THE ECONOMIC ASPECT

I. Children Under the Poor Law

II. The Factory Child.
Children Under the Poor Law

As R. H. Tawney points out, nothing reveals the true character of a social philosophy more clearly than its attitude to poverty and the treatment of childhood. The children under the Poor Law strikingly bear out the truth of this observation. Friendless and bereft of their natural protectors, they are entirely dependent upon the State for their upbringing and education. The old Poor Law affords little evidence that the State was either alive to the special needs of these children or to its responsibility for their training as future citizens. The early 18th century records, indeed, are replete with instances of the extreme barbarity in which the non-resident expectant mothers were hustled out of the parish, or the lump sums recovered as security made the occasion of a parish feast known as "saddling the spit". In many, if not most, cases the parish children were apprenticed to disagreeable trades and unsuitable masters. Only now and then the public conscience was horrified by cases of gross ill-treatment of the parish apprentices by brutal masters like Mrs. Brownrigg.

It is in the closing decades of the 18th century that we see the general swing towards humanity and the development of a sense of social responsibility, which is

2. M. Dorothy George: London Life in the 18th Century, p. 216
4. "In Fetter Lane - Mrs. Browning and her son, for the space of two years, subjected their apprentices to ill-usages so horrible that after the lapse of a century it is still well-remembered." Lecky: A History of England in the 18th Century, Vol. III, p. 327.
something more than an attempt to protect individuals from ill-treatment. The work of philanthropists like Hanway and the resolution of Manchester justices in 1784 refusing to sanction indentures of the parish apprentices to cotton mills are early manifestations of this change.

Even earlier we come across hero and there a small body adopting an enlightened policy, but it involved a heavy strain on its limited resources. "The Corporation of the Poor" in the City of Bristol, we are told, ran two workhouses. One was reserved for the reception of those young girls that were on their Poor's books, and of such whose parents took no due care of them. About one hundred such girls were taught to read and to spin. They had their wholesome and nourishing diet of beef, pease, potatoes, milk porridge, bread, cheese, good beer, cabbage, carrots, turnips, etc., and had good beds to lie on. Apparel was provided them for Sundays. They went to church every Sunday and were taught their catechism at home. The Corporation had to encounter some opposition from their parents. In the other workhouse the inmates were classified, the boys were segregated from the old people. The men were lodged in several chambers on one floor, and the women on another.

This courageous policy, the writer assures us, answered the expectation of the Bristol citizens and they had great reason to hope that these young plants would

1. M. Dorothy George, op. cit. p.267
produce a virtuous and laborious generation. But the Corporation's project of employing the poor in the workhouse did not succeed. The rates were advanced from £3,500 in 1714 to £13,000 in 1791. Eden describes the state of the Bristol workhouse of his time (1795) when like most other workhouses during the regime of out-door allowances it had degenerated into an ill-kept lodging house. The inmates, 287 in number, were mostly old people and children, and the insane, lame and blind, etc. "There are 12 or 15 beds, principally of flock, in each apartment, it is probably owing to this circumstance, and the number of old and disabled persons, that the house is infected with vermin... The Poor eat their victuals in their lodging rooms."\(^1\) Of the Poor in the Epsom workhouse in Surrey we are furnished with a more minute list. Of its 11 men, three under 50 years were idle and disorderly fellows, one of them somewhat of an idiot. The rest were aged, impotent or afflicted with some disease. Of the 16 women, 6 under 50 were idle, idiots, or profligate, and the rest infirm with age or disease. Other inmates were 7 boys and 16 girls.\(^2\)

The swing towards humanitarianism is noticeable in all the changes in the Poor Laws from 1782 to 1816. The workhouse inmates were treated to a liberal dietary. Meat dinners were served three or four times a week. At Bedford more especially the food of the family in the

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2. Ibid. Vol.III, p.695
workhouse was better than the most industrious labourer could afford himself at his own house.¹ But this indulgence was offset by the overcrowding, insanitation, filth and gross indecency of the workhouse life during the whole of the 18th and even for the first thirty or forty years of the 19th century.² No special provision seems to have been made for the workhouse children who make up perhaps the most mournful group in Crabbe's picture of the workhouse:

"There children dwell who know no parent's care; Parents who know no children's love dwell there. Heart-broken matrons on their joyless beds, Forsaken wives, and mothers never wed; Dejected widows with unheeded tears, And crippled age with more than childhood fears."³

Through neglect and improper treatment four-fifths of the children born in London, a Parliamentary Committee reported in 1767, died within the first year. This led to the passing of the Hanway Act of 1767⁴ directing that all children under the age of six years in the parishes within the Bills of Mortality, should be put out to nurse at a distance of at least three miles from any part of the cities of London and Westminster. The children so put out, were to be nursed and maintained at the charge of these respective parishes for not less than 2/6d weekly, with a bonus of 10s. a year to each successful nurse. Guardians appointed by the parish were to visit and inform themselves of the condition

¹ Ibid. p.286
³ The Village
⁴ George: iiic. p.39
of the children thus boarded in "baby farms" and individual houses. Sir George Nichols instances this Act as an evidence of the human and kindly feelings towards the helpless and infant poor. Sir Sidney and Beatrice Webb write that there is, so far as they know, no evidence as to the success or failure of Hanway's Act. But it may be safely assumed that Hanway's Act ensured the pauper child a better chance of survival. It was nicknamed "the Act for keeping children alive". Parishes burdened with the ruinous expenditure of out-door relief and with the increasing number of pauper children whom they were bound under the Poor Law of Elizabeth to apprentice to a trade, resorted to the none too scrupulous practices of securing by offer of a premium, apprenticeship in an alien parish, to escape liability or in the case of the workhouses of London, Birmingham, and elsewhere, delivering them over by scores to the mill owners, with little or no regard to the character of their employers. A Mr. B. of Manchester boasts to Byng in 1792 of the most wonderful importation of children purchased in London at so much the half score (nine sound and one cripple) by those merchants the most forward against the slave trade.2

A Memoir of Robert Blincoe, the subject of which, we are assured, resided at No.12 Turner Street, Manchester in 1832, throws light on the fate of children so consigned to the factory system.

The pamphlet is freely quoted by Alfred 1, Mantoux 2, and lately by Sir Noel Curtis-Bennett 3. According to himself, Robert Blincoe was supported in St. Pancras Poorhouse from the age of four till his seventh year. He considered himself worse off than a child reared in the Foundling Hospital, for he had no name given him. He acknowledged that he was well-fed, decently clad, and comfortably lodged and not at all overworked. Yet he was weary of confinement and of his company in the workhouse. "The aged were commonly petulant and miserable, the young demoralized and wholly destitute of gaiety of heart." 4 He would have gladly exchanged his situation with a sweep boy; being too small he was rejected by the master sweeps who came to the workhouse to select boys as apprentices. But in 1799 he was one of a large number of children apprenticed to the owner of a great cotton mill near Nottingham. The children were deluded by the parish officer into the belief that they were all, when they arrived at the cotton mill, to be transformed into ladies and gentlemen and fed on roast beef and plum-pudding. 5 Their indentures, in fact, contained no safeguards for their good treatment. At the apprentice house the supper consisted of milk-porridge, of a very blue complexion, and black bread so soft that they could scarcely swallow it as it stuck like bird-lime to their teeth. Blincoe worked as hard as anyone in the mill.

1. History of the Factory Movement.
2. The Industrial Revolution in the 18th Century.
3. Food of the People.
4. A Memoir of Robert Blincoe. p.10
5. Ibid. p.18
When his strength failed, he endured the strap or the stick, the cuff or the kick with as much resignation as any of his fellow sufferers. Being half starved and cruelly treated, he was many a time tempted to throw himself out of one of the upper windows of the factory. On a representation being made to the parish authorities, conditions had begun to improve when the mill stopped working, and most of the children were handed over to a mill in Derbyshire. Blincoe had by then served four years of his time and Peel's Bill had already become all but a dead letter.  

Blincoe's narrative of his sufferings in Derbyshire sounds incredibly revolting, but Fielden cites it in support of his account of the Factory System. He wishes every man and woman in England would see and read this pamphlet. Many details of Blincoe's picture are reproduced in Frances Trollope's novel "Michael Armstrong". The scene of Blincoe's misery was a sequestered glen in Derbyshire, remote from any human habitation. Ill-fed apprentices stole food from the pig's trough. Their work was shamefully protracted to sometimes sixteen hours without rest or food. During an outbreak of contagious fever, so great was the mortality that it was felt advisable to divide the burials in different places. Irons were riveted to some apprentices who were suspected of intending to run away.

1. Ibid. Ch. iv.
2. The Curse of the Factory System, p. 7
Changes in the distribution of the textile manufactures and the character of machinery, together with increasing legal restrictions, gradually displaced the device of wholesale apprenticeship of parish children to capitalist manufacturers. The economic pressure was also wearing down the reluctance of parents to send their children to factories. In his evidence before the Select Committee on Handloom Weavers in 1835 a witness stated his objection to children working in factories in these terms: "For I am determined for my part that if they will invent machines to supersede manual labour, they must find iron boys to mind them". He declared that but for the distressed circumstances he should never let his led go to the factory.¹

By 1815 many of the factory children were not pauper apprentices at all, but the children of Lancashire parents who were too poor to keep them at home. Robert Peel's Bill of 1816 was intended to protect the children of this category. It was in support of this that Coleridge wrote to Crabb Robinson: "Can you furnish me with any other instances in which the legislature has interfered with what is ironically called 'Free Labour', i.e., dared to prohibit soul-murder on the part of the rich and self-slaughter on the part of the poor?"² He dismisses as utterly sophistical the plea that legislative interference with free labour is improper. "It is our duty to declare aloud, that if the labour were

¹ Select Committee on Handloom Weavers 1835, Q.2640
² The Political Thought of Coleridge. A Selection by R. U. White, p.216.
indeed free, the employer would purchase, and the labourer sell, what the former had no right to buy, and the latter no right to dispose of: namely the labourer's health, life, and well-being. These belong not to himself alone, but to his friends, to his parents, to his King, to his country, and to his God. If the labourer were indeed free, the contract would approach, on the one side, too near to suicide, on the other to manslaughter.¹ He based his argument for shortening the hours of labour of children in cotton factories on common sense and human sympathy:

"Who does not know that in a journey too long for the traveller's strength, it is the last few miles that torment him by fatigue and injure him by exhaustion? Substitute a child employed on tasks the most opposite to all its natural instincts, were it only from their improgressive and wearying uniformity— in a heated, stifling, and impure atmosphere, fevered by noise and glare, both limbs and spirits outworn— and at the tenth hour, he has still three, four, or five hours more to look forward to. Will he, will that poor little sufferer, be brought to believe that these hours are mere trifles? Generalities are apt to deceive us. Individualize the sufferings which it is the object of this Bill to remedy, follow up the detail in some one case with a human sympathy, and the deception vanishes."²

That these words truly interpreted the feelings of an over-worked child is borne out by the evidence of witnesses before the Factory Commission. "When I have been at the mills in the winter season," a witness told the Committee, "when the children are at work in the evening, the very first thing they inquire is, 'What o'clock is it?' if I should answer 'seven,' they say,

1. Ibid. p.318
2. Ibid. p.219,220.
'only seven! It is a great while to ten, but we must not give up till ten o'clock or past.'

From the worst evils, however, associated with the apprenticing of pauper children far away from their kith and kin in the great industrial regions where no supervision could possibly be exercised, many rural parishes, as was the case in Cambridgeshire, seem to have remained free. After 1802 so-called 'free labour' children superseded the apprentices. Technical advances and legal restrictions, too, were making a change for the better. "The interior economy of mills," wrote Salkall in 1833, "has so much improved as to remove most of the obnoxious agents which fall with such dreadful severity upon the parish apprentices, who first become their victims; and there is nothing in a well-regulated mill directly injurious to life, save only the length of time spent there and its consequences."

"In the few factories," reports Mr. Muggeridge, Migration Agent in the Poor Law Commission, "in which apprentices are still employed, I find nothing in their condition to lead me to regret that the practice has much diminished. They are, with few exceptions, a dispirited and discontented class, infinitely worse clad, and less happy and respectable in appearance than the children of the same ages who are their fellow work-people in the same factories."

Of the evils and abuses of the old law in their

2. Treatment of Poverty in Cambridgeshire. E. M. Sampson  
effect upon the parish children the Poor Law Commissioners of 1832 condemned in particular the General Mixed Workhouse in respect of the absence of classification, discipline, and employment, apprenticeship under the old compulsory billeting-out and the more general premium systems, and the laws relating to settlement and bastardy. From the evidence of many workhouses they concluded that in by far the greater number of cases the workhouse was "a large alms house, in which the young are trained in idleness, ignorance and vice..."1 The Commissioners under the Poor Law Amendment Act reinforced their plea for district schools for the training of pauper children by pointing out the danger of a polluting association with the adult inmates.2 The system of a compulsory allotment of apprentices, as it was pursued in Suffolk and Norfolk, it was argued, tended to weaken filial ties and to breed irresponsibility and improvidence. The combined effect of premiums and the settlement laws was to place the children with unsuitable or impecunious persons in order to rid the home parish of its burden or to shift its responsibility to an alien parish.3 The result of all this was that the parish children suffered from the ill treatment of the masters and the neglect both of their immediate welfare and future career. The school master to the West London Union deposed that juvenile delinquency had been increased by the neglect of the training of pauper children in the poor houses; by the grossly vicious

1. Report 1834, p. 58
2. Report on the Training of Pauper Children, p. 9
3. Ibid. pp. 90, 94.
examples to which they had been exposed within the workhouses; by their absconding, on account of misconduct and bad treatment from their situations with low mechanics to whom they were apprenticed; and by the consequent temptations to which they were subjected. 1

The system of out-door relief under the old Poor Law was, it seems, adopted to mitigate the rigours of a period when the economic and social condition of the labourers was "probably at its very lowest level since the Elizabethan Poor Law had been established." 2 But, half a century later, after extensive enquiries into the effect of this mode of relief the Poor Law Commissioners condemned it as "a system which aims its allurement at all the weakest parts of our nature - which offers marriage to the young, security to the anxious, ease to the lazy, and impunity to the profligate." 3 The new policy was, therefore, dictated by the hostility of Poor Commissioners to out-door relief and their desire to suppress "individual improvidence and vice" at all costs. The first and most essential condition to be imposed on the individual relieved was that his situation should not, the Commissioners insisted, be made really or apparently so eligible as the situation of the independent labourer of the lowest class. 4 By the application of strict regimen in the workhouse on the Principle of Least Eligibility, it was intended to deter the able-

1. Tbid. p.146
3. P.L.C. 1854, p.59
4. Tbid. p.228
bodied applicants for relief. That relief might be so administered "as not merely to relieve, but also to deter," Tawney characterises as the grand discovery of the commercial age, made by utilitarian philosophers.¹

Harriet Martineau illustrated in her "Tales of the Poor Law" the calamitous results of the old law and improvements that the New Poor Laws were expected to bring about in the moral and material conditions of the labouring classes. Avowedly propagandist in aim and inspiration, her tales are nevertheless enlivened by homely touches. Elsewhere we are given a more direct statement of her views, reflecting, perhaps, the official attitude to out-door relief: "The tendency of all such modes of distribution having been found to encourage improvidence with all its attendant evils, to injure the good while relieving the bad, to extinguish the spirit of independence on one side, and of charity on the other... and to increase perpetually the evil they are meant to remedy - but one plea is now commonly urged in favour of a legal provision for the indigent. This plea is that every individual born into a state has a right to subsistence from the state. This plea, in its general application, is grounded on a false analogy between a state and its members, and a parent and his family."²

Her Poor Law tales, however, are not written in the spirit of such a forbidding doctrine as the above passage seems to shadow forth. Her first tale, "The Parish",

¹Op. cit. p.871
²Illustrations of Political Economy. Vol.IX, pp.69, 70
exhibits the state of parochial affairs as administered under the old system. Its interest centres on the fortunes of Goldby, the farmer who, notwithstanding his vigilant care and industry becomes a martyr to the maladministration of the Poor Laws in the parish of Thorpe—his rate-burdened land lying uncultivated, his stack yard burned down by refractory paupers. Intertwoven with this main story is the struggle of a sober, hardworking, independent labourer, Ashley, to keep himself and his children above pauperism. If Goldby's ruin is intended to illustrate the evils of a pauper ridden parish, Ashley's recovery sets off the virtues of frugality and forbearance of an independent labourer. Of particular interest to us, however, is Ruth's life in Goldby's farm house. Ruth, the eldest of the three children of a widow, is an industrious girl who had early been inured to responsibility and self-reliance; she has always been up in time to wash and dress her poor deformed little sister Biddy and to give her brother Peter his breakfast before she goes to school. At school she learns hemming, sewing, and back stitching. Her mother, Mrs. Brand, having opened a beer shop, the parish has Ruth placed with Goldby. Often had Ruth taken Peter and Biddy to Goldby's farm house and many were the games they played, calling "chick, chick" in the poultry yard, picking up the apples that were showered from the tree over her head and playing hide and seek in the straw on the old barn." Especially dear to Ruth was one lilac hedge whose leaves she and Peter would
gather for an experiment inspired by the story of the Babes in the Wood. They devoutly believed in that story, could never sufficiently admire the industry of the robins in covering the children with leaves, and were anxious to know how many leaves it would take. Under the churchyard wall close by, little Biddy was laid to be covered with lilac leaves, but either for want of materials or of patience on Biddy's part their experiment never succeeded. Very different from this idyllic picture is Ruth's experience at the farm. She had now to do hard and fatiguing work--scouring the dairy utensils, churning, making cheeses, and what not, then the long dinner table was to be got ready, then huge baskets of apples to be carried up to the apple loft and stowed away, then milking again; then supper, with noise and confusion, which made her thoroughly stupid before she was dismissed, weary, to her bed, to be alarmed by the stirrings of the owls in the roof and to cry herself to sleep amid thoughts of Biddy and home. Mrs. Coldby often seeing her cry, would teasingly ask: "What's this about child? Tears dropping into my milk-pans! Are you salting the milk to make it keep?"

In this realistically conceived picture of farm life Miss Martineau has imaginatively projected Ruth's point of view; how a very young girl would react to her initiation in the duties of a farm house. Objectively

1. The Parish  Ch. I
2. Ibid. Ch. I.
viewed, however, Ruth's work at the farm was the usual training of an agricultural labourer's child; a form of apprenticeship which is favourably noticed by the Poor Law Commissioners. In contrast with Ruth we see in other children the effect of the demoralizing conditions in which they were reared. Mrs. Brand is too pre-occupied with the brawling loungers at her beer shop to take care of her children. Biddy the deformed child serves only to amuse the disorderly customers, Peter is regaled with the exploits of the poachers and game-keepers. Indeed Ruth finds that her people at home are no longer drawn to her by common interests and ideals. It is at her mother's house that she overhears the plot for setting fire to her master's stack yard. Though her daring attempt to warn her master proves unavailing, yet her loyalty and sense of sacrifice bear out the testimony of the rector that the old virtues are not extinct, but are stronger than ever and more severely tried. There is, at times, a shade of priggishness in her character, when she seems to be voicing the views of the author. Seeing for instance that the children of Mr. Bloy the landlord are encouraged to beg from rich travellers, Ruth ventures to ask Mrs. Bloy if the children would be willing to work hereafter, if they were made fond of begging now. On the whole she is fairly representative of Victorian childhood, deeply domesticated, self-reliant, accustomed to assume responsibility from an early age, wise beyond

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2. Id. Ch. viii.
her years yet with something touchingly childlike irradiating the earnest seriousness of her character.

From the description of the workhouse it appears that once their fear of its high walls was got over the children made merry, playing, laughing, and teasing the old and disabled inmates. A mother's remark that the workhouse was a bad place for children evoked the following observation from an old inmate: "and yet—workhouses were meant for such as them and us. It seems odd, but it is quite true that none of them turn out good, and none of us happy."

The effect of the Abolition of Out-door Relief and of the strict application of the 'Workhouse Test' is pictured in Miss Martineau's "Hamlets". The story is undisguisedly propagandist. The opening scene, however, is charmingly imagined. Two orphan children, Harriet, a stout girl of ten and her brother Ben, just turned nine, are boarded out by the parish with Mrs. Monk, a fisherman's wife and mother of a three-year-old boy, Fred. Harriet and Ben are set to work to earn something and to make themselves generally useful in the house. We see the children go out in the early morning to gather what wool they can get from the downs. Having by noon collected a very respectable bundle of flock, and four guillemot eggs into the bargain, they return home, proudly exhibit their pricks and scratches to disarm Mrs. Monk's suspicions that their gains were not honestly come by. The humour and homely appeal of the following scene are irresistible: 'When Harriet
had just finished tidying up things a low wail was heard from the next room. It proceeded from Ben, not yet in bed, but standing in his shirt, wiping away his tears with its ragged sleeve. His grief was that he could not get into bed, as the baby was lying directly across his little feet, appearing where Ben wanted to rest his weary shoulders, and the same little feet being old enough to kick rather vigorously on receiving a hint to get back into their proper places. This matter being arranged by Mrs. Monk in a moment and Ben helped by the same hand to lie down without pushing Fred out upon the floor, the boy was permitted to go to sleep, as soon as he could, under the conviction that he must not move half an inch to the right or to the left.\(^1\)

As we proceed with the story, its propaganda overshadows these human touches: the children outgrow their individual traits and become lay figures to propagate the author’s views. Harriet and Ben join the workhouse school as out-boarders, wish to be generous, to do a great deal of good, and wonder why there are so many people on the parish when it is so easy to keep off it. Reared to a state of early independence Harriet and Ben do grow, indeed, to repay their training and protection by taking care of Mr. Monk and his children after the death of Mrs. Monk. Mr. Monk, anxious about his children’s future, thought that it might not often happen that such as Harriet and Ben would be at hand at

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1. Hamlets. Ch.I.
such times, Harriet declared: "... but I do not see why there should not be plenty such as Ben and me, if orphans were timely taught and tended in some place out of the workhouse."

The story closes with a picture of the entirely 'depauperised' village. By refusing the parish relief except on terms of strict regimen in the workhouse, Mr. Barry, the new overseer, eliminates all but the real paupers. Even these latter prefer to rely upon private charity and the mutual help of their relatives and neighbours whose virtues have now been stimulated by the new system of Poor Law administration. The workhouse school, too, is deserted in favour of one where children pay their two pence a week, "thinking more highly of education the more completely it was disconnected with public and private charity."

Miss Martineau's other two tales of Poor Laws do not give us any striking picture of children. "The Town" has a slightly sketched scene of the "workhouse school", exposed to the demoralizing influence of a Mixed Workhouse. The schoolmaster is assaulted by the children at the instigation of an idiot pauper. An interesting piece of evidence is afforded on an independent labourer's diet which is set up as a standard for the workhouse scale. Walter, the beadle, schoolmaster, and shoemaker, earned ten shillings a week. He, his wife, and six children made up the family. They had some little meat in a week but only Walters touched it to fit him for his

1. The Town. Ch. IX
work. The others got fried potatoes for dinner and the use of dripping, coffee and bread morning and evening and half a pound of butter now and then.¹

In the preface Miss Martineau states that all that is most melancholy in her story is strictly true and that she has taken no pains to select the worst instances of parochial abuse and pauper incroachment exhibited in her tales. The tales are intended to illustrate the thesis that vice and misery are to be referred to the errors of a system rather than to the depravity of individuals. A part of this thesis is developed by contrasting two sets of children: those growing free from, and those subjected to, pauperising influence. And the dividing line tends to be too sharply defined. Under the stress of her thesis Miss Martineau's model children seem to grow into moral prodigies, but as our analysis shows, her pictures of Victorian childhood are, on the whole, truly conceived. The subsequent history of the Poor Law Amendment Act, however, belied many of the high hopes in terms of which Miss Martineau pictures the "entirely depauperised" village in "Hamleta."

The new Poor Law provoked fierce opposition and something like rebellion in the North.² The poor in Cambridgeshire, said a Cambridgeshire farmer in 1836,³ "have an amazing prejudice against the Poor Law Bill."

"Rightly or wrongly," a contemporary historian of the factory movement wrote in 1857, "the labourers of England believed that the new Poor Law was a law to punish

² S. Commons' Committee on the State of Agriculture (1836) Q. 2361
poverty. Engels interpreted the Malthusian spirit of the new law as equating poverty with "superfluity."
"Live you shall, but live as an awful warning to all those who might have inducements to become "superfluous."
The workhouses were termed the Bastilles, and several of the best and most honest labourers, it was deposed before the Commons' Committee, said that before they would go to the Union Workhouses, they would rob on the highway. "I have," wrote Engels, "the reports of five cases, in which persons actually starving when the guardians refused them outdoor relief, went back to their miserable homes and died of starvation rather than enter these hells."

Kingsley speaks in 1844 of the horrible effects of the new Poor Law. "You must be behind the scenes to see the truth, in places which the Malthus's and --s know nothing of." On the refusal of out-door relief and the offer of Workhouse, Carlyle's characteristic comment was: "If paupers are made miserable, paupers will need to decline. It is a secret known to all rat catchers." He analysed the chief social principle of the Poor Law Amendment Act as "Laissez faire, laissez passer". "In brief, ours is a world requiring only to be well let alone. Scramble alone, thou insane scramble of a world - thou art all right, and shall scramble even; and whoever in the press is trodden down, has only to lie there and be trampled broad."

1. *Life and Labour in the 19th Century*, p. 103
Allowing for the colourful oratory of the objectors, whose criticism Sidney and Beatrice Webb characterize as purely negative, the new Poor Law does seem to have brought a new rigour at the same time that it suffered some of the old evils to survive. That Dickens in his picture of the new Poor Law was nearer the truth than was Miss Martineau's prophecy is borne out by what Louisa Twining saw of the mismanagement and the reign of terror in the Strand Union Workhouse in 1833 and in St. Giles's in 1857.

In three respects principally, the position of children under the Poor Law remained unsatisfactory. (1) General Mixed Workhouses (2) "Child Farms" (3) Out-door Relief.

The orders and regulations to be observed in the Workhouses and issued by the Commissioners directed the children under 13 to be separated from the adults and classified as: (1) boys above 7 and under 13 (2) girls above 7 and under 16, and (3) children under 7 years of age. To each class a separate apartment or building was to be assigned. This policy recommended in 1834 was abandoned in 1835-1837 and re-adopted in 1838. Yet in 1806, 14,000 children under 16 were still found in the General Mixed Workhouses. The intersection, however, of Gilbert and local act incorporations impeded the work of forming unions and providing workhouses. By 1836, 315 unions were stated to have been formed.

2. Recollections of Life and Work. pp. 114, 115
thus placing under the new law 45% of the entire population of England and Wales. At the end of 1858 the number of Unions was reported to have increased to 608. This progress was, however, qualified by the admission that these unions were not well provided with sufficient workhouse accommodation and that in some even of the earlier unions the workhouses were still very imperfect.¹ As the able-bodied paupers were kept out by the workhouse test and out-door relief was permitted in cases of distress, the workhouse became increasingly a refuge of "those very classes whom one would least of all select to associate with each other: both sexes, extreme ages, different degrees of imbecility and disease, those who are much to be pitied and those who are much to be blamed."² Such a confusion of classes, coupled with the adherence to the principle of "Less Eligibility" gave to the workhouse a character which is analysed by Fowle: "... it is neither school, infirmary, penitentiary, prison, place of shelter, or place of work, but something that comes of all these put together."³ The difficulty of steering between a jail and an almshouse and, consequently, the impossibility of enforcing any uniform regimen made the workhouse anything but a suitable place for children to be reared in. A very large proportion of the inmates of all the London prisons, it was reported, had passed as a preparatory step some portion of their lives in the workhouses.⁴ The

¹ George Nicholls: History of the Poor Law, Vol. II, p. 454  
² Fowle: The Poor Law, p. 112  
³ Ibid. p. 142  
⁴ Report on the Training of Pauper Children, p. 359
despotism and cruelty of the workhouse officers were frequently reported upon by competent witnesses. Their evidence to some extent, accounts for the dread and hatred of the workhouse which so often found imaginative expression in Dickens.

The metropolitan parishes, in conformity with the provisions of Hanway’s Acts (2 Geor. III c.28 and 7 Geor. III c.39) boarded out their children in small private "baby farms" or in infant establishments set up for the purpose in the suburbs of London. Some of these establishments seem to have been directly managed by the parishes concerned, others maintained under contract. Of the private undertakings the two best known were Aubin’s at Norwood, and Drouet’s at Tooting. High mortality at Aubin’s establishment led in 1836 to a special report by Dr. Arnott. Dr. Arnott found the diet excellent and abundant but suggested improvements in warming and ventilating. Reformed by these and other improvements, the Norwood establishment was commended by Dr. Kay in 1839 as a model school of industry: "No workhouse school as yet affords an example of industrial, moral and religious training, the success of which can be compared with that which has already attended only six months’ exertions in an establishment containing 1,000 children, though these efforts have been obstructed by all the imperfections incident to a contractor’s establishment."  

1. Second Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, App.C. 1836  
2. Report on the Training of Pauper Children, p.190
incident to a contractor's establishment" of which Dr. Kay speaks were brought to light in 1849 by an outbreak of cholera in Broust's school, which earlier in 1837 and again in 1840 was complained of for ill-treatment as well as ill-health. Doubts existed as to the right of the Poor Law Board to interfere with these "farming establishments", but what now occurred at Tooting brought home the necessity of protecting pauper and deserted children, especially of the metropolitan parishes. Dickens launched a vigorous attack against "a trade which derived its profits from the deliberate torture of and neglect of a class the most innocent on earth, as well as the most wretched and defenceless." Again in 1850, being agreeably impressed by the robust looking children in a large metropolitan workhouse, he recollected "that most infamous and atrocious enormity committed at Tooting - an enormity which a hundred years hence will still be vividly remembered in the by-ways of English life, and which had done more to engender a gloomy discontent and suspicion among many thousands of the people than all the Chartist leaders could have done in all their lives."

The 18th and 18th Victoria cap.13 empowered the Poor Law Board to regulate all those places wherein poor persons were lodged or maintained or educated under contracts with parochial authorities.

3. Reprinted Pieces. A Walk in the Workhouse
In a supplemental report at the end of 1839 the total number of workhouse children under 16 was stated to be 64,570, but the number of children on out-door relief ran into hundreds of thousands. Of these latter, Sidney and Beatrice Webb write that, although their number was the largest, the smallest amount of information is available. Dr. Phillips Kay drew attention to the semi-barbarous state of the indigent poor in Manchester and the racial degeneration that would follow upon neglecting the nurture and education of their children. 2

For a knowledge of the moral and physical conditions in which children of the poor were being reared we have mainly to depend on what Gazeinian has called "Le Roman Social en Angloisère". These children merged into the general mass of the poorer classes came to life in the pages of Dickens. What we owe to Dickens as a contemporary historian is acknowledged in Clapham's reference to "one little changed calling": "For this group there is a bare figure in the census: for the rest inquiry must be made down Dickens' basement staircases and into his shabbier garrets and closets for Susan Ripper and Gusta and the underlings at Todgers. No notes about wages, dietaries, such as exist in abundance for many classes of labour, occur in the public documents of the age in reference to the 670,491 female domestic servants - who were still probably over 50% more numerous than all the men and women, boys and girls in

2. Four Periods of Public Education, p.132
Before considering the literary treatment of the child pauper in Dickens in whom "all the scattered points of light appear in a concentrated form as if into focal point" ("endlich greift alle die verschie denen Ansätze auf er sammelt die zerstreuten Strahlen in einen Brennpunkt.")\(^2\), we shall briefly notice Mrs. Tonna's "Helen Fleetwood" (1841), Mrs. Trollope's "Jessie Phillips" (1844) and the anonymously published "Ginx's Baby" (1870). This will give us a true idea of the general trend of contemporary opinion on the subject.

Mrs. Tonna, who wrote under the pseudonym of Charlotte Elizabeth, was the daughter of Michael Brown, rector of St. Giles and canon of the Cathedral at Norwich. She is described by Mrs. Stowe as "a woman of strong mind and powerful feeling" and her delineations of factory life as "just illustrations of what such delineations ought to be".\(^3\) According to Cazamian she is a second Miss Martineau: "meme oneric polemique, meme rigorism puritan; mais ici l'ardeur intérieure est sentimentale non volontaire et intellectuelle."\(^4\) "Helen Fleetwood" is her tale of factory life and however needfully disguised as to persons and places, the tale, the author assures her readers, is substantially correct.\(^5\) Indeed, it is more a dissertation than a work of art. Dealing principally

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1. Economic History of Great Britain. The Early Railway Age, 1820-1850
2. Else Gutermuth: Das kindin englischen Roman von Richardson bis Dickens. Giessener Beiträge II 1924
3. Introduction to the Works of Charlotte Elizabeth
5. Chap.xx.
with industrial life, the book throws also an interesting side light on how the Poor Law and the factory system play into each other's hands. Prospects of lucrative employment, independence, respectability, schools for children, are held out to beguile the simple village folk like the pious and industrious widow Mrs. Green and her little family from their home parish. A happy household is broken up and after a heroic but unavailing struggle against poverty and distress the widow ends her days in the workhouse. One is impressed by the passionate sincerity of the book. "L'âme," writes Casamian, "est peinte avec conscience, exactitude, et mediocrite."

"Jessie Phillips'" is an indignant protest against the workings of the new Poor Law. In the suffering undergone by her heroine as an unmarried mother, Mrs. Trollope illustrates the harsh operation of the new law: and animadverts upon its unchristian spirit, its rigid centralised administration, replacing the reciprocal parish ties, the strict enforcement of the workhouse test, subjecting to a degrading penal regimen those whose only crime was their poverty, and its unchivalrous treatment of the unmarried mother.

Jessie Phillips is the village belle and an expert needlewoman. Her lovely, innocent face and light active figure have made her a favourite with the Squire's daughters. But her very innocence betrays her into the seductive amours laid by the Squire's unprincipled son
Frederick. Here the author interpolates a warning against confounding innocence with virtue, and a plea for popular education. In extenuation of her heroine's guilt she writes: "Let her not be harshly judged. The process by which innocence is strengthened into virtue, had, in her case, as in ten thousand others, never been applied; and the result was what common sense might tell us was likely to follow from the deficiency, a deficiency by the way, which is felt more generally than it is understood, and which will continue to be so felt, with all its hateful consequences, till our theories of popular education are improved."  

When about to give birth to her child, Jessie is deserted by Frederick. Cast out by society she becomes an inmate of the workhouse, undergoing the most painful initiatory process; having to part with her luxuriant chestnut tresses, to wear regulation dress of the Union, and to endure the promiscuous society of the workhouse. Aided by a sympathiser she steals out of the workhouse determined to get redress either from her seducer or the law. But foiled on all sides, she seeks shelter in a farm shed, and sinks into unconsciousness. The subsequent discovery of her dead child leads to her arrest. She is ultimately acquitted, for the real culprit proves to be Frederick, who, fearing disgrace, had meanwhile drowned himself. The sentence of "not guilty" is pronounced in vain upon Jessie, for worn out by suffering she dies unconscious of it. Loosely connected with the

main story are some episodes picturing other cases of hardship under the new Poor Law.

The much-esteemed and well-conducted widow Greenhill, rendered destitute by her son’s failure in a business speculation and his arrest for trade debts, applies for parish relief for her daughter in law and five children. One of the guardians shames her into silence by his Malthusian exposition of the new law, "Are you not ashamed, a woman of decent appearance like you are, to come and ask the active, honest, intelligent, thrifty part of the population to rob themselves and their own children (honestly brought into the world, with the consciousness that there was power to maintain them) are you not ashamed, old woman, to come here to take their money out of their pockets in order to feed the litter of brats that you know in your heart and conscience ought never to have been born at all?"

The workhouse with its strict confinement and contaminating atmosphere is painted as the living grave that it seemed to the inmates, shut within its dismal walls with nothing but stone and mortar and miserable faces to look at.

While protesting against the victimization of the unmarried mother under the new law, Mrs. Trollope does not seem to adopt any extreme views on the subject, but counsels patience. From the information given by many it seemed to her that a new Poor Law was absolutely

1 Id. Ch.ix.
necessary to save the country from the ruinous consequen-
ces of the old, but that the remedy which was applied lacked practical wisdom and the proper Christian spirit. "Nevertheless," she concludes, "it appears evident that much of the misery so justly complained of might yet be remedied were a patient and truly tolerant spirit at work in all quarters upon the subject."

Cazemian dismisses "Jessie Phillips" with "La valeur littéraire et le force probante en sont aussi faibles que celles de Michael Armstrong. Ne touchant pas au problème industriel, le livre ne mérite même pas l'examen."

Breathless, impulsive, and warmly affectionate as she is, Mrs. Trollope impairs the truth of her story by the extreme examples under which she chooses to personify her views. One may add, however, that about the new Poor Law, too, it was remarked: "This is legislat-
ing for extreme cases with a vengeance." The truest judgment on the book is Frances Eleanor Trollope's "... contains some powerful writing. The subject is, however, a painful one; and the work is a vast deal of sound sense and shrewd observation in many of these, but they are undoubtedly somewhat heavy reading material interpolated into the midst of a novel."

We are interested in "Jessie Phillips" for two reasons in particular. It reflects the views of a popular contemporary writer on a subject on which a

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1. Id. Ch.LVI
2. Le Roman Social, Vol.II, note 155
3. Quarterly Review LII 1854, p.239
4. Frances Trollope: Her Life and Literary Work, Vol.II,
a novelist like Dickens, a prophet like Carlyle, an observer like Engels wrote no less vehemently, though this vehemence in expression or in thought detracts from the factual value of their writing. The work, again, we learn, was inspired to some extent by Miss Martineau's attack on Oliver Twist on the ground that Dickens had charged against the new Poor Law the evil consequences of the old.

The new Poor Law question continued to whet the zeal for social reform till, with the rise of democracy in the 'eighties', it became merged with the general issue of social welfare. The misdirection and mockery of philanthropic effort and the State's failure to make any comprehensive provision for the physical and spiritual welfare of the poor are exposed in "Ginz's Baby", the story of a derelict child, which was anonymously published in 1870 and which went into a 36th edition in 1876. The Dictionary of National Biography describes "Ginz's Baby" as a pathetic satire on the struggles of rival sectarians for the religious education of a derelict child. The work, we are told, attracted universal notice and had its influence on the religious compromise in the Education Act of 1870.

Apart from its historical importance as a religious satire, the work is a trenchant criticism of the spirit of the new Poor Law and of the administrative machinery set up under it. If ever there was a case for state

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aid and intervention it was that of Ginx's Baby. Ginx, a stout navvy and father of twelve children, lived in one of those back-to-back tenements where sanitary reform was unknown, where disease was regarded with the fatalism of despair, and oblivion purchased through gin. In a room measuring 13 ft. 6 inches in height and furnished with one family bed, twelve young Ginxes were variously disposed of. Scarcely able to maintain his existing family and determined never to go on the parish, Ginx vowed to drown the next child if he ever had any. Ginx's Baby happens to be this fated child.

Ginx is carrying the baby to throw it over Vauxhall Bridge when his neighbours intervene. A philosopher witnessing the scene interposes with his dry rationalistic comments on what to the work-people is an intensely human problem. Telling Ginx that he had no right to bring children into the world or even to marry unless he could provide for his family, he addresses other workpeople. "Is it not time to think about these things and stop the indiscriminate production of human beings, whose lives you cannot maintain? Ought you not to act more like reflective creatures and less like brutes? As if breeding were the whole object of life. How much better for you, my friend, if you have never married at all, than to have had the worry of wife and children all these years." These words evoke angry murmurs among the assemblage and in Ginx the tender memories of his wife and children, "the bright eyes and the winding arms

1 Ginx's Baby. Pt.I, Chap.VII.
so often trellised over his tremendous form, the coy 
tricks and laughter that had cheered so many tired hours."

A stonemason voices the mute protest of his fellow 
men and gives a more human turn to the discussion, "Are 
we to live more like beasts than we are now, or do what's 
worse than murder? I don't see no other way. Among 
us I tell you, sir, three fourths of our education is 
edication of the heart. We have to learn to be human, 
kind, self denying, and I think this makes better men, 
as a rule, than heed learnin', tho' I don't despise 
that neither."

Ginx's Baby is taken charge of at a Catholic home. 
In the fierce controversy that ensues over its spiritual 
salvation the baby is again abandoned. A tradesman 
discovering it outside his shop-door conveys it to the 
workhouse of St. Bortimous. When brought before the 
Board for inspection, one of the Guardians, a dog 
breeder, inquires about his pedigree. "His pedigree," 
answers one half-witted inmate of the workhouse, 'goes 
back for three hundred hears. Parents are unknown by 
name, but got by Misery out o' Starvation. The line 
began with Poverty out o' Laziness in Queen Elizabeth’s 
time. The breed has been a large un wotever you think 
of the quality."

The Board of Guardians dispute their liability 
with the neighbouring parish and pending legal inquiry, 
confine the baby in an empty room. A notice is put up

1.Id. Pt.I. Ch.VII
2.Id. Pt.III. Ch.II
forbidding the workhouse officials to enter the room to feed the baby. Access to the baby is not, however, barred to other persons who may assist it if they choose. Fortunately for Ginz's baby, the order is disobeyed and the assistance of the workhouse master and occasional lady visitors save him from starvation.

Some months later a nobleman calling at the workhouse to see a little girl he had saved from infamy is shocked to find Ginz's baby almost starving and suffering from slow fever. The public interest being aroused, the Poor Law Board's intervention is sought, but the Guardians somehow manage to keep on the right side of the law. "They neglected nothing that could sap little Ginz's vitality, deaden his happiest instincts, derange moral action, cause hope to die within his infant breast, as soon as it were born." The author's description of how the Guardians discharged their responsibilities to the poor has a touch of Dickens's mordant satire on the Poor Law administration. On the treatment meted out by the Board to Ginz's Baby the author comments: "The items the Board were really entitled to charge the ratepayers as supplied to our hero were:—Dirt, fleas, foul air, chances of catching a skin disease, fevers, etc., vile company, occasional cruelty, and a small supply of bad food and clothing." Every pauper was to them an obnoxious charge by any and every means to be reduced to a minimum or nil. Ginz's Baby was reduced to a minimum.
The Guardians succeed in tracing Ginx to whom the baby is handed over. But Ginx, loth to shoulder the charge, just when he is planning to emigrate, deposits the child at the doorstep of a radical club. Through the kindness of Sir Charles Sterling an influential member, Ginx's baby is adopted by the Radical party as the emblem of the party's concern for "the condition of England question". The baby's fortunes now shift with party interests. The chance kindness of the menials however, enables him to survive. He grows old enough to be a page. After an inconclusive parliamentary debate on the "condition of England question" the baby, now grown fifteen, worn out by the chill indifference of his patrons, decamps with a few things from the club. His subsequent career follows the familiar pattern of poverty driven to crime and punished in the name of the Law.

Some years after Ginx's flight, the author lounging over Vauxhall Bridge suddenly sees a human shadow leaping out and disappearing in the coruscating foam. He is moved by this scene to reflect: "I did not know what form it was that swilled down below the glistening current. Had I known that it was Ginx's Baby I should have thought: 'Society, which in the sacred names of Law and Charity, forbade the father to throw his child over Vauxhall Bridge at a time when he was alike unconscious of life and death, has at last itself driven
Conceived as a satire, "Cinx's Baby" does not seem to invite criticism as a novel in which the story is realised in terms of character and drama. The anonymity of the hero should guard us against expecting any individual portraiture of the child. The child, here, serves to lend a pathos and an urgency to the "condition of England question", and to link the various sectarian religious and political interests which join issue over him in the name of philanthropy and education. None the less "Cinx's Baby" throws some light on the character of the home and the conduct of the parents of thousands of children who find no place in the statistics or reports of the Poor Law authorities but to whom Dickens has given "a local habitation and a name".

Of "Cinx's Baby", Hugh Walpole wrote in 1929, "The satire is vigorous and at times savage; it is remarkably alive today, not at all out of date, and one's feeling, as one reads, is that civilisation has progressed not at all - a pessimism unjustified but natural. And does not the concluding paragraph strike home today? In its pages one hears sounded the doom of Victorian uplift and moral behaviour."

The Poor Law gave Dickens a subject with which he found himself and his public in sympathy. The distressing economic situation in 1837-8, and criticism of the new Poor Law both inside and outside the Parliament

1.Id. Pt.V. p.224
2.The Eighteen Seventies pp.42,43.
made the subject topical. The popular success of Sir Edward Bulwer's "Paul Clifford", treating of an analogous subject justified a similar effort though inspired by a different spirit. The sentimental realism of Smollet, Sterne and Goldsmith suggested a literary style well-suited to a genius like Dickens who also could not separate realism from a didactic strain. Finally, Dickens brought to the subject his reformatory zeal and the recollections of his own unhappy childhood. The social and literary influences, the emotional drive that went to the production of "Oliver Twist", have invested the story with a symbolic significance and the episode in which Oliver asks for more has become, as Arnold Kettle puts it, "a myth, a part of the cultural consciousness of the people." Dickens concerns himself little with the general principles of the New Poor Law. It is against the spirit and the utter inadequacy and insufficient administration of relief that he is fighting. He makes this clear in the post-script to "Our Mutual Friend", "I believe there has been in England, since the days of the Stuarts, no law, so often infamously administered, no law so often violated, no law habitually so ill-supervised."

Two features, in particular, of the Poor Law administration provoked vehement criticism: the position of children and dietary. Dickens's happy inspiration brought the two significantly together in the episode of Oliver's asking for more. Oliver himself is too

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2. See The Lancet 1886-87 and 1887-88.
passive a character, too much of a symbol of purity and innocence, to interest one much. He is seen mainly from the outside. Yet, Dickens succeeds in conveying a vivid sense of childish terror and precocious suffering. His visual accuracy combined with his highly emotional and imaginative way of looking at things creates a succession of highly arresting scenes. The first ten chapters bear out the truth of Cazamian's remark that "Rul artisle ne fut plus capable d'enregistrer les aspects concrets des choses, ni plus incapable de ne pas les colorer de son jugement sympathique ou antipathique. Le reel ne se reflète en lui qu'an images sentimentales." The events and persons that overshadow the work-house child make up a world of appalling poverty and ugliness. An impersonal note lends it an air of callousness and irresponsibility. Oliver's mother dies: "It's all over, Mrs. Thingummy, said the surgeon...." To the authorities Oliver means no more than another parish child to be badged and ticketed and put into his proper place. When he is nine and his sturdy spirit has survived neglect and starvation at the parish baby farm, Mrs. Mann presents her charge to the beadle: "Oliver makes a bow, which was divided between the beadle on the chair, and the cocked hat on the table." Such touches relieve the horror of the picture. Wretched as the baby farm is, it is endeared to Oliver by his companionship with other children. He bursts into tears as he is led away from his companions.

1. Le Roman Social Vol. I, 318
in misery. Not only has the child, Dickens maintains, the right to the bare necessities of physical existence, but also to sympathy and affection.

Those who preside over the system of oppression are the Board of Guardians — eight or ten fat gentlemen, representative of the utilitarian philosophy of a commercial age. If the gentleman in a white waistcoat is animated by sheer brutality, meeting any assertion of right on the part of Oliver with his threatening prophecy, "That boy will be hung," the chairman, Mr. Limbkins, incarnates the grasping tradesman's spirit, striking a bargain with a master sweep to give Oliver "his chance of life". With Oliver's apprenticeship to an undertaker the system of oppression inside the workhouse is linked to the world of poverty and crime outside. The workhouse is but part of a social system in which those seated in authority are cruel, corrupt or inefficient and in which the oppressed die or take to crime. Poverty, death and crime loom large in the world in which Oliver spends his early years. Set against this stark reality, Oliver's life with the Brownlows and Maylies seems almost unreal. Oliver starts his career with Sowerberry the undertaker and would, but for surprising coincidences, have ended it with Fagin, the criminal. Death and crime give a significant pattern to the history of a parish boy.

In the episode of Mr. Gamfield, Dickens casts a lurid light on the Trade, Business and Mystery of a
chimney-sweeper. As early as 1760 philanthropists began to take interest in the climbing boys. As a result of Jonas Hanway's efforts an act to regulate the trade was passed in 1788, affording the first instance of state regulation of child labour. For want of effective means the Act remained a dead letter. After much obstruction from vested interests and public apathy, the zeal and patience of philanthropic reformers secured legislation in 1834 and again in 1884. The Act of 1884 requiring the magistrate's consent to indentures saved Oliver. But the whole legislation, Keeling observes, "is an extraordinary example of the futility of enacting labour laws without providing adequate means of enforcing them ...... In consequence we have the spectacle, at once tragic and ridiculous, of the Legislature spending 90 years in successful attempts to protect a few thousand boys from the daily risk of being suffocated, burnt, or crippled." Until the Act of 1875 prescribed a licensing system, the evasions and violations of the law were frequent. In literature the cry of sweeps against their wrongs is first heard in Blake:

"And because I am happy and dance
They think they have done me no injury
They are gone to praise God and his Priest and King
Who make a heaven of our misery." 2

Lamb, in his essay "The Praise of Chimney Sweeps" (1822) sees the facts of their hardship and sorrow through a romantic haze. Charles Kingsley assigns to a little sweep the principal role in "The Water Babies" (1863).

1. Keeling, F. Child Labour in the United Kingdom (1914) p. 9
2. Songs of Innocence
Living in a world of soot and squalor where he never hears of God or of Christ, Tom unlike Oliver, is gradually assimilated to his vile environment. His idea of happy times coming is to be a master-sweep, drink beer, play cards and bully little sweeps. Only after he has experienced a healing "death-by-water" and suffered more humiliation by doing "the thing he did not like", he is sufficiently cleansed to take his place in the busy world as "a great man of science". It is difficult to say how far this fairy-tale allegory influenced the passage of the Act of 1884. Mr. Digby Seymour, who took keen interest in that legislation, attributed his interest in the climbing boys to an article which he has read in "Good Words". Mr. Phillips emphatically holds that Kingsley's book would not have stirred Mr. Seymour to action with its idyllic charm.

A similar question arises as to the extent of Dickens's influence on the Poor Law administration. What change of spirit, characterised the treatment of children twenty years after the publication of Oliver Twist (1838) may be studied in Augustus Mayhew's "Paved with Gold" (1858) The author vouches for the truthfulness of his picture. He shows how the unimaginative attitude and lack of enlightened policy in the State's treatment of children pave the way to juvenile delinquency. Born in prison and reared in a workhouse there were few events in Phil's youth that he could look back upon with

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satisfaction. The school rules were reminiscent of a prison cell. The food was weighed to that nice turn of the balance which will keep life in the body. "The whole system is one of prudence rather than of benevolence," the author concludes.²

It is, however, gratifying to note that defects inseparable from boarding establishments began to be remedied in the late 'sixties by boarding out children or by setting up "cottage homes".²

1. Paved with Gold Book the Third, Chap. I.
2. sec W. Chance Children under the Poor Law