concerned with humanizing the poor, but instead delights in his ability to enter these forbidden spaces and stare his fill at every bawdy, drunken scene he stumbles upon. In fact, it could easily be argued that *Wild Tribes* is Phillips's justification for embarking on such an adventure, and that he was simply among the first members of the middle class who "disguised prurient curiosity in the garb of social altruism" as an excuse to do so (Koven 7). Enlisting an entire squad of police officers to guide him safely through London's most dangerous neighborhoods is shameless voyeurism if it is done for the

sake of curiosity alone, but if the thrill happens to be a byproduct of a larger quest to alleviate the suffering of the poor, then it can't be helped. Phillips's meager mission statement, written with a rhetorical roll of the eyes, is enough to justify not only his journey, but also the profits he would collect from the sale of his travelogue.

Phillips was not alone in his desire to see the slums firsthand. For roughly a decade leading up to *Wild Tribes*, members of London's upper and middle classes had begun to yearn for a more tactile interaction with the lower classes about whom they had read so much. The most intrepid among them began to emulate the writers of these stories and embarked on their own explorations of the slums. The practice of visiting the poorest quarters of the city came to be known as "slumming," and over the course of several decades it grew from being considered an "eccentricity" or "idiosyncrasy" on the part of a few adventurous individuals to being "a popular leisure activity for the upper and middle class in London" (Dolezal et al. 149). Slumming required respectable Londoners to "go native" for an evening, donning fustian jackets or ragged dresses, and even smearing a little dirt on themselves to pass as members of the "unwashed masses." The cross-class performance of slumming was not a short-lived fad, either. According to Seth Koven, the practice lasted for "the better part of the century preceding World War II," gaining in popularity until it reached its height in the final decades of the nineteenth century, and eventually crossing the Atlantic to catch on in large American cities like New York and Los Angeles (1).

People went slumming for a variety of reasons. Some were looking for "an evening's entertainment," training their voyeuristic gaze on the poor inhabitants of the slums who had seemingly come to life from the pages of novels and urban travelogues (Koven 1). Those slum tourists whose only goal was novelty and amusement helped confirm the position "of the urban

poor as the ‘others’, the ‘dark’ and the ‘strange,’” and participated in confirming for "the remaining inhabitants of the city … that they led better, ‘brighter’ lives” (Koven 1, Peterson 72). Just as physiognomy confirmed for the upper classes that they were further along the great chain of being than members of the savage lower classes, slumming offered visual confirmation of their superiority. Fashionable slumming, as this type came to be known, “is problematic not only because of the voyeurism involved,” but also because it “encouraged some observers to trivialize poverty, transform it into self-serving entertainment, and perpetuate absurd misconceptions about the savagery of the poor” (Dolezal et al. 146; Koven 7). It was useless to embark on an adventure and come back with nothing extraordinary to tell; fashionable slum tourists needed to at least confirm and preferably outstrip the tales of savagery, criminality, and suffering in the slums that had been so widely disseminated over the previous decades.

By later in the century, the fad had made its way across the Atlantic, and an 1884 article from the *New York Times* captures the spirit of fashionable slumming in its headline and subheading alone: “Slumming in This Town: Fashionable London Mania Reaches New-York; Slumming Parties to Be the Rage This Winter – Good Districts to Visit – Mrs. Langtry as a Slummer” (4). Any pretext of helping the poor is absent from the article, and the focus falls squarely on entertainment. The author divulges the news that the famous socialite and actress Lillie Langtry and a group of her closest friends recently embarked on their own tour of New York’s worst slums and offers a list of suggestions for those who wish to do the same: “for real ‘slumming’ the attendance of a ward detective is required whose official presence alone would protect the ladies of the party from insult and the gentlemen from violence.” Participants would also do well to remember that “plain and homely clothes should be worn, so as to attract as little attention as possible.” This cross-class performance of poverty allows tour groups to

enter the realms of the poor undetected where they can observe the horrors of the slums up close and bring back their own stories of life among the poor. The same *New York Times* article that offers these useful tips recounts one such tale told by a "quite well-known young English noble" who, returning from a nighttime tour of New York's east side, laments "over his brandy and soda" that New York's slums are no match for London's (4). "Ah, this is a great city," he says, "but you have no slums like we have. I have been in rickety condemned buildings that it was absolutely dangerous to go through! Found six families living in one miserably ventilated cellar—24 persons, 16 of them adults, living in the one room. No such slums here!" The aristocratic gentleman takes pride in the extreme dereliction that he has experienced firsthand and demonstrates a perverse sense of pride in the fact that his own city's decrepitude has afforded him such an adventure. He is pleased to have survived this brief glimpse of poverty, but spares no thought for the 24 people who sleep in the same dangerous conditions every night.

Many slum tourists, like the "well-known young English noble," entered the slums for the sole purpose of entertainment, but there were perhaps even more who did so for humanitarian reasons. There was an increasing insistence that "firsthand experience among the metropolitan poor was essential for all who claimed to speak authoritatively about social problems," and well-meaning members of the upper and middle classes set out to gain that experience in droves (Koven 1). Many entered on missionary work, hoping to bring the word of God to the poor and starving inhabitants of the slums. Others went under the guise of philanthropy and volunteered for charitable organizations that distributed aid among the same population. A select portion of slummers, however, sought to settle among the unfortunate masses and live as they lived, sleeping in hovels and going without regular meals for months at a time. Most of the people who

opted to camp out in the slums for longer stretches did so with the goal of gathering information and anecdotes for their own domestic travelogues, and ethnographic texts about what life was "really" like in the slums—already a prolific genre—began to appear in print with absurd frequency in the second half of the nineteenth century. It is tempting to interpret the ethnographic goals of these writers as self-serving and exploitative, but there were many who genuinely wanted to play a role in alleviating London's poverty crisis.

By the end of the century, however, the ethnographic trend had reached its zenith, and an oversaturation of published texts on the topic caused many readers to grow tired of the amateur pretensions of privileged adventurers who flocked to the slums to tell their version of life therein. In one review of Jack London's *The People of the Abyss* (1904), the author's critical response is indicative of the overall attitude toward texts of this kind after several decades of popularity. He says, "[slumming], once an eccentricity, then a fad, threatens to become a disease," and scorns the "increasing numbers" of "the sons of our petted aristocracy [who] go down to live temporarily in the most evil smelling municipal bogs and give a boosting hand to the permanent dweller therein in his supposed effort to climb higher" (Marsh 647). He points out that everyone who travels to the slums, from the fashionable slummer to the most altruistic volunteer, wants something from the people they study: "[the] little sisters of the rich take lessons in settlement work and put interested but embarrassing questions to the people who live in crowded tenements. Sociologists go to the slum for statistics; novelists for 'local colour'; painters for pictorial types; and the Higher Journalists for 'copy.'" Once they have gotten what they came for, they return to the comfort of their homes where they produce works of "indiscriminate, fruitless sentimentalising and complacent condescension to the 'lower classes" that "bears the mark of … patronising snobbishness … [and] induces a doubt whether nine-tenths

of all the slumming books are not sheer rot." As for London, the reviewer admits that he possesses "a healthy boy's love of adventure," but accuses him of "snobbishness," and simply wanting "material to make into a book" (Marsh 648). Despite this scathing review, however, London and his contemporaries cannot be said to be totally mercenary. Most displayed "an altogether messier mingling of good intentions and blinkered prejudices" that drove them to seek out the poor and laboring classes that had so far been hidden from their sight (Koven 3).

Well-intentioned or not, there was a mystique to the slums that had been perpetuated in text for several decades already, and the middle and upper classes were eager to train their gazes on the genuine article rather than continue to hear about these spaces secondhand. There are no exact numbers to indicate how many people embarked on their own adventures in the slums, but Koven speculates that "thousands of well-to-do men and women" undertook their own journeys (1). It was a popular enough pastime that slums eventually became genuine "tourist sites," and by the end of the century, "London guidebooks such as Baedeker's not only directed visitors to shops, theatres, monuments, and churches, but also mapped excursions to world renowned philanthropic institutions located in notorious slum districts such as Whitechapel and Shoreditch." Marx's assertion that, "every single thing" in a capitalist system "may be turned into a commodity" except "poverty, for it has no use of exchange value," failed to account for the insatiable curiosity of the middle class. Slumming included the "'discovery', marketing and presentation of the 'poor' to the 'better' part of the population for their amusement," and introduced ways in which the poor could be unwittingly drawn into the very capitalist economy that facilitated their poverty (Peterson 71). Moreover, the commodification of slumming even made the deviant criminal class—condemned for their perceived unwillingness to participate in the for-profit *lassez faire* industrial economy—into a tourist attraction that generated profits from

tours and guidebooks. The desire on the part of the middle class to render London's mysterious slums and their inhabitants visible ensured that if the poor and criminal populations would not generate capital on their own, middle-class capitalists would do it for them.

Chapter 3: "Whoever Though of Meeting You Here?": Anxiously Observing the Working Classes at the Great Exhibition of 1851

1.23 *Part One: The Question of Working-Class Involvement in the Exhibition*

Even after the Select Committee's success in allowing the working classes entry to civic spaces, there were still many areas in London's Royal Parks that maintained strident class divisions. Laborers who came for an afternoon's relaxation before returning to work in the factory were observed with satisfaction as they pursued healthy leisure activities, but it was the wealthy patrons that enacted performances of pastoral behavior intended to attract the surveilling eye. One fashionable area of Hyde Park that served as a stage for these performances was Rotten Row, a track measuring nearly a mile that ran between the south side of the park and the Serpentine River. The King's Road that William III traveled each day on his commute from Kensington was designated a public bridleway in 1730, at which point it became a fashionable place for London's elite to gather and show off their fine clothing and horsemanship skills.

The gracious, tree-lined avenue was a picturesque backdrop for the well-dressed gentry and wealthier members of the middle class to see and be seen, and it was said that reputations could be made or lost in an instant depending on a person's dress and decorum when riding along the Row. In *Vanity Fair* (1848), the Prince of Peterwaradin rides past Becky Sharp here, and compliments her "with a profound salute of the hat," after which "[she] and her husband were invited immediately to one of the Prince's small parties at Levant House" (585). Becky charms everyone in attendance, and soon she is "a constant guest at the French Embassy" and a regular among the aristocratic Mayfair set. Considering the site's importance in establishing and maintaining social hierarchies, it is not surprising that outrage accompanied the announcement in 1849 that Prince Albert intended to host a grand exhibition of industry and

manufactures in Hyde Park that would require a purpose-built structure of massive proportions to be placed right next to Rotten Row. When the aristocracy learned that several of the stately elms that lined that graceful avenue would, regrettably, need to be uprooted to make room for the structure, their indignation sent shockwaves through the London press, and most assumed the scheme would be dropped for lack of support.

1.23.1 The Rise of Exhibitions

Paris had seen great success with its bazaar of 1798, a scheme organized in the hope of selling surplus factory goods. It was successful enough that the French began to hold yearly national exhibitions intended as "an economic weapon in the fight against England," and they occurred annually for the next fifty years (Luckhurst 414). The early success of France's bazaars inspired the United States and other European countries to stage their own exhibitions of industrial wares, though England "spurned" the idea "to a large extent just because it was French." As the first decades of the nineteenth century wore on, however, the rate of industrial growth in England began to dissipate. British manufacturers of "ornamental goods," like "pottery, textiles, [and] furniture" began to speculate that "British consumers did not want British products, and in order to rectify this situation manufacturers began to spend large sums on foreign designers" (Auerbach *Display* 11). By 1835, the economic situation had grown dire enough to attract the interest of the House of Commons, and they commissioned a Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures to inquire "into the best means of extending a knowledge of the arts and of the principles of design among the people (especially the manufacturing population) of the country." They found that British manufacturers had grown complacent about the quality of the goods they produced, opting to "[devote] their competitive and inventive energies to issues of quantity and economy, rather than the aesthetics of design." Consequently,

"the British were producing goods that were inexpensive but sometimes unattractive." England, it seemed, had fallen behind the rest of the industrial world when it came to producing desirable goods of tasteful design.

The Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures determined that the education of England's workers was lagging behind that of other nations, and identified this deficiency as one of the primary reasons for the depression of the industrial economy. They found that "British artisans were the least trained, and middle-class manufacturers the worst educated, in Europe." Jeffrey Auerbach points out that until the end of the eighteenth century, "most skilled occupations … were handicrafts passed down from generation to generation," so until "the Industrial Revolution and the attendant growth of the factory system made the old system of apprenticeship obsolete, … there had been little need for formal teaching" (*Display* 10). The Select Committee identified the importance of fostering schools of design to educate workers on the principles of art, design, and craftsmanship, and mechanics' institutes to teach "the practical application of science to art." Though these institutions were already widespread—there were "more than 600" mechanics' institutes across "England, Scotland, and Wales" by 1850, and their collective memberships numbered over half a million—they failed to take into account "the inadequacy of primary education in Britain" (11). The institutes' habit of lending science books to their members, for example, was singularly unhelpful to those who began working in factories at a young age and, as a result, had never learned to read. For this reason, mechanics' institutes tended to better serve the "lower-middle and respectable working classes" than "the masses" for whom they were originally intended.

While the mechanics' institutes and schools of design may have failed in their mission to educate the lowest factory workers, they did facilitate a marginal increase in literacy among their

members. They were also responsible for the eventual introduction of "periodic small-scale exhibitions" in England, which took place primarily in industrial towns throughout the 1830s and 40s. These exhibitions saw moderate success at first, drawing a few hundred visitors to see the latest designs in manufactured goods. As the years progressed, their popularity grew until, in 1839, Leeds hosted "an exhibition of 'arts and manufactures'" that "attracted almost 200,000 people and enabled the institute there to purchase a larger building" (Auerbach 11). This unprecedented success drew the attention of London's Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (renamed the Royal Society of Arts in 1847 after receiving a Royal Charter), where Henry Cole, a "son of the rising middle class" and prominent member of the Society, and Prince Albert, the Society's president, began staging "large displays as a vehicle to further" both the development of the nation's manufactures, and "what [Cole] termed 'taste'" (Luckhurst 417, Johansen 63).

In 1847, the Society held an exhibition of "select specimens of British manufactures and decorative art" that drew a crowd of 20,000 visitors, followed by another in 1849 that attracted over 100,000. The popularity of these events led Albert and Cole to propose an "exhibition of exhibitions," which was to be the "apotheosis of the lofty ideal of 'rational entertainment" (Altick 456). Rather than display English ingenuity solely for an English audience, they would invite the world to submit their most advanced machinery and their finest manufactures to compete in a friendly contest between nations. It would, they hoped, promote innovation, stimulate the taste and design of British manufactures, bolster trade, and stand as an example of what could be accomplished by the peaceful interaction between nations. The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, as they succinctly dubbed it, would take place over six months beginning on the first of May, 1851.

1.23.2 Industry and the Great Lung of London

Since the idea for the Great Exhibition did not arise until after the success of the Society's national exhibition in 1849, Albert and his appointed Planning Commission[17] were on a tight timeline to design, construct, and outfit an exhibition hall that would hold the world's machinery and manufactures. They promptly announced a Building Committee and a call for designs and, though the committee received upwards of 200 submissions, few inspired enthusiasm among the judges. Rather than select a design they didn't like, the Building Committee opted to design their own and drew up plans for a heavy, squat brick structure with a large iron dome at its center (**Figure 4**). It would be a dark, imposing addition to Hyde Park, and its intended positioning would completely cut off any glimpse of green space from the eastern

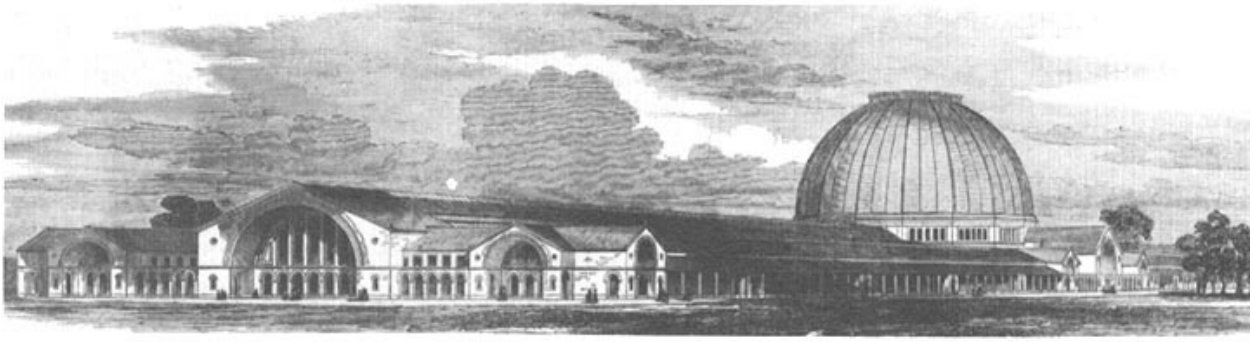


Figure 4: The Committee's Design for a Structure to House the Great Exhibition

[17] The *Athenaeum* of 5 Jan 1850 announced the Royal Commission: "The Royal Commissioners are—with the Prince Consort at their head—The Duke of Buccleuch, the Earl of Rosse, Earl Granville, the Earl of Ellesmere, Lord Stanley, Lord John Russell, Sir Robert Peel, Henry Labouchere, Esq., William Ewart Gladstone, Esq, the Chairman of the East India Company for the time being, Sir Richard Westmacott, the President of the Geological Society of London for the time being, Thomas Baring, Esq., Charles Barry, Esq., Thomas Bazley, Esq. (President of the Chamber of Commerce at Manchester), Richard Cobden, Esq., the President of the Institution of Civil Engineers for the time being, Charles Lock Eastlake, Esq., Thomas Field Gibson, Esq. (well known in the Spitalfields silk trade), John Gott, Esq. (of Leeds), Samuel Jones Lloyd, Esq., Philip Pusey, Esq., and William Thompson, Esq. (ironmaster and alderman of London)" (18).

entrances. The newspapers expressed dismay that "the Great Lung of London was to be choked with a hideous, huge, mountainous heap of burnt clay" ("Glass Houses" 81). Both the building and location were widely denounced as inappropriate choices for the Exhibition, and one article speculated that "no place could have had so much cold water thrown upon it, or been so generally railed against" ("Hyde and Seek" 28).

Chief among those lambasting Albert's plan was Colonel Charles Sibthorp, the cartoonishly conservative MP for Lincoln. During his tenure in the House of Commons, Sibthorp "opposed every change and innovation, regarding even the mildest reform as a fundamental attack on his idol, the English Constitution of his youth" (Michell 57). His, "idyllic childhood in the pre-industrial English countryside" had instilled in him "a glowing memory of the old order of things and a constant determination to maintain and restore it" (58). The xenophobic M.P. viewed Queen Victoria's folly in marrying Albert, a foreigner, as an unforgivable sin against the nation, and successfully lobbied to have the standard annuity of £50,000 for a consort reduced to £30,000 on account of it. Given his disdain for Albert and all things progressive and international, it is not surprising that he denounced the impending Exhibition as "one of the greatest humbugs, one of the greatest frauds, one of the greatest absurdities ever known." The uproar in the press over Hyde Park's trees afforded him a "symbol of the national calamity which he foresaw issuing from the Great Exhibition," and he joined in the clamor to either relocate the event or, better yet, scrap it altogether (59).

Sibthorp made a motion in the House of Commons to refer the choice of location for the Exhibition to a Parliamentary Committee. On the day of the vote, he delivered a blustering speech in which he cited "robbery, rape, riot, whoremongering, mugging, and military and industrial espionage" as reasons to nip the Exhibition in the bud while it was still in its planning

stages (Murphy). He implored the wealthy Londoners living near the park to protest against the intrusion of the "cheap nasty trash" that would inevitably flood their neighborhoods once the Exhibition began, and urged them to "[take] care of your wives and daughters, take care of your property and your lives!" He also advised them "to keep a sharp look out after their silver forks and spoons and serving maids," which would surely be endangered by the influx of criminals and foreigners (Greenhalgh 30). Fortunately for Albert, rather than sway the opinions of his fellow M.P.s, Sibthorp's absurdly "emphatic speeches against everything new or foreign delighted the House of Commons," and the motion was emphatically denied (Michell 58). This setback in Parliament, however, did not put an end to public indignation over the impending destruction of Hyde Park.

The outcry over the decision to host the Exhibition in the Park continued to dominate the front pages of London's newspapers and magazines even after Sibthorp's motion was voted down, and articles appeared nearly every day condemning the idea of destroying one of the city's few pastoral landscapes. *Punch* chimed in to mock the uproar, publishing a poem called "The Belgravians' Lament," in which the speaker voices the concerns of the upper and upper-middle classes: "The word is spoke—'tis past a joke—Hyde Park the spot shall be, / Where to the skies shall soon arise the House of Industry— / Pile high the bricks, the mortar mix, knock up the scaffold-poles, / Tread out the green, cut up the turn, with ruts, and hills, and holes" (23). It was difficult for Rotten Row's regular set to accept that bricks, mortar, and scaffolding would soon take the place of their beloved green space, especially considering the importance that had been attributed to nature as a morally and physically cleansing agent over the past two decades. The prospective loss of the park sparked fears of an influx of crime and disease, casting a shadow on the upcoming Exhibition.

That the stomping-grounds of the wealthy would be disturbed was bad enough; that it would be flooded with "a promiscuous rabble" was too much for London's upper and middle classes to bear ("Imaginary" 43). While the city's newspapers quoted Sibthorp and earnestly criticized the plans for the Great Exhibition, the writers at *Punch* continued to gleefully satirize the outrage in a series of poems, articles, and illustrations that laid bare upper-class anxieties about being overrun by a mob of brutish fairgoers. In "Hyde Park in Jeopardy," the author describes the ways in which the park would become intolerable to those who frequented Rotten Row:

> We live in an age of mutation,
> And a warehouse as big as an Ark,
> To exhibit the goods of each nation,
> Will illustrate that truthful remark,
> By the pleasant and nice alteration
> Its erection will make in Hyde Park.
>
> No more the superior classes
> Will parade their vain elegance there;
> But your blithe lads and frolicsome lasses
> Give the place quite a different air:
> 'Twill be crowded, in fact, by the masses,
> And by Greenwich instead of May Fair.
>
> No longer fine ladies shall amble,
> With their delicate airs, in the Ride;
> The soft Guardsman no longer will gambol
> At the frivolous horsewoman's side,
> But the holiday-mob push and scramble,
> Scorning all ostentation and pride.
>
> …

The gentle and mild conversation,
Softened down by Society's law,
Will give place to the rough exclamation,
To the lively and boisterous jaw,
To the loud, jolly, bold imprecation,
And the roaring and hearty guffaw.

The flowers will no longer their sweetness
In the Gardens of Kensington waste;
They'll be plucked with surprising completeness,
And the grounds will be somewhat defaced.
Never care for their order and neatness—
After all, that's a matter of taste.

The great human tide will ebb nightly,
And its scum in the Park leave behind,
There to harbour—nice characters, slightly,
It may be, unto pillage inclined;
If Belgravia and Pimlico lightly
Weigh this danger—why then, never mind. (12)

The progress wrought by the onset of the industrial revolution—praised as the dawning of a new age by many—is redefined by *Punch* as an "age of mutation" in which the coarseness of the manufacturing world threatens to infringe upon genteel performances of pastoralism. Hyde Park will be "crowded … by the masses" from "Greenwich instead of May Fair." In *Sketches by Boz*, Dickens's collection of vignettes about London compiled in the 1830s, he asks "[if] the Parks be 'the lungs of London,' we wonder what Greenwich Fair is—a periodical breaking out, we suppose, a sort of spring rash" (67). The idea that the bawdy, crowded scenes of Dickens's Greenwich would overtake the serene gentility of the posh Mayfair set was enough to give any fashionable Londoner the vapors, but the *Punch* poem goes on to detail the additional ways in

which the Great Exhibition will cause that serenity to be shattered. The "holiday-mob" will push and scramble over the refined pleasure grounds, drowning out the "gentle and mild conversation" of the upper classes with their "rough exclamation" and "roaring and hearty guffaw." These rabblerousers will deface the park and, like a swarm of locusts, pluck each aesthetic bloom from its stem. At night, the swarm will abandon the park, leaving behind "its scum" and a few "characters" with unlawful intentions.

In the same issue, *Punch* printed an imaginary conversation between Samuel Johnson and his biographer, James Boswell, in which they identify one of the less overt problems the upper classes had with selecting Hyde Park as the site of the Exhibition:

> *Boswell.* What do you think, Sir, of the Exhibition of 1851?
>
> *Johnson*. Sir, I think it would be a very good thing in its proper place. It will promote international sociality, and augment the trade of London. But, Sir, I am sorry it is to be held in Hyde Park …
>
> *Boswell*. Don't you think, Sir, that a public Park ought to be used for a public purpose?
>
> *Johnson*. Sir, you might as well ask whether a public building ought not to be used as a public-house. Sir, the Park *is* used for a public purpose. It is used for the purpose of taking air and exercise.
>
> *Boswell.* But, Sir, are not they who use Hyde Park for that purpose a limited class of persons, consisting principally of gentlefolks and people of quality?
>
> *Johnson*. No, Sir. The great people ride in the Ring and Rotten Row, and the common people go to look at them. The fine folks are a pretty show. The diversified liveries of their servants are pleasing, their complacent countenances impart cheerfulness, and their gay apparel and handsome equipages exhilarate the spectators. Sir, did you never observe how the populace shouts for joy to see a splendid carriage going to the races? ("Imaginary 43)

According to *Punch*'s Johnson, the true purpose of Hyde Park is to function as a site of performance for the "great people," while the "common people" look on as spectators. By

allowing the lower classes access to the royal parks, the upper classes who don their finest attire to ride along Rotten Row become (as planned, desired, and expected) the subjects of an admiring gaze. A literal barrier exists between the two classes in the form of a railing between the riders and the observers, and a more abstract barrier exists, too, as between dramatic players and their audience. The "gentlefolks" at center stage perform their social roles each afternoon, repeatedly demonstrating the marked differences between themselves—the "people of quality"—and the separate class of onlookers who are implicitly *not* people of quality.

The conversation continues, and Boswell and Johnson parse the ways in which the elite areas of Hyde Park will be made common by the interference of the lower classes:

> *Boswell*. But how, Sir, will the Exhibition interfere with the diversion of walking or riding in the Park?
>
> *Johnson*. Sir, by creating a miscellaneous concourse of persons who will be noisy, and whose trampling will wear away the turf. They will thus destroy the quiet and verdure, which afford refreshment to the eye and tranquility to the mind. And, Sir, they will overrun Kensington Gardens, and probably injure and deface them, besides committing depredations in the vicinity.
>
> *Boswell*. But has it not been proved, Sir, that the notion that the people will do mischief, if admitted to such places, is erroneous?
>
> *Johnson*. Yes, Sir. But a promiscuous rabble, such as collects at a fair, and such as will be attracted by this Exhibition, is not the people. Sir, large numbers of the people will be incapable of attending the Exhibition at all. The agricultural labourers, and the poorer mechanics throughout the country, will neither be able to afford the time nor the money requisite for a journey to London. Besides, Sir, if the Exhibition were ever so much the people's concern, it ought, nevertheless, to be assigned a suitable place. Sir, the people do not want their park to be turned into a fair-ground any more than a nobleman would like his own to be served so.

The "miscellaneous concourse of persons" will, it is feared, breach the tacit boundaries that separate the classes, and "destroy the quiet and verdure" that offer "refreshment" and

"tranquility" to those seeking a pastoral escape from the chaos of the city. Boswell objects to Johnson's claim that "the people" will deface Kensington Gardens and sully the location by committing "depredations" by reminding him that these same people have never behaved in the way Johnson fears in the nearly two decades since they had been granted access to the parks. But Johnson is quick to point out that "the people" are not the ones he fears. In fact, attending the Exhibition will be cost prohibitive to the "agricultural labourers" and the "poorer mechanics" that he assigns to that group. Rather, it is a different group he fears; a "promiscuous rabble, such as collects at a fair," like those in attendance at the fever dream of Sadler's Wells from Wordsworth's *Prelude*.[18] In their boorish blundering, they will transgress the real and imagined boundaries that separate the classes, overrun the Row, and introduce the chaos of the city into the manicured pastoralism of Hyde Park. The "miscellaneous concourse of persons" he fears is the faceless mob, the seething masses, the anonymous millions.

1.23.3 The Fairy Palace of Glass

Though the Commissioners were already moving ahead with plans to construct the massive brick structure in Hyde Park, the backlash in the press was so great that its members began to look for alternative options. The Duke of Devonshire employed a landscape architect named Joseph Paxton who had built greenhouses for a few members of the English gentry, and members of the Planning Commision who were familiar with his work appealed to Paxton to submit a plan for a new building when it became clear that the behemoth they had selected threatened to tank public support for the Exhibition before construction had even begun.

---

[18] See Chapter 1, pp. 43-45.

Obligingly, Paxton quickly drew up plans for prefabricated structure made of glass and iron and, while the rest of the Commissioners ruminated on his submission, he slipped the design to the *Illustrated London News*. When the public caught wind of Paxton's new design and discovered that it was not only more beautiful than the original structure, but that it managed to enclose the trees along Rotten Row rather than destroy them, they began praising it as a vast improvement to the old plans; the Planning Commission was left with little choice but to approve it unanimously and move forward.

The public celebrated the positive turn of events brought about by Paxton's new design, and opinions about the Exhibition itself were reflected in a "stunning reversal in the press," which "began to support the exhibition almost as soon as Paxton's plan was officially adopted" (Auerbach *Display* 52). *Household Words* published an article in which they expressed relief that "the most revered of the trees" that had been threatened by the first building's design "were to be admitted into the Industrial building" beneath the "central transept—the apex of whose curvilinear roof is one hundred and twelve feet from the ground" (Wills 389). *Punch*, too, celebrated this new development with a cheerfully reductive summary of the events that led to the change:

> Our Park was to be desecrated—torn from us … The Great Lung of London was to be choked with a hideous, huge, mountainous heap of burnt clay … And then—JOSEPH PAXTON came! With all the quietude of an assured power, with the serenity of practical genius, PAXTON unrolled his plan before the Commission … the structure that should cover the samples of the world's industry should have the lightness of crystal, with the abiding strength of iron. And, as the projector told over his plan, the Commission, with much-relieved heads and sparkling eyes—beheld a fairy Palace of Glass the whole structure fitted, with the fitness of geometry upon paper, and calculated with the minute conviction of arithmetic. And the Prince clapt his hands and said— "Paxton, go forth into Hyde Park; take

> glass and iron, and—beauty wedding strength—produce the Industrial Hall of Nations!" ("Glass Houses" 81)

Rotten Row and its much-lamented trees had been spared by Paxton's ingenious design, which simply enclosed them within the greenhouse structure, and further turned the tide of public opinion about the exhibition. The upper classes could breathe yet another sigh of relief knowing that Paxton's building was designed to be disassembled at the end of the exhibition and moved to another location so they could return to their evening rides in the park. The "fairy Palace of Glass" was soon dubbed "the Crystal Palace," and news outlets breathlessly reported on its progress nearly every day until the Opening Ceremony on May 1st, 1851.

1.23.4 The Question of the Working Classes

Though the question of Hyde Park's aesthetic integrity was resolved by the introduction of the new glass structure, handwringing over the types of people who might attend the Exhibition continued full force. The subject of class distinction was necessarily at the heart of many debates surrounding an Exhibition focused on industry and manufacturing. How could a nation proudly display their most advanced machinery (and the finest wares produced thereby) without acknowledging the people responsible for operating it? Moreover, how could they at best ignore and at worst malign the workers whose toil formed the basis of the British economic system? Supporters of the event hoped it would act to "bring about a reconciliation between the Two Nations" by drawing lowly laborers into a celebration of their work and honoring them for their contributions (Short 196). For his part, Prince Albert "welcomed the participation of the working classes in Exhibit preparations," but seemed not to know how to go about including them in the final product (Short 193). In fact, many of the members of London's elite that were involved in organizing the exhibition displayed an obvious lack of understanding about who the

working classes were, whether they would be interested in attending an exhibition, and how to make them feel like an integral part of the event.

This ignorance was on full display in March of 1850 at a "glittering dinner" hosted by the Lord Mayor of London to celebrate the announcement of the Exhibition. Among the elite guests in attendance was Samuel Wilberforce, the Bishop of Oxford, who suggested to the Planning Commission that if they sought "to interest the industrious classes in this exhibition," one surefire way would be to "encourage them to bestow their alms to help on its work." Notwithstanding the fact that few members of the working class had alms to spare, Wilberforce believed that those raising funds for the exhibition should not only urge "the rich to come forward with their £100 subscriptions," but should also "encourage the poor artisan to give his 1*s* subscription." By doing so, he insisted, the working man "may consider himself one of the inviters to this feast … —one of the afforders of British hospitality to his Continental neighbours" (2). This notion was applauded wildly by the wealthy guests at the banquet, many of whom followed the speech with champagne toasts to "The Working Men of England" on whom, they professed, the success of the Great Exhibition depended. The idle rich were so unfamiliar with the reality of the living and working conditions of the laboring classes that, according to Henry Mayhew, they "felt satisfied that industry is a special delight (though but rarely known to be industrious themselves), and who, consequently, believed that the honest poor always prefer labour to enjoyment" (155).

Much of the concern about whether and how to include the working classes in the industrial exhibition stemmed from this type of limited information about its members. According to Béatrice Laurent, "[many] visitors at the Great Exhibition, from Her Majesty the Queen to those who attended the 'penny days', had never seen a real machine and were

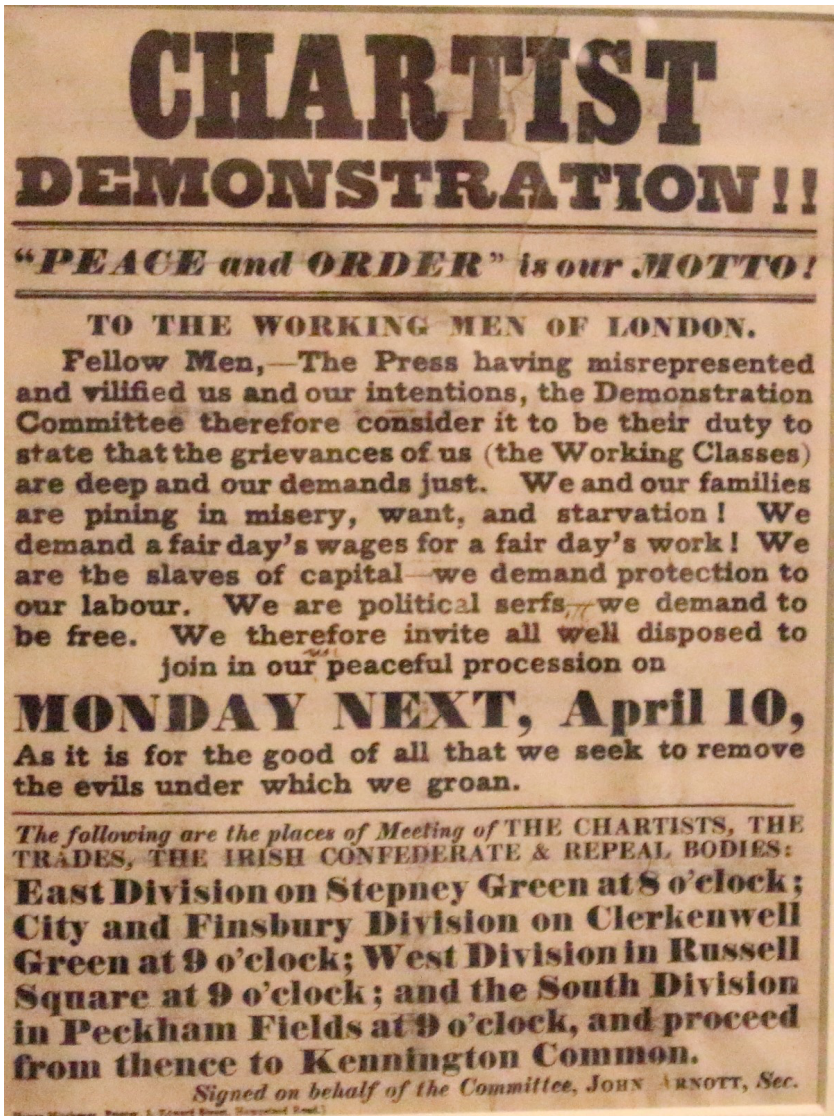
understandably eager to see one, preferably in motion," but few expressed the same desire to see the men and women who spent their long days laboring in service to those machines (1). It did not help that much of what the average member of the middle or upper class knew about London's poor came almost exclusively from secondhand sources. Whether through fictional accounts of the poor, popular "travelogues" that sensationalized the dangers of London's slums, or newspaper reports on the Chartist Movement of the previous two decades, the impression of the working class that was relayed to these readers was one of a diseased, immoral, and often violent group that posed a real danger to their more respectable countrymen.

1.23.5 The Threat of a Chartist Uprising

In fact, the Chartist movement was still very much alive when the Planning Commission sat down to hear Wilberforce speak at the Lord Mayor's dinner. It had had only been two years since France's National Workshops, which guaranteed work and income to that country's industrial laborers, had shut down, resulting in violent demonstrations and thousands of deaths in the summer of 1848. The political unrest of the period reverberated in England, where Chartists renewed their own demands for workers' enfranchisement and Parliamentary representation.[19] A massive rally was planned for April 10, to be held at London's Kennington Common. Posters advertising the event instructed various Chartist enclaves to depart from different locations around the city at specific times so they would flood into the Common at once, a huge body of laborers with a shared purpose, converging in dramatic fashion **(Figure**

[19] See Introduction, pp. 35-36.

5). Once there, they planned to combine their signatures and march in one body to Parliament to present the petition together. Though "PEACE and ORDER" was the motto printed at the top of their poster, responses throughout the city suggested that most people anticipated violence: the "Bank of England and other key locations were fortified with sandbags," the "Royal Family moved to the Isle of Wight," and the Metropolitan Police enrolled a massive force of "special constables" to block the routes to Parliament (J. Briggs). The exact number of constables



CHARTIST
DEMONSTRATION!!

"PEACE and ORDER" is our MOTTO!

TO THE WORKING MEN OF LONDON.

Fellow Men,—The Press having misrepresented and vilified us and our intentions, the Demonstration Committee therefore consider it to be their duty to state that the grievances of us (the Working Classes) are deep and our demands just. We and our families are pining in misery, want, and starvation! We demand a fair day's wages for a fair day's work! We are the slaves of capital—we demand protection to our labour. We are political serfs—we demand to be free. We therefore invite all well disposed to join in our peaceful procession on

MONDAY NEXT, April 10,

As it is for the good of all that we seek to remove the evils under which we groan.

The following are the places of Meeting of THE CHARTISTS, THE TRADES, THE IRISH CONFEDERATE & REPEAL BODIES:

East Division on Stepney Green at 8 o'clock; City and Finsbury Division on Clerkenwell Green at 9 o'clock; West Division in Russell Square at 9 o'clock; and the South Division in Peckham Fields at 9 o'clock, and proceed from thence to Kennington Common.

Signed on behalf of the Committee, JOHN ARNOTT, *Sec.*

Figure 5: Poster for a Chartist Demonstration in Kennington Common, 1848; People's History Museum

enrolled is unclear; according to R. E. Swift, "*The Standard*, *The Sun*, and *The Morning Chronicle* claimed 250,000, and *The Times* 170,000 (the figure accepted by the government)" (677). Whatever the actual number of constables was, it dwarfed the estimated 25,000 assembled Chartists, who adjusted their plan, sent the petition to Parliament in a cab, and peaceably dispersed rather than contend with the metropole's show of strength. In the end, this third and final petition was, once again, rejected by Parliament.

It was unfortunate timing that Albert's announcement of his intention to hold the Great Exhibition came less than a year after Parliament's third refusal of the People's Charter, when the rebuke was still fresh in the minds of England's laborers, and the threat of violent insurrection lingered in the minds of the upper classes. There were many among the upper and middle classes, however, who believed that the prospect of involving England's workers in the Exhibition created an opportunity to ameliorate the tensions fomented by Parliament's repeated rejections of the Charter. Even with the pall of 1848 hanging over the proceedings, there was hope that the Exhibition would function to unite the classes under the banner of progress, industry, and capitalism. The *Illustrated London News* expressed their sincere wish that it would be "the means of breaking down the barriers between the employers and the employed" ("A New Result" 608). Others who hoped for the same result "envisaged [the Exhibition] as an opportunity to publicize not only the physical advances of the new technology of the machine age, but the contribution of the industrial workers ... and their social maturity as well" (Short 193). The desire to placate the working classes led to the emergence of a new trend in writing about England's laborers. Rather than acknowledge the overriding fear among the middle and upper classes that the Exhibition would provide fertile ground for working-class unrest, discourse about the event instead began to center around the dignity of labor. By casting

England's industrial workers as patient, long-suffering, and ready for their moment of recognition, middle- and upper-class writers attempted to steer discourse about the working classes at the exhibition toward the positive outcome they desired.

1.23.6 "Honour to Labour"

Unrestrained praise of the working classes did not appear immediately; rather, writing about the dignity of labor began with grudging and conditional acknowledgements of the contributions the lower orders had made to advancements in technology and the British economy. Henry Mayhew conceded that though "manual dexterity or muscular labor" cannot be considered "the *summum bonum* of human existence," the middle and upper classes "[owe] so much of our comfort and happiness to both" that "we should honour them more than we do." In light of this fact, he suggests that "if society would really have the world progress, it should do away with the cheat which makes those men the most respectable who do the least for the bread they eat" (155). While Mayhew's reduction of industrial labor to procedural knowledge and brute strength may be seen as a tepid endorsement of the working classes, it can also be seen as a step toward the flood of effusive praise that followed. Those who had likely never visited a factory or even spoken with a factory worker were suddenly keen to stress their importance to society, offering their praises across a variety of mediums. In newspaper articles, editorials, and even odes to labor, factory workers were lauded as the valiant, hard-done-by heroes whose suffering and persistence would make the Exhibition possible.

Lady Emmeline Stuart-Wortley, daughter of a duke and wife of a baron, was among those who attempted to memorialize the working class in her writing. Though most of her published works centered on her travels on the continent and interactions with illustrious persons, the impending Exhibition inspired her to capture the nation's excitement about

"Labour's Coronation-festival" in verse (6.1). *Honour of Labour, a Lay of 1851* contains 333 stanzas in which she breathlessly calls the workers of the world to England's shores so they may be honored as heroes, conquerors, and kings:

> Haste! — ye Victor-Sons of Labour! — throng from many a distant land,
> Haste! — to Labour's royal Jubilee, — a most Triumphant Band! —
> Conquerors! — whose strong right arms have wrought, brave wonders evermore,
> Staunch Heroes of sore-travail'd hours, true heroes to the core!
>
> …
>
> Conquerors? — Yes! Conquerors! — many a Fight have ye not stoutly won? —
> Even though all uncheer'd by hopes of Fame, the toilsome race was run, —
> While ye wrought in dearth and gloom full oft, — nay! With obloquy and blame,
> But *yet* ye wrought, and dauntlessly, and triumph'd, and o'ercame!
>
> …
>
> Kings? No Hosts, no Courts, ye need, Your power, is in your toiling hands,
> On Scrolls of iron Ye inscribe, undoubting, your commands,
> And ye write upon the adamant, that ye have enslaved its strength, —
> Shall your rugged brave dominion, not be known and felt at length? (stanzas 11, 15, 58)

Though Her Ladyship's protracted verse was widely panned (her lack of poetic aptitude even drawing criticism in her obituary five years later[20]), it helps shed light on complicated attitudes surrounding the presence of the labor force at the Exhibition. She depicts the working class as having labored thanklessly "in dearth and gloom" for the great national cause of industrial advancement, even as the upper classes treated them with distain and fear. Despite their harsh

---

[20] After her death by dysentery in 1856, the obituary that appeared in *The Gentleman's Magazine* defined her as "a poetess, or at least a great writer of verse … Her Ladyship's facility was great; but … she mistook inclination for power, and the desire for the gift" (Urban 183).

conditions and treatment, these noble laborers toiled on "dauntlessly" until they had "wrought … wonders" for the world to admire. Accordingly, Her Ladyship hails them as victorious heroes, conquerors, and even kings who have painfully and valiantly bent steel and iron to their will for the benefit of humankind.

While Stuart-Wortley does not denounce the popular idea that the working classes have been chosen by God to suffer so the rest of British society can live in comfort, she frames the Exhibition as the dramatic moment at which they would step into the spotlight, shed their reputation for violence, indolence, and disease, and be recognized for their sacrifices and their contributions to the advancement of England's economy. She summons the workers of the world to come and be honored, with promises that a new day is dawning in which laborers will be treated with dignity instead of derision:

> At this Festival of Nations thus, be your Hope's bright summit reach'd,
> Be a worthier field accorded ye, and a loftier doctrine preach'd,
> Oh! Brave Industry! Let grateful Earth now bless your name revered,
> And Art! By sympathy sublime, be each high Conception cheer'd.
>
> …
>
> Come then forth to Fame, ye Workers, in the humblest walks of life,
> With the glorious Emulations fired, wherewith the time is rife,
> By th' illustrious Tribulations stirr'd, of an epoch bright and strange
> Which seems now to shake our conscious Globe, with the steps of coming change.
>
> …
>
> Honour be to Labour! — raise once more, that high and fitting strain,
> Honour now to thee! Brave Labour! — raise that echoing shout again,
> On the billowy Sea, — on th' outstretched plain — beneath the forest's bough,
> Hail! In town, or desert, mart or mine, — HONOUR to LABOUR, now! (17, 40, 328)

Stuart-Wortley's verse suggests that the working classes' suffering was not in vain but was rather the selfless striving toward a great reward; the culmination of a noble quest for which the prize

was an honored position in society. Her verse casts the Exhibition as a turning point for British society, when workers from "the humblest walks of life" would be accorded "a worthier field" and "a loftier doctrine" than that which had previously been issued to them.

Stuart-Wortley was not alone in her efforts to bestow upon the beleaguered laborers of England an unprecedented level of admiration and respect. In *1851; or, the Adventures of Mr. And Mrs. Cursty Sandboys,* a novel about a working-class family that travels to London to see the Exhibition, even Mayhew pauses in his narrative to lavish praise on the humble laborer:

> Let industry be with us "respectable"—as it is really in the natural arrangement of things—and the industrious poor instead of the idle rich will then be the really respectable men of this country. Let those who doubt the respectability of labour, consider for one moment what years of thought, and study, and patience, are involved in even the commonest industrial process … Who can look at the commonest pocket-knife or padlock, and not feel an intense reverence for the art and artists that could fashion those most useful instruments out of a lump of stone?" (155-56)

Labor was suddenly afforded a dignity it had thus far been denied. In light of an international exhibition praising the outcomes and tools of labor, the upper classes began taking notice of the everyday conveniences that had previously escaped their attention, like pocket-knives and padlocks.

The effusive praise of labor and laborers was mitigated by an equal number of suggestions about the need to "improve" the working classes. "If we wish to make gentlemen of our working men," wrote Mayhew, "our first step must be to assert the natural dignity of labour." Only when the superior classes acknowledged that industrial work was not shameful could laborers transcend the stigma of their class. As long as they continued to view labor "as a meanness, … workers and toilers remain mean" (Mayhew 155). Wilberforce theorized that it

was the work itself that degraded England's laborers, and the Exhibition would allow them to step back from the dehumanizing minutia of industrial production and take in the overall beauty of the things they produced. "The man who makes a button," he argued, "may be employed constantly upon the smallest portion of it, and there is a danger that in this occupation he may lose the sense of his humanity, and become degraded to a mere mechanical producer of that particular article" (2). It was hoped that the Exhibition would serve to counteract the dehumanizing effects of industrial labor by helping a laborer observe "how his particular work bears its part in the production of a great result." In seeing how his portion of the button in question contributes to the completion of a whole and useful product, "his position is elevated in his own eyes, and he begins to feel himself one of the contributors to the great wealth and the great name of the great land in which he lives." It was hoped that when England's laborers were able to step away from their machinery and view the wholesale products of their work, they would be proud of their contributions and inspired to work even harder.

1.23.7 The Chartist Perspective

Chartist leaders were understandably suspicious of the rhetoric suggesting that an Exhibition could heal the divisions wrought by Parliament's repeated denials of their Charter, and though they were not often quoted or interviewed in London's major newspapers, they found other ways to voice their opinions. Early in the planning stages, Chartist leader Henry Vincent stated, "rather ominously," that "the working classes regarded the Exhibition as a movement to wean them from politics" (Short 195). Though many members of the working class agreed with him, they were drowned out by middle-class pronouncements of peace, unity, and class harmony. It was perhaps for this reason that George W.M. Reynolds launched *Reynolds's Newspaper*, a weekly publication that "rose from the fall of Chartism to represent and speak to a

national working-class reading public" (Herdman 320). Many Chartist newspapers had come in and out of publication during the height of the movement, but the timing of *Reynolds's* launch and their protracted focus on the Exhibition suggests that its purpose was, at least in part, to represent working class opinions about the impending event.

In Jenna Herdman's study of the Exhibition coverage in *Reynolds's Newspaper*, she explains that while the "pro-exhibition press celebrated how the exhibition reconciled the class tensions that had been fermenting through the previous decades," *Reynolds's* published articles about how the "'monster building' would be a 'heavy and bitter affliction' for the London poor" (320). Reynolds himself made his stance on the event explicitly clear when he wrote that "all possible means, within the law, should be adopted to prevent [the Exhibition] from taking place. Meetings should be got up to expose and denounce it: tracts should be printed and circulated to explain its pernicious tendencies." He also questioned Albert's motives for holding an event based on labor while he knew so little about it himself; he asks: "[what] can he possibly care about the interests of the British traders and working classes?—or what can this ignorant young man know of those interests, even if he were disposed to care for them? Nothing at all" (qtd. in Herdman). Like Sibthorp, *Reynolds's* weaponized the xenophobic suspicion that Albert's foreign origins meant he could not have British interests at heart, and his position as a Prince meant he could not understand the working class. The Exhibition and its focus on international manufacture must, therefore, be an attempt to undermine British labor.

Reynolds's attack on the Exhibition was relentless, each week highlighting all the ways it was likely to harm laborers. In one article from January of 1851, the columnist writes:

> the influx of strangers to London will cause every article of consumption to rise in price; and the benefit derived from the presence of so many strangers will be alone felt by tradesmen and lodging house keepers. The poor of Whitechapel,

> Bethnal-green, and other districts distant from the monster building, can never reap one farthing from the display; but on the contrary will, by the dearness of provisions, be debarred from many necessaries they can in ordinary times obtain.

The division between London's East and West Ends was, once again, central to the class divide. The slums of Whitechapel were unlikely to see much tourism, while the wealthier classes who lived west of St. Paul's would reap all the benefits. It was especially galling that the Exhibition was centered on the outcomes of labor, but the laborers themselves would only suffer more by the "recognition" being offered to them. While London's major newspapers continued to report on the event as a harbinger of class unification and an opportunity for laborers to be recognized for their work, *Reynolds's* made the argument that it was just another example of the Tocquevillian notion that workers must suffer so the upper classes can live in luxury.[21]

1.23.8 "a great display of England's sins and negligences"

Even as London's popular publications were filled with praise for workers and odes to labor, *Reynolds's* began to document the suffering of London's poor with greater frequency. One article from September of 1850 offers a description of the notorious slum, Jacob's Island, in the same vein as Mayhew's article from the previous year.[22] In it, *Reynolds's* proposes a more accurate exhibition of what life is like for laborers in England:

> O Prince Albert! We hope—sincerely hope—that in the Great Exhibition which your princely wisdom has most graciously concocted for 1851, you will not fail to have a model of Jacob's Island placed in some conspicuous part, with three or four living specimens of the human beings whom a cruel social system, the

---

[21] See Introduction, p. 14.
[22] See Chapter 2, pp. 103-105.

> pressure of class-interests, and the influence of vile legislation have doomed to pine, languish, rot, and die prematurely, in that most loathsome spot upon the face of the whole earth. (qtd. in Herdman 321)

The Exhibition's focus on industrial machinery and goods produced combined with the as yet unresolved question of whether the laborers themselves should attend gave the impression that the machines were more valuable than the workers, and even suggested that they had completely replaced them. Visitors, it was feared, would be offered a series of sanitized tableaux of factory life in which clean, well-ordered machinery thrummed along on its own, producing the trappings of industry. Reynolds suggests that if visitors are to see the true costs of production, they should also be shown how low wages, poor living conditions, and lack of meaningful legislation affect the lives of the invisible workers.

Reynolds's revisited the same argument the following month in a parody of the numerous Exhibition catalogues that had begun to appear in which the items that would be on display were listed in meticulous detail. Instead of describing a steam engine or describing the types of woven fabrics produced on power looms, however, *Reynolds's* catalogue included "five groups of people": "an English working man, his wife, and seven children" arranged on a pedestal in a display of "average specimens of human misery"; a "juvenile thief"; a laborer who was "incarcerated for poaching a rabbit to feed his hungry family"; "the corpse of a soldier flogged to death for getting drunk"; and finally "the corpse of a political prisoner" dead from cholera (Herdman 322; Reynolds qtd. in Herdman 322). The working classes, invisible and mysterious as they were to the middle and upper classes who had no contact with them in daily life, offered an exotic display for visitors' consumption. Since, as Sadiah Qureshi points out, "[paying] to see

living foreign peoples perform was enormously popular in the nineteenth century,"[23] the idea of displaying the exotic bodies (or corpses, as the case may be) of unseen laborers was not as farfetched as *Reynolds's* article made it seem (2). While popular displays of exotic foreigners were dehumanizing in their own way, *Reynolds's* proposed exhibit co-opted the language of machinery and consumer goods to depict the workers on display as products themselves. The inclusion of multiple corpses further emphasized the idea that laborers are mere bodies whose health, happiness, and well-being do not bear consideration.

Reynolds's exhibition of poverty was not a unique concept in the London press, though it is perhaps the most graphic version proposed. Six months before the article appeared in *Reynolds's Newspaper*, *Punch* published a satirical cartoon by John Leech in much the same vein, though aimed at a largely middle-class readership (**Figure 6**). The cartoon, titled "Specimens from Mr. Punch's Industrial Exhibition of 1850 (To Be Improved in 1851)," depicts four workers on display under glass cloches, bent to their individual tasks. Each case bears a label for ease of identification, just as a specimen in a museum might. One contains "An Industrious Needle-Woman," bent to her sewing; the second holds "A Labourer Aged 75" bearing a pickaxe as though at work in a mine; obscured in shadow in the back is a third cloche containing "A Distressed Shoe-Maker"; and the final display holds "A Sweater," hard at work ironing fabrics on the floor. Amidst these displays is the caricature of Mr. Punch himself, observing a gentleman in top hat and fashionable dress as he peers through the glass at the specimens on display. Both the *Punch* cartoon and *Reynolds's* article invite visitors to shift their

---

[23] See chapter 2, p. 96.

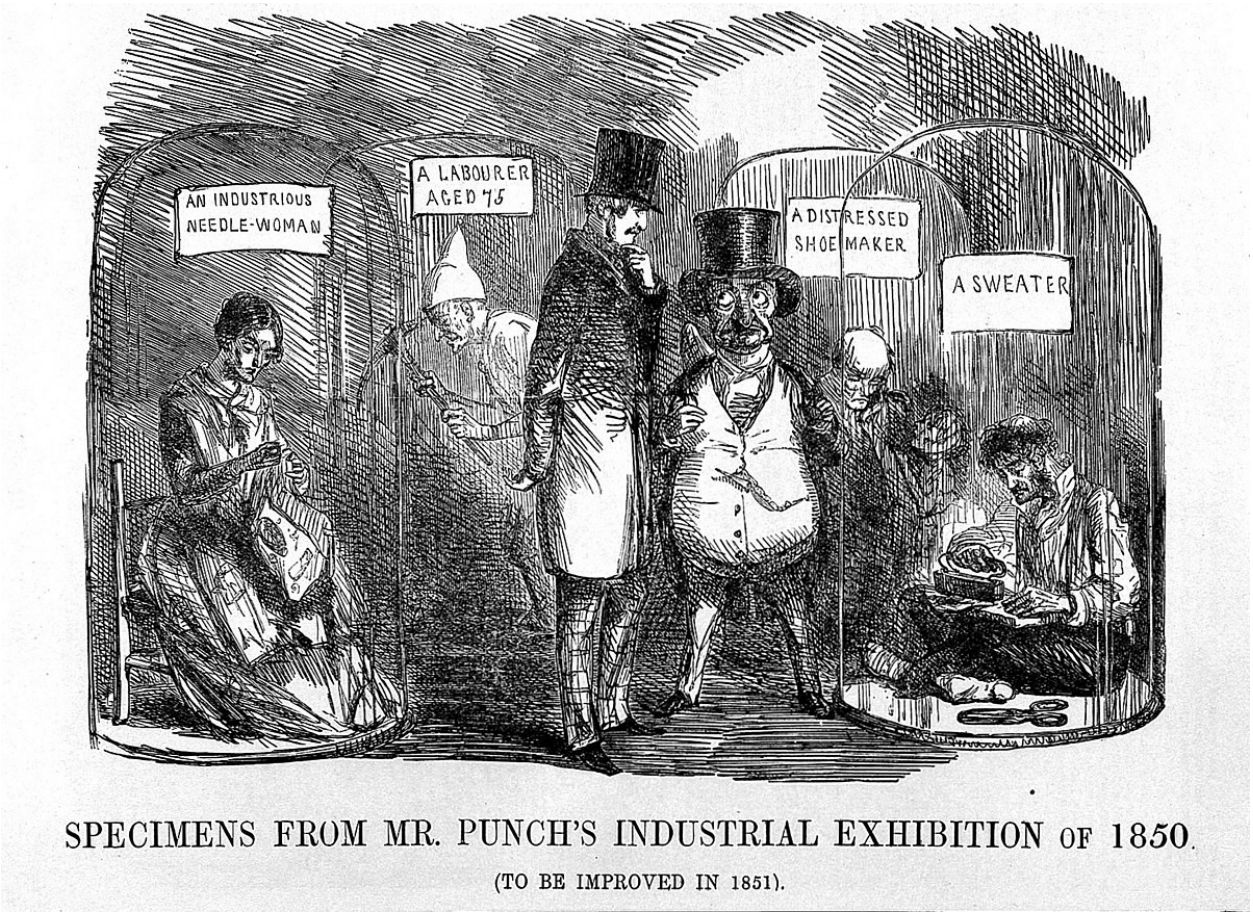


Figure 6: "Specimens from Mr. Punch's Industrial Exhibtion of 1850 (To Be Improved in 1851)," by John Leech. *Punch*, vol. 18, 1850, p. 145.

gaze from the machinery and products of industry to the workers themselves, whose lives in factories, mines, and slums have been, until this point, hidden from the view of the middle and upper classes. They suggest that if England is to put itself on display for the world, the world should be shown the true cost of industry.

Dickens was among those who felt the Exhibition was a shiny distraction from the real evils of rampant industrialism, and he made his own plea for a display of working-class poverty on the heels of *Punch*'s cartoon and Reynolds's article. In the first issue of *Household Words* of the new year, Dickens printed a short essay in which the personification of the year 1850, speaking his last words before his death at midnight on New Year's Eve, criticizes all that has

happened (and not happened) during the course of the previous year. The withered form of 1850 says he has seen:

> a project carried into execution for a great assemblage of the peaceful glories of the world. I have seen a wonderful structure, reared in glass, by the energy and skill of a great natural genius … Which of my children shall behold the Princes, Prelates, Nobles, Merchants, of England, equally united, for another Exhibition—for a great display of England's sins and negligences, to be, by steady contemplation of all eyes, and steady union of all hearts and hands, set right? ("Last Words" 338)

The year had certainly seen marvels of industry and engineering, but nothing significant had been done to address the housing and working conditions of the nation's poor and working classes. Rather than celebrate the impending Exhibition of the final products of labor or the machinery that facilitated increased production, Dickens argued that the country ought to pay more attention to the "sins and negligences" that allowed the suffering of workers to persist.

Coming, as he did, from humble beginnings—his lower-middle class father was a mere "clerk in the Navy pay office" and was even "briefly incarcerated in the Marshalsea prison for debt"—Dickens felt an affinity for those who struggled to make ends meet (Young 493). It is well documented that at the age of twelve, as a result of his father's imprisonment, he was forced to leave school and take up work in Warren's Blacking Factory to help pay off the family's debts. Dickens's empathy for those who hover near ruin, as well as his passion for factory, prison, and workhouse reform, can be attributed to these childhood experiences. It can also be seen in his depiction of characters like Oliver Twist and David Copperfield, whose plotlines share similar trajectories to Dickens's own. It is likely for this reason that when, in an effort to formalize the inclusion of the working classes in the Exhibition, a few members of the Royal Commission, with Prince Albert's approval, proposed forming a Central Committee of the

Working Classes, Dickens was asked to be a member. Their stated goal was 'to enable and encourage members of the working class to attend the exhibition, organise and monitor cheap accommodation, and facilitate orientation" (Clemm 19).

At the first meeting in March of 1850, Dickens, William Thackeray, Wilberforce, and *Daily News* editor John Forster—who were considered to be "most frequently in communication with the best of the working classes"—met with prominent Chartist leaders William Lovett, Francis Place, and the skeptical Henry Vincent, among others (Short 194). The committee worked in earnest, attempting to construct a proposal that would outline the ways in which the working classes would be formally involved in the Exhibition. Despite the "glittering dinner" at which Wilberforce and other members of the Commission had toasted the working classes with champagne, however, nearly all the men in attendance who had risen their glasses to England's laborers "shunned the idea of any organized participation with a horror that the specter of the French National Workshop disaster only enhanced." When it came time for the Central Committee of the Working Classes to ask the Commission for "sanction for its efforts to ensure working-class visits to the exhibition" they were met with "a blank refusal" (Short 194-195). Some members, like Lord Stanley, even threatened to resign from the Commission if they granted state-sanctioned inclusion to the working classes. Feeling that this refusal "[illustrated] the well-defined limits of official encouragement" of the inclusion of the working classes, and that they had little chance of succeeding without the support of the Royal Commission, Dickens and Vincent moved to dissolve the Central Committee of the Working Classes "with some bitterness" at only its fifth meeting. In the aftermath of its dissolution, Dickens was outspoken in his criticism of the Committee's goals, believing its purpose was "too absorbed in the display itself, and not concerned with ameliorating conditions in the nation as a whole" (Moore). In the

end, the Committee was more "reactionary" than proactive, and Grace Moore points out that it was only "established … to prevent an uprising of the lower orders which was believed would result from attempts to exclude them from the spectacle." In the end, the Committee had only alerted its Chartist members to the fact that Vincent's criticism of the event was likely accurate: the purpose of the Exhibition was, at least in part, a distraction from politics for lingering Chartists and the rest of the working class.

Though Chartist leaders and *Reynolds's Newspaper* were suspicious of the political motivations behind efforts to praise the working classes and include them in the Exhibition, there were other members of the working classes who believed, like Wilberforce and Mayhew, that the Exhibition could help heal class divisions. In one effusive essay published in *The Literature of Working Men*, a supplement to *The Working Man's Friend and Family Instructor*, a "woolen spinner" from Huddersfield encourages his fellow workers to participate in the Great Exhibition, which he calls "the Olympiad of Labour" (Vickerman 1). "The event," he says, "will break down many of the barriers to intercourse and amity set up by ignorance and isolation, and tend to a kindlier feeling between all nations and ranks" (3). At a meeting of the Lansdowne Association in Bethnal Green, another speaker expressed his belief that the Exhibition would draw together "classes who were always distinct and sometimes hostile to each other, since it would show the capitalist the importance of the mechanic and artisan" (qtd. in Short 196). However, because there were not enough working-class voices published in mainstream newspapers, or perhaps because the upper classes wanted to emphasize the working classes' enthusiasm for the Exhibition and its unifying possibilities, it was not unusual to find enthusiastic endorsements of the Exhibition written by members of the upper and middle classes *pretending* to be laborers.

These articles in which the upper classes spoke for the invisible, voiceless lower classes tended to be enthusiastic, though they were almost universally condescending and often satirical. It is not surprising, therefore, that *Punch* took the lead when it came to printing these types of stories. One such article lampooned the Lord Mayor's dinner at which Wilberforce and his elite guests toasted the working classes with champagne by fabricating a response from a member of the working class in attendance. When the Earl of Carlisle rises to toast the health of "the Workmen of the United Kingdom," *Punch* emphasizes that it is met with "nine times nine deafening cheers" from the crowd. Attendees are so moved that the "Prince cheered—Churchmen dropped grateful tears—Ambassadors embraced one another—Lords and Commons, and Commons and Lords shook hands … They really appeared to vie with one another in the outward expression of acknowledgment and thankfulness" ("Knife-and-Fork" 123). Then, when the adulation of the working classes had reached a fever pitch, "A WORKING-MAN (in fustian jacket) arose at the lower end of the Hall, and the profoundest silence immediately ensued." Fustian had long been associated with the working classes, as many laborers wore clothes made of the durable, canvas-like material. It took on special significance during the height of the Chartist movement when Feargus O'Connor, publisher of the Chartist newspaper *The Northern Star*, was released from a year's imprisonment for political agitation. O'Connor made his appearance before a cheering crowd of "Brother Chartists and working men" and began by pointing out that he stood before them "in a full suit of fustian … the emblem of your order." The significance of his apparel could not have been lost on the crowd; the Chartist leader had grown up among the landed gentry of Ireland, but had symbolically traded his finery for fustian. Since it was commonly held that "into the cloth was woven the shared experiences and identity of working class life," O'Connor's fustian suit served to represent the shift in his alliance

to that of the lower classes (Pickering 159-160). The significance of fustian was evidently not lost on the editors of *Punch*, either, since the fictional working-class speaker is readily identifiable to a middle-class reading audience by mention of his suit alone. These readers would also likely use this information to infer that the speaker is not just a member of the working classes but is also associated with the contentious Chartist movement.

When the man in fustian jacket begins to speak to the crowd of political luminaries, it is not the voice of a political agitator that comes out, but the idealized voice of the middle and upper classes who believe the Exhibition can mend fences between themselves and the Chartists to whom their representatives had by now denied voting rights on three separate occasions. "Your Royal Highness, My Lords and Gentlemen," he says:

> On behalf of hundreds of thousands of the working men of the United Kingdom, I am here to thank you. Let bye-gones be bye-gones; but this, I think, is the first occasion that the fustian jacket has been acknowledged and received by such a company. … The workingmen honour the superfine coat of the noblemen—and respect the lawn of the Church. … They admire and are grateful to the red-coat of the field, and the blue-jacket of the ocean; and now, Gentlemen, such feelings are only made the stronger and the deeper by the conviction that you have a somewhat like respect, and like recollection for the fustian of labour. … We are to have, it seems, an Exhibition of Work—a great World's Show-shop for the skill of labouring men; for we are all labourers, mind ye, whether in fustian or super-saxony.

This laborer is everything the higher classes could hope for: grateful for the opportunity to be included in the Exhibition, respectful of their "betters," and willing to let "bye-gones be bye-gones" over Parliament's repeated rejection of the People's Charter. He is, furthermore, interested in cross-class cooperation rather than social unrest; he aligns himself and his class with the elite by acknowledging that "we are all labourers … whether in fustian or super-saxony."

This representative of all the working class makes it clear that he is eager to share the newly-lauded glories of labor with members of all classes, and has no intention of disrupting the Exhibition with political rebellion. He goes on to outline the ways he and his fellow laborers will enrich the Exhibition with their participation:

> Well, Gentlemen, we Workmen may not be able to talk French with Frenchmen, and German with Germans; but if our tongues arn't skilled, we have our brains—our hands—and our eyes. We can talk to a machine. That speaks all languages. A lever's a lever all over the world—a piston's a piston. … At this Exhibition the brains and hands of all the world will speak one common tongue; and depend upon it, Lords and Gentlemen, the Workmen of the United Kingdom won't go to the show without taking some thoughts and notions worth a bit home with them. … Instead of the Emperors of Russia and Austria, and Kings of Prussia and Holland, and Hetmans of Cossacks, and so forth,—let us have a Congress of Manufacturers; let all those kings send their representatives to the great show-shop in Hyde Park, and depend upon it, they'll have a hearty welcome from the "Workmen of the United Kingdom." ("Knife-and-Fork" 123)

Despite the fact that Chartists published as many as ten working-class newspapers during the height of the movement, and notwithstanding the fact that the movement gave rise to literary supplements and books of poetry by England's laborers, the upper and middle classes persisted in depicting laborers as illiterate. *Punch*'s archetype of a working-class man cannot communicate with others except through the language of the machine; the "common tongue" of laborers all over the world is not the language of their betters, but a universal language of levers and gears. He is, furthermore, prepared to use this common tongue to welcome the workers of the world to the Great Exhibition.

Punch's positive depiction of a working-class Chartist speaker with this level of enthusiasm for letting "bye-gones be bye-gones" was likely based on a speech given by a "self-

described ‘working man’” named Mr. Dunford at a meeting convened in February of 1850 to drum up enthusiasm for the Exhibition (Auerbach *Display* 65). He stood before a largely middle-class crowd and, like Wilberforce, expounded on the “dignity of labour” and “the industry and talent of the working men of England”; he concluded his speech by urging all the working men in attendance to “come forward with their sixpences” and become subscribers to the Exhibition (65-66). Auerbach suggests the possibility that, like *Punch*‘s laborer, Dunford was a fiction. “It is impossible to know,” he says, “whether Mr. Dunford was a plant,” or, if he was a legitimate representative of the working classes, whether there were actually any “working men there in attendance” to hear his speech (66). According to David Vincent, for nearly a century beginning with “the appearance of Cobbett’s *Twopenny Trash* in 1816,” there was a “diverse and continuing tradition of newspapers claiming to speak for or to working-class radicals” (242). With this in mind, it seems more likely that Dunford’s portrayal of “British society as harmonious” and “devoid of any struggle between labor and capital” was orchestrated to make “the middle classes feel more secure about the working classes” and present “the working classes as unthreatening” (67). There was at least one other meeting of this type that featured a self-proclaimed laborer appealing to the patronage and goodwill of workers, even when the crowd was made up of exclusively middle-class men and women. If, as Auerbach and Vincent suggest, these men were merely acting the part of laborers to calm middle-class fears of a Chartist uprising, it speaks to the prevalence of these anxieties as opening day of the Exhibition approached.

1.23.9 Policing the Working Class

Relations between Chartists and the upper and middle classes were still rife with political tension, and a renewal of political agitation was among the Planning Commission’s greatest

fears; Thomas Carlyle had, after all, ominously warned that the movement was "weighty, deep-rooted, [and] far-extending" less than a decade earlier (2). Upon the dissolution of the Central Committee of the Working Classes, Alexander Redgrave—a former clerk for the nation's four factory inspectors who had recently risen to the appointment of sub-inspector—was placed in charge of "superintending the arrangements to be made in the metropolis for the Working Classes visiting the Exhibition" (Lee 90, Lord Granville to Colonel Gray, qtd. in Shears 144). Under his leadership, the Exhibition adopted a series of measures to ensure that real Chartists did not interfere with the event. In his report to Prince Albert, he notes that the "ordinary military force in the Metropolis has consisted of two regiments of Life Guards, and six battalions of Foot Guards in London," while "a regiment of Light Dragoons, a force of Military Pensioners, the head-quarters of the Artillery at Woolwich, the Sappers, the Marines, and some few detachments from regiments of the line there and at Deptford, in all but not exceeding 13,500 men" were stationed "in the immediate vicinity" (114). While these soldiers were sufficient "for all ordinary purposes" Redgrave placed "additional regiments … in and near London," and more near the city so "as to facilitate the concentration, if necessary, of a large body of troops in the Metropolis" for the "occasion of the Exhibition." Concerned that a visible increase in armed soldiers would escalate political agitation rather than subdue it, Redgrave assured Albert that "the judicious manner in which the troops were disposed" would prevent the public from realizing that "the ordinary force has been augmented even by a single regiment" (114-115). It is unclear whether a portion of these soldiers were dispatched in plain-clothes dress, but the policing presence of thousands of troops who had somehow been rendered invisible to the public suggests that the entire city of London was transformed into a deinstitutionalized panopticon for the occasion of the Exhibition.

Even with a significant portion of England's military forces tasked with keeping the peace, Redgrave and the Planning Commission still worried that both foreign and domestic political agitators would disrupt the event. The surveilling gaze was therefore not limited to the military; aside from doubling the number of troops around the capital, "a large addition" was made "to the strength of the Metropolitan and the City Police," and when all was said and done, "a thousand men" had been "added to the London Police force" (Redgrave 115; Short 198). The trepidation with which the Planning Commision regarded the threat of the lower classes was compounded by reports in the press—some fearful and others dismissive—of probable foreign and domestic political disruptions leading up to and during the Exhibition. In April of 1851, for example—less than a month before the Exhibition's May 1st Opening Ceremony,—the *Times* reprinted a report from the *New York Daily Herald* claiming that a "deputation of American Socialists, filled to the brim with all the combustibles of Red Republicanism, Socialism, Chartism, and anti-rentism," were en route to the Exhibition, and would "take the front rank of the agitators who are to be concentrated in London during the summer." This group had reportedly determined that the Exhibition offered "very favourable circumstances for a strike at the integrity of Her Majesty's empire" ("Time Draws On" 5). On top of this threat, they also pointed out that "there is no prospect of any material abatement of the prevailing starvation in the manufacturing districts, and starvation is always ripe for revolt. The city of London contains a population of 50,000 of similar materials to the mob who stormed the Tuileries and carried off the Royal family to prison and execution. It will be easy, then, for the conspiring social leaders to organize a descent upon Manchester." The combination of starving, disgruntled laborers and Chartist agitators in England's manufacturing districts posed a threat serious enough to make its way into New York's newspapers.

Though the report filtering in from the United States sounded grave, the *Times* relayed it to their middle-class readers with more derision than fear. The "pontifical and bland" *Times* rarely missed an opportunity to offer patronizing "advice to 'our American cousins," and adopted the familiar condescension by dismissing the *New York Daily Herald*'s report as misinformation on the part of an uninformed foreign source (Cunliffe 116). They assured the British people that "the 'prevailing starvation' in Manchester had never come to our knowledge till it was reported from New York," and as far as they knew, "the factory operatives had not only enough, but to spare." The threat of revolution that hung in the air following the third rejection of the People's Charter and uprisings in France was of no concern to Exhibitiongoers in London; the Metropolitan Police Force was more than a match for "the revolutionary daring of Parisians," who "have never yet encountered constables whose daily duty it is to drag frantic Irishmen from a fifth story to the stationhouse." The reporters at the *Times* were so confident that the people England—even the working classes—would not support a revolution, that they called "talk about burnings and stormings, revolutions and republics, … simply ridiculous."

Of course, *Punch* was not willing to let the *Times* have all the fun lampooning the alarmism of the American press, and took up the theme in song lyrics set to the tune of "Yankee Doodle":

YANKEE DOODLE, in a ship,
  Is come from New York city,
And if he should repent his trip,
  I reckon it's a pity;
Of Socialists he brings a crew,
  To kindle agitation;
Reds, Chartists, Anti-rentists, too,
  Who'll preach repudiation.

Chorus.--YANKEE DOODLE, &c.

Socialistic tracts, much more
  Combustible than rockets,
Are stuffed, with bowie-knives in store,
  In YANKEE DOODLE's pockets.
With schemes and projects for a new
  Britannic constitution,
And plenty of revolvers, tu
  Effect the revolution.

…

YANKEE DOODLE's come to town,
  In all his force and power,
He means to burn the Abbey down,
  Bank, Parliament, and Tower.
Oh! yes—and fire the Thames as well,
  Or, my! what fibs e-tarnal
That catawampous print do tell!
  Our screamin' New York jarnal.

The threat of revolutionaries sailing across the Atlantic to wreak havoc at the Exhibition was not cause for concern, but rather an excuse to mock the notion that any non-British entity could affect the English patriotism that prevented a serious uprising.

And yet, on April 22, a mere twelve days after publishing their excoriation of the *Herald*'s report on foreign agitators attending the exhibition, the *Times* dedicated a full page to news of a renewal of the Chartist movement that, "[after] a collapse of three years … begins to pluck up its spirit" ("London, Tuesday" 4). This new iteration of the movement included a renewal of the original six demands[10] as well as an outline of their new "Land Plan," an expanded bid for property ownership in the enclosed countryside. O'Connor had spent the previous five

years developing the Chartist Cooperative Land Company (later the National Cooperative Land Company, and finally the National Land Company), a scheme that aimed to:

> purchase land on which to locate such of its members as may be selected for that purpose, in order to demonstrate to the working classes of the kingdom, firstly the value of the land, as a means of making them independent of the grinding capitalist; and secondly to show them the necessity of securing the speedy enactment of the 'People's Charter', which would do for them nationally what this society proposes to do sectionally; the accomplishment of the political and social emancipation of the enslaved and degraded working classes being the prominent object of the society. ("Rules" 49)

O'Connor proposed removing factory workers from the city and distributing them across the country on small tracts of land owned by the Chartists. In doing so, the workers who left the city would be relieved of the burden of factory labor in poor conditions, contribute to producing enough food for England to feed itself, and meet the property requirements for enfranchisement. The number of working-class voters would thus grow exponentially, and those who remained in the city would have a body of voters looking out for their interests. Those who did not qualify for a tract of land via the ballot system would remain at work in the factories, but benefit from the removal of competition for jobs, which would give them the power to negotiate with their employers for better wages and hours.

The "Land Plan," as it was referred to by O'Connor and the press, was "based upon the principle of co-operation as regards money and labour," and aimed to "throw the industrious upon their resources, and to make idleness a crime when the road to industry was opened" (O'Connor 56). The plan, however, was riddled with challenges, not least of which was the fact that the men to whom the land would be distributed had spent most, if not all, of their lives in urban environments, and had no experience with agricultural work. O'Connor, too, was a poor

steward of money and financial records and was, it would later be found, spiraling toward insanity. It experienced further setbacks when Parliament determined that it did not qualify as a "friendly society" because the pooled resources would only benefit those who succeeded on the ballot, while everyone else was forced to forfeit their subscription money. When the Land Plan inevitably failed, the press saw an opportunity to publish wholesale dismissals of the Plan itself, and of Chartism writ large. The *Times* recalled the *Herald*'s threats of a Chartist rebellion at the Exhibition with gleeful dismissal, boasting that "the continental agitators as condescend to visit this reactionary metropolis at the approaching Exhibition have thus an opportunity of seeing that if we declined to join the dance of revolution it was not for want of an opportunity at home" ("London, Tuesday" 4). They confidently predicted that, despite the history of unrest that had accompanied previous chapters of the Chartist movement, the British working classes did not possess the revolutionary spirit of their counterparts abroad.

The failure of the Land Plan left London's working-class population in the same position they had been before they had been promised a depletion of laborers from urban areas, a decrease in competition for jobs, and increased leverage in negotiating wages with their employers. Considering these circumstances, it is not surprising that the working classes began to view the Exhibition as a potential source of employment as construction on the Crystal Palace got underway. Urban factory workers were joined by agricultural workers "from the provinces" who "left their jobs and journeyed to London in the hope of working on the building" (Short 196). Before much of the work had gotten underway, however, construction was halted when "the glaziers and labourers … struck for an advance of wages" ("Strike" 5). The *Times* reported that the glaziers were unhappy with their wages of "22s. a week by piece-work," and the general laborers wanted more than "half an hour for dinner." Convinced the striking workers would

"create a disturbance," the building contractors called in the police; the "ringleader" was arrested, the "dissident men" were quickly dispersed, and it wasn't long before "fresh hands [were] taken on." (Short 196). Fearing another setback from striking workers, those in charge of hiring opted not to look for "fresh hands" at home, and instead hired over one thousand French laborers, desperate for work in the wake of the collapse of the National Workshops, to complete construction of the Crystal Palace.

Press coverage of the building's construction varied widely depending on whether readers consulted middle-class or lower-class sources. The *Times* breathlessly reported on the builders' progress, noting that the rapidity with which the building was coming together "has really been wonderful," and "beats everything of the kind that has ever been attempted even in this land of industry" ("Crystal Palace" 5). They lavished praise on Mr. Paxton's design; Messrs. Fox and Henderson's skill as contractors; Mr. Henderson and Mr. Barry's suggestion to add a transept to the design; and even Mr. Owen Jones's controversial color scheme for the building's interior. Their "wonderful executive powers, … nice calculations of proportion and forces, … dexterous application of mechanical facilities, and, above all, that organized distribution of labour" has allowed the Crystal Palace to come together quickly ("Crystal Palace" 5). Meanwhile, they reported that the 2,000 laborers executing the construction resembled "a Gipsy encampment." The *Times* remarks that "it is unfortunate in some respects, that when such a structure is completed the energy which created it cannot be very forcibly realized," acknowledging that while the labor itself will be forgotten, the building will stand as a symbol of what "English enterprise and English capital can do." The article in the *Times* contributes to this erasure of labor, too, by speaking of all aspects of construction performed by the workers in the passive voice: the wooden ribs of the transept are "raised upon end and set up in pairs … Ropes

are then attached to this framework from scaffolding on either side of the transept, … and the power used in raising the ribs consists of four 'crabs.'" The men who raise the wooden ribs, attach the ropes, and operate the "crabs" are conspicuously absent from this description, and the reader is left with the impression that the building is rising from the dirt upon the energy of "enterprise" and "capital" alone.

The *Times* was not the only publication that omitted the laborers' efforts in their reports on the construction of the Crystal Palace. The *Illustrated London News*, upon observing the site, proclaimed that they were "not acquainted with any other building in which so many substitutes for manual labour have been successfully adopted in its construction," suggesting that machinery and ingenious devices were responsible for the bulk of the work ("Great Exhibition Building" 428) Other texts went so far as to explicitly depict the structure coming together of its own will, as if by magic. Samuel Prout Newcombe was the editor of *Pleasant Pages for Young People*, a "journal of home education" for children. Each volume contained lessons written in the style of conversations between a set of middle-class siblings and their "Papa," who is eager to instill in them lessons about morality, industriousness, and the value of hard work. As the Exhibition approached, Newcombe published a similarly didactic text called *Little Henry's Holiday at the Great Exhibition* (1851), in which Henry and Rose pose a series of questions about the Exhibition to their father. His responses constitute a thorough history of the planning phases of the event written so that the children of England could learn the names of the great men who made the event possible and internalize a sense of pride in the nation's accomplishments. After learning about how the idea came to be, little Henry asks, "Oh, *how* did [the Crystal Palace] arise?" (15). His father explains that it was done:

> Swiftly and silently, almost like some fairy scene … But how? how did the great building so suddenly rise? As the dry bones that were shaken by the wind came

> together, 'bone to his bone,' so came the columns of this Crystal Palace! They came from afar: an exceeding great army of iron and wooden-bones. By waggon [*sic*] loads they came,—girders and trusses, columns and ribs, of iron and wood. Then, they fitted one to another, forming a framework fairy-like and fine for the transparent glass. No unsightly heaps of brick! no smoking heaps of lime! no click of noisy trowel! no great unsightly scaffolding! All the parts were readily prepared: and as they came from distant places, they quickly joined together, like brethren, who knew each other. Thus ranging in square companies and in long rows, they helped and supported one another until they were tall and strong. Then were they able to bear up their curved-shape friends, the giant ribs, who gratefully formed a roof over their heads, and covered them in from the rain.

In "Papa's" rendition of events, there is no noise associated with the construction of the Crystal Palace. The "girders and trusses, columns and ribs" are summoned from the corners of Great Britain, and "silently" drawn together as if by the "wind," so no one in Hyde Park need suffer the "click of noisy trowel" as the work proceeds. The "iron and wooden-bones" are granted agency of their own, and when they meet, they recognize each other "like brethren." They "quickly join together" of their own accord, and "bear up their curved-shape friends" who "gratefully" assemble into the transept that shields their fellow pieces from inclement weather. The reader is not bothered by the sight of laborers, nor are they compelled to consider the poor working conditions or low wages wrought by the oversaturated market.

Little Henry notices the absence of workers in this rendition of events and asks, "[but] who did it?" His father attributes the work to the contractors, "Messrs. Fox and Henderson," explaining to Henry that "the completion of all this work was undertaken by *two men*. They began it at the end of July, 1850, and it was ready for receiving the goods to be exhibited by about the end of January, 1851" (emphasis in original 16-17). He acknowledges that a project of this magnitude is "a great undertaking for two men," and encourages his children to "[think]

what two men can perform, and when you have plenty of work to do, never sit down and say 'I can't!'" (18). The middle-class veneration for hard work and industriousness becomes the means by which Fox and Henderson—along with their sentient beams and girders—magically erect a fairy palace free from the noisy and "unsightly" evidence of labor. Henry and Rose, the next generation of middle-class capitalists, are thus primed to disregard the physical efforts of labor and give credit solely to those who plan and delegate the work involved.

Ironically, while some publications were busy crafting fanciful scenes in which the Crystal Palace assembled itself, visitors were encouraged to come to Hyde Park to observe the construction as it took place; those who wanted to pass beyond the wooden fences enclosing the site and see the proceedings up close were charged five shillings for the show. The *Times* writes that those who chose to do so would find the performance "an ample compensation for the 5s. entrance fee" ("Crystal Palace" 5). Inside the perimeter fence,

> The orderly arrangement, the intelligence, and unflagging zeal with which the work is pressed forward, the opportunity of watching how a great industrious and skilful [*sic*] population like ours supplies hands fit to accomplish the most novel and arduous undertakings—all these things furnish an ample field for observation and reflection, even when curiosity about the building itself has been exhausted. Accordingly, the number of visitors attracted there daily is considerable, and as much as 20*l.* is usually taken at the doors.

It is work noting that the "unflagging zeal" to be admired is not attributed to the workers themselves, but to the way in which "the work is pressed forward," presumably by Messrs. Fox and Henderson. The "great industrious and skilful population" to which the reporter refers is not that of the laborers, but the contractor that "supplies" the hands to do the work. The laborers are a mere spectacle, putting on a performance of industriousness for a paying audience that is

meant to look past the physical bodies at work and instead appreciate the men whose ideas set them in motion and gave them purpose.

Not surprisingly, *Reynolds's* offered an alternative perspective on the Planning Commission's decision to open the construction site to spectators who could afford the five-shilling admission fee. They published an editorial from "John, the Workman," who claimed to have "intimate knowledge of that construction site," and criticized the same spectacle that the *Times* had praised (qtd. in Herdman 326). The author says that ever since the public had been invited to observe the construction in exchange for a modest fee,

> groups of fashionables, with an energy worthy of a better cause, have torn themselves from their perfumed and silkcurtained chambers to plunge in a chaos of sawdust and broken glass, shavings, girders, columns, planks, joists, beams, sash-bars, and crowbars, piles of fragile side-lights, glazed and unglazed, and wooden gutters, painted rust colour to resemble iron; here amidst this confusion have I seen them utterly confounded, wandering amidst the sloppy, muddy pools, stumbling over and tripping upon wet plants and piles of slabs, falling into the farrows dug for the floor joists.

The reader can easily imagine the well-dressed crowd of onlookers, out of place in the muddy construction site, gaping at the chaos of men and materials. According to "John," even the quality of the materials is in doubt, as close inspection reveals that the gutters are not, in fact, made of sturdy iron, but are merely wood painted to look like the more durable material. Nevertheless, the attraction that draws the paying audience is not the "girders, columns," or "joists," but the workers themselves. He says the visitors "find but one pleasurable sensation amidst all these discomforts, and that is reserved for those only who are present at 'feeding time': then, indeed, do they witness, with wonder, the rush of two thousand hungry men to dinner; then, indeed, do they witness a gastronomic feat" (*Reynolds's* qtd. in Herdman 325-326).

Just as feeding time at the zoo offers the best opportunity for guests to observe the animals, the editorial suggests that the "fashionables" have come for the "pleasurable sensation" of watching the laborers when they are *not* at work. In these mealtime moments when their guard is down and they are at ease among like company, the voyeuristic crowds who trespass on the workers' domain observe the real performance of lower-class manners and behavior.

1.23.10 The Question of Admission Prices

Even as the laborers occupied the attention of spectators at the construction site, the Planning Commission had not yet decided whether to allow them to attend the Exhibition when it opened. The price of admission was set at five shillings, which was substantially more than the average laborer made in a day.[24] On January 25, 1851, the *Illustrated London News* published an open letter from Paxton to Lord John Russell in which he made an argument for eliminating all admission fees after the first two weeks of the Exhibition, save for one day a week when "the higher classes" may "pay for the exclusive privilege of admission, rather than encounter the inconvenience of a crowd" ("Admission" 52). The main benefit would be to "the large body of our own working classes" who "are at this hour depriving themselves of many little household comforts to enable them to visit London" (53). Paxton argued that the Crystal Palace was such a vast structure that "to make merely the circuit of the tables will be to make a journey of no less than 20 miles."[25] If Russell and the other members of the Planning Commission did not waive

---

[24] The skilled glaziers hired to handle the glass panes that made up the Crystal Palace struck because their wages were less than 22s. per week, or roughly 3s. 6d. per day for a glazier working six days a week. General laborers would have made even less.

[25] Later estimates placed the circuit at closer to ten miles.

the entry fee, Paxton feared that "the visitor will be tempted to spend a day" and "become fixtures from morning till night." If, however, they agreed to make admission free, the working classes could attend several times over the course of the Exhibition's five-month run and avoid inconveniencing middle class visitors by crowding the exhibits.

The *Times* weighed in on the price of admission in an article printed the following day. Like Paxton, they agreed that "persons coming to London from the country, or from abroad, should calculate on paying five or six shillings for admission," which they determined to be a small expenditure for an individual, but considering that "working men would like to take with them their wives and children, and five or six shillings for each of these would, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, place the exhibition beyond his reach" ("Cosmopolitan" 4). They, like Paxton, feared that "if he and his family have to pay, … they will go there early in the morning, take provisions with them, and become fixtures for the day, excluding everybody else." Aside from inconveniencing those members of the middle class who were likely to take advantage of the low ticket prices, those in favor of charging the full five-shilling admission fee argued that it would deter thieves, who would surely take the opportunity of picking as many pockets as they could among the jostling crowd. The *Times* disagreed with this argument, too, speculating that the "person who frequents this place for the purpose of filling his pockets at the expense of his neighbours will be the most eager of all to pay the admission fee," since "[nothing] would please him better than to catch all the exclusives off guard, through the persuasion that they were by themselves totally free from the intrusions of the horrid populace." It would be impossible to deter thieves from such an event no matter the price of admission, and besides, they argued, the Exhibition was "not originally meant to be regarded merely as a show, but as a sort of school of industry, calculated to awaken in the breasts of the working class the desire of attaining

excellence in their several callings." The working classes must be permitted to attend such a school without the obstacle of an entry fee so that each may "study, … meditate, … reflect," and "return to his home wiser than he came." Doing so would surely lead to the refinement of the working classes because:

> Whatever tends to bring men together, tends, at the same time, to refine and elevate them. It is solitude that makes savages. It is the habit of withdrawing from the society of mankind that nourishes prejudice and ignorance. Bring men together, place them face to face with each other, and then immediately feel that they are brethren, and instinctively hold out mutually the right hand of fellowship.

Free admission was, the *Times* argued, vital to the improvement of the working classes. Not only would they learn from the exhibits and improve their own work, but they would also become refined by interaction with their betters. Such an event had the potential to elevate the lower classes above the savagery with which they were commonly associated.

The base instincts of the lower classes were central to other arguments about whether they ought to be allowed to attend the Exhibition as well. In his novel about the Exhibition, *1851*, Mayhew notes that before the lower classes were admitted to the Crystal Palace, "the great topic of conversation was the probable behavior of the people" (161). The prevailing concerns about their attendance were: "Would they come sober? Will they destroy the things? Will they want to cut their initials, or scratch their names on the panes of the glass lighthouses?" There were many who seriously believed that allowing entry to the working classes would invite "the invasion of a drunken mob," and sobriety was a central point of discussion during the planning phases. Though the Royal Commission wanted to render the Exhibition accessible to and inclusive of all cross sections of society, "the responses they evoked in the media and urban, vocal public suggested that they had quite the opposite effect, bringing out the middle classes' intolerance"

(Clemm 210). Despite Paxton's calls for free admission, the "ruling classes' residual distrust for the masses" colored the Planning Commission's opinions on the matter, and they continued to regard the five-shilling entry fee as a filter that would keep out undesirables (Short 193).

It was not long before *Punch*, ever ready to lampoon the conversations taking place in the press, published its own open letter "To Joseph Paxton, Esq." from "YOUNG MOB, *alias* THE MASSES, *alias* THE MILLIONS" ("Open House" 43). "Sir," it began,

> My name is MOB, that is YOUNG MOB—son of OLD MOB—and, as the better-behaved son of a wild and ignorant father, I beg leave to thank you, Mr. Paxton, for asking Lord John Russell to throw open the Crystal palace to be seen by me for nothing; for I do assure you I am very much reformed, and altogether better behaved than my relations of the good old times, who used to kick up a rumpus, going about like a swinish multitude that wanted rings in their noses, and wooden collars about their necks.

As if directly addressing Mayhew's questions about whether the "the people" will "cut their initials" or "scratch their names" on the exhibits, "YOUNG MOB" asserts that he may, "with very little looking after" be trusted to enter the Exhibition. He acknowledges that his predecessors comported themselves like the "swinish multitude" depicted in domestic travelogues as more akin to foreign "savage" races than Englishmen but, having been recently granted entry to "the British Museum, the National Gallery," and "Kew Gardens," he asks Paxton whether during that time he has ever:

> chipped the nose off a statue? Have I wrenched the little finger from any mummy? Have I pocketed a single medal? Have I dog's-eared a single volume to be found where I have free entrance in the British Museum? Do I scratch RAPHAEL in the National Gallery, or poke my finger through CUYP'S cows? Do I not pay decent homage to Correggio? And do I mock at the light and darkness of REMBRANDT? Do I trample the flowers in the enclosure of St. James's Park? Do I—(as I fear some of my ancestors might have done)—do I pelt

> the black swans or the Solan goose as sanguinary foreigners? What injury have I committed in Kew Gardens? Show me the twig I have broken, the bud I have crushed.

Punch implies that the modern working classes, unlike their predecessors, did not participate in any of the behaviors mentioned by "YOUNG MOB." The ever-expanding list of institutions which made allowances for the working classes—in the form of expanded hours, reduced entry fees, and designated days on which entry was free—was precedent for the argument that the Exhibition ought to be free, or at least made more affordable for the lower classes. *Punch* used the personification of the "MOB," the "MASSES," and the "MILLIONS" to gleefully point out that arguments about whether the common people could control their urges in public had already been settled. "If I know how to behave myself in the British Museum," asks "YOUNG MOB," "shall I become a brute and savage when under your roof, and enclosed by your walls of Crystal?" Through *Punch*'s use of satire, the reader infers that the profusion of articles expressing concern about working-class behavior at the Exhibition are examples of unnecessary handwringing among the middle classes.

The liberality of *Punch*'s argument is tempered by the final paragraph, in which "YOUNG MOB" acknowledges that:

> Of course there are in my family—for the MASSES *are* a legion—thousands not admissible into the British Museum, Kew Gardens, the National Gallery, and so forth—no, not even into St. Paul's Church, by paying twopence for it. There are who belong to me, the idle, the dirty, the foul-mouthed, and the ragged. Let these be driven from the Crystal Gates.

Here, *Punch* cuts to the heart of the debate over whether the working classes should be allowed to attend the Exhibition. It is not the laborers the middle classes fear, but the immoral and diseased population that threatens to stream forth from the slums and into the world's Great

Exhibition of manufactures: the "underclass" of London. A five-shilling entry fee was insurance against this eventuality, but any admission fee at all was likely to prevent it. For this reason, the Planning Commission proposed "shilling days," on which, as the name suggests, the price ofn entry was reduced to a single shilling. This sum "would allow the respectable artisan in and keep the rabble out," thus ensuring a measure of safety for concerned members of the higher orders (Short 19).

Praise for the inclusion of shilling days was profuse, and the press envisaged a breakdown of class divisions that would heal the wounds of the past several decades with renewed vigor. The *Illustrated London News* believed shilling days would instill "a real fraternity between the two classes of visitors," and asserted that the "amalgamation of people of all ranks and classes will … render the Great Exhibition the most instructive and memorable spectacle of our time, or of any time in the history of civilization" ("London" 467). *Punch* even set aside its characteristic irony to praise the decision to offer discounted admission for the working classes, claiming the "power" of a "shilling piece … conducts its possessor to all the triumphs of all the world; brings him face to face with the doings—and among them the very choicest doings—of the very droll, diversified beings, that make the total of mankind ("Marvellous" 241). The shilling days were thus treated as a resolution to the question of how to involve the working classes in the Exhibition and served as yet another marker of peace and unity between the previously disparate classes.

Punch emphasized this theme in a cartoon titled "The Pound and the Shilling," which depicts a harmonious meeting between members of the upper and lower classes (**Figure 7**). On the righthand side of the illustration stands a military officer in medal-laden regalia, supporting

the arm of a fashionably dressed woman. They are flanked by a gentleman in a top hat, another in the plumed bicorn indicative of another military officer, and several other well-dressed

Figure 7: "The Pound and the Shilling, or 'Whoever Though of Meeting You Here?'" *Punch*, vol. 20, p. 247.

ladies. Mirroring this group is a laborer in a smock and stocking cap, arm-in-arm with a foreign visitor wearing a Moroccan fez. In the background a woman holds her infant child, and several other men look on in headgear indicative of their foreign or working-class status. Between these disparate bodies stand a small throng of children. Those in front of the fashionable men and women wear smart attire and neat bonnets; the girl nearest the viewer holds out a small basket of flowers to the lower-class children, who stand before the laborer in patched smocks with dirty faces. The caption below the cartoon's title reads, "Whoever Thought of Meeting You Here?," at once a polite greeting and an indication of the surprise these classed and racialized groups must feel at finding themselves in the other's company. There is a sense of harmony about the image; most have pleasant expressions on their faces, and the communion between the children suggests the next generation will set aside their differences and mend the divisions between classes. Upon closer inspection, however, there are several elements of the cartoon that indicate a sense of uneasiness on the part of the upper classes finding themselves in such close proximity to members of a group that is foreign to them, whether because of class or nationality. Fear of an influx of foreigners was second only to the fear of the "the dirty, the foul-mouthed, and the ragged," and here *Punch* marries the two by depicting lower-class visitors as aligned with the foreign rather than the domestic. One of the upper-class women shields herself from this group, seeming to hide behind another woman where she can peer at them from relative safety. In the background, a throng of onlookers crowd the balcony, flanking the caricature of Punch himself, whose appearance is often used to suggest to the viewer that all is not as it seems.

Though the inclusion of shilling days created the appearance of support for the working classes' inclusion in the Exhibition, "the effort to erase the boundaries between strangers only

served to draw attention to those boundaries" (Pond 58). Jeffrey Auerbach argues that "the class-based character of the exhibition itself should not be underestimated," and the organization of shilling days and full-price days served to underscore these divisions ("Historical" 102). The first day of the event was reserved for season ticket holders, which cost £3 3*s*. "for a Gentleman," and £2 2*s*. "for a Lady" ("First Report" 28). On the second and third days, admission was set at £1, dropping to the standard 5*s.* rate on the fourth day. It was to remain at that rate for three weeks, after which time the pricing structure assumed a more byzantine nature, fluctuating with the days of the week: Monday through Thursday, the entry fee was set at 1*s*., Fridays it was 2*s*., and Saturdays it reverted to 5*s*. (the Exhibition was closed on Sundays). While this pricing structure afforded many working-class visitors the opportunity to attend on a shilling day, it also offered the middle and upper classes the convenience of paying a little extra on a Friday or Saturday for the luxury of avoiding them. Auerbach suggests that this was, in fact, the point of concocting such an elaborate pricing schedule, as many members of the aristocracy, in particular, flatly "[refused] to attend the exhibition on so-called shilling days" if it meant being inconvenienced by the mob of lower-class visitors (102).

The concept of inconvenience was used often in the press to emphasize how important it was for the upper classes to have their own time at the Exhibition free from the surge of lower-class crowds. Even as the press printed panegyrics to labor and the Commissioners expressed their hope that the Exhibition would "inspire a new relationship between the classes" and "erase the discourse of the classes as strangers," they repeatedly encouraged the upper and middle classes to attend before admission prices were lowered (Pond 65). According to the *Times*, the masses would surely "destroy all comfort" with their presence ("Great Exhibition" 31 May 477). Meanwhile, the *Economist* anticipated a violation of "order and decorum" when the "multitude

… take the Crystal Palace by storm," and the *Illustrated London News* anticipated "a fearful inroad of all sorts of people" when admission prices dropped ("Multitude" 586; "Great Exhibition" 24 May 452). As these fears were aired in the press, *Punch* turned its satirical eye on the anxious upper and middle classes rather than the shilling people. "Sixty Shillings," they said,—the price of a gentleman's season ticket—worried over the "insolent, noisy, swaggering Twelve-pence; "Forty Shillings"—a lady's season ticket—"shuddered at the bare idea of that low, vulgar, riotous, destructive unit"; and "a Dollar—the embodiment of five shillings—made the best haste … to see all that was to be seen, before the Crystal was breathed upon, and for ever and for ever dimmed by One Shilling" ("Marvellous" 241). *Punch*'s claim that the building itself would be "dimmed" by the breath of the shilling people suggests that infection and disease were not the only things to fear in the presence of working-class bodies; they had the power to dim the Crystal Palace's luster with their most basic bodily function. Early attendance was thus not only a marker of class, but was also important if the upper and middle classes wanted to see the Exhibition before the lower orders had a chance to breathe on the glass panels and rob the fairy palace of its renowned sparkle.

Punch's articles and cartoons made it clear that the middle class had at best a hazy understanding of the differences between the lower classes, the working classes, and the poor, highlighting the fact that it was not uncommon for the lower orders to be lumped together as one massive body containing laborers, thieves, and beggars.[13] Even with the shilling fee in place, the Planning Commission feared that some of the rabble might slip past the barricades and disrupt the Exhibition. Worse still was the possibility that England's laborers had been lauded in error and were, in reality, no better than the vagrants in the slums. In order to guard against any eventuality arising from a misunderstanding about the fundamental nature of the broad swath of

the lower orders, the Commissioners determined that "[no] wines, spirits, beer, or intoxicating drinks can be sold or admitted," and even went so far as to ban the submission of alcohol for display unless it met the requirement of being "derived from unusual sources" (*First Report* 28, 9). It was worth denying the upper classes a glass of Madeira in the refreshment room if it meant the working classes were unable to transform into a drunken mob; if they were to be permitted to attend, they would do so sober.

Punch had a field day lampooning the decision to ban all alcohol from being served or exhibited at the Crystal Palace. They suggested that these "wholesome 'conditions and limitations'" might prove difficult to enforce, and that "many illicit distillers, who 'do their spiriting gently' in a back attic, may claim to exhibit their productions as having been derived from unusual sources" ("What May" 22). They imagine how "disappointed, how enraged" their "thirsty countryman" will be when he learns that he cannot "have anything to drink stronger than a glass of water," and imagine him "giving vent to the following philippic: 'Dong it! I must say the building is beautiful enough, but I tell you I should have admired your Glass a precious sight more, if one could have had a drop of summit in it!" ("Not Allowed" 86). The man who distills his own spirits in the attic and the one provoked enough by his forced sobriety to use such colorful language are no aristocrats; though all complaints about the decision appeared in the middle-class press, *Punch* suggests that the only people who will be bothered by the omission of alcohol at the Exhibition will be the working classes, for whom a propensity for drink was considered natural.

Short articles and poems about the drinking habits of the working classes appeared throughout issues of *Punch* leading up to opening day and were often accompanied by humorous cartoons depicting drunken buffoons in working-class clothing. One, titled "Scene — Exhibition

Refreshment Room," shows two men in fustian garb asking the attendant for a "Pint o' Beer, Miss, Please," and looking taken-aback when she tells them they can only have "a Strawberry Ice and a Wafer" (**Figure 8**). The men are not angry or belligerent at the denial, they merely

Figure 8: "Refreshment Room," *Punch*, vol. 21, p. 2

seem confused by the dainty delicacies (which they are unlikely to have tried before) that are offered instead. Even their encounter with an employee of the Exhibition is classed. The woman behind the counter works in a service position, but she is clearly a member of the more respectable working class; she wears a neat uniform, stands up straight, and has delicate features. The laborers, meanwhile, look frumpy in their wrinkled smocks and drooping hats. Furthermore, their elongated and slightly simianized faces are starkly contrasted with her delicate one, making them appear slow to comprehend the situation and even suggesting a regressive physiognomy. While the cartoon appears to poke fun at the absurdity of banning alcohol from the Exhibition, it also reinforces the idea that laborers are at the bottom of the hierarchy of those inside the Crystal Palace, whether socially, physically, or mentally.

Another *Punch* cartoon proposes a "Design for a Fountain to be Placed in the Transept on the Shilling Days" (**Figure 9**). In place of the elegant Crystal Fountain that served as the centerpiece of the exhibition hall is a round tub resembling a liquor barrel, the rim of which is littered with empty flagons and goblets. At the center of the tub are two smaller barrels marked "XXX," and perched atop them are the figures of two squat men in leather gaiters, aprons, and stocking caps, which would have been recognized as working-class attire. They lean together to hoist a jug over their heads, from which a fountain of beer sprays into the air and fills the pool below. In the background, the shilling people look on, clutching the tankards they have filled at the fountain. As in the scene from the Exhibition refreshment room, the facial features of the men holding the jug are exaggerated; in this case, they do not bear the simian features that speak to physiognomic regression, but are plump and smiling, like jolly barkeeps. The men and women in the background are roughly sketched, but the artist has emphasized drooping caps, laborers' smocks, and even one man's darkly colored nose, suggesting the redness that results from an

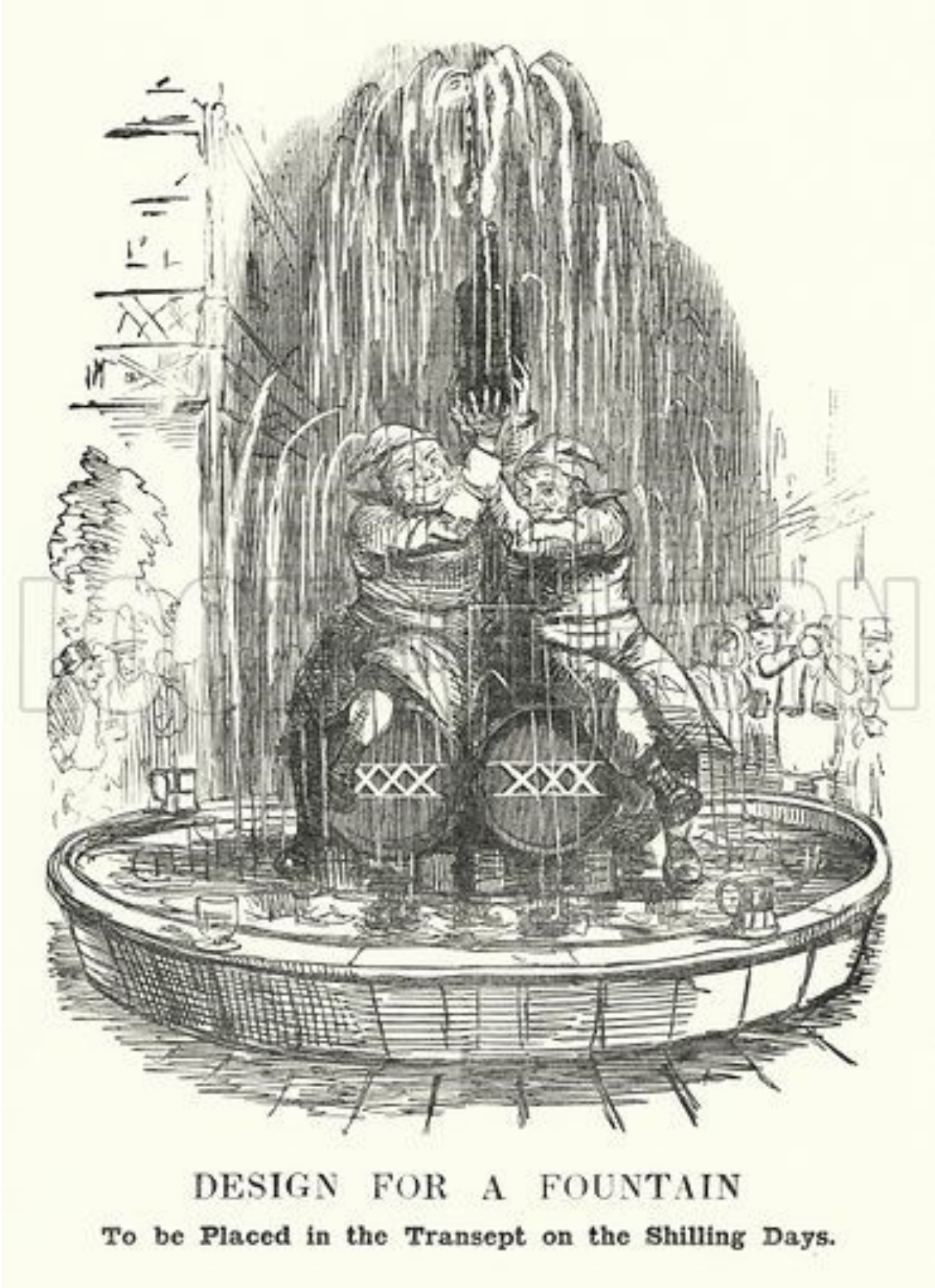


Figure 9: “Design for a Fountain to be Placed in the Transept on Shilling Days,” by John Leech. *Punch*, vol. 20, 1851, p. 257

overindulgence in alcohol. Both of these cartoons can be read ambiguously; perhaps they are mocking the laboring classes and their drinking habits, or maybe they are poking fun at the ludicrous levels of anxiety the middle classes were venting in the press. In either case, they emphasize the baseness of the shilling folk for comic relief.

The press's fixation on the drinking habits of the lower classes was a popular topic of conversation among the middle class, and appeared in religious tracts, sanitary studies, and calls for rational recreation among the lower classes[14]. Chris Otter argues that *Punch*'s initial reaction to the Commissioners' decision to ban alcohol was consistent with the "continuous discourse of desensitization" that characterized this type of "Victorian writing on the poor" (56). Liquor was the "cheapest, easiest way to annihilate sensibility," but middle-class discourse about the lower classes tended to highlight their "dysfunctional sensory apparatus[es]." Long hours spent in dimly-lit factories amid the deafening roar of machinery damaged their eyesight and hearing, bland rations destroyed their sense of taste, and the coarseness of their clothing and linens dulled their sense of touch. It is for this reason that the *Illustrated London News* expressed concern that the working classes at the Exhibition were "more prone to touch, feel, and finger the goods than they ought to have been," initiating a series of articles across several news outlets about whether they would damage or deface the exhibits in their desire for tactile sensation. In fact, the "great topic of conversation" leading up to the shilling days was "the probable behavior of the people. Would they come sober? Will they destroy the things? Will they want to cut their initials, or scratch their names on the panes of the glass lighthouses?" (Mayhew *1851* 161). In other words, would their dysfunctional sensory apparatuses make them more destructive than other visitors? As opening day approached, the middle-class imagination cast the laboring classes as a mob of drunken buffoons, running roughshod through the Crystal Palace, crowding the exhibits and

vandalizing the displays. In light of this shared sense of anxiety, it is not surprising that those who could afford to pay a little more to attend the Exhibition before this mob arrived were eager to do so.

1.24 Part Two: Observing the Working Classes

1.24.1 The Opening Ceremony

Opening day of the Exhibition arrived amid a flurry of activity. Laborers worked overnight to finish the building and place the final submissions from foreign exhibitors on display. Exhibition space in the 990,000 square foot structure was divided by country; Great Britain and her colonial holdings occupied the entire western half of the building, while the east was distributed among foreign exhibitors. In all, over 100,000 objects from Great Britian and forty other foreign countries were on display for the crowd, including the world's largest diamond, whimsical taxidermy, working power looms, and prototypes of Samuel Colt's latest revolvers; visitors would have to traverse nearly ten miles of exhibits if they hoped to see everything the Exhibition had to offer. Albert wrote to his grandmother in Coburg that he was "more dead than alive from overwork," though it was not from the challenges of collecting and arranging the objects on display. Rather, it was the "opponents of the Exhibition" that had worn him out, who, he claimed, "work with might and main to throw all the old women into a panic and drive myself crazy." Chief among the causes for panic was the threat that "strangers … are certain to commence a thorough revolution here, to murder Victoria and myself and to proclaim the Red Republic in England." Fears that foreigners and slum-dwellers would bring diseases into the Crystal Palace was also a concern, and he complained that "the plague is certain to ensue from the confluence of such vast multitudes, and to swallow up those whom the increased price of everything has not already swept away" (qtd. in Heffer 312). Though his tone was sarcastic,

threats to the Queen's life were at the forefront of many conversations about the opening ceremony, both at home and abroad.

Rumors of a class uprising had spread far beyond England's borders, and foreign dignitaries were wary of sending their representatives into what they believed to be a powder keg of rebellion. The King of Hanover was among those who were uneasy about the political environment in England, and he wrote to the King of Prussia about his fears: "I am not easily given to panicking," he said, "but I confess to you that I would not like anyone belonging to me exposed to the imminent perils of these times" (qtd. in Murphy). The King of Prussia, who planned to send his son and grandson as representatives, wrote directly to Albert to question him about the safety of doing so. "Countless hordes of desperate proletarians, well organised and under the leadership of blood-red criminals, are on their way to London now" he wrote, and asked Albert directly if it was truly safe for his heirs to attend. Albert responded in much the same tone he had used to complain to his grandmother, succinctly paraphrasing all the arguments that had appeared in the press and Parliament over the past two years:

> Mathematicians have calculated that the Crystal Palace will blow down in the first strong gale; Engineers that the galleries would crash in and destroy the visitors; Political Economists have prophesied a scarcity of food in London owing to the vast concourse of people; Doctors that owing to so many races coming into contact with each other the Black Death of the Middle Ages would make its appearance as it did after the Crusades; Moralists that England would be infected by all the scourges of the civilised and uncivilised world; Theologians that this second Tower of Babel would draw upon it the vengeance of an offended God. I can give no guarantee against these perils, nor am I in a position to assume responsibility for the possibly menaced lives of your Royal relatives. (qtd. in Rhodes)

In the end, the King's son and grandson attended as special guests of Albert and Victoria, though other dignitaries opted not to risk the loss of their heirs; the Russian Tsar flatly "refused to issue passports to the Russian nobility" due to his fear of the promised insurrection.

For his part, Albert "believed the rumors to be alarmist," but was still wary of the threat (Short 198). After all, Queen Victoria had suffered five attempts on her life over the past decade—at least two from working-class men who had shot at her in the hope of going to prison, where they would be guaranteed enough food to eat and a bed to sleep in—and it had been less than a year since the mentally ill Robert Pate had brazenly approached her carriage and struck her on the head with his metal-tipped cane (Murphy). Two weeks before opening day, therefore, as predictions of violence and expressions of concern for the Queen's safety reached a crescendo, Albert decided to err on the side of caution and the "Royal Commissioners announced that the Opening Ceremony would be closed to the public" (Short 198). There was an uproar in the press and among season ticket holders, who had been promised a seat in the Crystal Palace when the Queen opened the Exhibition in exchange for the small fortune they had spent on their passes. In fact, the backlash was so great that the decision was almost immediately reversed, and Albert "arranged for an announcement in the national press that Her Majesty had graciously decided to permit the public to be present" (Short 198). Over the next four days, season ticket sales skyrocketed from 7,000 to 12,000, and the newspapers resumed their detailed coverage of the exotic items that were arriving at the Crystal Palace each day (Heffer 307).

When the long-awaited first of May arrived, the lower classes flooded Hyde Park, but it was not to stage a rebellion. Instead, they brought tables, ladders, and chairs to stand on, scrambled into the branches of the Park's beloved elms, and crowded along the approach to the Crystal Palace in the hope of catching a glimpse of the Queen. The *Times* reported that "the

masses" congregated from all parts of the city, "but in a spirit far different from that which their nomenclators ascribe to them" ("Opening" 4). "Those honest English workmen, in their round fustian jackets and glazed caps" that had struck fear in the hearts of the Planning Commission over the previous weeks turned out in droves, but it was not to incite a rebellion. Instead, they were there to "take part in the honours of the day," and they "walked, contentedly and happily, amid prancing horses and gaudy liveries." Beginning at the gates of Buckingham Palace, "two lines of police were formed, which extended to Hyde Park, along Rotten-row, to the exhibition" and they were further "reinforced by the Life Guards, stationed two and two at long intervals," and all who held tickets to attend the ceremony were forced to run this gauntlet of security. The same atmosphere of joyful pomp and national pride prevailed inside the Crystal Palace, where the ceremony went as planned. The *Times* reported that the proceedings were so moving that "republicans and anarchists may be made monarchical by such influences, … but there seems little prospect of any political movement in the opposite direction" ("Opening" 5). Albert, the Queen, and the Commissioners breathed a sigh of relief, as it seemed that the *Times* had been correct in dismissing the *Herald*'s reports of a Chartist uprising.

In the days that followed, those who could afford to pay for the privilege of seeing the Exhibition before the masses could dull its luster attended in droves. While news outlets waited with bated breath to see how the working classes would behave on the first shilling day, they passed the time by observing the fashionable crowds of upper-class visitors. In his account of the Exhibition, John Tallis describes the "holders of season tickets" as "persons to whom the aesthetics of the place, its artistic arrangement, its beauty and satisfaction to the outward sense, were the chief attractions" (101). These visitors treated the Crystal Palace as "a lounge and a panorama unequalled for comfort, splendour and variety," but they rarely ventured "beyond the

first reach of the eye." The *Economist* accused them "[lounging] altogether in the nave and under the transept," refusing to leave this central space to see anything other than jewels, fine silks, and other sumptuous wares ("Multitude" 586). Mayhew was particularly biting in his criticism of their behavior, accusing the "elegant and inert loungers" of having "come there to be seen rather than to see," and in the process making "an exhibition of themselves" (*1851* 160). By refusing to move beyond the transept, most commentators believed they were missing the point of the Exhibition.

Given the amount of ink dedicated to mocking the upper classes for their self-interestedness in a space where all the world's ingenuity was available for their perusal, it is not surprising that *Punch* once again weighed in with their own satirical take. A cartoon titled "Young England"[26] depicts three gentlemen in fashionable dress, lounging on the benches that lined the transept (**Figure 10**). One comments that it is "Doosed gratifying ... to see sa much in-dastry," though they are nowhere near the hall of working machinery. All three men wear bored expressions; one stares at his feet, another at the floor, and the third gazes off into the crowd. They have little interest in the "in-dastry" on display around them, and seem put out by the fact that the peripheral crowd is too busy moving among the exhibits to pay them any mind; all the characters in the background are drawn with their heads turned away from the trio. *Punch* confirms the press's criticism that the aristocracy is only interested in attending the Exhibition in

---

[26] "Young England" was a Tory political faction that reached its height in the early 1840s. Boyd Hilton explains that its central tenets focused on "decentralisation, welfare for the poor, feudalism, 'back to the land', back to guilds and apprenticeships, hatred of industrialisation and other forms of modernity" (48). Its members were primarily aristocrats interested in a return to a pre-industrial paternalistic social structure.

their finery as an opportunity to see and be seen. Just as they had once gathered along Rotten Row to perform their class for each other and the admiring crowds of middle- and lower-class onlookers, they gathered under the same Elms that were now encased in the Crystal Palace's grand transept for the same purpose. For once, however, the upper classes were not the main attraction; the countdown to the shilling days had begun, and even on the second and third days

Figure 10: “Young England,” wood engraving by John Leech. From *Punch*'s "Memorials of the Great Exhibition, 1851."

when the price of admission was still set at £1, the papers were once again full of ominous predictions. The *Illustrated London News* questioned whether the shilling days would “diminish the interest of the present crowds,” and attendance numbers would drop upon the introduction of

this “fearful inroad of all sorts of people” (“Great” 24 May 452). Even if “King Mob” had not caused a disruption on the first of May, they might still spoil the dignity of the event with their uncouth behavior.

1.24.2 The Shilling Days Arrive

When three weeks had finally elapsed, it was time for the “shilling people” to determine whether the press’s predictions had been correct. The Planning Commission had taken all possible measures to quell “fears of angry altercations” by placing “38 sergeants and 400 additional constables on duty” in and around the Crystal Palace (Short 199). According to Mayhew, they had been “ordered to be at their posts an hour or two earlier than usual, so that by opening the door before the appointed time, the ‘rush’ might be prevented” (*1851* 153). Additionally, the Police Commissioner had ordered the installation of “a black ball on the roof of the Crystal Palace to signal the police at the park gates when the building was full,” so they could cut off entry to the park and prevent a surge of bodies at the doors (Short 199). Paxton’s concern that if the lower classes had to pay an entry fee they would spend the whole day crowding the exhibits was clearly a concern for those in charge, because “the living stream was directed in one route, and no return was allowed till the end was reached. ‘Pass on—keep moving,’ were the orders” from the officers posted along the route (“Multitude” 586). By the end of the day, it was clear that a one-shilling entry fee did not pay for the same privileges as five. While the upper classes had been permitted to lounge under the transept as long as they pleased, the shilling visitors were not even permitted to return to the exhibits that interested them. The press’s expectations of violence and poor behavior among the working classes led to a theatrical police presence, making the first shilling day tense and perfunctory.

The Planning Commission anticipated that the lowered admission fee would have the working classes clamoring to get into the Exhibition. The five-shilling admission price had drawn upwards of 20,000 visitors on several days, and they reasoned that "five times as many more will come when the charge of admission is five times less." But, according to Mayhew, "on the eventful day, the hundred thousand visitors '*in posse*,' dwindled down to twenty thousand '*in esse*.'" (*1851* 153). In his account of the day's events, Mayhew describes the surprising dearth of visitors:

> The two policemen who had been placed outside the gilt cage of the Mountain of Light,[27] the extra 'force' that was stationed beside the Queen of Spain's jewels, the additional 'Peelites' who had been quartered at every point and turn of the interior to direct the crowd which way to move, stared and grinned at one another as they saw the people saunter, one by one, into the building, instead of pouring in by tens of thousands, as had been anticipated.

The Commissioners reasoned that the working classes' absence was due to the fact that the "masses" were "waiting for their holiday time, when they always spend a large amount of their earnings in recreation and enjoyment." Surely, the next week's Whitsun holiday would allow greater numbers to attend. When the following week arrived, however, and "the same farce … of barriers and police" was repeated a second time, they were once again disappointed by an even lower turnout.

By this point, the Commissioners and the press were eager to determine the reason for the paltry number of visitors on shilling days, and the excuses they offered once again made

---

[27] The Koh-i-noor diamond.

their lack of firsthand knowledge about England's laboring population readily apparent. The upper classes, they knew, did not attend on those days because they had been repeatedly warned about the potential for violence and crowded exhibits. But where were the working classes that were supposed to make up these crowds? The *Economist* assumed they were staying away for the same reason that the upper classes didn't attend on shilling days: fear of the unpredictable mob. The "multitude," they reasoned, "seems to have been afraid of one another," and had stayed away to avoid the violence, drunkenness, and bad behavior that was expected from the other members of their class ("Multitude" 586). The Commissioners took a different stance, reasoning that their absence was due to an extreme sense of patience and self-denial. The working classes' "habitual tendency to postpone pleasure for business" was the reason for low admission numbers; surely they would appear as the weeks wore on (Mayhew *1851* 154).

Mayhew disagreed with these excuses. He accused the Commissioners of putting a "sentimental gloss on the occurrence" in an effort to "account for the disappointment" of such low numbers. He insisted that "'the shilling folk' were neither remarkable for self-denial nor extreme patience in their enjoyments." In fact, he argued, those accustomed to "getting their money hardly, are ever ready to taste the delight of spending it," and anyone "in the least acquainted with their characters" would know that they are, broadly speaking, "peculiarly prone to make business give way to pleasure." He accused the Commissioners of "[varnishing] matters over with a sickly sentimentality, angelizing or canonizing" the working classes rather than "speaking of them as possessing the ordinary vices and virtues of human nature." This tendency to fictionalize the lower classes in whatever light the situation called for was, according to Mayhew, "the besetting sin of the age." After decades of speaking on behalf of the "invisible" and "voiceless" lower classes in factory novels, urban travelogues, and missionary tracts, those

who controlled the discourse of class had become accustomed to depicting them in whatever light was most convenient for their purposes. In this case, the newspapers assumed they were as afraid of each other as the middle classes were, and the Commissioners imbued them with the virtues of caution and self-denial prized by the middle class.

As more reports of the first shilling day filtered in, it became apparent that most of those who attended "appeared to be members of the middle class, with only a few labourers scattered among them" (Gurney 119). Considering the way thrift was prized among the middle classes, it is not surprising that many of them chose to wait until prices dropped to bring their families to the Exhibition. For the average factory worker, however, one shilling represented around two days' wages, making even a single ticket an extravagance that many simply couldn't afford. This fact was made plain in the lyrics to a popular song that appeared soon after the announcement of the shilling days: "If I sell the pig and the donkey, the frying pan and bed, / I will see the Exhibition while it is a bob a head" (Short 199). As Mayhew put it, "the organisers failed to realise that, even at the low cost of a shilling for admission, the 'masses are busy working for their bread'" (*1851* 153).

1.24.3 The Great Glass Hive

In addition to the fact that many of the visitors at the early shilling days were members of the middle class, there was also a contingent of people who, intrigued by the ominous predictions in the press, attended for the sole purpose of seeing how England's laborers comported themselves. The *Economist* reported that "not a few" curious observers "went thither … to see how [the working classes] would behave" ("Multitude" 586). The Crystal Palace may have been built with the intention of displaying commercial goods and machinery, but it also created an architectural space in which visitors could easily become the subjects of examination. The *Times*

acknowledged that scientific observation was the dominant social trend that led to the Exhibition when they said, "[the] truth is just now we are an objective people. We want to place everything we can lay our hands on under glass cases, and to stare our fill" ("M.P.'s" 4). Amid the natural science craze and growing museum culture of the mid-nineteenth century, the Crystal Palace was the ultimate glass case in which to display the trappings of industry and empire. There were, of course, over 100,000 objects on display, but there were also six million visitors that passed through the "palace of glass," many of whom were either foreigners or members of the working class whose lifestyles were also foreign to the middle-class attendees. Deborah Nord points out that by the time the Exhibition took place, the eighteenth-century trend of caricaturizing and mocking "typical street figures" had given way to "the 'scientific' impulse of cataloguing and sorting" that was characteristic of nineteenth-century writing (24). This is readily apparent in Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor*, but it is also evident from the profusion of articles that appeared around the time of the first shilling day that the focus was on the working classes instead of the exhibits.

The fact that the Crystal Palace was made of glass was not the only reason it drew comparison to the glass display cases used in museums and scientific collections. The building's elevated galleries also made it easy to observe the movement of the crowd as they passed from one exhibit to the next on the main floor below. Tony Bennett points out that the building was in fact designed so that "while everyone could see, there were also vantage points from which everyone could be seen, thus combining the functions of spectacle and surveillance" (78). Many of the articles that appeared around the first shilling day depicted the gallery as a classed space belonging to the middle classes. From their perch above the masses, they could observe the behavior of the lower classes without endangering themselves by actually entering the fray. The

writers at *Punch* were among those who claimed this vantage point, and in an article titled "Front Row at the Shilling Gallery," they describe the pleasures of watching the shilling people:

> We like occupying the Front Row of the Gallery on a Shilling day of the Exhibition, and comfortably seated down, with plenty of room for our legs, to enjoy all the little incidents that are being quietly exhibited below. It is like going behind the scenes—if a person can be up in the gallery and behind the scenes at the same time—and peeping through a hole in the big curtain. ("Front Row" 10)

Though the upper classes were criticized for only attending the Exhibition to see and be seen, it is the lower classes that attract the middle-class gaze that is at times observational, surveilling, and voyeuristic. Since the overwhelming police presence already surveils the crowd on the main floor, watching for any breach of conduct that might require punitive measures, the middle classes in the gallery are free to watch the proceedings below as objective observers or voyeurs. When the article's author describes himself as "peeping through a hole in the big curtain," it becomes apparent that his pleasure is derived from the thrill of voyeurism: of watching in secret without being watched in return. The writer evidently shares this thrill with a group of like-minded, middle-class voyeurs, as the use of the plural to describe what "[*we*] like" to do, and his relief at having "plenty of room for *our* legs," suggests that the gallery space and its privileged occupants are all hidden behind the same curtain, immune from returned stares. Since the gallery space is obviously classed, and the "curtain" conceals those who occupy this space, the voyeuristic gaze becomes classed as well. The middle classes may look their fill at the crowds

below, but the lower classes are solely subjects for examination with no ability to return the gaze.[28]

Punch's voyeur goes on to describe the individual vignettes his group observes from their elevated seats. "What a good view you have from the Gallery of the little dinner-party that is generally given once or twice a day in the neighbourhood of the Fountain," he writes, suggesting that he, like the visitors that paid five shillings to tour the construction site, is most entertained by watching the lower classes at mealtime. In fact, the dining habits of the lower classes at the Exhibition were the subject of much attention during the first shilling days. According to Auerbach, the "sight of working-class women nursing their babies in the nave of the Crystal Palace and sitting on the edge of Osler's Crystal Fountain to eat their sack lunches" was "offensive for the upper classes," and both activities were considered "affronts to middle-class notions of propriety and respectability" ("Historical" 104). The middle-class paleontologist Gideon Mantell even wrote in his journal about the disgust he felt at seeing such behavior in public, recalling that among the "[vulgar], ignorant country people" he observed at the Exhibition, there were "many dirty women with their infants … sitting on the seats giving suck with their breasts uncovered, beneath the lovely female figures of the sculptor," while lesser offenders "ate their packed lunches" nearby (qtd. in Auerbach *Display* 155). The designation of

---

[28] It is perhaps not surprising that *Reynold's Newspaper* both recognized the trend of middle-class voyeurism of the working classes, and encouraged its readers to weaponize the gaze in return. As in previous articles, however, *Reynold's* passes over the middle class and makes royalty and the aristocracy its target. They write: "*Reynolds's* does not demand that its readers boycott the exhibition in protest or suggest that they convene in an organized march. Instead, *Reynolds's* suggests that working-class visitors should return the curious gaze cast upon them to mock the idleness of the aristocratic and royal patrons, harnessing this spectatorship for their entertainment and their radical education" (qtd. in Herdman 329).

the working-class mothers as "dirty" is juxtaposed with the smooth marble renderings of the "lovely female figures" on display nearby, and Mantell wishes he "had the power to petrify the living, and animate the marble." According to Gal Ventura, during the nineteenth century "only lower-class women … were depicted in the public sphere while nursing, an act that was regarded as an expression of vulgarity, ignorance, and social inferiority" (Ventura 246). Mantell's journal entry embodies this mindset, attributing beauty, decorum, and cleanliness to the upper classes, while deriding the nursing mothers as dirty and disruptive. His desire to petrify them in exchange for bringing the beautiful sculptures to life indicates that he does not wish to participate in the cross-class relations encouraged by the shilling days, but would prefer to attend the Exhibition only with those who share his sense of middle-class propriety.

The middle classes were so concerned about the nursing and eating habits of the lower classes that *Punch* even published a separate cartoon by John Leech that depicted them partaking in these specific activities (**Figure 11**). In "Dinner Time at the Crystal Palace," a tired and disheveled lower-class crowd gathers beneath a statue of William Shakespeare for their midday rest and refreshment. A woman in the foreground bares her left breast to nurse her infant child while another looks on approvingly; they are flanked by a passel of toddlers and young children. An older woman leans against the left side of the statue's base, watching her husband pour a drink from the dark bottle he has pulled from the lunch basked tucked under her skirts. On the opposite side of the statue, a man swigs directly from his flask. The Bard's eyes are cast down on this scene, another observer of the working classes looking down at them from an elevated position. Inscribed at his feet is a line from *Troilus and Cressida*: "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." Read at face value, the line calls to mind Albert's hope that the Exhibition will bring about "the realization of the unity of mankind" (qtd. in Sorkin 209). The

Figure 11: "Dinner-Time at the Crystal Palace," *Punch*, vol. 21, p. 16

more cynical interpretation, however, involves a threat: the "touch of nature" that the working classes bring to the Exhibition will make "the whole world kin" through the erosion and adulteration of middle-class decorum. If the working classes were to participate in events like the Great Exhibition, their behavior would need to be policed and reformed by their betters.

Like *Punch*, most writers opted to perform their surveillance from above; it was common for accounts of the Exhibition to report on events with a bird's eye view of the proceedings below. American Congressman and editor of the *New York Tribune* Horace Greeley relayed his perspective of the event from an elevated vantage point in his lecture on the lessons imparted by the Great Exhibition. He begins with a tour of the exhibits before the doors have opened for the day but is soon overwhelmed by the "never-ending succession of the sumptuous and the gorgeous" (15-16). Even the "Transept, with its towering Elms, its Crystal Fountain, its gigantic Brazen Gates, its Statues, its Royal Portraits, and caged Diamond" do not interest him; "MAN" he claims emphatically, "is nobler than the works of his hands; let us pause and observe":

> Hark! the clock strikes ten; the gates are opened; the crowds which had collected before them begin to move. No tickets are used; no change given; it is a 'shilling day,' and whoever approaches any of the gates which open to the general public must have his shilling in hand … In twenty minutes our scattered, straggling band of Jurors, Exhibitors, Policemen and servitors will have been swelled by at least ten thousand gazers; within the hour fifteen thousand more have added themselves to the number; by one o'clock the visitors have increased to fifty thousand: every corner and nook swarm with them; even the alleys and other standing room in the gallery are in good part blocked with them; but the wave-like, endless procession which before and below us sweeps up and down the Central Aisle is the grand spectacle of all. (16)

The masses of "shilling day" visitors flood the Crystal Palace, overwhelming the officials on duty and increasing in number with every passing hour. Bodies "swarm" every corner of the

building, and they pass, "wave-like" up and down main aisle. Greeley's account gives the impression that the bodies are a force of nature, like bees crowded in a hive, or the unrelenting current of a flowing river that has engulfed the "Jurors, Exhibitors, Policemen and servitors" in its path. As luck would have it, he is positioned above the rapids where he can take in the scene from relative safety:

> From our elevated and central position almost the entire length of this magnificent promenade is visible … Far as the eye can reach, a sea of human heads is presented, denser toward the center just before us, but with scarcely an interruption any where. The individuals who make up this marching array are moving in opposite directions, or turning off to the right or to the left, and so lost to our view … but the river flows on unchecked, undiminished, though the particular drops we gazed on a minute ago have passed from our view for ever. (Greeley 16-17)

The scene below calls to mind notions of the sublime, which Edmund Burke describes as "[whatever] is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of … danger," or "whatever is in any sort terrible, or is analogous to terror" (39). Greeley gives the impression that to be among the crowd of shilling people is to be swept along where the current takes them, one drop in an ever-replenishing torrent of water. There are no individuals, just a "sea of human heads" that make up a greater body of largely working-class people. Greeley describes it as extending "[far] as the eye can reach," a phrase that suggests both endless replenishment and the terror one might feel when looking at a powerful river in nature. While the ground floor is chaotic, however, the gallery is a world apart, offering a safe space from its elevated position above the fray below.

The perception of the crowd on shilling days as a terrific force of nature invited all kinds of analogies to the natural world, and most popular—especially among the writers at *Punch*—was the depiction of the Crystal Palace as a great glass beehive in which the laboring drones

buzzed about in service to the Queen. American finance magnate George Peabody called the Crystal Palace a "bee-hive" where the "inventive genius of man" was on display (81). In the "Preface to the Twentieth Volume," *Punch* refers to the Exhibition as "the Great Hive to which the World's Bees have contributed their labours" (Stevens 65-66; "Preface" 81). *Punch* makes use of the analogy again in "The Happy Family in Hyde Park," a brief article that portrays Prince Albert in the style and cadence of a carnival barker attempting to entice a crowd: "[walk] in, walk in, ladies and gentlemen," he says, "and see the interestin' spectacle of the United and Happy family … Here you be'old 'em livin' together in peace and 'armony, like so many industrious bees in a glass 'ive" (36). This overview of the world's contributions to the Exhibition is accompanied by a cartoon of the same title that depicts Albert among a small crowd of European onlookers standing outside a miniature version of the Crystal Palace, calmly peering through the glass at the chaotic scene within (**Figure 12)**. Inside the glass case, non-European foreigners perform their native dances in a frenetic swirl of motion. Auerbach and Qureshi, among others, have rightly interpreted this cartoon as a commentary on the division between "civilized" Europeans and exotic or "savage" foreigners at the Exhibition. I argue, however, that it also offers the suggestion of England's working classes among the performers on display inside. Two stationary bodies are visible among the movement: one stands near the top center in the smocked shirt of a mechanic with his hands in his pockets, staring at the dancer before him. The other, backed into the top left corner, wears a simple overcoat, clasping his hands behind his back as he gazes up at the arched roof of the transept. They are remarkable for their deliberate, stationary poses, and their westernized clothing leaves room for the interpretation that the working classes are grouped with those inside the miniaturized exhibition space both to observe the foreign exhibits, and as novelties to be observed by their "betters."

THE HAPPY FAMILY IN HYDE PARK.

Figure 12: "The Happy Family in Hyde Park," *Punch*, vol. 21, p. 38.

Punch's final reference to the Crystal Palace as a great beehive occurs in "Pictures for the Exhibition of Industry," in which they suggest that the "glass hive … ought to show the bees at work" (42). Like they did with their cartoon from the previous year, "Specimens from Mr. Punch's Industrial Exhibition of 1850 (To Be Improved in 1851)," they argue that a "real exhibition of Industry would require that the INDUSTRIOUS themselves should be exhibited as well as their productions" (**Figure 6**). Rather than place the workers under glass cases as they had previously suggested, however, (since "needlewomen cannot be starved, nor tailors 'sweated,' nor miners blown up, amongst a multitude of people, with any degree of safety") they propose "that paintings of our various artizans*,* labouring in their usual vocations, should accompany the display of the substances and fabrics which we owe to the labour or ingenuity of the respective classes. Shall we ostentatiously show off all manner of articles of comfort and luxury, and be ashamed to disclose the condition of those whom we have to thank for them?" *Punch*'s suggestion is rooted in the fact that though the focus of the Exhibition was industrial machinery and manufactures, there was still a notable lack of representation of the men and women who operated the machinery in England's factories.

Punch had long noted the lack of laborers represented at the Exhibition, but now that visitors roamed the halls of the Crystal Palace, their absence among the industrial exhibits was even more conspicuous. In the many lithographs, engravings, watercolors, and drawings of the Exhibition that were disseminated in souvenir guidebooks and the press, for example, the Hall of Moving Machinery was depicted as clean and well-ordered, humming along autonomously, without the aid of the workers who would normally have operated them. Even in the official watercolors of the Exhibition commissioned by Prince Albert, this space is depicted as fully mechanized **(Figure 13).** Middle-class women and children in bright bonnets and shawls stroll

Figure 13: "The Great Exhibition: Moving Machinery," c. 1851-2, by Louis Haghe. Royal Commission Trust, RCIN 919979.

along the spacious aisle, accompanied by a few men in smart top hats and starched collars. They pause to watch the massive power loom and the great spinning wheel of an automatic mill, while two laborers lean against the railing that separates the visitors from the machinery. The laborers' heads are bent together in conversation, as if discussing the finer points of the looms and steam engines that whir around them. The vast hall stretches on into the distance, its size indicative of its importance to the Exhibition. In all this space, however, there is not one attendant to be found; no one to feed the shuttle through the loom or gather whatever substance is being ground by the mill. The space allotted to each piece of machinery means there are no small spaces to squeeze through, either, so the child laborers that would usually be present to clear dust and debris from the tight spaces in a factory are absent as well. Sabine Clemm points out that "the general emphasis that the Exhibition placed on consumption of the final product rather than the manufacturing process" *required* an erasure of the labor that made it possible, as a display that

included the grim reality of factory life would likely have dimmed the perceived luster of the fine fabrics on display (210). In most representations of the Exhibition, therefore, the “production process appeared sanitized and dehumanized,” while the "poverty and suffering that often went along with it remained invisible” (211). Just as middle-class texts had portrayed the building coming together of its own volition, depictions of the Hall of Working Machinery as fully mechanized suggested that the fabrics wove themselves together in the same manner. Worse, still, was the fact that since most middle-class visitors had never been inside a real factory, many of them would likely assume that the sanitized Hall of Working Machinery was representative of actual factory conditions.

1.24.4 The Future of Labor

Ironically, while the erasure of labor discounted the contributions of the working classes at the Exhibition, this new sanitized perception of factory work made it possible for perceptions of the lower classes to be reset in the middle-class imagination. As the Exhibition continued its run, it became apparent that the working classes were not going to rise up in rebellion, nor were they likely to make drunken spectacles of themselves or damage the wares on display. Their behavior was consistently benign, inviting praise and not a little surprise from those who had feared the worst from them. In fact, their keen interest in the exhibits caused many news outlets and social commentators to draw comparisons between them and the fashionable aristocrats who had taken little interest in any of the objects on display. Mayhew wrote that the working classes “surpassed in decorum the hopes of their well-wishers,” and praised them for regarding the Exhibition as “more of a school than a show.” What had been “a matter of tedium, and became ultimately a mere lounge, for gentlefolks,” he said, “is used as a place of instruction by the people” (*1851* 161). The *Illustrated London News* conceded that “the

visitors whose presence was to destroy all comfort really promote it, by moving about to *see the Exhibition*, instead of sitting, as their superiors in station did, blocking up the passages to *see each other*" ("Great" 31 May 477). In light of this surprising turn of events, middle-class discourse about working-class visitors shifted from a tone of fear and trepidation to one of paternalistic pride in their desire to learn as much as they could from the exhibits. After a long period in which they had been the subject of fear and derision, the laboring crowds were suddenly cast as discerning students of industry that lacked the artifice and pretension of their social betters.

Mayhew captured this rhetorical shift when he explained that while the "working-man has often little book-learning," what knowledge he has "constitutes the education of life." His "understanding of human motives, and the acquisition of power over natural forces, so as to render them subservient to human happiness" is his greatest attribute, of which he "has generally a greater share than those who are said to belong to the 'superior classes'" (*1851* 161). The *Economist* also praised the working classes for their innate understanding of what among the exhibits "was worthy of admiration," and praised them for being "as gentle, as kindly, and as trustworthy, as they are strong and ingenious" ("Multitude" 586). This newfound admiration of the working classes was centered on their innate sense of industry, their intuitive understanding of "human motives," and their instinctual ability to bend "natural forces" to the will of industry. Central to these qualities was their lack of "book-learning"; the failure of England's system of primary education had prevented them from absorbing any of the adulterating influences that rendered the middle and upper classes unfit for factory work. Even as middle-class discourse about the laboring

classes shifted to render them in a more positive light, it was wielded to cast them as the natural bearers of the burden of labor.

The new narrative of the working classes as noble and worthy of admiration extended beyond the confines of the Crystal Palace as well, and accounts of their behavior in London's other venues began to appear in various reports and news outlets. When the Exhibition closed in October, the final tally revealed that of the roughly six million "persons who entered the building," "over four million" had attended on shilling days, a number that ultimately "ensured the financial success of the Exhibition" (Redgrave 111; Short 199). The working classes had flocked to London in greater numbers than the Planning Commission had dared to hope for following the low turnout at the first shilling days. While some were "day excursionists," arriving by train or omnibus in the morning and returning home in the evening, many made the most of their travel fare by extending their stay by a few days or even a week (Redgrave 112). During their stays in the city these visitors behaved like tourists, visiting as many attractions as their time and money would allow. According to Redgrave's report on the decorum of the working classes throughout London during the Exhibition, "the various National Monuments of art and of historical interest, the Galleries of paintings, of sculpture, of scientific and popular collections, were," like the Exhibition itself, "visited with extraordinary eagerness and with untiring energy" (120). Most foreign visitors were granted free admission through their consulates to Windsor Castle, the House of Lords, the Woolwich Arsenal and Dockyards, and the Royal Mint, among other attractions, the British Museum, but even the National Gallery, the pleasure-grounds at Kew, and St. Paul's Cathedral had offered extended hours and free admission for the domestic working classes. There were even a few titled

landowners[29] who threw open the doors of their estates to admit "all willing to seek the opportunity" of seeing firsthand how members of the highest classes lived (120).

Drunkenness and assault accounted for nearly half the offenses for which people were arrested in London during the course of the Exhibition, and Redgrave attributed these incidents to "the failings and offenses into which the labouring classes are most prone to fall" (124). But when the numbers were gathered and compared to those of the previous year, it was discovered that the rise in these crimes was less than four percent which, considering the increased numbers of foreign and domestic visitors packed into the metropolis, was deemed a victory for law and order. In keeping with this outcome, the museum directors, clergymen, and nobility who opened their establishments to the visiting public reported an influx of visitors, but no disruptive behavior to speak of. From March to September of 1851, the British Museum more than tripled the number of visitors from the year before but, according to Sir Henry Ellis, "not a single instance occurred during the whole time in which, as chief officer of the Museum, I was called upon to interfere in regard to any irregularity" (Redgrave 121). Similar reports were issued from the National Gallery, where the Assistant-Keeper reported "No injury … to the pictures, and … no occasion to call in additional aid, or any assistance of the Police Force in keeping order," and from the Dean of St. Paul's, who reported that, despite a crowd ranging from 600 to 6,000 visitors *per hour*, there was "no one instance, or hardly one" in which "our attendants [were]

---

[29] Redgrave reported that "the Duke of Northumberland, the Earl of Ellesmere, and the Lord Ward determined to risk the experiment of admitting to their mansions and galleries all willing to seek the opportunity. The success of these concessions must be sought in the proper demeanour of the visitors, and the amount of gratification which has been diffused: the effect, it is to be hoped, will be traced in the gradual development of taste for amusements which tend to interest the mind, rather than merely to allay excitement" (120).

compelled to call in the assistance of the police" (121). In the end, the working classes were lauded for maintaining "the most remarkable quietude and good order," and credited with demonstrating to foreign visitors that class unity was possible (Redgrave 111).

1.24.5 The Aftermath of the Exhibition

Considering the success of the Exhibition and its contribution to the discursive shift in depictions of the working classes, it is not surprising that scholars and historians look to 1851 as a turning point in British history. Louise Purbrick points out that the Exhibition initiated "various historical phenomena" that changed the social, commercial, and cultural layout of the nation. "[After] 1851," she says, "the principles of modern design are accepted, shopping becomes dreaming, empire is popularised and the working class no longer presents a revolutionary threat since its representatives visited [the] Crystal Palace and learnt how to behave in public" (1). It is perhaps for this reason that studies of the Exhibition tend to "summarise the future rather than assess the past" (2). Shifting perceptions of the working classes altered the nation's political landscape as well, and are credited with putting an "end" to the tensions associated with working-class radical politics. Purbrick asserts that "1851 contributed to a state of amnesia about the political significance of Chartism and the extent of its state suppression," which was at least in part achieved by replacing middle-class discourse about the threatening masses of political activists with a wave of texts that described laborers as noble, studious, and well-ordered (4). In his extensive work on the Chartist activities that took place just prior to the Exhibition, John Saville points out that the explosive events of 1848 could easily have made *that* year the agreed-upon turning point of the nineteenth century, but the timing of the Exhibition only three years later had "wiped" the "memory of the mass arrests and jailings … from public memory," and "assisted in the process of indifference and forgetfulness" (202). The close of the Exhibition was

thus considered to have brought with it a clean slate for class relations, and a new mindset about the display and consumption of commercial goods.

While class tensions may not have been entirely put to rest by the Great Exhibition, they were alleviated by the cultural turn toward consumerism. In fact, the gradual introduction of the working classes into public and civic spaces was due, in large part, to the promise that entry into these spaces went hand-in-hand with entry into the nation's economic system. Assurances that the "mechanic's daughter" would want to purchase fine ribbons if she was allowed to observe her social and economic "betters" in the Royal Parks paved the way for working-class admission to these spaces, just as the promise that laborers at the Exhibition would want to purchase the goods they saw on display convinced the Commissioners to make allowances for their entry fees. But while the promise of creating another consumer was the catalyst that opened the doors to these spaces, the prospect of cross-class interaction in these spaces still made members of the middle class nervous. To alleviate this anxiety, they wielded control of the cultural discourse of class to either praise the behavior they hoped to see, or condemn the behavior they feared the lower classes would enact.

Financial reports from the Exhibition indicate that it "made a substantial surplus of some £180,000," and Albert wasted no time putting forth "proposals for an 'Institution which should serve to increase the means of Industrial Education, and extend the influence of Science and Art upon Productive Industry" (Hobhouse 49-50). The Royal Commission used the profits from admission fees to buy a large tract of land in South Kensington where they built the Natural History Museum, the Science Museum, and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Meanwhile, the Crystal Palace was disassembled, removed from Hyde Park, and re-erected in Sydenham two years later. In its new iteration, it was no longer just an exhibition hall where a cross-section of

London's residents went to admire the goods on display; now they could purchase whatever they saw. The move "exploited" the "commercial potential of the Crystal Palace," and it was reimagined as something more akin to a department store than a museum (Gurney 123). Others, it seems, also envisioned a consumer utopia during their time at the Great Exhibition; the "department store magnate" William Whiteley was reportedly "so inspired by the glass building that he began to dream of large retail stores" that he called "universal providers' shops," and Charles Henry Harrod began the process of expanding his modest grocery business to include luxuries like cosmetics and stationery (116). While the lower classes continued to attract suspicion from the middle class, a new era of display and consumption began in the second half of the nineteenth century that focused on "ordering objects for public inspection," thus shifting the gaze from the laborer to the products of industry (Bennett 74).

Works Cited

Allen, Rick. “John Fisher Murray, Dickens, and ‘the Attraction of Repulsion.’” *Dickens Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 3, 1999, pp. 139–159.

Altick, Richard D. “The Crystal Palace Year: 1851.” *The Shows of London*, Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1978, pp. 455-469.

Ashworth, W. “British Industrial Villages in the Nineteenth Century.” *The Economic History Review*, vol. 3, no.3, 1951, pp. 378-387.

Auerbach, Jeffrey. “The Great Exhibition and Historical Memory.” *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol. 6, no. 1, 2001, pp. 89-112.

---. *The Great Exhibition of 1851: a Nation on Display*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1999.

Bailey, Peter. *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885,* London: Routledge, 2014.

Bailey, Victor. “The Fabrication of Deviance: ‘Dangerous Classes’ and ‘Criminal Classes’ in Victorian England.” *Protest and Survival: The Historical Experience: Essays for E.P. Thompson*, eds. John Rule and Robert W. Malcolmson, London: Merlin Press, 1993, pp. 221-256.

Beasley, Edward. “Making Races.” *Victorian Review*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2014, pp. 48-52.

Beaumont, Matthew. *Nightwalking: A Nocturnal History of London*, London: Verso, 2015.

Beeton, Isabella. *Beeton’s Book of Household Management*, New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1861.

“Belgravian’s Lament.” *Punch; or, The London Charivari*, *Punch; or, The London Charivari,* vol. 19, June 1850, p. 43.

Bennett, Tony. “The Exhibitionary Complex.” *New Formations*, vol. 4, 1988, pp. 73-102.

Beier, A.L. “Identity, Language, and Resistance in the Making of the Victorian ‘Criminal Class’: Mayhew’s Convict Revisited.” *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 44, no. 3, 2005, pp. 499-515.

Bodenheimer, Rosemarie. *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction,* Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988.

Borsay, Peter. “Nature, the Past and the English Town: A Counter-Cultural History.” *Urban History*, vol. 44, no. 1, 2017, pp. 27-43.

Braddon, Mary Elizabeth. *Aurora Floyd*, vol. II, London: Tinsley Brothers, 1863.

---. *Lady Audley’s Secret*, ed. Lyn Pykett, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012.

Brantlinger, Patrick and Donald Ulin. “Policing Nomads: Discourse and Social Control in Early Victorian England.” *Cultural Critique*, vol. 25, 1993, 33-63.

Breton, Rob. “Crime Reporting in Chartist Newspapers.” *Media History*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2013, pp. 244-256.

Brewer, George. *The Juvenile Lavater; or, a Familiar Explanation of the Passions of Le Brun, Calculated for the Instruction and Entertainment of Young Persons; Interspersed with Moral and Amusing Tales, Illustrating the Benefit and Happiness Attendant on the Good Passions, and the Misfortunes with Ensue the Bad, in the Circumstances of Life*, London: A.K. Newman, 1812.

Briggs, Asa. *Victorian cities*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970.

---. *Victorian People: A Reassessment of Persons and Themes, 1851-67,* Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1975.

Briggs, Jo. "1848 and 1851: A Reconsideration of the Historical Narrative." *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History*, ed. Dino Franco Felluga, Extension *of Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net*, 2012, n. pag.

Briskin, Alan. *The Stirring of Soul in the Workplace*, San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1998.

The British Library. "The People's Charter." *British Library*, bl.uk/collection-items/people-charter. Accessed 24 June 2021.

Bullen, Arthur Henry. "Preface." *Musa Proterva: Love Poems of the Restoration*, Ed. A.H. Bullen, privately printed, 1902.

Bulwer Lytton, Edward. *England and the English*, Leipzig: Frederick Fleischer, 1834.

Burke, Edmund. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. James Boulton, South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968.

Cadbury, Edward and George Shann. *Sweating*, London, 1907.

Carlyle, Thomas. *Chartism*, London: James Fraser, 1840.

Carpenter, Mick. "From 'healthful exercise' to 'nature on prescription': The Politics of Urban Green Spaces and Walking for Health." *Landscape and Urban Planning*, vol. 118, 2003, pp. 120-127.

Carpenter, William. *The People's Book; Comprising their Chartered Rights and Practical Wrongs*, London: W. Strange, 1831.

Churchill, David. "The Spectacle of Security: Lock-Picking Competitions and the Security Industry in mid-Victorian Britain." *History Workshop Journal*, vol. 39, no. 80, pp. 52-74.

Clare, John. "The Mores." *John Clare: Major Works*, eds. Eric Robinson and David Powell, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004, pp. 167-169.

Cohen, Deborah. *Household Gods: The British and their Possessions*, New Haven: Yale UP, 2006.

Cohen, Stanley. *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, 3rd ed., London: Routledge, 2002.

Colby, Robin B. *Some Appointed Work to Do: Women and Vocation in the Fiction of Elizabeth Gaskell,* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995.

"The Cosmopolitan Exhibition." *The Times*, 26 Jan. 1851, p. 4.

Croll, Andy. "Street Disorder, Surveillance and Shame: Regulating Behaviour in the Public Spaces of the Late Victorian British Town." *Social History*, vol. 24, no. 3, 1999, pp. 250-268.

"The Crystal Palace in Hyde-Park." *The Times*, 6 December 1850, p. 5.

Cunliffe, Marcus. "America at the Great Exhibition of 1851." *American Quarterly*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1951, pp. 115-126.

Davie, Neil. "'A "Criminal Type" in All But Name': British Prison Medical Officers and the 'Anthropological' Approach to the Study of Crime (c.1865-1895)." *Victorian Review*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2003, pp. 1-30.

Davis, Philip. *The Victorians.* Oxford English Literary History, Vol. 8: 1830-1880, 2002.

Davison, Graeme. "Exhibitions." *Australian Cultural History*, vol. 40, no. 3, 2009, p. 376-377.

Dellheim, Charles. "The Creation of a Company Culture: Cadburys, 1861-1931." *The American Historical Review*, vol. 92, no. 1, 1987, pp. 13-44.

Dickens, Charles. *A Christmas Carol*, London: Bradbury and Evans, 1858.

---. *Bleak House*, ed. Nicola Bradbury, New York: Penguin, 1996.

---. *Dombey and Son*, London: Chapman and Hall, 1890.

---. *Hard Times*, London: Bradbury and Evans, 1854.

---. "Introduction to the first cheap Edition of *Oliver Twist*." 1850, British Library, London, Dex.289, 1.

---. "Last Words of the Old Year." *Household Words*, vol. 2, no. 41, 4 Jan 1851, pp. 337-339.

---. "New Uncommercial Samples: On an Amateur Beat." *The Uncommercial Traveller and Other Papers, 1859–1870*, eds. Michael Slater and John Drew, London: Dent, 2000, pp. 377–385.

---. *Old Curiosity Shop*, London: J.M. Dent, 1925.

---. *Oliver Twist*, eds. Paul Negri and Tom Crawford, Dover, 2002.

---. *Our Mutual Friend*, New York: Penguin

---. "Greenwich Fair." *Sketches by Boz*, London: Chapman and Hall, 1854, pp. 67-71.

Dickens, Charles and Richard Horne. "The Great Exhibition and the Little One," *Household Words*, vol. 3, no. 67, 1851, pp. 356-360.

Disraeli, Benjamin. *Sybil, or The Two Nations.* London: Oxford UP, 1975.

Doyle, Richard. *Bird's Eye Views of Society*, London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1864.

Dreher, Nan H. "The Virtuous and the Verminous: Turn-of-the-Century Moral Panics in London's Public Parks." *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, vol. 29, no. 2, 1997, pp. 246-267.

Dyos, H. J. "The Slums of Victorian London." *Victorian Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1, 1967, pp. 5-40.

Elliott, Dorice Williams. "Servants and Hands: Representing the Working Classes in Victorian Factory Novels." *Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2000, pp. 377-390.

Engels, Friedrich. *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844,* London: S. Sonnenschein & Co., 1892.

Fahnestock, Jeanne. "The Heroine of Irregular Features: Physiognomy and Conventions of Heroine Description." *Victorian Studies*, vol. 24, no. 3, 1981, pp. 325-350.

First Report of the Commissioners for the Exhibition of 1851, London: Spicer Bros. Wholesale Stationers, 1852.

Foreman, Amanda. "Park of Ages." *American Scholar*, vol. 82, no. 3, 2013, pp. 44-53.

Forster, John. *The Life of Charles Dickens*, Vol. I: 1812-1842, Boston: James R. Osgood and Co., 1875.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison,* trans. Alan Sheridan, New York: Vintage, 1995.

Freire-Medeiros, Bianca. *Touring Poverty*, New York: Routledge, 2015.

"Front Row of the Shilling Gallery." *Punch; or, The London Charivari*, vol. 21, 1851, pp. 10-12.

Gaskell, Elizabeth. *North and South*, ed. Patricia Ingham, London: Penguin, 1995.

Gaskell, Peter. *The Manufacturing Population of England, Its Moral, Social, and Physical Conditions, and the Changes Which Have Arisen from the Use of Steam Machinery with an Examination of Infant Labour*, London: Baldwin and Cradock, 1833.

Gavin, Hector. *Sanitary Ramblings: Being Sketches and Illustrations of Bethnal Green*, London: John Churchill, 1848.

George, M. Dorothy. *Hogarth to Cruikshank: Social Change in Graphic Satire*, New York: Walker & Co., 1967.

"Glass Houses of Parliament." *Punch; or, The London Charivari*, vol. 19, June 1850, p. 81.

Goode, Erich, and Nachman Ben-Yehuda. *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance*, 2nd ed., London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Goodridge, John and Bridget Keegan. "Introduction." *A History of British Working Class Literature*, eds. John Goodridge and Bridget Keegan, Cambridge UP, 2017, pp. 1-9.

"The Great Exhibition." *Illustrated London News*, 24 May 1851, p. 452.

"The Great Exhibition." *Illustrated London News*, 31 May 1851, p. 477.

"The Great Exhibition Building.—Constructive Details." *Illustrated London News*, 30 Nov. 1850, p. 428.

"Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations." *Athenaeum*, no. 1158, 5 Jan. 1850, p. 18.

Greeley, Horace. *The Crystal Palace and its Lessons: A Lecture*, private copy, 1851.

Greenhalgh, Paul. *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939,* Manchester: Manchester UP, 1988.

Greenwood, James. *Odd People in Odd Places; Or, the Great Residuum*, London: Frederick Warne, 1883.

Gurney, Peter. "An Appropriated Space: The Great Exhibition, the Crystal Palace and the Working Class." *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Essays*, ed. Louise Purbrick, Manchester UP, 2001, pp. 114-145.

Hammerton, R.J. "Capital and Labour. Cartoon No. V." *Punch; or, The London Charivari*, 12 Aug. 1843, vol. 5, pp. 48-49.

"The Happy Family in Hyde Park." *Punch; or, The London Charivari*, vol. 21, p. 36.

Hardy, Thomas. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Represented*, London: Harber & Brothers, 1891.

Heffer, Simon. *High Minds: The Victorians and the Birth of Modern Britain*. London: Random House, 2013.

Herdman, Jenna. "The Prince and the Penny Chartist: The Great Exhibition in *Reynolds's Newspaper*." *Victorian Periodicals Review*, vol. 53, no. 3, 2020, pp. 313-337.

Hilton, Boyd. "Disraeli, English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit." *A Union of Multiple Identities: The British Isles c. 1750-c.1850*, eds. Laurence Brockliss and David Eastwood, Manchester: Manchester UP, 1997, pp. 44-59.

Himmelfarb, Gertrude. "Introduction." *Alexis de Tocqueville's Memoir on Pauperism*, trans. Seymour Drescher, London: Civitas, 1997, pp. 1-16.

Hirschi, Travis. *Causes of Delinquency*, Berkeley: U of California Press, 1969.

Hobhouse, Hermione. "The Legacy of the Great Exhibition." *Royal Society for Arts (RSA) Journal*, vol. 143, no. 5459, 1995, pp. 48-52.

Hobsbawm, Eric. *Industry and Empire: From 1750 to the Present Day,* New York: New Press, 1999.

"House of Commons, Tuesday, February 4, 1851: Address in Answer to the Speech." *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, vol. CXIV, 1851, pp. 52-134.

"House of Commons, Thursday, February 21, 1833: Public Health." *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates,* vol. XV, 1833, pp. 1049-1059.

Hwang, Haewon. *London's Underground Spaces: Representing the Victorian City, 1840-1915*, Edinburgh UP, 2013.

"Hyde and Seek."

"Hyde Park in Jeopardy." *Punch; or, The London Charivari*, vol. 19, June 1850, p.12.

"Imaginary Dialogue on the Exhibition of 1851." *Punch; or, The London Charivari*, vol. 19, June 1850, p. 43.

"An Immortal Idea." *Punch; or, The London Charivari*, vol. 20, May 1851, p. 42.

Jann, Rosemary. "Evolutionary Physiognomy and Darwin's *Expression of the Emotions*." *Victorian Review*, vol. 18, no. 2, 1992, pp. 1-27.

Jenner, Charles (the Younger). "Eclogue II: Time Was." *Town Eclogues*, London: T. Cadell, 1772, pp. 8-14.

Jepson, Henry. *The Sanitary Evolution of London*, London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907.

Jerrold, William Blanchard. *London: A Pilgrimage*, illustrated by Gustave Doré, London: Anthem, 2005.

Johnson, Jamie W. "The Changing Representation of the Art Public in 'Punch', 1841-1896." *Victorian Periodicals Review*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2002, pp. 272-294.

Kingsley, Charles. *Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet: An Autobiography*, London: Chapman and Hall, 1850.

---. *Charles Kingsley, His Letters and Memories of His Life*, ed. Frances Eliza Grenfell Kingsley, New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1877.

---. "Great Cities and their Influence for Good and Evil." *Sanitary and Social Lectures and Essays*, London: MacMillan & Co., 1892.

---. *Poems of Charles Kingsley*, London: Henry Milford, 1913.

"Knife-and-Fork Exhibition at the Mansion-House." *Punch; or, The London Charivari*, vol. 18, May 1850, p. 123.

Knox, John. *The Masses Without! A Pamphlet for the Times on the Sanitary, Social, Moral and Heathen Condition of the Masses, Who Inhabit the Alleys, Courts, Wynds, Garrets, Cellars, Lodging-Houses, Dens, and Hovels of Great Britain*, London: Judd & Glass, 1857.

Koven, Seth. *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London*, Princeton UP, 2006.

Landry, Donna. "Foreword." *A History of British Working Class Literature*, eds. John Goodridge and Bridget Keegan, Cambridge UP, 2017, pp. xvii-xxii.

Langland, Elizabeth. *Nobody's Angels: Middle-Class Women and Domestic Ideology in Victorian Culture*, Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1995.

Laurent, Béatrice. "Victorian Designs of Industrial Desire." *Cahiers Victoriens et Édouardiens*, vol. 82, 2018, pp. 1-26.

Lavater, John Caspar. *Essays on Physiognomy Designed to Promote the Knowledge and the Love of Mankind*, trans. Thomas Holcroft, 3rd ed. London: B. Blake, 1840.

---. "On the Nature of Man, which is the Foundation of the Science of Physiognomy." *Embodied Selves: An Anthology of Psychological Texts 1830-1890,* eds. Jenny Bourne Taylor and Sally Shuttleworth, Oxford UP, 2003.

Laws of Etiquette; or, Short Rules and Reflections for Conduct in Society, Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, & Blanchard, 1836.

Lee, W. R. "Robert Baker: The First Doctor in the Factory Department." *British Journal of Industrial Medicine*, vol 21, no. 2, 1964, pp. 85-93.

"Let M.P.s Talk as They Please." *The Times*, 16 May 1851, p. 4.

Lombroso, Cesare. *Criminal Man*, eds. Mary Gibson and Nicole Hahn Rafter, Duke University Press, 2006.

"London, Tuesday, April 22, 1851." *The Times*, 22 April 1851, p. 4.

"London, Saturday, May 31, 1851." *Illustrated London News*, 31 May 1851, p. 467.

Long, Vicky. "Industrial Homes, Domestic Factories: The Convergence of Public and Private Space in Interwar Britain." *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 50, 2011, pp. 434-464.

Mace, Rodney. "Chartist Demonstration Poster, 10 April 1848." *British Trade Union Posters: An Illustrated History*,

MacMaster, Neil. "The Battle for Household Heath 1857-1884: 'Popular Politics' and the Victorian Public Park." *Past & Present,* vol. 127, 1990, pp. 117-154.

Malcolmson, Robert W. *Popular Recreations in English Society, 1700-1850*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1973.

Marsh, Edward Clark. "Jack London's *People of the Abyss*." *The Bookman: A Review of Books and Life*, vol. 18, no. 6, 1904, p. 647.

"The Marvellous Shilling." *Punch; or, The London Charivari*, vol. 20, 1851, p. 241.

Marx, Karl. *The Poverty of Philosophy*, trans. H. Quelch, Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1884.

Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America,* Oxford: Oxford UP, 1964.

Maxwell, Richard. "Henry Mayhew and the Life of the Streets." *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 17, no. 2, 1978, pp. 87–105.

Mayhew, Henry. "A Visit to the Cholera Districts of Bermondsey." *Morning Chronicle*, 24 September 1849, p. 4.

---. "The Great Exhibition." *Brechin Advisor*

---. *The Great World of London*, Part IX, London: David Bogue, 1857.

---. *London Labour and the London Poor*, Volume I, London: Griffin, Bohn, and Co., 1861.

---. *London Labour and the London Poor*, Volume IV, London:

Mayhew, Henry and George Cruikshank. *The World's Show, 1851, or, The Adventures of Mr. And Mrs. Sandboys and Family, who came up to London to 'Enjoy Themselves', and to See the Great Exhibition*, London: George Newbold, 1851.

McCuskey, Brian W. "The Kitchen Police: Servant Surveillance and Middle-Class Transgression." *Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2000, pp. 359-375.

Message, Kylie and Ewan Johnston. "The World Within the City: The Great Exhibition, Race, Class and Social Reform." *Britain, the Empire, and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851*, eds. Jeffrey Auerbach and Peter Hoffenberg, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008, pp. 27-46.

Michell, John. "A Most Conservative M.P. and the Royal Boycott of Lincoln." *Eccentric Lives and Peculiar Notions*, Kempton, IL: Adventures Unlimited Press, 1999, pp. 57-61.

Moore, Grace. *Dickens and Empire: Discourses of Class, Race and Colonialism in the Works of Charles Dickens*, United Kingdom, Taylor & Francis, 2017.

Morris, Robert John. *Class, Sect, and Party: The Making of the British Middle Class: Leeds, 1820-1850,* Manchester UP, 1990.

Morris, Susannah. "Market Solutions for Social Problems: Working-Class Housing in Nineteenth-Century London." *Economic History Review*, vol. 45, no. 3, 2001, pp. 525-545.

"The Multitude at the Exhibition." *The Economist*, vol. 9, no. 405, 31 May 1851, pp. 586-587.

Murphy, Paul Thomas. *Shooting Victoria: Madness, Mayhem, and the Rebirth of the British Monarchy*, New York: Pegasus Books, 2012.

"A New Result of the Great Exhibition." *Illustrated London News*, vol. 18, no. 497, 28 June 1851, pp. 607-608.

Newcomb, Samuel Prout. *Little Henry's Holiday at the Great Exhibition*, Illustrated by William Dickes, London: Houlston & Stoneman, 1851.

Nord, Deborah Epstein. *Walking the Victorian Streets: Women, Representation, and the City*, Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1995.

"Not Allowed to be Drunk on the Premises." *Punch; or, The London Charivari*, vol. 20, 1851, pp. 86.

O'Brien, Ellen L. *Crime in Verse: The Poetics of Murder in the Victorian Era*, Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2008.

O'Connor, Feargus. "A Treatise on the Small Farm System, and the Banking System, By Which it is Intended to be Developed." *The Labourer: A Monthly Magazine of Politics, Literature, Poetry, &c.*, vols. 3-4, 1848, pp. 54-100.

"Open House at the Crystal Palace." *Punch; or, The London Charivari*, vol. 20, 1851, pp. 43.

"The Opening of the Great Exhibition." *The Times*, 2 May 1851, pp. 4-5.

Otter, Chris. *The Victorian Eye: A Political History of Light and Vision in Britain, 1800-1910,* University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Paxton, Joseph. "Admission to the Exhibition of 1851, to the Right Honourable Lord John Russell." *Illustrated London News*, 25 January 1851, pp. 52-53.

Perkins, Mr. "The Claims of Labour." *Household Words*, vol. 3, no. 67, 7 May 1851, p. 356.

Phillips, Watts. *The Wild Tribes of London*, London: Ward and Lock, 1855.

"Pictures for the Exhibition of Industry." *Punch; or, the London Charivari*, vol. 20, 1851, p. 42.

Pickering, Paul. "Class Without Words: Symbolic Communication in the Chartist Movement." *Past and Present*, vol. 112, 1986, pp. 144-162.

Pond, Kristen. "'A desire to look respectable in the eyes of strangers': The Victorian Press and the Figure of the Stranger at the Great Exhibition of 1851." *Victorian Periodicals Review*, vol. 53, no. 1, 2020, pp. 57-75.

Pool, Daniel. *What Jane Austen Ate and Charles Dickens Knew: From Fox Hunting to Whist – the Facts of Daily Life in 19th-Century England*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993.

Pooley, Colin G. and Jean Turnbull. "Changing Home and Workplace in Victorian London: The Life of Henry Jaques, Shirtmaker." *Urban History*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1997, pp. 148-178.

Prasch, Thomas. "Eating the World: London in 1851." *Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. 36, no. 2, 2008, pp. 587-602.

Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London: Routledge, 1992.

"Preface to the Twentieth Volume." *Punch; or, The London Charivari*, vol. 20, 1851, pp. iii-iv.

Purbrick, Louise. "Introduction." *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Essays*, ed. Louise Purbrick, Manchester: Manchester UP, 2001, pp. 1-25.

Qureshi, Sadiah. *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, University of Chicago Press, 2011.

Redgrave, Alexander. "Report of Mr. Alexander Redgrave on the Visits of the Working Classes to His Royal Highness Prince Albert." *Report of the Commissioners for the Exhibition of 1851, to the Right Hon. Spencer Horatio Walpole*, London: Spicer brothers, 1852, pp. 111-

Rhodes, James Robert. *Albert, Prince Consort: A Biography*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1983.

Robbins, Bruce. *The Servant's Hand: English Fiction from Below*, Durham: Duke UP, 1993.

Rodrick, Anne Baltz. "'Only a Newspaper Metaphor': Crime Reports, Class Conflict, and Social Criticism in Two Victorian Newspapers." *Victorian Periodicals Review*, vol. 29, no. 1, 1996, pp. 1-18.

"Rules of the Chartist Co-operative Land Society (1845)." *Reports from the Committees Vol. 13, National Land Company*, vol. 19, 1847-48, pp. 49-52.

Ruskin, John. "The Moral of Landscape." *The Works of John Ruskin,* London: J. Wiley & Sons, 1885, pp. 280-307.

Saville, John. *1848: The British State and the Chartist Movement*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987.

Schlör, Joachim. *Nights in the Big City: Paris, Berlin, London 1840-1930,* translated by Pierre Gottfried Imhof and Dafydd Rees Roberts, London: Reaktion Books, 1998.

Scholz, Maximillion. "Over Our Dead Bodies: The Fight for Cemetery Construction in Nineteenth-Century London." *Journal of Urban History*, vol. 43, no. 3, 2015, pp. 445-457.

Schroeder, Janice "The Publishing History of Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor*." *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History*, ed. Dino Franco Felluga, 2019.

Schur, Owen. *Victorian Pastoral: Tennyson, Hardy, and the Subversion of Forms*. The Ohio State UP, 1989.

Shears, Jonathon. *The Great Exhibition, 1851: A Sourcebook*, ed. Jonathon Shears, Manchester: Manchester UP, 2017.

Short, Audrey. "Workers Under Glass in 1851." *Victorian Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2, 1966, pp. 193-202.

Sims, George. *How the Poor Live, and Horrible London*, London: Garland, 1984.

"Slumming in this Town: A Fashionable London Mania Reaches New York." *New York Times*, Sep. 14, 1884, p. 4.

Smiles, Samuel. *Self Help; With Illustrations of Character and Conduct*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1869.

Sorkin, Michael. *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*, New York: Hill & Wang, 1992.

Stevens, Henry. *An Account of the Proceedings at the Dinner Given by Mr. George Peabody to the Americans Connected with the Great Exhibition at the London Coffee House Ludgate Hill on the 27th October 1851*, London: William Pickering, 1851.

"Strike of Glaziers at the Exhibition, Hyde-Park." *The Times*, 27 November 1850, p. 5.

Swift, R. E. "Policing Chartism, 1839-1848: The Role of the 'Specials' Reconsidered." *The English Historical Review*, vol. 122, no. 497, 2007, pp. 669-699.

Tallis, John. *Tallis's History and Description of the Crystal palace and the Exhibition of the World's Industry in 1851*, ill. Beard, Mayall, etc., London: John Tallis & Co., 1852.

Taylor, Jenny Bourne and Sally Shuttleworth. *Embodied Selves: An Anthology of Psychological Texts 1830-1890,* Oxford UP, 2003.

Taylor, W. Cooke. *Notes of a Tour in the Manufacturing Districts of Lancashire*, London: Duncan and Malcolm, 1842.

Thackeray, William Makepeace. *Vanity Fair*, ed. J. I. M. Stewart, London: Penguin, 1981.

---. "Waiting at the Station." *Punch*. March 1850, pp. 92-93.

Thompson, Edward Palmer. *The Making of the English Working Class*, New York: Pantheon, 1964.

Thompson, Francis Michael Longstreth. “Social Control in Victorian England.” *Economic History Review*, vol. 34, no. 2, 1981, pp. 189-208.

Timbs, John. *Curiosities of London: Exhibiting the Most Rare and Remarkable Objects of Interest in the Metropolis; with Nearly Fifty Years' Personal Recollections*, London: J.S. Virtue & Co., 1855.

“Time Draws On.” *The Times*, 10 April 1851, p.5.

Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Alexis de Tocqueville’s Memoir on Pauperism*, trans. Seymour Drescher, London: Civitas, 1997.

Trodd, Anthea. “Household Spies: Servants and Crime.” *Domestic Crime in the Victorian Novel*, London: Palgrave, 1988, pp. 45-68.

United Nations. *Urban Land Policies*, New York, 1952.

Urban, Sylvanus. “Obituary: Lady Emmeline Stuart-Wortley.” *Gentleman’s Magazine*, vol. 199, 1856, p. 183.

Ventura, Gal. *Maternal Breast-Feeding and its Substitutes in Nineteenth-Century French Art*, trans. Merav Fima, Leiden: Brill, 2018.

Vickerman, Charles. “The Olympiad of Labour.” *The Literature of Working Men; the Working Man’s Friend and Family Instructor*, Nov. 1850, pp. 1-3.

Vincent, David. *Literacy and Popular Culture: England 1750-1914*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999.

"Voyeurism, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, June 2021, www.oed.com, accessed 21 June 2021.

W., C.T. *The Crystal Hive; or, The First of May, 1851*, London: W.H. Dalton, 1852.

Ward, J.T. *The Factory Movement, 1830-1855,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1962.

"What May, or May Not, Be Exhibited in May, 1851." *Punch; or, The London Charivari*, vol. 19, June 1850, p. 2.

Wheeler, Michael. *English Fiction of the Victorian Period 1830-1890*, New York: Longman, 1994.

Wilberforce, Samuel, Bishop of Oxford. "On the Dignity of Labour." Proceedings of the Westminster Committee Meeting, Feb. 1850, pp. 1-2.

Williams, Raymond. "Class." *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Oxford UP, 1983, pp. 60-69.

---. *Culture and Society: 1780-1950,* New York: Columbia UP, 1983.

Williams, Robert. *London Rookeries and Colliers' Slums: A Plea for More Breathing Room*, London: W. Reeves, 1893.

Wills, William Henry. "The Private History of the Palace of Glass." *Household Words*, vol. 2, no. 43, 1851, pp. 385-391.

Wong, H.W. "The Imagination of Criminals in Victorian London in *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*." *Interlitteraria*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2019, pp. 81-94.

Wordsworth, William. "Preface of 1800." *Lyrical Ballads, 1798*, Ed. Harold Littledale, London: H. Frowde, 1911.

---. *The Prelude or, Growth of a Poet's Mind: an Autobiographical Poem,* London: Edward Moxon, 1850.

Working Men's Association. *The People's Charter; Being the Outline of an Act to Provide for the Just Representation of the People of Great Britain in the Commons' House of Parliament ... Prepared by a Committee of Twelve Persons, Six Members of Parliament*

and Six Members of the London Working Men's Association, etc., London : published for the Working Men's Association by H. Hetherington, 1838.

Wortley, Lady Emmeline Stuart. *Honour to Labour, A Lay of 1851*, London: W.N. Wright, 1851.

"Yankee Doodle in 1851. *According to the New York Weekly Herald*." *Punch; or, the London Charivari*, vol. 20, 1851, p. 161.

Young, Arlene. "Virtue Domesticated: Dickens and the Lower Middle Class." *Victorian Studies*, vol. 39, no. 4, 1996, pp. 483-511.