

CHAPTER XXI.

Gregory King's Scheme of the Income of the several families in England.—Degrees of Society.—Town and Country Populations.—London.—Its Population.—Commerce.—Trading Companies.—Banking.—Unemployed Capital.—Projects for New Companies.—Lotteries.—Tradesmen.—Their character and habits.—Extent of London.—Progress of Fashion Westward.—Street Economy, and Police.—Robberies and Outrages.

IN 1688, "A Scheme of the income and Expense of the several Families in England" was calculated by Gregory King. He gives the number of families in each degree, and the number of persons. Of course there can be no absolute dependence upon such a document; although other political arithmeticians gave it their approval. In 1851, the Census of that year included a minute return of the infinitely varied Occupations of the People. The Census of 1841 exhibits a general Classification, which is more available for some points of comparison with the "Scheme" of 1688. The changes in the component parts of Society in about a century and a half are very strikingly brought out by this comparison.

I. The "Scheme," in the first place, gives us, of persons of independent means, 160 temporal lords, 800 baronets, 600 knights, 3000 esquires, 12,000 gentlemen. The income of an esquire is taken at £450, and that of a gentleman at £280. There were, moreover, 40,000 "Freeholders of the better sort," whose incomes are taken at £91 each. There were also 120,000 Freeholders of the lesser sort, each with an income of £55. These constituted the class of yeomen, and many, no doubt, farmed their own land. The Census of 1841 shows upwards of five hundred thousand persons returned as independent; but three fourths of these are females. The more minute return of 1851 shows a large number of annuitants, chiefly females. This class has been created by those facilities of investment in the Government Funds and other Stock, which scarcely existed in 1688.

II. We have next, in the "Scheme," 10,000 persons in the Civil Service of the country;—5000 being in the greater offices and

places, and 5000 in the lesser. The class of placemen was very numerous at a period when places were openly sold, and were regarded as amongst the best of investments, for persons who desired the happy lot of sinecurists. The Civil offices of our time are filled by about 16,000 persons of whom the greater number are amongst the hardest workers of the community. The offices now connected with local administration, and the servants of the dock-yards, are not included in this comparison.

III. The mercantile class in 1688 was estimated at 2000 eminent merchants and traders by sea—each with the modest income of £400: and 8000 lesser merchants, each with an income of £200. The shopkeepers and tradesmen were taken at 50,000, each with an income of £45. The artisans and handicraftsmen at 60,000, each earning £38 by the year. The adult males engaged in Commerce, Trade, and Manufacture, in 1841, exceeded two millions. The miners and other labourers were more than half a million.

IV. In 1688, there were, as we have mentioned, 160,000 Freeholders. There were also 150,000 Farmers, each with an income of £42 10s. We may conclude that the greater number of the small owners, as well as the renters of land, were engaged in agricultural occupations. The Farmers and Graziers in 1841 were 309,000. Gregory King's estimate gives 364,000 labouring people and out-servants, and 400,000 cottagers and paupers. At a period when there was necessarily a great mixture of occupations, it is impossible to say that these heads of families, amounting to more than three-quarters of a million, were for the most part agriculturists. But we apprehend that a large portion were chiefly engaged in occupations of a rural character. In 1841, the number of agricultural labourers and gardeners, amounted to about twelve hundred thousand.

V. The naval officers of 1688 were estimated at 5000; the common seamen at 50,000. The navy of the queen's and merchant service in 1841 was returned as comprising 220,000 men and boys. The officers of the army in 1688 were reckoned as 4000; the common soldiers as 35,000. In 1841 the army comprised 131,000 officers and men. In 1851 the numbers were largely increased.

VI. The clergy were estimated in 1688 to consist of 2000 "eminent clergymen," each with an income of £72; and of 8000 "lesser clergymen," each with an income of £50. In 1851 there were 18,587 ministers of the established Church; 8521 Protestant dissenting ministers; and 1093 Roman Catholic priests. The

“persons in liberal arts and sciences” in 1688 were reckoned as 15,000, each with an income of £60. In 1841 the legal profession comprised 17,454 persons; and the medical 22,187. Other educated persons following miscellaneous pursuits were 143,836, of whom 34,618 were females.

In looking at the amount of country and town population in Gregory King's estimate, we may take the number of persons to be as follows, in each of the preceding general divisions:—

COUNTRY POPULATION IN 1688.

Belonging to Families of Rank	153,520
Clergy (estimated portion of the whole)	40,000
Freeholders	940,000
Farmers	750,000
Labourers and out-servants (half of the whole)	637,500
Cottagers, &c	1,300,000
Vagrants	30,000
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	3,851,020

TOWN POPULATION IN 1688.

Belonging to Families of Persons in Office	70,000
Merchants	64,000
Clergy (remaining portion of the whole)	12,000
Law	70,000
Liberal Arts and Sciences	75,000
Shopkeepers and Tradesmen	255,000
Artisans	240,000
Army and Navy	256,000
Labourers and out-servants (half of the whole)	637,500
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	1,679,500

As nearly as we can judge from these imperfect data, the country population in 1688 comprised five-sevenths of the entire number of the people; the town population comprised only two-sevenths. In 1851, the town population slightly exceeded the population of the country; that of the towns being 8,990,809; that of villages and detached dwellings in the country being 8,936,800.

Of the town populations, that of London probably comprised one-third of the aggregate number. Three years before the Revolution, the inhabitants of the metropolis were estimated by King at five hundred and thirty thousand. This was about one-tenth of the whole population of the kingdom. Sir William Petty estimated the inhabitants of London at a million of persons. This calculation was founded upon very loose data; and still looser were the

assertions derived from the increase of houses, that in the reign of George I. the City, with Southwark and Westminster, contained a million and a half of people. Under the precise enumeration of the census of 1801 London contained less than a million inhabitants. The entire population of England and Wales was then under nine millions. Compared with other large towns at the end of the seventeenth century, London was considered able to bear an assessment in Aid that indicated her superiority in wealth as much as in population. In 1693 she was called upon to pay a monthly tax six times as great as the united assessments of Bristol, Norwich, Exeter, Worcester, Chester, and Gloucester. In 1702, there belonged to the port of London 560 vessels, averaging 151 tons each, giving an aggregate of 84,560 tons. The number of merchant vessels of all the ports of England was 3281, with an average of nearly 80 tons, and an aggregate of 261,222 tons. London thus engrossed about one third of the entire trade of the kingdom.

The commerce of the port of London, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, inconsiderable as it was when compared with the gigantic operations of our own time, must have been sufficiently imposing to the foreigner, and even to those who habitually looked upon it. The magnificent docks of the Thames belong to the present century; one small dock belonged to the earlier period of which we write. But the Pool was crowded in the reigns of William III. and Anne with colliers and coal-barges, waiting to deliver their cargoes at numerous private wharfs. Billingsgate, in 1699, was made a free market for the sale of fish; and the fishermen of little vessels that now came with every tide laden with mackerel and soles, with lobsters and oysters, were no longer compelled to sell exclusively to the fishmongers, but were free to supply the street-hawkers. At three o'clock in summer, and at five in winter, this famous market was opened. The dispute of fishers and costermongers produced that variety of our language which was once termed “Billingsgate;” but which is known by more general names since the great fish market has become refined. But more speculative commercial operations were going forward in the port of London than those connected with the supply of grain, or coal, or fish. During the quarter of a century from the accession of William and Mary to the death of Anne, there had been only four years and a half of peace. To the ordinary sea risks, at a time when marine insurance was little resorted to, was added the risk of capture by a foreign enemy, in distant seas, and not unfrequently in the Channel,

Nevertheless,—although during the eight years and a half of war in the reign of William, the tonnage of English shipping declined by more than a half its previous amount,—immediately after the peace of Ryswick, in 1697, the commerce of the country took a sudden spring; and although the war was renewed in 1702, it went on increasing during the reign of Anne. Two East India Companies had been quarrelling for the twelve years succeeding the Revolution; but at length their differences were composed; they established a common stock; and the Old Company which was formed at the beginning of the seventeenth century was incorporated into the New Company at the beginning of the eighteenth. The anxiety of the merchants of London to overthrow the monopoly of the India Trade, which was in the hands of a few individuals of enormous wealth, was at last successful. The silks and painted calicoes of India were prohibited; but the use of tea was spreading amongst the higher and middle ranks, and a new source of profitable commerce was opened by the change of habits in the people. Even whilst tea and coffee were taxed in their liquid state, and families sent to the coffee-house for a quart of the precious infusions, it was observed that excess in drinking, especially about London, was somewhat lessened through their use.* Immediately after the Revolution, tea and coffee were made subject to the Customs' duties. The shops of London then retailed the new luxuries, but at a price which must have forbidden their general use. In 1710, Bohea is advertised at twelve, sixteen, twenty and twenty-four shillings per lb.; the lowest green at twelve shillings.† Eighteen years afterwards, it is complained that “tea and wine are all we seem anxious for.”‡ There was another change in the habits of the people produced by political causes operating upon the accustomed course of trade. The war with France was accompanied by a prohibition of French wines and brandy, of which the previous returns showed an annual consumption of twenty-two thousand tuns of wine, and eleven thousand tuns of brandy. The Methuen treaty of 1703, under which the wines of Portugal were put upon the most favoured footing, sent the wine consumers from Claret to Port, of which twenty-thousand pipes were imported into London in 1721. The loss of brandy was supplied by the consumption of home made spirits; and in a very few years “the

* Chamberlayne's "Present State," 1687, p. 41.

† Advertisement in "Tatler," No. 157, original edition.

‡ "Augusta Triumphans," by Defoe, p. 311.

distillers found out a way to hit the palate of the poor, by their new-fashioned compound water, called Geneva."*

Several of the old trading Companies of London were at this period carrying on their adventures with success. The Russia Company, established in 1553, had certain privileges; but each member of the Company traded on his own account. The Turkey Company was formed in 1579; and two hundred years later was denounced by Adam Smith as "a strict and oppressive monopoly." This was also what was called "a regulated Company," or a monopoly for individual traders. The African Company, which began its operations in 1530, was, on the contrary, a joint-stock Company; its constitution being such as that which the East India Company set forth as their own great claim to support, in which "noblemen, gentlemen, shopkeepers, widows, orphans, and all other subjects may be traders, and employ their capital in a joint-stock." The Hudson's Bay Company was chartered in 1670, for the purpose of opening a trade for furs and minerals. For nearly two centuries the trade in furs, conducted by this Company and the North West Company, who were once rival but were at last united, was held to be the sole use to which a region some forty times larger than England could be applied. The minerals which prince Rupert sent out a ship to search for, in the time of Charles II., have been discovered in the time of queen Victoria. The reign of the Hudson's Bay Company has suddenly passed away upon the discovery of gold. A new Colony has been added to the British Crown, in the same year which has also seen the transfer of the sovereignty of India from a Joint-stock Company to the Imperial government. It is impossible to look upon such mighty changes without a conviction that events which may change the destinies of millions of Asiatics, and fill another American region of boundless swamps and forests with the greatest civilising race of the European family, are amongst the most wonderful of the Special Providences of the Almighty.

The system of Banking, which had been slowly growing up in London from the time of Charles II., when the goldsmiths kept the cash of the merchants, and large business transactions were arranged by the payment of bills, or what we now call cheques, was not followed at all, or at least very imperfectly, in the country districts. Remittances to London, even of the taxes collected for the government, were made in specie. In 1692 the collectors of the

* "Complete Tradesman," vol. ii. p. 220.

tax-money of the North, carrying their precious burden on sixteen horses, were attacked in Hertfordshire, and the treasure being borne off, all the horses were killed by the robbers to prevent pursuit.* In the instructions of the "Complete Tradesman," at a much later period, we have this form of entry in the Account of Petty Cash":—"To the Exeter carriers, for carriage of money, 15s 3d." In 1694 the Bank of England was incorporated, and carried on its first operations, with fifty-four cashiers and clerks, in the hall of the Grocers' Company. This great Corporation commenced its functions under the most auspicious circumstances. Its subscribers anticipated the payment of a million two hundred thousand pounds of taxes voted by Parliament, and the Company was allowed eight per cent. upon the money advanced, besides an annual sum of four thousand pounds for management. The system which was recommended by the East India Company, under which the unemployed capital of noblemen, gentlemen, shopkeepers, widows, and orphans, could be made profitable, was coming to be understood. But the facilities for the development of the system were extremely few. Capital was raising its inarticulate voice for employment; and there were projectors at hand to hold out the most tempting prospects of increase without labour and without risk, to the persons of every degree, whose money was unprofitably locked up in the strong-box. The age of Companies came very soon after the Revolution. No scheme of fraud, no delusion of folly, was transparent enough to make its victims stay their headlong pursuit of imaginary wealth. The mania never stopped. Several years after the ruin which was produced by the infatuation of the South Sea scheme—of which we shall make mention in due course—the management of Companies was thus spoken of: "We are so fond of Companies, it is a wonder we have not our shoes blacked by one, and a set of directors made rich at the expense of our very blackguards."† The fluctuations, soon after the Revolution, in the price of shares—not only of "new projects and schemes, promising mountains of gold," but of the established trading Companies—were so excessive, that the business of the Royal Exchange, in its stock-jobbing department, might be compared to the operations of a great gambling-house. Indeed the spirit of gaming had taken possession of the people in the humblest as well as the highest transactions. In a Statute of 1698, it is recited that many evil-disposed persons, for divers years last

* Evelyn, "Diary," 20th November.

† "Augusta Triumphans."

past, had set up mischievous and unlawful games called Lotteries, in London and Westminster, and in other parts, and had fraudulently obtained great sums of money from unwary persons. The Lotteries were therefore declared to be public nuisances. But the newspapers of 1710 are full of the most curious advertisements of Lotteries, called Sales. Some tickets were as high as two guineas: many as low as sixpence.* Mrs. Lowe, the milliner, next door to the Crown in Red Lion Street, has a sixpenny sale. Six houses in Limehouse, and £2499 in new fashionable plate, are to be disposed of by tickets, and the numbers are to be drawn by two parish boys, out of two wheels, at the Three Tun Tavern in Wood-street.† There is even a twopenny sale, at the Pasty-cook's, at Porter's-block, near Smithfield.‡ But there are signs of the cheats coming to an end. The sale of goods for £7500, to be drawn on Wednesday last, is postponed for weighty reasons; but it will certainly be drawn at Stationers' Hall, for eminent Counsel have given under their hands that this sale of goods is not within the Act for suppressing of Lotteries.§ The Act was passed; and the "heavy plate" and "stitched petticoats" had to find an honest market. Utterly opposed in principle to the spirit of Lotteries was the principle of Insurance. There were two Insurance Offices against Fire established before 1687—The Royal Exchange, and the Friendly Society. The Amicable Society for insuring Lives was chartered in 1706. But these most valuable institutions were imitated in a gambling spirit. Insurances upon births and marriages were opened; and became such covers for fraud that they were suppressed by Statute in 1710.

The projectors of schemes for making all men suddenly rich,—the managers of fraudulent insurances—the sellers of plate, jewellery, and mercery by lottery—all these, and many others, who trafficked in human credulity, were exceptions to the general spirit of the English tradesman. In an age of somewhat loose morality amongst the higher classes, Burnet, writing in 1708, says, "As for the men of trade and business, they are, generally speaking, the best body in the nation; generous, sober, and charitable." He describes the inhabitants of cities as having "more knowledge, more zeal, and more charity, with a great deal more of devotion" than "the people in the country." Berkeley, who took a broader view of human affairs than the historian of his own time, points to

* Advertisements in "Tatler," No. 239.

† *Ibid.*, No. 245.

‡ *Ibid.*, No. 240.

§ *Ibid.*, No. 252.

"country gentlemen and farmers, and the better sort of tradesmen," as believers in the efficacy of virtue to make a nation happy, rather than as confiding in the power of wealth. * Burnet rather qualifies his praise of "the best body in the nation," by admitting that in the capital city "there may be too much of vanity, with too pompous an exterior." † Of this vanity and pompous exterior there is various evidence. It was the natural result of a prosperous social condition, in which there were very few industrious men who were not bettering their circumstances. It may seem somewhat strange at a period not very far beyond a time when the income of an eminent merchant was taken at four hundred pounds a year, and that of a lesser merchant at not more than two hundred, that we find indications of a pompous exterior which would necessarily be very costly. We can understand how sir Josiah Child, who married his daughter to a duke's son, and gave her a portion of fifty thousand pounds, should have lived at a splendid mansion at Wanstead, and covered acres with his plantations. We do not wonder at the large expenditure of sir Robert Clayton, who changed the barren hills of Marden, in Surrey, into a scene that "represented some foreign country, which would produce spontaneously pines, firs, cypress, yew, holly, and juniper." ‡ But we cannot avoid thinking that the average mercantile income was underrated, when we know that the suburbs of London were full of country houses, to which merchants and retailers always repaired in the summer. Carshalton is described as crowded with fine houses of the citizens, some of which were built at profuse expense. § Other parts of Surrey presented the same show of wealth, in such retreats of the traders, "who in their abundance make these gay excursions, and live thus deliciously all the summer, retiring within themselves in the winter, the better to lay up for the next summer's expense." ¶ The frugality of the citizen's London dwelling, over his shop or over his warehouse, must not be too readily assumed. "It is with no small concern that I behold," says a correspondent of Mr. Bickerstaff, "in coffee-houses and public places, my brethren, the tradesmen of this city put off the smooth, even, and ancient decorum of thriving citizens, for a fantastical dress and figure improper for their persons and charac-

* "Alciphron," Works, vol. i. p. 337.

† "Our Times," Conclusion, vol. vi. p. 203, Oxford ed.

‡ Evelyn, "Diary," July 13, 1700.

§ Defoe, "Tour," i. 232.

¶ Defoe, "Tour," i. p. 239.

ters."* The tradesmen and shopkeepers even aspired "to keep footmen as well as the gentlemen; witness the infinite number of blue liveries, which are so common now that they are called the tradesmen's liveries." Again: "Citizens and tradesmen's tables are now the emblems, not of plenty, but of luxury." † Three or four maid-servants were said to be kept in a house, where two formerly were thought sufficient. Of course, there is the usual exaggeration, in much of this complaint. One of the most certain indications of an improving state of the middle classes is the more luxurious nature of their diet; the wear of better clothing; the employ of more domestic servants; the furnishing their houses with articles of improved taste. It does not necessarily follow that convenience is more costly than discomfort, or refinement than coarseness. The satirist is not always to be relied upon who looks back to a past generation for his models of virtuous simplicity. What was denounced as vanity and extravagance in Anne's reign, might be held up as the most pattern frugality, to shame the universal love of display in our time.

The rebuilding of the City after the great Fire, was a work of marvellous energy, which offers an example, rarely paralleled, of public spirit. It was scarcely to be expected that there should have been no sacrifices to mere expediency; that a houseless population should have set about the work of reconstruction by raising up a city of wide streets instead of narrow alleys; and of regular architecture instead of the diversified adaptations to individual means and wants. Yet much was accomplished. Brick or stone houses replaced those of timber and plaster; and light and air were not excluded by the topmost story of every house almost touching its opposite neighbour. London was made more convenient, but infinitely less picturesque. In one respect the new city was not so airy as the old. Gardens behind many of the opulent traders' houses, and large side-yards, were built over. The nobility had migrated from the East to the West, and their old mansions in Bishopsgate, and Houndsditch, and Barbican, with vast courts and offices, were covered with new squares. The fire of London gave habitations to a more numerous population; and it was asserted that when the City had been rebuilt, four thousand additional houses stood upon the area that was desolated by the fire. If the new shops and warehouses and dwellings had no great architectural pretensions, many public edifices had risen, which

* "Tatler," No. 270.

† "Complete Tradesman,"

gave London a feature characteristic of its age. The churches which were destroyed had been mostly erected during the period when the old religion was in the ascendant. They were adapted to the ceremonials of Catholicism, and not for the accommodation of congregations to whom the sermon was the all-important part of public worship. It was fortunate that a man of real genius existed at the time of the Fire, who had a higher notion of the functions of an Architect than to produce copies of buildings belonging to a past age. It was fortunate that Sir Christopher Wren did not set about re-producing a Gothic St. Paul's, but, after the labour of thirty-five years, gave London the noblest Protestant Temple of the world. It was fortunate that instead of repeating in his new Parish Churches the gabled roofs and lancet windows of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, he left us, in his fifty-one Churches, built under every possible disadvantage, edifices of consummate beauty and variety in one great feature of their external appearance. He had to build these churches upon small areas, many behind the main streets. He made his very difficulties the main cause of his success. "Wren, with consummate judgment put his strength into his steeples and campanili, which soar above the sordid and dingy mass of habitations, and, clustering like satellites round the majestic dome of the Cathedral, impart to the general aspect of the city a picturesque grandeur scarcely rivalled by Rome itself."* The accomplished artist from whom we quote truly characterises Wren as an inventor.

After the fire of London, as the nobility and the opulent gentry had gone Westward for their dwellings, the course of retail trade took the same direction. In the latter years of Charles II., the mercers occupied Paternoster Row; the street was built for them; it was thronged with coaches in two rows; the neighbouring streets were occupied by dependants upon the mercery trade, by the lacemen and fringe-sellers. Gradually the court came no longer to the city to buy its silks and velvets; and the mercers followed the court, and settled in Covent Garden.† Paternoster Row was deserted by the dealers in brocades, to be ultimately supplanted by the dealers in books, who, in like manner, deserted their old quarters in Little Britain. The "persons of quality" had begun to congregate a little north of Holborn. Great Ormond Street, with one side open to the fields, was a seat of fashion; and so was

* Mr. A. Poynter, in "Pictorial History of England," vol. iv. p. 742.

† "Complete Tradesman," vol. ii.

Bloomsbury Square. Spring Gardens, whose thickets were once the resort of gallants in laced ruffles and periwigs, and of ladies in masks, was now covered with gay houses. Covent Garden Square was the very centre of high life. Drury Lane had not quite lost the aristocratic perfume which belonged to Craven House and Clare House. The fashionable tenants of the side boxes of Drury Lane theatre, and of Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre, were not far removed from these two famous resorts of "the Town," which was now corrupted by Farquhar and Congreve, in lessons of human conduct only made more dangerous by their wit. Soho Square and St. James's Square were built before the Revolution. Golden Square was in fashion a quarter of a century later. The land of gentility was gradually stretching away still westward, in the direction of Piccadilly. But in 1708 Bolton Street was the most westerly street of London, Albemarle Street, to erect which Clarendon's proud mansion had been cleared away, was in an unfinished district of what are called "carcasses," at the end of the eighteenth century. Squares were growing up towards Tyburn Road, which did not acquire its genteel name of Oxford Road, till it became the seat of a new Bear Garden. The hangman's cart duly travelled to the ancient gallows long after this road of deep sloughs had been formed into a street. Changes marking the changes of society were going on. May Fair, "held in Brookfield Market-place, at the east corner of Hyde Park," dwindled away; and the Brook which flowed from Tyburn was covered over by the houses of Brook Street. The May-pole in the Strand, which James duke of York employed his sailors to hoist up at the Restoration, to typify the downfall of Puritanism, was removed to Wanstead, to support "the largest telescope in the world." Puritanism lost its power of domination, and gradually slid into Dissent. At the Revolution there was a transient struggle, in which a little toleration was the only victory of the principle which had overthrown the monarchy. The New Church in the Strand took the place of the old May-pole. Addison's Tory Fox-hunter seeing this church of St. Mary le Strand half-built, thought that Dissent had triumphed, and that an old temple of the establishment was in process of demolition. He "was agreeably surprised to find that instead of pulling it down they were building it up, and that fifty more were raising in other parts of the town."*

The Street Economy, as it may be called, and the Police of the

* "Freeholder," No. 47, June 1, 1716.

London of the beginning of the eighteenth century, have so often been described, that we can merely glance at these subjects, which are the peculiar province of the essayist. It was a city, cleaner probably, and with more public conveniences than any other capital of Europe; but in what we should now deem a condition most unfavourable to health, comfort, and security. There were no foot-pavements as distinguished from the carriage-road. There were lines of posts in the chief streets, within which it was only safe to walk. The carmen in the principal road were fighting with the hackney coach drivers. The chairmen drove the foot-passengers off the railed-in way; and the foot-passengers themselves struggled for the honour of the wall. Every square and open place was a deposit for rubbish and filth, gathering in heaps of abomination, to be very tardily removed by the dustman. The streets were resonant with the bawlings of higgles and wandering merchants of every denomination. The pick-pockets and ring-droppers had no preventive police to regulate the exercise of their profession. A crowd of vagabond boys were often pursuing their sports in the most crowded thoroughfares, of which sports foot-ball was the favourite. The apprentice in the merchant's counting-house enters in his petty cash-book—"For mending the back-shop sashes broken by the foot-ball, 2s. 6d."* The Thames was the most convenient highway between the City and Westminster, with wherries employing four or five thousand watermen. The hackney-coaches, to the number of eight hundred, had not displaced them. But a more rugged set than the Thames watermen—more terrific to a timid squire from the country, or an ancient lady going down Blackfriars to take the air—it is impossible to conceive. Their shouts of "Next oars" and "Skullers," were appalling. No sooner was the boat on its way, up or down the stream, but every passenger in another boat was assailed with a volley of "water compliments," compared with which the "slang" of our politer day is soft as the oaths of Hotspur's wife.† It was at night that the real dangers of the street began. The Watch was in the most lamentable state of imbecility. The Court of Common Council, in 1716, decreed that the streets should be lighted—but the few glass lamps only made "darkness visible." Robberies were common in every great thoroughfare. The very link-boy was a thief. The resorts of bullies and cut-throats, Whitefriars and the Savoy the Mint and the

* "Complete Tradesman," vol. ii.

† *Vide* (but you had better not) "Tom Brown's Works," vol. iii. p. 288, ed. 1730.

Clink, were put down by Act of Parliament in 1697, as places of refuge for fraudulent debtors; and the great haunts of villainy no longer bade defiance to the officers of the law. But the drunken outrages of the night-prowlers, "The Mohawks," who had "an outrageous ambition of doing all possible hurt to their fellow-creatures," were denounced by the "Spectator," on the 12th of March, 1712; though on the 8th of April he says, some "are apt to think that these Mohawks are a kind of bull-beggars, first invented by prudent married men and masters of families, in order to deter their wives and daughters from taking the air at unseasonable hours."* Swift was terrified about them; and a royal proclamation was issued offering a reward of £100 for the detection of any person wounding or maiming one of her majesty's subjects. There was probably much exaggeration in these terrors. The historian of London deduces their origin from "fictitious stories artfully contrived to intimidate the people;" and adds, "It does not appear that ever any person was detected of any of the said crimes." He made all inquiry in places where they were said to have been chiefly committed, and could never learn of any one person having received the least hurt.† Nevertheless, the deportment of some of the rich, "flown with insolence and wine," was one of the reasonable terrors of a street guarded by decrepit old men, and during an administration of justice which might be often bribed by wealth and awed by rank.

* Nos. 324 and 347.

† "Maitland's London," i. 511

Comparative Table of the Number of Houses and estimated Population at the Revolution, and of the Populations of 1801 and 1851; with the Assessment for Aid in 1689—arranged in Registration divisions.

	Hearth-money. Return of Houses.	Population at 5 to a House.	Population, 1801.	Population, 1851.	Aid, 1689.
<i>South-Western Counties.</i>					
Wills - - - - -	27,093	135,465	183,890	254,221	£1965
Dorset - - - - -	21,940	109,700	114,432	184,207	1344
Devon - - - - -	56,310	281,550	340,308	567,038	3229
Cornwall - - - - -	25,374	126,870	182,281	385,388	1543
Somerset - - - - -	44,686	223,430	273,577	443,916	2771
	175,403	877,015	1104,438	1805,000	10,850
<i>West-Midland Counties.</i>					
Gloucestershire - - - - -	26,764	133,820	250,723	458,805	1808
Herefordshire - - - - -	15,000	75,000	88,436	115,489	1131
Shropshire - - - - -	23,284	116,420	169,248	229,241	1203
Worcestershire - - - - -	20,634	103,170	146,441	276,926	1057
Warwickshire - - - - -	21,973	109,865	206,738	475,013	1192
Staffordshire - - - - -	23,747	118,735	242,635	608,716	832
	131,402	657,010	1,104,333	2,164,290	7,239
<i>London Division.</i>					
Middlesex and Westminster - - - - -	69,139	345,695	500,680	958,000	£3040
London - - - - -	30,357	151,785	200,000	364,000	£4291
<i>South-Eastern.</i>					
Surrey - - - - -	34,218	171,090	268,238	683,062	1597
Kent - - - - -	39,242	196,210	308,667	615,766	3526
Sussex - - - - -	21,337	106,685	159,471	336,844	1821
Hants - - - - -	26,851	134,255	219,020	405,370	2189
Berks - - - - -	16,906	84,530	110,480	170,065	1132
	138,754	693,770	1,066,771	2,211,127	10,065
<i>North-Western.</i>					
Cheshire - - - - -	24,054	120,270	192,905	455,725	747
Lancashire - - - - -	40,202	201,010	673,486	2,031,236	1006
	64,256	321,280	866,391	2,486,961	1753
York - - - - -	106,151	530,755	851,000	1,739,995	3469
<i>South-Midland.</i>					
Herts - - - - -	16,569	82,845	97,393	167,298	1345
Bucks - - - - -	18,390	91,950	108,132	163,723	1315
Oxon - - - - -	19,007	95,035	111,977	170,439	1133
Northampton - - - - -	24,808	124,040	131,225	212,380	1413
Huntingdon - - - - -	8,217	41,085	37,568	64,183	633
Bedford - - - - -	12,170	60,850	63,382	124,478	896
Cambridge - - - - -	17,347	86,735	89,346	185,405	1020
	116,508	582,540	639,334	1,087,896	8,126
<i>Eastern.</i>					
Essex - - - - -	34,819	174,095	227,682	369,318	3008
Suffolk - - - - -	34,422	172,110	214,401	337,215	3286
Norfolk - - - - -	47,180	235,900	273,479	442,714	3578
	116,421	582,105	715,562	1,149,247	9774
<i>North-Midland.</i>					
Leicester - - - - -	18,702	93,510	130,082	230,308	1084
Rutland - - - - -	3,263	16,315	16,300	22,983	240
Lincoln - - - - -	40,530	202,650	206,025	407,222	2575
Nottingham - - - - -	17,554	87,770	140,330	270,427	873
Derbyshire - - - - -	21,135	105,775	161,567	296,084	862
	101,264	506,320	636,324	1,227,024	5634
<i>Northern.</i>					
Durham - - - - -	15,984	79,920	149,384	390,597	823
Northumberland - - - - -	22,741	113,705	168,078	303,568	572
Cumberland - - - - -	14,825	74,125	117,230	195,492	168
Westmorland - - - - -	6,301	31,505	40,805	58,287	116
	60,051	300,255	475,497	948,344	979
Wales and Monmouth - - - - -	53,983	269,915	601,000	1,005,721	2839

CHAPTER XXI.

Fixed position of the various Classes.—Difficulty of passing from one position to another.—The Rural Population.—The Cottager.—The Agricultural Labourer.—Character of the Agricultural Labourer.—The Farmers and Small Freeholders.—The Gentlemen and Esquires.—Character of the Country Gentleman.—His Animosities.—The Nobility.—The Nobility and Esquires in London.—The Clergy.—Great Social Evils.—Neglect.—The Press.—Liberal Arts and Sciences.

In considering the proportions of the various degrees of society, as presented by the approximating "Scheme" of 1688, and the exact Census of 1851, we must bear in mind that, a century and a half ago, the facilities possessed by the people of passing from one occupation to another were very limited; and that the power of what we term rising in the world was equally restricted. In the locality in which a labourer was born he generally remained to the end of his life. The laws of Settlement were attempted to be relaxed in 1697; for it was felt and avowed that paupers were created by the restraints which prevented them seeking employ where there was work to be done, and compelled them to starve upon the parochial pittance where there was no capital to support labour.* But the clumsy machinery for remedying the evil would not act; and this semi-slavery continued unmitigated till our own time. The barriers which prevented the artificer or the trader from passing out of his first condition into one more eligible were almost as onerous. The severe enforcement of the laws of Apprenticeship kept a man for ever in the particular pursuits for which he had served seven years of dreary education; and the devices of Guilds and Companies and City-freedoms created a practical monopoly, which it was very difficult to overthrow. Some few men of great ability certainly overcame the impediments of birth and education, and rose to opulence and honours; but the rise of the commonalty was always regarded with extreme jealousy by the born great. The servile literature of the days before the Revolution echoed this sentiment. It was sedulously inculcated, in the fashionable belief, that all the wealth of the community was

* 8 & 9 Gul. iii., c. 3.