

THE NECKLACE of history bears jewels amongst the beads. The man of reason, delighting in their flashing facets, is not so distracted that he forgets the thread running through them all - that which is always true.

But what a remarkable period! So many of nature's secrets are unlocked, and in the surging movements that follow, the people's inherent traditions melt and run together. The people are no longer steadied by the mediaeval codes of fellowship and chivalry and devotion. The guilds are finished, their high aims ran down to plain self-interest and monopoly. The ideal of the "gentleman", and the "brotherhood of man" have yet to be recognised again. The idea of "improvement" holds sway - often self-improvement.

Lawlessness breaks out in the early 18th century. Desperation, rebellion and subservience follow; fear reprisal and retreat. Of the seven deadly sins, pride would seem to run most strongly at this time, followed closely by greed. Not until 1815 does human compassion awaken sufficiently for the tide to begin to turn.

Reviewing the broad sweep of history, scholars often miss the significance of the main changes in land tenure. The basis of land usage upheld by the Saxon Kings was altered at the Conquest to enable William to grip and subdue the people. Appreciation of the balance between the rights of land usage on the one hand and public duty on the other was gradually confused and forgotten duties were converted to fixed money rents which withered with debasement of coinage and rising prices. Opinion reached the point where the lawless Tudor enclosures became possible. Finally the brass-faced enclosures of the Industrial Revolution set the seal on the foundation that has underlaid all subsequent economic developments.

No. of Enclosure Acts			
		1770-80	641
1720-30	33	1780-90	287
1730-40	35	1790-1800	506
1740-50	38	1800-10	906
1750-60	156	1810-20	771
1760-70	424	1820-30	186

Firstly, villagers lose their common rights in land; many are soon without work, sometimes physically forced out of the family cottage; the old, parents and children face the workhouse or the road to the new factories. Villages are burnt and disappear. Later the new roads and railways quickly drain the able-bodied from this pool of desperation, feeding the queues at the mill gate.

This is the age of children in the mill and down the mine, from five in the morning until dead beat, and then back to the packed back-to-back houses and cellars, maybe awash with filth or loud with debau-



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chery. Large industrial slums develop. The more fortunate find a place below stairs, or in a shop with a bed under the new counters.

This is the time of the workhouse, the age of Hogarth's "Gin Lane", and game laws to keep the hungry off the new county estates; mantraps; the savage Riot Act; fathers of desperate families are hanged for stealing a lamb or deported for lesser faults.

Poverty is blamed on idleness, or fecklessness or lack of thrift or overpopulation. In real terms, a skilled man's wage falls to half what was common in the 15th century, and does not return to that level until the 1880's when some benefits of the remarkable increase in productivity are being felt by the mass of producers. As a share of production, real wages for the majority have been low ever since.

The gentry, the farmer and the absentee parson enclose land, and buy out those who cannot afford the expense of fencing new enclosures. With the new agricultural methods efficiently applied, and grain prices artificially raised by the Corn Laws, quick fortunes are accumulated. Arkwright pioneers the factory system and factory discipline, and mills proliferate.

This is the time of Jane Eyre, and developed social etiquette. Good manners stand in for good citizenship and consideration for humanity. Georgian manors and mansions are built - now some distance from the village and the villagers, and handsome almshouses rise near the church. The first building speculation begins in St. James's Square and then spreads through the fields.

The buck wagers his fortune at Boodles or Whites. The master craftsman no longer sits down to breakfast with his apprentices, and the entrepreneur is divided by a new pride and arrogance from the men. A new division opens across society. Politics are now polarised by the Law of Rent - splitting interests along the primary division of wealth; between earned and unearned, the landless and the landed, workers and entrepreneurs, labour and management and their respective sympathizers.

Slavery is outlawed - a real triumph of reason, but then labour is now cheaper and less trouble than

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chained slaves. Meanwhile in New England, where land is freely available, the newest settler escaping from Europe will retain all that he produces, hired labour is difficult to obtain at any price and African slaves are being shipped in by the thousand for sale to the new plantation owners.

Cheap labour, inventions, entrepreneurial vigour with little competition from abroad until the 1870's gives rise to booming overseas trade, and Britain "dominates" world commerce, that is she supplies what people need and want.

True consideration and sympathy for human suffering probably reached its lowest ebb by 1805 or 1815. From this time, the spirit of reform awakens, resulting in a number of measures that limit the worst effects. The Factory Acts, prohibition of women and boys in mines and chimneys, abolition of the slave trade and slavery, police and prison reform, orderly meetings of workmen become lawful again, trade is freed, a corrupt oligarchic franchise is widened. Even after the Reform Act of 1832 less than eight per cent of the population over twenty years of age have the vote, and sums of up to £16,000 are paid to secure a seat in the House of Commons. Examinations are introduced to ensure that senior posts in the Civil Service are awarded more by merit than family connection, and eventually the great civil engineers are engaged to provide clean water supplies and sewerage for everybody.

Although dependent on the goodwill of the people, such measures would not have taken effect without the steady selfless work of essentially practical men and women. We know the names of a few of them and a few details from their lives, but to appreciate their work fully we need to recognise those today who work steadily in varied ways for the great human causes.

In the 18th century the admiration of "improvements" is directed not only towards reforms, and inventions and enterprise and improved methods. Well proportioned domestic architecture flourishes and fine Georgian silver and china and furniture. Clear economic observation is made and the sounds of superlative music accompany the awakening social con-

science. The people of the time recognised and encouraged:- the Adam brothers; Wedgewood, Chipendale and Sheraton; Constable and Turner; Adam Smith, Ricardo, Bentham, and J. S. Mill; Robert Owen, Cobbett, Dickens; Elizabeth Fry, Dr. Arnold; Burke, Wilberforce and Cobden; Wordsworth and Blake; J. S. Bach, Handel, Haydn and Mozart.

The usual explanations as to the origin of this burgeoning pressure to improve do not satisfy. Consider the expansion of production. Mined coal increased from 2½ million tons to 10 million tons per year between 1700 and 1800, and by 1867 reached 57 million tons. The mining of metal boomed as never before, and instead of importers we became exporters of metal. Between 1720 and 1760 total exports doubled, and doubled again by 1795. Between 1710 and 1795 the average weight of lambs increased from 18 to 54 lbs; beef cattle from 370 lbs to 800 lbs.

Banking activity begins	1749
Golden Age of Georgian architecture	1763-65
Building Act, building boom begins	1774
<i>Wealth of Nations</i> : Adam Smith	1776
Pre-eminence of British workshops	1780
<i>The Rights of Man</i> : Thomas Paine	1790
Canal boom	1791-94
Dock boom	1799-1806
First large foreign loans	1817
<i>Principles of Political Economy</i> : Ricardo	1817
Macadam's roads	1827
Joint stock banks	1841-42
Railway boom	1844-47
Steamship boom	1870

Meanwhile, buildings and durable capital equipment accumulate as never before, the rate accelerating as the years pass. Preoccupied with the function and increasing effectiveness of this capital, and observing the condition of the poor and the fact that they are supporting some in great luxury, men like Marx begin to agitate minds, blaming poverty on capital and the growing capitalist system. By so doing, they



have dragged a great red herring across the path of economic thought, leaving a trail for those who concern themselves with injustice more than justice, embittered violence rather than actions founded on reason.

There are few single-minded seekers of the truth who pursue this line to the point eventually reached by Marx, when it may be realised that all forms of

capital result from, and are not the cause of work on land, and that the ownership of slaves or the inequitable holding of land determines who may control capital, production, employment and unearned income.

Like all forms of trade protection, the Corn Laws protected a minority at the expense of the rest of the community. Foreign corn was kept out of the country, shortages arose, and of course corn prices were held at artificially high levels making a further burden to be borne by the poor. Heavy duties on tea and tobacco also made this a great time for smugglers. The principles of free trade were declared by Adam Smith and championed by Richard Cobden. The recognition of clear principle backed by a certain amount of self interest and the sustained efforts of those who foresaw the benefits to all citizens, gave us Free Trade from 1846 to 1915. This freedom, like all true freedoms arising from the recognition of Nature's laws, required a minimum of control; bureaucracy was at its lowest ebb.

The people of this period recognised and manifested two great freedoms - the abolition of chained slavery and free trade, but neglected and ignored the economic freedom that flows from equal rights to land with secure tenure for those who reimburse society for the privilege. The result is slavery of a different sort - the slavery of the unemployment queue, with wage levels forced down to the lowest wage the unemployed man will take for the job. These basic foundations have not altered since 1830; the superstructure stands propped and shored up, and in spite of expensive patches it leaks and leans badly.

To set out an historical framework like this may be useful if it clears the decks for observation, but there is no substitute for first-hand accounts written at the time - one may enjoy the company of the finest minds and perceive the state of affairs through the sharpest eye and ear of the age.

Mr. R. L. Tames has served us well by collecting and selecting a wide variety of key writings and colourful observations.*

The book is laid out in three type faces for clear distinction between the documents themselves, the notes, and the short, informative editorial comments that link the passages.

Maybe the editor's view lacks some depth, but it is wide and reliable, leaving the reader to discover significance. It is noticeable that he does not take sides on the subject of enclosures, but presents practical advantages and human disaster evenly enough. The indiscriminating student may be led off to collect the dead stuff of history, but there is a path or two

for the open-minded seeker that leads towards the heart of the matter.

It is not so surprising that there is nothing from Ricardo in view of the prevailing ignorance of his contribution to economics, but I was sorry to find Bentham missing also. Perhaps we have here the best of Malthus - he seems to have been presented in a better light than he deserves.

A passage from Marx on the limitations of trade is interesting. It points to the ideal underlying the socialist view of trade, so that the common lack of



understanding of trade and markets becomes understandable. Here you will find a far-sighted reference to an ideal state of society where trade is no longer necessary. How society moves from its present condition, with the existing attitudes and institutions to the legendary Golden Age of a blissful family type economy, is not given. It has not yet dawned that the steps may be taken naturally, one at a time, by the progress of free trade acting in concert with the public collection of land rent. So the important marriage between the Ideal and the Practical has not yet taken place for most people.

Today we are better served by the economic historians than by the mainstream of economic academics, in that we are led to drink from the fountain-head rather than the muddled floor of jargon and second-hand opinion further downstream. I do not find that this book has been compiled with the insight that readers of this paper have tasted, but it is worth the consideration of those who seek out the thread of constant law.

E. F. HALKYARD

WE REGRET to report the death of Edward Francis Halkyard at the age of 80 on April 14. Mr. Halkyard was Secretary of the Henry George Foundation of Australia and also an executive member of the Henry George League of Melbourne and Director of the School of Social Science. He helped in such a variety of ways in his various capacities that he will leave a gap very hard to fill. He was greatly esteemed by his colleagues for his personal qualities and for his selfless devotion for so many years.

**Documents of the Industrial Revolution 1750 - 1850*
Richard L. Tames, Hutchinson Education Ltd., 80p.