

Baker Street Elementary

& The Victorian Web

Presents

"The Life and Times in Victorian London"



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& The Victorian Web

The Life and Times in Victorian London

50 - *Typical Englishman before Victoria -- 06/30/2017*

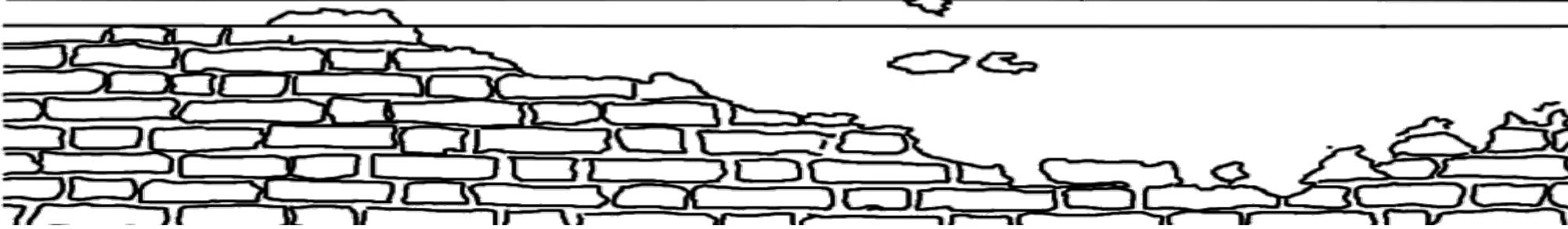


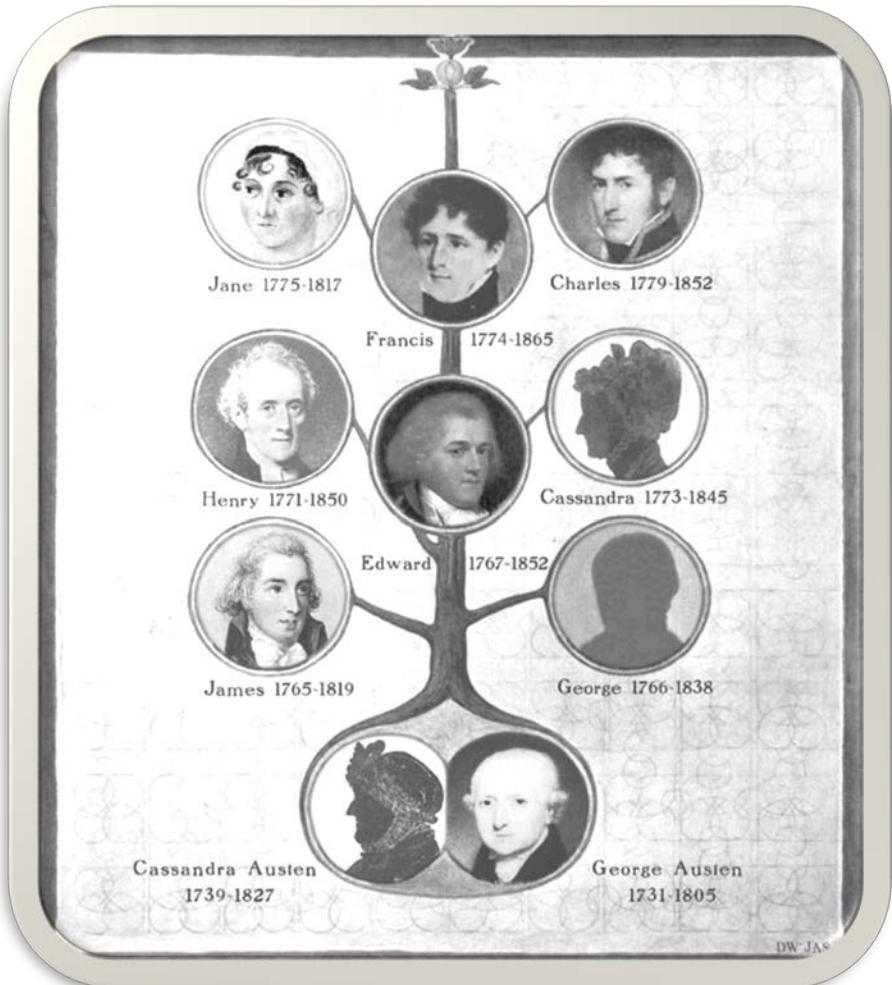
*Welcome to topic number 50... today we will
be looking at the typical Englishman just
before Queen Victoria ascended the
throne...*





The great novelist, Jane Austen, was born into the 'middle ranks' of English society when 'middle' meant the opposite of average or typical.





Her family made do on £210 a year, an income that exceeded 95% of English families at the time.



Her family owned property, had some leisure, chose their professions, went to school, had books, writing paper, and newspapers at their disposal.





If, therefore, the Austens were considered relatively poor, what was the life of the other 95% of the population?





The typical Englishman was a farm laborer.

His material standard of living was not much better than that of an average Roman slave.



His cottage consisted of a single dark room shared night and day with wife, children, and livestock.

His only source of heat was a smoky wood cooking fire.



He owned a single set of clothing.

He traveled no farther than his feet could carry him.





He received no medical attention.

He was very likely illiterate.



His children were put to work watching the cows or scaring the crows until they were old enough to be sent into "service.



*Perhaps the most striking difference
between the lives of the typical
English man and woman at the
beginning of Victoria's reign and those
of the Victorian factory worker...*



...appears in the fact they were nearly always hungry and undernourished – more so, some economic historians claim, than even present-day hunter-gather tribes.



In good times, he ate only the coarsest food—wheat and barley in the form of bread or mush.

Even potatoes were a luxury beyond his reach.





In addition to suffering chronic hunger, extreme fluctuations in bread prices put him at risk of outright starvation.



Early 18th-century death rates were extraordinarily sensitive to bad harvests and wartime inflations.

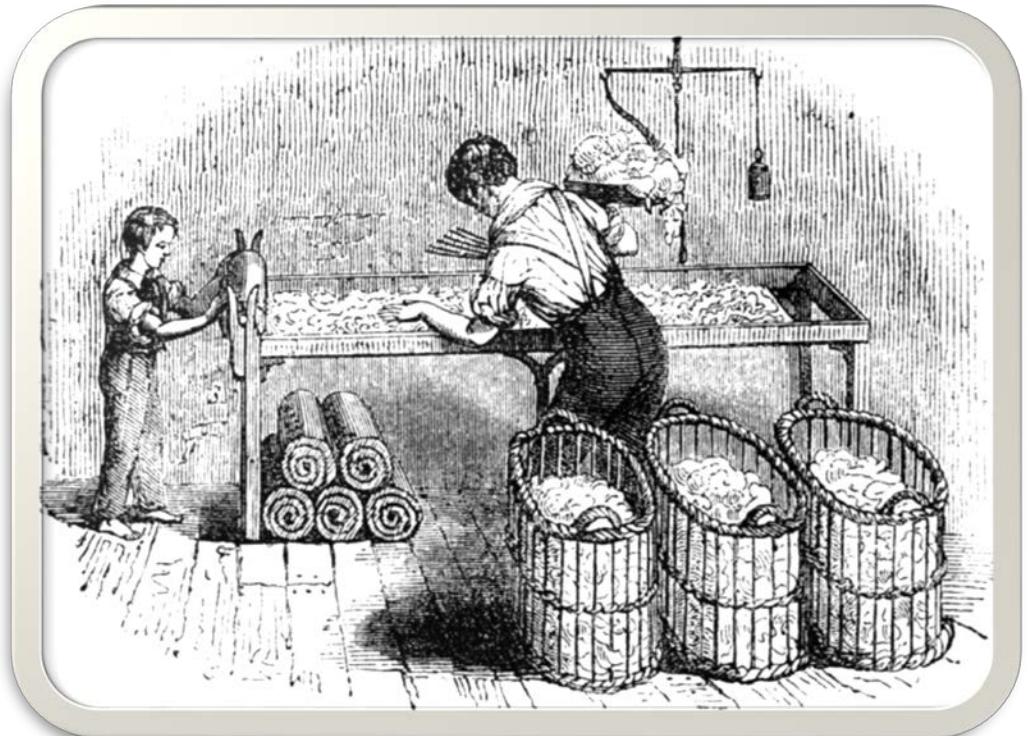




Workers in nineteenth-century factories have it much better, however unhealthy or intermittent their jobs might be.

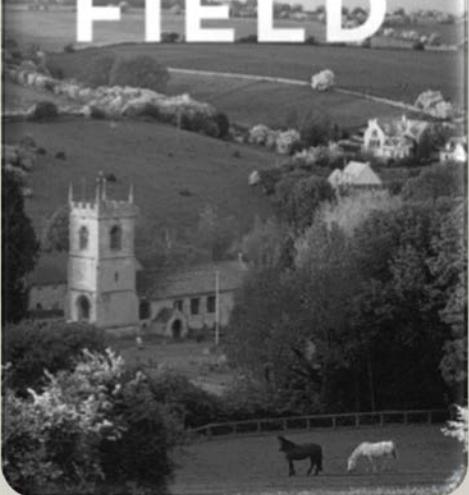


*In other words, as terrible as is
the life of the industrial worker,
it is much, much better than his
and her agricultural counterpart!*



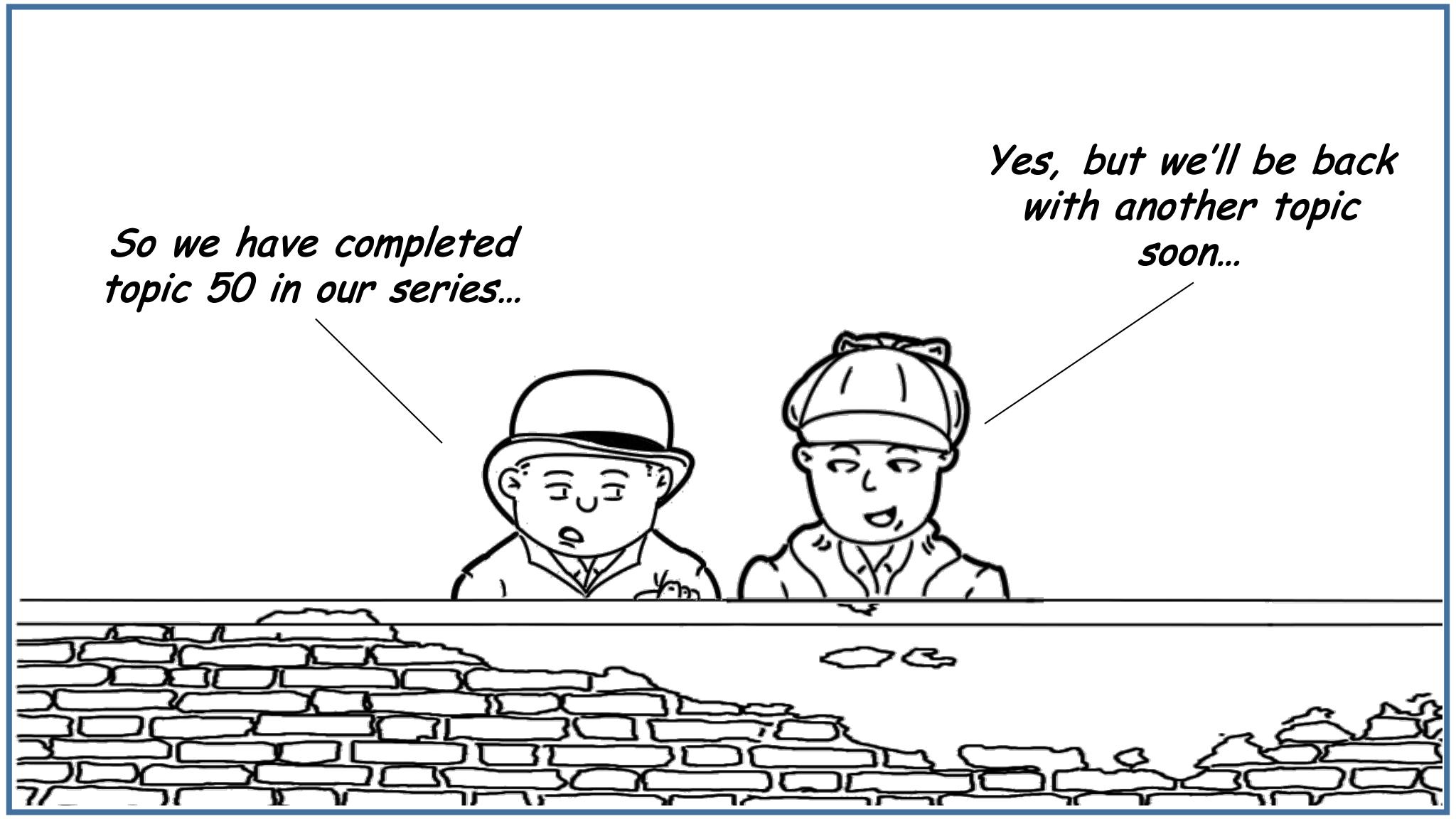
RONALD BLYTHE

AKEN FIELD



And as Robert Blythe's classic Akenfield will show, the harsh conditions of life in the countryside will continue into the 20th century.





*So we have completed
topic 50 in our series...*

*Yes, but we'll be back
with another topic
soon...*



The Victorian Web

literature, history, & culture in
the age of Victoria



Original Source Material for this topic:

- George P. Landow, Editor-in-chief, the Victorian Web,
<http://www.victorianweb.org/history/typical.html>



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"The Life and Times in Victorian London"

IS CREATED THROUGH THE INGENUITY & HARD WORK OF:

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