

Philanthropy in England 1480-1660

by the same author

THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS TOLERATION
IN ENGLAND

- 1 *From the beginning of the English Reformation
to the death of Queen Elizabeth*
- 2 *From the Accession of James I to the Convention
of the Long Parliament, 1603-1640*
- 3 *From the Convention of the Long Parliament
to the Restoration, 1640-1660*
- 4 *Attainment of the theory and accommodations in
Thought and Institutions, 1640-1660*

THE CHARITIES OF LONDON, 1480-1660

THE CHARITIES OF RURAL ENGLAND, 1480-1660

Philanthropy in England 1480-1660

A STUDY OF THE CHANGING PATTERN
OF ENGLISH SOCIAL ASPIRATIONS

BY

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FOR

F. R. J.

Animae dimidium meae



PREFACE

This is the first of a series of volumes dealing with the changing pattern of men's aspirations for their society during a long and critical period in the history of western Europe. The present volume is an essay commenting on the subject and presenting conclusions drawn from a considerable mass of available evidence. In the very nature of the case the whole of the research had to be completed and the later volumes written in first draft before it was possible to undertake this essay. The second projected volume will deal in some detail with the philanthropic impulse in the English urban society, attention being confined to London, where a rich, an incredibly generous, and a most articulate merchant aristocracy was in the course of our period to lay solidly the foundations of liberal institutions not only in the metropolis but throughout England. The third volume will consider at length the changing structure of men's aspirations in rural England, with documentation supplied from a sampling of counties in various parts of the realm. There will remain studies of several additional rural counties and of Bristol, an urban complex second in importance only to London. It is hoped that these may be published separately in appropriate periodicals.

Many years have elapsed since this study was begun under the kindly auspices of a grant from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. The work has been sustained through the years by most helpful subventions from the American Philosophical Society, Harvard University, and Radcliffe College. More recently it has been brought to completion with the help of a generous grant from the Ford Foundation which made it possible to complete the research, to assemble and assess the materials, and to reduce the data to statistical order. These volumes will record the benefactions of many men of an earlier age; the author's experience would suggest that even the slow and fumbling efforts of the student of history are not without their support by equally generous donors in these later days.

The gathering of the materials for these volumes has required work in the principal libraries and archives in England and the United States, where in every instance the author has met with courteous and patient treatment. The work has imposed particularly heavy burdens on the staffs of Somerset House, York Minster, and many district registries, and for their most helpful assistance we would express our deepest gratitude.

W. K. J.

Cambridge, Massachusetts

January, 1958

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The bibliographical citations in this work are necessarily very heavy, particularly in the later volumes. Hence no formal bibliography will be presented, but a full reference will be supplied in the instance of the first citation of a printed or manuscript source.

It has been our intention to render all quotations exactly as written or printed, save that capitalization has in all cases been modernized.

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I

The Conception

I esteeme wills . . . to be of the noblest sort of recordes; for yt they acquaint us wth more circumstances (and at the least wth no lesse certainty) then other recordes comonly do. As namely, the substance of the deceased especially in his personall estate, his wife, children, kindred, servants and his esteemed freindes (for of such consist his executors, supervisors, and legatees) his inclinations to piety, charity and bounty, the circumstantiall time (for the most part) of his death and the place of buriall; all wch give much light and satisfaction to such as listen after the memory of their ancestors.

Gervase Holles, *Memorials of the Holles family*
(A. C. Wood, ed.) (L., 1937), 20.

This study is concerned with men's aspirations for their own age and for generations yet to come; with their heroic effort to shape the course of history by creating enduring social institutions which would contribute significantly, often decisively, in determining the structure and nature of the society just then coming into being. It has been our purpose to record every gift and bequest made to charities, quite broadly defined, during the period 1480-1660 in a selected and, it is hoped, representative group of ten English counties, which probably included about one-third of the population and somewhat more than half of the disposable wealth of the entire realm. The broad objective of the study is to trace with care the changing aspirations of English society as reflected in the benefactions of the age. The period with which we are to deal is long, extending as it does for very nearly two centuries. It is likewise an era of great importance in the history of thought and institutions, witnessing as it did the collapse of the mediaeval society and the rise of the modern era, the triumph of a strong monarchy on the ruins of the feudal polity, the revolutionary impact of that complex movement which we call the Reformation, the emergence of a powerful and responsible gentry, and the swift rise of a principally Puritan urban aristocracy—the merchants—to the seats of economic power. A detailed examination of the benefactions of this momentous period provides a sensitive and surely an accurate barometer of powerful forces of historical change at work in the English society and affords us a most intimate understanding of the

shifting morphology of aspirations which were producing changes that were in their total effect revolutionary.

Very broadly, it may be said that this study documents, though certainly imperfectly, one of the few great cultural revolutions in western history: the momentous shift from men's primarily religious pre-occupations to the secular concerns that have moulded the thought and institutions of the past three centuries. This profoundly important metamorphosis in the nature and quality of men's aspirations for their society is quite perfectly mirrored in their benefactions. When men come to draw their wills they express their aspirations with a kind of ultimate honesty, and when they leave charitable bequests they arm these aspirations with effective and enduring sanctions. The drafting of a will is for any human being a final and a solemn stock-taking not only of his personal estate, but if he be charitably disposed, of the world around him and of the world as he would like it to become.

'In Dei nomine Amen.' With this sonorous and solemn phrase almost every will drawn before 1640 was prefaced, suggesting not only the sentiments of the age but the historical and social sanctity and honesty of these documents. Men drew their wills in the name of God and in the face of God. A will in our period was quite as much a testament of faith as a secular document disposing of goods and chattels. Almost every will begins with a carefully considered and eloquently elaborated confession of faith, in which the testator earnestly strives to set out the nature of his beliefs, to confess his own inadequacies, to confirm his confidence in the mercy of God, and to prepare himself for a death which he believes to be imminent. Wills in this age of profound faith were mirrors of men's souls as truly as they were mirrors of their mundane aspirations. They were intensely personal documents, as well, for relatively few betray the cold hand of the lawyer or notary in the language and form of their composition. And they are completely honest documents, since men examined their consciences and defined their aspirations with searching of soul and in the sight of God, as they came at last to order their charitable dispositions, to project, as it were, their convictions and their fondest hopes for the earthly society from which they must now reluctantly depart.

The wills of our period, then, were made in full contemplation of death, and they were ordinarily drawn in the immediate presence of death. They were literally last wills and testaments. An extensive sampling would suggest that for wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury in the earlier years of our period only two months intervened between the drafting of the median will and its admission to probate; that not as much as three months elapsed during the early Elizabethan period; and almost exactly four months in the early Stuart

era.¹ These wills brought at last into formal language and decision matters of personal and social significance on which the testator had long brooded and towards which the slope of his aspirations had run for many years past. These were not '*ad hoc*' or tentative determinations, but rather the ultimate and irrevocable dispositions of men of some substance towards their families, their friends, and their society. They accordingly possess great dignity, great poignancy, and great clarity with respect to the ultimate aspirations of the testator.

These, then, are in large part the documents from which our evidence will be drawn. The benefactions made by men of our period bear eloquent witness to a profoundly significant, a truly revolutionary, shift in the nature and structure of men's aspirations: to the rapid withering of the religious preoccupation as the secular needs of humanity came, well before our period was out, to absorb the concern and the fortunes of men who were laying most securely and solidly the *Grundlagen* of a new civilization. This study will be concerned with an examination of the striking change in the pattern of men's attitude towards the problems of poverty, misery, and ignorance. The Middle Ages were acutely sensitive to the spiritual needs of mankind while displaying only scant, or ineffectual, concern with the alleviation or cure of the ills that beset the bodies of so large a mass of humanity. The mediaeval system of alms, administered principally by the monastic foundations, was at once casual and ineffective in its incidence, never seeking to do more than relieve conspicuous and abject suffering. This is probably the most significant reason why benefactions to monastic foundations had so sharply declined prior to 1480 in England and why they literally dried up well before their properties were expropriated by the Crown in the fourth and fifth decades of the sixteenth century.

Poverty was first systematically attacked in the sixteenth century with gifts for the outright relief of the poor and then later in our period with really massive endowments designed to eradicate its causes by a great variety of undertakings, among which the extension of educational opportunities was not the least. These efforts, so important in the development of the ethic as well as the institutions of the liberal society,

¹ Some further details on this point may be of interest. A long sampling of wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury for the years 1504 and 1517 yields an average interval of 106 days between the drafting of the will and its probate, the more meaningful median figure being 59 days. The range of time extends from 6 days to 2 years, 2 months, and 11 days. A similar sampling for the years 1558 and 1564, with a range of from 6 days to 3 years and 14 days, gives an average interval of 158 days and a median of 81. For the years 1617 and 1637 the average was 273 days, while the median figure was 121 days, and the range from 3 days to 7 years, 6 months, and 1 day. Less extensive samplings made of wills proved at York for these same years yielded substantially similar results.

were implemented by Elizabethan and Jacobean legislation planned to make each parish responsible for its poor and to separate the employable from the unemployable poor. But it is clear that the constructive effort, as well as most of the funds, flowed from private endowments rather than from the mechanism contemplated by legislation.

This study, then, will trace out from the wealth of detail available the development of moral and social responsibility in the English society. Many factors, it is clear, account for the almost precocious maturity of this attitude in the late Tudor and the early Stuart reigns. The Tudor sovereigns had given England a long and stern tuition in local administrative responsibility. The gentry, raised up to political and economic strength by Henry VIII and Elizabeth, assumed new and heavy public burdens with grace and considerable skill. At the same time, Calvinism was in England sublimated into a sensitive social conscience that was secular in its aspirations and fruits even when the animating impulse may have been religious. Two classes of men, the gentry and the newer urban aristocracy of merchants, assumed an enormous measure of responsibility for the public welfare while rapidly and most effectively translating their ideals for society into a new philosophy of the state which we denominate liberalism.

The whole realm stirred as men began to discover that they could create institutions of social change and reformation with their own wealth and charity. Well before our period was finished, a veritable transformation had occurred in the social and cultural institutions of the realm, the artifact, in large part, of a relatively small group of rich, aggressive, and generous men who were creating a society in the image of their own aspirations. In this essentially revolutionary process, they received full encouragement from the masterful Tudors, perhaps the most secular as well as the most enlightened of all English sovereigns. The tide of philanthropic change mounted into a flood during the early years of the Stuart age, completing a social revolution intimately connected with a more dramatic, though in ultimate terms less effective, religious and political revolution which occurred directly a bewildered royal prerogative was thrown across the course of historical change.

It is likewise clear that it was the mercantile aristocracy of London which came in the course of our period to exercise a dominant influence on the moulding of national aspirations and on shaping and endowing the institutions required to translate aspirations into enduring reality. These Londoners, who were very rich and almost incredibly generous, spread the pervasive pattern of their giving across the whole face of England. The focus of their attack was on the ancient evil of poverty. But they were prescient enough to sense that poverty could never be destroyed unless the ignorance in which it spawns was relieved. Such men scorned and discarded alms, the mechanism of mediaeval charity,

since they were profoundly persuaded that casual, undisciplined charity was as ineffective as it was wasteful. The great and effective instrument which the mercantile aristocracy, whether of London, Bristol, or Norwich, developed to secure the translation of their aspirations into historical reality was the charitable trust, which was to be classically defined and most powerfully encouraged by the great Elizabethan statute of charitable uses.

It is not too much to say that the gentry and the merchants assumed a very large measure of social responsibility in England early in the Tudor period, which during the Elizabethan era was so expanded that it became dominant. Older classes of men, and most particularly the nobility and clergy, were quietly withdrawing from the tasks of responsibility, while these new and intensely aggressive classes were moving in to fill the vacuum of social and historical responsibility and power. In part, as we shall later note in detail, this cession of responsibility, whether among noblemen or husbandmen, can be explained by economic difficulties in which the older social groups found themselves, but far more important is the undoubted fact that the whole tendency of Tudor policy, so warmly espoused by the gentry and by their urban counterparts, was viewed with suspicion if not disfavour by the older and once powerful rural classes. We shall have occasion to observe that the gentry itself was fragmented as a consequence of Tudor policy, an historically decisive alliance having been forged between the rising mercantile aristocracy and the 'new gentry' which had its origin in the redistribution of monastic properties and in the speculative opportunities available to daring landed entrepreneurs throughout most of the sixteenth century. Various classes of men, then, responded in quite different ways to the dominant forces of sixteenth century history. One can perhaps more accurately say that they responded with differing degrees of willingness, for, as we shall see, the merchants and the gentry were with an immense generosity and a sureness of aspiration establishing social and cultural institutions, a whole pattern of civilization, all over England long before other and more reluctant classes of men made grudging concession that the mediaeval world was at an end.

With the accession of Queen Elizabeth, it is possible to say that the whole tone of social and cultural aspirations is secular. At about this date the historical commitment was made which over the next century was to lead to the foundation and the endowment of the whole complex structure of institutions which undergird the liberal society. The state lent little direct aid to this process of change, the ultimate effect of which was revolutionary, save by the tone of its policy and the great codifications of laws which defined the nature of the responsibility of the modern state towards poverty and which charted those regions of social need to be occupied and won by charitably disposed men armed with

that most effective of social mechanisms, the charitable trust. But this was not all. The state, as personified by the great Queen, bestowed an even more effective kind of aid by the steady support which it lent to secularism in English life and even in the English church. This secularism of the Queen, always decently disguised when possible, was cold, efficient, and complete.

The secularism of this great and remarkable woman proceeded, we may believe, from complex sources. Policy encouraged it; the determination to protect the state against religious zeal and the fragmentation of sects dictated it; a prescient understanding of the slope of modern policy suggested it. But it ran deeper than that, for at the bottom of the unfathomable personality and genius of the Queen there seems to have been a religious indifference which was itself a kind of innate secularism. This mood of the woman who ruled England so firmly, translated as it was into brilliant policy, fitted precisely and effectively the aspirations of those classes which were moulding English institutions with their charitable wealth. Their mood, too, was intensely and irrevocably secular, as we shall have many occasions to point out. Yet it must be said that their immense secular bias sprang from quite different roots from that of the Queen. Most of these donors were deeply pious men; in fact, a very large proportion of the most effectively munificent among them were Puritans. They were simply moving in directions, often suggested by their own piety, in which the church was either unprepared or unfitted to move. Early in our period there is abundant evidence that they distrusted the church as feoffee for social change and amelioration because they knew that the ancient church had been in the generation just prior to the Reformation an inefficient, they rather said faithless, custodian of social wealth and because in certain areas of need, as, for example, education, it had stubbornly resisted progress. Much of this odium which these men attached to the mediaeval church their grandsons, particularly if they were Puritan, attached as well to the established church of the realm. But even more significantly, the broadening spectrum of social and cultural aspirations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries simply transcended and overran those areas of responsibility which the church was prepared or competent to undertake. Broadly speaking, therefore, the church and its needs, much less its social services and competences, came to be regarded as irrelevant. But at the same time the institutions founded by these donors, and the very content of their intense secularism, not infrequently sprang from sources of deep and moving piety.

Queen Elizabeth ruled so strongly and well because her aspirations for the English polity were so closely in attunement with the aspirations and interests of the dominant classes of the realm. We have observed that this sympathy, this synchronization of aspirations, lent profoundly

important support to the amazing accomplishments of private benefactors throughout her reign. A social and historical momentum gathered force during her long reign which burst out into an immense outpouring of principally secular charitable dispositions in the early Stuart era. The power, the velocity, and the direction of movement, which was ordering the basic social institutions of the modern world, were so mighty that they could neither be controlled nor diverted to causes which both James and Charles would have preferred. James was bewildered and his son was not a little alarmed by the vast power and social effectiveness of the huge and carefully devised charitable endowments of the age which were creating an England they did not understand, an England at bottom inimical to their conception of the state. In particular, they both were aghast at the intense secularism explicit in this tidal flow of funds which was moulding a society which they were not competent either to rule or to administer. Archbishop Laud, always expressing the half-formed views of his sovereign, made an heroic, indeed, a tragic, effort first to discipline and then to order the social forces of the age, but this interesting essay of policy had no other considerable effect than to hasten the outbreak of civil war. The Stuarts did not understand England, its constitution, or its social institutions. Nor did they understand the aspirations of men who with their own substance were creating a society of which we are still the inheritors. It is with these great forces of social change that we are concerned in this study.

The Method

A. DIVERS PROBLEMS OF METHOD

1. *Wills as sources*

This volume is an essay, which will undertake to comment rather generally on a considerable body of evidence to be more fully presented in the subsequent volumes comprising this work. In the later volumes we shall deal with the development of charitable institutions in the several counties included in this study, while in the present volume we shall be concerned with the interpretation of data aggregated from the individual counties and described conveniently, if inexactly, as applying to England as a whole. We should now, however, discuss the historical and statistical method employed in the accumulation, the aggregating, and the interpretation of the large mass of somewhat unruly evidence on which the study rests.

Our principal source has been the many thousands of wills proved in England during the period 1480–1660 and since 1858 most conveniently gathered in several repositories. By far the most important body of these materials are those to be found at Somerset House, these being wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. Though any precise statement must be inexact, we may say that broadly speaking any will in which the testator possessed property in more than one diocese of the Province of Canterbury, or made bequests in more than one diocese, or was possessed of considerable property, would be proved in this archiepiscopal court. In this same great collection, moreover, are to be found wills proved in England during the years 1653–1660, when the Protectorate, among its many important reforms, not only withdrew the probate of wills from ecclesiastical hands but consolidated their probate for the entire nation.

A similar repository for the northern reaches of the realm is to be found at York, where, beginning in 1389, wills of persons dying within that province were proved if their property and dispositions fell within the roughly outlined categories mentioned above. The Prerogative Courts of Canterbury and of York, then, granted probate and became the repositories of the wills of most persons disposing substantial

estates and, for us more pertinently, those bequeathing considerable sums for charitable uses. We have accordingly examined the wills of all testators dying during our period in the ten counties with which we are concerned and have assembled the particulars concerning the charitable dispositions of those who left such bequests.¹

A very large proportion, upwards of 94 per cent, of charitable benefactions made by will are to be found in these two great repositories, where the wills of almost all men of considerable substance had necessarily to come for probate. But we are likewise deeply interested in the changing social aspirations of humble men whose wills, when they made them at all, only uncommonly possessed complications which would bring them to York or Canterbury. These wills were ordinarily proved in a diocesan court, or in a subordinate jurisdiction of the diocese, and were, for the most part, ultimately deposited in various district registries, where they may now be consulted.

There are few classes of historical records for whose preservation men show such tender concern as the wills of their ancestors. We may, consequently, assume with some confidence that we have found and recorded the charitable contributions of almost all men who within our period and region left charitable bequests. Such benefactions comprised a large proportion of the total sum given for charitable uses in the ten counties with which we are concerned, amounting in fact to almost two-thirds (63·17 per cent) of the aggregate. The proportion thus dis-

¹ The Prerogative Court of Canterbury normally embraced all testators dying within the Province of Canterbury who left *bona notabilia* of more than £5 value in more than one diocese of the province, and all estates of persons dying overseas. In many cases, however, executors preferred to prove wills in the prerogative court even if all goods fell within a single diocese. The PCC was not fully organized with its own officers until 1443, though the functions were certainly exercised at a much earlier date.

Under the prerogative courts, whether of Canterbury or York, were the bishops' consistory courts holding jurisdiction over an entire diocese, the archdeaconry courts, the peculiar courts, as well as manorial and local courts, such as the Court of Husting in London, in which many wills, usually of humble testators, might be proved.

When ecclesiastical jurisdiction over probate was abolished in 1858, wills from the two great prerogative courts were gathered in Somerset House in London and in York, while most, but by no means all, wills to be found in the lesser ecclesiastical jurisdictions were assembled in the various district probate registries. Thus at the Norwich District Probate Registry will be found wills proved in the Consistory Court of Norwich as well as wills formerly in the Court of the City of Norwich. G. W. Marshall's *Handbook to the ancient courts of probate* (L., 1895) is the only convenient guide to the various repositories, but, having been published two generations ago, is not reliable because of the steady progress that has been made in consolidating wills in the district registries. A study of this matter, and a published handlist, would be valuable, as would a thorough treatment of the history of probate during the unsettled years of the Civil War and the era of revolutionary government.

posed ranges from the inexplicably low figure of 27·60 per cent for Buckinghamshire to the very high proportion of 70·37 per cent and 77·75 per cent in the great urban centres of London and Bristol respectively.

2. *Living gifts as sources*

But we have likewise endeavoured to record every known gift for charitable purposes made during a donor's lifetime, whether that amount was disposed as an income or a capital sum. As has just been suggested, rather more than a third of the total sum was so given, though we remain uncomfortably certain that despite a diligent search many small income gifts have eluded us and that many more were never recorded at all. We have sought to work through all possibly relevant county, borough, and parochial records, for it does remain true that a really large number of such benefactions, even when quite casually made, somehow found their way into preserved historical materials. One may be reasonably confident that all the larger gifts made by living donors have been found if they were in capital form—and very few were not—because such benefactions almost invariably were or became trusts which in turn created an historical record. But the casual gift for alms, the spontaneous gift of a coin for a beggar, the modestly cloaked aid given to a worthy but needy householder—such gifts which reveal so much of the spirit of a man and of his age—are elusive and are probably wholly unrecorded. It seems certain indeed that we are here describing a relatively very small and statistically unimportant range of charitable gifts, yet we have found enough of them to know that they possess a virtue and a human significance far transcending their statistical importance.

We have been greatly assisted in our search by the fact that a large proportion of all charitable benefactions made in our period were in the enduring form of capital. As we shall have later occasion to observe, these endowments took many forms, but they did necessarily create a legal and an historical record. Of the total sums given for charitable uses in England, slightly more than 82 per cent was capital.¹ The proportion of funds established as endowments, whether by bequest or living gifts, was remarkably similar in all the counties examined, falling within the very tight range of from 76·83 per cent for Lancashire to the 91 per cent so constituted by the always prudent benefactors of Bristol.² In all counties the amounts left for educational purposes, for almshouses, and the various institutions created for the social rehabilitation

¹ We ask indulgence here and subsequently for quite inexactness, but most conveniently, using the term 'England' to describe the sampling of ten counties with which we deal.

² See table opposite.

of the poor were almost wholly in the form of endowments, while such secular uses as the household relief of the poor, the care of roads, and other public works received considerable support from outright gifts for immediate use. So too the various religious needs were heavily sustained by outright gifts, though the range in the several counties is wide, with the one exception of funds left or given for the support of lectureships, which, Bristol and Kent aside, were almost wholly endowed.

3. *The principle of county selection*

It being impossible, and probably unnecessary, to record the charities for all counties in the realm, some principle of selection had to be evolved, be it said after a number of false starts. It seemed most important that the group of counties should be as representative as possible, always subject to the pragmatic consideration of the availability of reasonably complete county, borough, and parochial records. It was also thought to be desirable that the counties should differ one from another in respects important to our study, and on these grounds Surrey was not included as being too similar to Kent and Westmorland as too similar to Yorkshire, after the research for these two counties was well along. It was necessary, too, to include socially and economically retarded counties with others at once prosperous and advanced, since England during most of our period was far from being a culturally homogeneous nation and the velocity of social change varied most remarkably from region to region. As importantly, it was necessary to include London (Middlesex), wherein so evidently the centre of gravity of wealth, social progress, and cultural power reposed, as well as one other important urban complex (Bristol), which was building its own social institutions and which stood reasonably free of the immense influence of the capital. It was desirable, too, to include a number of essentially agricultural counties with no considerable urban centres, as well as others with a more evenly mixed economy and population. Finally, it became very clear as the work progressed that, so dominant were London's aspirations in determining the social development of the entire realm, it was important to secure a range of counties reflecting these influences on a scale extending from the overwhelming consequences of London's charitable wealth in Kent to the relatively inde-

The proportion of capital gifts in relation to the total of charitable funds in the several counties is as follows:

	<i>per cent</i>		<i>per cent</i>
Bristol	91.00	London	82.60
Buckinghamshire	82.40	Norfolk	80.96
Hampshire	80.09	Somerset	80.86
Kent	81.35	Worcestershire	80.51
Lancashire	76.83	Yorkshire	82.17

pendent development of social institutions in that almost truculently proud county, Norfolk.

Accordingly, the counties included in our sample are: Bristol, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Kent, Lancashire, Middlesex (London), Norfolk, Somerset, Worcestershire, and Yorkshire. It is hoped that those so chosen fully meet the criteria of selection, though there are at least a few more which might well have been included in an ideal sample. Possibly another Midland county might have been added; the cultural and economic isolation of Dorset invites attention; the remarkably intimate ties binding Shropshire to London deserve even more study than has been given to them in our discussion of London; and another county in the northern reaches of the realm would have provided a better geographical representation had it met the other criteria being imposed.

4. *Population and wealth*

The general conclusions of this work resting as they do upon a sampling of the counties of the realm, a number of relevant and extremely difficult questions must be considered. The first of these is, of course, the relation of the population of our group of counties to that of the realm at large. Here we are in an area of conjecture, though recent scholars have, it would seem, reached a reasonably close agreement on at least one element of this mooted question. Responsible estimates of the population of England in *ca.* 1600 range from Thorold Rogers' certainly low figure of about 2,500,000 to Usher's suggestion of something like 4,460,000, while the more reliable of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century estimates range from 3,500,000 to Gregory King's suggestion of 4,885,696. Our own very rough calculation is something like 4,200,000 as the probable order of population for England in 1600, since a fairly detailed study of relevant data in the ten counties would incline us towards supporting the higher estimates of Professor Usher and of Father Hughes, the latter having set forward a figure of about 4,000,000.¹

If the whole question of the population of the realm at any given date in the Tudor and Stuart periods is uncertain and subject to wide differences of speculative judgment, the population of the several counties

¹ Rogers, J. E. T., *Six centuries of work and wages* (N.Y., 1884), 463; Darby, H. C., ed. *An historical geography of England before A.D. 1800* (Camb., 1951), 435; Usher, A. P., *An introduction to the industrial history of England* (Boston, 1920), 89; Hughes, Philip, *The Reformation in England* (3 vols., N.Y., 1951-1954), I, 32. A. M. Carr-Saunders (*Population*, L., 1925, 7) sets the estimate at 5,000,000 in 1603 for England and Wales, with which A. L. Rowse (*The England of Elizabeth*, L., 1951, 218) seems inclined to agree. A careful and an ambitious attack on the problem of population ought in all conscience to be made.

comprising the realm is a subject which has received very little even of speculative enquiry. Yet certainly no defensible estimate of the population of the whole can be presented without estimates of the population of the parts. We have necessarily devoted considerable attention to this difficult question, depending heavily upon parochial and diocesan materials in an effort to arrive at tentative estimates of the growth of population during our period in the several counties with which we are concerned. These estimates will be more fully set out in the subsequent volumes, but we should here present our judgment with respect to the population figures as they stood in 1600. It would seem probable that the population of our ten counties at this date was of the order of 1,389,000, which in turn suggests that our sampling of counties includes almost exactly one-third of the population of the entire realm.¹

Interestingly enough, the regions with which we are concerned likewise comprised almost exactly a third (32.68 per cent) of the whole of the land mass of England. More significantly, the counties in our group included about a third (32.54 per cent) of all the parishes in England in 1600, or, more accurately, a third of the organized places of worship in the realm. Our count of the parochial units, made as near 1600 as possible, would suggest that there were in England at this time 9321 places of organized worship, of which 3033 were to be found in the counties included in our sample.² In several important particulars,

¹ For the individual counties our estimates of population are as follows:

Bristol	16,000
Buckinghamshire	55,000
Hampshire	135,000
Kent (16th century boundaries)	155,000
Lancashire	105,000
Middlesex (outside Greater London)	45,000
Greater London (1603)	225,000
Norfolk	180,000
Somerset	115,000
Worcestershire	58,000
Yorkshire	300,000
	<hr/>
	1,389,000

This figure represents 33.07 per cent of our estimate of the population of the whole of England in 1600.

² No two counts can ever be quite the same. For one thing, as we shall mention in detail in our discussion of the individual counties, the parochial structure of the realm was not complete even in 1600, and the number was, on balance, steadily increasing. But more importantly, no two students can quite agree on what constituted a parish. Our count includes all places of settled and organized worship, the number consequently being somewhat larger than would result if the census were limited to parishes in the strict and legal sense of the term. Sir Thomas Wilson (*The state of England, anno dom. 1600*, F. J. Fisher, ed., L., 1936, 11) believed that there were 9725 parish churches in England (and Wales ?)

therefore, we would seem to be justified in assuming that we are dealing in this study with something like one-third of the realm at large.

But we are concerned not so much with the population base as with wealth, reflecting itself in generosity, of men and of regions. Thus the city of Bristol gave substantially more to charitable causes during the course of our period than did the county of Hampshire, though without any doubt the population of the latter county was something like eight times as great in say 1600. In these most relevant terms, our sampling of counties is by no means representative, principally because of the immense wealth of London and almost as significantly because of the effective quality of that wealth. We have dealt with this subject in some detail in our discussion of the individual counties, but it may be said here with fair certainty that the ten counties comprehended in our study disposed something over 50 per cent of the total wealth of the

in 1600; William Camden reckoned that there were 9284 in 1603, his count following a considerably earlier census made by Archbishop Parker (*Britain*, L., 1637, 161-162); John Weever (*Ancient funerall monuments*, L., 1631, 183) gives the same estimate; Sir Edward Coke reckoned the number at 8803 at the outset of the seventeenth century, but since he excluded cities and boroughs from his count, the total would be very close indeed to our own estimate; while a late sixteenth-century manuscript count of the parsonages and vicarages in England and Wales 'extracted out of records of first fruits and tenths in the Exchequer' (*BM Royal MSS.*, 18 D. III, f. 3) gives the total of strictly defined parishes as 8736, the accurate addition of the columns being, however 8733. The details of our own count, as compared with Camden's, may be of some interest:

County	Year	No. of parishes	No. of fully organized chapelries	Total places of organized worship	Camden's count	Camden's comments
Bristol	1600	17		17	17	
Buckinghamshire	1600	210*		210	185	'and mercate towns 18' [36] 'beside very many Chappels'
Hampshire	1600	320*		320	253	
Kent	1600	395*		395	398	
Lancashire	1650	64	118	182	[182]	
Middlesex (outside London)	ca. 1600	76*		76	73	
London	ca. 1600	117*		117	121	'very many Chappels'
Norfolk	1600	581*		581	660	
Somerset	1560	395	74	469	385	
Worcestershire	1600	196*		196	152	
Yorkshire	ca. 1600	314	156	470	459	
		2685		3033	2885	

* Chapelries included.

realm and at least 60 per cent of the charitable wealth provided by the whole of England during the long period under investigation.¹ The disproportionate wealth, both total and charitable, disposed by the counties comprised in our sample is, as has been suggested, principally explained by the vast riches of London, but it should likewise be remarked that they included certainly six, and more probably seven, of the ten largest cities in the England of our age, and among them the four ranking cities of the realm: London, Bristol, Norwich, and York. And mercantile wealth in the second half of our period was not only very great, but, more significantly, it was largely disposable and it was incredibly generous and socially effective.

5. *The historical intervals*

We should also explain that in the key tables on which this study rests we have been obliged for statistical reasons to follow quite arbitrary conventions which do some violence not only to the usual chronological divisions but also to historical fact. The period covered extends from 1480 through 1660, beginning some years before the triumph of Henry Tudor and including as well some few months of the period after the restoration of the monarchy. This was regarded as essential for statistical and comparative purposes, since thereby the accumulation of benefactions and their analysis could be made in decade intervals for the whole of the long era under review. This quite inflexibly imposed convention required us, in the event a donor made charitable gifts in more than one decade, or, as was more commonly the case, made a gift in one decade and left a charitable bequest in a later decade, to divide the total contribution of the donor and to assign the correct portion to the proper decade. Similarly, charitable dispositions made prior to 1480 by donors who also made contributions in or after that year have been only in part recorded, as have the gifts of donors made after 1660, only the contributions prior to the Restoration having been counted. In a fair number of cases it proved to be impossible accurately to date a gift, though the total of such contributions amount to the statistically insignificant proportion of no more than 0.26 per cent of the *corpus* of charitable funds in our era. After some uncertainty, the whole of these gifts have arbitrarily been assigned to the interval 1641–1660, to which,

¹ These estimates represent amendments of the most valuable comments of Thorold Rogers and E. J. Buckatzsch ('The geographical distribution of wealth in England 1086–1843', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2d. ser., III (1950), 180–202) on this subject. The estimate of the proportion of charitable wealth contributed by group of counties is derived principally from extensive samplings of the charitable gifts made in all other English counties as related to the presumably complete data for the counties under discussion. These samplings, however, were confined to the materials available in the PCC and PCY.

it seems likely, the largest proportion of the money total, though not of the donors, properly belongs.

Useful as are the decade intervals in which we have assembled our data, they are relatively unimportant as compared with the more generally recognized historical periods of our era into which our material has also been aggregated and among which useful and most revealing comparisons and changes may be observed. But since the decade intervals must be kept intact, we have necessarily in this basic scheme of organization done considerable violence not only to convention but to fact. The period 1480-1540 has been called with reasonable chronological accuracy 'The Pre-Reformation Era' and, as with the other periods, will ordinarily be mentioned without repeated and certainly monotonous reference to the dates with which it is defined. The years 1541-1560 have been described somewhat inexactly as 'The Age of the Reformation', while 'The Age of Elizabeth' has been foreshortened to the four decades, 1561-1600. The period 1601-1640 has been regarded as 'The Early Stuart Period', while the remaining two decades have been described as 'The Revolutionary Era'. These divisions, in addition to being methodologically desirable, have the further merit, for purposes of statistical convenience, of establishing successive chronological units of 60, 20, 40, 40, and 20 years, which may, of course, be easily and accurately compared in various ways.¹

6. *Units of reckoning*

Convenience rather than strict accuracy must also be pleaded in explaining still another methodological decision. The smallest monetary unit carried into our many tables is the shilling, since it seemed desirable to avoid inconvenience and inaccuracy in arriving at totals and percentages if pence and their fractions were included. It should be emphasized, however, that all gifts of less than a shilling have been separately carried in working sheets and then aggregated to the nearest shilling and that some thousands of very small donors accordingly appear in our various tables only as 'aggregated individuals'. But the totals are believed to be correct. Moreover, all benefactions of £1 or more have been entered to the nearest shilling, without more precise regard for the pence, in a large number of early benefactions, when the mark was a common unit of bequest or gift. Since the number of benefactions runs into many thousands, there is statistical assurance that no measurable inaccuracy has been introduced into our calculations by the convention of reckoning, shall we say, two marks as £1 7s od and four marks as £2 13s od.

¹ Reference to Table I (Appendix) will more clearly and succinctly suggest the chronological method followed.

B. FRAILTIES OF THE METHOD

The statistical method, on which this study so heavily depends, has no more than a limited utility to the historian, since most of the data with which he is necessarily concerned cannot be accurately measured. This is not to say that historians have not for too long neglected the methods and the instruments so elaborately and competently evolved by the statisticians, but it does suggest that these convenient and valuable tools must be used with great discretion. Such discretion is especially important because statistical results have an almost hypnotic effect in the beauty and rigour of their apparent accuracy. The mathematical result may all too often mask the unreliability or the inexactness of the raw data from which it was originally compiled. The facts, the truths, of history are elusive, incomplete, and lie subject to the interpretation of the historian, their assembling and elucidation being at least partially dependent on his judgment, his experience, and an artistry which remains an essential element of the method of his craft. These cautions should run for all the social scientists who inevitably deal with data as frail as they are fallible, but lie with particular force on the method and the conclusions of the historians who, happily, have thus far seemed indisposed to adduce an imagined infallibility of knowledge from data at once fallible and incomplete. This in no sense means that the historian cannot learn a great deal about the past of man, that his knowledge may not be far more complete and his conclusions far more correct than those once possessed by the men of the age with which he deals. But he dare not venture arrogantly into the claims of infallibility. The historian mixes in his method the rigorous disciplines of the scientist with the almost intuitive skill of the artist, but his conclusions remain tentative, suggestive, and humble, since he has at least learned that the image of truth in any age is indistinct, inexact, and all too often fractured.

These cautions we must apply with particular emphasis to the findings on which this work are based. We have, we believe, examined all the available evidence. We have, we trust, recorded it correctly, reckoned it exactly, and interpreted it with care. But, in dealing with huge totals aggregated from relatively tiny sums, we have been inevitably too much moved by the apparent exactness of great totals carried out to the delicate mensuration of a shilling, and above all by percentages carried out to the second decimal place, a measure of refinement competent ordinarily even for the physicist and mathematician. Yet, it must be said, that these findings are not exact, that they derive in some measure from human judgment compounded by human error, as it has dealt with sources very often difficult to assess and which in their totality omit many other sources now lost or which simply never existed at all in recorded form. We have, then, confessed sins of commission and sins

of omission, which as we understand the orthodox canons comprise the generality of sins. To complete this confession, we should in all candour estimate that the significant findings, as for example the totals of charitable funds given during our entire period in the counties under examination, may well be in error within a range of from 10 per cent to 15 per cent either way, and that this error is probably on the side of understatement.

The doubts and cautions which we have tried to express have thus far been somewhat general in nature. We should now set out in detail the more specific frailties of method inherent in the research underlying this work, employing as it does a quite rigorously statistical method. Thus among the most tediously difficult of our problems has been the necessity of assigning some value to the gifts in kind so frequently left to charity by humble donors, particularly in the early decades of our period. The total value of all such gifts was certainly not relatively very important, but they tended to come from classes of men and to be given for charitable causes that interest us a great deal, and hence values have whenever possible been assigned. They were of many kinds: a ewe, a fat bullock, a hive of bees, a quiver of arrows, a handkerchief, a quantity of corn, or of lead, or of iron, or a specified number of trees of unspecified size which were to be employed for some worthy use on the local bridge or church. Such gifts in kind have been converted into monetary amounts, employing the price data so laboriously and so helpfully assembled by economic historians during the past two generations and more. But our own research has taught us that there were more complex variables of price in the England of our period than the economic historians have recognized, for price was above all else affected by costs of transportation, and hence we cannot be certain that the price of a fat ewe in Smithfield had any real relation to the value of the particular ewe, which was in any case probably a scrawny beast, which the executors of John Amys cut out from that husbandman's flock in his remote North Riding village in 1503 to be delivered up for the support of the worship of God in the testator's parish church. Fortunately, however, the guidance which Rogers, Beveridge, and others have given us has usually been supplemented by the careful disposition of other donors in the same parish in or near the same year to set in their wills a value on the same gift in kind, thereby most appreciably relieving this particular problem. There is one exception: the gifts in kind which humble women were all too likely to leave for pious purposes—the coverlets, the frocks, the silks, and the wedding rings which they loved to dispose and which quite defy valuation, particularly when they are described as 'my second best'. Women have complicated as they have graced the course of history.

More substantial and sophisticated donors have also caused us diffi-

culty by the terms of their bequests and have doubtless in some cases led us into quite erroneous conclusions. In a few cases the enthusiasm of donors outran their estates, or an estate melted away in adversity, fire, or mismanagement between the date when the will was drafted and the time of probate. In fewer cases, one has reason to believe that the charitable enthusiasm of the testator was not unmixed with confusion of mind, since patently the estate could not possibly bear the charitable burdens laid against it. But in any event there is a small fraction of wills in which the charitable bequests failed for these or other reasons. We are fairly sure that there are a sufficient number of checks of subsequent historical record to justify some confidence that we have not been ensnared by such optimism in substantial charitable estates, though such checks do not exist in all cases when bequests failed in small estates.

Similar uncertainty can on occasion arise when a testator after setting out his schedule of bequests, some often being charitable, leaves the whole or a fraction of the residue of his estate for one or a group of charitable causes. Fortunately, this was rather uncommonly done, for tracing down the facts regarding such ultimate distributions can be most time-consuming, but in these cases the document itself provides a note of caution for the historian. The value of the charitable estate has in most of these instances been accurately determined and in the others has been assessed with at least a reasonably satisfactory approximation.

Charitable donors were also prone to leave land and other real property of unspecified worth for one or another charitable cause. Land so left was almost invariably described in terms of location and extent, while messuages, cottages, barns, mills, and other buildings of every conceivable type were almost always sufficiently described to make it possible to identify them in later records or judicial proceedings. Happily, almost all real property so disposed was settled in endowments, which makes it possible to assign a value at least at a relatively early subsequent date, though we should note that in Kent alone there were seven different pieces of real property the value of which could not be established until after lapses of from 61 to 128 years. Relatively rarely, real property was to be sold and the proceeds used for indicated purposes, and in these cases the problem of assigning values can be very difficult indeed. Usually the amount will appear in the churchwardens' accounts, the record books of a school foundation, in borough accounts, or in some other place of record, though on occasion we have had no other recourse than to assign a value which is certainly quite arbitrary and which may also be quite inexact.

In another area our difficulties in determining the amount of a charitable benefaction have been even greater. In point of fact, the data assembled under the head of *Church Building* have seemed so inexact

as to make it desirable to designate this category of contribution as '*Estimated Church Building*' in every county. The subject has interested us because the curve of voluntary gifts for this purpose provides one of several clear indications of the mounting secularism of aspirations in England, but it has been necessary to present the data in a most tentative form. The costs of church building in England during our period were borne in several ways, for example, by local rates, by voluntary contributions, and, not uncommonly, by a mixture of charitable and non-charitable funds. Our interest has, of course, been wholly in the voluntary contributions made for the purpose and we have reasonable confidence that this line of distinction has at least been kept clear. In most cases, too, it has been possible to arrive either at an exact or at least a reasonably exact cost for construction carried forward by voluntary effort, though there is always some risk that certain contributions were not recorded by those in charge of the undertaking. There remain, as well, and it is here that our difficulties have been unresolved, a fair number of churches, or more commonly, chapels, which we know were built wholly or in part by charitable contributions, for which we have been able to find no cost figures whatsoever. In other cases we have found what are evidently no more than fragmentary records of contributions to work which involved a major outlay with no indication in the relevant parochial or diocesan records that the construction was in part financed from non-charitable sources. In other instances we have perhaps rashly undertaken to supply estimates of costs based on the approximate cube of the structure and the known costs of roughly similar construction in the same county and in the same general period.

Not only this study, but the whole economic history of our period, is likewise fallible in a statistical sense because we know so little regarding the true curve of the purchasing power of money during this era of almost two centuries. The presentation of our statistical data is, then, static, assuming as it were a level curve of prices because we are unable to adjust our decade and period totals to any index of price movements. The want of such information has troubled the economic historian, but it seems probable that our knowledge in this important area will remain as incomplete as it is unsatisfactory. We do know that a profoundly important inflationary process got under way in western Europe at about the beginning of our period which in a broad sense has persisted to our own generation. This inflationary process was relatively gradual during most of the era with which we are concerned, though its cumulative consequences were very important indeed and were fully recognized, though hardly understood, by contemporary social and economic theorists. At the same time, however, certain elements of cost, as for example wages, rose slowly if at all through most of the age, while some com-

modities were rising very rapidly in cost. The upward movement of prices, with its inevitable peaks and valleys, was then an uncoordinated, creeping, and exceedingly complex phenomenon. The state, moreover, tended to set its policy squarely against the entire process of inflation, particularly in its efforts to control wage costs and the costs of food-stuffs, with rather more success than has commonly been supposed.

In the course of this study we have amassed a vast store of material relating to the history of prices in the ten regions with which we have been concerned. Though we hope to put this material to some subsequent use, it is all too clear that these data will contribute little towards what this perhaps overly precise generation of scholars wishes it had, a curve of prices accurately reflecting the facts concerning the national economy. It is our impression that such a curve can never be constructed, not so much for want of data but because of the complex nature of the data. The basic difficulty is that we simply do not know how to construct an index properly weighted to reflect the needs, the aspirations, and the strivings of a nation and a culture as it was three or four centuries ago. This problem is difficult enough as we seek to measure purchasing power in our own society, but when we endeavour to do so in this much earlier age we tend inevitably to seek to measure not what men of the sixteenth century wanted but what we think they should have wanted. Further, the sixteenth century society was in so many ways far more complex than our own, for it was at once intensely parochial and highly stratified in all matters involving consumption and standard of living. Tastes, aspirations, and the definition of necessities have become increasingly, perhaps dangerously, homogeneous since the Industrial Revolution, but our attitudes and preoccupations in these matters have little relevance for the sixteenth century.

The complexity of this problem is further enhanced by the fact that prices and values in one English region in say the late sixteenth century bore almost no relation to prices in another. Such fragmentary indexes as have been compiled for the period have largely, and inevitably, been constructed on prices at central market points, or, more exactly, for centres where there was a sustained and considerable consumption of goods and commodities. But such data have only limited utility and meaning when we examine prices in remote parts of the realm. Costs of transport were enormous in relation to the then value of most commodities, while, even more relevantly, the total absence of the possibility of transport did strange things indeed to prices in local areas. There was simply no system of national distribution of many commodities; local scarcities did not necessarily mean national scarcities; and local prices are no measure of national prices.

We have dealt at length with the reasons for our failure to adjust our data to the price changes of this long historical period. But perhaps

one more comment may be made on the whole subject of the difficulties of assembling not only price data but statistical data generally. We are concerned with an age which possessed very little statistical sense or interest; this may in fact be argued to be one of the glories of the age. We are dealing with an age when a mayor in solemn address before the Queen could say that the number of unemployed cloth-workers in his city considerably exceeded what we know was the total population of the community. It is an age that dealt grandly in round numbers, when population estimates reflected little more than the then mood of the witness. There is, indeed, an almost poetic quality in the attitude of men of this era towards numbers: they were meant to have a broad and occasionally an heroic effect. All this was understood and accepted, and surely it could not have mattered much. In the course of this work we have added many thousands of estate inventories, and these were legal documents, and have come to the conclusion that when the totals are exactly accurate we have witnessed an instance of the inscrutable workings of the law of probability. Churchwardens had their difficulties with their quite simple accounts, but then so did the archbishop when he sought to tally the number of parishes in his province. These small and certainly unimportant errors are easily resolved, but what they betray is a want of statistical interest which in broader and more important areas of knowledge and fact has created a vacuum of information about matters we regard as important but which the age with which we are dealing largely ignored.

If we have found it impossible to adjust our data to the rising curve of prices in the course of our period, we have regarded it as at once impossible and unprofitable even to attempt to do so in relation to the purchasing power of money in our own age. There is simply no basis for comparison, not only because of the insoluble statistical problems involved but because such an effort seeks to compare scales of values which are wholly incomparable. Just one appealing and arguable constant seems to us to be available, the wages which unskilled and skilled labour received then and now in order to maintain life and some increment of decency in standard of living, though this last element in our statement introduces a variable of enormous importance that is statistically unreliable. But it still may be recorded that for a very long working day an ordinary farm labourer, when employed, late in our period (1647), received, without sustenance, from 5d to 6d *per diem* and that his modern English counterpart receives about £1 3s 0d; that a master mason or carpenter would then have been paid about 12d and now something like £1 16s 0d; and that a collier working at the coal face would then have had 10d, whereas his modern counterpart would be certain of £1 14s 1d. These are but fragile and partially unreliable comparisons, but they do suggest the enormous depreciation that has

occurred in the purchasing power of money.¹ They suggest, too, that the historian of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries must learn to think wholly in terms of the age in which he works, to accept its values, and gain by a process of absorption 'the feel' of a society and an economy that was very dissimilar to our own. Hence it is that we understand that a yeoman's legacy of £1 for the poor householders of his parish was by no means a socially insignificant sum; that an endowment of £50 established to provide care for the poor of a rural parish might in fact be quite sufficient for that purpose; or that £100 to £150 was quite enough capital to secure the founding and the endowment of a school or an almshouse in a small market town. Men of this age wrought mightily with instruments which seem puny indeed to us.

Still another statistical frailty has been occasioned by the inflexible requirements of the statistical method itself. In all cases it has been necessary to convert into capital amounts income gifts made in perpetuity, such as rent-charges which were expressed only in terms of annual worth. In other instances we have no certain clue to the precise capital worth of an endowment, consisting let us say of a tract of land or urban houses, though we are given the then income value of the property in question. These conversions have been made by applying a constant multiplier, which is in effect an estimate of the level rate of interest on trustee funds throughout our period. The determination of this multiplier was made late in the course of our study, not in fact until large masses of material had been accumulated which would throw some degree of light on this whole obscure question. The decision was then reached to multiply all income amounts, yielded of course by capital assets, by a factor of 20, thus assuming a yield value of 5 per cent on trustee funds in the several counties. These values have without exception, therefore, been recorded as capital sums, and we have ordinarily so rendered them in describing individual benefactions rather than explaining each time the procedure just discussed.

The whole question of the interest rate prevailing on trustee funds is, of course, of much wider importance than the quite narrow question with which we are concerned. We shall later show that the massive accumulations of capital gradually gathered by trustees must have been one of the most important of all sources of credit in this period of the

¹ J. E. T. Rogers (*A history of agriculture and prices in England*, 7 vols., Oxford, 1866-1902) provides the largest mass of data available on this matter, though, as several commentators have pointed out, his conclusions must be used with caution. He suggests, for example, that for the period 1401-1582 the curve of prices for grain rose from a base of 1.00 to 2.40, while wages rose from 1.00 to 1.60 in the same interval (IV, 718-719). He would hold that prices rose much more steeply in the next interval, 1583-1642, for grains from 1.00 as a new base to 2.22, and for labour much more slowly in a range of 1.00 to 1.04 for the wages of carpenters and 1.00 to 1.65 for plumbers (V, 787-792).

early but rapid growth of capitalistic enterprise. The legal rate of interest was reduced from 10 per cent to 8 per cent in 1624 and again lowered to 6 per cent in 1651, though these figures supply no more than evidence of a slowly declining rate of interest during the course of our period for mercantile and entrepreneurial credit. The huge holdings of capital administered by charitable feoffees, particularly in London, had to be invested as cautiously as possible in what may well be described as prime securities. This normally meant that land, urban improvements on land, or mortgages secured by land were purchased by the charitable trustees, undoubtedly lending most substantial support to the structure of land values throughout our period. But larger risks were often taken both in London and in smaller communities when charitable capital was lent directly to responsible borrowers at rates of return rather higher than might be gained by investment in land. Normally a bond was required binding the borrowers to repayment under penalties, while not infrequently a co-signature was likewise demanded. Such secured loans were especially common in cloth towns and market towns throughout England, evidently constituting an important source of local entrepreneurial credit.¹ As we shall later point out, a large pool of charitable capital was also provided during our period quite specifically to serve as loan funds either for young men just beginning their callings or for responsible but needy persons who might thereby be relieved and rehabilitated. These funds, too, constituted a not unimportant source of credit, either at uneconomic interest rates or with no interest charge at all, though their purpose was of course wholly philanthropic. We shall see that very little indeed of the investment made by charitable trustees was lost, they with remarkably few exceptions having been prudent in their outlays and vigilant in the protection of their capital.

These trustees, then, took few speculative risks, with the consequence that the yield on charitable funds administered by them was much lower than might be supposed. We have particulars regarding the interest rate on £238,671 6s of trustee funds, spread, it should be said, over our whole long period, which would suggest an average rate of return on such prime investments of 5.368 per cent for all England. These rates of return, it will be observed, varied rather widely from an average yield of 5.026 per cent for London and 5.16 per cent for Bristol to the 6.84 per cent which Lancastrian trustees found it possible, and prudent, to secure.² In many cases, particularly in London, large donors would

¹ *Vide* F. G. James, 'Charity endowments as sources of local credit in seventeenth and eighteenth century England', *Journal of Economic History*, VIII (1948), 153-170, for a brief but interesting discussion of an aspect of this question.

² Our present interest in this matter is of course narrowly restricted, though we do hope at a later time to deal more fully with this important question. The following table presents the data in hand for the several counties included in this

themselves prescribe at least the initial rate of prudent return on their benefactions by requiring their trustees to invest a given sum, usually in land, to yield a stated return, which in almost every case was exactly 5 per cent. These capital totals have not been included in our computations unless we are certain that the trustees abided by the injunctions of the testators, but so general was this practice as to suggest that 5 per cent was regarded by experienced and substantial men as a safe and reasonable return on such funds. This convention and this assumption we have likewise followed in translating income values into capital estimates, though, as has been observed, by a factor which almost certainly slightly underestimates the total worth of the charitable funds in question.

Certain difficulties in method had also to be resolved in determining to which county a particular benefaction should be credited. Normally, of course, a benefactor made his charitable dispositions in and to the county where he lived and died. The place of residence of the donor is an important element in the decision, but not infrequently substantial benefactors, particularly in London, divided their bequests between the county of their residence and still another county, usually of their birth. In all such cases the benefactions have been credited to the county or counties benefitting, though for statistical reasons we have tried to make certain that the donor was counted but once, and then in the county of his residence. In a few cases, the nobility and the upper clergy being mostly involved, it has been difficult indeed to determine the true, the sentimental, place of residence of the donor, and in these instances we have quite arbitrarily assigned the donor to the county in which the bulk of his wealth was seated, while the benefactions have been credited to the counties benefitting. There has, we fear, been some 'spilling over' of donors from one county to another and hence some

study. It should be noted that loan fund capital is not listed. The average yield given is for our whole period, though a more detailed analysis would reveal a steadily declining rate of return on trustee funds down to about 1640.

	<i>Capital</i> £			<i>Income</i> £			<i>Yield</i> Per cent
Bristol	8709	8	0	449	12	0	5·16
Buckinghamshire	3260	0	0	174	4	0	5·34
Hampshire	15,040	0	0	842	4	0	5·60
Kent	11,989	8	0	646	4	0	5·39
Lancashire	23,779	2	0	1626	10	0	6·84
London	113,560	0	0	5708	0	0	5·026
Norfolk	33,230	16	0	1766	16	0	5·32
Somerset	8320	0	0	467	16	0	5·62
Worcestershire	5600	0	0	310	8	0	5·54
Yorkshire	15,182	12	0	820	16	0	5·41
All counties	£238,671	6	0	£12,812	10	0	5·368

little multiple counting, but we are reasonably confident that the benefactions themselves have been sorted out into the proper counties. There is one important, and necessary, exception to these rules regarding the distribution of charitable bequests across county lines. We are concerned with but ten counties, and it is to them and in them that the rules apply. When a donor, and this almost invariably meant a London donor, made a charitable benefaction to a county not included in our group, this benefaction has been credited to the county in which the donor resided, though rather detailed tables in the several counties treated set out the full and somewhat complicated particulars. These possibly elaborate conventions have seemed necessary in the interests of accuracy, and most particularly to avoid counting the same benefaction twice, once in the county of residence and then in the county benefitting from the charitable bequest.

C. THE GREAT CHARITABLE HEADS

We should in concluding these notes on method comment on the scheme of distributing and grouping benefactions among the various charitable uses. The great charitable heads, so perfectly and classically defined in the preamble of the famous Elizabethan statute establishing the law of charitable trusts, were all well developed and recognized many years before the close of our period and, so constant are the needs and aspirations of men, would seem most adequate for a classification of charities in our own age. We are in this study, in point of fact, principally concerned with the profoundly important shift in men's aspirations and interests within this frame of charitable causes. None the less, it has seemed advisable and convenient somewhat to extend and to regroup the charitable heads as defined by the Elizabethan statute.

The first of the large groupings we have entitled simply *The Poor*, the charitable causes comprising it having all been dedicated to the direct and immediate relief of the needy. Included in this group of charities is a principal head, or use, which we have somewhat unsatisfactorily entitled *Household Relief*, or, alternately, *Outright Relief*. A great variety of benefactions have been so grouped. Thus in the early decades of our period the direct gift of alms, funeral doles, and testamentary outright distributions to named or unnamed poor have been aggregated under this head. But as time went on, benefactions for household relief tended to be much more carefully devised and prudently administered, with capital gifts, or endowments, replacing the earlier and more casual doles or gifts for immediate use. The income from such funds was distributed by responsible and named persons to the poor of a defined area or community under carefully regulated conditions which, as we shall later observe, included a bewildering variety of provisions, definitions, and

prescriptions. But however constituted, and whether as doles or more carefully regulated stipends, benefactions of this kind were dedicated to the relief of existing poverty, to the prevention of vagabondage and social ruin, and to maintaining poor families at least at the level of subsistence in their own homes. Many, perhaps most, of the enormous number of gifts for these worthy purposes were quite unsophisticated, but they betoken in their ever-swelling number and amount an aroused social conscience and a determination to sustain men, and especially worthy men, who simply could not provide for their own support.

In almost all these benefactions there is expressed the implicit, and very often, the explicit, hope that by such outright alms families might during a season of unemployment or personal catastrophe be sustained until they had righted their affairs and found it possible to become self-supporting once more in an increasingly complex and competitive economy. Hence most of the endowments devoted to this use sought to differentiate, as did all legislation of the era, between the worthy poor and those who were believed to be either vicious or incorrigibly lazy. But there was an ever-growing realization that some men, whether because of age, injury, infirmity, or simple incompetence, had in fact been overwhelmed and must accordingly be either permanently sustained or allowed to starve. It was for the saving of such men that a mounting flood of capital gifts for the founding or endowment of *Alms-houses* was dedicated in the course of our age. We shall be much concerned with rapidly spreading interest in these foundations, which by the close of our period formed a veritable network of carefully ordered institutions offering sanctuary to the socially and economically derelict. It must be remarked here that these almshouses were applauded by the best and socially most sensitive men of the era and that they made an immensely important contribution not only to the relief of abject poverty but also to the dignity and temper of an age. That noble term, *Almshouse*, which constitutes our second and important charitable head, was not to acquire the unfortunate connotation which it still possesses for us until several generations after our period had closed.

A third charitable head within this grouping we have somewhat ambiguously described as *Charity General*. These were funds, for the most part capital, left by donors for quite broadly defined charitable uses, or to be employed for worthy purposes at the discretion of the feoffees, named parishes, or municipal officers. Such income was of course applied for a variety of purposes, but it was so heavily concentrated during our whole period on the needs of the poor that we have thought it best to regard the use as falling wholly within this great charitable category. These funds represent a most interesting development, since their unrestricted nature made them especially effective. These accumulations were, however, derived from two different kinds of

donors. Many of them, mostly in small amount, came into being because the donor had drawn his will or deed of gift so inexpertly and vaguely as to make any very specific interpretation impossible by his executors and, less importantly, by us. Certain others, however, including the great bequest of Henry Smith, a London merchant, were among the most sophisticated and carefully ordered of all the philanthropies of the age, these donors wisely holding the view that the social utility of their benefactions might be limited in future generations by too precise restrictions. But whatever the source and whatever the motives, these endowments were in fact largely employed during the age with which we are concerned for the relief of poverty.

The last of the charitable heads within the grouping of *The Poor* we have described as *The Aged*. These were funds given under most specific restrictions in order to secure the care of poor men and women simply because they were old rather than because they were at once aged and poor. These charities were concerned, then, with the amelioration of age itself; we can perhaps accurately say that they represent very early experiments in geriatrics. The whole *corpus* of these endowments was relatively small, representing only 0.17 per cent of the whole of charitable funds of the age, but does none the less constitute a clearly defined charitable use. It should, however, be emphasized that these sums by no means represent the extent of the concern of the era with the problems of the old. The fact of age and the fact of poverty bore a very close correlation during the whole of our period, and the aged poor are mentioned and are included in almost every fund established to secure some measure of help for the poor. In most instances, nomination for admission to almshouses was limited to the aged, while in many endowments for household relief a careful preference was expressed for the care of men and women who because of the infirmities of their years could no longer carry on with useful and remunerative tasks.

We have gathered a considerable number of additional and distinct charitable uses within a second grouping which we have called *Social Rehabilitation*. These were also benefactions which were directed towards the plight of the poor, but from a refreshingly and effectively different point of view. The massive funds which were slowly being gathered for the care of the poor were designed to secure no more than the amelioration of poverty, surely the first task in any socially responsible community, while those with which we are now concerned were dedicated to a frontal assault on the very sources of poverty. These were lively, hopeful, and experimental undertakings into which a great deal of wealth was poured, principally by urban donors, in an impressive effort to get at the roots of the problem. For the most part, the various experiments in social rehabilitation were developed in the course of our era and were to contribute significantly to the adoption of a new and

much more hopeful attitude towards a grim and endemic evil which had throughout history sickened and weakened the western society. These ventures, many of which were as naïve as they were courageous, represent, so to speak, the risk capital which bold and certainly enlightened men provided in an heroic effort to bring about the cure of poverty.

Among the charitable heads included within this great grouping is the *Relief of Prisoners*. As we shall have later occasion to point out, the state during the whole of our period assumed little responsibility for the care of prisoners beyond administering their incarceration. In part, consequently, the benefactions given for this purpose were designated for no other end than to ensure at least the subsistence of poor prisoners who had no resources for their own care. But most of the considerable total of endowments established were designed to secure the release of men being held prisoners for debt. The laws respecting imprisonment for debt were at once harsh and rigid, with the consequence that an imprisoned debtor, save for the occasional gaol deliveries, might be held indefinitely unless he possessed some outside assistance. The endowments for this purpose were in the main established in order to gain the redemption of such prisoners being held for small sums and to restore them to useful and self-supporting lives.

Much larger sums were accumulated during the course of our period which may most exactly be described as *Loan Funds*. These capital amounts were established under a bewildering variety of deeds of gift, usually with most elaborate administrative provisions, and they were dedicated to several somewhat different purposes. Certain of them were carefully limited to small loans made without interest to respectable and responsible householders who were temporarily distressed. Other, and very large funds, were established to provide initial working capital for young men who had just completed their apprenticeships and who were ready to take up their callings as artisans, tradesmen, or merchants. This was a particularly critical stage in the life of any poor and ambitious youth, and there is abundant evidence that these loan stipends were immensely important as agencies of social and economic mobility during the second half of our period. Still other funds were established to provide loans for merchants, tradesmen, or craftsmen who had fallen upon evil times or who had met with financial reverses, so that they might be restored to their calling. Such loan funds, whether for young men beginning their careers or for older men who needed help in order to continue, almost invariably required some measure of security for the loan, while the interest rate was modest, if interest was imposed at all. Still another substantial total of loan funds we have after some hesitation regarded as more properly to be listed and discussed under other charitable heads. In these instances, the deed of gift provided that full security be required and that an economic rate of interest be imposed,

the income to be distributed for specified charitable purposes to which we have likewise assigned the capital. The intentions of the donor in such cases were undoubtedly mixed, but his prime concern seems to have been in the charitable employment of the income, whatever the form that these funds took and whatever purpose they were established to serve. We are struck by the amazing powers of survival displayed by these revolving funds, sustained as they were by uneconomic interest rates and subject always to the hazards of failure, death, or dishonesty on the part of the borrowers. While reserving a fuller discussion of this matter to later pages, it may at least be said here that this proud record exhibits at once the care which feoffees took with such funds and the social needs which these loans served.

Another of the interesting and fruitful experiments undertaken by our age in the social rehabilitation of the poor were the *Workhouses and Stocks for the Poor* established by private donors. Fairly substantial amounts were dedicated to this purpose in every county with which we have been concerned. The enthusiasm for this charitable use was of course stimulated by legislative efforts to secure the setting up of workhouses in all parts of the realm, though it should be remarked that the earliest and most successful of these undertakings were launched either by private efforts or by forward-looking municipalities. We shall see that these experiments took many forms, but they were all founded in the conviction that some agency must be created which would provide not only sustenance but the possibility of rehabilitation for the poor. Some were designed to force the unruly and unworthy poor to work for their bread, while hoping that disciplined activity and instruction might mend the moral flaw which it was believed was the source of incorrigible poverty, while others were planned to provide useful and honourable employment for householders who simply could not find work for a season. In some cases these undertakings were elaborately housed and financed in institutions which partook of the nature of both a prison and a competently staffed and disciplined factory. More commonly, these benefactions did no more than provide stocks of materials on which the industrious poor could employ themselves in their own homes. It is most difficult to estimate the social value of these schemes, so varied were they and so differing in their success, but we can at least suggest that they betoken a lively, a sensitive, and a responsible concern of high-minded and courageous men who were seeking by every sensible means to secure the prevention as well as the relief of poverty.

Even larger capital sums were poured by benefactors into *Apprenticeship Schemes* in every part of England. These were of all sorts and for many purposes, but they were in every instance planned to provide a reasonable range of opportunity and training for boys and girls who would otherwise almost predictably have become public charges. Many

of these endowments were organically connected with school and alms-house foundations, being designed to secure necessary training for a worthy boy or girl to whom the rudiments of an education had been given. Others provided a mechanism and the funds for the selection of apt and poor boys in remote rural regions for the inestimable benefits of an apprenticeship in London, in Bristol, or in Norwich. Some were modest indeed, undertaking no more than the binding out under responsible arrangements of destitute boys and girls in order to give them training in humble skills. But they were all intended to enlarge the ambit of opportunity for children possessing no resources and very little hope. There is abundant and most eloquent testimony that these foundations served an enormously fruitful purpose and that they gained for the realm new sources of human strength which would otherwise have been swallowed up in the slough of destitution.

The ends of social rehabilitation were likewise well served by the large endowments vested for the founding and support of *Hospitals and the Care of the Sick*. We have endeavoured to restrict the term 'hospital' to the meaning and function it was only just acquiring, though these institutions in the sixteenth century still on occasion served quite mixed purposes. Great sums were in the course of our period to be dedicated to the institutional care of the sick, the infirm, the crippled, and even the mentally ill. These donors and the foundations which they established were concerned with the rehabilitation of the stricken, in the first tentative assumption by society of a broad area of responsibility which even now in many western countries has not been fully embraced. But much of the capital included under this charitable head was more simply and perhaps less effectively vested, providing income for the care of the sick in their own households, while at the same time protecting such families from the poverty which so often marched in the train of illness. Great beginnings were made in this vast area of need by private donors during our period, by men who valiantly undertook to raise up at least some bulwarks to lend protection to the dignity of the human body and spirit.

Finally, we have included under the broad grouping of social rehabilitation those funds given to secure *Marriage Subsidies* for poor but respectable young women. These were of many sorts, and were usually cluttered with particularly complicated instructions and restrictions, but they were all designed to provide a small dowry for girls who were either orphans or whose families were destitute. The amounts given were usually modest but were none the less in average terms sufficient to enable a young woman to bring to her marriage the essentials required for her furnishings and her clothing. These gifts were intended to provide a young couple, otherwise without means, with at least a respectable start in life, and there is extensive evidence to suggest that certain

of these funds made most substantial social contributions to the age. But they came to be less favoured during the closing decades of our period, especially by merchant donors, who were perplexed by the problems of administration inherent in such foundations. They were regarded, however, with more slowly diminishing enthusiasm by the gentry in the counties, who doubtless could supervise the distributions with greater prudence and who in any case seem to have taken a more pleasantly sentimental view of life and the problems of their age.

We tend to forget how narrowly the functions of government, whether national or local, were defined in the Tudor and Stuart periods. Broadly speaking, government was concerned with the maintenance of order, the administration of justice, and with the defence of the polity. Even the great Elizabethan poor laws, opening as up they did a new and a vastly important additional area of responsibility, sprang at least in part from the intense Tudor preoccupation with the maintenance of order and were set upon sound bases of responsibility only after the Tudor society had struggled valiantly for three generations to deny that there was even a problem with which government could or need be concerned. Just as private charity first assumed an ever-expanding social responsibility for the broad range of problems that cluster around the harsh reality of poverty, so did it first move into other areas of social need wholly or largely ignored by government. These charitable heads we have treated under a large grouping perhaps best described as *Municipal Betterments*.

The first of these heads we have called *General Municipal Uses*, including a great variety of benefactions designed to make a community a more comfortable and efficient place in which to live and work. A surprisingly high proportion of these benefactions, ranging from about 72 per cent to 99 per cent in the several counties, were settled in the form of endowments in order permanently to provide the benefits which the donor intended. They were of many sorts. Thus it was private generosity which ordinarily built, furnished, and kept in repair the municipal buildings of any town or city in this age. Plate, ceremonial vessels, regalia, and funds to defray the cost of the elaborate dinners so beloved by men of this period were bestowed upon the municipal officers and their successors. Markets and shambles were built and the title vested in the municipality, with the income often being assigned for general municipal purposes. Rudimentary fire-fighting apparatus was most often provided by private charity. Very substantial endowments were frequently established in order to pay all or part of local rates or national taxes that might be levied, particularly those falling on poor householders. Rather impressive and certainly useful endowments were vested in municipalities by private donors, the income of which was to be employed for the general uses of the communities thus

favoured. These are but a few of the many charitable uses gathered under this head, all of which, however, bespeak the pride which the mercantile aristocracy felt for the cities in which they had prospered and which they had usually helped to govern.

It has likewise seemed best to include under the great grouping of *Municipal Betterments* those funds left to the merchant *Companies for the Public Benefit*. As one would expect, a large proportion of such charitable accumulations (93·17 per cent) were to be vested in the powerful livery companies of London, though lesser associations of this kind in London and in the provinces were also to benefit. The London livery companies in the course of our period were to become experienced, adept, and most responsible charitable trustees, administering enormous sums vested in them for many charitable causes. Here it should be made clear that none of these trusts is included in the funds now being briefly described. But the companies were also accumulating funds in their own right under trust obligations for their own or the public interest. Members almost by custom came to leave at least modest legacies for such purposes. Special endowments for the maintenance of their halls were built up, bequests to provide dinners and other entertainments were not uncommon, while still other funds were given to the companies with the instruction that the income was to be used for some designated civic purpose. Even more importantly, the companies gradually accumulated large endowments in return for their services as charitable trustees, a residue or an indicated amount being provided by the will of the donor for the pains to be taken in the administration of a charitable fund. The companies were, then, well before our period was out, taking on many of the attributes of the quasi-municipal bodies which they were to become in the course of another century.

We have also included under municipal betterments a very small charitable head which we have entitled *Public Parks and Recreation*, for which we have recorded no more than nominal contributions. None the less, one does sense at least an emerging concern on the part of men of the age with these ultimate ameliorations of urban life.

Finally, and most importantly, all the bequests and gifts dedicated to the improvement of public works have been gathered under a head which we have inexactly but persistently described as *Roads and Bridges*. Many thousands of donors made contributions for this general purpose, nearly all of them small and for immediate use. The limited responsibility assumed by government, both national and local, is most fully documented by these benefactions and the improvement which they sought to effect in the basic instrumentalities of community life. In our detailed discussion of the various counties, we shall have occasion to mention at least the principal of these gifts, though the great range

of interest which they expressed can at least be summarized here. The largest in amount were the gifts for the building and repair of highways, provided particularly by merchants and clothiers, who had no doubt for many years cursed evil stretches of road which as the last action of their lives they determined to mend. We have noted as well many bequests for the maintenance, the sweeping, and the general betterment of streets, and even a few for street lighting. We have recorded some hundreds of bequests for the building or the maintenance of bridges, ranging from those over tiny streams to some that represented great engineering achievements for this period. Bequests for the repair of city walls, for the building of dikes and causeways, the digging of drainage canals, and the building of waterworks have all been gathered under this commodious heading. So too have benefactions for the construction of wharves and docks, and even for the cleansing of harbours, the building of jetties and breakwaters, as private benefactors sought to prod the central government to carry forward needed projects for the assistance of navigation. The whole sweep of these benefactions, mounting as they do during our long period, conveys the sense of a busy, an aggressive, and a sanguine age in which men were moulding the physical shape of the countryside and of their communities, just as with their larger benefactions they were fabricating the basic social and cultural institutions of the realm.

Under *Education* we have grouped a number of charitable uses to which men of the age made massive and permanently effective contribution. It is not too much to say that during the course of our period the basic educational institutions of the realm were founded and endowed. The determination of donors to extend and strengthen educational opportunity displays an almost obsessive confidence that thereby the ignorance from which poverty sprang might be dispelled, that youth might be encouraged, and that a way might be cleared for all men of talent and ambition. We shall later have occasion to comment at length on these sentiments and on the immense achievement wrought by benefactors who were determined to create a new England by freeing the mind of its youth. But here we may at least suggest that these men brought about a quiet revolution whose consequences were as apparent as they were beneficent well before our period had closed. Certainly it can be said that in 1660 educational opportunities were more widespread and stronger than they had ever been before or than were ever to be again until well into the nineteenth century.

The great and continuous flow of the charitable funds that were to accomplish this noble work of social betterment was directed principally towards the founding and endowment of *Schools*. Though we may on occasion have used the term 'grammar schools' loosely rather than precisely, it should be emphasized that under the head of *Schools*

we have included all educational institutions offering instruction of an elementary or secondary nature. Thus we have been quite as much interested in the elementary schools as in those of a more advanced grade, though, unfortunately, few of the former were to be endowed and hence have on the whole escaped us. We have likewise included essentially technical or trade schools of several sorts within this head, almost all of which, it might be added, offered in their curricula at least some of the elements of the liberal disciplines. Most of the schools with which we are concerned were, it is true, grammar schools, but they constitute only part of an immense edifice of education which was being reared across the whole of the realm. Our census of these schools is of course by no means complete, since we are concerned only with those which were founded or endowed by private charity or which were in part supported by voluntary contributions. Our survey, then, includes no more than the structure of free education as it developed during this period of incredible generosity with which we are concerned.

Though the great weight of the effort to create an educational system in England was very properly and most fruitfully directed towards the needs of elementary and secondary education, almost exactly half as much charitable wealth was directed towards the needs of the *Colleges and Universities*. Here we are of course principally concerned with the impressive and the continuous flow of new and revivifying wealth to Oxford and Cambridge, but we have included as well other and most interesting educational experiments of an advanced nature such as, for example, Gresham College and the ill-fated Chelsea College. Benefactions of many kinds made for the support of the universities have been included under this head, whether for the founding of new colleges, the building or betterment of fabric, the endowment needs, the creation of professorships, or the strengthening of the libraries of the universities and their colleges. In assembling and aggregating these many and rich benefactions we have thought it desirable to depart from the rule normally followed in crediting charitable gifts.¹ These benefactions for the universities were national in their significance and consequence and hence had no specific efficacy in or meaning for the counties in which the two great foundations happened to be situated. Hence we have in every case credited such gifts within the county in which the donor was resident.

Both the schools and the universities were greatly strengthened during our period by the large sums given by private donors for *Scholarships and Fellowships*. It is particularly interesting, and important, to observe how benefactions were binding the schools to the universities by an intricate and well-considered system of endowed scholarships, offering to able youths the opportunity to proceed from a favoured school

¹ *Vide ante*, 39-40, for a fuller discussion of the scheme normally prevailing.

directly to the university. Many, perhaps most, of the university scholarships founded in this age were restricted to students from a prescribed geographical area, if not from particular schools, with the result that an impressive and most complex fabric of educational opportunity was extended across the whole country. Fellowship endowments were more commonly vested in the favoured college without geographical restrictions, donors being disposed, however, to express a preference if not a restriction with respect to the area of knowledge with which the fellow would be concerned.

Finally, under the great grouping of *Education* we have listed gifts made for the foundation and support of *Libraries*, not including, of course, those larger amounts designated for the strengthening of the libraries of the universities. The libraries were of several sorts, including, it may be said, the earliest of the truly public and free libraries of England. Some were connected with schools, rather more were housed in churches, and still others were provided with their own quarters. But whatever the nature of their organization and government, they too bespeak the thirst for knowledge and the tremendous confidence of an age which with private funds created more effective and widely available educational opportunities than the world had ever known before.

The last of our great groupings of charitable uses may simply and accurately be entitled *Religion*. There were many gifts which in an ever-decreasing volume flowed from benefactors for the support of the church, for its many needs and services. So complex were these needs and the structure of support that we have gathered such benefactions under several appropriate heads. We should, however, mention at this point that, though gifts for monastic uses will be separately and quite fully discussed in the several counties, they have for statistical purposes been distributed to the several more general heads included under *Religion*. This has seemed desirable not only because of the disappearance of the whole institution of monasticism rather early in the course of our period but, even more pertinently, because, whether in terms of the aspirations of the donor or the religious effectiveness of the gift, such benefactions cannot sensibly be differentiated from the larger complex of the religious institution and its work.

Under the head of *Church General* we have gathered many thousands of benefactions, for the most part small and outright, which were dedicated to the general support of the church and its worship. Under this heading are recorded all gifts and bequests to a particular church which were evidently unrestricted in their nature. Here too are aggregated the innumerable gifts for lights, for altars, for images, and for the general maintenance of worship and the sacramental system. The church depended heavily on the flow of such benefactions for the support of its complex ministry. The curve of these gifts, as we shall

repeatedly suggest, may well constitute the most sensitively reliable index available to us of the intensity of the religious aspiration and the warmth of the devotion which men lent to their church.

After some hesitation we decided to regard as charitable gifts the large sums which were given or bequeathed to secure *Prayers* for the repose of the souls of the dead. These include many chantry foundations with considerable endowments, lending support to a large number of stipendiary priests. Included as well are smaller capital gifts left to secure in perpetuity or for a prescribed period of years obits, anniversary masses, and other carefully arranged masses for the soul of a deceased testator. There remain a host of outright gifts and bequests left by humbler, or more sceptical, men for a single mass, an anniversary dirge, or a trental of masses. But the question remains whether such gifts and bequests were in fact charitable at all. Strictly speaking, they doubtless were on balance not charitable in intent, though we believe that they were in effect. These celebrations were interwoven with the life and the worship of the church, and we may with some certainty believe that the interesting and very specific theological questions involved were in consequence obscure. It should also be noted that in most chantry foundations a usually tiny proportion of the income was set aside for charitable uses, while in a few at least the stipendiary priest was charged with educational duties. Moreover, the whole chantry system supported a considerable body of clergy, the stipendiary priests, whose duties and spiritual contributions, usually despite the relevant deeds of gift, extended far beyond their precisely defined spiritual obligations. It may in point of fact be well argued that the whole complex system of endowed prayers was brought under suspicion and some measure of disrepute long before the Reformation just because the church absorbed this huge aggregate of wealth for larger uses and needs, thereby in effect converting such endowments to charitable ends. The church did not follow this path of policy because it was faithless or corrupt, but because it was not an impressively vigilant trustee and because inevitably the larger needs came to absorb the lesser. It was quite uncommon for a chantry to survive at all for more than a century or so; it was even more unlikely that the carefully prescribed stipulations of a donor were fully honoured for more than a generation. With the Reformation there came a total conversion of such of these assets as survived; a not wholly unrelated conversion had been going on for many generations earlier.

A great variety of gifts have been gathered under the head of *Church Repairs*, or more exactly, we should perhaps say, church repairs and decorations. These were ordinarily intensely personal and parochial gifts made by men who loved and took pride in their parish church. By church repairs we have meant the ordinary care of the fabric, modest improvements and amendments of that fabric; in a word, the whole of

the contribution made towards the maintenance of the religious structure of a community. But under this head we have included as well gifts and bequests made for the embellishment of the fabric and the services of the church: the sacred vessels, the crosses, the cloths, the vestments, the fonts, the antiphonaries, and a host of other articles.

Still another important category of contribution to the needs of the church and its offices we have described as *Maintenance of the Clergy*. These gifts were of two easily differentiated kinds. The first were the gifts and bequests made outright towards the support of named clergy or for the clergy of a district or of a monastery. Such benefactions were, prior to the Reformation, a by no means unimportant source of clerical income, as, we might add, were the many fees imposed by law and custom, which we have not, of course, included in our reckoning. More important, and we shall deal with this subject at length in later pages, were the endowments created by pious men in order to secure the augmentation of clerical stipends in particular parishes. The great bulk of the benefactions included under this head were of this type, representing in their totality an important effort to lend to the clergy of the realm a greater dignity of status and to attract to the calling men of more impressive attainments.

One aspect of this effort was so important both in its religious and political consequences that we have dignified it as a separate head, namely the large and most effective endowments accumulated for the founding of *Puritan Lectureships*. These funds were for the most part ultimately to be absorbed by the established church, but during our period they possessed not only a Puritan bias but an extraordinary prestige and an impressive spiritual power. This whole subject, indeed, deserves a far more detailed and comprehensive treatment than is possible within the limits of this study.

Finally, under *Religion* we have included an important category which has been most cautiously described as *Estimated Church Building*. We have had occasion to comment on the statistical difficulties involved in gathering the sums included under this use, but must once more say that the data represent no more than our best and probably conservative estimates.¹ By church building we have meant the building or rebuilding of churches and chapels, major enlargements of existing churches, and in a few instances the carrying forward of repairs so extensive as to amount to a rebuilding of a decayed structure. It should again be stressed that we have meant to include only those undertakings financed in whole or in part by voluntary subscriptions or gifts, which in a fair number of instances means that we have endeavoured to separate charitable gifts from sums provided by rates when mixed funds were used for building purposes.

¹ *Vide ante*, 33-34.

We have described the five great charitable heads and the twenty-four categories under which we have assembled and have sought to analyse a very large mass of data, data which on occasion were not wholly tractable even within an unfortunately elaborate scheme of organization. We have commented as well on the methods which we have employed and have endeavoured to deal fully and critically with the frailties which we observe in the method. There remains one certain and inherent frailty which we can confess but which we cannot cure. We are dealing with the aspirations of men, with the flux which we find in their sentiments, their intentions, and their vision of the world as they would like it. Their aspirations must at points engage our own even across the span of centuries, just as their prejudices must on occasion fortify our own. The scheme of attack and of analysis we believe to be rigorously objective; the interpretation we can only hope will be honest if it cannot be objective.

III

The Need

A. THE DECLINE OF THE MIDDLE AGES AND THE EMERGENCE OF ENDEMIC POVERTY

We are not directly concerned with the history of poverty during our era or with the measures taken by a vigilant society to effect its relief and cure. We are rather concerned with the rapidly changing structure of philanthropic aspirations during this period of almost two centuries; with documenting a momentous shift of these aspirations towards an all but complete secularism which almost incidentally brought the age-old problem of poverty under careful examination and which created amazingly effective provisions for its amelioration. Yet it must also be said that the question of poverty, its causes and its cure, was a central preoccupation of the social conscience of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and that a very considerable proportion of the huge aggregate of charitable wealth provided was dedicated in one way or another to laying this ancient spectre.

It must be emphasized that poverty, wide-scale and endemic poverty, did not burst unannounced on the early modern world. To a degree the nature of poverty was to change, but more importantly men's sensitivity to the fact and social threat of poverty was to be enormously sharpened and enhanced in the course of the period under review. We would agree with Professor Thorndike's wise comment that there have been three broadly held historical attitudes towards poverty in the Christian world. In the first poverty itself was idealized, possibly because its amelioration lay wholly beyond the resources of the society, and the obligation of alms was taught as an intrinsic and significant part of the Christian social duty. Such almsgiving was direct, spontaneous, and expressed the sentiment of true charity, the giver sharing vicariously in the poverty and need of the recipient. The second historical stage was much longer and far more complex, extending in point of fact until late in the sixteenth century. During this age no great virtue was argued for the fact of poverty, which came rather to be increasingly regarded as a social cancer which, while it could not be eradicated, must be treated with all the means available. The relief of the poor, then, became a social as well as a religious duty, which until about the time of the Reformation

was largely assigned to the willing but almost wholly ineffectual agencies of the church and afterwards was undertaken principally by private and secular charity. These two first stages of development are not cleanly separable nor, certainly, does the third break sharply from that which had preceded it. In the final historical stage, which may be said to extend to our own day, a distinction is drawn between the employable poor and the derelict, society undertaking by a variety of measures to provide training, employment, and opportunity for those able and willing to work and decent economic sanctuary for those who are permanent casualties in an increasingly complex and competitive economy.¹

Poverty, then, was not new. It was endemic in all of western Europe throughout the Middle Ages and in times of wide-scale warfare, plague, or regional crop failures could lash out in benumbing and killing epidemic form. In part, the terrible scourge of poverty in the earlier Middle Ages was a consequence of poor transport and the absence of strong central governments able and willing to act; in part, it was an aspect of the intense regionalism of mediaeval life. Many men died of hunger, but on the whole they died quietly. The economy possessed elements of great strength, but it was perennially vulnerable to poverty occasioned by local disaster, with the consequence that, if the serf died, his lord had at least gone very hungry and so had his parish priest. But England after the beginning of the fourteenth century was becoming a much more complex society, not only in the countryside at large but in the rapidly growing and prospering towns. Various ecclesiastical institutions, and most particularly the monasteries and the many hospitals, began to assume a larger role in the relief of at least conspicuous indigence, while in the towns the craft guilds in their various forms, undertook, usually under ecclesiastical auspices, the most effective social insurance and concern that the mediaeval world was to know. Then came the immense disaster accompanying the decline of the mediaeval society, resulting in a steady decay of institutions and of social attitudes, a process not yet complete as our period began. The decay of manors, the savage and destructive waves of plague, foreign and internecine wars, and the slow erosion of civil and economic order not only vastly worsened the problem of poverty but spawned a new kind of poor with which the sixteenth century sought to deal in an amazed and awkward incertitude. So convulsive was this long period that a once stable society was torn apart and masses of men—the dispossessed, the masterless, and the incompetent—were literally set in motion by irresistible forces as they sought first

¹ Thorndike, Lynn, 'The historical background', in *Intelligent philanthropy* (Chicago, 1930), 27-31; Birnie, Arthur, *An economic history of the British Isles* (L., 1955), 110; and *vide* Troeltsch's careful and thoughtful comments on early Christian and medieval charity (Troeltsch, Ernst, *The social teaching of the Christian churches*, Olive Wyon, trans., 2 vols., N.Y., 1931, I, 135-137, 303-305).

work that was not to be had and then alms which society was neither equipped nor disposed to give.

The problem which we have been sketching so generally and briefly possessed an almost cosmic significance. The particulars may differ, but throughout western Europe its broad outlines were much the same in say 1450 or in 1500. 'Economic causes were producing unemployment and in consequence vagrancy, and traditional methods of relieving the needy were proving insufficient.'¹ The collapse of a civilization brought in its train social consequences of stark severity which staggered men in their immensity and which found them without instrumentalities for alleviation, much less for correction. Moreover, as we shall point out in some detail, the church, so long charged by mankind with a general and somewhat vaguely defined area of responsibility, was itself in process of decay. Its once numerous hospitals and almshouses were in large part to disappear in the ruin of the fifteenth century, while the slender resources of those that survived were principally consumed by the tasks of administration and the obligations of pious observance; the monasteries were in a state of visible and rapid decline, suspect when they were not neglected by the society, and were lending, long before their dissolution, no more than token contribution towards the amelioration of a social crisis in which they were themselves engulfed; the craft guilds, perhaps the most effective of all mediaeval agencies for the care of the poor, were in process of dissolution for economic reasons and their charitable function had withered well before the Reformation ended it. The English society stood, then, as our study begins, with few organized, disciplined, and effective resources with which to meet a spreading and a blighting evil. We are concerned with the slow accumulation of new resources and with the fashioning of competent instrumentalities for the care and cure of poverty. The conscience of mankind during the course of our period was for the first time honestly and resolutely to embrace the problem of the poor.

B. THE PROBLEM OF POVERTY IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

I. *Increasing sensitivity to suffering and want*

This is in very broad outlines the genesis of the problem of poverty in the acute and pressing forms in which the early modern world was obliged to deal with it. Poverty, want, and starvation were present, critically so, in the English society in 1480 and had evidently been somewhat abated, principally by the restoration of order and the revival of trade, in the first half-century of Tudor rule. Yet we tend to yield to

¹ Elton, G. R., 'An early Tudor poor law', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2d. Ser., VI (1953), 55; and Chadwick, W. E., *The church, the state, and the poor* (L., 1914), 95-96.

an illusion of the increase of poverty in England for a full century after our period begins, chiefly because men of the age were preoccupied with the problem, were earnestly engaged in trying to deal with it, and were for the first time coming to possess some knowledge of the facts. The stern reality of need remained, though gradually diminishing, throughout our long period, but these two centuries were even more significantly marked by a very rapidly growing, a burgeoning, perception of that need. We shall be much occupied with mankind's increasing sensitivity to want, to acute suffering, and to the ignorance and hopelessness from which they spring. The sixteenth century was deeply concerned with the problem of poverty; its literature and documents are filled with the question; its discussion of causes, of extent, and of methods of action mount steadily as the century wears on. When men address themselves with such persistence, such eloquence, and on occasion with such exaggeration to a great social problem, the cure itself is close at hand. There was, we are confident, no real increase in poverty in England during the sixteenth century. Men were at last doing something about it. Thus it was that while the fierce and accusatory literature blasting the depopulation of villages rose to its effective height in the generation after 1517, it appears certain that the historical and economic forces which had brought ruin and death to many scores of Midland villages had in truth run their course well before 1485.¹ But this literature of protest and of reform none the less remains important and intensely relevant. Men were taking the shaping of their society into their own hands, were beginning to build it to a pattern supplied by their own aspirations. The doubtless tragic and perhaps unnecessary disappearance of unnumbered mediaeval villages had passed all but unnoticed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; merely the threat of such social disaster was in the mid-sixteenth century sufficient to call down the moving and wholly persuasive wrath of a Latimer or a Lever. Conscience had been quickened, aspirations had been formed, and men were moving out into a new and unexplored terrain of social responsibility.

Such dramatic events as the dissolution of the monasteries or even the triumph of Protestantism in England seem to have had very little to do with this momentous course of change, save as they were themselves perhaps the consequence of the revolution which was so irresistibly under way. Neither of these events, for example, had any considerable connection with the extent of poverty or the slow mustering by the society of the immensely powerful forces which were brought to bear in the frontal assault that was to be made on poverty and want of opportunity. What did happen, with results persisting to our own generation, was the steady secularization of men's aspirations as they came to address themselves with wholly courageous spirit to the great

¹ Beresford, Maurice, *The lost villages of England* (N.Y., 1954), 137 ff.

problems that were at hand. Perhaps it is not too much to say that the expropriation of the monastic properties was no more than an early but effective instance of this profoundly important shift in the structure of men's aspirations for the world about them and the world of the future as they imagined it.

We would not, of course, suggest that the historical and economic forces of the early modern era did not create new and on occasion critical causes for poverty, even though it seems certain that such social losses were being rapidly offset by the gains of this remarkable period. There were sharp dislocations in the economy and the society, particularly in the first half of the sixteenth century, which undoubtedly bred poverty and which we should not at least briefly assess.

2. The social consequences of the monastic expropriations

It was that great nineteenth-century publicist, William Cobbett, who set firmly in our social tradition the notion that the dissolution of the monasteries was a principal cause for the prevalence of poverty in the sixteenth century. Interestingly enough, this view seems to have proceeded from his burning anger with Henry VIII and his advisers, not for having expropriated these foundations, but for having failed to devote the spoils to completely secular and charitable purposes. These judgments Cobbett preached with the moral earnestness and persuasiveness of a Ridley; his eloquence persuades us still, though his facts were wrong and his opinions uninformed.

We know relatively little regarding the role of the mediaeval monasteries in alleviating poverty in the areas in which they were situated, though it is at least clear that contemporary opinion regarded them as important defences against poverty and as rendering extremely useful services in succouring the transient poor. Even more significantly, most of the almshouses, hospitals, lazar-houses, and other charitable institutions of the age had been founded and administered either directly or indirectly by the monasteries, and there is no doubt whatever that these foundations carried on an extremely valuable social and healing function until they, with the monasteries, began slowly to decay at about the middle of the fourteenth century.¹

This long and inexorable process of the deterioration of monasticism was far advanced well before the advent of the Reformation. This was true throughout western Europe, but perhaps most dramatically so in England where, almost a generation prior to the Dissolution, the fabric was in decay, contributions were drying up, and many foundations were so reduced in numbers that the spiritual offices required by the rule could not be maintained. Moreover, the historic role of these foundations in the distribution of alms had steadily declined and had become

¹ Steinbicker, C. R., *Poor-relief in the sixteenth century* (Washington, 1937), 33.

by the time of the Expropriation relatively insignificant, not, it seems clear, because of corruption or deliberate violations of trust covenants, but rather because of the wastage of estates, the ever-rising costs of administration, and simply befuddled mismanagement. We shall deal in some detail with these matters in our treatment of the several counties, but it may be said here that Savine's careful analysis of the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* lends full support to the inferences which may be drawn from extensive contemporary literature.¹ It would seem that 323 foundations, and including all the larger monasteries which enjoyed a total gross income of about £112,000 p.a., were just prior to the Dissolution distributing in alms under obligations of trust no more than £2700 p.a., or a scant 2·4 per cent of the whole of their available income. It is true that the commissioners were exacting in their definitions of both alms and trusts. When we take into account what we know of mediaeval gifts and bequests to the monasteries, however, it is abundantly clear that there had been an immense erosion of the admitted charitable responsibilities of these foundations. Many trusts had been diverted to other uses; many more, it seems probable, had simply been forgotten with the passage of time. We have much sparser data, whether from the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* or elsewhere, regarding the amounts distributed as voluntary alms by this group of foundations, together disposing almost 70 per cent of the monastic wealth of the realm. But there are sufficiently numerous instances where we have the amounts disbursed both under trusts and voluntarily to permit a statistical projection and to warrant the reasonably reliable estimate that these monasteries did not dispose in alms an amount exceeding £6500 p.a., requiring the income on capital of perhaps £130,000 in value. Within a period of forty years in our ten counties alone, the whole of this social capital had been restored by secular donors, being carefully vested for the relief of the poor. We may reasonably assume that at least twice as large a capital had been so disposed as a bulwark against poverty in the realm as a whole.

The charitable burden borne by the monasteries was, then, relatively slight, though in an age when £2 10s would sustain a human being at the level of subsistence for a year, it cannot be dismissed as without importance. It must be said, however, that the quality of monastic alms was even less impressive than the quantity. The number of poor corrodiers kept was few, and they were to be found in only relatively few houses. Most monastic alms were distributed as outright doles on holidays and commemorative days to beggars who thronged from house to house to piece together a scant living in which the acceptance of alms was not unmixed with periods of criminality. The monks cannot at this distance be blamed for the fact that their alms on the whole probably

¹ Savine, Alexander, *English monasteries on the eve of the Dissolution* (Oxford, 1909), 229–241, *et passim*.

created far more beggary than they cured. Their prime office was not the systematic care of the poor, they were engulfed by the begging flot-sam thrown up by the great social catastrophe of the preceding century, and they were, in any case, imbued with a conception of the nature of alms that was as old as the Christian past. But it just happened that this conception of alms was not effective in dealing with the problem of poverty as it existed in western Europe at the turn of the sixteenth century, even if the monasteries had possessed sufficient resources for really generous distributions.¹

There remains a more important consequence of the dissolution of the monasteries in relation to the problem of poverty. These expropriations, proceeding rapidly and ruthlessly as they did, represented still another in a train of social and economic dislocations which had beset the English society for a period of well over a century. Not many poor, particularly deserving poor, were deprived of sustenance, but some thousands of men and women were made poor, or faced the threat of poverty, because this great redistribution of national wealth had taken place. The monks were pensioned or absorbed into the fabric of the priesthood, but many of their tenants, their servants, and certain of their lay administrators were thrown upon a labour market already saturated. The new proprietors of the monastic lands managed them with far greater efficiency than the monks could ever contrive, but it was precisely here that the pinch of social distress occurred, especially in the north of England. The very mismanagement which had created an administrative hierarchy and a lightly exploited lay labour pool, thereby so seriously diminishing the funds left in monastic coffers for charitable uses, had in fact created substantial employment. Tudor literature is full of complaints, often by men themselves sternly Protestant, of the grasping quality of the too great efficiency of the new proprietors. Thus Becon wisely tells us that these men 'abhor the names of monks, friars, canons, nuns . . . but their goods they greedily gripe. And yet, where the cloisters kept hospitality, let out their farms at a reasonable price', they do 'none of all these things'.² These purchasers

¹ Dietz, F. C., *English government finance 1485-1558* (Urbana, Illinois, 1921), 123-124; Coulton, G. G., *Five centuries of religion* (4 vols., Cambridge, 1923-1950), IV, 713-723; Garnier, R. M., *History of the English landed interest* (L., 1892), 281 (Garnier believed, however, that slight as was the contribution of the monasteries, their sudden withdrawal created a crisis which compelled the state to intervene); Slater, Gilbert, *Poverty and the state* (L., 1930), 8-10; Hewins, W. A. S., 'The problem of pauperism' in *Social England* (H. D. Traill and J. S. Mann, eds.) (L., 1901, 6 vols.), III, 360; Webb, Sidney and Beatrice, *The old poor law* (L., 1927), 18-19; Gray, B. K., *A history of English philanthropy* (L., 1905), 9-13; Ashley, W. J., *An introduction to English economic history and theory* (2 vols., N. Y., 1888, 1893), II, 312-317.

² Becon, Thomas, 'The jewel of joy' (1553), in *The Catechism* (John Ayre, ed.), (Cambridge, 1844), 435.

of abbey lands were men, by and large, who understood that land when exploited as capital could found new fortunes and create a new aristocracy. They were men who knew what they wanted, who were quick to introduce new methods, and who became the exemplars of the enclosers, the sheep graziers, and the rent raisers so detested by the sixteenth century moralists.¹ Thus it was that around each destroyed foundation a tiny social dislocation occurred, unimportant in itself save in human terms, but which as it extended across the length and breadth of the realm enmeshed to form a major dislocation in a society only just beginning to find firm footing in a new and very complex world.

3. *Agricultural changes and the increase of poverty*

The problem of dealing with poverty in England was also very considerably complicated by the great agrarian revolution which had begun a century earlier but which continued throughout the sixteenth century. The driving force of that revolution was a changing attitude on the part of owners towards their land, which increasingly they came to regard and to exploit as a species of capital. Much land passed into the hands of new and vigorous men who were sensitive to the economic realities and who were wholly prepared to convert their holdings from arable to grazing or to reconstitute the semi-communal and wasteful open-field system still prevailing in many parts of England, if means could be found to gain their ends. Many of these proprietors, as we have noted, gained control of former monastic lands, with the result that the social dislocation resulting from expropriation was often compounded by the improving dispositions made by the new owners. It appears reasonably certain that the most sweeping of these agricultural changes, at least in terms of the actual depopulation of communities, were over by 1500, but they were none the less continuous throughout the Tudor period and in the view of all contemporary observers, including the three great and certainly unsentimental Tudor monarchs, worked real hardship on the landless agricultural labourers, some portion of whom now possessed no more than marginal and seasonal utility. It must be remembered, too, that the agrarian society was still most conservative and that any change wrought genuine injury on its weakest members, who simply did not have the capacities of adaptability required in finding new employment elsewhere.² This remains true even though we are describing a movement of change which was at once relatively slow and on the whole regional in its character. The most trustworthy estimates would

¹ Cheyney, E. P., *Social changes in England in the sixteenth century* (Boston, 1895), 67.

² Tawney, R. H., *The agrarian problem in the sixteenth century* (L., 1912), 263-265; Ernle, R. E. P., *English farming past and present* (L., 1919), 56-58; Gray, *History of philanthropy*, 2-3.

suggest that not much more than 1200 square miles of agricultural land was enclosed in the long interval 1455-1637 and that these changes probably did not result in the dispossession and possibly the unemployment of more than 35,000 families.¹

Paradoxically enough, the rapid spread of sheep-farming in the first half of the sixteenth century, while undoubtedly creating rural unemployment in certain areas, was itself supporting the industrial prosperity of the woollen manufacturing regions, which certainly absorbed a much larger labour force than that which the sheep had dispossessed. But the difficulty was that these dislocations were local, or at most regional, and the labour dispossessed lacked both the mobility and the skill to effect a theoretically possible and desirable translation. Human beings are like that, whether we are speaking of a Yorkshire cottager in the sixteenth century or a Welsh coal miner in the twentieth century. Some thousands of men, consequently, who had been bound to particular stretches of land by ties which generations had forged suddenly became landless, rootless men. The Tudors as a result, in a period of expanding national prosperity, found themselves faced with a new and a pressing problem of vagrancy and genuine unemployment. It was with the definition and resolution of this problem that Parliament was to wrestle for a full two generations and it was to this problem that private charity was to address itself with such admirable pertinacity.² The particular crisis was spent by the close of the sixteenth century, in any case, when a great shift from grazing to arable farming set in, but it had occasioned great suffering and had taught England something of the sterner realities of the modern economic world.³

It is very possible that both sixteenth century moralists and twentieth century social historians have been so deeply moved by the undoubted though limited evils of depopulation as a result of enclosures for sheep-farming that we have devoted too little attention to the almost certainly more important sources of rural unemployment, the rise of the yeoman farmer and 'the squire who farmed like a yeoman'. Valuable insight provided by Professor Mildred Campbell and others, and their own account books, wills, and inventories, suggest that these aggressive, intelligent, and profit-minded men who farmed their own land were rapidly reducing the wasteful increments of labour undoubtedly borne by the manorial system. The labour which they employed was landless,

¹ Gay, E. F., 'Inclosures in England in the sixteenth century', *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, XVII (1903), 576-597; Johnson, A. H., *The disappearance of small landowners* (Oxford, 1909), 48, 58.

² Professor Tawney's comments on this general problem (*Agrarian problem*, 265-280) are wise and illuminating.

³ Holdsworth, W. S., *A history of English law* (12 vols., L., 1922-1938), IV, 388-402; Palmer, R. L., *English social history in the making* (L., 1934), 58-59; Ashley, W. J., *The economic organisation of England* (L., 1949), 115.

disciplined, and in large part seasonal. The proprietors of this class were throughout the sixteenth century the most efficient farmers in England, and rural unemployment followed in the train of their very efficiency.

4. *Demographic factors*

Extensive work in local materials has also persuaded us that probably the most important of all the causes for rural poverty in our era was the steady and relatively steep increase in population which appears to have set in just a little while before the beginning of our period and which continued unabated to its close. There are many reasons for believing that the rural population of the realm was growing more rapidly than a tightening and somewhat harassed agrarian system could possibly absorb, and likewise faster than the mobile elements of this increase could be absorbed by a very rapidly expanding industrial and commercial economy. It is probable that the population of the realm increased by as much as 40 per cent between 1500 and 1600 and by another 30 per cent in the first four decades of the seventeenth century. Dramatic as was the increase in urbanization, it could not keep pace with this enormous and spiralling rise in population. Even the most casual examination of parish records, particularly in the southern and Midland counties, suggests all too clearly that rural parishes were seriously and heavily overpopulated from about 1550 onwards in terms of any reasonable assessment of available arable lands and of known local industries. Parishes such as these, and there were thousands of them, fed men and youths by the tens of thousands into that inexhaustible maw which was London, but never quite as rapidly as the parishes produced them and always a little faster than London could absorb them. The simple fact is that there was a substantial labour surplus, both rural and urban, during almost the whole of our period.

5. *The protest of conscience*

There were, then, complex economic and demographic forces which were at once producing a long period of agricultural prosperity for most classes of landowners and misery and ejection for the marginal elements of the agrarian community. Men of the sixteenth century did not understand the forces at work, but they feared them, and they were certainly warmly articulate in their denunciation of the social evils which ensued. There is a vast literature of social protest through the whole of the sixteenth century, of which the Tudors were not unmindful as they struggled to find ways and means to remedy ills which in a true sense their own wise economic policies had made inevitable. At least a few selected examples may be noted.

John Bayker, who represented himself as an artificer who had travelled through much of England, in *ca.* 1538 made bold to warn the

King of the decay of houses and villages throughout the realm. All this, he felt, could be corrected if vacant land were brought under tillage, if landlords were forbidden to raise rents and impose excessive fines, and if every dispossessed poor man might have but 'one lythyll howsse or cotage to inhabyt and but a lytyl garden grownde wythe all'.¹ Nostalgically, the great Latimer could recall his yeoman father who 'had no landes of hys owne, onlye he had a farme of iii or iiii pound by yere at the uttermost, and here upon he tilled so much as kept halfe a dosen men. He had walke for a hundred shepe, and my mother mylked xxx kyne. . . . He kept me to schole, or elles I had not bene able to haue preached before the Kinges maiestie now. . . . He kept hospitalitie for his pore neighbours. And sum almes he gaue to the poore, and all thys dyd he of the sayd farme', whereas the present owner could not afford 'a cup of drincke to the pore'.² What had happened? Graziers, enclosers, the shepherd and his dog, had destroyed a pastoral society, said Latimer, and with him all the sixteenth century moralists most vehemently agreed. Thomas Becon, who had been deeply influenced by Latimer while at Cambridge, writing a little later, denounced as sons of Satan those ambitious landlords who 'not only link house to house, but, when they have gotten many houses and tenements into their hands, yea, whole townships, they suffer the houses to fall into utter ruin and decay; so that by this means whole towns are become desolate, and like unto a wilderness, no man dwelling there, except it be the shepherd and his dog'. The encloser and the grazier have brought calamity on the rural poor and ruin to whole stretches of the kingdom. They are as evil as they are heartless, consigning the poor 'to starve and perish for hunger'.³

The rural ills which Latimer had observed in Leicestershire and Becon in Norfolk were with equal eloquence described by an anonymous writer who in *ca.* 1550 drew his knowledge from Oxfordshire. There was real dearth in England, he held, caused by the enclosures being made for sheep grazing. He testified that in Oxfordshire alone forty ploughs had disappeared during the reign of Henry VIII and that each plough provided sustenance for a household of six persons. These families were dispossessed and had no place to go because this corrosive process of change was to be found in every part of the realm. Hence they have gone 'forth from shire to shire and . . . be scattered thus abroad within the king's majesty's realm, where it shall please almighty God; and for lack of masters, by compulsion driven, some of them to beg and some

¹ *S.P. Henry VIII*, CXLI, 134-135, quoted in *Tudor economic documents* (R. H. Tawney and Eileen Power, eds.) (3 vols., L., 1951), II, 302-305.

² Latimer, Hugh, *The fyrste sermon . . . before the Kinges Maiestie* (L., 1549), no pagin.

³ Becon, *Catechism*, 434.

to steal'.¹ These same ills had been noted through all the Midland counties and brooded on by John Hales, appointed in 1548 to the commission to redress enclosures. Writing perhaps two years later, Hales complains of dearth, of rising prices, and of enclosures which have driven away forty families from areas where 'nowe one man . . . and his shepherd hathe all'. The enclosures to make arable farming more profitable, already proceeding in several counties, do no harm to the economy or to the society, Hales tells us, but those which favour wool against grain are a scourge in the land of England.²

These rural dislocations were coming to an end towards the close of the sixteenth century as, on balance, land was returning to the plough in England. But even the troubled debates from which the great Elizabethan poor laws were to issue echoed the deep conviction that enclosures and land laid down to grazing were the prime cause of poverty in the realm. This persuasion had taken on the status of a national myth which, with alterations, has perpetuated itself down to our own century. Henry Arthington, writing in 1597, laid the blame for rural poverty principally on those proud and wasteful landowners who rack their tenants in order to maintain an indecently high standard of living. The enclosers, the covetous landlords, and the ruthless corn merchants he held to be the 'poor makers' of the age.³ In the same year, the recently installed Dean of Durham, William James, complained repeatedly to Lord Burghley of the decay of tillage and of rural poverty in the North. In the bishopric, he held, at least 500 ploughs had decayed in the past half-century with the result that in an area where 8000 acres were once corn land, hardly 160 acres remained in tillage. 'Want and waste have crept into Northumberland, Westmoreland, and Cumberland', where one might travel for twenty miles and see no inhabitants. In Northumberland, James added, great villages had been depopulated, and there being 'no man to stop the enemy's attempt . . . people are driven to the poor port towns'.⁴

The great Tudor monarchs were almost intuitively sensitive to social criticism and were deeply concerned with economic dislocations which might lead to the subversion of the public order they were so grimly resolved to maintain. The Crown was accordingly troubled by these forces of rural change which were clearly under way and which evidently had some uncertainly defined connection with agrarian unemployment and unsettlement. The problem was not easy of solution.

¹ *Certain causes gathered together wherein is showed the decay of England* (L., [1550-1553]), in Dunham, William H., Jr., and Stanley Pargellis, eds., *Complaint and reform in England 1436-1714* (N. Y., 1938), 135-136, 138.

² Hales, John, *A discourse of the common weal of this realm of England* (Elizabeth Lamond, ed.) (Cambridge, 1893), 15, 18, 33, 37, 53, 66, 88-89, 97, 112-125.

³ Arthington, Henry, *Provision for the poore* (L., 1597), no pagin.

⁴ *S.P. Dom.*, 1597, CCLXII, 10, 11.

Tudor policy consistently favoured the very classes that were acquiring land and exploiting its ownership, while Tudor legislation quite as consistently sought to protect the smallholder and the rural wage earner from the consequences of that exploitation. The weight of law and of administration was consequently employed to retard and to control the progress of an agricultural revolution which was regarded as inevitable and desirable in the scale of national interests but which must be accomplished gradually lest the society itself be too severely strained. Accordingly, the whole temper of law and of policy were at once conservative and restraining throughout our period, as the government sought with a considerable measure of success to guide and to control the necessary process of agrarian change. From 1488 (4 *Henry VII*, c. 19) onwards until the last days of the Protectorate, there was constant concern and steady intervention in the agrarian problem, no fewer than twelve major statutes, seven royal commissions, many proclamations, and the steady attention of the Privy Council and the Court of Star Chamber attesting to the discipline with which the Crown ordered the rise of the gentry to the seats of economic power.¹

6. *Urbanization and the new poverty*

The great and silent changes taking place in agriculture were, as we have seen, moderately paced and were subject to the constant and on the whole the wise restraining policy of the state. These agricultural dislocations bred poverty among rural groups now marginal in their economic utility and, connected as they were with a steadily increasing population, fed with surplus labour another great and more rapid revolutionary change under way in the economy of the nation. Professor Nef and other economic historians of our generation have traced out the principal lines of an early industrial and commercial revolution which occurred within the term of our study and which was profoundly to alter the whole shape of the English economy and society.² The rapid spread of industry, the closely connected growth of principally industrial urban communities, and the rise of new classes of employers who possessed no clearly held sense of social responsibility nurtured by tradition or by law vastly aggravated the whole problem of poverty during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. More specifically, industrialization and urbanization were to spawn a new kind of poor, workers dependent on specialized skills, cut off from the ever-sustaining resources of an uncomplicated rural parish, and living at the mercy of an employment subjected to periodic intervals of slump or complete

¹ Holdsworth, *English law*, IV, 362-373; Tawney, *Agrarian problem*, 313-317.

² Nef, J. U., *Industry and government in France and England 1540-1640* (Philadelphia, 1940) and the same author's masterly *The rise of the British coal industry* (2 vols., L., 1932).

stagnation. The always perceptive Eden has well said that 'manufactures and commerce are the true parents of our national poor'.¹

The whole weight of the evidence which will be fully discussed in later volumes suggests that it was urban poverty which created the most serious and the most difficult problems for the society with which we are concerned. Men of the age, as we have seen, were principally pre-occupied with the rural poor, and the great Elizabethan poor laws were to be framed principally to help them, though the peculiarly intransigent and sharp distress was to be found in the cities, the wool towns, and the commercial centres around which trade and industry clustered. In sixteenth century England a total want of employment in a rural area remained almost unknown, or at least contemporary observers viewed the possibility with incredulity; to put it with harsh but more pertinent accuracy, starvation was scarcely possible or tolerated in the still quite uncomplicated and amazingly stable society which rural England remained despite the dislocations to which it had been subjected. But in the urban and industrial complexes growing so rapidly in so many parts of the realm, men found themselves subject to the wholly unpredictable scourges of seasonal unemployment and, even worse, to cyclical periods of severe economic depression when work could not be gained even by the most desperately willing artisan. This was a development which was simply not comprehended by the English society until well into the seventeenth century, and then most grudgingly, because the whole frame of historical and economic reference remained agrarian in an economy undergoing an industrial revolution. It was to this great need, to this social crisis, that private charity addressed itself with such pertinacious concern, thereby relieving a need and a social tension of the utmost gravity. So too, as we shall see, the Elizabethan poor laws, passed as they were by men principally pre-occupied with agrarian poverty, were in fact to have their first substantial application in the relief of urban, of industrial, poverty.

Thus it was that the industrial and commercial revolution which so quickly and so effectively created new opportunities for employment, which so enormously increased the value of the national product of the realm, and which steadily absorbed the ever-mounting population of rural England spawned the new and dreadful blight of industrial, of urban, poverty, a poverty which western society has only very recently been able to bring under relatively firm control. It is quite impossible to measure the extent of urban poverty at any time, but it may most confidently be said that it was endemic during the last century of our period and that it flared up on occasion in dreadful and epidemic out-

¹ Eden, F. M., *The state of the poor* (A. G. L. Rogers, ed.) (L., 1928), 3-4. This great work remains valuable for any student of English social and economic history.

bursts. In 1595, a year of great scarcity, the Lord Mayor of London reckoned that there were 4132 stricken householders in the city, which would suggest that possibly as much as 10 per cent of the whole population were at or below the line of pauperism, if allowances are made for aged and youthful dependents of these families. A recent writer, using Gregory King's figures for Lichfield, compiled just a century later, believes that at that date probably 16.8 per cent of the whole population of that provincial city were paupers,¹ while an anonymous author writing in 1641 certainly too pessimistically suggests that a quarter of the population of the realm was made up of 'miserable poor people'.² Though we shall deal with the subject in more detail in later pages, it may be appropriately said here that an extensive study of parochial records for the certainly critical period 1601-1640 would lead us to believe that something like 8 per cent of the population of any urban and industrial complex in England were quite chronically at or below the line of poverty as then most harshly defined, while in periods of trade depression or pestilence this proportion could rise, and that very quickly, to as much as 20 per cent of the population.

The truth is that in the towns as in the country areas there was a labour surplus through the whole of the last century of our period. This fact tended not only to keep wages depressed but likewise to make marginal or unemployable whole segments of the population which could have found at least partial employment under more stable rural conditions. It has been most pertinently pointed out that in seventeenth century England 'the labour force of the community was characterized by a relatively short span of working life at maximum productive efficiency'.³ Such labour was discarded easily and quickly, particularly as an unending flow of youth poured into London, or Halifax, or Coventry in search of employment. This labour force was subjected, as well, to the necessity of supporting a large body of minor dependents resulting from a very high birth rate and the even heavier burden of lending sustenance to those whom an urban society declared to be aged. These burdens neither the labour force nor the municipalities involved could possibly bear alone. Here again private charity, mustered in enormous and disciplined aggregates, intervened quickly and with fair efficiency to save the society from what might easily have been a disastrous collapse.

The rise of industry in our period had many aspects and extended into many fields of endeavour, but the most important single develop-

¹ Coleman, D. C., 'Labour in the English economy of the seventeenth century', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2d. ser., VIII (1956), 280-295.

² *Considerations touching trade, with the advance of the King's revenue* (L., 1641), 15.

³ Coleman, in *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2d ser., VIII (1956), 285.

ment was without doubt in the cloth trade. The growth of the industry was very rapid, though our detailed examination of the counties suggests that the great prosperity attained and the mass employment resulting in certain areas such as the West Riding and the west of England was at the expense of much older, tradition-ridden, and now inefficient producing regions scattered all over the south and east of England. The new industry lay at particular hazard because its prosperity was so heavily dependent on the export market, while those employed were especially vulnerable because of the high degree of technical specialization which characterized cloth manufacturing. The clothier, the key figure in the industry, had only a relatively small capital commitment in his inventory or in forward purchases, with the result that he could and did adjust his business quite accurately to current demand and simply withdrew from the market and closed down an entire industry at will. Hence it was that 'we do not hear of the poor merchant' or the 'poor clothier' in the seventeenth century, while the 'poor spinner, weaver, dresser, and so on, was a continual object of concern'.¹ The industry was particularly subject to troughs of unemployment and remained throughout our period a breeder of poverty, even though it had come to be the employers of many thousands of persons.

The cloth industry, undoubtedly over-extended and with too large capacity for production, was in a generally unhealthy state in the long interval 1620-1640, having literally collapsed in 1621-1623 and suffering another serious depression in 1630-1631.² The complex reasons for this collapse of an industry which was the largest single industrial employer of labour in the realm have been carefully and expertly studied in recent years, the consensus being that the export market had by 1620 been largely lost to England. Spreading unemployment from this industry involved other artisan groups, with the result that England found herself, without experience or preparation, faced with her first major crisis of industrial depression. As we shall later note in some detail, the government found itself obliged to intervene vigorously and persistently, with, among other results, the first serious effort being made to secure a general and strict application of the Elizabethan poor laws. The Privy

¹ Hinton, R. W. K., 'The mercantile system in the time of Thomas More', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2d ser., VII (1955), 280; *vide* Stone, Lawrence, 'State control in sixteenth century England', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, XVII (1947), 103. Stone holds that the state felt it necessary to intervene with controls as the economy became more complex, since 'the propertied classes of the Elizabethan period were faced with a turbulent and unruly proletariat, half industrial workers, half professional unemployed'. It was fear of disorder that made the propertied classes willing to accede to increasingly significant forms of state intervention.

² Hewins, W. A. S., 'Pauperism and the poor laws', in *Social England*, IV, 196-197; MacInnes, C. M., *An introduction to the economic history of the British Empire* (L., 1935), 21-22.

Council was deeply troubled by reports pouring in of distress and disorder in many parts of the realm, of which that from the High Sheriff of Somerset may be taken as typical. A 'tumultuous assembly of poor' in the eastern part of the county had been quieted, but he must warn the Council 'that there are such a multytude of poor cottages builte uppon the highwaies and odd corners in every country parishe within this countye and so stufte with pore people that in many of those parishes there are three or fower hundred poore . . . that did gett most of their lyvinge by spinninge, carding and such imployments aboute wooll and cloath'. Trade was dead, there was no reserve for these people, who 'are for the most parte without worke and knowe not how to live'.¹

The High Sheriff of Somerset was troubled, and so was the Council as similar reports sifted in to them from affected areas all over England. Letters were despatched to the justices in all the cloth counties in 1622 requiring them to compel the clothiers to assume a larger measure of social responsibility. The Council would not endure 'that clothiers . . . should at their pleasure . . . dismiss their work folks, who, being many in number and most of them of the poorer sort, are in such cases likely by their clamours to disturb the quiet and government of those parts wherein they live'. In consequence, the wool growers, the clothiers, and the merchants who had profited greatly in good times, 'must now in the decay of trade . . . bear a part of the public losses as may best conduce to the good of the public and the maintenance of general trade'. But the industrial crisis was too severe, its economic and social consequences too widespread for this fiat of sovereignty to have much more than moral meaning. The state quickly found that words were not enough; it was itself soon deeply involved in a prolonged and arduous effort to stay the decay of the whole social fabric of the realm which was threatened by this first major episode of industrial depression.

In discussing the causes for the increase of poverty in England, we have laid frequent emphasis on the undoubted factor of a steep and continuously rising curve of population through the whole course of our period.² We have estimated, probably quite conservatively, that the population of the realm increased by as much as 40 per cent during the sixteenth century and then very steeply by another 30 per cent in the first four decades of the seventeenth century. Almost as certainly, the population of the kingdom was somewhat more than doubled in the course of our whole period. This was a very substantial increase for an economy with relatively modest resources of production and distribution, and for one still remarkably stable and conservative in its whole social and economic structure.³ There was, as we have so often stressed,

¹ *S.P. Dom.*, 1622, CXXX, 73 (May 14).

² *Vide ante*, 26-29, 63.

³ Barrington, Daines, *Observations on the more ancient statutes* (L., 1796), 536-537.

a major expansion of industry and of commerce under way which went far towards absorbing the ever-mounting store of labour available, but the whole social problem was not easily resolved because the marginal elements of the labour force were neither mobile nor skilled and because the economy itself was ill-proportioned and somewhat inelastic. The consequence was an undoubted labour surplus first in agrarian England and later in urban England, which was to create great hardship for classes of men quite defenceless against change and also most difficult social problems for a government not fully comprehending the essentially revolutionary shifts that were under way. Broadly speaking, the whole era with which we are concerned was one in which prosperity and productivity were increasing both rapidly and generally, but not in such wise as to comprehend all elements that went to make up the realm. Much of the really widespread poverty and suffering which might have occurred was, as we shall see, to be relieved or prevented by an immense outpouring of private charity, supplemented modestly towards the close of our era by direct governmental intervention through the taxing power.

The fact of the increasing weight of population on the resources of the realm was well understood by contemporary opinion after about 1580, even by this age which was so happily disinterested in all matters statistical. We need here only mention the stream of publications dealing with the problem of overpopulation, usually closely connected with propaganda urging emigration to colonies either projected or recently founded.¹ In their search for arguments certain of these writers doubtless exaggerated the common conviction that the realm had become overpopulated and that much of existing poverty flowed from the fact, yet it seems quite clear that they were appealing to sentiments very widely held. In fact, the whole colonial movement of the early seventeenth century gained much of its impetus from this concern. Perhaps at least one of these writers might be briefly heard.

Richard Eburne, a Somerset clergyman, in 1624 published a systematic and eloquent plea for colonial emigration, especially in the interests of the Newfoundland plantation in which nearby Bristol had a considerable financial stake. In his preface he tells us that he is addressing himself to the poorer and meaner sort, whom he exhorts to 'looke upon the miserie and want wherein you doe, and abiding in England, you cannot but live'. God has offered, almost miraculously, a means of relief from the poverty which assails England, and it would be sinful indeed not to accept it. This poverty, the author believes, is principally occasioned by the fact that England has for long been spared from war and plague, 'the two great deuourers of mankinde', with the result that the realm swarms with a 'multitude and plentie of people'. It is this

¹ Wright, L. B., *Religion and empire* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1943).

overplus, this marginal population, which should be sent abroad. It is in fact intolerable 'what a number in euery towne and citie, yea in euery parish and village, doe abound' who cannot be sustained save at damaging cost to the whole society. Such needed translations of people, he recognized, would not be easily effected, 'Englishmen especially, and of them, most of all the in-land sort' being 'wedded to their natiue soile'. Eburne would therefore use compulsion to secure the transportation first of the vagrants and then of those guilty of minor offences, often inspired by want. He would then sweep up the homeless men and squatters, that 'superfluous crue' who had always plagued the quiet of the realm. To these he would add pressed troops for garrison duty and then for colonization and lastly the children of paupers who would be bound to fruitful trades in the colonies. These were the marginal, the impoverished groups, which Eburne would have constituted as the mud sills of his colonial society, he having been fully confident that the needed farmers, artisans, and craftsmen could be induced to follow by the economic and social opportunities available in the new world. Ideally, he would wish to see about 16,000 persons emigrate each year from England, two for each parish, which would feed numbers in needed fashion to the new world and restore the stability of population so required in England if the problem of poverty was to be solved at all.¹

7. *The erosion of inflation*

We have likewise stressed at several points in our earlier discussion the serious consequences of a steadily spiralling inflationary process on the society of the age.² We have suggested that it is probably impossible to construct a reliable index of prices that would have valid national meaning in our period, but we can most assuredly state that the rising curve of commodity prices, the cost of necessities, steadily outstripped the curve of wages.³ And it is precisely here that poverty was engendered and deepened by the inflationary process. Valiant, if largely ineffective, efforts were made by the central government to control the prices of necessities, particularly in times of extreme dearth, but the powerful economic forces at work in the society simply could not be stilled by fiat. At the same time, steady and on the whole remarkably successful efforts were undertaken to retard the curve of wages, assisted no doubt by the fact of a labour surplus, with the result that quite unintended social injury resulted. One authority, indeed, would go so far as to maintain that the crisis of poverty in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was

¹ Eburne, Richard, *A plaine path-way to plantations* (L., 1624), 9, 59-62, 72-75.

² *Vide ante*, especially 34-37, 65-66.

³ Beer, M., *Early British economics* (L., 1938), 82-99; Rogers, *Agriculture and prices*, IV, 716-719; V, 787-792.

principally due to the fact that wages did not rise as rapidly as did prices.¹ The government and responsible opinion generally were deeply concerned because of the eroding social effects of a gradually mounting inflation, but could never quite diagnose either the nature of the economic malady or set forth the appropriate remedies. Everyone in the society, a contemporary informs us, blamed everyone else: 'Some thought the husbandmen were guilty who charged high prices for victuals, whereupon the husbandmen said the fault was with the noblemen who raised the rents and . . . [made] enclosures. Noblemen said the fault was with the merchants and artificers for selling everything dearer than in past times.'

The economic processes which we have so briefly described undoubtedly condemned whole classes of men to a life without margins of safety, to a standard of living only scanty above the line of subsistence even in normal times. This was true in a long period which may generally be described as very prosperous indeed, when most classes of men were without doubt enjoying a rapid and visible increase at once in their standard of living and in the margins of their security. This ever-spreading gulf between classes troubled the whole society and was a principal factor in evoking the great charitable outpouring which characterizes the age under review. It is also responsible for a considerable exaggeration of the whole problem and fact of poverty in the realm, for it evoked a reaction in the conscience of certain classes of men who were prospering conspicuously because of the inflationary process. The fact and the fear of poverty were, then, present at all times among the rootless and the unskilled, and had, as it were, become endemic in the new society of the sixteenth century. But in periods of economic crisis, when there were widespread and successive crop failures, particularly if conjoined with industrial unemployment, the whole society found itself on the brink of frightful and almost paralysing disaster. This fear was to be demonstrated by almost every writer dealing with the social and economic problems of the era, but Eburne, whom we have just been citing in another connection, comes to mind. He complained that prices had risen steeply in the past generation with the result that the helpless poor had been pressed deeper and deeper into want and enjoyed an ever-smaller share in the necessities of life. If steps were not at once taken to relieve the pressure on foodstuffs, war and pestilence would, he held, be the inevitable result. His over-simple cure was, of course, 'the diminution of the people, which reduced to such a competent number, as the land it selfe can well maintaine, would easily cause, not onely the excessiue height of fines and rents, but also the prices of all things else, to fall of themselves, and stay at . . . [a] reasonable . . . rate'.²

¹ Rogers, *Work and wages*, 427-430.

² Eburne, *Plaine path-way*, 10.

These all too frequent intervals of dearth the government sought to control and to alleviate by direct, sweeping, and angry interventions in the economic process which it is evident enjoyed the full support of the dominant elements in the society. There are literally hundreds of these interventions in which the whole administrative mechanism of the realm was charged with controlling the prices of necessities by fiat and with arranging for the better distribution of commodities in short supply in order to relieve panic and afford some measure of protection for the poor. The government was searching for a way to master economic forces which even now we cannot fully control. It was hungry for information, for enlightenment. Thus it wished the deputy lieutenants of Hertfordshire to inform it of the reasons for the continuance there of high prices of grain. Wheat, the Council was told, was better in quality, though the yield was small, while barley 'carries a higher price, as the poor who were wont to feed upon wheat and rye are driven to it'. The county was seeking to supply itself from 'more fruitful shires', but was troubled by 'the higglers of Middlesex, and other purveyors for London' who scoured the county for its scant food resources. 'It is pitiful to consider the great multitude of poor in most of the towns of the shire, who having the last year spent the greatest part of their substance, are now driven to live upon relief.'¹ In such crises as this, and there were many of them, the whole weight of sovereignty was thrown quickly, aggressively, and on the whole effectively on the side of the poor and for the preservation of social order.² This fact in itself constitutes one of the greatest of the gains that men had thus far made in ordering their affairs and in assuming full responsibility in broad areas of social need.

8. *The scourge of epidemics*

There remains still another principal cause of poverty in the age with which we are concerned, the heavy and wholly unpredictable incidence of epidemic diseases which so plagued the whole of the western world from the middle of the fourteenth century until just past the middle of the seventeenth. The whole course of this strange visitation has been well traced out, though we remain uncertain of mortality rates until the late sixteenth century. It is clear that England was never wholly free of these scourges at any time, that rather limited areas tended to be

¹ *S.P. Dom.*, 1595, CCLIV, 10.

² Countless examples might be given. Typical are interventions in Buckinghamshire and Nottinghamshire in 1623 when, as we have earlier suggested, there was widespread dearth and suffering in both rural and urban communities (*S.P. Dom.*, 1623, CXL, 10, 19). Certain of the justices of Nottinghamshire reported that they had ordered the churchwardens and overseers to set the poor on work and to relieve the impotent, 'but the poverty of the country is generally soe great that it will bee a thinge of no small difficulty sufficiently to provide for them'.

affected at any given moment, and that the mortality rate, particularly in congested urban areas, was in the worst of these epidemics so staggeringly high as to cripple the normal functioning of an entire community and most severely to restrict its economic activity. From 1480 onwards there appear to have been seven outbreaks of bubonic plague or other epidemic diseases of major proportions in England, while in more than half the years included in this study at least localized epidemics have been noted.¹ The most feared of all circumstances was when, in a period of dearth or widespread unemployment, a visitation of the plague simply wiped out the always slender resources of the poorer classes, among whom in any case these epidemic diseases moved with a particularly savage virulence. Under such conditions whole areas became disaster regions in which all the resources that could be mustered by the region and often by the central government had to be mobilized to prevent starvation on a wide scale.²

England learned much about the whole intricate matter of poor relief in the course of protecting the society from the secondary consequences of such epidemics. One will observe in later pages that in many parishes the first experience in administering poor relief was gained in such periods of local disaster, while in most rural parishes throughout our period the poor laws were never fully applied save under these conditions. In really severe and protracted epidemics collections for relief were ordered to be taken throughout the realm for the sustenance of the poor in the afflicted communities, while poor rates, sometimes doubled or trebled, were imposed in such communities, often by the direct command of the central government.³ These frightful visitations of epidemic taught the nation much regarding its own resources and disciplined it in the understanding that the poverty bred by plague must be instantly relieved lest even more terrible social consequences should ensue. Indeed, it is not too much to say that men had come to understand that poverty was itself a kind of plague, epidemic in the industrial society. But this plague of poverty, as we shall now observe, men discovered they could control and even possibly cure.

We have endeavoured to treat at least briefly the principal sources of poverty in the period with which we are concerned. They were numerous, they were interrelated, and they raised difficult and complex problems for the English society as it sought to grapple with them. Quite inevitably, we have doubtless sketched a more morbid picture of

¹ The statement is based on Creighton, Charles, *A history of epidemics in England* (2 vols., Cambridge, 1891), and Mullett, C. F., *The bubonic plague and England* (Lexington, Kentucky, 1956).

² Ewich, Johannes, *Of the duetie of a magistrate in the time of the plague* (L., 1583).

³ *S.P. Dom.*, 1625, V, 34, for one example.

the age than actually existed. The whole subject of poverty in the early modern period has been too often treated with what can only be described as sentimentality, whether we are moved by the warm eloquence of a Latimer or some historian of our own age. The fact is that widespread poverty had cursed the western society long before the opening of our period and that on balance the expanding economy which marks the whole of our era itself relieved ever larger segments of the society from the fear of abject poverty. Poverty was slowly yielding to a more general prosperity than England had ever known, while an ever-quickenning concern of responsible classes of men with the social and moral consequences of disabling poverty was to ensure its relief, if not its cure. Men in our age were moved by new and powerful aspirations for their world and among the strongest and most effective of them was the determination to root out and destroy this ancient evil.

IV

The Mechanisms

A. SOCIAL REFORM AS AN ASPECT OF PUBLIC ORDER

The whole of the sixteenth century is remarkable for the cautious but progressive experimentation by the state with measures designed to secure the control and relief of poverty. We shall first be concerned with tracing out the development of poor-law legislation brought into a great statutory *corpus* at the very end of the Elizabethan era, though we shall treat this subject relatively briefly since it has been most competently described by authorities in whose debt we stand. Of even greater significance to us, and we believe for the relief of poverty, was a roughly parallel development of the law of charitable trusts and the evolution, and, at the close of the century, the perfection, of the charitable trust as a great and most effective mechanism for those who wished to perpetuate their philanthropic aspirations.

It may safely be said that the steady concern of the Tudors with the problem of poverty flowed from the almost obsessive preoccupation of these great rulers with the question of public order. Henry VII, his son, and his granddaughter all shared an intuitive sensitivity in this matter and were quick to lash out when the slightest threat to public security appeared in any part of the realm. This concern was surely part of their jealous conception of the meaning of sovereignty and their abiding resolution to secure the realm and their throne from the chronic disorder of the preceding century. We may well believe that these monarchs were not moved by sentiments of piety or of pity as they resolutely addressed themselves to the problem of poverty, but they were at the same time deeply persuaded that unrelieved and uncontrolled poverty was the most fertile breeding ground for local disorders which might by a kind of social contagion flame across the whole realm. Hence it was that the immense power of the Crown was steadily addressed to the problem of poverty.

Nor was their view without real justification. We sometimes forget how essentially insecure the Tudor political society really was and how awkwardly ineffective was the central power in dealing with purely local disturbances. Social discontent and occasionally the harsh reality of agrarian poverty were in some measure involved in the Pilgrimage of

Grace, in the rural risings in the South, in Kent, and in Essex in 1549-50, and in Wyatt's rebellion in 1554. There were enclosure riots in Derbyshire and Oxfordshire during the Elizabethan period and similar and more serious disturbances in the Midland counties shortly after the accession of James I. As Professor Tawney has so well said, these disturbances were essentially conservative in their nature, for they protested the whole course of agricultural change, which was producing an ever-increasing national wealth but also extensive poverty among marginal classes of men. The steady sympathy of the Tudors ran with these protesters and the whole weight of legislation sought to remedy their case. But the Tudors moved quickly and savagely when social protest gave way to riotous courses.¹

B. THE PROBLEM OF VAGRANCY

The most immediate and pressing concern of government during our whole period, but particularly for something more than a century (*ca.* 1520-1640), was with the problem of vagrancy. There is no doubt whatever that vagabondage was widespread, that it was organized, and that it imposed on rural and village communities burdens and dangers with which they could not cope. The evidence is abundantly clear that this class was feared by all elements in the society and that the incredibly harsh penalties laid against it were to a large degree justified. Well before the beginning of the sixteenth century it is evident that these rootless beggars were a social nuisance, that very shortly afterwards they had become 'a chronic plague'.² These men comprised a fairly numerous class, the usually careful Harrison estimating their number as 10,000,³ which seems to have appeared in every western European country at about the same time. They moved across the countryside in droves, swarming in to funerals for doles, infesting cities, and living in many cases by alms supplemented by a beggary tinged with criminality.⁴ This class seems principally to have recruited itself from the agricultural displacements of the early sixteenth century, but drew as well from the general and persistent migratory movement, earlier described, from overpopulated rural areas to the rising urban centres. The vagabonds were, then, flotsam from the migratory movements of the period, who had settled into a rootless and wandering life from which they came in time to have no desire to be redeemed. They represented a social phenomenon with which the age was quite unprepared to deal and which it

¹ Tawney, *Agrarian problem*, 343-346.

² Leonard, E. M., *The early history of English poor relief* (Cambridge, 1900), 10.

³ Harrison, William, *An historicall description of the islande of Britayne* (L., 1577), in *New Shakespeare Soc. Pub.*, 6th ser., I, 218.

⁴ Gray, *English philanthropy*, 4-5.

could never quite stamp out. There is abundant evidence, too, that this class was to a remarkable degree self-perpetuating and that finally a breed of men, their women and their children, had insulated themselves from a society of which they were no more than a festering part.¹

As we shall shortly note, the state in a continuous stream of statutes and proclamations sought to stamp out this social evil by penalties which were always harsh and on occasion brutal. These measures, however, enjoyed the universal approbation of all Englishmen of the age because the vagrants were hated with a detestation born of fear. Two contemporary comments, rather widely spaced in time, will perhaps suffice to give some sense of solid and conservative opinion on the matter. Thomas Harman, in a treatise published in 1564 and addressed to the Countess of Shrewsbury, announced that his purpose was 'to acquaynte your goodness with the abhominable, wicked, and detestable debauch of . . . these ragged rabblement of rakehelles that under the pretence of great misery . . . do wyn great almes . . . to the utter deludinge of the good gevers'. Their worst sin is that by their skilful arts the true and worthy poor are defrauded of their proper alms. They plague the state, disorder the whole society, and live as beasts from their own choice.² More than a generation later, an equally angry writer held that vagrancy could be stamped out only by punishment and strictly enforced labour. He tells us that unnamed 'counsellors of state' reckoned that there were as many as 80,000 idle vagrants who lived as an immense charge on the whole community. Those who obdurately refused to work should be shipped to sea or simply 'sold to the English plantations, to see whether God will turne their hearts and amend their lives'. This is a class which must be wiped out. It is, he reminded his readers, 'the generall rule of all England . . . to whip and . . . brand the wandring beggars . . . and so mark them with such a note of infamie', while no private person dared give them labour, even forced labour. The problem and its cure, he submitted, was so grave that it could only be met by the whole state using all its resources.³

The preoccupation of the sixteenth century with the acute but limited problem of vagrancy resulted in an inevitable but none the less

¹ Webb, *Old poor law*, 42-43.

² Harman, Thomas, *A caveat . . . for . . . vagabones* [sic] (L., 1564), no pagin.

³ *Stanley's remedy* (L., 1646), 1-5. Aydelotte believes that vagabondage began to yield to controls after 1572-1575, when the fear of houses of correction did what the danger of severe corporal punishment failed to do (Aydelotte, Frank, *Elizabethan rogues and vagabonds*, Oxford, 1913, 69-70). In the cities, and especially in London, they were skilfully separated from the poor by the close of the century and were either set at work or pressed into the army. It is significant that the rogues and vagabonds, universally feared and hated during the sixteenth century, began after about 1600 to become romantic figures in literature.

most unfortunate confusion as men of the age tried to come to grips with the infinitely larger and more important problem of poverty. Much of Tudor legislation was aimed at vagrancy and the disorders accompanying it, tending to assume that poverty and vagrancy were synonymous. The notion persisted that hungry men were simply invincibly idle men, that poverty was a consequence of a moral fault. It was only slowly that this view yielded to the patent realities of the sixteenth century economy; that men even in Parliament came to understand and then to admit that much poverty, very real and killing poverty, flowed from the economic and social dislocations of the era. Perhaps the most difficult of all the social and legislative admissions which the Tudors had to make was that there was genuine unemployment in the realm and that whole classes of men were from time to time and from place to place literally thrust down well below the line of subsistence by forces with which they were powerless to contend. We shall observe that Parliament and opinion generally came slowly and reluctantly, but at last cleanly, to sort out the kinds of poverty that afflicted the realm and to take measures at least crudely appropriate to the circumstances. Perhaps the most significant of all the social gains of the century was made when it came generally to be understood that not all men who were forced to beg were actually or potentially vagrants of criminal disposition.

1. *The parish as the unit of responsibility*

Principally as a consequence of the fear of vagrancy, too, the whole weight of Tudor legislation and policy was directed towards the sealing off of poverty within the parish in which the poor man was resident. We have seen that both the state and beleaguered communities feared these wandering bands of idle rogues because there was neither administrative nor police machinery competent to deal with them. Vagrancy could neither be cured nor controlled until it could be brought to rest and then dispersed. Hence steady and really heroic efforts were made to declare the parish of birth or residence to be responsible and to force all poor men to remain in their home parish or to return there. This line of policy was both inevitable and correct, though it failed to take into account the fact that the most serious forms of unemployment, of true poverty, were regional. None the less, all the prescriptions of law ran against the man who left his native parish in search of work in another. He must bear a licence from his former employer, he must have funds, and he must be in a position to prove that he was on his way to arranged employment, or the conclusion of law as well as of local opinion was that he was a vagrant.¹ The preoccupation with the evils and dangers of

¹ Steinbicker, *Poor-relief*, 164-168; Tawney, R. H., *Agrarian problem*, 272; *Religion and the rise of capitalism* (N.Y., 1926) 217-218; Aschrott, P. F., *The English poor law system* (H. Preston-Thomas, trans.) (L., 1888), 2-3.

vagrancy on occasion almost made the poor laws unworkable, since a single critical and dramatic aspect of a policy question of vast and complex dimensions too consistently coloured men's thinking and decisions. In fact, as we have pointed out, the sixteenth century society was characterized by a really extraordinary mobility, derived its economic strength from this fact, and gained the self-cure of most regional poverty as a consequence. The law stood as an impediment to policy, but the social and economic realities were happily to prevail.

Yet there were sound and old precedents which undergirded Tudor policy in vesting in the parish such a large measure of responsibility for the care and administration of poor relief. In the earlier Middle Ages the tradition prevailed that a portion of all parochial tithes belonged to the poor, though there is little persuasive evidence that the realities ran with the tradition. But in any event the impropriation of tithes to the monastic foundations, with ultimately such disastrous consequences to the parochial clergy, was in full sway by the beginning of the twelfth century and had, broadly speaking, robbed the church of its possibility of meeting the traditional responsibility for the care of the poor long before the advent of the Reformation.¹ These wholesale impropriations, weakening as they did the fabric of parochial life, were steadily opposed by the bishops for a variety of cogent reasons and were as consistently, and as ineffectually, condemned by Parliament, principally on the ground that they robbed the poor of their due rights. Thus in 1391 the House of Commons complained to the King that impropriations were 'cruelly destroying and subtracting from the poor and needy', to which the King responded by ordering that a proper sum should annually be paid by impropiators for the relief of the poor and the support of vicars.² These complaints in Parliament were chronic throughout the fifteenth century, particularly since the practice of farming out tithes and rights of presentation on a frankly commercial basis had become widespread and since the endemic poverty with which the sixteenth century had to deal had already made its grim appearance. The bishops were by this time engaged in a defensive action to force from the impropiators some proportion of tithes adequate to pay the priests and maintain the fabric, while Parliament was seeking to find a way to secure a fraction of such tithes for the discharge of an obligation of alms within the parish. One authority, lending careful attention to twelve impropriated parishes in the fifteenth century, suggests that no more than 2 per cent of the whole of tithes were in fact made available

¹ *Vide* Coulton's discussion of this question in *Five centuries of religion*, III, 149-171. *Vide* also Ashley, *English economic history*, II, 308-311; Dowell, Stephen, *History of taxes in England* (4 vols., L., 1876-1884), I, 311-312; and Clarke, H. W., *A history of tithes* (L., 1894), 123-124.

² *Rot. Parl.* III, 293b; *15 Ric. II*, c. 6; *4 Henry IV*, c. 12 (1402).

for alms in the parishes in question.¹ This may very well be near the mark for the possibly 40 per cent of all parishes whose tithes had by this date been swallowed up in monastic and other impropriations. But, none the less, an abiding tradition, or perhaps more accurately, an ideal, remained of parochial responsibility for the care of the poor.

But poor as most English parishes were, hard pressed as they were to maintain the essential services and offices of the church, they turned well before the advent of our period to an assumption of some measure of responsibility for the care of their poor. Relatively few churchwardens' accounts or other useful parochial documents survive from the fifteenth century, but, as we shall point out in our study of the several counties with which we are concerned, the earliest of surviving records make it clear that in most cases at least humble beginnings had been made towards building up modest endowments, of a most bewildering variety, as well as establishing the tradition of outright gifts or bequests for distribution to the poor. Church ales and other 'benefits' were also widely held in late mediaeval times, the profits being employed as income gifts for the succour of the parish poor. It should be emphasized here, as it will be documented later, that these parochial dispositions were very modest indeed, but at the same time they were widespread and had served well before the reign of Henry VIII to establish firmly and generally the tradition of parochial responsibility.

This preparatory stage of parochial development did not alter the essentially ecclesiastical nature of the parish, for this quite informal and rather crude system of alms remained within the structure of ecclesiastical organization and direction. The parish in 1480 had few links indeed with secular government, none at all with the central government, and hence remained free to develop intensely local and customary ways of doing things, subject always to the discipline of a normally remote ecclesiastical authority. An instrument of administration was at hand which the Tudors, geniuses as they were in the arts of administration, arrogated for secular uses and most particularly for the care of the poor. A long series of statutes, beginning in the reign of Henry VIII, assigned increasingly complex and important duties to the parish as a secular unit of administration, while the Elizabethan poor laws were to fix the status of the parish as a unit of secular government. This cumulative body of law established in the parish an organized mechanism for administering the affairs of the poor and entrusted it, ultimately, with the power and responsibility of levying local rates. At the same time, Tudor law most wisely left the parish free to manage these important affairs in its own way, subject only to the supervision of the local justices, with the result that local tradition and custom were respected

¹ Hartridge, R. A. R., *A history of vicarages in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1930), 156 ff.

and maintained. 'The character of some of the measures needed to alleviate the prevailing distress suggested an ecclesiastical organization as an appropriate channel of relief, while the magnitude of the problem necessitated a national scheme controlled by the state.'¹ An entirely new group of trusted and responsible local officials was raised up by Tudor law and policy, thereby extending the fingers of administration from Westminster out to the remotest parishes of the realm. Whether it was intended or not, the inevitable and quick result was the secularization of the parish, and, for that matter, of the realm, for the central government had assumed vast social responsibilities which, in so far as they had been discharged at all in earlier generations, were universally regarded as an aspect of mankind's religious obligations.

C. THE POOR: THE GRADUAL ASSUMPTION OF NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

1. *Early Tudor legislation*

The great *corpus* of Tudor legislation dealing with the complex problems connected with poor relief was formed slowly, cautiously, and experimentally. There had been, it is true, mediaeval precedents stretching back to 1349 when as a consequence of the disorders attending the Black Death, a prohibition was laid against dispensing alms to able-bodied beggars who should rather be compelled to labour for their sustenance.² Later in the century, further efforts were made to restrain the migratory tendencies of labour, set in motion by the economic forces attending the deterioration of the manorial system, when in the reign of Richard II statutes of great severity were laid against vagabonds and all migratory beggars and labourers, while stating the obligation to provide relief for those unable to work. All men wishing to leave their place of abode were required to carry certificates, which should be freely granted to those who could prove certain employment in another community.³ The extreme rigour of these laws against vagabondage, long unenforced and in fact unenforceable, was revived in 1495 when all local authorities from the sheriff down to the petty constables were ordered to search out vagabonds and other idle persons and, after placing them in stocks with only bread and water for three days and two nights, to send them on, each man to repair within six weeks to his own hundred, 'where he last dwelled, or . . . where he is best known or born', and there to remain without begging outside the hundred of his legal residence.⁴

¹ Holdsworth, *English law*, IV, 160. This paragraph owes much to Holdsworth's discussion, IV, 151-163.

² 36 *Edw. III*, c. 8.

³ 7 *Ric. II*, c. 5; 12 *Ric. II*, c. 3, c. 7.

⁴ 11 *Henry VII*, c. 2.

The whole problem of poverty was first taken up with some freshness and originality in 1531, without doubt, because of Henry VIII's concern for the state of public order in his realm. England's alliance with France in 1528 had precipitated an economic crisis, since the cloth trade with Flanders was paralysed, resulting in serious unemployment in several populous areas, the situation being further worsened by a general dearth occasioned by bad harvests. The government intervened directly to compel the clothiers in several counties to maintain employment,¹ while strong measures were taken to regulate the price of the food grains. The statute of 1531 stemmed from this dislocation and is important in being the first to separate the worthy poor from the mendicants and to lay down quite different prescriptions for the handling of the two groups. Vagrants and unruly persons were to be whipped and then returned to their homes, while the impotent poor were to be licensed to beg in their own community. Heavy penalties were laid against begging by unlicensed persons, and private citizens were forbidden under pain of fine to extend alms to the unlicensed.²

It was soon evident that there were grave deficiencies in the statute of 1531, particularly since no provision whatever was made for the sustenance of the impotent poor save by reducing them to beggary. But that there was considerable discussion of the whole and now pressing problem of poverty is suggested by the draft of a statute apparently prepared in 1531, very possibly by one of the retinue of humanist reformers surrounding Thomas Cromwell. A recent commentator has pointed out that the preamble of the document carefully distinguished between the 'strong valiaunt beggars' who waste the commonwealth and 'olde sicke lame feble and impotent persones not able to labour for ther livyng . . . dryuen of necessite to procure thalmes and charitie of the people'.³ Certain of these poor are undoubtedly vicious, but others are poverty-stricken through no personal fault, and still others have had no opportunity ever to become self-supporting. The unknown author then proposed to solve the problem of unemployment by an elaborate programme of public works on roads, harbours, forts, and rivers. Due notice was to be provided throughout the kingdom of work made available, while all able-bodied unemployed were to report for labour at reasonable wages, under pain of arrest and forced work with possible penalty of felony for refusal. This great undertaking was to be financed by royal bounty, rather vaguely defined taxes on income, and contributions gathered in the parish churches. There remained the poor who were too old or too infirm to work. The realities here should be accepted,

¹ Leonard, *English poor relief*, 46-48.

² 22 *Henry VIII*, c. 12.

³ *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2d. ser., VI (1953), 57. Elton follows *BM Royal MSS.* 18, C. vi.

two responsible men being appointed in each parish to separate the helpless from the idle but able-bodied poor. The truly impotent poor were to be sustained by public alms in their parishes, while their children should be apprenticed. Even these poor were to be forbidden to beg in the parish, save that they might be required to solicit gifts of food and alms for distribution by the appointed parochial authorities. Sermons were to be appointed to be read, exhorting each parish to take up the local burden of alms, while the collections made were to be assigned to the properly constituted parish officers for distribution.

The important statute of 1536 evidently owed something to this draft, though it failed to establish the contemplated administrative machinery and completely ignored the certainly grandiose recommendations for a national system of public works.¹ The act of 1536 described all earlier statutes as defective because they had made no provision for the unemployable poor, though it, too, in fact failed most significantly in this very respect. But it did open a long period of legislative and administrative experimentation by ordering the parish or municipal authorities to assume full responsibility for the impotent poor so that they would not be compelled to range abroad as beggars. The law sought to freeze the poor in the local area where they belonged, since all persons save beggars with certificates, mendicant friars, and servants seeking employment with letters explaining the circumstances were subject to its provisions. The children of the poor were to be taught a trade and set on work; alms were to be raised by voluntary means in each parish for the support of the helpless poor; while casual alms, so typical of mediaeval piety, were now declared to be harmful and were carefully restricted. In this statute, the broad outlines of later and more effective legislation begin to emerge, though no adequate provision was made either for financing poor relief or for its administration. The act fails, too, to do more than formally to distinguish between the derelict and the incorrigibly idle and vagrant. Underlying the statute one still sees the stubbornly held persuasion that there were no genuine unemployed and that vagrancy and beggary could be driven from the realm by the application of the criminal law.²

That the principal concern of the Crown and of informed political opinion was still with the troubled problem of vagrancy is clearly sug-

¹ Elton believes that the draft may have been prepared by William Marshall, who was close to Cromwell and who had recently translated and published the famous poor-relief ordinances of Ypres (1525-1529) under the title, *The manner of subvention of poore people* (L., 1535).

² 27 Henry VIII, c. 25. For other comments on the statutes, *vide* Ashley, *Economic organisation*, 109; Leonard, *English poor relief*, 53; Holdsworth, *English law*, IV, 392; Nicholls, George, *A history of the English poor law* (3 vols., L., 1898), I, 124; Lipson, E., *The economic history of England* (3 vols., L., 1929-1931), III, 417.

gested by a statute passed in Edward VI's first regnal year. This act introduced really ferocious penalties against the vagrant poor, prescribing servitude for two years upon first conviction and penalties leading to lifelong slavery or a felon's death for those who proved to be intractable. The children of beggars were to be forcibly apprenticed, while if they ran away servitude might be imposed. At the same time, the pious wish was expressed that individual communities would erect houses for the reception of the impotent poor, and the clergy were once more admonished to exhort their flocks to give alms for their care.¹ Very shortly afterwards, Parliament confessed that the rigour of the first Edwardian law outran public sentiment, for, though 'wholesome' in its intent, it had not been enforced because of its 'extremity'. Accordingly, the statute was repealed, and that of *22 Henry VIII, c. 12* was reinstated in its stead.² This re-establishment was confirmed late in Edward's reign when the larger question of the plight of the impotent poor was taken under fresh review. This act enjoined the parochial clergy and officers to compile a census of the derelict poor and each year to ensure the election of two able men who should assume responsibility for the collection and distribution of alms. The poor might no longer beg openly, but were to be regarded as the responsibility of the whole parish. A hint of compulsion, of sanctions, followed in the prescription that any person, being able to do so, who refused to make due voluntary contribution for poor relief should, after local exhortation, be reported to the bishop who should then 'indue and persuade by charitable ways and means'.³

2. *Early Elizabethan legislation*

Parliament was moving cautiously in this new and uncharted field of legislation, being most reluctant to accept the consequences of the fact that there were deserving poor who were neither impotent nor vagrant rogues. This extreme caution doubtless arose from the immensely troubled question of how an extensive system of poor relief could be financed. In the last Edwardian statute it is evident that Parliament was edging close indeed to the frontiers of compulsion, being determined to screw the meaning of voluntary alms down just as far as the definition would hold. This statute was passed in a decade characterized by great political and economic dislocations and one, too, in which there was a remarkable body of literature urging social reform on a broad and bold scale. That the public conscience was all but prepared to undertake the burden of responsibility for the sustenance of the poor is, as we shall later see, impressively documented by the marked increase during this decade in the scale and quality of private giving dedicated to this pur-

¹ *1 Edw. VI, c. 3* (1547).

² *3 and 4 Edw. VI, c. 16* (1549-1550).

³ *5 and 6 Edw. VI, c. 2* (1551-1552).

pose. Certain classes of men were, then, in fact already assuming social responsibility in a large area into which the state could move only by reluctant but still steady process of change. So, too, the principal commercial cities of the realm, dominated as they were by the mercantile élite who were also setting the pattern of private charitable aspirations, had by 1560 moved out far in advance of the national system. While reserving a full discussion of this remarkable phenomenon to later volumes, it may be said here that London had as early as 1533 arranged a system for the collection and distribution of voluntary alms and had in 1547 boldly embraced the principle of a compulsory poor-rate. Its great charitable institutions and its hospitals likewise date principally from this period, establishing as they did a structure of charitable institutions which was to be imitated all over the realm. Norwich was only a little behind London, for there a compulsory rate was sanctioned in 1549, while in 1570 a most elaborate and successful municipal assault was made on the whole complex problem of urban poverty. So, too, Bristol and York were in the vanguard of experimentation, with numerous other provincial cities in their train.

Still another reluctant step in the direction of an imposed rate was taken early in Elizabeth's reign, when Parliament ordained compulsion after the gentle and charitable pleas of the churchwardens, the clergymen, and the bishop had failed to persuade a stubborn parishioner to contribute voluntarily towards poor relief in his community. The bishop might in that event bind the recalcitrant over to the justices in the amount of £10, while the justices, after earnest efforts to persuade, might then levy a 'sesse' on him which must be paid in weekly instalments under penalty of imprisonment.¹

The whole body of experience gained over more than a generation in dealing with the problems of the poor, or perhaps more accurately with categories of the poor, was brought under full discussion and to a quite new resolution in a very important codification of law made in 1572. The subject was first debated in Parliament in 1571, when a member attacked the whole law of vagabondage as being so 'over-sharp' as to be unenforceable. This member, Sandys, held that if the justices of the peace would carry out their legal and moral duties, as had been done in Worcestershire, most of the difficulties with which the realm had borne so long in handling vagrants would disappear. He was supported by another member, Knollys, who argued, as subsequent history was to prove with good reason, that the cure of vagrancy was to be gained by instituting houses of correction in every town, which he believed could be maintained by fines laid against the keepers of public houses.² That

¹ 5 Eliz., c. 3.

² D'Ewes, Symonds, *The journals of all the parliaments, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth* (L., 1682), 165.

this debate had its effect is evident in the act passed in the next year, when for the first time a clear and workable line of definition was drawn between vagabonds (the professional poor) and the impotent poor.¹

This great act, *14 Eliz., c. 5*, defined as vagrants all able-bodied men without land or master who could not explain the source of their livelihood, all such men who declined to accept employment, and by prescription certain classes of men, such as peddlers, tinkers, and minstrels, who all too often had proved to be vagrants. The law was drawn to run heavily against the 'professional poor', for vagabondage and begging were outlawed under pain of whipping and boring through the ear for a first offence, unless the culprit would enter service for a period of one year, and then as a felony in the event of a third conviction. This class having been separated, the justices were to require in each parish the compilation of a register of the true poor, they being defined as the impotent and the aged, and to arrange for their relief, though always only in the home parish to which they were to repair and where they were to remain. The justices for the counties and mayors for the towns were further empowered to levy rates on all persons in weekly assessments to meet the needs of the lawful poor, with power to remand to gaol those who after due persuasion declined to pay the prescribed tax. All begging was prohibited by law even by the true poor, save in those instances when the parish found itself unable to maintain its own charges, while any tax surpluses remaining were to be paid over to the county which should provide places of correction and forced labour for all rogues and vagabonds. Finally, the act formally established the office of overseers of the poor in each parish, they being appointed annually by the justices of the peace from the substantial householders of the parish. These important local officials were unpaid, might not refuse to serve, and in general were to aid the constables and churchwardens in the discharge of their now greatly enlarged duties. Quite clearly the office regularized formally the important role heretofore played by the collectors of parochial alms required by earlier statutes. These powers and responsibilities were to be steadily increased, and for more than two centuries the overseers were to bear almost sole local responsibility for the care of the poor.²

Clear, courageous, and well drawn as was this statute, it still failed to meet the central problem of poverty as it had come to exist in the

¹ Peyton, S. A., 'The houses of correction at Maidstone and Westminster', *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, XLII (1927), 251-261.

² *14 Eliz., c. 5*. For significant discussion of this statute, *vide* Leonard, *English poor relief*, 69-72; Webb, Sidney and Beatrice, *English local government* (8 vols., L., 1906-1922), I, 31; Tate, W. E., *The parish chest* (Cambridge, 1946), 30; Cox, J. C., *Three centuries of Derbyshire annals* (2 vols., L., 1890), II, 140; Nicholls, *Poor law*, I, 163; Lipson, *Economic history*, III, 429.

modern world: the undoubted fact that there were genuinely unemployed men seeking work which was not to be found. Such unemployed persons were the special concern of private philanthropy, but it still remained true that a kind of poverty, scarcely admitted by a cautious government, existed which in the want of adequate and rehabilitating policy tended to plunge such men below the line of respectability and to make them either derelict or vagrants. Very cautious progress in facing this reality was made by Parliament in 1575-6, in an act really supplementing the great statute of 1572. This law had several important facets. Charitably disposed men were encouraged to leave property in trust for the founding of houses of correction without having to incur the trouble or expense of securing a licence in mortmain. Bastard children, a troublesome social problem in all parishes, were given some degree of protection by a provision declaring the mother and the reputed father to be wholly responsible for their support. More importantly, it was ordered that stocks of raw materials, wool, flax, iron, and the like, were to be maintained in every city, borough, and market town, on which vagrants could be compelled to work, young people trained in useful and gainful skills, 'and . . . other poore and needye persons being willinge to worcke maye bee set on worcke'. These stocks for the poor were somewhat optimistically supposed to be self-supporting and were to afford employment for those industrious poor who found themselves without occupations. In addition, houses of correction were once more ordered erected in each county for the reception and reform of the truly idle, the incorrigible vagabonds, who were simply to be compelled to submit to forced labour under possible pain of felony.

It may be said, then, that after 1572 England possessed a reasonably comprehensive and possibly a workable statutory provision for a national system of poor relief, but there is no evidence that the plan was given extensive or significant trial. The vast administrative powers of the Privy Council were simply not employed to breathe life into the statute. In the interval 1530-1597 there were eighteen proclamations dealing with various aspects of the problem of the poor, of which all save five were issued in the Elizabethan age. It is instructive to note that thirteen of them were concerned with the vexed problem of vagrancy, while two more ordered administrative action in the closely related subject of wandering beggars. Two conferred governmental blessing on specific charitable undertakings, such as granting permission to collect contributions for hospitals in Wales (1560). Only one, and that rather late in the reign (1593), was significantly concerned with the larger and more pressing problem of poverty, and even it was principally directed towards expelling vagrants and maimed soldiers from London.¹ It is likewise significant that Lambard in his valuable and much used hand-

¹ *An order for avoydyng of all kinds of beggars* (April 17, 1593).

books for justices of the peace and local officials was content with merely sketching the statutory provisions in effect after 1572, without affording any suggestion that there was life in the law or that it was being generally applied.¹

All too frequently in the Elizabethan period we tend to confuse the careful prescriptions of law with the realities as they may be observed out in the provinces. Thus any student reading and reflecting on the laws as they stood on the statute books for the control of evangelical Roman Catholicism could only conclude that an active and a general persecution of the faith was steadily under way, whereas in fact the laws were seldom rigorously enforced during the reign. Elizabeth and her advisers wished the armoury of law to be well stocked, but they drew on that armoury most prudently. This in part explains the fact that the poor laws of England appear remote and non-existent when we examine the local evidence for their enforcement. The laws were held in reserve against social and economic emergencies of a most compelling order which did not in fact arise until the very close of the reign. It is also most important to observe that the flow of private charitable funds, much being directly addressed to poor relief, was increasing with great rapidity during this reign, with every encouragement from the state, and, as we shall later note, that these ever-swelling funds were almost sufficient to meet the more pressing needs in all save industrialized parishes in particularly difficult periods of economic depression. Most of the Elizabethan era was hopeful, prosperous, and confident, and there is abundant reason for believing that men still hoped that they might be able to grapple with the forces of poverty with their own essentially local strength, a view which the canny and cautious Elizabethan government blessed and fostered. This meant in turn that there was until the closing years of this great reign no insistent, no frightened, demand from the realm at large that the state intervene to implement and strengthen its own statutes; and this was a government ever sensitive to regional and group opinion and advice. The Queen was prepared, was armed, to move, but had no intention of moving into a vast and wholly uncharted area of social responsibility until the stern logic of events should compel her.

At the same time, this period of almost a generation was one in which there was active and most intelligent experimentation in all phases of poor relief in the principal urban centres of the realm. In the main these measures, which will be discussed in some detail in later volumes, were financed by private benefactions from the mercantile aristocracy which had moved with a singular dedication to the attack on the whole complex problem of poverty and the want of opportunity which bred it. In

¹ Lambard, William, *Eirenarcha: or the office of the justices of peace* (L., 1581), and *The duties of constables* (L., 1584).

the last quarter of the century at least twenty-two boroughs were experimenting with stocks for the unemployed poor, many more were actively administering apprenticeship schemes for the children of destitute parents, and bridewells had been established in at least fourteen communities as well as in three or four counties. Many more towns, especially those depending principally on a single dying industry, made systematic attempts to attract new industries with offers of tax abatement and capital assistance. There were many of these local ventures in the Elizabethan period, which when taken together constitute a most impressive annal of the effort of the burgher aristocracy to bring the wasting forces of poverty under control.¹

3. *The great Elizabethan code*

a. *The problem of poverty reaches a crisis*

But the problem of poverty was in truth national and the resilient government, informed as it was by long legislative experimentation and the vast body of experience accumulated by private charity, stood ready to embrace resolute policy when regional and private devices should be unable to deal with emergency on a national scale. This emergency developed late in the Queen's reign. In 1596 Edward Hext, a respected justice of the peace in Somerset and a Member of Parliament, warned Lord Burghley that even rural communities could no longer cope with their social and economic responsibilities. In the recent quarter sessions in his county, 183 idle and unemployed poor had been set at liberty

¹ Though the discussion of these municipal undertakings is more properly reserved for later volumes, we might here mention at least one very interesting document which reveals the advanced social thinking and the deep concern of London 'for the reliefe of the poore so as they shall not nede to randge abroad in begginge'. These 'orders' provided that in each ward a 'grave and godlie man' be chosen as treasurer to receive legacies and gifts for the poor quite beyond the amounts raised by rates in the various parishes. Distributions were to be made by eight collectors in each ward. A careful census of the poor was to be made and kept, setting out the number who were for whatever reasons impotent, as well as to note those who 'can by labour get something to their relief', in order accurately to assess the need. All preachers were to exhort their flocks to contribute towards the maintenance of a stock for the poor, 'to the end that no poor should stray abroad begging'. Further, in every ward from £50 to £60 was to be made available 'by suche as may be conferred [?] withall havinge habillytie to set the poore on worke', these funds also to be raised by private subscription. The good work which London had undertaken, it was urged on the Council, would be of no effect unless means were found to rid the outlying urban and suburban areas of the wandering poor who so persistently filtered into London, recognizing perhaps unconsciously that the problem with which London grappled so intelligently and vigorously was in fact national in scope and required remedies nationally imposed. (*S.P. Dom.*, 1577 [?] CXX, 50.)

when it appeared that no one could be found who would take them into service. The social deterioration of these men had proceeded so far, 'by reason their sinews are so benumbed and stiff through idleness that as their limbs being put to any hard labour, will grieve them above measure: so as they will rather hazard their lives than work'. These men, Hext strongly argued, were derelict, for as a magistrate he had observed that they would rather risk their lives on a false plea of felony than be sent to a house of correction, even when one was available. In Somerset alone, £73 had been spent in sustaining these people in gaol at 6d a man. Nor will juries any longer convict really dangerous vagrants for felony, for 'most commonly the most simple country man and woman . . . are of opinion that they would not procure any man's death for all the goods in the world'.¹ Hext wrote from a region in which real suffering was widespread and from near a locality in Oxfordshire where the magistrates were dealing with what can only be described as insurrection induced by poverty. He wrote as a responsible man whose fright and perplexity still animate his letters. This was one of the many advices that the Queen and her Council were receiving in this troubled year, and the Tudors acted instantly when they sensed even the danger of disorder abroad in the realm.

In 1594 a severe economic depression began in England, on this occasion spreading through both urban and agricultural regions. There were heavy and unseasonable rains for some years beginning in 1594, with the result that harvests were poor for five consecutive years. The whole economy was in any event strained by the continuing war with Spain. The worst year was 1596, when it seems certain that the dearth of necessities was so great, prices so high, and unemployment so general that numerous regions were really threatened by famine.² Despite the sternest efforts of the government to control prices and to relieve communities where the scarcities were greatest, the price of bread grains rose wildly to such figures as 9s a bushel for wheat in Devon in mid-summer, 10s a bushel in London, 12s to 15s in Bristol, and in Shrewsbury to 18s.³ Suffering was widespread, responsible magistrates such as Hext were frightened, and there is evidence that there were instances of outright starvation in England in the black summer of 1596. The government moved with great vigour in its efforts to prevent hoarding, to move supplies, and to control prices, while the gentry were ordered to depart from London to their estates to assume their responsibilities for hospitality and the maintenance of public order. The clergy were instructed to preach against forestalling and to encourage almsgiving,

¹ Strype, John, *Annals of the Reformation* (4 vols., L., 1725-1731), IV, 255-304.

² Strype, *Annals*, IV, 294-295; Camden, William, *The history of the . . . Princess Elizabeth* (L., 1688), 506; Stow, John, *Annals* (L., 1631), 783.

³ Cheyney, E. P., *History of England* (2 vols., L., 1926), II, 6-8.

while observing two fast days each week and encouraging their congregations to follow their example.¹ Very rigid prohibitions were laid down against the export of any food-stuffs, while huge importations of grain were made from abroad, principally, it may be observed, by charitably disposed merchants, the enormous total of 888,660 bushels clearing the port of London alone in a period of seven months in 1596–1597.²

The turbulence so feared by the Tudors spread across the realm in the wake of hunger. Bread riots occurred in the capital in 1595, while grain shipments in Norfolk were attacked by rioters in three communities. We have seen that the magistrates of Somerset were deeply troubled in 1596, the severity of their course being suggested by the fact that forty persons were put to death in the county upon conviction for felonies. The Privy Council was most gravely concerned, particularly when evidence of a planned uprising in Oxfordshire was disclosed. The ringleaders, Bartholomew Steere, a carpenter, and about twenty others, mostly artisans and labourers, were speedily arrested and executed, but the government feared that spontaneous insurrections might break out in almost any part of the realm. The government was likewise compelled by its observation and experience during these unhappy months to recognize that there were many thousands of able-bodied and wholly responsible men, in both urban and rural areas, who were desperately anxious to work for whom no work could be provided.³ Harsh but persuasive reality had at last driven lines of separation and recognition among the several classes of poor—the genuinely unemployed, the impotent, and the vagrant. In two full generations Parliament had been moving grudgingly and slowly towards this admission which undergirds the great legislative measures of 1597–1601.

b. *The great debate*

When Parliament was convened in October, 1597, it passed quickly to a full debate of the whole problem of poverty and its relief. While, unfortunately, only sparse records of this great discussion have survived, it is clear indeed that the members had come up to Westminster gravely concerned by the recent, and current, disturbances and with an almost intuitive sense that they must come to grips with a pervading social problem which could in critical periods threaten the stability of the basic institutions of the nation. It is most significant that the dominant landed interest in the House of Commons moved with such enlightened and determined vigour to lay great responsibilities on themselves and on their land, though it was generally recognized that the poverty

¹ *Acts of the Privy Council* [1596–1597] n.s., XXVI (L., 1902) 95, 96, 380–383; Strype, John, *The life and acts of John Whitgift* (L., 1718), 490.

² Cheyney, *History of England*, II, 19.

³ Ashley, *Economic organisation*, 110.

flowing from unemployment was principally an industrial, an urban, phenomenon.¹ All aspects of the problem of poverty were fully and intelligently debated. Sir Francis Bacon was especially concerned with the blighting effect of enclosures, which he said bred idleness, the decay of tillage, grievous poverty, and a substantial impoverishment of the realm.² Another member spoke with great eloquence of 'the extream and miserable estate of the godly and honest sort of the poor subjects of this realm', the undoubted sufferings and restlessness of whom had served so to move the House to action.³ Sir Francis Hastings complained that far too much time and consideration were being given to the old and worn subjects of enclosures and tillage, to the neglect of the more pertinent and pressing problems of vagrancy and the plight of the true poor.⁴ In all, seventeen separate bills were introduced, of which eleven dealt quite specifically with the problem of poor relief,⁵ the confused legislative process being finally ordered and disciplined by the appointment of a powerful committee for consideration which included such parliamentary leaders as Sir Francis Bacon, Sir Nicholas Bacon, Sir Thomas Cecil, Sir Robert Wroth, a most persuaded proponent of bold legislation, and Edward Hext, whose earlier letter to the Privy Council on the deteriorating situation in Somerset has already been cited.

Meanwhile, in the Lords earnest debate ranged over these same grave matters, the preparation of legislation being referred to a committee of eminent peers which included Lord Burghley and Archbishop Whitgift. One bill, having been heavily amended in the House of Lords, was sent down to the Commons, a committee of the lower house, of which Sir Walter Raleigh was the spokesman, moving angrily to an obscure claim of privilege when the Lords somewhat peremptorily declined the usual form of conference for the reconciliation of differences in detail.⁶ This bill was accordingly rejected by the Commons by a vote of 106 to 66, just as the flow of the great measures codifying and extending the poor law began to reach the floor from the committee of the Commons which had been meeting in Middle Temple Hall.⁷

c. *The framing of the law*

The first of this notable and carefully articulated series of statutes sought to deal severely and finally with the 'professional poor', the rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars with whom the central government and Parliament had struggled so manfully for three generations. The act empowered the justices of the peace to erect houses of correction

¹ Garnier, *English landed interest*, 284.

³ *Ibid.*, 552.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 561.

⁷ Rowse, *England of Elizabeth*, 355.

² D'Ewes, *Journals*, 551.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 555.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 579-582.

for this segment of the poor in each county and city in the realm. Vagabondage was once more carefully and accurately defined, while such persons were to be arrested, whipped until bloody, and then returned by a direct route to the parish of their birth or legal residence. They were to be whipped again in every parish where they tarried. The law further provided that upon reaching their home parish they were to be placed in service, if able-bodied; committed to gaol or a convenient house of correction if need be; and if adjudged incapacitated they were to be lodged in an almshouse. All really incorrigible and dangerous vagabonds were to be banished 'out of this realm' or committed 'perpetually to the galleys of this realm', and were to suffer death as felons if they should return.¹

The old and troubled question of agrarian change and dislocation was treated in two connected statutes which dealt fully and somewhat sentimentally with a problem in fact no longer particularly urgent because tillage was tending to replace grazing in most parts of England. None the less, the *Act against the decaying of towns and houses of husbandry* recited the decay of husbandry that had occurred, whereby in many regions 'a great number of poor people are become wanderers, idle and loose, which is the cause of infinite inconvenience'. It was accordingly ordered that, castles and manor houses excepted, any house 'that now hath or heretofore hath had' twenty acres or more of land attached was to be 'adjudged a house of husbandry forever'. All such houses 'decayed or wasted' since the beginning of the reign, or half the number if forty acres of land were provided, were to be restored and so maintained. It was further and somewhat weakly stipulated that the assize justices were to be empowered 'to inquire of, hear and determine all said defaults and offences'.²

The related *Act for the maintenance of husbandry and tillage* in a magnificently eloquent preamble set forth the view that the strength and well-being of the realm are 'greatly upheld and advanced by the maintenance of the plough and tillage, being the occasion of the increase and multiplying of people . . . [and] a principal means that people are set on work and thereby withdrawn from idleness, drunkenness, unlawful gains, and all other lewd practices'. By tillage, too, the people were 'preserved from extreme poverty' and the wealth of the state healthfully 'dispersed and distributed in many hands . . . for the service of the realm'. The act recited the steady effort of law and policy since Henrician times to maintain 'a certain quantity and proportion of land' permanently in tillage, but confessed that depopulations attending 'turning tillage into pasture' had continued, to the great detriment of the whole

¹39 *Eliz.*, c. 4 (continued as 43 *Eliz.*, c. 9; amended by 1 *Jac. I*, c. 7; continued by 1 *Jac. I*, c. 25 and 21 *Jac. I*, c. 28).

² 39 *Eliz.*, c. 1 (continued by 43 *Eliz.*, c. 9; 1 *Jac. I*, c. 25).

society. Accordingly, it was ordered that all grazing lands which were arable for a period of twelve years continuously prior to 1558 should before May 1, 1599 be restored to tillage and so maintained, while existing tillage land, which had been so employed for twelve years past, might under no circumstance be converted to grazing.¹

The acts thus far discussed had sought to proscribe vagabondage and incorrigible idleness by cleanly separating out the vagrants and then in related statutes to protect and preserve an agrarian system which had rather more nostalgic meaning than economic reality. The processes of rural change, as we have seen, were slow, immutable, and on balance distinctly salutary, though they had for many years past caused social dislocations, migratory movements, and some real suffering among marginal labour groups. The intent of this last statute was to freeze the agrarian economy as it existed at the beginning of the century and to lend as effective protection as might be possible to the rural poor, to the landless men. Sharp questions were raised in Parliament regarding the efficacy of this legislation, but it was passed by men against whose own self-interest its prescription ran, surely with full knowledge that it was unenforceable.

The great central statute in this Elizabethan code of social legislation was entitled simply *An act for the relief of the poor*. This act contained little that was really novel or bold, but it gathered the legislative and administrative experience of almost a century in a most carefully drafted instrument which was meant to deal honestly and competently with a grave social problem heretofore never faced quite squarely. It is significant that the act bears no pious and eloquent Elizabethan preamble, but moves almost brusquely to the heart of the matter by establishing and defining the duties of the overseers of the poor. In every parish the churchwardens and 'four other substantial householders' should as overseers have power, with the consent of two or more justices, to set at work children whose parents could not provide for them, as well as all other persons 'having no means to maintain them'. Power was conferred to raise by the 'taxation of every inhabitant and every occupier of lands in the . . . parish' amounts sufficient to provide a convenient stock of commodities on which the poor should be set at work and also 'for the necessary relief of the lame, impotent, old, blind, and such other among them being poor and not able to work', as well as to bind out poor children as apprentices and do 'all other things' necessary to give such relief as might be required.

This provision was clear, unequivocal, and legally sufficient. It recognized the fact of unemployment and it made specific provision for the care and sustenance of the unemployable. The statute went on very carefully to outline the functions and responsibilities of the overseers,

¹ 39 Eliz., c. 2 (continued by 43 Eliz., c. 9; 1 Jac. I, c. 25).

on whom it laid such heavy and, as time was to show, permanent tasks. They were required to meet monthly and each year should submit to two justices of the peace a full account of their activities and finances, a fine of £1 being imposed for unexcused absences from each monthly meeting or for being negligent in duty. If the justices 'do perceive' that any parish was economically unable to raise the necessary sums by taxation, the required rates should then be spread over the hundred, and if that should not prove sufficient, the justices in quarter sessions were instructed to rate other parishes of the county in order to ensure the purposes of the statute. Power was given to distrain and sell the goods of any rated inhabitant of a parish, while 'in defect of such distress' any two justices of the peace might commit such a recalcitrant person to prison until his tax was paid. The overseers were likewise vested with power to bind any poor boy as an apprentice until he had reached the age of twenty-four and any girl until she was twenty-one years of age. Suitable dwelling places for the poor might be built with funds raised by taxation. The parish, having been vested with these extensive powers and responsibilities, was to rid itself completely and forever of beggary, since it was ordered that 'no person shall go wandring abroad and beg in any place whatsoever, by licence or without, upon pain to be taken and punished as a rogue', save only for poor inhabitants of a parish who might, upon the determination of the overseers, be permitted within that parish to 'ask relief of victuals'. It was further provided that rated sums were to be levied on all parishes by the justices for the relief of prisoners of the King's Bench and Marshalsea, and support should be given to such almshouses as might need aid in each county. If, after these numerous obligations had been discharged, any surplus remained in the funds of the county, the justices in quarter session should bestow the amount for such charitable needs as they might find desirable.¹

This great statute, passed to relieve an economic crisis already improving, though containing little that was either bold or original, clearly defined and cleanly delineated the nature of responsibility for the unemployed and the unemployable poor. It was amended in unimportant details in 1601 and then remained, with numerous reaffirmations and quite minor amendments, the central law of the land relating to poor relief for very nearly two and one-half centuries. It fixed the parish as the unit of ultimate responsibility not only because the facts regarding poverty were best known there, but probably more importantly, because the whole scheme of poor relief rested on the assumption that a stable society, a non-migratory society, offered fewer social perils to the state. An efficient and an important parochial mechanism for the administration of a wide area of social responsibility had likewise been established by law, linked, however, by carefully graduated degrees with the

¹ 39 *Eliz.*, c. 3.

county and ultimately to Westminster itself. The act also represents the complete vesting of charitable responsibility in secular hands—neither church nor churchman is mentioned in the law—thus finally marking the completion of a translation of responsibility which, as we shall later observe in detail, had been steadily in progress from the beginning of our period. One of the most significant of all the steps in the social history of the modern world had been taken with, we believe, a full understanding of the meaning of what had been done.¹

There remain two more statutes which completed the great design of Tudor social legislation gathered into a code by Parliament in 1597. Both these laws lend emphasis to the fact that the government and the dominant political classes in Parliament acknowledged the immense responsibility already being assumed by private charity in the care of the poor and sought means which would substantially encourage and enlarge the flow of such funds. As we shall later point out, the major responsibility continued to be borne by ever-expanding charitable endowments during the whole of our period, the great legislative undertakings having been regarded essentially as emergency measures to be employed when periods of economic crisis imposed greater burdens than private funds and voluntary institutions could assume. The greater of these statutes, 39 *Eliz.*, c. 10 and 43 *Eliz.*, c. 4, which had the effect of creating and defining the law of charitable trusts, we must reserve for consideration in a more appropriate connection.² The *Act for erecting of hospitals or abiding and working houses for the poor* was in its effect supplementary, since it had as its purpose the encouragement of private benefactors who might wish to found and endow almshouses, houses of correction, and similar institutions for the care of the derelict or the social rehabilitation of the unfortunate. Power was given to such donors to give or bequeath lands or other resources in fee simple by the uncomplicated action of enrolling a deed in Chancery without the necessity of securing a special royal licence or act of Parliament to achieve the incorporation. It was further provided that such foundations must be effectively endowed with property of the clear annual value of at least £10.³

¹ For comment on the act, *vide* Cheyney, *History of England*, II, 270, 413; Webb, *Old poor law*, 61-65; Burn, Richard, *The history of the poor laws* (L., 1764), 104-134; Coate, Mary, *Social life in Stuart England* (L., 1924), 114-115; Eden, *State of the poor*, 19-20; Wickwar, W. H. and K. M., *The social services* (L., 1936), 21-23; Slater, *Poverty and the state*, 53-56; Aschrott, *English poor law*, 6-8; Hník, F. M., *The philanthropic motive in Christianity* (M. and R. Weatherall, trans.) (Oxford, 1938), 225-226.

² *Vide post*, 109-117.

³ 39 *Eliz.*, c. 5. This statute was made permanent by 21 *Jac. I*, c. 1: 'That all hospitals, maisons de dieu, and abiding places for the poor, lame, maimed or impotent people or houses or correction at any time hereafter to be founded, shall be incorporated and have perpetual succession' (*House of Lords MSS.*, February 24, 1623-4).

d. *Pride of achievement*

The passage of the legislation of 1597 and its reaffirmation in the statutes of 1601 excited general interest and popular discussion which affords us some sense of how the great steps taken were viewed and understood by contemporaries. We may draw on two of these writings for some illustrations of public sentiment. Henry Arthington, writing in 1597, submitted that the care of the poor had throughout Scripture been the work of the good man. Yet for too long the poor of England have not been properly regarded. It is true, he maintained, that most poor men were themselves at fault, for they 'woulde not worke . . . in the time of abundance' and have been great wasters. Nor have private men met their obligations of charity fully, for 'some are willing to supply their wants, and do it in some places to God's glorie and their own comfort, but others (alas) are too hardhearted'. Neither law nor the process of charity has operated evenly in England, there being many regions where the scantest of responsibility is taken and other communities, like his own Wakefield, where, though 'the poor be . . . many and needy', none is left to penury and want.

Further, Arthington maintained, there are most evidently several kinds of poor men among whom careful discrimination must be made, if measures for relief are not to do more harm than good. There are first of all the impotent poor, those who simply cannot support themselves because of age, sickness, bodily injury, or extreme youth. 'All these . . . must be maintained in the whole.' Far more difficult to sort out and assist are the poor who are quite able to work, for they fall into numerous groups and tend to shift from one group to another. Those who are able and willing to support themselves but simply cannot find employment must be assisted, as, the writer seems to suggest, should those who 'bee overcharged with children' and who must support them by physical labour, and 'such as fall to decay in their workes'. But the beggars, the idle, the wasters deserve no help and must be firmly dealt with because they menace the whole society and consume resources needed for the help of the true poor. Writing very shortly before the passage of the great poor law, Arthington maintained that there were already in force sufficient and wholly worthy statutes for the relief of the great penury of the time, if they were rigorously enforced. He believed, in fact, that only a moral reformation which brought all men back into their parish churches, which softened the hearts of the rackers of rents, the enclosers, and the engrossers would provide the moral climate in which poverty might be relieved and very possibly cured.¹

Quite different from Arthington's somewhat cloudy sentimentality and pious confusion were the pragmatic jottings in an anonymous

¹ Arthington, *Provision for the poore*, no pagin.

pamphlet entitled *An ease for overseers of the poore*, designed, the author says, to assist these officers in their new and important tasks. There is much that is statutory and as much that is gratuitous in this interesting work. England, he held, has found it necessary to legislate charity because 'men in this iron age have no devotion to doe good, [for] it falleth out, that where one dies as a benefactor to a town-stocke, many thousands die and bequeath all to their own stocke'.¹ It is still to be hoped that private charity can again be persuaded to assume its proper burdens. In the good old days of Edward VI, the author maintained with blissful historical inaccuracy, men did give 'according to their degrees and devotions', but in this 'obdurate age of ours, neither godly perswasions of the pastors, or pitifull exclamations of the poore, can move any to mercie: unless there were a lawe made to compell them'.² Until godly and charitable times have been restored, then, the overseers and their parishes must carry out the prescribed work of relieving the poor.

The overseers must be men of some wealth and station who may command the wholesome respect of the poor. All rates should be assessed carefully according to wealth and should be instantly discontinued in time of plenty, for 'contributions are not given to make or multiplie poore but to mitigate poverty'.³ In so far as possible local employers, such as clothiers, should be assisted in accepting apprentices and temporary helpers, rather than undertaking to create work with elaborate and expensive stocks of materials. The statutes wisely limit stocks to simple commodities that can be worked by relatively unskilled men and women, and the overseers should use every inducement to have the finished goods sold locally, 'seeing it is for the benefit of their towne'.⁴

Then there are the impotent poor who must be provided with full care, including the very old, the very young, the blind, the dumb, the idiots, and the sick. The duty to these helpless people is clear and it is now statutory, but even so money is to be given them only as a last resort, for 'such as be chargeable to the towne which can live in some measure either of their labours or otherwise, are no better than theeves; for they take it from others, to whome it justly belongeth and those which give it, are guiltie as accessaries with them, if they knowe they may forbear it'.⁵ Every effort should be made to encourage gifts and bequests to ease the burdens of both the poor and the parish. At last vagrancy and idleness have really been proscribed by law, with the result that now those who give will know that they aid in relieving the really worthy poor. Rates should be assessed with great caution and in terms of the exact needs of the poor, for if too much is given 'you

¹ *An ease for overseers of the poore* (Cambridge, 1601), 16-17.

² *Ibid.*, 22.

³ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

shall increase the number', since 'to enquire after poore is the next way to procure poore'.¹ England, the author evidently believed, could now face the future with cautious optimism, since agencies for reformation as well as relief had been competently fashioned and universally accepted.

e. *Problems of administration*

The knowledgeable though unknown author of *An ease for overseers* confessed that the problem of levying rates fairly within each parish was difficult, and he might well have added, the statute itself was probably purposefully vague in laying down the method. For the act of 1597/1601 opened up an almost wholly uncharted area of local taxation. The statute provided that the parish would 'raise weekly or otherwise, by taxations of every inhabitant, parson, vicar and other, and every occupier of landed houses tithes impropriate or impropriations of tithes, colemynos or saleable underwoods' such sums as might be required to give effect to the law's requirement. It is clear that the churchwardens and overseers were to set the rates under the supervision of the justices of the peace; power to collect by distraint was provided; and an appeal against an improper assessment might be taken to the justices of the peace in their quarter sessions. This was as far as the statutory instructions went, possibly because Parliament fully understood the great variety of local traditions and experience in raising modest sums for parochial uses.

Parliament also clearly intended that these assistance moneys should be raised by rates, that is, by the determination of an aggregate sum by competent authorities in each parish to be raised by dividing the total by some reasonable assessment among those subject to taxation. Something like this plan had been followed as early as 1531 when the Statute of Bridges² arranged for the assessment of lump sums on particular communities, leaving it to local authority and common sense to apportion the tax among the inhabitants. Somewhat more precise instructions were given in an act in the next year for raising money in twenty-five counties for the building of gaols, when the tax was to be levied on residents in proportion to the value of their income.³ It seems certain, too, that Parliament intended in the poor law of 1572 that assessments should be made in relation to the wealth, the ability, of the inhabitants, rather than by the easier device of taxing the value of the land, or premises, occupied by the person being rated.⁴ In most parishes in the older and the institutionally mature parts of the realm there was also long and

¹ *An ease for overseers of the poore*, 29.

² 22 Henry VIII, c. 5.

³ 23 Henry VIII, c. 2.

⁴ Cannan, Edwin, *History of local rates in England* (L., 1912), 54, 68-69.

relevant experience in levying church rates at vestry meetings, which by a not unreasonable extension was employed for the review if not the assessment of poor-rates. In such parishes the rates were levied by the churchwardens, overseers, and constables, subject to the review of the vestry, which also exercised a review of the details of the expenditures incurred under the statute. The vestry likewise exerted a very real, if indirect, control over the mechanism of taxation, since it also chose the churchwardens and in most cases the overseers, while, of course, the whole disposition was subject to the review of the justices of the peace.¹ That this was the method usually employed is further suggested by the fact that the records of assessments and outlays are most commonly to be found mingled with other parochial records.

The statute was imprecise with respect to both the administration of the assessment and the basis of taxation, though it carefully included all 'inhabitants' and all 'occupiers' of property in the parish. The whole question of the basis of the taxation had in fact to be adjudicated, a stream of appeals and complaints flowing from the parishes where the act was given local effect. Indeed, one of the most reliable ways of determining when a parish was first taxed under the poor law is to watch carefully for the arrival of the first angry protestations in the quarter-sessions records of the county. In most communities the tendency was for the overseers to lay the assessments by the value of pound rents, that is, by 'levies and payments according to the true value of the lands' of the parish, which of course threw the burden of taxation rather more on the occupiers of real property than on the owners. Lambard discussed the problem at length in his 1599 edition of the *Eirenarcha*, though he offered no clear instructions to the many overseers who bought his book because no body of judicial decisions had as yet accumulated. The even more ubiquitous *Countrey justice*, in commenting on the problem of the rating base a generation later, concluded, we think correctly, that Parliament intended two merged systems of assessment: on every inhabitant who could be rated at all, and on the known annual value of all property within the parish.² This view likewise enjoyed the cautious support of Sir Robert Heath, the Chief Justice, who in 1633 prepared an informal opinion to be used by the judges on circuit in dealing with the innumerable questions advanced by the uncertain and harassed justices of the peace. It was Heath's view that all land in each parish was to be taxed at a level rate, 'that

¹ Tate, *Parish chest*, 14-17.

² Dalton, Michael, *The countrey justice* (L., 1635), 94: 'In these taxations there must consideration be had, first to equality and then to estates. Equality, that men be equally rated with their neighbours, and according to an equal proportion. Estates, that men be rated according to their estates of goods known, or according to the known yearly value of their lands, farms, or occupyings, and not by estimation, supposition, or report.'

there may be an addition for the personal visible ability of the parishioners within that parish' which the overseers should take fully into account in preparing the schedule of rates.

The fact is that each parish was left with almost complete autonomy in determining not only the method by which the rates should be levied and expended, but, and more importantly, whether one should be ordered at all. We shall later point out that relatively few parishes felt it necessary to apply this statute for almost a generation after its passage and that a great many never did so before the Restoration. The judges and the justices of the peace permitted a quite bewildering variety of local and traditional usages to persist among those parishes which were rated, tending to intervene only on angry appeal from a taxpayer and then almost invariably lending support to the local authorities whose harassed life and responsibility commanded their sympathy. This was doubtless sound practice, and it was certainly as Parliament meant it to be. No systematic body of judicial decisions on the matter of ratings under the statute is to be found prior to the restoration of the monarchy.¹

The *corpus* of law dealing with the whole complex range of problems that centres around poverty stood very nearly complete for our period; and, indeed, for a very long time afterwards, with the passage of the great measures at the close of Queen Elizabeth's reign. A famous divine, discussing the evils of beggary and vagabondage, could well speak for the realm in the conviction that this legislation was 'in substance the very lawe of God', which should never be repealed.² We shall now review briefly the refinements and additions made to the fabric of the poor laws during the remainder of our era, leaving to later pages a discussion of the far more important subject of the administration and enforcement of the laws.³

4. *Seventeenth century glosses on the law*

Even James I, so often nervously critical of the accomplishments of his great predecessor, found little room for improvement on the code which was his inheritance. A statute in his first regnal year provided that in the event of plague a special rate might be levied not only on the

¹ An unsigned memorandum in the State Papers (1648-1649) complains of the vagueness of the wording of 43 *Eliz.*, c. 2. The writer suggested that it ought to be amended significantly to make it clear that taxation should be based on the value of property which any person held or occupied and also on the basis of his known ability to pay. It should, however, be made clear that no man would be taxed according to his 'ability' save in that parish where he maintained his chief habitation. (*S.P. Dom.*, 1648-1649 [undated], DXX, 52).

² Perkins, William, *Works newly corrected according to his owne copies* (Cambridge, 1605), 910.

³ *Vide post*, 126-142.

affected parish but likewise on the surrounding area.¹ A few years later, in 1609-1610, a bill which had failed of passage in 1597 was enacted into law requiring the justice of the peace to erect a house of correction in each county by rates, under penalty of a fine of £5 to be laid on each defaulting magistrate. The existing and fully competent laws against idle and disorderly persons were to be rigorously enforced, such vagabonds and malingers to be placed in the contemplated houses of correction by the justices meeting in quarter-session, and while held there for amendment 'in no sort to be chargeable to the county for any allowance . . . but [to] have such allowance as they shall deserve by their own labour and work'.² The law cleanly and deliberately distinguished between the unemployed poor and the invincibly idle, whom earlier legislation had mixed in houses of correction with most unfortunate consequences. A further act was passed in 1621 which sought most severely to restrain agrarian migration to urban centres by requiring all persons who 'shall come to any city or town to dwell' to exhibit an estate to the value of £2 p.a. or goods to the worth of £5, unless they had served as apprentices in an 'art, mystery or manual occupation' for a term of at least seven years.³ All persons removing to urban communities in violation of these provisions were to be returned at once to the parish of their origin. Shortly afterwards, an act of Parliament was passed lending further encouragement to those who desired to found and endow almshouses and houses of correction by specifying quite simple procedures of foundation and ensuring perpetuity to these incorporations.⁴

Charles I added no legislation of importance to the existing code of poor laws, though, as we shall later observe, the first really serious move to secure their administration was to be made in a remarkable and sustained effort in the course of his reign. In the early sessions of the Long Parliament, it is true, an interesting bill was drafted for the reform and administration of charitable institutions generally, though it seems never to have emerged from the committee of peers to which it was assigned in January, 1641, for further consideration. The draft memorandum pointed out that possible donors of endowments for almshouses, houses of correction, free schools, and other charitable institutions were discouraged because all too often their lands were leased out for very long terms in a time when 'the prices of all things [are] now risen above the rates of former ages'. It was accordingly proposed that no lease of property bearing a charitable use might be made for a term of more than twenty-one years or for three lives 'for a yearly rent of a full two-thirds of the true yearly value' of the property thus granted. It was further ordered that no master, governor, or adminis-

¹ 1 Jac. I, c. 31.

³ Draft in *House of Lords MSS.*, April 30, 1621.

² 7 Jac. I, c. 4.

⁴ 21 Jac. I, c. 1.

trator of a charitable foundation might enjoy a stipend in excess of £30 p.a. or, if it be less, a sixth part of the total revenues, unless otherwise specifically appointed by the donor.¹

A far more ambitious proposal was laid before the House of Lords which contemplated the revision and the redrafting of the Elizabethan poor laws. This memorandum was prepared by William Steele, a young lawyer who was subsequently to serve as Recorder of London and Lord Chancellor of Ireland. There is no evidence that this well-articulated proposal ever received serious legislative attention, but it none the less deserves at least brief comment here for the boldness and thoroughness of its recommendations. Basically, Steele proposed a shifting in the centre of gravity of social responsibility from the parish to the county, from the overseers to the justices of the peace, while leaving intact the administrative and taxing mechanism of the parish. A public stock, administered by a treasurer to be chosen by the general session of the justices, was to be created in each county, funds being supplied by taxation ordered by the justices, by all fines and penalties levied within the county, by contributions and bequests given for the use, and by any profits that might accrue from the workhouses of the county. The justices were in effect to be constituted as a charitable corporation and were within the county to have all powers heretofore vested in commissions of charitable uses for enforcing the charitable responsibilities imposed upon feoffees.

The county stock should be prudently employed for the erecting and maintenance of workhouses, for the support of derelict sailors and soldiers, and for providing stocks of goods on which the unemployed and needy might be set at useful and gainful employment. Rewards were to be paid from the stock for the apprehension of vagabonds and felons, while the proper charges of the justices, the overseers, and constables were also to be met from this treasury. The taxing power of the parish for the care of its poor was not to be disturbed, though the county would take over many of the responsibilities heretofore borne by the local unit. The overseers were to be directly responsible to the justices of the peace and the latter to the assize justices. Some assessment should be laid on all persons able to make contribution, and those not making payments should automatically be classified as poor who might be compelled to work. The old, the impotent, and the very young should, when there was clear need, be maintained by parish rates. The hopeless poor, then, were to be supported by the parish, the able-bodied but unemployed poor were to be assisted by works administered by the county, and 'all persons that can give no good account for their manner of living' and all wandering beggars were upon conviction to be sent to a county workhouse for a term of years or longer. Begging was

¹ *House of Lords MSS.*, January 2, 1640-1.

to be absolutely prohibited under penalties of transportation, while wandering persons were to be regarded as vagabonds and returned to their home parish for correction and cure. Each parish should bear, under supervision, the prime responsibility for the care of its own poor, but the whole system of relief and rehabilitation, Steele suggested, should be given a larger organization and support.¹

The bold and original suggestions here advanced by Steele were, as we shall later notice, quite typical of a large body of reforming thought which made a significant contribution to the consideration of the whole problem of poverty and its relief. Yet, save for quite minor modifications, the Elizabethan *corpus* of legislation remained in force through the whole of the revolutionary era. Both the Commonwealth and Protectorate dealt most cautiously with this entire area of responsibility. There were nine ordinances in the period dealing specifically with problems created by the war itself and with the care of war casualties and there were ten which lent the sanction of the state to highly organized and worthy fund-raising efforts for the benefit of charitable needs in specified communities. We have likewise noted seven measures ordering the application of a proportion of confiscated properties to religious, educational, and other salutary purposes, though these ordinances can scarcely be regarded as having made substantial, much less permanent, contribution either to the purposes named or to the law relating to charitable responsibility. There are, however, a few ordinances in this troubled period which deserve some brief mention.

An ordinance dated May 28, 1647 had general application and significance, though its purpose was to afford relief for maimed soldiers and sailors and their dependents. Such needy persons were to be placed under the full protection of the statute of 43 *Eliz.*, c. 2, the parish of residence being declared responsible for their maintenance. Maimed soldiers were to be settled in the parish of their origin, while their widows and orphans were to be eligible for needed charitable relief 'besides such relief as they shall gain by their work and labour'.² This statute was amplified by a further ordinance in August, 1647, which required that a tax, to be approved by the justices, of from 3d to 2s 6d weekly be levied in each parish to carry out the intent of the law.³

It should also be noted that an important and, one must add, a

¹ 'Proposalls concerning ye maintenance of impotent and aged people and for imploying and punishing of beggars and vagabonds' (1641) (*House of Lords MSS.*, calendared in *Historical Manuscripts Commission, Fourth Report*, House of Lords, App. 114). Ludlow later described Steele as a 'man of great prudence and uncorrupted integrity'. There is a biographical notice in the *DNB*.

² Firth, C. H., and R. S. Rait, eds., *Acts and ordinances of the Interregnum* (3 vols., L., 1911), I, 938.

³ *Ibid.*, I, 997. Another ordinance passed still later in the same year (1647) further amplified the law (*ibid.*, I, 1055).

much needed, act was passed by Parliament in 1649 discharging poor prisoners held for debt whose assets did not exceed £5 in value and who took the debtor's oath¹; this was, however, subjected to subsequent review and suspension because of the difficulties found by the judges in its administration.² Special but important legislation, which will be considered in another connection, was passed dealing with the always urgent problem of the poor of London,³ as was a carefully drafted act (September 26, 1649) for the reorganization and further maintenance of the school and almshouses in Westminster.⁴ The important act passed in May, 1649, to enable the draining of the Great Level of the Fens professed to have as a central objective the enrichment of the commonwealth, the advancement of trade and agriculture, and the employment of the poor by the creation of opportunities for large-scale employment,⁵ though the state itself carefully refrained from taking any of the considerable financial risk. Towards the end of the revolutionary era (June 9, 1657), an act was passed ordering that all wandering, idle, and vagrant persons, not found in their 'usual place of living or abode' be adjudged rogues under the statute of 39 Elizabeth, though it seems evident that the measure served rather to sharpen the memories of the law enforcement officers than to enlarge or modify the clear meaning of the earlier statute.⁶ We may, in fact, say in summary that only inconsequential changes were made in the whole fabric of Elizabethan charitable legislation in the two generations that elapsed from the date of passage to the close of the period under review.

We have sketched the slow and somewhat reluctant development of a complex, an articulated, and a comprehensive code of legislation dealing with the problem of poverty. This was the work of the great Tudor sovereigns, who were neither sentimental nor tender towards their subjects, but who were ever prepared to face historical realities, who were jealous of the substance of their power, and who were almost intuitively sensitive to any dislocations or disorders which might erode the structure of their sovereignty. This great body of legislation may, then, be regarded as a mechanism competent to ensure the relief of poverty. It stood ready for enforcement in periods of economic distress and widespread poverty in any area of England, though, as we have so frequently said, there is no evidence that many communities undertook a serious or systematic application of the law until well into the seventeenth century. This legislation was at bottom prudential; it stood ready for enforcement in periods of crisis and national need. There was also implicit in the Tudor legislation the assumption that individual

¹ Firth and Rait, *Acts and ordinances*, II, 240-241, 321-324.

² *Ibid.*, II, 860-861 (1654).

³ *Ibid.*, I, 1042-1045 (1647); *ibid.*, II, 104-110 (1649).

⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 256-277.

⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 130-139.

⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 1098.

communities were themselves responsible for invoking the law when local need arose. The whole apparatus of law and the machinery of administration stood ready for use. But under Elizabeth at least the central government only rarely brought pressure to bear on the parish or the county. None the less, this *corpus* of legislation was of very great historical significance in that it represented the assumption by the state, in slow and ordered stages, of ultimate social responsibility for the care not only of those who were derelict but of those who were unemployed through no fault of their own. A great social floor at the level of subsistence had been laid under the Tudor society, and the morality as well as the practicality of this daring and enlightened commitment was generally accepted by the close of the great Queen's reign. An immense and an irreversible social gain had been made.

At the same time, however, the great legislative advance was possibly only because private men, by their own charities, had in fact already assumed an enormous and an ever-enlarging responsibility for the welfare and dignity of their society. The care of the poor, not to mention other equally important charitable outlays, throughout our period remained principally in the hands of private donors, who were creating with their wealth the great social institutions which may be said to frame and undergird the liberal society. The law, the use of the taxing power, was regarded, so to speak, as a kind of co-insurance against social disaster in the event the economy was overwhelmed by forces too powerful and too abrupt for private charity to master. It was the lively fear that such a period of disaster might be at hand which evoked the legislation of 1597 and which was to result in its first considerable enforcement about a generation later. But there remained the confidence that private charity, with its rapidly mounting resources, could not only bear the burdens of the society in normal times but could raise the level of opportunity throughout the realm so that poverty itself might be prevented. Accordingly, every encouragement was lent by the state through the whole course of the century to properly defined almsgiving, and a second great mechanism of social progress was gradually evolved in the shape of the charitable trust. It is most significant that the statute codifying and extending the legal meaning of charitable trusts was passed in the same year as the poor law. They were conjoined in the thinking of the legislature just as they were in the thinking of the community of the realm.

D. THE EVOLUTION AND MATURING OF THE CHARITABLE TRUST

1. *The historical and legal background*

The law of charitable trusts developed in step with the law of uses more generally, in the earlier stages without statutory definition and despite the clear meaning of common law and the intent of statute law. The trust was an invention of equity, affording a uniquely competent instrument for the distribution of private property and providing a quite perfect mechanism for the vesting of charitable endowments without the necessity of securing from the Crown or from Parliament charters of incorporation.¹ The development of the law of trusts in England owed its peculiar nature to the fact that there were separate courts of law and equity. Thus the law courts recognized though they would not enforce uses, while Chancery came rapidly to undertake responsibility not only for the enforcement of duties upon the legal owner but for the protection of the beneficiary in his interests in the trustee's property. Uses were so rapidly exploited as a means of creating estates because the mediaeval society was searching for some means of freeing itself from the strict rules of law and, as importantly, of escaping from the rigorous limitations imposed on the holders, one can scarcely say the owners, of property held under feudal tenure. Accordingly, 'the employment of the use or trust as a means of making testamentary disposition of land at a time when land was not devisable, and its employment to avoid the feudal claims of the overlord, were not condemned, since the courts recognized that these purposes were no longer against public policy, although they could not be accomplished under the old rules of the dying feudal system'.²

Some forms of uses extend far back in English history, though the great authority of Maitland would suggest that they were first generally and skilfully established in the thirteenth century when extensive endowments were placed under trusteeship by private donors for the benefit of the Franciscan order, which could not under its constitution hold property.³ In the later fourteenth century private uses began to become very common indeed, though at some considerable hazard since the execution of the trust depended wholly on the good faith of the feoffee. But early in the fifteenth century Chancery had become an established court of the realm, and successive chancellors began to intervene to enforce on the trustee his duties and to protect uses in so

¹ Scott, A. W., *The law of trusts* (5 vols., Boston, 1956), I, 3-5. Our discussion of the development of private trusts depends heavily on this monumental work.

² *Ibid.*, I, 9.

³ Maitland, F. W., *Equity* (Cambridge, 1910), 25; Tyssen, A. D., *The law of charitable bequests* (L., 1921), 1-2.

far as they did not lie athwart statute or public policy.¹ The development was rapid, uses becoming assignable, estates in uses being recognized, and the doctrine that uses descended by the same rules that applied to land having been sustained. These sophisticated arrangements with respect to property were throughout the century not only hastening the collapse of the whole system of feudal tenure but were being employed by the magnates during the tumultuous years of the War of the Roses to escape even the consequences of high treason.² Uses were also being employed to secure the effect of the devising of land, which ran wholly counter to the necessary assumptions of feudal tenure. But, even more importantly, the king was being injured not only because there was great confusion with respect to titles, but because it was no longer wholly clear where and to whom ran the lines of obligation for military service, taxes, and the ultimate responsibility for the ownership of property.

These abuses and obscurities Henry VIII sought to correct by the Statute of Uses in 1536. The King's agents on the floor of Parliament drove hard to secure this crown measure, which had in fact to be somewhat modified before men against whose personal and family interests it ran could be persuaded to effect its passage.³ The preamble recited at length the abuses and national disadvantages flowing from the employment of uses, while the act cured the fault by the simple process of confirming the legal estate on the *cestui que use* (the person who had the use).⁴ Thus the holder of the use was given title, it being intended that the use should no longer be an equitable interest protected by Chancery but should be dealt with by the ordinary law courts. Clearly, the intention was to join possession to the use and to annihilate the distinction between legal and beneficial ownership.⁵ The statute, then, did not forbid uses, as the King would have preferred, but it rather vested the full responsibilities of ownership in the trust. The act had one further and perhaps not wholly intended effect in that it forbade the devising of freehold estates, a consequence which proved to be extremely unpopular among the gentry who had reluctantly passed *27 Henry VIII, c. 10*.⁶ This grievance of the landowning class was redressed in the great Statute of Wills, passed a few years later, which by legalizing the devising of certain important categories of land relieved the most important of the social and human pressures which had led to the undisciplined development of the private trust.⁷

¹ Scott, *Trusts*, I, 15.

² *Ibid.*, I, 17.

³ Holdsworth, *English law*, IV, 450-457.

⁴ Tyssen, *Charitable bequests*, 4.

⁵ Digby, K. E., *An introduction to the history of the law of real property* (Oxford, 1884), 302.

⁶ Holdsworth, *English law*, IV, 464.

⁷ *32 Henry VIII, c. 1*; in 1660, *12 Cha. II, c. 24*, made all lands devisable.

We may conclude, therefore, that the Statute of Uses did not destroy uses and that it remained possible to separate the beneficial interest from the legal title. It was held that when the trust was active, when real and active duties were vested in the trustee in relation to the beneficiary, the act did not prohibit, as was the construction of the statute when a use was established only for a term of years. The formidable ingenuity of the lawyers probed at the statute, until it was determined in *Tyrrel's* case (1557) that if a use be raised on a use, the first was illegal but the second held.¹ The effect of the statute as interpreted by the courts was, then, in no sense to destroy the instrumentality of the trust, but rather to clear away the thicket of abuse and legal evasion which had sprung up during the dying days of the mediaeval order. The main lines of development for the modern law of trusts had been clearly laid out, and most particularly for the rapid maturing of the great instrument of the charitable trust with which we are more immediately concerned.

In crude form at least the charitable trust was well known and extensively employed by donors long before the sixteenth century. Most mediaeval charitable dispositions were of course for religious purposes, and, though the common law held that unincorporated bodies might not hold property, the evident fact remained that many monasteries, churches, and other such bodies possessed very large properties indeed. Much of this wealth was, of course, held by religious bodies which were legally corporations and which were empowered to hold property by frank almoign, a licence in mortmain lending protection against possible forfeiture. Successive tightenings of the statute of mortmain were made, with the consequence that a second form of endowment developed which was in its legal structure a charitable trust. Property was conveyed to another person for the use of a named religious organization as beneficiary. When in the early fifteenth century the Chancellor began to intervene to enforce uses as part of his equitable jurisdiction, such trusts gained further protection and came gradually to be employed in the founding of secular as well as religious charities. As we shall later note in detail, the number and the value of charitable trusts increased enormously in the course of the sixteenth century, since from the time of the Reformation the Crown as well as Chancery lent all possible enforcement and protection to them. It was quickly established that a charitable use could be laid on property either by enfeoffment or by will.² The great transformation occurring in this century was, of course, the profoundly important shift from religious to secular aspirations, assisted somewhat by the Reformation statutes outlawing trusts

¹ Scott, *Trusts*, I, 22.

² Bristowe, L. S., *et al.*, *The law of charities . . . the fourth edition of Tudor's charitable trusts* (L., 1906), 3; Shelford, Leonard, *A practical treatise of the law of mortmain and charitable uses* (L., 1836), 44-45.

for superstitious purposes and outlawing endowments for prayers for the dead.¹ The ever-mounting flow of funds into charitable trusts was assisted as well by the disposition of the courts, after a momentary hesitation, to construe favourably all trusts created for charitable uses and, if any substantial difficulty appeared to intervene, by direct action to establish the trust legally and effectively.

2. *The Elizabethan codification*

The great Elizabethan statute of charitable trusts was notable, then, not because it created charitable uses, but rather because it codified a body of law badly wanting classical statement and because it vastly stimulated constructive and well considered charitable giving by lending full and most formidable protection to the aspirations of donors. It is, indeed, not too much to say that the essential features of the Elizabethan act were fully stated as early as the fourteenth century. In the *Vision of Piers Plowman* we observe that the troubled (and rich) merchants were counselled by *Truth* to gain full remission of sins and a happy death by the fruitful use of their fortunes:

And therewith repair hospitals,
help sick people,
mend bad roads,
build up bridges that had been broken down,
help maidens to marry or to make them nuns,
find food for prisoners and poor people,
put scholars to school or to some other craft,
help religious orders, and
ameliorate rents or taxes.²

These are the good causes, religious orders aside, which achieved immortality of definition in the eloquent preamble to the Elizabethan act first passed in 1597 and with unimportant amendments gathered into the great code of social legislation in 1601.³ The preamble undertook the recital of the proper objects of charitable interest and, for a society with limited resources, defined a very broad spectrum of responsibility and proclaimed a noble conception of what a society ought to be.⁴ Thus it was recalled that wealth had been left by sovereigns and 'by sondrie other well disposed persons, some for releife of aged impotent and poore

¹ 23 Henry VIII, c. 10; 7 Edw. VI, c. 11; *Adams v. Lambert*, temp. Eliz., 4 co. 529.

² Langland, William, *The vision of . . . Piers Plowman* (F. W. Skeat, ed.) (L., 1906), 80. My attention was first called to this passage by Mr Henry Moe, who includes it in his most persuasive *Guggenheim Foundation statement to Congressional Committee*.

³ 39 Eliz., c. 6; 43 Eliz., c. 4. Our references and discussion will be addressed to the latter statute.

⁴ Gray, *English philanthropy*, 35.

people, some for maintenance of sicke and maymed souldiers and mariners, schooles of learninge, free schooles and schollers in universities, some for repaire of bridges portes havens causewaies churches sea-bankes and highwaies, some for education and preferments of orphans, some for or towardes reliefe stocke or maintenance for howses of correction, some for mariages of poore maides, some for supportacion ayde and helpe of younge tradesmen, handie-craftesmen and persons decayed, and others for releife or redemption of prisoners or captives, and for aide or ease of any poore inhabitants concerning paymente of fifteenes, [and] settinge out of souldiers and other taxes'.

The statute of 1601, as we shall date the law, secured the enforcement of charitable uses by instructing the Chancellor to appoint commissions to enquire into abuses, to take evidence, to impanel juries, and to hand down decisions subject only to his own review. There remained as well the possibility for a complainant to take a direct appeal to Chancery against the abuses of feoffees, though this method gradually became disused.¹ Though ostensibly concerned with no more than the correction of existing abuses in charitable trusts and the encouragement of future donors to raise up such charitable institutions, the statute became in fact a great landmark in the development of the law of charitable trusts. The statute remained unrepealed until 1888,² but even then the new statute carefully preserved the preamble and its list of uses properly defined as charitable. The recital in the preamble, it may be supposed, was designed to be rather more hortatory than definitive, but none the less the stamp of its eloquence upon law and aspirations has been such that the courts of the United States as well as of Britain have tended to be guided by its precepts. So, too, the precise word 'charitable' has acquired a meaning that is anchored in the language of the preamble, with the result that trusts have tended to fail when testators, and their lawyers, have attempted to enlarge or refine the intention by some such term as 'charitable and benevolent'.³ The Nathan Committee on the Law and Practice relating to Charitable Trusts, as recently as 1952, in commenting on the famous case of Diplock's will (1949) in which the court held the will void for uncertainty because the words 'or benevolent' were appended after 'charitable', has ventured to propose legislation permitting the application of such estates to legal charities instead of permitting the complete frustration of the testator's intentions.⁴ It is interesting, however, to observe that this distinguished committee would hesitate to broaden the definition of charitable purposes beyond

¹ Scott, *Trusts*, IV, 2564.

² Mortmain and Charitable Uses Act, 51 and 52 Victoria, c. 42.

³ Scott, A. W., 'Trusts for charitable and benevolent purposes', *Harvard Law Review*, LVIII (1945), 548 ff. This is a brilliant discussion of the matter.

⁴ *The Economist* (January 10, 1953), 61.

Lord Macnaghten's modest rephrasing of the almost casual but beautiful wording of the Elizabethan preamble. These men in the Parliament of 1601 were drafting well and surely because they sought to state and to ennoble aspirations which had become and were to remain central to the structure of the liberal society.

One other aspect of the great Elizabethan statute deserves some comment. The conception and definition of charitable purposes here advanced was starkly and coldly secular, just as were the benefactions of the age. The only religious purpose mentioned at all was the repair of churches, and even this was quite inconspicuously tucked in between 'causewaies' and 'seabankes'. This omission was flagrantly deliberate, because the whole temper of the age had grown so completely secular and because the preoccupations of men had fastened so tenaciously on the many and pressing needs of the world and the society which they saw about them. In point of fact, even the repair of a parish church, very rarely undertaken in Elizabethan England, was itself a quasi-civic undertaking, the motives for which were quite as likely to proceed from local pride as from religious sentiment. But here the text of the law ran even more sternly secular than sentiment, for we have counted many scores of charitable trusts established for religious purposes between 1590 and 1639 which remained wholly unmolested, until in the latter year a judicial decision lent protection by ruling that a trust established to maintain a preaching minister was valid under the Elizabethan act.¹

As we have suggested, the statute of 1601 was a great 'gathering act', bringing under codification a long development and a fruitful national experience in the growth of charitable trusts as instruments of social betterment. We should now review quite summarily the principal of these earlier statutes which had gradually opened as they had disciplined the flow of charitable funds into several deepening channels. Perhaps the first significant statute of this kind, offering protection to what can accurately be described as charitable trusts, was passed early in the reign of Henry V. The act recalled that there were many hospitals in the realm to which earlier founders had left their wealth for the sustenance of impotent persons, lazars, witless men, poor women with child, and the poor generally. A large number of these foundations had decayed or disappeared with resulting injury to the realm. It was consequently ordered that the appropriate ecclesiastical authorities enquire into the manner of founding of such institutions and take steps to secure such corrections and reparations as might be needed.² This law had the effect of creating a charitable commission with limited powers and instructions and of defining more precisely responsibilities and capacities already held by the ordinaries. There is, however, little evidence that the statute was given full effect or that the calamitous

¹ *Pember v. Inhabitants of Knighton*.

² 2 *Henry V*, c. 1 (1414).

decay of mediaeval charitable institutions, already far advanced, was significantly retarded.

The early Tudors, as we have observed, lent steady legislative and administrative support to the vesting of charitable endowments, though even prior to the Reformation the secular bias of their policy was only too evident. Considerable constraint was accordingly imposed on the creation of trusts for most religious purposes by an act passed in 1531-2. The statute recited the injury done to the king and realm when lands were alienated in mortmain to trusts created for the use of parish churches, chapels, guilds, brotherhoods, and for obits, whether perpetual or for a term of years. Such uses were prohibited and were to be without the effect of law, if they should be instituted for more than a term of twenty years, save that in cities and corporate towns where by ancient custom devises into mortmain had been permitted the act was not to prevail.¹ This statute, strengthened as it was by the whole weight of the Reformation legislation shortly to follow, was of considerable significance in drying up even further the rapidly diminishing flow of charitable funds to the various religious uses.

From this day forward, indeed, the whole weight of law as well as of policy was exerted to mould the charities of England to secular ends and to assist donors in creating the great charitable institutions which were so profoundly to alter the structure of the English society. Two examples will perhaps suffice. In 1572, in conjunction with the important poor law framed in this same session, an act was passed to encourage and assist benefactors who wished to found hospitals and almshouses. The great benefit that had flowed from the recent establishment and endowment of the four great London hospitals was cited and the hope expressed that there would in future years be many more benefactions for such worthy purposes. Many such gifts would be provided in wills, 'at which time for want of council and other opportunities, it may happen that the right names of the said corporations hath not or shall not be truly named or expressed', with resulting questions regarding the validity of the bequest. It was therefore enacted that such gifts or bequests left for the use of the poor in any hospital should be 'good and available in law' despite the 'misnaming, misreciting or not true naming or reciting' of the intended foundation.² Thus brusquely did Elizabeth seek to clear away legal niceties and flaws of instruction which ironically have for so long troubled the courts in the interpretation of the great statute passed in the closing years of her own reign. Of even greater significance was the enabling act passed in 1597 as part of the great code of social legislation enacted at that time. This act, it will be recalled, relieved founders of hospitals, almshouses, and houses of correction from the necessity of securing letters patent

¹ 23 Henry VIII, c. 10.

² 14 Eliz., c. 14.

and made it possible, by a deed enrolled in Chancery, to found such institutions so long as the yearly value of the endowment provided was at least £10.¹

The requisite body of law and of experience for the founding and protection of charitable trusts stood substantially complete in 1597, and, as we shall shortly observe, an immense outlay of funds so constituted was to mark the social history of the next generation. One further statute, dealing with a single aspect of the whole broad range of charitable interests was, however, enacted in the early Stuart period. In 1610 Parliament turned specifically to the regulation and protection of the considerable sums being left for the support of apprenticeships. It was declared that 'experience whereof hath brought forth very great profit and commodity unto those cities, towns, and parishes where any parts of the said monies have been so given and employed'. At the same time, abuses had arisen in the rather random outlays made from such funds. It was accordingly enacted that in the future such sums were to be expended by the municipal authorities of the favoured towns and boroughs unless the instructions of the donor explicitly determined otherwise, while in unincorporated communities the outlays were to be made by the parish clergyman together with the churchwardens, the collectors, and the overseers of the poor. It was further ordered that masters taking apprentices should be bound to return the fees at the end of the period of service, with the intent that a revolving apprenticeship fund could thereby be established in each favoured community. Careful provision was also made to ensure that only the income on endowed apprenticeship funds might be expended, while enforcement of the act was to be obtained by inviting any person suspecting a breach of trust to petition Chancery for the appointment of a commission of enquiry with power to require restitution in the event of fraud or the impairment of funds.²

We have frequently noted that the poor laws were given full effect only very gradually and unevenly during the course of our period. In contrast, charitable trusts were lent formidable and most effective protection during the whole of the Tudor period and were subjected to periodic and competent review after the statute of 1601 had carefully delineated an impressively orderly scheme of commissions of enquiry.³ We shall have occasion to mention many of these enquiries in our more detailed discussion of the counties under study and shall see that inquisitions into 'fraudes, breaches of truste, and negligence' could be instituted in a great variety of ways. Most commonly, responsible inhabitants of a parish simply complained of malfeasance to the bishop

¹ 39 Eliz., c. 5. *Vide ante*, 94-98, for a fuller discussion in the context of related legislation.

² 7 Jac. I, c. 3.

³ *Vide ante*, 113.

of the diocese, to a commission already in being, to the Lord Chancellor or Lord Keeper, or, and not infrequently, to the Privy Council. In other cases the institution of complaints has been noted from such persons as the clergyman, the vestry, the overseers, the municipal authorities, or a local justice of the peace. There are a number of instances, too, when descendants of the donor filed a complaint, and not a few in which a single and evidently humble petitioner set in motion the effective machinery of investigation. Finally, if a whole community was so negligent and dull as to fail to protect its self-interest, these commissions of enquiry could and did ferret out malfeasance and more often simply rural incompetence by regional enquiries designed to review the current status of all known charitable funds.¹ The consequence was that charitable funds were on the whole administered with quite astonishing probity and skill and that a tradition of the highest fidelity in the discharge of duty was quickly established. This fact in itself lent powerful encouragement to substantial men considering benefactions and accounts in no small part for the huge sums vested in charitable trusts during the last two generations of our period.

3. *Analysis of the achievement*

We have sought in all the counties under study to distinguish carefully between capital gifts (endowments) made for charitable uses and those benefactions which were made outright, that is for immediate expenditure of the whole of the gift or, and this rather uncommonly, the expenditure of the whole of the principal over a stated term of years. During the early decades of our period charitable benefactions tended to partake of the nature of alms and were most commonly made as outright gifts for immediate use. But from about 1520 onwards a steadily increasing proportion of donors were disposed to order charities in the form of endowments and a much larger proportion of the total of charitable sums was so disposed. With only minor and eccentric exceptions, these endowments were in legal form charitable trusts. The great Elizabethan statute ordering the structure of charitable trusts and

¹ A few examples of enquiries under the statute may be mentioned here: *S.P. Dom.*, 1616, LXXXVIII, 28; *Chancery Petty Bag*, Charity Inquisitions, Kent, C 93/7/7; *S.P. Dom.*, 1617, XCII; *S.P. Dom.*, 1621, XLII, 72; *S.P. Dom.*, 1634 [?], CCLXXXI, 49; *S.P. Dom.*, 1637, CCCLII, 78; *S.P. Dom.*, 1655, XCIX, 101-102; *S.P. Dom.*, 1656, CXXIV, 79.

A particularly valuable series of examples may be found in Herne, John, *Law of charitable uses* (L., 1663), 100 ff. Herne tells us in his preface that he had been present at hearings of many commissions 'grounded' on the Elizabethan statute. He had 'found the gentlemen . . . commissioners, jurors . . . grown almost weary of well-doing . . . never cheerfully embraced these commissions . . . and many inquisitions and decrees have . . . miscarried'. He accordingly was hopeful that his book might secure the better observance and execution of the statute.

affording them effective and inexpensive protection was accordingly quite perfectly timed in relation to the historical realities, since it was in about 1590 that the immense outpouring of charitable funds for a great variety of secular uses set in. From that date forward to the close of our period, a very large proportion of all charitable benefactions was vested in the form of endowments, even relatively small sums having been given the dignity and protection of trusteeship.

Taking our whole period in view, the immense total of £2,551,880 19s was vested by donors in our ten counties as capital amounts under trusteeship of one kind or another. This sum constituted a not inconsiderable proportion of the capital wealth of the realm and must by the time of the Restoration have been yielding something like £127,600 p.a., which was being disposed for a great range of fruitful and greatly needed social purposes. The immense significance of the mechanism of the charitable trust is suggested when we reflect that upwards of 82 per cent of the huge aggregate of charitable sums disposed during our entire period was settled in the form of endowments. It is significant, too, that the proportion of total charities established in endowments was remarkably uniform in all the counties that we have examined, ranging from about 77 per cent in Lancashire to 91 per cent in Bristol.¹ Though the details may more appropriately be considered in our examination of the several counties, it may be suggested here that such great charitable needs as almshouses, loan funds, stocks, apprenticeship plans, and all the educational uses were almost wholly financed by the vesting of capital sums which would in perpetuity ensure the attainment of the aspirations of the donor.

The enormous capital which had by the close of our period been settled in charitable trusts possessed a qualitative as well as an overwhelming quantitative strength. Though, as we have seen, accounting for a very large proportion (82 per cent) of the total of charitable funds, this huge sum had been given by a relatively small group of 6328 individual donors, comprising no more than 18 per cent (18.1 per cent) of the whole number for our entire period. Accordingly, even the average worth of these trusts was the remarkably large sum of £403 5s 4d, an

¹ The proportions for the several counties are as follows:

	<i>per cent</i>
Bristol	91.00
Buckinghamshire	82.40
Hampshire	80.09
Kent	81.35
Lancashire	76.83
London	82.60
Norfolk	80.96
Somerset	80.86
Worcestershire	80.51
Yorkshire	82.17

amount, it must be noted, quite sufficient for the needs of most rural parishes for outright poor relief or to found a strongly endowed almshouse or grammar school. Even more importantly, these endowments were with few exceptions carefully and prudently ordered by their donors, with the result that they were well administered, carefully husbanded, and stood as open invitations to later benefactors to augment them as their enormous social value came to be recognized. With £403 5s 4d a late fifteenth century landed magnate could arrange funeral doles which were certain to attract unruly swarms of beggars from a half dozen nearby counties; with the same amount a Norwich merchant a century later could endow in perpetuity a social institution of great and abiding utility.

In our discussion of the development of the law of trusts, we suggested that historical fact was quite steadily outstripping law. Legal historians have tended to assume that the charitable trust was unimportant before 1597, or at the earliest 1572, though there were in fact some thousands of them in England and they had attained a relatively sophisticated development well before the close of the sixteenth century. The total of capital vested in charitable trusts in our ten counties, comprising, as we have estimated, perhaps half the wealth of England, had as early as 1600 reached the massive sum of £808,131 14s by gradual accumulations over the preceding decades. This capital amounted to 32 per cent (31.67 per cent) of the whole of the very large total to be vested in trusts during our entire period. At the same time, the Elizabethan legislation marking the close of the century lent even further stimulation to the flood of giving already well under way, with the consequence that the incredibly large proportion of almost 69 per cent of the whole was to be provided by donors in the course of the next two generations.

We have been discussing large capital sums settled in upwards of 6000 trusts over a period of almost two centuries. In many cases we know little about these trusts save for scant information provided by the will of the donor, the deed of gift, or the findings of a later commission of enquiry. In a far greater number of cases we know a fair amount regarding the circumstances of the founding of the trust but very little about its subsequent history. There remain a surprising number of instances when we have been able not only to secure quite full particulars regarding the establishment of the trust, but to trace its subsequent history to a fairly recent date. This group of trusts we should now examine in some detail.

There are in all 2121 of these trusts about which we have comfortably complete historical knowledge, these comprising almost exactly a third (33.51 per cent) of the total number which we know to have been vested in the course of our long period. This group of trusts possessed an

original, a founding, worth of £727,590 of capital value, assuming always, as we have earlier explained, a level interest rate of 5 per cent on trustee funds. These trusts were substantial, the average working out to £343 os 10d, this being capital wholly adequate for the endowment of an ambitious apprenticeship scheme or for the founding of an excellent provincial school. When one examines the evidence in county terms, however, very marked differences in the average worth of these trusts appear, ranging from £116 18s 7d in Worcestershire to the really amazingly high average of £616 13s 4d for Bristol and £634 11s for London.¹ We are, then, dealing with trusts of considerable size and very great social significance, though it must be stressed that any discussion of averages always conceals the interesting complexities on the fringes of the data. Thus it seems quite astonishing that a fifth of the trusts in this group, 435 in all, were in fact established with capital sums of £20 or less. Even when we take into account the immense erosion that has occurred in the purchasing power of money, these remain very small legal entities indeed to have been vested with the full powers, and responsibilities, which accrue to trustee funds.

It is also interesting to observe that in this group of trusts approximately the same proportion of the total capital had been vested prior to 1601 as was the case for the whole *corpus* of endowed funds in the counties under study. In all, 749 of these endowments were constituted before the close of the sixteenth century, this representing slightly more than 35 per cent (35·31 per cent) of the whole number, while the £212,430 of capital disposed by these trusts accounted for about 29 per cent of the entire sum to be accumulated in these endowments during our entire period. There are, it should be noted, rather marked differences in the proportion of trustee funds vested before 1601 when we

¹	Average worth of trusts	Number of trusts	Number of trusts with capital of £20 or less
	£		
Bristol	616 13 4	42	6
Buckinghamshire	312 1 4	105	40
Hampshire	231 18 3	104	32
Kent	191 1 1	436	112
Lancashire	449 4 9	97	6
London	634 11 0	542	67
Norfolk	203 1 4	263	45
Somerset	332 15 6	102	13
Worcestershire	116 18 7	184	60
Yorkshire	264 14 0	246	54
Totals	343 0 10	2121	435

(20·51 per cent of
total number)

examine the county particulars, ranging from not much more than 12 per cent for Hampshire to the remarkably high proportion of almost 40 per cent. for Bristol.¹ It is quite clear that the sophisticated device of the charitable trust was first extensively employed by knowledgeable urban donors, men who could command expert legal counsel, a fact which would become even clearer if the heavy endowments dispersed to, and counted in, the counties by London donors were separated for detailed comment.

We have also been interested in attempting to sort at least into very roughly defined categories the bewildering variety of trusteeships constituted by these donors, one would suppose on the whole with little or no legal counsel. The largest number, 471 in all, comprising somewhat more than a fifth (22·21 per cent) of the group, were established in trust as rent-charges on real property, with fixed sums to be paid annually to indicated charities, parish officials, municipalities, or other agents. These trust arrangements may well have seemed prudent when concluded, but they have, of course, fared very badly indeed historically as the purchasing power of money has declined. In numerous cases, and particularly in urban communities, fluid capital was gained and more advantageously invested by the redemption of these charges, often, it would seem, without the formal approbation of Chancery or the courts. But in the main these foundations, which were in most cases slight in total capital worth, gradually declined in social utility.²

	<i>Original worth</i>	<i>Total no. trusts</i>	<i>Total pre- 1601</i>	<i>Total no. 1601- 1600</i>	<i>Total worth of trusts founded pre-1601</i>	<i>Per cent of original worth of all trusts</i>
	£				£	per cent
Bristol	25,900	42	16	26	10,164	39·24
Buckinghamshire	32,767	105	22	83	9,569	29·20
Hampshire	24,119	104	18	86	2,998	12·43
Kent	83,322	436	166	270	19,711	23·66
Lancashire	43,576	97	22	75	8,757	20·10
London	343,925	542	291	251	108,759	31·62
Norfolk	53,407	263	90	173	18,053	33·80
Somerset	33,943	102	29	73	12,884	37·96
Worcestershire	21,515	184	35	149	5,960	27·70
Yorkshire	65,116	246	60	186	15,575	23·92
Totals	727,590	2121	749 (35·31 per cent)	1372 (64·69 per cent)	212,430 (29·20 per cent)	(29·20 per cent)

² It should perhaps be said here that a much larger number of capital gifts were made in the form of rent-charges which were not charitable trusts, the owner of the land having simply a legal obligation to pay the prescribed sum annually to a prescribed charitable cause or charitable trustee.

A second and also a large group of these charitable trusts were vested in private trustees under almost every conceivable kind of constitution and arrangement for securing the perpetuation of the feoffees. There were in all 402 of these trusts, or 18.95 per cent of the whole number, in which the details of trusteeship were set out in the will or the deed of gift. The original trustees were normally named by the donor, in number from two persons to one vast assembly of forty-seven, with careful provisions for new appointments when the number had dwindled to a prescribed level. Most of the large foundations were of this general type, while the trustees were not uncommonly at the same time responsible for the actual administration of the school, the almshouse, or some other institution founded under the deed of gift.

We have been most arbitrary in our definition of the next type of trusteeship, to which we have assigned almost as many, 397, of the trusts in the group under consideration. These were trusts in which the parish officers, the clergymen, and 'substantial inhabitants' of the parish were named as feoffees in an almost infinite variety of combinations. The parish itself, or, more accurately, its most respected and competent officers, was in these instances considered to be a corporation on which the trust might be imposed. In another 173 cases, or 8.16 per cent of the whole number, the municipal officers, in various combinations, were vested as feoffees in larger corporate towns and cities.

In our discussion of London we shall have occasion to deal at length with the extraordinary competence displayed by its livery companies as trustees of charitable funds. It is noteworthy that about 40 per cent of all London trusts included within the group under consideration were so vested, while the value of these funds amounted to almost 60 per cent of the total worth. By no means all the charitable estates so disposed were the gifts of donors who were also members of the livery, while thirty-two of these were trusts from other counties, accepted by the companies under trust covenants. In all, therefore, 253, or 11.93 per cent of the whole number of trusts in our group designated the highly skilled and the already notably responsible city companies as feoffees.

It seems rather surprising that in only thirty instances were existing charitable institutions, such as the universities or the great London hospitals, to undertake trust responsibilities for purposes or for beneficiaries lying outside their own sphere of activity and responsibility. The pressure on such famous and generally respected institutions was heavy to accept such responsibility, the prospective donor usually baiting his proposal with a suggested subsidiary gift or rent-charge, but save for these few instances such requests were declined. There remain 395 trusts, 18.62 per cent of the whole number, regarding which we have reasonably full historical particulars but for which we cannot speak with

certainty respecting the original trust constitution as arranged by the donor.¹

This large group of trusts is in average terms well over three centuries old. For the most part, the trust instruments were drawn before the law of charitable trusts was well formulated and before men of the western world had gained much experience in the administration of this extraordinary legal and social instrumentality. Most of these trusts were relatively quite small, many very small indeed, and most of them were entrusted to laymen possessed of no particular administrative experience or financial sagacity. None the less, so important has society conceived their purposes to be, so competent were the safeguards erected by the Elizabethan legislation, and so faithful has been the unbroken succession of unpaid and almost unnoticed feoffees that over this long span of time only 174 of the total number of these trusts have been lost, through negligence, or malfeasance, or merger with other funds. This means, of course, that only 8 per cent (8.20 per cent) of these trusts have disappeared; that perpetuity has in fact been largely achieved even for the smallest and most eccentric of these many endowments. But this presentation in fact exaggerates the inevitable, if nominal, losses that have occurred as a consequence of the erosion of time against human institutions, for those that have disappeared have on the whole been the small rent-charges and other funds almost too tiny to command fiduciary attention. When set out in capital terms, it may be said that of the original capital worth of £727,590, funds possessing an original value of only £11,702 is have been lost, which of course means that only 1.61 per cent of the capital worth has not been faithfully

1	<i>Total no. trusts</i>	<i>Trust types</i>						
		<i>Rent-charges</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Parish officers</i>	<i>Munici- palities</i>	<i>Livery cos.</i>	<i>Existing charitable corporations</i>	<i>Uncertain</i>
Bristol	42	18	5	3	16	—	—	—
Buckinghamshire	105	15	32	17	7	—	14	20
Hampshire	104	23	10	10	13	3	—	45
Kent	436	130	89	114	36	16	2	49
Lancashire	97	15	46	11	3	1	2	19
London	542	105	44	108	8	221	3	53
Norfolk	263	25	59	41	40	4	4	90
Somerset	102	30	23	31	7	—	—	11
Worcestershire	184	20	22	22	17	4	—	99
Yorkshire	246	90	72	40	26	4	5	9
Totals	2121	471	402	397	173	253	30	395

preserved. In London, Bristol, and Yorkshire the record of fiduciary responsibility has approached absolute perfection, since in these three regions not as much as 1 per cent of the original capital has disappeared. In point of fact, we greatly exaggerate the incidence of loss, inconsequential as it was, for in a great many cases we can say with certainty that these usually small funds were with the passage of time merged without legal authority with other capital, usually held by parishes or municipalities, vested for similar charitable uses. We may say with full confidence that we deal here with the most amazing record of fiduciary responsibility that the western world has ever known.

But this is by no means the full annal of the proud and fruitful record which English feoffees of charitable trusts have attained. These trusts were in most cases required to pay out the whole of income received, they have not been wholly exempted from the weight of taxation, and they have been administered through three centuries marked not only by violent economic dislocations but by a steadily mounting spiral of inflation. None the less, the original capital worth of £727,590 for this group of charitable trusts had increased at their last reporting dates to the staggering total capital sum of £10,549,387, a gain of 14.5 times in worth, which very possibly is not far off from the factor of inflation obtaining over the course of this long interval.¹ This really incredible record has been achieved despite the fact that a considerable proportion of these trusts were unfortunately frozen in rent-charges and though the increase in three of the counties that have remained predominantly rural has been within the relatively modest range of 203 per cent to 275 per cent. In Bristol, on the other hand, the capital worth of these funds has increased eleven times over as urban real property has risen steadily in value, while in Yorkshire and Lancashire the increase has been of the order of twelve and eighteen times over respectively as lands originally of modest value have vaulted in worth, first as minerals were found and exploited and then as urbanization spread across these once predominantly rural areas. The sprawling encroachments of London have been principally responsible for lifting the value of Kentish trust funds in this group by 1251 per cent, not to mention the fact that sixteen of the endowments of this county had been entrusted to the skilled hands of the city companies. London itself has had the proudest record of trusteeship, the original worth of £343,925 for this group of its funds having increased to the immense total of £6,736,396, or a rise

¹ We should say that these reporting dates range from 1808 to 1955. Most of the values have been derived from the Parliamentary Charity Commissioners' Reports, though for the larger trusts it has been possible to gain much more recent figures. Only a few of the reports are more than a half-century old. We need scarcely point out that we are here concerned with only a fraction of the whole of the trust funds established during our period and which have been treated in other connections in our discussion.

of nearly twenty times over. This incredible accomplishment has been the consequence of investment policies, particularly by the livery companies, which exhibited prudence tempered with daring and has principally been gained by successive commitments in land just ahead of the ever-expanding growth of the city. It is an accomplishment all the more remarkable because a large proportion of the improvements on land originally held by these 542 trusts were destroyed in the Great Fire, literally extinguishing more than a score of these trusts and very seriously impairing the resources of many more. But fire, pestilence, wars, and panics have not over a long span of three centuries seriously impeded good and faithful men as they have discharged with brilliance and steady purposefulness social burdens laid on them by men they never knew, but who like them were charged with a vision of a fairer habitation for all mankind.¹

¹	<i>Original worth</i>	<i>Latest worth</i>	<i>Per cent increase</i>	<i>Lost or merged</i>	<i>Original value lost</i>	
	£	£	per cent		£	s
Bristol	25,900	289,389	1017	1	10	0
Buckinghamshire	32,767	99,395	203	10	1,005	0
Hampshire	24,119	78,756	227	16	1,079	0
Kent	83,322	1,125,583	1251	38	2,403	0
Lancashire	43,576	799,859	1736	8	562	0
London	343,925	6,736,396	1859	29	3,061	0
Norfolk	53,407	376,269	605	12	1,200	0
Somerset	33,943	127,446	275	11	791	0
Worcestershire	21,515	144,241	570	17	954	0
Yorkshire	65,116	772,053	1086	32	637	1
Totals	727,590	10,549,387	1350 per cent	174 (8.20 per cent of total number)	11,702	1 (1.61 per cent of whole)

Law and Reality

From 1572 onwards local authorities in England had been legally empowered to levy rates to provide for the care of the hopelessly poor, while from 1597 onwards they were by law required to lay such charges upon their community in discharging a social obligation which the society had now formally undertaken. But as was so often the case with Tudor legislation, the law as debated and then prescribed at Westminster bore no precise or necessary relation to the realities of its administration in the thousands of parochial entities of which England was comprised. The fact is that the great codification of poor laws passed in 1597, and restated in 1601, was essentially prudential, having been drafted and passed by a government which liked to be fore-armed against all emergencies and which had been seriously frightened by the distress and the attendant disorders just prior to the convention of Parliament in 1597. The law was carefully and unambiguously drafted; a brilliantly conceived system of administration was established in which the remotest parish was linked with Westminster; and the whole realm was declared to be a single community of responsibility for the relief of poverty which threatened to overwhelm the private resources of any single locality. But the mechanism of relief thus created was intended as a system of co-insurance, as it were, when the normal resources which could be marshalled in any community had failed. The central authority very wisely contented itself with arming the local authority which it had created with plenary powers of levying and collecting taxes for the succour of the poor, but it made clear that it had no intention of intervening so long as any community resolved its problems in its own way.

The immediate, and perhaps the expected, consequence of the passage of this great *corpus* of legislation was a notable increase in the flow of private charitable funds designed to provide relief for the truly derelict and to attack the whole problem of poverty frontally by creating institutions which would effect its cure. We shall deal with this remarkable and certainly most impressive flood of charitable giving fully in later pages, but it may here be suggested that in the one generation following the passage of the Elizabethan poor laws rather more was given

for charitable uses than in the whole of the preceding four. A truly magnificent effort was undertaken by private charity in the six decades with which our period closes to raise up and endow institutions which would at last bring endemic poverty under control by effective relief and achieve its cure by an immense expansion of the area of social opportunity for all classes of men. The state stood poised for intervention after 1597, if the need should arise, but because of the prodigal generosity of private men who had assumed for themselves an heroic burden of social responsibility that intervention was in fact to be long delayed; delayed, it is fair to say, in its ultimately complete sense, until our own century.

Broadly speaking, therefore, the burden of social responsibility was to be borne by private charity in England throughout our period, the taxing power being reserved for emergency situations in areas overwhelmed by plague, local disaster, or acute economic stress. Save for one brief period, when, as we shall see, the Privy Council intervened with forceful but on the whole ineffectual activity, it may be said that no effort whatever was made to secure the general enforcement of the great statutes of 1597 and that in most regions of the realm the resources provided by private charity proved sufficient for the need. Since it has been commonly assumed that because the statute had been enacted it was generally enforced, we shall want here to deal with this matter at least briefly, while reserving a fuller discussion to a later study.

We may first review the interval 1572 to 1597 when, as we have seen, the parochial authorities possessed power to levy taxes for poor relief if compelling need should arise, though no fully articulated scheme of administration had as yet been arranged by law. The central authority was by no means disinterested in the problem of poverty during these years, having concerned itself quite steadily with efforts to control prices of the important food-stuffs, to secure the better distribution of staple foods in periods of shortage, and to conserve the national stock by setting fast days and discouraging conspicuous consumption.¹ Steady pressure was maintained on the local authorities to achieve the enforcement of the laws against vagabondage and begging, determined efforts were made to regularize and increase the voluntary collections for the poor ordered to be taken in every parish, and a stream of enquiry flowed out from the Council to the justices of the peace demanding information regarding the state of their poor and the measures being taken for their care.² But no general or sustained action was taken to require the local

¹ For instances, *vide Acts of Privy Council*, 1586-1587, 71-72; 1596-1597, 380-386; 1597-1598, 388-389; Yorkshire Archaeological Association, *Record Series*, III (1888), 84-87, 118.

² For examples, *vide Hist. MSS. Comm., Salisbury Papers*, VII, 118; XIV, 98-99.

authorities to resolve their problems by resort to the legally available solution of taxation.

An extensive study of parochial records in the ten counties with which we are concerned suggests that during this interval the ever-mounting flow of charitable benefactions for poor relief was the principal source of funds wherewith local needs were met, while in many parishes church ales, voluntary offerings, and incidental revenues were employed to buttress the system of household and almshouse relief so rapidly being formed by private generosity. When local disaster struck, whether because of bad harvest or outbreak of plague, the responsible authorities resorted to rates which they and those who paid them regarded as an emergency measure to carry the community through a period of crisis, also likely to be relieved by greatly increased private giving.¹

An examination of all the overseers' accounts as well as churchwardens' accounts available to us for the whole of England, with, however, somewhat closer attention to the ten counties with which we are concerned in this study, suggests that tax levies to aid with poor relief were by no means uncommon in the long interval from about 1560, when such accounts first appear in systematic form, to 1600, which we have taken as the effective date for the great legislation of 1597-1601.²

¹ There are in fact numerous instances of such impositions well before 1572. Thus in Cambridge in 1556, when an epidemic followed in the train of a poor harvest, the municipal authorities assessed a poor rate on the town. The mayor and vice-chancellor levied the assessment arbitrarily, following the principle that the richer parishes should bear most of the burden for the poorer. (Hampson, E. M., *Poverty in Cambs.*, 6-7; *VCH, Cambs.*, II, 90-97.)

² We should here comment on the method employed for this survey and on our treatment of the findings. All known printed overseers' accounts as well as churchwardens' accounts have been examined as have certain relevant masses of material in the *State Papers Domestic* and in the *Lansdowne Manuscripts*. But yielding far more have been the overseers' accounts thus far gathered from the parishes into numerous county archives. In four counties an effort has been made to work directly in all the parishes known to hold such accounts, but we are by no means certain that all have been seen, for in many cases parish officers simply do not possess adequate knowledge of their own holdings. A careful and complete census of overseers' accounts available before 1660 is badly needed and such materials, if they are ever to be effectively calendared and studied, should, of course, be gathered into the several county archives.

In all, we have found and examined overseers' accounts in twenty-seven counties. Overseers' records for our period have been found for 288 parishes, of which fifty-one were urban, all these being found in London or Norwich, forty-eight were from thirty-one market towns, and 189 from rural parishes. Many of these accounts were kept for quite short intervals, during periods of acute distress, and others, though cited, were so crudely or imperfectly recorded as to be almost unintelligible. In total, for the period 1560-1660 we have recorded rates and distributions reflecting 2348 annual levies for these parishes, suggesting that in average terms a parish compelled to impose rates during our period did so for a term of about eight years.

It should be added that our figures as presented are not wholly accurate,

During this interval assessments were ordered by the local authorities in 424 instances, the number of such parochial levies averaging about 10·6 for each year in the period. A total of £12,649 17s was raised by the overseers from various sources during the course of these years, of which more than two-thirds (£8716 19s) was derived from rates, while £3190 was gained from uncertain sources, and the remainder from outright gifts or endowed income available to the parish officers. These cautious custodians of funds did not expend the whole of the moneys available, having disbursed £11,904 6s for poor relief in the various parishes whose accounts we have examined. By far the largest distributions were in market towns, where a total of 66 assessments had been made and where £6822 11s was disbursed, or an average of £103 7s 5d in each year in which a levy was ordered. There were relatively few assessments noted in urban parishes and a surprisingly modest average outlay of £18 19s 2d in these instances. The number of rural parishes in which rates are known to have been levied is much larger, there having been 129 such annual assessments, while the average distribution in these relatively simple and homogeneous communities was no more than £5 14s 9d annually.

It seems doubtful that there were many more rates levied for poor relief in this interval than those we have found, while the structure of the levies suggests that they were imposed only in periods of acute local distress. Rather more than a fourth of them were imposed in parishes in the ten counties with which we are concerned, and it is most significant that in almost all cases they were levied in communities as yet without strong and effective charitable endowments. Moreover, such help as was afforded to the poor was regarded only as a subsistence payment to aid in a moment of acute family distress. The record of disbursements is incomplete in most parishes, but we can say that of the whole amount disposed £1339 5s was provided to meet the needs of 2616 individual paupers over this period of about forty years, or an average payment of no more than 10s 3d in each year for the support of a family in extreme distress.¹ Clearly, these payments were made only under circumstances

being drawn as they are from a most confused body of sources. The overseers were singularly unskilled in the arts of book-keeping, they rarely added a column of figures correctly, and they struck balances where balances simply do not exist. More troublesome is the fact that among receipts are mingled funds certainly from rates with funds clearly from charitable sources, while the source of still other considerable amounts remains wholly uncertain. It should also be emphasized that the funds credited in our analysis as from charitable sources in almost all cases reflect only those charitable incomes vested by donors in the churchwardens or overseers or income amounts specifically payable to them for distribution, the larger mass of endowments having been vested in independent trustees and the income paid quite separately to the recipients.

¹ These average amounts are not far off from those found by Emmison in his study of two Bedfordshire parishes in which rates were levied for poor relief

of great urgency and were designed to do no more than supplement the aid now beginning to be disbursed in generous sums by private donors. There was real and there was widespread suffering in Elizabethan England, but in so far as it was relieved it was principally from the hands of private donors.

From 1597 onwards the great Elizabethan poor laws, passed after careful debate and confirmed once more in 1601, were on the statute books, but were to remain only lightly enforced for a full generation as the immense flow of private charity in this remarkable period sustained the increasing social needs of the nation. In 1598 the Privy Council reminded all the justices of the peace of the recent enactments, while assuming that the judges on their last circuits had informed them of the great importance of the measures taken and of the intention of the government that they be put into force. They were accordingly instructed to discuss at their next quarter session ways and means of lending effect to the statutes and were reminded of the high trust imposed in them. But despite these and later representations, the evidence is clear indeed that there was no more than a slight increase in the amounts raised by rates for poor relief and that in almost all communities every possible expedient was exhausted before such levies were imposed. Nor did the government move with more than hortatory persistence to secure the enforcement of the law so long as the flow of endowed income or voluntary contributions was sufficient to carry local burdens which became progressively heavier during the early Stuart period.

In 1607-1608 the harvests were poor, prices were very high, and there were local disturbances reflecting the hardships of these months. Even so, the Council contented itself with issuing orders authorizing the justices of the peace to regulate and control grain supplies and commanding them to request the clergy to exhort their parishioners 'that the poore may be served of corne at convenient & charitable prices'.¹ Nor was any substantial effort made to secure the enforcement of the poor laws when from 1619 to 1622 there were meagre harvests just as the cloth trade found itself in a most severe depression. Instead, the traditional measures of exhortation, regulation of prices, appeals for private intervention, and proclamations concerned with public order were employed in an attempt to hold the economy at least relatively stable until nature afforded better harvests and the now much weakened

in this period. Mr. Emmison's study is a most valuable and pioneering work in this whole field of investigation, while his gathering of parochial accounts into the admirable county archive which he administers in Essex has greatly assisted us in this analysis. Emmison, F. G., 'Poor relief accounts . . . in Bedfordshire, 1563-1598', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, III (1931-1932), 102-116.

¹ *Orders appointed . . . for . . . remedyng . . . the dearth of graine* (L., 1608), 13.

cloth trade showed some measure of revival. Not only were few parishes rated, but one angry commentator held that 'there hath beene no collection for them [the poor], no not these seven yeares, in many parishes of this land, especiaillie in counties townes; but many of those parishes turneth forth their poore, yea and their lustie labourers that will not worke, or for any misdemeanour want to worke, to begg, filch, and steale for their maintenance'.¹

Though these were difficult years for many segments of the economy, years in which the new and dreadful phenomenon of industrial unemployment first made its appearance in England, they were also years of incredible charitable generosity. In the one generation, 1601-1630, as we shall later observe in detail, the climax of charitable giving in England was attained. During this brief interval upwards of £500,000 was provided in our ten counties for the various heads of poor relief alone, while very large amounts were also poured into a great variety of experiments seeking the social rehabilitation of the poor. There can be no doubt that it was this immense and fruitful flow of funds, largely vested in the enduring form of endowments, which carried the burden of poverty during these years and made it unnecessary to invoke generally the poor laws standing at hand in the event of national emergency.

This is not to say that rates were not levied on occasion in particularly distressed areas, usually to be suspended when an epidemic had passed or when the local economy had regained its stability. It is also apparent that through the course of this generation there was a gradual but a sustained recourse to taxation for poor relief, particularly in the market towns which suffered most from the collapse of the cloth trade. In the first decade (1601-1610) rates were imposed in 184 parishes for at least one year, a total of £8098 coming into the overseers' accounts, of which £6388 8s was certainly derived from taxation, £854 11s from charity, and £855 1s from uncertain sources. In these same parishes £7600 1s was disbursed by the overseers for poor relief, of which it may be noted a very large total (£5373 13s) was given out in the hard-pressed market towns. We can account in individual human terms for the disbursement of only a small proportion of the total paid out by the overseers from income in hand, this being the relatively small sum of £1553 3s which was disposed to 912 paupers, or a sharply higher average stipend of £1 14s 1d annually. This would suggest, of course, that, as a consequence of the Elizabethan poor law, in all the parishes in which overseers' accounts have been found and studied perhaps 4400 persons were in the course of this decade supported, if £1 14s 1d can be regarded as lending support against the wasting ravages of poverty.

In the second decade of the century the amounts received and dis-

¹ S[parke], M[ichael], *Greevous grones for the poor* (L., 1621), 14-15.

bursed by the overseers were substantially increased. The number of parishes imposing rates during these years range from sixteen in the first year (1611) to twenty-two in a year of rather acute economic unsettlement (1619) towards the end of the decade. In all, we have found overseers' accounts for 198 parishes in the course of this decade, of which eighteen were urban, ninety-nine market towns, and the remainder rural. A total of £11,970 4s was entered in overseers' accounts for this decade, of which by far the largest amount (£8393) was from parish rates, £2751 19s from charity, and £825 5s from uncertain sources. The overseers laid out payments for poor relief totalling £11,538 1s, of which £1039 13s was expended in the eighty-one rural parishes, the relatively very large total of £7921 14s in the ninety-nine market towns, and £2576 14s in the eighteen urban parishes. Once again, we can account for the ultimate distribution of only a small proportion of the whole outlay, £2559 4s having, we know, been disbursed to 1029 poor householders. This works out to an average annual distribution of £2 9s 9d for each impoverished household, an amount markedly greater than that prevailing in the previous decade (£1 14s 1d). Our evidence would most strongly suggest that this was occasioned by the fact that an increasing number of aged persons, especially widows, were now being permanently admitted to parochial relief rolls as pensioners and that the average length of time during which the able-bodied poor found themselves unemployed rose sharply, particularly in the market towns, during these years.

The curve of recourse to taxation for the support of the really derelict poor projects itself steadily upwards once more in the third decade of the century, the amount received and disbursed by the overseers in the parishes under study having again increased by something like 40 per cent. Overseers' accounts have been found covering at least one year for 251 parishes, the lowest number of impositions having occurred in 1623 when rates were levied in twenty-one parishes and the largest in 1630 when thirty-two parishes were obliged to tax themselves. In all, the considerable total of £16,645 12s was received by the overseers, of which £10,878 12s was derived from rates, £5124 19s from charitable income payable to the overseers, and £642 1s from uncertain sources, most of which, it seems safe to assume, was in the nature of voluntary contributions of one sort or another. The overseers paid out £16,246 9s for poor relief in the course of this decade, of which £5179 8s was disbursed in thirty-nine urban parishes, £8740 9s in 112 parishes in market towns, and £2326 12s in 100 rural parishes. We possess detailed information regarding the disposition of about 31 per cent of these disbursements. In all, £4983 5s was paid to 1891 poor householders, the average disbursement having risen once more to an annual stipend of £2 12s 8d, a considerably larger amount than that which charitable

donors of the period reckoned sufficient to lend at least subsistence support to a rural family. It would seem prudent to conclude that in the course of this decade something more than 6100 families were sustained and protected by rates in those communities in which overseers' accounts survive. This was by no means an insignificant contribution to human welfare, but it was insignificant indeed when compared with the vast support lent to the society by the huge aggregates of wealth being vested by private benefactors to curb and control the wasting scourge of endemic poverty.

The next decade, 1631-1640, is of particular interest because the government was to undertake in these years a vigorous, a systematic, and certainly a persistent effort to secure the enforcement of the Elizabethan poor laws on a national scale. The years 1629-1631 were marked by still another, and a severe, agricultural depression, accompanied by heavy unemployment in a number of regions dependent for their prosperity on the cloth trade. A proclamation and official *Orders* were issued in September, 1630, establishing local authorities charged with the regulation, the pricing, and the distribution of local stocks of the food grains and with seeing that the poor were provided at reasonable rates.¹ Even earlier, in May, 1629, a proclamation had commanded that the poor laws be enforced, while the assize judges were instructed to make enquiry on their next circuit regarding local arrangements which had been effected.

The Privy Council was faced with a difficult problem of policy, since Parliament had recently been stormily dissolved and since the King had taken a resolution to rule without benefit of its counsel and without recourse to its taxing power. A period of arbitrary government was being ushered in, just at the moment when the Council was persuaded that the social needs of the nation required the full and rigorous enforcement of a system of law and administration which depended in the last analysis on the support of the justices of the peace, men principally drawn from the politically dominant class in the realm which had been so recently and so generally estranged. Furthermore, the Council was itself weak, was seriously out of touch with opinion in the realm at large, and was to undertake a gigantic task of local administration with an administrative mechanism that had fallen into sad decay in the generation that had elapsed since Elizabeth had brought the arts of local governance to a pitch of high excellence. None the less, the decision was taken, principally, it seems certain, on the strong advice of Archbishop Laud and Wentworth, both of whom were particularly insensitive to political opinion and both of whom suffered from the tendency to assume that when an order was issued, a blueprint carefully drawn up,

¹ *Orders appointed . . . for the preuenting and remedying of the dearth of graine and other victuall* (L., 1630), 2-3, 9, 11-13.

successful administration and execution followed as a consequence of fiat.¹

This resolution was carried into formidable effect, involving the power and the attention of the whole Council, when in June, 1630, a special committee of the Privy Council was constituted as a commission for the poor, charged to bring fully into enforcement the *corpus* of the Elizabethan poor laws and to establish local commissions in areas where distress was particularly acute. Shortly afterwards, the conciliar committee divided itself for administrative purposes into six sub-committees responsible for regional areas coterminous with the several judicial circuits in order the better to follow in detail the progress of the social commitment which had been assumed.² This action was followed in January, 1631, by the drafting and publication of *Orders and directions* which recited and glossed in detail the existing statutes relating to poor relief and set out the method by which their enforcement was to be secured. All justices of the peace were required to form themselves into committees to ensure the administration of the law in each hundred and were to hold monthly meetings with the overseers, constables, and churchwardens who were charged with the ultimate responsibility for administration in the parishes. Neglect of duty was to be sternly punished and the justices of the peace were to render regular and detailed reports to the assize judges, who would in turn forward them to the Privy Council. The *Directions*, twelve in number, reviewed the principal terms of the Elizabethan legislation, setting out with clarity and no little eloquence the view that each community must assume full and unflinching responsibility for the care of its own poor.³

The Privy Council maintained continuous pressure on the justices of the peace to secure the enforcement of the poor laws from 1631 to 1638, during a period when the constitutional crisis was mounting steadily and the realm was drifting towards civil war. It must, indeed, have devoted a considerable proportion of its business time to a consideration of the enormous mass of returns that flowed in during these years from the harassed justices and to trying to secure at least formal returns from some eight counties which did not even deign to reply. There are upwards of 1200 of these returns from committees of justices responsible for individual hundreds.

An examination of these returns suggests that the Council was incredibly naïve in assuming that because a return had been filed the

¹ Lipson, *Economic history*, III, 450-451; Leonard, *Poor relief*, 150-154.

² *S.P. Dom.*, 1631, CLXXXII, 8, CLXXXIII, 60.

³ *Orders and directions with commissions for the better administration of justice* (BM Add. MSS. 12, 496, f. 243); printed, with changes, as *Orders and directions* (L., 1630). We have followed the first text in this analysis.

law was being enforced. The great mass of the returns are on their face evasive, vague, or misleading and could have given the Council little more solid information than they give us. Yet these returns, save in a few instances, were filed and accepted as meeting the requirements of the ambitious, indeed, revolutionary, policy to which the Council had addressed itself. In many areas from which returns were faithfully made we have certain knowledge that overseers had not even been appointed, in far more that rates were not being levied despite the inference that they were. In almost half the returns we are told that there were no poor who stood in need, that incidental fines levied and devoted to the poor were sufficient, or that local charities were quite adequate to carry the burden. Many justices reported most confidently that rates were about to be levied, which the Council seems to have taken as sufficient assurance. Other returns were stiffly and arrogantly couched, saying almost nothing save that local needs were being met by local resources and methods. This great body of material conveyed little solid information to the Privy Council and suggests most strongly that the central government was almost completely out of touch with those responsible for local administration. Laud and Wentworth had set for the Privy Council a gigantic task of administration at a time when the sovereign was proceeding with a hazardous experiment in arbitrary government that was doomed at the moment of the first national crisis. The letters and demands flowing out from the Council were imperious, wordy, and assured in tone, but they commanded little of respect, nothing but vagueness of response, from men of high local station who had a generation earlier been the principal pillars of monarchy but who were now its estranged and sullen enemies. The structure of sovereignty in England had crumbled well before the convention of the Long Parliament.

This conclusion, derived from a study of this huge and amazing mass of evidence, is most abundantly confirmed by our independent assessment of the overseers' accounts for this tragic decade. Amounts flowing into the overseers' accounts and amounts disbursed by them had from 1571 forward been rising on a remarkably stable curve from decade to decade and little more than this occurred in the decade under discussion.¹ It almost seems, indeed, that the Council's frenzied efforts were without any substantial consequence at all. In a considerable number of parishes we do know that rates were for the first time imposed, but there is reason for believing that in part this was the result of local needs which would have been met in this manner, the fussy and nervous insistence of the Council notwithstanding.

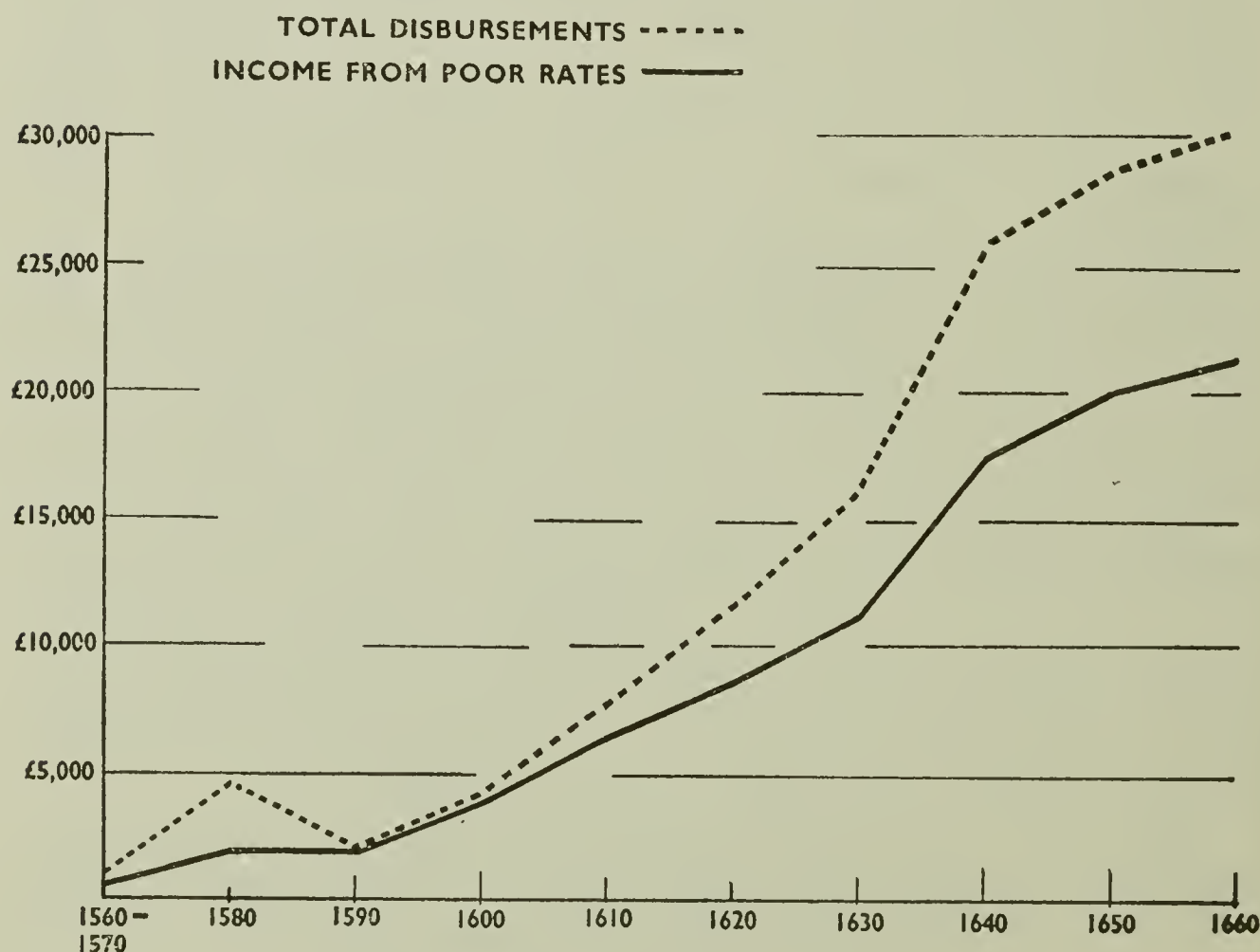
In the course of this decade 434 parishes in England levied poor rates in at least one year, the smallest number of assessments occurring

¹ See graph of overseers' accounts overleaf.

ironically in 1634 when the activities of the Privy Council were at their height and the largest in 1638 when weary experience, disillusionment, and serious political crisis had caused the Council to abandon its efforts to secure an enforcement of the poor laws on a national scale. In all, the overseers rendered accounts for receipts of £26,947 11s during these years, of which £17,262 15s. was derived from rates, £1609 5s from uncertain sources, and £8075 11s from voluntary contributions. Of this total, £25,841 9s was disposed by the overseers for poor relief, £9769 4s in thirty-two urban parishes, £3186 3s in 246 rural communities, and the large sum of £12,886 2s in 156 parishes in market towns suffering seriously from the economic crisis which marked these years. We have been able to trace out the distribution of almost half (48·77 per cent) of the whole amount disposed by the overseers, a total of £12,603 5s having been provided for 5453 needy persons. This works out to an average distribution of £2 6s 3d annually to each poor man, slightly less than in the preceding decade, and would suggest that something over 1100 families were each year being maintained and succoured by public funds in those communities where overseers' accounts have been found.

We shall in the course of this work have frequent occasion to comment on the remarkable stability of English institutions, or, perhaps one

OVERSEERS' ACCOUNTS, 1560-1660



could as accurately say, English habits, during the revolutionary decades with which this study closes. Save when there was disruption caused by actual hostilities or the presence of large bodies of troops, life in a rural parish or a market town seems to have proceeded in the usual patterns and local institutions to have continued to function as they always had. We shall note that the flow of charitable funds continued, though with some abatement, during the whole course of these two decades and that charitable endowments continued to be properly administered under the watchful eye of the central government, the courts, and interested local bodies. There was serious economic dislocation in much of England during the period of hostilities, but there is abundant evidence that so far as poverty and unemployment were concerned the requirements of the two armies for men, for transport, and for supplies tended to absorb the unemployed and actually to lift the general level of wages. Army pay considerably exceeded that commanded by ordinary labour, and the official complaint from Hertfordshire that its waggons were being drained off at twice the pay offered locally suggests the kind of inflationary process at work in much of England during this interval. At the outset of this period the King had somewhat plaintively commended to the realm the Elizabethan code of poor law which his Council had failed to bring fully into effect,¹ while a renewed and extremely vigorous sovereign power under the Commonwealth and Protectorate intervened actively and steadily to secure the administration of the laws relating to charitable trusts and to lay on the local authority the ultimate responsibility for the care of the poor.²

Nor does it seem to be true, as has been so uniformly said, that the administration of the poor laws collapsed or was gravely impaired during these years. The remarkable fact is that the level of receipts and of disbursements carried into the overseers' accounts even during the troubled decade of civil war rose substantially as compared with that reached in the preceding decade when the whole weight of the government had been brought to bear on the justices of the peace and the parishes, while in the decade of the Commonwealth and Protectorate overseers' receipts and disbursements were to increase once more. This is only one of the many myths which need to be dispelled with respect both to the policy of the Cromwellian government and, more impor-

¹ *A proclamation commending the due execution of the laws made for setting the poor on work* (1640); in *S.P. Dom.*, 1640, CCCCLIV, 12, and printed in full in Rymer, Thomas, *Foedera* (L., 1704-1735, 20 vols.), XX, 407.

² *S.P. Dom.*, 1650, IX, 45 (May 3) 3; XI, 10 (September 7) 13; 1651, XV, 43 (March 29) 2; XVI, 16 (July 28); 1652, XXIV, 113 (August 27) 9; 1653, XXXVI, 86 (May 21) 24; XLIII, 366 (September 6); 1654, LXXIII, 16 (July 6) 8, 9; LXXIV, 100 (August 21); 1655, C, 42 (August 22) 5; C, 55 (August 29) 16; 1655-1656, CXXIII, 8 (January 2) 1; 1659, CCIV, 33, 35 (September 20) 15.

tantly, to the effect of the revolutionary period on English life and institutions.

In the decade of civil war, 1641-1650, rates were levied for poor relief for at least one year in 401 parishes, the heaviest incidence occurring in 1650 when forty-seven overseers' accounts have been found and the lightest in 1643 when thirty-four parishes laid taxes for the purpose. The period of the heaviest and most continuous warfare did clearly take its toll, since the £1947 10s disbursed by overseers in 1642 and the £2314 12s expended by them in 1643 was markedly less than in any other year in the period. For the whole decade £28,913 12s was recorded as received in the accounts of the overseers, of which £19,657 14s was gained by rates, £7613 8s from voluntary gifts, and £1642 10s from uncertain sources. The overseers for these years reported outlays for the succour of the poor totalling £28,451 7s, or about £2600 more than the amount we have noted in the preceding decade. By far the largest expenditure was in 117 parishes in market towns, which accounted for £14,507 8s 5d, or nearly 51 per cent of the entire sum, while £6249 7s was disbursed in 250 rural parishes, and £7694 12s in thirty-four urban parishes. We can account in detail for the expenditure of about 29 per cent of the whole amount, £8210 1s having been employed to provide stipends for 3470 poor families in the given years, or an average of £2 7s 4d for each pauper receiving his support from public funds. This amount, it will be observed, is not far off from the average subsistence payment made in each decade from 1611 onwards, a remarkable stability in such payments having been maintained despite a steadily mounting inflation and the admission of an ever-larger proportion of permanent pensioners to the relief rolls.

The amounts raised and disbursed for poor relief by the enforcement of the Elizabethan code were to increase modestly during the closing decade of our period when political stability had been restored and when the revolutionary government in its turn brought at least moderate, though hardly sustained, pressure to bear on the local communities to discharge their responsibilities by taxation if charitable funds in hand proved to be insufficient. During these years the substantial total of £31,288 9s was raised by the overseers in 456 parishes, of which £20,879 16s was derived from rates, £7975 9s from charitable sources, and £2433 4s from uncertain quarters. The overseers disbursed in all £30,061 13s, the largest sum being £11,585 spent on poor relief in ninety-six market towns, or an average annual outlay in these communities of slightly more than £120. A total of £8983 10s was spent for the needs of the poor in 324 rural parishes, while a somewhat larger outlay of £9493 3s has been noted in the accounts of urban overseers. For this decade, we have the particulars regarding disbursement of well over half (55.89 per cent) of the total outlay, £16,802 12s having been

paid to 5934 poor men and women, or an average stipend of £2 16s 8d annually for each pauper. This outlay was somewhat higher than that noted in the preceding decade, very much larger than the £2 5s 1d which is the average overseers' disbursement during our entire period, and is likewise substantially greater than founders of charitable endowments assumed, again in average terms, was required to lend subsistence to a family for a year even in urban parishes. In part this rise may be attributed to a still greater proportion of disbursements made to pensioners, persons permanently deriving their support from public moneys, by the substantial inflation marking this period, and, at least in part, by a somewhat greater sensitivity to the needs of poor families, ranging just a little beyond the concept of maintenance on the plane of bare survival.

We may conclude, then, from substantial, though certainly incomplete evidence, that the Elizabethan poor laws were regarded as prudent by the government which enacted them and by later governments as well, save for the determined effort of the Privy Council to implement this great legislation just prior to the outbreak of the Civil War. It stood ready to be enforced in the event of great national emergency, but it was never brought fully to bear on social needs during our period because the immense flow of private charitable funds dedicated to the succour of the poor was, save for local and emergency exceptions, almost sufficient to meet the basic needs as the age understood and defined them. We have observed, however, that the law was gradually brought more fully into effect as our period progresses, although in all parishes where rates were levied they were regarded as no more than supplementary to the permanent charitable provisions which private donors were creating in every corner of England. But at no time in our period were the sums raised by rates substantial or particularly significant when compared with the great amounts available as a consequence of the ever-mounting endowments created by private generosity.

To lend further support to this conclusion we may take the year (1650) in which the largest disbursements to the poor were made by the overseers. In this year £4306 5s of payments are recorded, the funds supporting the outlays having been derived from £3269 12s in rates, £266 6s from uncertain sources, and £906 17s from voluntary contributions, or £4442 15s of income in all. If we may assume, and it is most unlikely, that the revenues from uncertain sources were also from rates, a total of £3535 18s was in this year raised by taxation in those parishes in all parts of England about which we have certain knowledge. This amount, and the somewhat larger amount paid out by overseers, may properly be contrasted with the income available, and expended, in our ten counties alone from the endowments which had by the close of our period been established for household relief and for the support of

many hundreds of almshouses. The income disbursed for household relief in the parishes of our counties, and in other counties as their gift, was about £30,525 p.a., while for the support of almshouses massive endowments had been constituted yielding something like £20,870 to secure the full maintenance of those who were irrevocably derelict. In all, then, something over £51,000 was annually available for distribution by private trustees, city companies, parish officials, including overseers, and many other trustees, by a nation which had performed a kind of miracle in mustering great charitable wealth from most generous private sources in an heroic and largely successful effort to deal with a problem as old as history itself.¹ This resolution and this effort had been supplemented and strengthened by prudential legislation, by the setting forth of an ultimate public responsibility undergirding the private resolution, which had not in the course of our period to be brought fully into force and which in fact made relatively no more than slight direct contribution to the social needs of the age.

By the most liberal analysis of the data this would seem to suggest that in no year prior to 1660 was more than 7 per cent of all the vast sums expended on the care of the poor derived from taxation.² We believe that this is not far from the mark for England as a whole, in great areas of which rates for poor relief were never levied at all. But it is not, of course, true in those parishes for which overseers' accounts have been found in the ten counties with which we are concerned. Excluding, as we should, thirteen parishes in London and Middlesex which together possessed huge charitable endowments, in part vested for the relief of other areas, we have within our group of counties found overseers' records in seventy-nine market towns and rural parishes where in all 822 annual assessments were made for the care of the poor. A few of these were parishes well endowed for poor relief but which were obliged to levy rates for supplementary needs because of famine, fire, or acute economic distress. But this group of parishes generally were among the poorest in their respective counties, most of them being areas of social blight, as we shall describe them in the detailed county analyses in later volumes. They were, then, typically parishes with far less than average charitable resources, communities which were wanting in strong local leadership and often with no resident gentry. Nevertheless, taking in every instance the year (1650) in which the largest amount was raised by rates, even in this group of marginal parishes, the sums available for the needs of the poor from charitable endowments

¹ For a fuller discussion and elucidation of these estimates, *vide post*, 253-263.

² We have in our reckoning of the amounts available from charitable sources included only income from endowed (capital) funds. There was as well a steady flow of outright gifts and doles for immediate use, amounting, it may be noted, to £627 6s in our ten counties in the year 1650.

exceeded by slightly more than three times the amounts gathered by taxation for distribution by the overseers. It would seem, therefore, that the Elizabethan legislation was in a general sense prudential, and that broadly speaking it was invoked only in those areas in which private charity, for a variety of reasons, had failed to bring communities level with the realm at large in their social resources.¹

Though, in general, it may be said that the poor laws were not invoked because they were not needed, because private charity bore almost the whole of the great burden of poor relief prior to 1660, it must also be said that they were enforced in any community only as a last resort, for these rates were extremely unpopular and they were most difficult to raise until time and experience had established local habits and until innumerable judicial decisions had fixed the pattern of their administration. In almost every parish where rates were levied there was a swarm of angry and outraged complaints regarding the rating methods, the probity of the overseers, and urgent denials that the poor were not already well provided. There are hundreds of complaints from overseers of outright refusals to pay assessments and many scores in which a rich parish simply declined to pay even a light assessment for the relief of another in the same hundred hard hit by plague or poverty. This enormous body of obdurate complaint flowed from the overseers to the justices of the peace, who did their best in quarter sessions to adjudicate in terms of local traditions and knowledge, often with scant regard for the crystal-clear prescription of statute law. But many cases they referred on to the assize judges or directly to the Privy Council, especially in the Laudian period when refusals to pay poor rates ordered from above took on some of the ugly political aspects of refusal to pay Ship Money rates in these same years. The life of a justice of the peace was hard in those hundreds where levies were made, that of the overseers intolerable and on occasion perilous. The countryside resisted these rates as best it could, though they bore but lightly upon the individual property owner, in part to be sure because they

¹ It should once more be emphasized that the figures we have used for amounts raised for poor relief are limited to the amounts set out in the overseers' accounts which we have found. These figures are necessarily incomplete, so any attempt to project them by computation to the whole of England would be pointless. There has, in any case, been far too much of wild conjecture on the whole subject. Willet (*Synopsis papismi*, 1220) believed that from £30,000 to £40,000 p.a. was being raised by taxation for poor relief in *ca.* 1613, certainly far too high an estimate. Thomas Ruggles, adducing no evidence whatsoever, suggests a figure of £188,811 p.a. in 1650 (*History of the poor*, L., 1793, 2 vols., I, 168–169). The first credible estimate is for 1696 when poor rates were probably yielding as much as £400,000 p.a., but this bears no relation to the realities for our period. The poor laws were widely enforced after 1660, as the flow of private charities began to diminish and as the economy became at once more complex and erratic.

were taxes, in part certainly because they were untraditional, but one senses even more importantly because for a parish to be rated was an admission of local failure to meet responsibilities which men of this age had come to agree they should freely and fully meet from their own resources as citizens of a Christian and a civilized community.

VI

The Impulse

A. GENERAL COMMENT

1. *The problem of motives*

We have observed that broadly speaking the whole elaborate apparatus of the Elizabethan poor laws was never brought fully into operation at any time during the course of our era and, save for a brief period of fairly extensive trial under the somewhat excited direction of Archbishop Laud, was never generally tried at all. The burden of responsibility for the care of the poor and for the enlargement of social opportunity was borne by private charity which created massive endowments for the founding and fashioning of the basic institutions of the liberal society. The great *corpus* of Elizabethan law was, as we have seen, a prudential system, framed to protect the society and the state against the threat of social disaster which might have become very real indeed had not private men acted so quickly, so generously, and so intelligently as they addressed themselves to the mastery of the transcendent problems of their age. The state had taken the necessary resolution to move into a vast area of need when circumstances should require, but a whole system of ideas, of ideals, and of institutions which we describe as liberal resulted from the fact that a great outpouring of private wealth dedicated to social ends made any substantial sovereign intervention unnecessary. An historical decision of very great moment was perhaps unwittingly taken by private donors of all classes, but most importantly by those of the merchant élite, which initiated not only the fashioning of adequate social institutions for the nation but also the fashioning of an ethic of social responsibility which was to be the hall-mark of the liberal society. Very generally, one may say that the bulwarks raised by private generosity against poverty, disease, ignorance, and impotence remained sufficient until they were overwhelmed by the forces loosed by the Industrial Revolution, which in England and the western world made necessary the direct and ultimately the massive intervention of the state in order to ensure the welfare, perhaps the survival, of large masses of men chronically in danger from, when they had not been rendered permanent casualties by, the complex society which is the modern industrial economy. Surely it is not too much to say that our

ideals and our social ethic are still largely an inheritance from the earlier age with which this study is concerned. Men of our generation do not fully realize that an immensely significant social revolution has occurred over the course of the past century which has left them all citizens of a welfare state. This encompassing historical reality must in turn require from our society an accommodation in ideals, in social and political theory, and doubtless in institutions which may well move it far from the bases upon which it has reposed since the seventeenth century. The Elizabethan poor laws were prudential; in a very true sense we may say that mankind did not have fully to impose them until our own generation.

We are now concerned with an analysis of the motives which, as it were, impelled men to save their society from the state, albeit with the almost frantic encouragement of the central authority. What, in brief, were the impulses which caused a relatively small group of private donors to undertake in the course of our period, one can almost say in a period of about two generations, such a vast burden of social responsibility for a society which stood in considerable peril? We are here concerned at bottom with an analysis of human motives, with an area of reality in which the historian moves with great uncertainty and without the sure guidance of neatly ordered fact. Our question, quite exactly put, is what caused men to perform essentially noble, self-sacrificing actions, and particularly why they were considerably more inclined to do so in the rather tightly defined interval of a century extending from the accession of Queen Elizabeth to the restoration of the monarchy than in any other period before or since. We do here concern ourselves with human motives, and about them we can never speak with comfortable assurance. This is true, of course, even when we seek coolly and dispassionately to examine the moving forces underlying our own actions, our own decisions, and most particularly those occasional deeds of ours which may be believed to embrace some elements of nobility. What really animates our action when we subscribe to a hospital fund, endow a scholarship, found a college, or give casual alms to a passing beggar? Such benevolent actions, we may suppose, are at bottom taken because we are subtly subject to the pressures of a culture which regards such actions as worthy. They are in one sense, therefore, not free actions at all, but are a tithe levied upon our means by the ethic of a society of which we are part and to which we all must in greater or lesser degree conform. But even if this be so the fact does not explain the true springs of our action, does not, as it were, elucidate and illumine the moment of decision. This most essential datum remains buried deep in the recesses of our nature, immune, perhaps happily, from the fumbling probing of the historian and, certainly happily, from the too arrogantly pitched enquiry of the psychoanalyst.

These difficulties of analysis, of arriving at understanding, are, needless to say, enormously increased as we seek to assess the impulses which moved men to generous and noble actions in a much earlier age. Not understanding the wellsprings of our own actions carries no impressive certification for discovering the motives for action in another and very different era. Moreover, this difficulty is greatly increased by the fact that we are dealing with an interval of time in which there was a profoundly important and most massive shift in the structure of men's aspirations for their society, when many men were taking great charitable decisions which did not enjoy the general approbation of their society, when they were evidently moved by impulses of nonconformity rather than of conformity. It is quite precisely this metamorphosis in men's aspirations from the needs of the religious society to the requirements of the secular society that principally concerns us, with the result that we must probe for motives which ran against an ethic prevailing in the western world for a very long time. To pose this question more explicitly and in humble, and hence perhaps in the ultimately important, form, just why did it occur that the customary bequests from husbandmen in Somerset of a few pence for the needs of their parish church give way at about 1580 to equally customary legacies of a few pence for the parish poor? It was certainly not that there were suddenly more poor or that the church stood in less need. Something had happened to the motives, the moving aspirations, of very simple men in a remote county just as it had happened to richer and more socially sophisticated classes of men a generation or more earlier. In the broader sense, in terms of large masses of men, we believe we do understand what had occurred; we remain very uncertain indeed when we seek to discover the springs of action forming and then dictating the immensely significant decision in 1581 of John Broocke, husbandman, of Winford, Somerset, to leave 4s for the needs of the poor of his parish rather than to give modestly to the needs of his parish church as his ancestors had before him.

Yet it must be said that even in this area of historical concern we are not without impressive resources of knowledge. As we have already had occasion to say, men of our period were verbosely eloquent when the solemn moment came to draw their wills and to order their charities. In this deeply religious age men composed their wills and testaments in the sight of God and in a large number of cases they sought, perhaps as honestly and as fully as men have ever done, to explain and even to examine the motives which underlay and enforced their actions. Thus very typically indeed, a London merchant by will founding and endowing a grammar school in Lancashire not only explains at length the reasons for his zealous hatred of ignorance and illiteracy but tells us why he has chosen to found an important social institution in a par-

ticular and a remote community. The motives, the impulses, undergirding action are then commonly explicit in the wills and deeds of gift of these thousands of donors who were creating a new society in the image of their own aspirations, just as they may be said to be implicit in the multitude of smaller gifts for which only scant information survives.

2. *Metamorphosis of the mediaeval conception of alms*

Before turning more precisely to a consideration of the great moving forces which were to elicit and to order an immense outpouring of charitable wealth in our period, it will be well to review very briefly the principal historical movements which had created an environment in which the great metamorphosis of men's aspirations might occur. Thus we have observed that the decay of the mediaeval society created a social crisis which could not for long be ignored by sensitive and responsible men, while at the same time this very process of decay hastened the end of the mediaeval system of alms which had been inadequate for the needs of an earlier era and which stood irrelevant to the requirements of the sixteenth century. We shall have many later occasions to point out that few indeed of the truly charitable mediaeval institutions, the almshouses, the schools, and all the rest, that survived at the close of the Middle Ages were harmed by the swift and ruthless process of the revolutionary movement which we call the Reformation. They were on balance rather strengthened, improved, and extended, principally by private charity, while generally speaking they were all wrenched free of ecclesiastical control as part of the violent process of secularization then under way in every aspect of English life and institutions.¹ The pitifully few remaining charitable assets were on balance nurtured and rendered more relevant to the needs of a new age. But, as we shall see in county after county, there were few indeed that had survived the long process of the death of an earlier society. Men of the sixteenth century had of necessity to begin to build their institutions *de novo*, and they built in accordance with the requirements of a new and a very different conception of social architecture.

It perhaps simplifies a process of social change far too much to say that men of the Middle Ages gave alms as an act of piety while men of the sixteenth century gave, and much more generously, under the dictate of social need. Yet the evidence runs most persuasively with the statement. Mediaeval alms were on the whole quite indiscriminately given, quite sentimentally disposed, without much reference either to the present need of the recipient or his future fate. The most perfectly typical forms of mediaeval alms were those given to beggars at the monastery gates and those disbursed wholly indiscriminately under the

¹ Tawney, *Religion and the rise of capitalism*, 217; Ashley, *English economic history*, II, 327.

terms of the will of a rich prelate or noble as funeral doles. This whole pattern of almsgiving, which was probably insufficient if not harmful even during the high Middle Ages, was coming to an end well before the Reformation and was almost forgotten a generation later. At the same time, we shall observe an immediate and an immense burgeoning out of benefactions for poor relief, secular in form and intent, addressed to the control, if not the cure, of poverty, and designed to relieve the conscience of a society which had come quite suddenly to regard poverty as a social evil and as a danger to the strength and well-being of the realm. We have in earlier pages discussed at some length the really rapid development of this new attitude which supplied one of the most important of the underlying motives for private charity.

3. *The changing pattern of aspirations: secularization of the charitable impulse*

In later pages we shall deal in detail with the profoundly important shift from men's concern with the needs of organized religion to the human needs which they saw in the world around them. But here it is well at least to note that this great translation in their interests and aspirations had the effect of immensely enlarging the sphere of their responsibility. The mediaeval church was in many senses an institution offering to men no more than a vicarious opportunity for the exercise of their philanthropic impulses. Alms, it was taught, were better distributed to the needy through the good offices of the church; the derelict were better provided for through hostels and hospitals administered and oriented by the ecclesiastical authority. The objects of the pious concern felt by donors were accordingly once removed from the act of generosity, while the effectiveness of ecclesiastical charity, subserving as it did the ends of faith, came with cause to be doubted by laymen quite untouched by heresy. In London, for example, education was for many years a closely guarded ecclesiastical monopoly, proof even against other ecclesiastical competition, with an inevitable freezing of the sources of rich and ready lay assistance for a need which had by 1500 reached a state of scandal. Merchant wealth for almost a century before the Reformation poured out from London in mounting streams for the founding of grammar schools in the provinces, with in most cases scarcely concealed efforts to secure these foundations as nearly as possible against clerical control. When the weight of ecclesiastical control was lifted in London itself by the revolution which began with Colet and ended with the Reformation, the task of forming the school resources of the great city was well begun within a generation and in terms of sixteenth century needs all but completed by the close of the second generation. The triumph of secularism had, then, its liberating aspects; it cleared the way for the free play of imagination and daring in meeting

the needs of mankind; and it placed in the hands of men who were as bold as they were generous instrumentalities for the attainment of their aspirations for their own age and the age to come.

4. *The logic of the need*

Surely, too, the impulse of charity owed much to the ever-clearer evidence of grievous social need which marks the unfolding of the sixteenth century. We have previously dealt at length with this question,¹ having observed that aid was at once more urgently required than in earlier generations and that the fact of need was informed by a rapidly maturing social conscience. Because secularism triumphed with the Reformation it meant that the society had assumed a vast responsibility and concern which had been left in priestly hands before and that the forces of social evil and rot could no longer be ignored. This awareness of need, this increasingly sensitive concern, likewise owed much to the warm and persuasive eloquence of the great preachers of the Reformation, clustering around the heroic genius of Latimer, who angrily denounced Rome and the forces of poverty in the same breath and who set for Protestantism perhaps impossibly high standards of moral attainment in the very generation of its emergence. Latimer and his brethren were often ill-informed, always overly dramatic, and ever better moralists than social commentators, but they literally bludgeoned into the English conscience an awareness of new and pressing responsibilities which it was never quite to renounce again.

But even if he convicted the sixteenth century for depopulations which had mostly occurred in the fifteenth, Latimer none the less was profoundly perceptive in his understanding that men of his age must come to grips with an ancient evil which had appeared in new and sinister forms. We have seen that the sixteenth century was marked by an immensely important agricultural revolution and by the inevitable dislocations accompanying the rapid spread of industry and urbanization. New and marginal classes of men emerged, bereft of the sanctuary of land and instantly vulnerable to seasonal or cyclical unemployment. It was a poverty wanting in the possibility of any dignity; it was a creeping, mobile poverty that could never be quite confined to the region of its origin; and it was a poverty which bred the possibility of social disorders born of hopelessness. Contemporary observers who were at once responsible and unsentimental believed that there were forces loose in the land which might bring the realm to the brink of social disaster, and, as we have seen, Parliament in 1597 itself thought that this time had come. This awareness of acute need, need no longer sustained either by the community of the land or by the ministrations of the priest, supplied an immensely powerful impulse to charity. And it

¹ *Vide ante*, 56-76.

was private charity, flowing out as it did into every nook and corner of the land, which saved England at once from social disaster and from the necessity for the intervention of the state on a massive scale. The secular spirit of mankind won for itself a notable triumph in this first great trial of its strength and its sense of social responsibility.

5. The confirmation of national policy

The understanding which men of the sixteenth century came to have of large areas of national need was animated, as it was disciplined, by Tudor social and economic policy. The three great Tudors, whose reigns encompass more than a century of our period, all possessed an extraordinary sense not only of the needs of their age but of its historical direction. They assessed with rare wisdom the social and economic tensions of the century and then lent strong and intelligent support to those countervailing forces which would afford relief. Above all else, these great monarchs were extremely sensitive to all threats of disorder, to all those pressures which threatened the security and power of the Crown. It is very clear indeed that their steady concern with the eroding poverty of their age proceeded not from any sentimental concern for the poor but rather from an astute understanding that unrelieved and uncontrolled want constituted a grave threat to the stability of the realm. It is not too much to say that the Tudors viewed charity as a necessary aspect of public policy rather than as a requirement of Christian morality.

We have previously observed that the whole weight of Tudor policy was secular and that discreet but sustained support was lent by the Crown to a process of social revolution already well under way. Most of the institutions of the realm, including the church itself (one is almost tempted to say), were to be completely secularized in the course of the sixteenth century. Thus it was that the whole range of institutions wherewith the society was sustained and bettered were rebuilt when they were not freshly constituted by private and intensely secular charitable funds which flowed into channels opened up by national policy. Thus, for example, the pressing problem of poverty was transferred from the sphere of religion to that of secular social policy and came by the close of the century officially to be declared the responsibility of the whole body politic. The full authority of the Crown and the effective powers of its principal agencies were accordingly ranged in support of the impulse for private charity, which it was hoped might prove sufficient to bear the ever heavier social burdens of a new age.

The direct concern of the Crown with the social needs of our period is well illustrated by the increasing number of charitable briefs directly promulgated for a variety of worthy causes. These royal warrants for the collection of funds for specified charitable purposes were a secular

replacement of the earlier papal briefs, perhaps the earliest example being that issued in the form of letters patent by Henry VIII to assist the prior and monks of Kirkby (Leics.) in raising funds for the rebuilding of their priory. We have counted in all some eighty-three of these royal warrants for general charitable purposes, excluding a considerable number granted for the relief of particular persons. The secular temper of the age is suggested by the fact that only twenty of these briefs authorized collections for the repair or rebuilding of churches, usually after a fire or some other local disaster, or for some more general religious need, most of these being concentrated after 1606. There were, as well, numerous briefs issued for the relief of persecuted Protestants abroad, by far the most important being the collection made in 1655 for the relief of the Protestants in the Vaudois and in Poland, when the huge sum of £51,532 17s 8d was raised in a national effort in which most intensive propaganda was employed. The largest number, thirty-one in all, were authorized to secure the relief of communities which had suffered from fire or to assist in the carrying forward of needed municipal betterments such as bridges, causeways, and havens. All the remainder were addressed towards some scheme of social rehabilitation, the relief of the poor in a particularly distressed community, or for miscellaneous public purposes.¹

These charitable interventions of the state were, of course, relatively unimportant and occasionally most eccentric indications of national policy with respect to the expanding social needs of the national community. They were, in point of fact, no more than visible tokens of a vast intervention which the state had reluctantly undertaken for the social welfare of the nation in the slowly accumulating legislation which was at last forged into a system in the codifying statutes passed towards the close of the great Queen's reign. These laws, as we have noted, were designed as no more than emergency measures to be employed and implemented when the social fabric of the nation should be endangered by forces too powerful for policy to master or for private charity to ameliorate. They were posited on the assumption that the responsible, the dominant, social classes of the realm would in ordinary seasons bear the burdens not only of social relief but of social betterment; that private men would with their own means build a society according to the designs framed by their own aspirations. These vast obligations were

¹ It should be noted here that these collections, with the single but important exception of the moneys raised for the repair of St Paul's, have not been included in our totals save when the amount contributed from the counties with which we are concerned can be established. In only relatively few instances, in fact, are the particulars available regarding the amounts raised in these charitable canvasses. Excellent discussion of this whole matter may be found in Ping, L. G., *Raising funds for good causes during the Reformation* (L., 1936) and in Bewes, W. A., *Charity briefs* (L., 1896).

undertaken principally by two classes of men, the mercantile aristocracy and the gentry, classes which enjoyed the steady confidence and favour of the Tudors and on whose loyalty and devotion the whole edifice of Tudor power and policy had been erected. These relatively small classes of men, vigorous, articulate, and intelligent, possessed an astute understanding not only of the needs of their age but of the direction in which the forces of history sloped. In the sixteenth century we shall observe a steady translation of responsibility to these classes, to be followed in the seventeenth by an inevitable translation of power. The Tudors not only understood but they assisted this whole process of historical change, which to their tragic undoing the Stuarts almost blindly and uncomprehendingly resisted. Power, as history has so often demonstrated, flows inevitably to those unafraid to assume the burdens of responsibility.

B. THE GREAT MOVING IMPULSES

I. *The emergence of the Protestant ethic*

We have been dealing with the broader historical background from which the powerful impulses of private charity sprang during the course of our period and which framed and ordered men's aspirations for their age. We should now seek to analyse somewhat more specifically the great moving forces which evoked the immense outpouring of charitable funds and which, it is not too much to say, founded and brought to a remarkable maturity the basic social institutions of the liberal society. We shall have later occasion abundantly to demonstrate that the structure of men's aspirations became increasingly secular and that the institutions endowed as a consequence lent massive, perhaps decisive, support to the secular forces which were to master English policy well before our period closes. Yet it must be understood that the huge accumulations of charitable funds, the whole framing of the social institutions of the age, and the impulses which moved men were firmly and deeply rooted in the Protestant ethic which had itself been brought to an almost precocious maturity before the close of the sixteenth century. The Protestant Reformation in England, proceeding as it did quite independently from the decorous and prudent formulations of official statement, was in its nature revolutionary, in most important respects anti-clerical, and in its social consequences deeply imbued with secularism. This process of reformation affected the lay mind more profoundly than it did clerical and governmental policy, having as one of its most formidable aspects the earnest denunciation and repudiation of the whole Catholic apparatus of alms, of social inaction dominated by clerical policy, and of a generally conservative attitude towards broad areas of social responsibility. The surviving mediaeval social institu-

tions were weak and attenuated indeed at the beginning of our period; the reformers were prone to deny with great eloquence that they had ever existed at all in any effective form. There is real and there is deep hatred of the Catholic social and cultural past in the great and persuasive preaching of Latimer, of Lever, and of Hooper in the first generation of Protestantism, which animates as well most evangelical preaching during the two generations that were to follow. There was hatred and there was also an historical repudiation. The preachers and the lay moralists alleged that there was a social, as well as a spiritual, vacuum in English life which must be filled by private charity and by a broad assumption of responsibility for an immense range of social needs.

Though the great preachers lent their aid and animated it with their zeal, the Protestant social ethic which was forged in the course of the sixteenth century was none the less profoundly secular in its spiritual concerns. It was encouraged and employed by an intensely secular government likewise preoccupied with the great social needs to which a deeply moved laity now addressed its energies and its wealth. The range of this really herculean effort was as broad as the society itself, though, as we have seen, it was from the outset to be concentrated on the succour of the poor by an immense widening of the base of social responsibility and the systematic relief of poverty by a variety of institutions wholly dominated by lay control and leadership.¹ The Protestant clergy, being Calvinist, could not argue that good works were necessary to grace, but they did hold with a most persuasive and sustained vehemence that good works were an authentic and a necessary fruit of grace categorically demanded of His saints by God. Thus the grounds so quickly and firmly established for the relief of poverty and the enlargement of social opportunity were moral in their nature, while public policy buttressed moral resolution by support springing from an intelligent appraisal of the requirements of civil order and well-being.² The Calvinist not only said but he believed that we are but stewards of wealth for which we are accountable to God and that our means must be so used as to 'tend to Gods glorie, and the salvation of our soules'. Indeed, a great preacher could hold that the fact of wealth and the necessity of charity are inseparable, for almsgiving 'is the best kinde of thrift or husbandry . . . it is not giuing, but lending, and that to the Lord, who in his good time will return the gift with increase'.³ This view of charitable obligation was remorselessly and deeply etched into the English conscience by a host of Calvinist divines, of whom Perkins may again be taken as the exemplar, when in the language of the

¹ White, H. C., *Social criticism in popular religious literature of the sixteenth century* (N.Y., 1944), 255-285.

² Wright, *Religion and empire*, 152.

³ Perkins, 'Of diuine or religious worship', in *Works* (1605), 862.

counting-house he presses the point that 'a man upon good securitie lends to another an 100. pounds, hoping for the principall with the increase at the yeares end: yet dare not he skarse deliuer an 100. pence to the poore members of Christ vppon the promise and bonde of God himselfe'.¹ So strongly and powerfully were men persuaded of this view of the requirements of stewardship that Edward Dering, a noted Puritan divine, could stoutly and consistently oppose the poor laws of the mid-Elizabethan period on the grounds that they tended to weaken the moral responsibility which wealth must bear for poverty and need. Men, he said, are made rich for no other reason than that they may give to the poor. This social responsibility, he maintained, was direct, was personal, and must not be vitiated by an effort to spread it over a whole polity. If men of substance decline to assume their moral duty by the voluntary support of their needy brethren, the poor should be assigned to them in direct proportion to their wealth.²

This view of the charitable responsibility of the substantial members of the society was well established within a generation after the advent of the Reformation and was generally accepted by the close of the sixteenth century. As we shall see, it was held with particular tenacity by those small but most powerful classes, the merchants and the gentry, which for complex reasons were steadily gathering wealth and a dominant position within the society as the rule of the Tudors wore on. In these classes particularly the habit of substantial charity, vested largely for secular purposes, got itself well established by the beginning of the Elizabethan period. Men of these classes had come to assume a large and an essentially aristocratic measure of responsibility which very few of their number failed generously to implement as they ordered their affairs towards the close of their lives. Thus it was that in the early seventeenth century the failure of a London merchant to settle some substantial and conspicuous charitable trust or gift was generally regarded as little short of shocking unless there had been a grievous wasting of the estate because of age, ill-health, or commercial misfortune. A powerful tradition of charitable responsibility had gathered strength within these two rich and aggressive classes which resulted in a golden stream of wealth that spread its way through the many channels of need opened during this remarkable period.

The importance of this phenomenon of habit, of the tradition of social responsibility, cannot be too strongly stated. We have observed in many hundreds of parishes that one substantial foundation of say

¹ Perkins, 'How to live', in *Works* (1605), 581.

² Strype, *Annals*, II, 279-281. Dering (1540?-1576) was educated at Christ's College, Cambridge, where he was highly regarded for his great learning. He became a famous preacher, but his increasingly fierce and critical turn of temper brought him into royal disfavour as early as 1570.

an almshouse would very quickly draw many other gifts either for the support of that institution or some other equally ambitious undertaking for still another need in the community. A grammar school founded in one parish would inevitably tend to inspire a similar foundation in a nearby community. Thus it was that these immensely important foundations spread by a kind of social osmosis from parish to parish across the face of England, establishing in the end an intricate network of helpful and healing social agencies which no man and no class had quite planned but which none the less expressed most perfectly the *ethos* of an age. So it was, too, that the habits of responsibility first assumed by the now culturally dominant classes, the merchants and the gentry, spread gradually amongst other classes in the society. We shall later see that the various classes of men accepted this intensely secular concern for the society with differing degrees of completeness, that their aspirations for the age underwent differing degrees of velocity of change, but it remains true that in general terms a most powerful and significant cultural revolution was under way which came to include all classes of the society as private charity first re-defined and then re-made the social institutions of the realm.

2. *The ambit of opportunity*

It is likewise most evident that from about the time of the Reformation onwards men were moved by a very strong urge to broaden the base of opportunity within their society. We shall see that well before 1540 the secularization of aspirations had begun, with at first a rapidly mounting concern for the outright relief of poverty, which men were coming quickly to realize was the most pressing social problem of the century. But though the flow of funds for poor relief was to continue to rise through the whole course of the next century, a considerable number of rich, perceptive, and highly sophisticated donors, particularly among the merchant aristocracy, began to sense that the crux of the problem was not so much the outright relief of the poor as the prevention of poverty itself through the enlargement of the ambit of social and economic opportunity. Very broadly, we may say that after 1580 enormous sums of charitable wealth came to be vested in schools and in scholarship foundations, in the conviction that poverty bred and perpetuated itself in the slough of ignorance, and in various schemes for social rehabilitation, in the warmly held persuasion that every honest and ambitious youth must be afforded the opportunity to gain a footing in a now intensely competitive and relatively complex economy. The motives of these men who were founding the basic institutions of the society in which we still live were complex, partly intuitive, and sometimes imperfectly stated, but it remains abundantly clear that they were moved by a fresh and confident conviction that men had learned how

to master and to form the cultural environment in which they lived. They were confident and courageous men who in less than a century were quite literally to create a new England with their own incredible generosity. They were for the most part moved by sentiments of high morality and of great nobility as they addressed themselves to the task of remaking a society; their impulses were in the main drawn from the Protestant ethic in which they had been bred, though the form which their aspirations took was intensely, often fiercely, secular in its nature. As one reads the many hundreds of wills and deeds of gift with which these donors established the schools, the scholarship funds, and the hospitals of England he has the sense not only of the almost exalted confidence of these men in the efficacy of education and reasonable opportunity in curing the blighting problems of the age, but of a fervent patriotism as they so consciously sought to mould the England which they loved to the requirements which modernity had imposed on mankind.

3. *The literature of exhortation*

In our discussion of the impulses which evoked the great flood of charitable giving in the age with which we are concerned, we must now lend quite detailed attention to the vast body of tracts and sermons which may accurately be described as a literature of exhortation. From 1540 onwards, it is not too much to say, a drumfire of exhortation was maintained by which the moral obligation of charity was established, the generous men praised and the covetous condemned, and the whole righteous quality of Protestant good works extolled. It is of course difficult to assess the precise influence of these eloquent documents, for they quite as truly bespoke the moral temper of the age as they assisted in its creation, but we may at least be certain that they were widely read, much quoted, and represented the moral consensus of the last century of the era with which we are dealing. Most of these treatises were from the pens of clergymen, though we shall note that a remarkable number were written by laymen whose essential thought was in fact inseparable from that of their clerical confrères. It is likewise important to observe that no really significant distinction can be drawn between the thought of Puritan and more strictly Anglican authors, for all bear the indelible stamp of the rigorous Calvinistic ethic which, until Archbishop Laud's fatal intervention, may be said to have marked the whole of Anglican thought. Generally speaking, however, it is evident that most of these treatises, in so far as they were clerical, were from the pens of the evangelical wing of the church, which, whether Puritan or not, remained dominant in the formulation and statement of Anglican thought until about the time of the accession of Charles I.

Most of the tracts with which we shall deal were originally delivered

as sermons, the power and fervour of which echo even in printed form. The hundreds of surviving sermons that deal so eloquently and compellingly with the moral obligation of charity represent but a tithe of the countless sermons preached on the same subject by now forgotten clergymen to languid squires in rural parishes throughout the realm and to harassed merchants and tradesmen in all the market towns and cities of England. All of England was in church on the Sabbath during our era, and the sermon was without doubt the most important single instrumentality for the moulding of thought, the forming of resolution. The sermons of our period were carefully hewn from Scripture; were in the main literate, skilful, and thoughtful; and possessed most persuasive power because they were preached by men whose faith was unmarred by the slightest scepticism. We may believe, then, that this considerable and persistent body of literature possessed great effectiveness in forming the Protestant social ethic in England and in shaping the social vision which generous and responsible laymen were so nearly to translate into institutional reality before our period was at an end.

a. *Prior to the Reformation*

It is notable that during the first interval (1480-1560) into which we may divide this extensive material, this literature of exhortation, there was almost nothing of any considerable consequence prior to the advent of the Reformation. Sermons and moral essays do survive in fair number from the first half-century of this period, but charity when treated at all is dealt with in a most formal and remote fashion, bearing neither on the problems of the age nor on the aspirations of the auditor or reader. Nor were the earlier years of the Henrician Reformation marked by any deep concern with the direct, the compelling, obligation of charity or any bold affirmation that England had broken cleanly with the mediaeval social past. But in the closing years of that great monarch's reign, as thought itself began to move in a massive and revolutionary fashion despite the angry prohibitions of an imperious ruler, and in the short but irrevocably decisive reign of his son, what can only be described as a transformation of social thought and of national aspirations visibly occurred. The great preachers and their lay colleagues in this brief period were angry, high-minded, and courageous men who not only denounced the social evils of the age but forged the essential elements of the Protestant ethic by linking it organically with social reformation. In spite of the exaggerations, the economic naiveté, and the godly wrath of these men, of whom Latimer was the greatest, they laid for ever on the English conscience a sense of the shame of poverty and a moral responsibility for the enlargement of the ambit of opportunity. These men, be it remembered, were in a brief period not only to make England a Protestant nation but were to shape an ethic which,

refined and enlarged by the Puritanism which was their spiritual legacy, profoundly and permanently altered the English character and aspirations.

The ancient problem of the relation of the rich and poor, in a world presumably ordered by God's will and mercy, received considerable attention from the writers of this interval, but we shall confine our comment to the views of one whose work was published early in the period and another whose great influence was exerted at its close. The Carmelite friar, Henry Parker, in his *Dives and pauper* (1493), had the pauper say that though God is worshipped by both rich and poor, the poor man is spared the sin of covetousness and the temptation of riches and may well remain content with his lot.¹ But Dives, in the ensuing dialogue, points out that the rich man, if he be godly, may be even more blessed in that he possesses the means for precious acts of charity. Ideally, and by God's mandate, rich and poor are necessary to each other, though the poor remain protected from the consuming sins which may overwhelm the very rich.² With this the early Protestant, Thomas Becon, would agree, but the ideal relationship has, he strongly argued, been wholly destroyed by the covetousness of the few who have beggared the realm, famished the King's subjects, and laid waste the poor. 'As riches, so likewise poverty cometh from God; and both are to be taken thankfully, and not to be grudged at', but neither policy nor Christian morality can permit sinful and irresponsible rich men to disorder the Christian state, on which there reposes an obligation to protect all its members.³

The early reformers warmly insisted that the obligation of charity lies on all Christian men and may not be disavowed without separating oneself from the community of Christ. Christ was never more precise than in His command that we dispense alms, not only that the poor may be succoured but that the rich man may be purged of his devotion to worldly wealth and thereby joined in the love of God.⁴ All the other Christian virtues are comprehended in charity, 'for yf men be chary-

¹ *Dives and pauper* (L., 1534 ?), 1-2. Parker was a Carmelite friar of Doncaster. Preaching at Paul's Cross in 1464, he violently attacked the episcopacy and the secular clergy for their arrogance and covetousness. He was imprisoned for a season by the Bishop of London, but was released upon recanting at Paul's Cross. He died in 1470, the work under discussion being published posthumously in 1493 and then republished in 1534 or in 1536 as a Reformation tract.

² *Ibid.*, 5-12.

³ Becon, 'The fortresse of the faythfull' (1550), in *Catechism*, 601. Becon (1512-1567) is admirably treated in the article in the DNB.

⁴ Lupset, Thomas, *A compendious . . . treatyse, teachynge the waye of dyenge well* (L., 1534); in Gee, J. A., ed., *Life and works of Thomas Lupset* (New Haven, 1928), 285-286. For a biographical memoir of this Christian humanist, *vide* the DNB.

table they shall not onely love God feare God, and serve God . . . but also shal helpe . . . sucker and sustayne theyr poore neyghbours with all theyr strength and myght'.¹ It is love of material possessions, of wealth, which may most dangerously separate us from God, whereas true charity disposes man favourably towards all other men for the sake of God and His love for them. The Christian 'in visytynge the sycke, in clothyng the naked, in feding the hungry, in refreshyng the pore, in comfortinge the miserable', is joined in a fast love for God, is made perfect in all virtues by the one transcendent virtue of charity.² We can stand in no doubt with respect to the obligation of charity, for here the Bible is clear and specific in its requirements on the man who would call himself Christian.³ The Christian obligation is simply that Christ's flock must be fed. The community of Christ is an economic as well as a spiritual polity in which distributions must be made to every member according to his need. This is the commandment that lies upon us, which neither the individual Christian nor the church itself can repudiate.⁴

The principal outlines of charitable exhortation, later to be so fully and skilfully developed, were laid out during these tumultuous years prior to the Elizabethan settlement of religion. These authors, almost all being preachers with vehemently Protestant convictions, set out the moral obligation of charity with arguments gathered from Scripture and from the compelling realities of need which they observed in their own society. Thus an anonymous pamphleteer writing in 1537 strongly maintained that 'faith must declare it selfe by deeds of charite'.⁵ It is only when the rich man dedicates his wealth 'to the benefite of his neyghbours' that his wealth ceases to be hateful to God and without danger to the soul of the owner. This dogma of the social responsibility of wealth was unequivocally argued by the reformers of the period, as they lashed out against covetousness, avarice, and oppression. Still another anonymous author, writing in *ca.* 1548, stated the case very bluntly indeed. 'How do we loue our neyghbour as our selues when we put them out of their houses and lay their goods in the stretes?' Men of this age, the author continued, lay the lash of oppression on their poor brethren, exhibiting less care for the needs of poor men than they do for their own dogs.⁶ Such selfish and obdurate men, fastening as

¹ Conway, William, *An exortacion to charite* (L., 1550?), sig. A.ii.

² Lupset, *A treatise of charitie* (L., 1533), sig. C.4; in Gee, *Life and works*, 207-231.

³ Conway, *Exortacion*, sig. B.iiii *et passim*.

⁴ Becon, 'Preface' (1564), in Ayre, John, ed., *The early works* (Cambridge, 1843), 19-20.

⁵ *A goodly treatise of faith, hope, and charite* (Southwark, 1537), lxxi.

⁶ *The prayse and commendacion of suche as sought comenwelthes* (L., 1548?), 2-3.

they do on their own wealth, violate the clear and certain commandments of Scripture and are rebels against the social order which the Christian religion has established.¹

Thomas Becon, perhaps more notably than any other preacher of his generation, established this pattern of charitable exhortation which was in the course of the next century to receive such full and effective development in England. Christ, he maintained, has laid upon us the stark commandment to love our neighbours. This injunction rests with clear and special severity upon all those who enjoy power and wealth. Wealth possesses no other virtue than to be employed in the advancement of Christ's purposes and in the maintenance of His poor. 'Covet not to reign alone in a town. Suffer other men to live by thee, yea, and that of their own. . . . So let them hire thy farms that they may not be impoverished . . . but rather enriched, that they may be the more able virtuously to bring up their children in good arts and godly sciences, to help their poor neighbours, to keep hospitality, and to bear the charge of the commonweal for their portion.' We wield the power conferred by wealth only as stewards, and those who betray that trust will certainly hang in hell.²

Our social duty is clear, Becon eloquently maintained, but men have grown callous and faithless in the care which they lend to the poor around them. 'Again, what unmercifulness reigneth among men at this time! How slenderly are the poor members of Christ provided for now-a-days!' The very fact of beggary, of hunger, stands as an awful indictment on a society whose Christian duty it is to succour and maintain the poor.³ But the poor increase until 'they be almost innumerable', weakening the structure of a society which has impiously declined to assume its responsibilities towards the needy.⁴ We have forgotten, Becon thundered, that no Christian can live with his own wealth while men and women hunger and suffer around him. 'Thus see we that all good men have ever pitied the poor, and sought all means possible to do them good. But the contrary is found among us now-a-days. For men . . . are "the lovers of themselves", and not of the poor. . . . They heap to themselves, they provide nothing for the poor. There be many signs of the last day to be at hand; but this cold affection, and more cold love, and most cold liberality toward the poor, prove evidently that it is not far off.'⁵ Our return to Christ, and our obedience to His will, will not be confirmed or complete until we pledge our wealth to

¹ Coverdale, Myles, 'Confutation of the treatise of John Standish' (1541?), in Pearson, George, ed., *Remains* (Cambridge, 1846), 366. For this great preacher's career, *vide* the excellent article in the DNB.

² 'A pleasant new nosegay' (1542), in *Early works*, 222-226.

³ 'The news out of heaven' (1541?), in *Early works*, 40.

⁴ 'The fortresse' (1550), in *Catechism*, 583.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 584-587.

the relief of a poverty which is not consonant with a Christian society.¹

The relief of conspicuous and wasting poverty, the reformers argued, is in fact simply the first, the basic, obligation imposed on the Christian by his faith. The true duty of the society runs far beyond this essentially emergency mending of the social fabric. There lies on us as well the necessity of building a world in which poverty will be prevented by better institutions and by a wider range of opportunity. 'It is not ynough . . . to geue onely meate, harbour, and clothing to suche as be in extreme necessite'; we must as well lend support to every agency of education and of social rehabilitation so that 'all those that be baptized in Christe, be uertuouslie brought up from their childehood, and taught good artes, that euerie one, accordyng to his portion' may make some contribution to the perfection of the Christian commonwealth.² Above all else, we must come to understand that poverty is spawned in ignorance and that it can be prevented only when youth is afforded the opportunities which education, apprenticeship, and the special leadership of an informed and learned clergy can supply. All these things charity can and must accomplish. The liberality of the rich, required for the salvation of the society as well as for the salvation of their souls, must not be postponed until death, but must rather inform and fructify the whole course of the lives of men of substance.³

The great and angry preachers of this early and intensely evangelical phase of the Reformation were deeply concerned with the whole complex problem of poverty, were disposed to connect the spreading evil of beggary with the derelictions of the ancient church, and were preaching a doctrine of far-reaching social reform as a concomitant of the religious revolution then under way. They were, as we have earlier suggested, laying the foundations of the Protestant social ethic during the course of these tumultuous years and they were fixing in the English social conscience a sense of responsibility, of very direct and immediate responsibility, for needs and for opportunities which men had never before fully recognized. Their social and economic philosophy was warm and generous, though it must be stressed that their understanding of the economic processes then transforming England was incredibly naïve and that their proposals were often so disingenuous as to betray a kind of utopian irrelevance. We should now notice at least briefly the social thought of a few of the principal of these remarkable, these attractive, and these somewhat dangerous men.

¹ Becon, 'The fortresse' (1550), in *Catechism*, 619.

² [Bucer, Martin], *A treatise how . . . christian mens almose ought to be distributed* (Printed abroad, 1557?), sig. B.4. Bucer was in England from 1549 until his death in 1551.

³ Becon, 'A new catechism' (n.d., ca. 1553), in *Catechism*, 110-116, 306-307, 317-326, 390-393.

Thomas Starkey, who was perhaps the boldest and most original of them all, writing between 1533 and 1536, believed that England was under-populated, that far-reaching social and economic reforms were required if the realm was to attain its full vigour and strength, and that the state should lend its sovereign power to the amelioration of the condition of the poor. Nor should the government tolerate the wasting sin, the social crime, of idleness. The cure could only be attained if every child were required to learn a craft beginning at the age of seven, under pain of banishment if as an adult he could offer no useful skill to the society of which he was part. Starkey also preached the virtues of a closed economy in which practically all imports were prohibited and in which the manufacturers were regulated with a view towards increasing and sustaining employment. He likewise denounced the rising curve of land rents and all enclosing, which he seemed to regard as a deliberate assault on the well-being of the state and as the principal cause of poverty. He proposed that all rents be by law reduced to earlier, though unspecified, levels in the belief that in a few years 'we should have this miserable poverty taken away'. In such an economy all those who wished to do so and who were sturdy could find employment, while those who were truly impotent might be decently cared for as their need engaged the charitable instincts of a society which was at last Christian in fact as well as in name.¹

The social thought of Henry Brinkelow, writing as he did about a decade later, was even bolder, while his suggestions for reform were at once more specific and more nearly within the realm of practicality. This former monk was an early convert to Protestantism and was perhaps the most courageously insistent of all the reforming group that the wealth of the ancient church be employed for worthy and bold social needs. In 1542 he lashed out against the citizens of London, one of whom he had become, for their shocking neglect of the poverty which they saw about them. 'O lord God how blynde be these cytezins which take so greate care to prouyde for the dead' by popish superstitions, while neglecting their bounden Christian obligation to relieve those in desperate want. Even supposedly responsible merchants leave from £6 to £12 yearly for superstitious masses for the dead while scattering only a few pennies on the Sabbath for the care of the derelict. 'Oh ye cytezyngs if ye wold turne but even the profettes of your chauntryes and obbets to the fyndyng of the poare with a pollytique and godly provysyon where as now London beyng one of the flowres of the world as touchyng worldly riches hath so many, yee innumerable of poare people forced to go from doare to doare and to syt openly in the streates bedgyng and many not able to do ere other but lye in their houses in

¹ Starkey, Thomas (K. M. Burton, ed.), *A dialogue between Reginald Pole and Thomas Lupset* (L., 1948), 73-79, 89, 95, 140, 143, *et passim*.

most grevouse paynes and dye for lack of ayde of the riche.' London, Brinkelow earnestly maintained, was disgraced and its very religion rendered suspect by its heartless want of concern for the plight of its swarming poor.¹

In his more famous *Complaint of Roderyck Mors*, probably first published in 1545, Brinkelow dealt more generally and certainly more powerfully with the social needs and opportunities of his age. He believed that a true reformation in England must comprehend the ills of the society, and he argued with most courageous insistence that the expropriated monastic properties as well as the bishops' lands should be expressly devoted to this end. A portion of this wealth should be yielded to the Crown as income in order to relieve the poor and middling people of the realm from the burdens of taxation. But the great bulk of it should be devoted to the care of poor householders, in assisting poor maidens in their marriages, in loans to men who might thereby be rescued from poverty, 'and the reste to be employed uppon poor cities and townes and to their provision of the poor'. Almshouses should be founded in every substantial town for the succour of the derelict. 'Let physicyans . . . be founde in euery suche towne or cyte . . . to loke uppon the pore in that towne and in all others joyninge unto it', with stipends assumed by the community, and let grammar schools of high quality be founded in all urban centres which the able poor might attend without charge. These and other social benefits would relieve existing poverty, would go far towards curing ignorance and want in the next generation, and would create a fairer and a better England, all as an indirect, but infinitely beneficent, consequence of the great spiritual reformation then so well under way.²

These great propagandists of the Reformation, nourished as they were in its first warm and hopeful days, were evidently animated by a vision of a new social and economic order. They connected, quite naively and incorrectly, the social and economic ills which troubled and wasted their society with the Roman order which had just been overthrown, while they demanded that social reformation must proceed as a concomitant of the spiritual reformation which they believed to be at hand. For a revolutionary moment during the weak reign of Edward VI it did look as if an evangelical reformation of the church was imminent and that bold and far-reaching social reforms were to be undertaken as well. In this moment, and it was a truly dangerous one for the realm, the control of policy was almost lost by the Crown just as that policy

¹ Brinkelow, Henry, *The lamentacion of a Christian against the citie of London* (L., 1542), sig. A.iiii, B.iiij. Brinkelow had become a citizen and mercer of London. *Vide* DNB.

² Brinkelow, *The complaint of Roderyck Mors* (Geneva, 1545?, 1550), sig. F.iiij.

was perverted and vitiated by the violence of the reaction under Mary Tudor. Under Elizabeth, surely the greatest if not the most admirable of all English rulers, cold, remorseless, and prudent policy again came to prevail, with the result that the bounds of the Reformation were most modestly prescribed and the course of social reform was cautiously set by a government disposed to do no more than was necessary in order to adapt the society to the requirements of a new and a very complex age. But none the less the vision of the great reformers had stirred England; the aspirations which they had enunciated for their generation had come to animate the minds and consciences of many men; and these almost recklessly righteous men had contributed much to the forging of the Protestant ethic. In an ultimate sense, in fact, the Edwardian preachers and not Queen Elizabeth were to prevail.

Among the greatest of these preachers was Thomas Becon, whose eloquent delineation of the requirements of Protestant charity we have already discussed. Becon maintained that the charitable impulse was perverted by the Roman church which persuaded amiable but misguided men to pour funds into 'great monasteries for the bellied hypocrites, great colleges, chantries, and free chapels for soul-carriers and purgatory-rakers'.¹ All this golden flow of wealth, for so long dedicated to worthless and superstitious ends, must now be gathered and righteously employed for the cure of poverty in England. But this, he said, had not occurred. 'When', he asked, 'was the love of men ever so cold toward the poor?' Thus the recent risings (1549) in Norfolk and Devon were occasioned by true and desperate poverty, the real instigators being those covetous men who engrossed and enclosed the lands, who despoiled the poor, since they 'study not, as the true gentlemen do, to profit many, to do good to the country, to maintain the poor, to relieve the succourless, to nourish the weak, to cherish their needy tenants'.² There would be no true emancipation from popery until England had assumed the full measure of her Christian responsibility towards the poor and until the ignorance that gripped the nation had been dispelled by education. Ignorance, papistry, and poverty, Becon warmly argued, were links in the evil chain which had bound the nation. The urgently required, 'the next and only remedy is, that godly learned schoolmasters be placed with liberal stipends, to whom the christian youth may be committed' in order to gain some measure of understanding of the meaning of the Christian religion and the nature of the Christian commonwealth.³

These views were even more strongly urged by Thomas Lever in two remarkable sermons preached in London in 1550. Lever disavowed any teaching of economic egalitarianism, for such a view would utterly

¹ 'The fortresse' (1550), in *Catechism*, 587.

² *Ibid.*, 599.

³ 'Preface' (1564), in *Early works*, 10.

destroy the 'misticall bodie of Christ' in which there are divers members having divers places and duties. But there devolves upon the Christian rich a heavy and an omnipresent duty of charity which in time of great necessity can only be discharged by the employment of capital assets for the care of the needs of Christ's congregation.¹ And it must be said since the Reformation that the Christian rich of England have been moved more by greed and by covetousness than by charity, as they have fattened on the wealth released from the grip of popery.² Even the merchants of London, whom God has endowed with great wealth, are not content with 'the prosperous welth of that vocacion to satisfye themselues and to helpe other, but their riches muste abroad in the contrey to bie farmes out of the handes of worshypfull gentlemen, honeste yeomen, and poore laboringe husbandes'.³ Thus wealth has been employed for self-aggrandizement rather than for the advancement of God's kingdom and the succouring of His weak members.⁴

Lever, like all the strongly evangelical clergy of the Edwardian period, hotly maintained that the Reformation had been betrayed in the spoliation that had occurred in the disposition of the monastic and chantry properties. This wealth was meant by Parliament, and by godly men generally, to accomplish a great and a needed social reformation in the realm, 'that thereby suche abundaunce of goodes as was supersticiously spent upon vayne ceremonies, or voluptuously upon idle bellies, myght

¹ Lever, Thomas, *A fruitfull sermon . . . in Poules churche* (L., 1550), sig. B.iii. Lever (1521-1577) was ordained a priest in 1550. He sought refuge in Zurich during the Marian regime and was strongly preferred during the early Elizabethan period; but his increasingly radical Puritanism led to his deprivation in 1567. There is a biographical notice in the DNB.

² Lever, *A sermon preached . . . before the Kynges Maiestie* (L., 1550), sig. C.iii.

³ Lever, *A fruitfull sermon*, sig. B.iiii.

⁴ Robert Crowley, 'a very forward man for reformation', made the same point in most vigorous language. A merchant long abroad, he tells us, on his return looked for an ancient almshouse near his own home but found instead a great house on the site:

Than, by the waye syde,
hym chaunced to se
A pore manne that craued
of hym for charitie . . .

The beggar explained to the merchant that men of great riches had bought the old almshouse and the pensioners had been turned out.

Lorde God! (quod this marchaunt)
in Turkeye haue I bene,
Yet emonge those heathen
none such crueltie haue I sene.
The vengeaunce of God
muste fall . . . vpon these wicked men,
and that verye shortelye.

[Crowley, Robert (J. M. Cowper, ed.),

Select works (L., 1872), 11-12]

come to the kynges handes to beare his great charges, necessarilie bestowed in the comen wealthe, or partly unto other mennes handes, for the better releue of the pore, the maintenaunce of learning, and the settinge forth of goddes worde'.¹ But this wealth, which might have been dedicated to godly and charitable uses, has in fact been looted by men who are as evil as they are rapacious. These men, who have despoiled a Reformation, must be compelled to make restitution if England is to escape the awful vengeance of God.² In a sermon preached before the King in 1550, Lever called upon the government itself to compel the proper and the charitable use of this great wealth. 'The Kyng beareth the slaunder' for what has occurred, while 'the poore feeleth the lacke, but who hath the profit . . . I can not tell: but well I wot . . . that the Act of Parliament . . . for the mayntenaunce of learnyng, and reliefe of the poore, hath served some, as a most fyt instrument to robbe learnyng, and to spoyle the poore.'³

b. *The Elizabethan age*

The stirring warmth of the preaching in the early and radical stage of the Reformation in England gave way in the course of the Elizabethan period to a more temperate but a none the less most insistent emphasis on the Christian obligation of charity. There are a great many of these sermons and tracts; so we must needs be content with citing only a few representative works which state the case of the rapidly maturing Protestant ethic with some eloquence and certainly with deep conviction. We shall deal first with a number of clerical utterances and then turn to a consideration of a few of a larger number of lay tracts which expounded the high necessity for charity in the same terms and in very nearly the same language.

The whole position in this important matter is well set out in the semi-official *Certaine sermons*, first published in 1563, in which charity is represented as inseparable from the love of God.⁴ God requires our alms, though we are, as it were, officially assured that such acts of mercy are profitable to us, for 'who so is liberall to the poore . . . shal . . .

¹ Lever, *A fruitfull sermon*, sig B.iiii.

² *Ibid.*, sig. C.i.

³ Lever, *A sermon preached . . . before the Kynges Maiestie*, sig. E.iii. Lever continued, at some personal risk, to urge the issue even during the Elizabethan period and after his deprivation. In 1572 he complained bitterly to Burghley that the statute of 37 Henry VIII disposing of monastic property had been systematically violated by rapacious men. The intention had been to foster the universities and the hospitals of the realm, but the property had in fact been treated as private spoil. (*S.P. Dom.*, 1572, LXXXVIII, 21.)

⁴ *Certaine sermons appoynted by the Quenes Maiesty* (L., 1563), Sermons V, VI; *The second tome of homelyes* (L., 1563), 'An homely of almes-dedes', 354, 362-363; also in *Certaine sermons . . . appointed to be read in churches* (L., 1676), 27, 30.

have sufficient for him selfe & evermore be without daunger of penury'. The admonition of generosity runs through the whole of the Bible, is an inherent part of Christian teaching, since alms given to the poor are really given directly to God. Nor is this all, for alms-deeds 'preserve . . . our soules in safetie . . . purge the soule from the infection and fylthy spottes of sinne . . . as water quencheeth burninge fire, even so mercy and almes resisteth and reconcyleth sinne'.¹ This view was further advanced by Thomas Drant, Vicar of St Giles Cripplegate, who urged his congregation to emulate the earth in its bounty. The Christian man 'should give his almes though he hath no more hope to recover it than he hath whiche casteth upon the face of the runnyng water'. Our fortune, he urged, has no meaning unless we use it for good works, 'and when as they themselves [the rich] will not bestow it upon the poore or to good use, then the common place will suck it up. The Kinges bench will suck it up and the Chancery will swallow it up. Therefore . . . geve accordyng to the necessitie of those that want, be plentifull unto the poore and follow the example of the liberall cloudes which let their water gushe uppon the face of the earth'.²

The Christian obligation of charity was stated with a warmth and intensity of conviction reminiscent of the great Edwardian preachers by Thomas White, Vicar of St Dunstan's in the West. The son of a Bristol clothier, White had inherited a large fortune which he was to expend upon notable charities in London and in his native city.³ An Anglican clergyman with Puritan leanings, this founder of Sion College spoke with rare force and eloquence to one of the richest congregations in the city. The commandment of charity lies upon us as Christians with unequivocal clarity, White maintained, while Scripture commands us to give to the generality of the poor to the limit of our abilities. 'Surely there are many poore, and made many wayes, as well by their owne default as otherwise and as they are almost without number, so they are altogether without order. . . . Better care would be had both of them and for them, but in the meane season thou maist never dispise him to whom thou maist be like.'⁴ The commandment is clean and clear, but England stands sinfully in the breach of that commandment. Charity has waxed cold at the very moment of reformation. 'As it is an argument of the whole worldes overthrowe when universally winter shall come ouer charitie, so is strōg as a conclusiō of the cōfusion of ỹ citie that hath lost the heate of christiã loue and pittie: if thỹ enemy

¹ *Certaine sermons* (1676), 230-231, 233-237.

² Drant, Thomas, *A fruitfull and necessary sermon* (L., 1572), no pagin. The DNB provides a biographical notice of Drant.

³ White's great charities will be discussed in later volumes of this study.

⁴ White, Thomas, *A sermon preached at Paules Crosse 17 Nov. 1589* (L., 1589), 34.

hunger, feede him; but we are so farre out of charitie, that we would feede on him rather.¹

The steady emphasis placed by the clergy on the Christian obligation of charity became at once more specific and insistent as the Elizabethan reign drew towards its close and as the problem of dealing with poverty became more acute throughout the realm. Our alms must flow from us as an aspect of our faith, while our piety and our generosity must increase as a factor of our prosperity.² We must give generously and we must give thoughtfully, for to consider 'the necessities of men in giving, is much more acceptable thã to giue hand over hand'. We must order our charity, eschewing the wasteful and harmful tendency to scatter doles, thus helping to create a system of charity which will most effectively cure the ills of our society. And we must give during our own lifetime, to needs as we see them, rather than bestowing the whole of our charity in one massive bequest.³ Though our charity should be intelligently and carefully ordered, it must none the less flow from our love of Christ and our sharing with Him a deep compassion for men who are sore and afflicted.⁴ The obligation of charity is indeed nothing more than the obligation of mercy, and mercy must run in a flowing stream to both the souls and the bodies of our fellow men. Thus are condemned all those who 'seeme to pitie mens soules but not their bodies: they will instruct others, admonish them, forgive them and pray for them, but will not give them one penny to help them withall; being like unto a popish prelate who being asked a penny by a poor man, refused to give it but offered to blesse him, which the poore man refused because he thought that if it had been worth a penny he would not have given it to him'.⁵ Our giving, then, must at once be well considered and animated by mercy; and it must be generous and joyous. 'Therefore . . . giue . . . and giue gladly . . . know that in the ende what thou keepest thou shalt lose . . . ere you dye, lay . . . forth for the profit of your poore brethren', exhorted that 'silver-tongued' Puritan divine, Henry Smith.⁶

The almost vehement insistence of the great Elizabethan preachers, and most particularly those of Puritan inclinations, on the obligation of

¹ White, Thomas, *A sermon preached at Pawles Crosse 3 Nov. 1577* (L., 1578), 60.

² Turnbull, Richard, *An exposition upon the canonicall epistle of St James* (L., 1591), Sermon 4, 31 ff.; Sermon 8, 81-84; Sermon 10, 97 ff. A graduate of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in 1566, Turnbull was licensed to preach in 1576 and was Rector of St Pancras Soper Lane from 1582 until his death in 1593.

³ Bird, Samuel, *Lectures* (Cambridge, 1598), 69. Bird was born in Essex and educated at Cambridge. For a season the schoolmaster at Lavenham, Suffolk, he became in 1580 the minister at St Peter's, Ipswich, where he served until his death in 1604. The DNB article confuses Bird with his son.

⁴ Turnbull, *An exposition*, Sermon 12, 122; Sermon 10, 107, 116.

⁵ Harrison, William, *Deaths advantage* (L., 1602), 20.

⁶ Smith, Henry, *Sermons* (L., 1599), 509.

charity was firmly rooted in their view that we possess wealth only as stewards, though men afflicted with the dreadful sin of covetousness do persuade themselves otherwise. 'That which makes men so loth to giue is, because they thinke that it is their own, not considering that they are onely disposers of the manifold graces of God . . . as stewards.'¹ This view was also most eloquently expressed by Henry Smith, who complained that 'in this yron age, it is as hard a thing to perswade men to part with money, as to pull out their eyes . . . or cut off their hands'. 'I cannot but wonder,' he added, 'that men are so slow in giuing of almes . . . when the promises of God warrant them not to lose their reward.'² Wealth which serves no social end, which is not sanctified by compassion, is an evil to mankind and is destructive to its possessors. The rich must therefore share 'the overplus of their riches none of theirs, but the poores, whom they slay and murther, asmuch as in them lieth, when they detaine it: therefore, when they suffer the poore to perish; the naked to sterve; the needie to die for want of necessary succour', all this will in the final day 'stande up in judgement against them'.³

We have been examining no more than a sampling of a powerful, a moving, and a deeply persuaded body of sermons addressed to the obligations of wealth in a new economy and, in some senses, in a new society. These sermons reflect the charitable temper of the age and they must have made considerable contribution towards inspiring the impulse from which the burgeoning charities of the period sprang. They purposely exaggerated the covetousness of the age, while they evoked generosity by an almost conventional insistence that charity was as cold as it was deficient. These views are perfectly expressed in a work published in 1596 which held that 'in our time the charitie of most men is frozen up, so that it is now high time to blow up the dead sparkels of love, and to kindle the cold coales of charity'. To this task the anonymous author addressed himself with extraordinarily effective zeal. We dare not be idle in the doing of good, and the transcendent good is the giving of alms. 'Riches cannot make a man good, but men may doe good with them.' The times in England require the generality of private men of substance to dedicate their wealth to the needs of mankind, just as the state itself, the totality of men, must regard the whole of the wealth of the realm as a common stock with which hunger, sickness, and misery may be relieved. Both our hearts and our purses must accordingly be opened. 'If ye will in time distribute your money and wealth, with a ready and willing mind . . . ye shall not want God's assistance. . . . Seeing Christianity is not an idle profession, but a busie practice,

¹ Bird, *Lectures*, 15.

² Smith, *Sermons*, 499.

³ Turnbull, *An exposition*, sig. Mm4v. For similar sentiments, *vide* Smith, *Sermons*, 502-503, 506-513.

alwaies occupyed in doing good; And seeing among all other good workes, distributing to the necessitie of other, is a speciall good worke, not onely comfortable to other, but also profitable to our selves, and acceptable to God.' There are too many poor in England and there remains too much wealth not dedicated to their succour. We must, as we contemplate the need about us, remember that 'the rich man is no more than Gods steward and the poore mans treasurer . . . give your money . . . and you shall have Gods treasures . . . rewards in this life and in the world to come'.¹

Certain of the Puritan sermons of the Elizabethan period glow with a righteous anger most reminiscent of the Edwardian period. They denounced the social irresponsibility of the rich and laid out in specific, if exaggerated, fashion a bill of particulars of what must be accomplished before England could be regarded as a nation worthy to be called Christian. Thus Thomas White, while granting that there was general provision made for the poor in the city of London and while praising the generosity that had founded its hospitals, none the less blasted those men who were content with the achievements of their age. 'I would Christians would learne to be liberall for very shame . . . what say you, and the poore lye under euery wall, and crie under euery stall, and die in the streates in the tyme of the Gospeli.'² True it is that London clothes many backs and feeds many bellies, 'but yet not withstanding the dead doe give more then those that are alive, and therefore if God will have the poore more provided for, I thinke hee must provide to take away more of the rich men'.³ Christopher Hooke, in a sermon preached at St Paul's, spoke of the misery of the poor of London, who sought work which they could not find, as a blight on the conscience of all Christian men of the city.⁴ The righteous indignation of these Puritan divines could on occasion pass the bounds of exhortation into sentiments disturbing to the government, as happened in 1603 when Richard Stock, a lecturer at St Augustine Watling Street, uttered words disrespectful to the lord mayor in a sermon preached at Paul's Cross. Stock alleged that most of the funds raised for poor relief were by assessments of fifteenths which bore more heavily proportionately on the artisan than on the merchant. Bluntly addressing the aldermen, Stock continued, 'You are magistrates for the good of them that are under you, not to oppress them for your own ease.'⁵

¹ *Three sermons or homelies to mooue compassion towards the poore* (L., 1596).

² White, *A sermon* (L., 1578), 61-62.

³ White, *A sermon* (L., 1589), 39.

⁴ Hooke, Christopher, *A sermon preached in Paules church* (L., 1603), no pagin.

⁵ *Hist. MMS. Comm., Salisbury Papers*, XII, 672. A native of Yorkshire, Stock (1569-1626) was educated at Cambridge and was incorporated at Oxford in 1595. He was appointed curate of All Hallows Bread Street in 1604 and served there as rector from 1610 until his death in 1626.

It will have been observed that even the most evangelical of these Protestant divines strayed very far indeed into those indefinable verges which delimit the doctrine of the necessity of good works. They were, it is true, carefully orthodox in their view that good works were the inevitable and demonstrable concomitant of a state of grace, but so insistent were they on the high necessity of charity that the lay auditor must have been more persuaded by the argument of works than the more intangible and subtle complexities of grace. This stern insistence on good works from the elect may be illustrated by a sermon of Richard Curteys, Bishop of Chichester, who warned his congregation that we can never assure ourselves of God's mercy and favour unless we do our duty both to God and to our neighbour. 'God graunteth mercy to none, but to them that leade a godly and charitable life . . . except you doe good workes, you cannot assure your selues of Gods mercy . . . I . . . exhort you to good workes, that you may feelee the favour and goodnesse of God thereby towards you.' And good works, Curteys went on to suggest, may in fact be precisely defined as fulfilling our obligation of charity. By this infallible test, it can only be said that England is not in a state of grace. There are hungry men in England, while there are wealthy landowners who have closed up their houses 'to take a chamber in some citie' to the complete neglect of the duty which they owe to their neighbours and dependents. God's curse is upon such men of property. 'Consider wherefore did God giue you such great store of riches, and large possessions in this life, aboue your brethren; was it not to doe good with them, and to helpe them that haue neede . . . I counsel you to study, to bee more carefull in relieuing the poore distressed members of Jesus Christ' against the 'great day of accompt' which all men will have for the stewardship of their wealth.¹

This is powerful and effective preaching. It was, moreover, a kind of preaching heard all over England during this period when the velocity of charitable giving was mounting with an almost incredible rapidity. Such preaching without any doubt contributed most fruitfully towards creating a climate of social opinion from which the great benefactions of the Elizabethan era flowed. These preachers purposely exaggerated the want and misery left unattended in their era, just as they grossly underestimated the mounting flow of charitable funds being directed by private donors towards the relief and even the cure of poverty. But such almost poetic exaggeration is the price of eloquence and perhaps as well the price of warm and healing moral fervour.

The whole *corpus* of clerical literature dealing with the obligation of charity and with the social needs of the realm was well summarized at the close of Elizabeth's reign in a curious but a none the less impressive book, the *Oderifferous garden of charitie*, by Robert Allen, which man-

¹ Curteys, Richard, *The care of a christian conscience* (L., 1600), Sermon 4.

ages to treat the complex question with an evangelical zeal that is not wanting in an understanding of the very great accomplishments of the preceding half-century. Allen believed that the recently enacted poor laws constituted a landmark in the treatment of poverty. It was, for one thing, Christian law-giving. Above all, the laws had at last cleanly separated the worthy poor from the professional beggars and vagabonds, whose demands and artifices had prostituted the mercy of almsgiving, for 'that mercie was degenerated to the cruell and wastfull feeding and fostering of such an idle and wicked rout as . . . were altogether unworthy of any almes inso much as they were such, as utterly refused to work'.¹ This great accomplishment had had the happy effect of liberating and ennobling the impulse of almsgiving, of lending assurance to the donor that his charity would serve a worthy social and religious purpose. Poverty could now be genuinely and completely relieved. Even the quiet and unknown poor must be sought out and sustained in 'many a blind and unmercifull nooke in the land'.

Allen suggested that the church itself should strive to supplement and augment the worthy purposes which had now been undertaken by the secular authority. Each church in the realm should seek by voluntary contributions to build up a stock from which particularly needy poor men might be relieved and work found for those able to support themselves.² Not only does this proposal have practical virtue, Allen held, but it acknowledges that the church itself bears a direct obligation for alms which it does not wholly relinquish to the state.³ All men should be encouraged to give generously to make their full measure of contribution towards the needs of their fellow men during the course of their lifetimes. The passage of the poor laws, Allen seems to hold, should be regarded as a commitment of the whole polity towards its minimum responsibilities of Christian decency, but many more areas remain to be opened and occupied by private charity. The poor have many needs beyond bare subsistence, persecuted Christians abroad need succour and a sanctuary in England, and the ministry of the church requires more than 'grudging and niggardlie' support. All these things and many more have been made possible since the great Elizabethan statutes emancipated charity by defining its obligations and separating the worthy from the unworthy poor.⁴

There is likewise a very considerable body of lay writing which urged the necessity for greater charitable giving and the requirement of a broader sense of social responsibility on the part of the whole realm in

¹ Allen, Robert, *The oderifferous garden of charitie* (L., 1603), Dedication. We have been unable to learn much concerning Allen's career. He was a clergyman, probably in London, and was the author of a number of religious works published between 1596 and 1612.

² *Ibid.*, 35-37.

³ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 42, 77, 116, *et passim*.

terms not dissimilar from those which we have found in clerical thought during the Elizabethan era. This lay thought, only a tithe of which we can discuss, was on the whole more pragmatic, more concerned with social order, and less dependent on scriptural authority, yet it must be said that it most evidently proceeded from the same stratum of Calvinist morality. This writing, too, was essentially hortatory, reflecting a need of social reformation which, as we have seen, was transforming the institutions of England and vastly enlarging the ambit of opportunity for all classes of men.

These lay thinkers also laid stern emphasis on the Christian obligation of charity and the unforgivable sin of covetousness. 'Why doo wee so gape for rytches, why doo wee dedicate all our labour to uniust Mammon?', William Fulbecke enquired.¹ Wealth must be regarded as a gift of God to be employed for His glory, but pride of riches and a covetous nature are destructive to a man and to his commonwealth. And the age, these moralists agreed, was too preoccupied with the winning of wealth for the mere sake of wealth. As one ballad writer put it:

I read in ancient times of yore,
That men of worthy calling
Built almes houses and spittles store,
Which now are all down falling;
And few men seek them to repair,
Nor none is there among twenty
That for good deeds will take any care . . .²

The true Christians, the good men, 'seeke not to haue theyr names blazed by the trumpet of the common people . . . they do not hawke nor hunt for lucre and gaine, but if it please the Lord to place them in seates of honour, they take it as a free gift . . . charitablie dispensing their substaunce, to the use of their needie brethren, to the discharge of their owne want, and to the glorie of God'.³ Our alms, our liberality, attest our love of God and our religious concern for our fellow men. As we are Christian and as we are civilized, so shall we assume responsibility for the needs of the world around us. In the beautiful and biblical words of Thomas Twyne, a physician at Lewes, Sussex, 'A mans almes is as a purse with him, and shall keepe a mans favour . . . and afterwarde . . . pay euery man his rewarde upon his head'; accordingly, 'Say not unto thy neighbour, goe thy way and come agayne, tomorrow I wil giue thee, wheras thou hast now to giue him'.⁴

¹ *A booke of christian ethicks* (L., 1587), sig. C.4. Fulbecke's career is noted in the DNB.

² Collier, J. P., ed., *A book of Roxburghe Ballads* (L., 1847), 50.

³ Fulbecke, *A booke*, sig. C.ii.

⁴ Twyne, Thomas, *The garlande of godly flowers* (L., 1574), no pagin.

The lay thought of this period was by no means limited to rhetorical exhortation, to a calling on men to assume responsibilities which at least in the abstract were generally recognized and accepted. Many of these writers likewise held very specific views regarding the duty of the magistrate to intervene in order to frame a more equitable and merciful polity in which the poor would be relieved and opportunity broadened. Perhaps three of these treatises might be briefly examined in, as it were, a descending order of generality. They are typical of a substantial body of lay thought which lent strong impulse not only to the final and decisive intervention of the state in the problem of poverty late in the Elizabethan age, but to the even more significant burgeoning out of private charitable giving in the second half of the sixteenth century.

That extraordinarily versatile Elizabethan, George Whetstone, who had spent his own considerable patrimony in riotous living, in his *A mirour for magestrates of cyties* couched much of his distinctly Puritan advice to the magistrate in terms of reflections on the corruption and vices that had overwhelmed the Roman world.¹ Many of these same evils, the author held, afflict England, though they may be epitomized in the social irresponsibility of wealth in the land.² Such abuse, such want of concern for the needs of the poor in a commonwealth, Whetstone maintained in a later work, can only be corrected by the direct intervention of the magistrate, whose office it is to 'defende the poore and fatherlesse, and to see that such as bee in neede and necessitie, may haue right'.³

Far more specific and impressive were the recommendations of Andreas Gerardus, as very freely translated and applied to the English scene in 1572 by Henry Tripp, a London clergyman of the period. This work, which enjoyed considerable currency and which was much quoted, took the view that the relief of poverty was the joint responsibility of the secular authorities and of the church. The root of the sixteenth century problem, it was argued, was in the fact that the church had come gradually in earlier ages to neglect its basic responsibility for the care of its poor, with the consequence that the state had been obliged to move into a vacuum of social need. 'Magistrates, your integritie and diligence . . . shall neuer be approved of God or godly men, before you haue prouided a meane in your comõn wealth to releue the poore, whiche are alway the greater part in any societie.' Nor is that all, for 'the citzens uniuersally desire, that beggers . . . may bee brought in order . . . and that the true povertie . . . maye be prouided for . . . and that some certaine way maye be prescribed for the right . . . disposing

¹ Whetstone, George, *A mirour for magestrates of cyties* (L., 1584), 1-23. For Whetstone's career (1544?-1587?), *vide* the DNB.

² *Ibid.*, 23-37.

³ Whetstone, *The English myrror* (L., 1586), 223.

of the common almes'.¹ The problem of poverty, the author held with prophetic correctness, could never be truly resolved until the rogues and vagabonds were separated from the worthy poor, so that the full and free flow of alms might be directed towards need that was real and ubiquitous. Such a separation could not be made unless the state imposed substantial authority on local officers, who knew the facts and who could see that all distributions were made to the worthy. Once the true poor had been segregated, the whole of the charitable resources of the commonwealth might be concentrated on the extirpation of the shameful want and misery which afflicted it.²

Magistrates of all ranks were being advised by citizens of all degrees during the troubled generation that preceded the passage of the great *corpus* of poor laws towards the end of the Queen's reign. Thus in 1575 (?) John Hooker, the historian who was for almost a half-century Chamberlain of Exeter, angrily rebuked the municipal authorities of his native city as he observed 'what troupes . . . of children, boyes and elder persons, lye loytering and floistering in every corner of the citie, but more lamentable it is that no care, no order, nor redresse is had thereof, which if it be not looked into in time, it will rebound to the peril of the publique state of your citie'. There has been long discourse regarding the problem of the poor in Exeter, but nothing of consequence has been done to relieve the ill. Talk must yield to effective action, 'if you do indeed tender the preservation of the common state of your citie and the continuance of so honourable and ancient a common wealth'. Not only must idlers, rogues, and vagabonds be driven out, 'but also the occasion and breeding of them is to be cut of [f] whiche is that yong children may be brought up and be instructed in honest arts'. Many measures Exeter cannot effectively take alone, but there is much that she can do. Thus all orphans must be given full protection of the law and provided for if they have been left without means. Widows should and must receive at least one-third of their husbands' estate, no matter what the provision of the wills may be. Poverty, idleness, and vagabondage can be cured in England only by the protection of children and by ensuring them some measure of opportunity, whether this be undertaken by parental care or in default of that by the community at large.³

The vexed problem of chronic and unrelieved poverty in the realm constantly engaged the conscience and mind of responsible men during the Elizabethan period. As we shall have later occasion to observe in detail, conscience was to a degree relieved by the immense endowments

¹ Gerardus, Andreas (H. T[ripp], tr.), *The regiment of the pouertie* (L., 1572), 9, 11.

² *Ibid.*, 11-20, et passim.

³ Hooker (alias Vowell), John, *Orders enacted for orphans within the citie of Excester* (L., 1575?), 9-38.

which this half-century raised up for the succour of the poor and for the prevention of poverty by the creation of institutions which would enlarge for all men the area of social and economic opportunity. But these problems also engaged the attention of the idealists, the projectors, who though they thought of themselves as intensely practical men were in fact social reformers who pressed with great zeal for some social or economic panacea which they believed would cure the problems of the age. Some of these men held colonization to be the answer, rather more denounced enclosures as the cause of all the social woes of the era, while still others would simply make the rich generous and the poor thrifty by legislative fiat.¹ There is a considerable body of this literature which we cannot pertinently discuss here in detail, but some mention may at least be made of three representative documents which exhibit the strong demand of the age for sweeping social reform in quite different ways.

There survives in the Lansdowne Collection a most interesting manuscript treatise, addressed to the Queen, in which a grand design for the cure of poverty is laid out by 'John Easte'. The work, which seems to have been composed in *ca.* 1580, was entitled *A discourse how the poor may be relieved*, and is a curious mixture of practicality and vapoury idealism.² Easte maintained that the worthy poor, when relieved at all by parochial alms, were receiving doles of not more than 4d to 6d a week, which was simply not sufficient to support a family. Such poor men were inevitably forced into beggary and then into criminality. With rare astuteness, the author made the point there there was no clean separation between the worthy and the professional poor, because there was no general and adequate provision for the former. Many of the poor, yielding to pressures that were irresistible, were in the end executed as malefactors, which in itself was expensive to the realm, for Easte reckoned that at the least it cost society £100 to bring a man up to his maturity. The curse of poverty in England could only be cured by providing honest and remunerative work for all who wished it and by teaching all children some useful trade. Easte estimated, upon no authority save his own conjecture, that there were at least 200,000 paupers in England, whom, he reckoned, it would require £520,000 annually to support with a decency which would prevent them from falling first into beggary and then into criminal pursuits. Of this number, he believed about 50,000 were permanent charges on the society because of age or impotence, while another 50,000, though infirm, could, if work were to be had, earn at least a portion of their sustenance. All the

¹ *Vide ante*, 63–65, 71–72, for a discussion of certain of this literature, not all of this period, in a somewhat different connection.

² *Lansdowne MSS.*, XCV, 3 (n.d.). The manuscript is subscribed 'John Easte' on eighty-six sheets, though an endorsement in another hand suggests that it was probably written by Sir Thomas Smith.

rest could easily provide for themselves with some economic increment for the society to assist in the support of the 100,000 poor who were in whole or in part true wards of the realm.

The crucial question was, of course, precisely how work was to be provided for this large and scattered potential labour force. Here Easte, like all the social reformers of the age, had no particularly relevant suggestions to make, though he promised that 'I shall set forth what ordinances are to be made of how the people should be set and kept at work if I am so commanded'. Needless to say, the Queen never 'so commanded', but from the mass of the author's eloquent generalizations it is possible to see that he was thinking in rather muddled mercantilist terms. He strongly argued that the quality of English cloth must be improved and the export market regained, which he somehow thought could be accomplished if the export of wool were absolutely prohibited. The cultivation of flax should also be encouraged and a linen industry established. These quite unrealistic, and certainly uneconomic, suggestions, are the sum of Easte's 'revealed' solutions, though he does provide further particulars on the care of the poor. The author would have all sums collected for poor relief, whether from private sources or taxation, placed in the hands of local officials who would use the whole of it, save for amounts required for the succour of the aged and impotent, for providing workhouses and stocks on which the poor might be profitably set at labour. Such a plan, he maintained, would cure idleness and beggary and would afford training for the host of poor and neglected children who inevitably became charges on the society under the existing scheme of poor relief.

Easte's proposals, like so many made by the social reformers of the period, were laden with good intentions but made only very slight contribution to the solution of a problem with which the English society was struggling. For one thing, he thought of the realm as an economic entity, while it was in fact a political mass embracing many and diverse local economies in every stage of development and growth. Most of the social ills of the age had to be dealt with and cured parish by parish, region by region, which was the inevitable course private charity was taking. Thinking on the problems of the age in local terms, followed by actions designed to better conditions in a modestly defined area, was, then, at once more fruitful and hopeful. Such more practical thinking was set out in a memorandum of James Rither, a gentleman and a landowner in Harewood in the West Riding of Yorkshire, as he reflected on the ills of his community. His was a large and sprawling parish with at least twenty scattered hamlets, whose problems arose principally from the fact that most of the lands, to a value of five hundred marks annually, had once been held by the monasteries. Much of the land had been bought by the Gascoigne family, from which they created a demesne,

leaving a large area of about eight thousand acres in commons, which was so poorly utilized and distributed that it simply could not support the commoners. Rither proposed that each household be assigned a freehold of three convenient acres of this land, that it be enclosed and that each household pay rent in the amount of a shilling annually, as well as light charges on certain pasture lands, in perpetuity, the whole of the income to be employed for the founding and maintenance of a school which would cure the ignorance of the community and provide the training and skills required if children were to be taught to support themselves. If this could be done, self-employment would be provided for the older generation, hope and opportunity for those to come. Rither had thought a great deal about the problems of his own community, and he had thought responsibly and sympathetically. 'What moves my compassion the more for these poor people is that I may have them for work at 2d a day and meat and in harvest for 4d a day, be it never so long, and if they were always thus set on work, they would live well. This shows they would do well with the assistance of superiors, and though this be agreed to of all those people and though by law I might enclose more to my private use, yet it needs higher powers if it is to be supported.'¹

Rither's proposals, modestly conceived and thoughtfully related to the specific problems of a community which he fully understood, are impressive in the sense that they document the concern, the sense of responsibility, which the gentry as a class displayed for the difficult social problems with which their age had of necessity to deal. It is not too much to say, indeed, that men like Rither, among the gentry and the merchant aristocracy, were in the course of our period to attack problems and evils which had plagued mankind through the whole of Christian history with firm resolution, high courage, and with very great personal generosity. It was the concern of men like Rither, their brooding contemplation of the vexing and eroding social situations which lay about them, which supplied the impulse for their own charitable actions; or to put it in another way, which evoked private intervention on a grand scale in one of the most harassing problems that the western world has ever known.

One more instance of the thought of the social reformers of this age may be mentioned. Robert Hitchcock, soldier and projector, in 1580 propounded a somewhat grandiose scheme which he assured his readers would at once assist in the solution of the problem of poor relief and the better arm the realm against its enemies abroad. Despite the many laws enacted in the course of a century against vagabondage, such acts have not 'nor cannot banishe that pestilent canker out of this commonweale,

¹ *Lansdowne MSS.*, CVIII, 29. The document is undated but was probably written in the last decade of the sixteenth century.

by any degree, but that the same encreaseth daiely more & more, to the greate hurte and impouerishyng of this realme'.¹ This festering social problem the author proposed to resolve by creating a great fishing fleet on which the poor might be set at useful employment. He would dispose £1000 in each of the principal ports and £200 in each of the 225 lesser and decayed port towns of the realm, in order to provide a fleet of 400 fishing vessels, with appropriate gear, each of which would be manned by a professional master and twelve lusty beggars or poor men wanting employment. This plan would, Hitchcock argued, have the great merit of providing permanent work for a large number of unemployed persons, would greatly increase the diet of the realm, and would establish a sorely needed training school for deep-water mariners. Hitchcock felt certain that if the proposal were lent official approbation, the £80,000 of capital required could be raised by loans from substantial men in all shires, from men fearful lest the worsening poverty of the realm lead to riotous outbreaks not easily suppressed. 'Therefore the wise and wealthie men of this lande, had neede by greate discretion to devise some speedy helpe herein, that this poorerer [*sic*] sorte of people, maie be sette to some good artes, science, occupacions, craftes and labours, by whiche meanes they might be able to relieue them selves of their greate nede and want.'²

This plan was of course quite impracticable, among many reasons because it would have bankrupted an already existing and considerable fishing industry, but it does suggest the deepening concern of men of many classes, and of many talents, with difficult social and economic problems which England was no longer prepared to leave to time, chance, and God's inscrutable will. This sense of buoyancy, of accomplishment, and of steady social purpose began about the middle of the Elizabethan period to replace the almost nervous uncertainty and despair which marks the writing of the social reformers of the Edwardian era. Perhaps one example of the substantial body of writing in this new and more hopeful mood might be discussed.

John Howes, who had served as a kind of bursar for Christ's Hospital, in two discourses, one written in 1582 and the other in 1587, described with understandable pride the immense contribution made in the course of a generation by the great London hospitals, which as we shall later note had been founded and supported by mixed private and municipal funds.³ These institutions had been well and securely founded in a very brief period when responsible men in the city became persuaded that

¹ Hitchcock, Robert, *A pollitique platt* (L., 1580), sig. a.i.; also in Dunham and Pargellis, *Complaint and reform*, 276-292. There is a memoir of Hitchcock in the DNB.

² Hitchcock, *Pollitique platt*, sig. e.i.

³ The founding of these institutions will be dealt with in a later volume.

bold and effective measures must be taken, and at once, to deal with the worsening problem of widespread and unattended poverty and want.¹ At the same time, Howes pointed out in his second discourse, much more remained to be done and further reformation should be undertaken. London is still harassed (1587) by rootless poor, in part because the municipal authorities are lax in enforcing their own ordinances and, more importantly, because 'London cannot releve [the whole of] Englande'. London, having the best and most enlightened policy for the care of the poor, has inevitably attracted wandering poor from the whole of the realm, 'so that London is but an hospitall, a place of releife' for the poor of the entire nation. This difficulty can never be wholly resolved, Howes felt, but many things can be done, such as providing distinctive badges for the true London poor, buying up and razing the evil slums which the paupers infest, and prohibiting under severe penalties all employers from importing poor country children as sweated labour. Further gains could be made, the author suggested, if more practical instruction were introduced in the curriculum of Christ's Hospital in subjects such as 'to wright divers kinds of hands', book-keeping, and playing musical instruments. Girls should be taught numerous trades, as well as the spinning to which they have traditionally been bound. The grammar schools should remain open to the children of the poor, but their curriculum might, Howes courageously suggested, also be enlivened and broadened by the inclusion of more practical and immediately useful disciplines. Hospitals and lodging places should be set up outside the walls for those afflicted with plague, the alley ways which breed crime and disease should be converted to open gardens, and fresh, cleansing water should flow through every street in the city, so that it may be 'the sweetest city in Cristendomme'.²

On this hopeful, confident, and proud note we may well close our discussion of the body of thought in the Elizabethan period which evoked and lent encouragement to the impulse of charitable action. At the very close of this reign, as we have seen, bold and effective action was taken by the whole polity to ensure that the state itself would intervene if now confident and responsible classes failed in attaining the grand design of social betterment towards which they were directing so much of their energy, their patriotism, and their substance. This great *corpus* of legislation had been occasioned by a brief and stunning period of acute social crisis, but men had by this time accumulated enough of experience and of resources to be reasonably confident that they possessed the means and the knowledge to relieve poverty and just possibly to cure it. This fact represented a very great gain for the spirit and the dignity of mankind.

¹ Howes, John, 'A familiar and frendely discourse' (1582), in Tawney and Power, *Tudor economic documents*, III, 415-420.

² *Ibid.*, III, 421-443.

c. *The early Stuart period*

The fruits of Elizabethan policy and thought were to be harvested in the early Stuart period when, as we shall shortly observe, the great outpouring of charitable funds in England was to occur.¹ During the course of this interval there was quite as much discussion of the problem of poverty and of ways to effect its cure as in the Elizabethan age, though it should be said that this literature of tracts and sermons wants something of the heat, of the troubled spirit, which enlivened the writing and preaching of the preceding generation. There is more of equanimity, less of anger; there is more of certainty, less of doubt regarding the ability of the society to handle its problems. Nor is there any substantial difference between lay thought and clerical in these later years in the treatment lent to the whole complex question of social reform, though it remains true that, until *ca.* 1630, most of the effective discussion of the meaning and the necessity of charity came from clergymen of Puritan leanings. It is also interesting to note that in the writing of the early seventeenth century there was far less hammering out of the arguments, buttressed by persuasive scriptural authority, for the religious obligation of almsgiving seemed to be taken for granted. There was instead more relatively unsupported exhortation to congregations and to readers to give, and that immediately and generously. It is perhaps not too much to say that charity had become the habit of the nation.

Only one work in the period seems to require separate comment, this being a rather ambitious and important book by George Webbe, who had long been Vicar of Steeple Ashton, Wiltshire, and who in the year his treatise was published was made rector of a rich living in Bath.² Webbe undertook a detailed and certainly an impressive discussion of the meaning of poverty and its significance within a Christian society in a treatment which was scriptural in its documentation, philosophical in its method and language. Contrary to the teaching of the schoolmen, Webbe maintained that poverty as such has no virtue whatsoever, it being a matter wholly indifferent in a religious sense.³ Christ's blessing was on the poor in spirit, not on those who were poor in purse. The whole weight of scriptural teaching enjoins us to labour 'that we may have sufficient, not only to relieve our owne wants, but also to relieve the necessities of others'. Wealth, then, can provide both religious and social utility, when it is regarded as a blessing of God to be used for godly purposes. Hence, 'seeing riches are the instruments of doing good, and to this end are giuen vnto vs by God, that with them we may

¹ *Vide post*, 244-246.

² Webbe, George, *Augur's prayer* (L., 1621). There is a sketch of Webbe's career in the DNB. *Vide also Alumni oxonienses*.

³ Webbe, *Augur's prayer*, 119.

doe good, and glorifie God, they are not wilfully to be reiected'.¹ Wealth is in fact the necessary instrument of Christian charity, which 'requireth not only that we should doe good, but also that wee should doe it well and by good meanes'.²

Not only is it true that poverty has no inherent virtue, but clearly it is to be laboured against by the individual Christian and in so far as possible extirpated by the society. The droves of beggars and vagabonds infesting England are mediaeval survivals and our very human instinct of casual alms perpetuates an ancient and an essentially irreligious vice. Professional beggary in the realm must be proscribed in fact as well as in law, and the wasteful and vicious habits which breed such unnecessary poverty must be cured by religious courses.³ But this kind of poverty quite aside, 'pouerty . . . may befall a wise man, vertuous man, a faithfull man . . . Extreme pouertie and necessitie may befall the godly'.⁴ There are, and there will always be, worthy poor in the Christian society who are its religious charges. Bishop Ridley, Webbe suggested with great admiration, had perfectly defined these poor men in the glorious days of the Edwardian Reformation as those who were poor because of impotence or casualty. These 'are the poore of Gods making, and our dutie in respect to them, is . . . to pittie them . . . comfort them . . . relieue them, and support them in deeds'.⁵

These worthy poor are part of God's order for the Christian society, possibly because if all men were rich there would remain none on whom could be exercised the precious work of charity, which is an inherent attribute of Christianity itself. The obligation of charity is laid upon us absolutely, and lies as a first charge against the whole of our substance. Yet, the author reflected, 'how hard-hearted and hard-fisted are the men of our age to the fatherless and the widdowes, to the aged, maimed, and decaied poore?' May God 'drop down more pittie . . . into our frozen . . . hearts'!⁶ We are knit together as one society and our wealth has neither sanctity nor title unless it be employed towards making the whole of the society of which we are part a mean between riches and poverty. Wealth, then, may be sought as a way to preserve ourselves and our children from want, making it certain that we shall not ourselves burden our brethren, but it possesses Christian title only if we understand that there lies on it a public and a religious charge as well, which is the charge of charity.⁷ 'If then our good God hath beene so gracious . . . as to give vs a conuenient competency . . . let vs reckon . . . *that wee have a goodly heritage*' and employ it as the needs of our religion and our society require.⁸

Webbe in this impressive and carefully composed treatise sketched

¹ Webbe, *Augur's prayer*, 136.

² *Ibid.*, 111.

³ *Ibid.*, 143-150.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 170-171, 178.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 211-214, 216, 222-223.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 243.

broadly and systematically the consensus of responsible English thought on the whole complex problem of poverty and its treatment. It will have been observed that his argument was derived from and supported by proofs and conclusions drawn principally from Scripture. It may, in fact, be regarded as an adequate statement of the Protestant, and more specifically of the Calvinistic, position on the whole range of ethical and social problems raised by the hideous realities of poverty in the early modern world. Protestantism had been obliged to lend careful and immediate attention to this question because, by an irony of history, urbanization and the rise of capitalism made their effective appearance in the western world simultaneously with the Reformation. We are inclined, on the whole, to the view that the causative factors have been greatly overstated, indeed that both were probably the consequence of powerful forces at work in the society, but Protestantism had none the less speedily to frame an ethic which would not only explain its own position vis-à-vis the poverty with which it found itself confronted but to gather resources with which to relieve and if possible to cure a malignant social ill.

As we have suggested, the writers of the early Stuart period did not lay great stress on the religious obligation of charity, which they assumed was 'a doctrine obvious to all'.¹ None the less, they clearly and eloquently stated the view that this commandment of charity lies heavily upon us and that the Christian who ignores it stands guilty of oppressing the weak and the poor.² We must consider the needs of men around us with mercy and our alms must flow out almost as an act of religious worship as we seek with compassion to help those who stand in need.³ Wealth is vested in us, if it be godly wealth, only that it may arm compassion in doing its effective and healing work among the poor. Our whole substance stands in trust to God, for we are but stewards who will seek to dispose our means in accordance with the clear knowledge of His purposes as revealed to us in Scripture.⁴ We dare not forget that rich and poor are inextricably bound together in the Christian community, and that we despoil and lay waste this commonwealth when those with means do not lend their full support to the needs of

¹ Donne, John, 'A sermon preached in St Paul's . . . 1628', in Alford, Henry, ed., *Works* (L., 1839, 6 vols.), V, 183.

² *Ibid.*, V, 187-188, 198; I, 185.

³ Sibbes, Richard (A. B. Grosart, ed.), *The complete works* (Edinburgh, 1862-1864, 7 vols.), IV, 524-525; Scot, Patrick, *A fathers advice or last will to his sonne*, (L., 1620), sect. vi.

⁴ Cooper, Thomas, *The worldlings adventure* (L., 1619), 15-16, 31-34; Church, Henry, *The good man's treasury* (L., 1636), 283-291 (we can discover little regarding this author, save that he appears to have been a layman); Layfielde, Edmund, *The mappe of mans mortality* (L., 1630), 38, 56; Donne, John (G. R. Potter and E. M. Simpson, eds.), *Sermons* (Berkeley, 1953- , 10 vols.), II, 215-220; Donne, *Works*, III, 111-113

their poor brethren. For the rich man, wrote Francis Rogers, 'is like the elme-tree, the poore man is like the vine-tree: the elme underproppeth the vine, and so causeth it to stand and beare fruit. . . . Euen so, the rich men by their almes vphold the poore, who otherwise would starue, and the poore men againe ouer-shadow the rich men with their prayers to God, whereby they doe the better flourish in this world, and liue foreuer in the world to come'. We are all children of God, commanded to care for each other, and so the wealth with which the few are blessed must be dispensed to sustain the worthy poor and to temper the extremes of excessive wealth and of bestial poverty.¹ Those men of substance who decline to assume the Christian obligations of alms, who husband their resources for their own sake, are guilty of the awful sin of covetousness and fully merit the punishment infallibly in store for them.² We are commanded to give, and we must give joyously, secure in the knowledge that thereby we lend succour to our weak brethren and support to Christ's kingdom on earth.³ For those who submit gladly to the Christian discipline of giving generously in alms, the spiritual rewards are certain and their temporal estate will remain unharmed because they have done the will of God. Christian alms cannot in their nature be grudging, and they should not be postponed until the frightening moment of death; they should rather flow from our resources during the whole course of our lifetime as we earn the franchise of Christian men.⁴

The moralists of the early seventeenth century were, as we have said, able to assume that men of the age were reasonably persuaded of the religious necessity of abundant charity, and hence they tended to undertake by every artifice of logic and eloquence to exhort their readers to do their Christian duty. There is a considerable body of this literature of exhortation which we should now treat at least briefly. These writers, and particularly the preachers amongst them, were first of all concerned that men should possess some understanding of the social meaning of Christian charity, the place of charity in the nexus of human relationships. Thus William Whately, a rigorously Puritan divine, in preaching

¹ Rogers, Francis, *A sermon of love* (L., 1613), 33, 34-35, 40. (The son of Richard Rogers, Dean of Canterbury, Rogers was educated at Cambridge, where he proceeded B.A. in 1598 and B.D. in 1608. Ordained in 1604, he served as Rector of Trinity the Less, London, Vicar of Alkham, Kent, and Rector of St Margaret's, Canterbury. He died in 1638); Donne, *Sermons*, II, 213; Sibbes, *Works*, V, 178 ff., IV, 6 ff.; Wakeman, Robert, *The poore-mans preacher* (L., 1607), 7-17 (Wakeman was the son of a Worcester clergyman. He was educated at Oxford, where he was graduated B.A. in 1594; he held livings in Devon, where he was appointed Canon of Exeter in 1616. He died in 1629.)

² Layfield, *Mappe of mans mortality*, 33; Donne, *Sermons*, II, 293-294.

³ Rogers, *Sermon of love*, 34-35; Donne, *Works*, V, 513-518.

⁴ Cooper, *Worldlings adventure*, 39; Sibbes, *Works*, IV, 524-525; Rawlinson, John, *Mercy to a beast* (Oxford, 1612), 48-49.

to his congregation after a great fire had all but destroyed their town (Banbury), took the view that the burdens laid upon those whose goods and fortunes were spared offered a perfect instance of the nature of Christian responsibility. 'Now let your abundance supply their wants, whom God hath therefore called to want, that he might giue you an occasion of declaring the abundance of your charitie. . . . Bountifull and mercifull actions are the best bargaines, and the best purchases. No fire shall be able to consume those riches, wherewith a man doth enrich himselfe by succouring those that are distressed.' Alms-deeds are thank offerings made to God. We must remember that all we keep from the poor, we in fact withhold from God in defiance of His goodness towards us.¹

This view of the social meaning of charity was even more forcefully advanced by Robert Harris, an eminent preacher of decided Puritan persuasion, who stressed the fact that the distribution of poverty, want, and personal disaster among men proceeds from the inscrutable purposes of God.² But if these purposes are not clear to us, clear indeed is our own obligation of rendering help and of keeping intact the bonds of love and compassion with which the Christian commonwealth is knit together. Nor will simple alms suffice; the need in England is work for those who are prepared to work. 'Tis in vaine to speake of bringing downe markets unlesse there bee employment. Were barley at two shillings, if men haue not work tis all one: therefore you poore bee willing to worke for bread, you rich study to finde worke.' The answer that there is no work, no help that is consonant with dignity, simply will not suffice. 'Looke to your fields, were ditches scoured, marishes drained, lands ploughed in many fields, it would quite cost; looke to your high wayes, all the poore in the countrey bee scarce enow to gather and lay stones in them. . . . But we haue not to pay them. I answer once for all, better keepe them working than begging and wandring.' Kept they must be, and it is at once better for the poor and better for the whole society if useful work be contrived by every man of property who can assist.³

We lie, then, under an obligation of charity which is pervasive and which proceeds both from our duty as Christians and our responsibilities as citizens. We give to our fellow men who are in need, not only because we must but likewise because spiritual benefits accrue to us in the performance of what is almost a sacramental obligation. No man

¹ Whately, William, *Sinne no more* (L., 1628), 20-24, 41-43. The son of a mayor of Banbury, Whately was educated at Oxford. He was appointed lecturer at Banbury in 1604, vicar in 1610, serving until his death in 1639. The Banbury fire destroyed upwards of one hundred houses in the town.

² Harris, Robert, *Dauids comfort* (L., 1628), 1-12. There is a DNB memoir of Harris.

³ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

has been destroyed by his charity, while a great many have been eternally ruined by their own greed. 'Thy hearty zeale towards God, and thy willing charity towards man, and both these, in secret, and without noise', declared Sydenham, will conjoin to make man fully Christian. To the rich God holds out, though only briefly, possibilities of grace not enjoyed by most men.¹

The flow of our charitable giving, the alms which we dispense, should, then, be an inevitable concomitant of our faith. The truly Christian man regards his store of wealth as subject to the requirements not only of himself and his household, but the whole of the household of Christ. Our giving must accordingly proceed from faith and from righteousness. And it is a necessary attribute of the grace with which God has mercifully endowed us. So, 'in heart wee should bee touched with compassion . . . next with milde and kinde wordes to comfort our distressed brethren . . . and thirdly (if we haue ability) to succour and releue them; and if power bee wanting in vs, yet let vs not omit the two former, whereby wee are made partakers of others misery'. It is our charity which unites us in the fellowship of the Christian society, its rewards and blessings are quite as efficacious to those of us who can give as to those of who must receive.²

Though all this is evident and necessary to our faith and to the Christian society, the clerical moralists, one can almost say propagandists, held with forgivable exaggeration that their age was in fact one in which the springs of charity were all but dry. As Whalley put it, 'the charitie of our times is like feeble old age, blinde, or lame, or deafe, or dumbe'.³ The good works of the age, another writer held, were of little worth or moment because men had been distracted from their true duty by greed and self-seeking.⁴ The great Puritan divine, Thomas Gataker, advanced a more sophisticated statement of this theme, holding that his age was afflicted with 'a kind of negative Christianity', since men had grown content with the 'omission of evill', forgetting that God requires as well the positive virtues of piety, charity, justice, and equity. It is not enough that the rich no longer rob and oppress the poor, for on them lies as well the obligation of generous, joyous, and compassionate alms for the needy in Christ. What, he enquired, is 'more contrary

¹ Sydenham, Humphrey, *The rich mans warning-peece* (L., 1630), 37; Benson, George, *A sermon preached at Paules-Crosse* (L., 1609), 46-48; Hildersham, Arthur, *The doctrine of fasting* (L., 1633), 26, 65; Hildersham, *A sermon preached in Ashby-Chappell* (L., 1633), 1, 18-19; Warren, John, *Domus ordinata* (L., 1618), *passim*.

² Est, William, *The right rule of a religious life* (L., 1616), 212-216, 303; Gore, John, *The poore mans hope* (L., 1635), 9-13, 20; Whalley, John, *Gods plentie* (L., 1616), 22, 27, 41.

³ Whalley, *Gods plentie*, 2.

⁴ Benson, *Sermon at Paules-Crosse*, 44.

to Christianitie then an vtter want of charitie? when as charitie is the badge or cognisance of Christ, and the very character of a Christian. . . . He is no Christian man therefore, he is scarce a man, that hath no compassion of other mens miseries. . . . It argueth a want of loue to Christ, when men haue no commiseration of the members of Christ, being in want or misery, in distresse, danger, or extremitie'.¹

These writers agreed, as well, that the distribution of benefactions was best made during the lifetime of the donor. Not only are the spiritual rewards greater and society assured that demonstrable need is thus supplied with healing resources, but the habit of good works is thus ensured. Too many men, they held, were cold in their charity throughout their lifetime and then sought by a kind of impious purchase to gain grace by bequests which imposed no burden upon them and which afforded no joy in the fact of the gift. All this notwithstanding, the righteous man in ordering his affairs against his death, against the moment when he faces God, will make certain that the poor and needy are well provided for in his last will. 'You shall do well to testifie at the end when you are going to give up your account to God, that you are not lesse loving and pittifull to the poore than you have been before.'² As we contemplate the approach of death, we should regard our wealth as a storehouse, the whole of which we propose to distribute in such wise as best to help the Christian society and to meet the wishes of God from whom our wealth has come. Consequently, 'hee who maketh his will may obserue the will of God, that so the testament of man may agree with the testament of God'.³

At Paul's Cross, the most influential pulpit in England, in the city churches, in pulpits across the length and breadth of the realm, and in tracts warmly composed and eagerly read, this drumfire of exhortation to charity was steadily maintained throughout the early Stuart period. Many of these sermons were never printed, others have been lost, but a very large body of this literature remains, which we have endeavoured to present by a most cursory sampling of its still compelling rhetoric and logic. Surely this sustained and intensely evangelical effort made considerable contribution to the impulse towards charitable giving, offers at least a partial explanation for the tidal surge of giving which set in at about 1550 and which reached its flood during the first generation of the seventeenth century. We could provide many other examples of

¹ Gataker, Thomas, *A sparke toward the kindling of sorrow for Sion* (L., 1621), 28; also in *Certaine sermons* (L., 1637).

² Jones, William, *A briefe exhortation to all men* (L., 1612?), 16. Jones, a native of Northamptonshire, was educated at Eton and Cambridge. He was ordained in 1607. A Puritan, he served as a lecturer in the Isle of Wight.

³ Warren, *Domus ordinata*, 19. Warren, an early graduate of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, was from 1610 until his death in 1628 Vicar of Great Clacton, Essex. He was a moderate Puritan.

moving exhortation, using every rhetorical device known to skilful divines,¹ but brief quotations from two must suffice.

John Rawlinson, in a sermon preached at St Mary Spittle, London, early in the period, took full advantage of the fact that among his auditors were many of the merchant élite of London. He reminded them that the 'Lord in the riches of his mercy, hath anointed [you] with the oyle of gladnesse, aboue your fellows', in no small part because of the tradition of this class of assuming heavy responsibilities for the poor in Christ. 'Yee are . . . sheepe cloathed with golden fleeces . . . And . . . thou fillest so many empty bellies, cloathest so many naked backes, lodgest so many houseless strangers, relievest so many maimed souldiers, providest for so many impotent creeples, and mainteinest so many fatherlesse orphans . . . Into these . . . channels . . . do the sylver-streames of your mercifull devotion runne.' But Rawlinson admonished the merchant élite because its members tended to dedicate their great charities by bequest. Surely, 'a blessed thing . . . it is, thus to do good, though it be but at your death. But, much more blessed should ye be in your work, not only in the sight of men, but of God himselfe, if in your life time ye would deale & distribute with your owne hands, that which ye cannot tell whether ye shall hold till your death; which indeed is to do good . . . to benefite others rather by your life, than by your death'. Further, that emulation among the great merchants which had borne such rich fruits should be extended to a godly rivalry for good works during the lifetime. One can almost hear the language of the counting-house, when in conclusion Rawlinson assured his congregation that 'he that is a benefactor to others, is a benefactor to his owne soule'.²

This was immensely powerful and beautifully skilful preaching. It so happens that Rawlinson was quite wrong, and may well have realized it, in his contention that merchant generosity was almost wholly confined to bequests, but he none the less was seeking by every possible appeal to open even wider the already vast flow of merchant generosity. His argument was couched in terms that would appeal to a rich merchant congregation, his admixture of flattery and rebuke was perfectly contrived, and his manifest fervour and dignity still animate the crumbling pages of his printed sermons. These great merchants attended their parish churches and they attended as a body the many special services such as that at St Mary Spittle. There were many Rawlinsons in London, merchant generosity had seen to that, and they preached to their auditors a fearless gospel of charity, of responsibility, and of a

¹ As, for example, Layfielde, *Mappe of mans mortality*, 12-33; Page, Samuel, *A sermon preached at the funerall of Sir R. Leveson* (L., 1605); Anyan, Thomas, *A sermon preached at Saint Marie Spittle* (Oxford, 1615); Whalley, *Gods plentie*.

² Rawlinson, *Mercy to a beast*, 48-49, *et passim*.

kingdom of Christ on earth which they most earnestly believed might be brought about by godly men.

The exhortation to charity was undertaken by William Whately in much more general terms and for a much wider audience.¹ We are assured, the author says, that those who give generously of their means for the relief of the poor will never want themselves.² Giving to the poor is a necessary Christian duty and it is required by God of all men, not only the rich, but the 'meane . . . in case they have any thing to spare'. The whole of the resources of a truly Christian society belongs to the whole of that society, the rich being but stewards for those who must be assisted and sustained.³ It is accordingly 'fruitfull of thanks' to God to give alms; 'it is undoubtedly a duty which must justifie the truth of our religion . . . [and] whosoever professeth religion and is hard, miserable, niggardly, and cannot finde in his heart to give to the poore according to his meanes, that man looke he never so faire to the worlds eye and to his owne, pray he never so often . . . is but a hypocrite, a dissembler . . . a false hearted man'.⁴ There can be no faith and no love in us without abundant and joyous works of mercy, and the riches which God may bestow upon us have no virtue unless we use them as stewards and servants of God.⁵ So great and so heavy is the obligation of charity that rests upon us that our choice as stewards, as feoffees of Christ, is limited to how and for what purpose our alms shall be given. Of all the clear and irrevocable commandments of God, none lies more certainly upon us than that of charity.

So steady, so insistent, and so central was the statement of the religious necessity of charitable conduct, particularly on the part of the Puritan divines, that only subtle differences would seem to separate their views from those of the arch-enemy, the Church of Rome. It will have been noted that these clergymen were elevating the injunction of charity within the *corpus* of Protestant thought to a position which can almost be described as a doctrine of works. This matter deserves some further consideration. We shall accordingly attempt to discuss it quite specifically in terms of the writings of a number of representative clergymen, both Puritan and, shall we say, orthodox, who grappled honestly with what they fully realized was an embarrassing doctrinal dilemma.

Richard Reeks, a clergyman of Little Ilford, Essex, evidently moderately Puritan in persuasion, tells us flatly that faith and good works are inseparably conjoined, that the one provides the testimony of the other.⁶

¹ *Vide ante*, 183-184, for an earlier mention of this author and comments on another of his sermons.

² Whately, William, *The poore mans advocate* (L., 1637), 2-4.

³ *Ibid.*, 9, 14.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 20-23.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 41-42.

⁶ Reeks, Richard, *Faith and good workes united* (L., 1630), 7.

This was likewise the view of a far more famous preacher, Laurence Chaderton, chosen by Mildmay as the first master of Emmanuel College, who held that in the final day of judgment we shall all be judged 'according to the workes of loue and mercie' done in the course of our lives, when 'they which gaue unto his members meate, drinke, lodging, clothing, and visited the sicke and imprisoned, shalbe pronounced righteous and goe into life eternall. But the unmercifull, being voyde of these workes, shalbe pronounced cursed, and goe into everlasting fire'. This was putting it very strongly indeed, and Chaderton confessed as much. But 'workes are necessarilie required to the doing of the Fathers will . . . for the declaration of our faith, for the confirmation of our hope'.¹ This was the view, too, which John Donne advanced when he reminded his congregation that the good works which Christ commands are things hard and painful, things that 'are against the nature, and ordinary practice of worldly men to do'.² In fact, the obligations which the man of the reformed faith must shoulder are more difficult than those of the Roman Catholic, for he must understand that good works, abundant charity, are required of him, but 'without relying upon them, as meritorious'.³

Reeks sought to make the point that the reformed faith impelled men to undertake deeds of charity because they stood confident in their faith and because Protestantism stressed practicality as well as piety of faith and conduct. In fact, he carried this argument extraordinarily far, doctrinally quite dangerously far. God, he maintained, wishes 'doings rather than sayings'. The Christian religion 'consisteth in practice more then in theorie; being an occupation rather then a mere profession of doing good'. It is our doing good, or more bluntly, to use the dread phrase, our good works, by which we 'make our election certayne'.⁴ We cannot, it is true, be saved by good works, yet we cannot be saved without them, 'as the necessary effects of that grace which brings glory . . . [for] a naked faith, is no true fayth'.⁵ This insistence on the Christian obligation of charity had carried men of the strongest Calvinistic persuasion very far indeed towards a statement of a new, a reformed, doctrine of good works. Captious men would raise the cry of popery, but, as another clergyman put it, this is irrelevant so long as we understand that the generous giving of our substance 'for God's sake truly expresses our love for him'.⁶ This teaching, whatever its doctrinal merits, evoked a most powerful response from the conscience and substance of England. We may well believe that this persuasion was

¹ Chaderton, Laurence, *A godly sermon preached at Paules Crosse* (L., 1580), sigs. C.ii, C.iii.

² Donne, *Works*, I, 161.

³ *Ibid.*, I, 168.

⁴ Reeks, *Faith and good workes*, 33.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 37-40.

⁶ Fleming, Gyles, *Magnificence exemplified* (L., 1634), 26-30.

generally entertained by laymen who were giving more of their substance than men had ever done before or, for that matter, than they ever were to give again.

We must have no fear of good works under the true and infallible certainty of the reformed faith. For now our 'workes of mercy are ioyned with righteousnesse and well doing', cried a Wiltshire divine with a kind of exalted certainty.¹ Under the Gospel we are blessed with a faith which 'cannot be separated from charity; but wheresoeuer it is it bringeth forth good works, to the praise and glory of God'.² Faith and charity have at last been perfectly conjoined and men need no longer fear the popish trap of works contrived and exacted by a selfish and venal clergy. So a Devonshire clergyman maintained, in an assize sermon in 1630, when he tells us that 'faith and charitie are like a paire of compasses, to take the latitude of our Christian profession, whiles faith, like the one foot, stands fixt in the centre of justification: charity, like th'other, must goe round in a continuall circle of beneficent operation; and delight to doe good'. It is from faith that we gain our justification, but it is from our charity that we attain our sanctification and the certainty of our election. It is 'faith, [that] having brought us home to Christ . . . leaves us . . . at the grave; but charity . . . doth never fall away . . . and keepes us company to heaven'.³

The difficult and tangled problem of Protestant good works, so to speak, was more systematically and impressively handled by John Squire, Vicar of St Leonard Shoreditch, in a sermon preached at St Paul's and dedicated to Sir Alexander St. John and his lady, 'of my poore parish', who were 'zealous of good workes'.⁴ All good Christians, the preacher said, have ever, as they must, sought to walk that narrow way to heaven which is paved with good works. By the carrying out of good works alone can we make our election sure.⁵ There can be no valid, no saving faith not illumined and accompanied by good works. 'I dispute not the distinctions, whether good workes bee . . . *sacrificia impetrantia*, to beg a blessing upon our King and kingdome, upon our families and persons: or whether they be onely *sacrificia eucharistica*, the tribute of our thankfulnes . . . But this I know, [they are] sacrifices wherewith God is pleased'.⁶ Good works possess a transcendent goodness and flow inevitably from faith. This view, Squire maintained, did not throw the

¹ Parsons, Bartholomew, *A christians remembrance* (Oxford, 1636), 15.

² Reeks, *Faith and good workes*, 42.

³ Foster, Thomas, *The scourge of covetousness* (L., 1631), 13-14.

⁴ Squire, John, *Three sermons* (L., 1637), Dedication. Squire was a grandson of Bishop Aylmer and the son of Adam Squire, Master of Balliol. He was graduated from Cambridge in 1605, becoming vicar of the London parish in 1612. An orthodox Anglican, he was sequestered and imprisoned in 1643. He died in 1653, having kept a school at Richmond, Surrey, after his release.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 98-99.

reformed church into the trap of the doctrine of merits. Good works simply exhibit our love of God and all His children. The reformed church must and can teach that 'good workes are necessary to salvation, not in the act of justification, but in the worke of sanctification, without which there can be no salvation . . . Indeed we doe not, indeed we dare not avouch with the Jesuites of Rome . . . that heaven is the value, worth, and price of our workes . . . But if it can be proved, that the Protestant church doth hold dogmatically, that good workes are not necessary to salvation, I will turne papist'.¹

The good works of the reformed church in England, so its clergy vigorously maintained, far exceeded those of the Romanists since such alms issued from a true comprehension of the conjunction of faith and works, rather than from the fear and the false expectation induced by the wholly wrong doctrine of merit. But it is England's shameful sin, the clergy held, that poverty still exists unsuccoured, misery and sickness unattended. 'Those that should bee eyes to the blinde, pluck out their brethrens eyes and make them blind, whilst they grinde their faces who should cheare them; and robb them of their garments who should cloath them. Where is mercy? . . . Whilst men turne bread into stones . . . selling good land to build fine houses, turning the smoake that ascended the chimnies of their fore fathers . . . Whilst there is so much pride, so little pity, great feasts, little charity . . . small alms . . . where will you go to find out mercy?'² Shame will be upon us until our wealth has relieved the suffering of the poor, until charity sustains the whole of the nation's need. Good works flow inevitably from the compassionate heart, for 'faith indeed is the life of a Christian but [charity] is the breath whereby he is known to live'.³ The whole of England must experience the warming surge of compassion and be moved by it to abundant charity, before the Reformation may be regarded as complete in the realm. As another clergyman put it:

Thou which with pittie in thy heart are moued,
Towards the needy soule with care oppressed,
Thou blest of God, of earthly men beloued,
For helping of the orphan so distressed.
Comforting widdowes, saluing sick-mans sore,
Aiding the simple, with fall of thy store.⁴

¹ Squire, *Three sermons*, 103-104.

² Rogers, Nehemiah, *The good Samaritan* (L., 1640), 79. Educated at the Merchant Taylors' School and at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, Rogers was for many years Vicar of Messing, Essex. He was briefly (1642-1643) Rector of St Botolph Bishopsgate, London, but was sequestered. He regained an Essex living in 1648. He was the father of John Rogers, one of the most violent of all the Fifth Monarchy men.

³ *Ibid.*, 119-121.

⁴ West, Richard, *The court of conscience* (L., 1607), 'Charitable benefactor'.

'The kingdom of Christ is not yet at hand in the land, despite the great gains made by men of the reformed faith.

We may well close our discussion of the literature of the early Stuart period dealing with the necessity of charity by at least a brief notice of a number of works which took a somewhat more secular view of the whole question of the relief of poverty. The authors of these works were men who at bottom looked forward to the cure and prevention of poverty and who took the view that this was the proper and the necessary goal for the Christian society. Both laymen and clergy made due contribution to this literature of social protest, which we may treat under several heads.

Numerous writers held that the principal cause for chronic poverty in the realm was the subtle but continuous oppression of the poor by the rich and powerful. In part this oppression had become quite unconscious, but it none the less had the effect of creating and perpetuating a marginal social and economic group within the English society, doomed to a state of hopeless poverty. Thus that stalwart Puritan divine, Thomas Adams, lashed out at grasping landlords who all too frequently ruined the customary economy of a community by their enclosing greed and then attempted to salve their guilty consciences by charitable courses. 'It is not seasonable, nor reasonable charitie, to vndoe whole townes by your vsuries, enclosings, oppressions, impropriations; and for a kind of expiation, to giue three or foure the yeerely pension of twentie markes: an almeshouse is not so big as a village.'¹ But of all these miscreants, the enclosing landlord is worst, for he is but a 'monstrous theefe' who 'steales away the poore mans liuing and life'.² Such cruel men who lay waste a countryside to assuage their greed must be moved by some powerful and sinful forces, mused another divine, Charles Richardson, who sought to analyse the acquisitive instinct of his age. The first of these forces, he concluded, 'is ambition, when men hauing gotten a deale of wealth together, giue many hundreth pounds, to buy one degree of honour after another, to make themselues great in the world, & I know not how many thousand poundes, to aduance their daughters in marriage, to make them ladies or great personages'. Still another impulse animates such ambitious and wasting men. Every man of fortune who has purchased an estate symbolizes his newly acquired degree of honour by sumptuous building, 'one of the vanities of this age'. Such men seek to build on a princely scale, with the result that 'not onely their owne tenants, but all the countrey about them shall bee tyred out' by their frenzied outlays. And then, the great house having been built, prodigal sums must be expended on its upkeep and its diet

¹ Adams, Thomas, *The white devil* (L., 1613), 35; also in *Workes* (L., 1629), 48.

² Adams, *White devil*, 47; and vide Powell, Robert, *Depopulation arraigned* (L., 1636).

while the poor of the community are plunged even deeper into poverty as the landlord exacts revenues for the support of his new estate.¹

There is much angry and eloquent protest of this kind, and particularly in the years prior to 1630, of which a few more examples should perhaps be given. Thus a testy anonymous author agreed fully and most vehemently with Richardson and Adams in his analysis of the social evils of the age which bred and then perpetuated poverty. He held that the common lands of England were being consumed by grasping landlords. These men handle land as if no human beings were involved in its management and disposition. The rich invariably purchase large estates; such men 'get whole townes into their hands; and then dispeopling the same by letting downe of houses and turning forth of tenants, they recover the commons from the poore, and make them their own'.² This having been done, these grasping landlords exploit their estates by systematic farming, with the result that a few farmers find work where scores were earlier supported. All this vaulting ambition, all this waste and corruption, has no other effect than to grind down the poor. 'Our monstrous pride', declared Adams, has turned 'hospitallity into a dumbe shew: that which fed the belly of hunger, now feedes the eie of lust . . . we make our selues the compounds of all nations: we borrow of Spaine, Italy, Germany, France, Turkie and all: that death when he robs an Englishman, robs all countries: where lies the wealth of England? in three places, on citizens tables, in vsurers coffers, and upon courtiers backes.'³

It would seem, Richardson lamented, that every powerful group in English life was involved in a malignant conspiracy to destroy the poor. Thus he lashed out at the lawyers as oppressors, with their spinning out of cases and their unconscionable bleeding of every client before his case was even brought to trial.⁴ This complaint was bitterly shared by Arthur Warren, a poet who had himself known imprisonment for debt, when he wrote:

What i'st to begge, but to be counted base?
 What i'st to borrow, but to be denide?
 When poore are trespas'd, they learne Ploydons case,
 And must for recompence content abide,
 Yet giue the rich but an uncourteous looke,
 It prooues a forfeit by their statute booke.⁵

Every hand, these moralists seemed to hold, was raised against the poor. Even the tradesmen, those men on the way up in estate, entrap and

¹ Richardson, Charles, *A sermon against oppression* (L., 1615), 11-12.

² S[parke], *Greevous grones*, 19.

³ Adams, *White devil*, 17-18.

⁴ Richardson, *Sermon against oppression*, 14-15.

⁵ Warren, Arthur, *The poor mans passions* (L., 1605), no page.

defraud the poor with their lies, their cheats, and their smooth persuasion. They are engrossers, they speak falsely of quantity and of costs; even training up their servants and apprentices to share in their essential corruption and deceit.¹ These are but 'little rich men', but they share with the truly rich want of charity, guilt in the oppressing of the poor, and that contempt for the poor which is itself the worst of all oppressions:

Degrading vs with contumelious spells,
They touch, attach, and summon us with shames,
To our discredit ring reprochfull bells,
And catalogue us with inhumane names,
Vagabonds, varlets, villaines, vassalls, slaues,
Rogues, caterpillers, runnagates, and knaues.²

All this is, of course, reminiscent of the literature of protest, of wrathful demand for reform, which had its clearest and most extreme statement in the period of the Edwardian Reformation, but which, as we have seen, had a continuous and effective history in English social thought until it burgeoned out, once more in radical and vehement form, as an aspect of the Puritan Revolution. This was essentially old-fashioned thinking, depending heavily on accepted but wholly outworn axioms and symbols which possessed in the early seventeenth century neither historical nor economic reality. Yet it seems evident that this writing was persuasive and that the teachings which it propounded were widely accepted. It was essentially moralistic in tone and it undoubtedly supplied a significant impulse to charitable giving in this as it had in earlier generations.

We should deal, in concluding our discussion of the literature of protest in this era, with at least a sampling of writers who were 'projectors', men fanatically wedded to one course of reform, or to a single explanation of the woes of mankind, and who at least incidentally offered to cure poverty by the prescription of panacea. Certainly one of the ablest of all this group was Gerard de Malynes, the early economic theorist who was often officially consulted on monetary problems during the Elizabethan period.³ De Malynes strongly argued that England could never be truly prosperous or happy so long as great extremes of wealth and poverty existed. The harmony and balance of the economy had been destroyed by the 'dragon' of covetousness, which he identified as monetary inflation. Until this dragon was loosed by unscrupulous usurers, 'the inhabitants of this noble iland did liue by the naturall

¹ Richardson, *Sermon against oppression*, 17-23.

² Warren, *Poor mans passion*, no pagin.

³ DNB; Beer, *Early British economics*, 106-113, 146, 149; Viner, Jacob, *Studies in the theory of international trade* (N.Y., 1937), 5, 9, 17, 54, 61, 76.

richesse of the lands they were borne unto, or by the . . . riches they were bred vnto . . . euery man using . . . his own . . . Clergy men and magistrates did liue by their reuenues and pensions . . . gentlemen of their lands . . . merchants and citizens by their trade, artificers by their craft', while concord and justice reigned in the commonwealth.¹ With gross oversimplification, De Malynes blamed the monetary policy for the inflationary process, which as we have seen was certainly a significant cause of endemic poverty in England, holding that it amounted to deliberate and controllable devaluation.² Men have become quite mad in their thirst for money, with the result that charity is cold and 'brittle metall' is preferred to 'eternall treasure'.³ Inflation he denounced as a monster which 'taketh away the chiefest comfort of the poore, which is the quietnesse of their minds, and deuoureth their gaine before it can be gotten'.⁴ All this he would cure by a reform of monetary policy, just as another economic theorist of the period, Charles Gibbon, would relieve the poor and restore the harmony of the commonwealth by a complete reform of assessments in order more equitably to distribute the burden of taxation.⁵

Still other writers found the solution to the problem of poverty in some specific economic undertaking. There were many who believed that the principal reason for supporting the colonizing projects of the era was that the marginal classes in the society might thereby be relieved either by transportation or by the economic benefits accruing to the mother country.⁶ Even more numerous were the projectors who believed that substantial relief, if not the cure, of worthy poverty could be gained by lending full governmental support to the fishing industry. Chief among these was John Keymer [or Keymor], whose treatise entitled *Observation made upon the Dutch fishing* appears to have been written in 1601, and which enjoyed considerable circulation and influence in the Jacobean period, though it remained unpublished until the time of the Restoration. Keymer held that England had simply resigned to the Dutch and other European nations a great and profitable fishing industry, which if revived and well supported could vastly improve the prosperity of the nation and go far towards the relief of its chronic

¹ De Malynes, Gerard, *Saint George for England* (L., 1601), 13.

² *Vide ante*, 72-74.

³ De Malynes, *Saint George*, 19, 47.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁵ Gibbon, Charles, *The order of equalitie* (Cambridge, 1604), 11-14, 17-20.

⁶ This subject has been well and fully treated in L. B. Wright's *Religion and empire*, in which abundant documentation is provided, and need not be developed here. *Vide ante*, 71-72, however. Mention may be made of Donne's sermon preached before the Virginia Company in 1622 (*Works*, VI, 225 ff.) and of M[ichael] S[parke's] *Greevous grones* (L., 1621), in which this theme is well developed.

poverty.¹ The author maintained that all the mining industries of England, and the clothing industry as well, did not produce the economic benefits that would flow from a well-managed fishing industry. It would add strength of ships and seamen, but above all else it would give employment 'for all people, both young and old, for the keeping of them from begging and stealing, and other disorders'.² The benefits which Keymer envisaged were rich indeed, and the picture roseate, for he held that 'the trade of fishing is work-master to all other trades, and by that means the Dutch increase their farthings to pounds, and their pounds to thousands; and what fruitfulness is in their country and not a beggar there, every one getting his own living . . . the poor man, tho' he be blind and have but one hand, will get his own living sitting on a seat, with knitting and making of nets and hooks; every boy and wench, from ten and twelve years and upwards, will get their own living by winding hemp, spinning yarns, making twine and thread for nets'. Then and then alone, 'idlenesse, beggary, and penury, will be driven out of this land'.³

One projector, who signed himself 'Captain Baylie', combined two current enthusiasms when in 1625 he proposed linking a revival of the fishing industry with a huge undertaking for planting Virginia. Baylie believed that funds could be raised by subscription in every parish of the country—in fact, he had made trial proposals on his own authority—to finance the building and equipping of a fishing fleet which would employ as many as 10,000 young men, who would also be available to man the navy. The King was asked to build each year, from timber obtained from Virginia, two warships of 1000 tons burthen each for the defence of the fishing grounds and the sea routes to Virginia. At the same time, as many as 3000 poor were to be despatched each year to Virginia, with a grant of twenty acres of land, household and other necessary gear, and victuals for their first year. All this was to be financed by subscription from persons disturbed by the poverty so widespread in the realm, those refusing to subscribe to have their names 'recorded in a blank book'. If this were undertaken over a period of ten years, the coastal towns would be enriched by the fishing industry and by outfitting the Virginia fleet, while the resulting revival of trade 'will sett so many a work of all trades that I dare not sett downe'. The poor throughout the realm will either be relieved or transplanted, while even the prisons which 'are everlasting full & great store of bloud spilt in regard there is no way for them to expose themselves to live' will be

¹ 'John Keymer's observation made upon the Dutch fishing about the year 1601', in *A small collection of valuable tracts relating to the herring fishery* (L., 1751), 7.

² *Ibid.*, 33-34.

³ *Ibid.*, 36.

emptied as such men, often vicious because of hopeless poverty, will be transported to Virginia.¹

It may be said that a powerful and persistent pressure of informed opinion was concentrated on the problem of poverty and its relief during the whole of the early Stuart period. Steady support was lent to the charitable impulse which in the course of this era brought private benefactions to such a high plane both in amount and in quality of disposition. A climate of opinion had been created in which two rich and powerful classes particularly, the merchant aristocracy and the gentry, had assumed really immense burdens of responsibility which they were carrying with great dignity and a sense of social dedication. The literature which we have been considering undoubtedly made significant contribution to this great achievement of human generosity in the years 1601-1640, for it had established in the public mind at once the religious and the social necessity of bringing all possible resources to bear on the age-old problem of poverty. We have necessarily been content with presenting as evidence only a sampling of this literature. It is important to note here that we have been drawing from a much larger mass of material, including fifty-one published sermons urging the high necessity for charitable responsibility. Most significantly, it may be said that of this group of sermons, thirty-two were preached by clergy of undoubted Puritan persuasion and that another six of these ministers would seem from the biographical data available or from internal evidence to have been Puritan as well. This fact is remarkable when we bear in mind that throughout these four decades Puritanism lay under pressure of an increasing severity and that the printing press was in the later years of the period not available to men of a pronounced Puritan bias. We are not saying that this literature, essentially moralistic and evangelical as it was, was in any sense giving expression to a factional point of view, but rather that the great strength of the charitable impulse, at least in its social aspect, was to be found in the Puritan party. This remarkable preponderance of Puritans among the clerical writers considered was also accounted for by the further fact that the Puritan wing of the clergy tended, as it always had, to include most of the famous preachers of the church; and in an age when the published sermon was widely prized and read as a piece of literature, it was the sermon of a man with an established reputation as a popular preacher that tended to get published.

d *The ferment of revolution*

We turn now to our last period, the tumultuous years of intellectual ferment, social experimentation, and political dislocation which mark the Puritan Revolution. We are here considering only the treatment of

¹ *S.P. Dom.*, 1625, CLXXXIX, 36.

the problem of charity in the literature of the era, but a few more general remarks may be permitted as well. This was inevitably a period of serious economic dislocation, offset, however, by the demands for employment, including the armed services on both sides, of the war itself. There is no indication in our evidence of any considerable augmentation of poverty or of economic distress during these two decades, save for that caused by the physical impact of war itself, and we have earlier observed that there was very little slackening of parochial relief in those areas where charitable endowments were available or where rates had earlier been imposed for poor relief. The new and on the whole the most difficult problem of these two decades was the care of the war casualties, the thousands of wounded men, the widows and orphans, and the necessity for resettling into normal civilian pursuits men whose mature life had been spent in the camps and barracks. The formidable problem of handling the social wreckage of a sharp and lengthy civil war, then followed by the casualties from Cromwell's foreign adventures, tended to be solved by burdening existing institutions, hospitals, and almshouses, with of course serious dislocation of their normal services. But there was no breakdown of institutions, there was no social disaster, and, as we shall shortly suggest in detail, there was certainly no catastrophic falling away in the flow of funds from private charity, which in this interval, as in the past century, bore the principal responsibility for the care of the distressed.¹

As we turn to the discussion of the extensive body of literature dealing with the whole complex problem of poverty and its relief, we may observe that there is remarkably little difference in either the quantity or the quality of thought, as compared with the two preceding generations, save that this period of free discussion and experimentation inevitably produced a larger and a more interesting proportion of schemes set out by 'projectors'. But so great was the momentum of discussion, so well established was the dogma of charitable responsibility, and so well sustained was the flow of charitable funds that the literature of the revolutionary period may on balance be regarded as a continuation of a stream of thought which had its rise in the troubled but hopeful days of the Edwardian Reformation. Some other writers on the revolutionary era have discovered a hardening of the attitude of a triumphant Puritanism towards the poor, a contempt for poverty, which we do not observe in the literature.² There is rather, as there had

¹ This general view, it must be said, differs substantially from that advanced by a number of social and economic historians who have dealt in some detail with the revolutionary period.

² We would mention in particular the views of Miss Margaret James (*Social problems and policy during the Puritan Revolution*, L., 1930) and of Professor Tawney (*Religion and the rise of capitalism*), which must, of course, carry great weight; but we believe that they have read the literature of the period 1640-

been for a century, a denunciation of rogues and "vagabonds, harsh proposals for the handling of the unworthy poor, which possibly differ somewhat in intensity but by no means in substance from an attitude firmly fixed in the public and governmental mind for well over a century past. But the main stream of thought, which we believe to have been animated by Puritanism for more than two preceding generations in any case, remained relatively unaffected by the political and religious disaster which had overwhelmed the land. We should now address ourselves to the consideration of a small, but we believe representative, sampling of the extensive body of literature in this period which lent support and renewed strength to the already mature impulse towards charitable giving.

The preachers of the revolutionary era, like their brethren before them, lashed out at the coldness of their age, at the decline of charity, and the drying up of the springs of compassion. Thus the formidable Henry Symons saw a general decay of virtue in the commonwealth, but particularly denounced the rich, 'how few of them that are rich towards God . . . rich in faith . . . rich in good works' and the care of the poor.¹ Such men must repent, must open their hearts and purses freely and gladly if they are to stand before the last judge.² The age is cold, is wanting in compassion, urged another divine, for 'never had we more need to presse men to acts of charity, then in this iron age upon which we are cast'. At a time when need is so evident and so great, our 'mercy to the poor runs very low. Our forefathers . . . how bountifull and charitable were they; we have standing monuments of it in colledges, in hospitalls', while in this corrupt generation 'we are so farre from erecting such monuments of mercy, that we are rather for the pulling down of these, as being popish, unnecessary, and I know not what'.³ Yet, since mercy is a debt owed by us to man by the commandment of God, the author charged all men of substance to undertake the full measure of their responsibilities towards the poor and needy.⁴

1660 out of the century-long context in which it should be set and, more particularly, that they have failed to note that the denunciations of the unworthy, the professional, poor were framed with a logic and usually in language that was a century old. No one in England ever liked idlers and rogues, or those thought to be such, the Puritans least of all.

¹ Symons, Henry, *The Lord Jesus his commission* (L., 1657), 19. A native of Kent, Symons was graduated from Cambridge in 1632. He was ejected in 1662 as Rector of Southfleet, Kent.

² *Ibid.*, 32.

³ Jacomb, Thomas, *Gods mercy for mans mercy* (L., 1657), 14-16. Jacomb (1622-1687) was educated at Melton Mowbray School, Leicestershire, and at Oxford, where he was graduated B.A. in 1643. He was Rector of St Martin Ludgate from 1647 until his ejection in 1662. An outspoken Presbyterian, he was imprisoned for a season for holding a conventicle in London, but was protected by the Dowager Countess of Exeter, whom he served as chaplain.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 17, 21-22.

The preachers of this period also urged in the terms so eloquently expounded for a century past the absolute obligation to charity which lay on the Christian conscience. We are commanded to give generously to all men who are in need, and we should with terror search our hearts when we repel the claims of men who stand in distress. Our alms should flow instantly and inevitably from the Christian mercy in our hearts, and we may be sure indeed that 'the poor mans hand is Christ's treasury, and there is nothing lost which is put there'. The charitable man will be blessed on earth as he is in heaven, 'so, whatsoever we give to the poor, we give to men, but Christ repayes it. We give it away in earth, but we meet it in heaven: we cast it away in this world, but find it in the world to come'. No society which calls itself Christian, which heeds the express commandment of God, dares be anything less than charitable, while the existence of unrelieved poverty in a state is a clear indication that the duties inherent in the Christian community simply have not been met. Our charity must be cheerful, it must be a first call on our own wealth, and it must flow from the reservoir of faith through the channels of humility.¹

The Puritan clergy patiently insisted that we must not accept the commandment of alms as a kind of doctrinal abstraction without admitting it to our minds and hearts as an intensely personal responsibility. There can be no salvation unless we lend our obedience to this injunction of Christian charity, maintained Richard Younge, who gave specific examples of men who had well discharged their responsibilities by disposing from 10 per cent to 20 per cent of their incomes in alms.² Earlier piety had done much, had wrought great achievement of alms, another minister held in a sermon at St Paul's, but there remain the poor, the impoverished clergy, the children unapprenticed, and the sons of indigent men who deserve education but cannot attend the universities without help. 'Remember . . . it is your duty to consider the ability which God hath given you, to weigh the necessitous condition of the objects set before you, and accordingly to extend your bounty to the honour of God, the discharge of your consciences, the regaining of your credit, and the relief of the needy.'³ The poor have an absolute claim on some generous measure of our wealth, a claim which transcends our man-made title. To withhold from the poor, accordingly, is to defraud them and, if we 'deprive them of the means where by their lives might have been preserved', to murder them.⁴ Not only do we live

¹ Moore, John, *The crying sin of England* (L., 1653), 18 ff., 24, 27-30; Watson, Thomas, *A plea for almes* (L., 1658), 40-43, 49, 53-54, 59-60. Both men are noted in the DNB. Moore died in 1657; Watson was ejected at the Restoration, having been a pronounced Presbyterian.

² Younge, Richard, *The poores advocate* (L., 1654), 27-29.

³ Hardy, Nathaniel, *The olive-branch* (L., 1658), 38.

⁴ Younge, *Poores advocate*, 6.

under a stark prescription of charity, but we must needs learn to give joyously, in full confidence as an act of faith. 'He who hath no true charity, hath no true faith, no true wisdom, no well grounded hope, peace of conscience, or any other saving grace whatsoever'.¹

When we have at last experienced the grace of alms freely and gladly given, of alms distributed as an act of mercy, our own mercy will be rewarded by the mercy of God towards us. God, Jacomb tells us, will 'return to the mercifull man what he gives to the poor . . . if God do not returne your mercy in the very kind, he will do it in some other way', for a benefaction to the needy 'is a loan to God, and he is a faithfull pay-master'.² This Presbyterian divine put it bluntly and forcefully in terms of the counting-house, when he wrote that 'charity to the poor 'tis your bill of exchange; pay down your money here, and you shall receive it again in glory'.³ Infinite rewards, then, flow to us, once we have learned the meaning of mercy towards our unfortunate brothers in Christ. London merchants must have been moved indeed to have such certain assurance that 'works of mercy are all expended upon a mans self, he hath the comfort here, and the reward hereafter . . . laying up a foundation, a way to make our uncertain riches sure and stable'.⁴ We dare not forget that, in truth, that which we possess has come from the 'deep places of the earth'; 'it is gift, it is not property; Gods, not yours; you are the fiduciaries, the despositaries onely'.⁵ We betray the trust of God, just as we betray our own profession of Christian faith, when we seek to seal off our treasure against the needs of our brethren in Christ.

And, if these Puritan divines were blunt and categorical in expounding the personal obligation of charity and the ubiquitous rewards that flow from mercy, they were equally assured in treating the subject in its dreaded connection with the question of the necessity for good works. One suspects, in point of fact, that their evangelical zeal to inspire charity tended to master their orthodox qualms as they enunciated, and a powerful argument it is, what we can only regard as a Protestant doctrine of the merit of works. Good works, the merit of alms freely given, ensure us the reward of a tranquil conscience in this life and 'joy forevermore' in the life to come. They are 'seeds of glory' that follow us into heaven. When the angel of darkness cuts us down, preached Cartwright, 'riches they take wing and fly away . . . but our good works prove our close and faithful friends, they follow us still'.⁶ Our works of mercy endure with a godly and compelling righteousness for all time to come, another divine would hold.⁷ Our deeds of mercy will assuredly

¹ Young, *Poores advocate*, 21-22. ² Jacomb, *Gods mercy*, 11. ³ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁴ Reynolds, Edward, *The rich mans charge* (L., 1658), 45. The career of this eminent moderate is noted in the DNB.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 46-47.

⁶ Cartwright, Thomas, *The good man's epitaph* (L., 1659), 15-16.

⁷ Watson, *Plea for almes*, 3-8.

be blessed by God, for 'it is lawful to put out your monie to use, when you lay it out for good uses'.¹ Indeed, this preacher, if we read him correctly, would seem to say that good works may well be more important than faith itself in the attainment of salvation.² More cautiously and certainly with more of Calvinistic orthodoxy, the moderate Reynolds, in preaching before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, suggested that though 'we dare not ascribe unto good works, any meritorious dignity, or proper causality, whereby they procure or produce salvation for us, yet such a necessity of them we ever acknowledge, as that without walking in the way of holiness, we shall not arrive at the Kingdom of Glory; without doing the will of God, we can never expect to receive the promises'. God commands good works, the acts of mercy, from us, and clearly the 'vertue of true saving faith' finds its outlet, its confirmation, in the good works that we do and leave behind us.³

We have been considering the thought of some of the greatest and most persuasive preachers that Protestantism has ever known. They were men who spoke with that unique confidence of infallible knowledge of faith which Calvinism alone among the Protestant dogmas has inspired, and they spoke in an age in which the learned clergy possessed a prestige perhaps never equalled before or since. They were pronouncing, with respect to the area of our interest, a quite remarkable doctrine of the social meaning and responsibilities of wealth. They loved to emphasize the fact that we are no more than feoffees of wealth, that we hold our substance from God as stewards and remain strictly accountable to Him for the wisdom and social generosity of its use.⁴ It is when we have come fully to understand the nature and obligations of our stewardship that we have freed ourselves from the evil of wealth, for then we know that 'the poore mans hand is the rich mans treasury, what hee layes up there, he shall find in heaven: hee that feeds the hungry, puts bread into Christs owne mouth; hee that clothes the naked, puts a garment on Christs owne backe'.⁵

We must, then, come to comprehend that we hold our wealth in trust, that wealth has virtue only when it is disciplined by and dedicated to the service of God. Our wealth must serve the ends of our social responsibility, of our duty to God, our country, and our fellow men. As Reynolds phrased it, 'whereas worldly riches are onely . . . for the present time . . . being put into good works, they are . . . returnable into another country. A mans works will follow him . . . An house thus

¹ Watson, *Plea for almes*, 37.

² *Ibid.*, 30-43.

³ Reynolds, *Rich mans charge*, Epist. Dedic.

⁴ *Christs order* (L., 1644), 4; Marriot, Robert, *A sermon in commemoration of . . . Mistris Elizabeth Dering* (L., 1641), 22. Marriot, a graduate of Cambridge in 1630, was in 1641 Vicar of Lenham, Kent. He conformed after the Restoration, serving successively in two London parishes. He died in 1689, aged 81.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

founded, shall continue for ever'.¹ Christ did not forbid us to have or to gain wealth; this view betokens a complete misunderstanding of His precepts and teachings. But He did command us at our peril to dedicate our substance to His purposes, and He did warn us against the dreadful sin of covetousness, of seeking wealth for its own sake. How, then, shall we know 'those lawful means, which God gives for the getting of wealth?'² We are not only permitted, but we are required to gain sufficient substance to lend full support to our own needs and those of our family, and to provide for the 'necessity of our calling and condition of life; which admits a very great latitude, according to the various relations, and stations, which men hold, both in church and state'. But what imperils us in this world and the next is the insidious and wholly evil love of wealth for its own sake, for the 'covetous man is possessed . . . by his wealth . . . of all sinners [he is] most miserable . . . His end shall be, begger, and fool'.³ We must come fully to comprehend, Reynolds taught, that wealth is but transitory, 'fit to buy some trifles with, but not to purchase an inheritance'. Our eternal, our true, estate is laid up in another world by the good works we leave in this life, with the consequence that our wealth has no moral meaning, no real meaning, save as it enables us to carry forward charitable, useful, and enduring works.

This seems to us to be a clear statement of the later Calvinistic position on the meaning and utility of wealth in the Christian society. Wealth must be dedicated to God's uses, for 'God hath given [riches] to us . . . to do good with . . . for the good of our souls, and the comfort of our poor brethren'. The right use for wealth, then, is to employ it as the 'material for good works', that we may discharge our lives profitably for the needs of other men.⁴ God has in His wisdom given more to some men than to others for the sole purpose of imposing a larger measure of social responsibility, so held Samuel Richardson, the leading Baptist theologian. God will bless us in the act of giving. We must recall at all times that 'it is the will of God that there should not be any inequality of living among his people', and be guided by the understanding that 'it is not enough to do some good, or much good, unless we do all the good we can'.⁵ Rich men have their wealth, Reynolds taught, 'as the sun hath

¹ Reynolds, *Rich mans charge*, 4-5.

² Ryves, Brune, *Two sermons* (L., 1652), 1-6. Ryves was educated at Oxford, where he proceeded B.A. in 1616. He was appointed Rector of St Martin Vintry in 1628 and Vicar of Stanwell, Middlesex, about 1640. He was a chaplain to the King, an Anglican, and a Royalist. He was rewarded at the Restoration by appointment as Dean of Chichester and of Windsor. He died in 1677, aged 83.

³ *Ibid.*, 8, 11-14, 19-22.

⁴ Reynolds, *Rich mans charge*, 30-31.

⁵ Richardson, Samuel, *The cause of the poor pleaded* (L., 1653), no pagin. (cropped). Richardson was the most eminent and responsible of the Baptist thinkers of his generation (Jordan, W. K., *The development of religious toleration*

light, or the fire heat, to communicate unto others . . . the whole good that money doth . . . is while it is in motion', the sole justification for riches consisting in the good uses to which they may be applied.¹ We shall accordingly bear our wealth as a burden laid upon us, to be discharged according to God's clear purposes of charity, conducting our own lives and providing for our families with that frugality and charity of outlay which recognizes that wealth possesses no personal meaning for us.²

If the rich man, the Christian whom God has endowed with means to serve the ends of His will, understands all this, recognizes the nature of his responsibility, then may his wealth be put to an infinite variety of godly purposes, then will he be blessed. Surely, as one writer of the period puts it, 'there lyes before you the fairest of opportunities; never was there a fitter seeds-time for prayer and almes . . . that's your happinesse that you can give'. Many demands lie against our charity, many objects of mercy: 'old men and babes, widowes and orphans, many poore persons that want stocks to set them on work, that would faine be imployed if they knew how'; these are but instances of the good works which God requires.³ And there are many other worthy objects of charity which make due claim on the divinely trusteed wealth which we hold. The schools and universities require support, the ministry is ill supplied in its necessary work, all the hopeful experiments in social rehabilitation need ever more capital, and there are about us poor and distressed Christian men and women who require our alms.⁴ All these needs we must supply, all these responsibilities lie unfulfilled as a charge on our charity and conscience. All this we must bring about 'as in communion, as members one of another . . . with meekness . . . and facility . . . with mercy . . . as a debt of love . . . for the credit of our Reformed Religion, that the mouths of adversaries may be stopped, who falsely charge us with preaching and . . . professing a naked, empty, fruitless faith'.⁵ All Christian men, whether their estates be large or modest, must set themselves at these great tasks, with an understanding that almsgiving cannot be regarded as a wasting of a man's estate. The only impediment to this great and godly, this necessary, achievement 'is the affection and passionate love, that we bear to our wealth, that lust . . . as the apostle cals it'. Surely, we as Christian men

in England, L., 1932-1940, 4 vols., III, 515-523). It is interesting that, Richardson aside, the sectaries gave little or no consideration to the great social problems which we have under discussion. This is doubtless principally explained by the fact that for most of these men such problems were unimportant because they were possessed of a vision of the Kingdom of Christ which they believed to be at hand.

¹ Reynolds, *Rich mans charge*, 31.

² Ryves, *Two sermons*, 28-38.

³ Harris, Robert, *True religion* (L., 1645), Preface, 35.

⁴ Reynolds, *Rich mans charge*, 33-37.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 38-41.

of the reformed faith will come to understand that the 'final reward of almesgiving [is] a present coronet, and a future crown'.¹

We have dealt all too briefly with a large and a very impressive body of clerical literature which in the course of the revolutionary era may be said to have brought to its maturity the Calvinistic teaching on the moral and social responsibility of wealth and to have assessed with great care and considerable nobility the nature of the Christian obligation of charity. Most, but by no means all, of these men were Puritans, as, in point of fact, they had been in the earlier periods with which we have dealt. It is noteworthy that the thought of this period on the whole complex and troubled problem of the relief of poverty was in no sense revolutionary, being linked solidly and organically with the thought of the past century as men sought to analyse and set down the obligation of the reformed faith towards problems which were ancient in their origin but which had become critical in a society undergoing a social and economic metamorphosis of revolutionary proportions. Any one of these sermons could with perfect propriety have been preached in the Caroline period; most of them would have been consonant with the mood of the late Elizabethan age. They represent, then, no sharp break with the past, but rather a maturing of a profoundly important body of Christian thought to which the best and most responsible minds in England had been lending prayerful attention for a full century.

But the revolutionary era was also marked by an immensely significant burgeoning out of lay thought on these difficult and complex matters of poverty, of want of opportunity, and the chronic wasting not only of human life but the resources of the state. The sectaries, who were lending fanatical but stimulating attention to religious questions during these years, were so engrossed with their spiritual vision, with the Kingdom of God which seemed to be at hand, that they gave but scant attention to the more pedestrian problem of poverty and the charity which might cure it. But there were other laymen who were almost completely secular in their interests and who demanded that the political and religious revolution be extended in the realm of social institutions. These men wished for as much boldness and experimentation in social problems and issues as had characterized the flow of events in the realms of faith and the constitution, but here they were to be halted by the solid social conservatism of Cromwell and the power groupings which he led and fused with such consummate skill. We shall now briefly discuss the thought and the recommendations of these laymen, all of whom were bold but none of whom, it is interesting to note, was an incendiary. Most of these men, and, as we have observed in earlier pages, there had been others before them, were 'projectors', men who believed they had found the solution for problems of vast com-

¹ Hammond, Henry, *The poor mans iithing* (L., 1657), 63-66, 73.

plexity by some single formula which they advanced with an admirable but occasionally tiresome persistence. The *corpus* of this thought is very large, and we must accordingly be content with a most modest, and we hope, representative sampling, particularly since it has already been well and thoroughly treated,¹ and since the principal emphasis of most of these writers is quite irrelevant to our problem.

A pamphleteer, Henry Peacham, a painter, musician, mathematician, and professional writer, among other attainments, sought rather early in the revolutionary period to discover 'the causes of our want and . . . generall scarcity', without, it might be added at the outset, propounding any very convincing analysis.² Peacham took the view that the principal difficulty in England arose from the fact that a relatively small number of men had accumulated vast estates which they 'brood over and watch . . . day and night', with the result that the necessities of countless men remain unrelieved. There are others who are simply misers, wholly withdrawing their money from circulation and hence making no contribution to the common needs of the realm. The land is impoverished, too, by sumptuous tastes and the conspicuous wasting of its resources, by foreigners who abuse their sanctuary in England by engrossing its wealth, by chronic losses of bullion in the East India trade, and by a general tightening of trade 'in these tickle times'. The result is that the opportunities open to a likely boy, a marriageable daughter, or a young man taking orders have been dangerously and uncharitably restricted.³ God has ordained that there should be rich and poor, but it is also His injunction that the poor must be relieved and that the path of opportunity be left open and easy for the children of the poor whom 'God raiseth up, as by miracle . . . oftentimes to possesse the most eminent places either in church or commonwealth'.⁴ All these benefits, all these social necessities, are retarded or destroyed when charity is withheld, when wealth is hoarded or employed for wholly personal ends.

One of the few legislative or policy changes of the revolutionary era which may possibly be attributed to the earnest recommendations of the many projectors was the establishment in 1647 of the Corporation of the Poor in London.⁵ It was London wealth which principally prosecuted and won the Civil War and it was London which inevitably had to carry the chief burdens of social dislocation and the ever-mounting problem of caring for the casualties of the war. The institutions and the endowments accumulated over the past century, as well as the quite decentralized system of administering poor relief, were simply unable to carry

¹ In James, *Social problems and policy*.

² Peacham, Henry, *The worth of a peny* (L., 1647), 1.

³ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵ For a brief discussion of the legislative proposals and changes of this period, *vide ante*, 104-107.

the burdens in this period of emergency, and the Corporation was founded to cope with these pressing difficulties.¹ Rice Bush [or Buck], a pamphleteer about whom little can be certainly said, in a treatise published in 1649 claimed that the idea was first developed by him and his friends at a meeting called to discuss the urgent problem of poor relief and to consider modifying the London system by judicious borrowings from that prevailing in the Low Countries and such English towns as Norwich, Ipswich, and Dorchester, where there were no beggars.² Bush held that the difficulty was not so much the want of salutary laws, but rather a breakdown in the methods of administering and enforcing them. He further, and correctly, argued that the problem which London must face was genuine and widespread unemployment, whereas the weight of administrative effort and concern was steadily directed towards the punishment and control of vagrancy. The administration of the charitable resources of the city ought accordingly to be carried forward in relation to the state of trade, so that an already depressed industry be not further depressed by engulfing it with a flood of unwanted and unneeded apprentices. The worthy poor simply must be supported until employment can be opened for them, the sick must be cared for at municipal expense, and all fines laid against ale-houses, drunkards, and the profane should be added to the resources from which relief is drawn.³ Four additional workhouses should be erected in London, in which the poor might be gainfully employed, while funds should be raised, beyond amounts available from past charity and present taxes, by soliciting food and loans from householders, paying over all unclaimed legacies to the Corporation, and diverting the estates of childless couples to these worthy purposes.⁴ If even these heroic measures will not suffice, the bells of London's churches, which he reckoned as worth £9660, should be melted down and the citizens persuaded for 'one year to forbear altering their apparell into other fantastick fashions', the saving to be paid into the stock of the Corporation.⁵

The Corporation as actually constituted bore only a somewhat casual relation to the ideal which seems to have been in Bush's mind.⁶ The ordinance establishing it reposed authority in officers who were in effect the existing municipal officers. It was given somewhat wider powers to arrest and set at work all idle and disorderly persons, to levy taxes for the financing of work programmes, and was declared to possess all the powers of justices of the peace in punishing vagrants, binding out

¹ Ordinance, 17 December, 1647; in Firth and Rait, *Acts and ordinances*, I, 1042.

² [Bush, Rice], *The poor mans friend* (L., 1649), 3.

³ *Ibid.*, 10-14.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁶ Leonard, *English poor relief*, 272-273.

apprentices, and affording relief for the poor. Some hundreds of poor were employed by the Corporation in spinning and weaving on stocks maintained at the Wardrobe and in the Minories, while a considerable number of additional orphans were brought under the charge of the city.¹ The municipal authorities in 1649 announced hopefully that they intended to put the poor at work on gear for the fishing trade, as well as other manufactures, in appealing to the clergy of London 'to stir up your hearers with the most religious and pressing arguments to so pious and charitable a work, that so this city might not be found guilty of such a neglect as not to provide for the poore'.² The Corporation continued to find itself short of funds and, perhaps almost inevitably, continued as well to expend most of its resources and energy on the curbing and punishment of vagrancy. In 1655 the governors of the Corporation put into the mouths of orphans being maintained by that body a persuasive, if improbable, plea for funds and support, employing all those arts which are known to modern advertising:

These children orphans singing show,
 Though God's above, he dwels below,
 Who clothes their backs and bellies feed,
 And gave them fathers in their need.
 These father'd fatherless, their fathers bless,
 And warble forth their worth in thankfull verse . . .

God is the poor mans God, who doth express
 Himself the father of the fatherless,
 And men like gods themselves appear
 To whom poor fatherless are dear,
 Whose works of charity,
 He suffers not to dye,
 What thus they spend
 To God they lend,
 Who will repay with glory in the end . . .

This is the pure religion, and this
 By Gods appointment leads to lasting bliss;
 When scarlet robes, and golden chains
 Shall come to nothing, this remains,
 When creature comforts faile,
 Such works as these prevaile . . .

You that have thus so well begun, go on,
 Finish your work, let no man take your crown,
 Such works as these their workmen bless;
 By spending thus, you shall increase,

¹ Gray, *English philanthropy*, 72-74.

² *Bute broadsides* (Houghton Library, Harvard University), I, 43 (February, 1649).

This is Gods way of thriving,
 Thus give, and get by giving;
 What else you save
 Others may have;
 These works your selves shall find beyond the grave.¹

The Corporation in its report and appeal in the same year stated that it was lending complete sustenance and education to about one hundred poor children and was 'ayming at the entertainment of some hundreds more'. Many hundreds of poor families were being supported at useful labour, 'none being refused or denied employment that will come for it'. None the less, it must be concluded that the Corporation added only slightly to the resources already in being for the care of the derelict and that its work remained somewhat uninspired and inconsequential. Its contribution had been fully made by the time of the restoration of the monarchy.

It seems quite certain that the establishment of the Corporation inspired a proposal in 1649 by Peter Chamberlen, a prominent London physician and a 'projector' par excellence, for a really heroic attempt to deal with the problem of poverty. The poor constitute a heavy drain on the national economy, and they simply must be provided for whether by a debit or a credit against national resources. Hence he suggests that a national stock, or corporation, be formed whose assets would consist of the remaining royal and episcopal estates, all common lands and marshes, abandoned mines, tithe assessments for a period of three years, after which they would be eliminated, and certain other national resources. This huge capital wealth, most of which was quite unexploited, would be employed for the advancement of education, colonization, and above all to provide fruitful labour for the poor of England. These resources would be used for the 'benefit of the whole nation, by improving of lands that were never improved, by imploying of men that were not onely useles; but a burthen, through idleness, or want of imployment, and by converting them into good common-wealths-men . . . for the honour . . . and . . . strength of the nation'.² Chamberlen also advocated a public bank which he thought would revive trade, while he had every confidence that great national prosperity would at once result if the poor of the nation could be set on useful work.³ No better use could be made of the public resources of the nation, since 'all riches

¹ *Bute broadsides*, I, 66 (1655).

² Chamberlen, Peter, *The poore mans advocate* (L., 1649), 3-5. The son of a barber-surgeon, Chamberlen (1601-1683) was educated at Cambridge and at Padua. He was admitted to Gray's Inn in 1631 and was successively physician to James I, Charles I, and Charles II. He was highly skilled in obstetrics, using forceps in deliveries. At one time, at least, he was a Baptist.

³ *Ibid.*, 6-10.

whatsoever proceed from the labour and industrie of the poor . . . the more poor, the more hands, the more work, the more wealth'.¹ If such a plan, fired with boldness and imagination, were set in motion, within a few years England would discover that she had not a surplus but an acute shortage of labour.

Chamberlen's plan did possess great boldness, but it was of course sketched only in the broadest outlines and concealed by its warm enthusiasm the legal, the administrative, and the practical difficulties which would have been encountered in setting in motion even a segment of this grandiose proposal. But this kind of thinking was very much in the air during this period of revolution and swift change. Thus in the next year, 1650, an anonymous tract, almost certainly inaccurately attributed to John Keymer,² recommended the founding of a national stock, to be called the 'state merchant', to deal with all the problems of foreign trade, to lend support to the fishing industry, and to take measures to ensure the manufacture in England of all the principal fabricated commodities. This sober mercantilist tract urged that such measures were required to give employment to the poor of the nation, and that a revival of the cloth industry and a rebuilding of the fishing trade would alone absorb most of the surplus labour with which England was now plagued.³

One of the most sensible and thoughtful of all the many proposals for social and economic reform advanced in this period, which literally seethed with ideas, was that made by Adam Moore, of Somerset, whose work was published in 1653, but the preface of which indicated that it was written a generation earlier. Moore, daring to attack frontally the now venerable myth that all enclosures were harmful to the poor and to the economy, boldly proposed that the whole of the common land and the wastes of England be enclosed by legal means in order to provide a broader base for a society that had become overpopulated, whose resources of land had been consumed. The commons and wastes of England, he held, and quite correctly, were badly and most imperfectly exploited, surely because common rights were vested in them. They could never be improved or tilled until they were divided and placed under private ownership. Rights in common encourage idleness, subsistence living, and offer just enough of sustenance to support a marginal and a doomed class of rural paupers. Those who draw their living in part from common and waste lands will, of course, say: 'Here . . . we can keep a horse or a cow (if we have any), or if our estate will not reach to such a one, yet can we compass a goose or a swine, that in a yeer may yield us many a penny (God wot'.)', which means that a whole class of men, usually with large families, was accepting a life of penury, hard-

¹ *Poore mans advocate*, 13.

² *Vide ante*, 195-196.

³ I. D., *A clear and evident way for enriching the nations of England and Ireland* (L., 1650), 2, 10, 12, 15-16.

ship, and idleness.¹ Even the animals bred and raised by such men stood always in danger of starvation, while the breed could not be improved so long as herds ran in common.²

This system, Moore maintained, had always been hopelessly wasteful, and the nation could no longer afford such wastage of its resources, for 'the great increase of people in our dayes . . . cannot but compell us . . . to make the best use of our abilities for our relief and preservation'.³ The best, the only, hope for England is by law to enclose such lands, allot them equitably under private ownership for tillage by men who, when they once find themselves masters of land of their own, will mend their idle ways and become self-supporting and self-respecting members of the commonwealth. Moore estimated, probably very conservatively, that there were upwards of 2300 square miles of waste and commons in England which might be profitably enclosed, which he optimistically reckoned could lend full support to something like 750,000 persons. Quite as important would be a great national effort to drain and then enclose the marshy areas and the fens of the nation, which he held were now completely useless to the economy. The canals would serve as enclosures, willows set on their banks would supply fuel and timber, and the rich lands thus brought under the plough would release exhausted upland areas which ought in any event to be returned to pasture.⁴ Such enterprise would immediately absorb the labour of the working poor, who when the work was done would receive their due proportion of the land they had made available. Distributions in each county should be made by commissions of the most trusted inhabitants, who should take particular care to safeguard the rights of the worthy poor and who should vest specified tracts in all regions in the churchwardens for the perpetual care of the impotent poor.⁵ Moore remained confident that even the most idle poor, once they experienced the benefits and joys of owning land of their own, would be animated by pride and industry in order further to improve their lot as self-respecting citizens of a more prosperous England. Thus, he concluded, 'we have now . . . from these few heads discovered a new plantation in our own continent . . . as for wealth and people, even another kingdome would seem to be gained unto us . . . the state enriched . . . poor and idle employed . . . provisions encreased . . . people multiplied, and the whole nation in power advanced'.⁶

Moore addressed the problem of the enclosure of commons and wastes with more reasoned sense than any writer had brought to bear before on the question. In fact, his views were widely adopted when many years later enclosures were generally undertaken, though his sensitive regard for the rights of the poor and his essentially reforming

¹ Moore, Adam, *Bread for the poor* (L., 1653), 6.

² *Ibid.*, 9.

³ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 35-36.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 38-39.

approach to the whole tangled issue was to be quite neglected. His proposals were at bottom modest and they were wholly practical, save that he skirted round the central problem of costs and dismissed rather blithely the evident fact that a herculean administrative effort would be necessary if his plans were to be carried forward. But his scheme of social and economic rehabilitation remains within the ambit of the possible. This alone sets Moore quite apart from most of the social reformers of this interesting and seminal age when almost every idea known to the modern world managed to get itself before a somewhat bewildered generation for at least a moment of discussion.

But always the problem of the poor, and the nature of the obligation of the society towards them, stood central to the discussion. Thus a petition presented to the Council of Officers in 1659 proposed that all prisons be turned into workhouses, and that the revenues of the prisons combined with certain other funds be employed in a great effort to afford relief to all the poor.¹ Another author, while conceding that the relief of poverty was 'a laudable and necessary work', held that true reform could only come when education was more widely extended. Hence a national canvass of schools should be made in order to set all able students in the universities at public charge, so as to build a learned ministry and endow the nation with proficiencies which only education could supply.² William Sprigg, a fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, on the other hand, argued that there were already so many schools and so many possibilities of attaining an education that the nation spoiled 'many a good plough-man to make a poor scholar . . . to keep our colledges thinly stock'd with half-witted stapish fellows'. The number of educated men, or at least of those 'thinly educated', far exceeded the professional opportunities available, Sprigg maintained, with the consequence that men of ability were made dangerously discontented and sought violent changes in the state and society.³ He proposed rather that charity be confined to the more urgent task of supporting the poor in their great need and that tithes be wholly suppressed and all glebe lands annexed to workhouses for their endowment. He expressed himself as shocked that of all the episcopal lands expropriated by the state, none had been appropriated for setting the worthy poor on work, which

¹ *S.P. Dom.*, 1659, CCV, 24 (November 24).

² [Poole, Matthew], *A model for the maintaining of students* (L., 1658), Preface, 2-7, 15-18. A native of York, Poole (1624-1679) was educated at Emmanuel College. Rector of a London parish at the Restoration, he declined to conform and retired to Holland, where he spent the remainder of his life. He was a biblical scholar of some note.

³ [Sprigg, William], *A modest plea for an equal common-wealth* (L., 1659), Preface, 65-68, *et passim*. A notable pamphleteer and a Parliamentarian, Sprigg was deprived of his fellowship at the Restoration. He was a brother to Joshua Sprigg, a clergyman of considerable reputation.

betokened 'the deafness of this uncharitable age to the cries of the poor', and which stood as a crime and a black reproach to the Christian conscience of England.¹

The greatest, and very probably the most influential, of all the many 'projectors' of the revolutionary era was without doubt the ubiquitous Samuel Hartlib, who had interesting and often most practical ideas on a great variety of topics. In 1650 he expressed himself as hopeful that Parliament was at last ready to undertake some really promising and well-conceived plan for the relief of poverty and, more particularly, for the care of poor children, and he proceeded, as was his wont, to instruct that assembly in precisely what ought to be done.² Parliament should attack this whole festering social problem with courage and energy. Thus he recommended that the waste and barren lands of the nation be improved at public expense and that the growing of such crops as tobacco be prohibited, while the planting of such labour-producing crops as hemp, flax, and roots ought by every inducement to be encouraged.³ Indeed, a great 'work of reformation' must be set under way 'for the good of the poor', such as 'was never . . . performed in former ages in our nation'.⁴ A clean and a full separation must be made between the incorrigibly idle and the large mass of the poor who are unable to labour or who cannot find employment. Facilities for setting the poor on useful work must be provided in every town and city in the land, all economic oppression of the poor under whatever guise must be stopped by law. The 'honest rich . . . and comfortles poor . . . wait for a reformation, as the thirsty ground for raine . . . and there is . . . great need for the Parliament to find out ways and means to preserve people from poverty' and to protect the weak from the strong. The flotsam of the society, those who simply decline to work, must be subjected to the salutary disciplines of the workhouse and if this does not effect their reformation, they should be summarily deported to the colonies.⁵

Hartlib's ranging and ingenious mind, informed as it was by a brooding sense of charity, was fertile with suggestions for the cure of the ancient evil of poverty. He called for some plan to ensure the universal education of poor children in the useful rudiments of knowledge until they were old enough to be apprenticed. More could be done in making available stocks of raw materials on which poor families might work in their own cottages, while the clergy could render great contribution by attending more effectively to the educational and spiritual needs of poor and neglected children. In fact, Hartlib's central preoccupation was

¹ *A modest plea*, 54-57.

² Hartlib, Samuel, *London's charity enlarged* (L., 1650). Hartlib was one of the most important of the social thinkers of the period. A full-length study of his thought and his place in his age is needed. There is a DNB notice.

³ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 8-10.

with the plight of poor children; his protest was against dooming them to the fate of their own parents by closing against them the door of education and the opportunity which it opens up for all men. This problem, he contended, was by no means insoluble. He estimated that for every grouping of a hundred children, something like £461 5s would be annually required to secure their lodging, their diet, their training in crafts, and the essentials of their education.¹ It was, he thought, a conservative estimate that children under proper supervision and training might, while learning useful trades and skills, produce goods to the value of £260 p.a. for each such unit. This outlay is a pittance indeed if it will preserve a hundred children from ruin, will offer to them the opportunity through their whole lifetime to become useful, decent, and self-sustaining men and women.

There was fervour, there was deep compassion, and there was hope in Hartlib's musings on what might be done in England to bring about the Kingdom of God on earth. All his writings display an ingenious and fertile mind, never, however, wanting in practicality and an adequate sense of the possible. But we should conclude with a truly utopian tract, more typical of much of the social thought of this amazing and in so many ways fruitful era when men caught for a moment a vision of a new social order. Hugh Peter, that remarkably versatile and gifted man, whose great abilities were flawed by weaknesses of character, in 1659 epitomized the utopian dreams of the social reformers of the revolutionary era in a tract entitled *A way propounded to make the poor . . . happy*. He proposed setting up, within the framework of the English society, an insulated community in which young and old, husbandman and scholar, might join in a truly Christian commonwealth. The society would maintain a London house in which from twenty to thirty of its artisan members would dwell, with shops for the sale of their wares, and a country house where 'husbandmen, handicrafts people are to live and work . . . mariners . . . to go forth to sea to trade and carry goods', and where several scholars should reside. All profits gained by the community, after sustenance was provided, were to be shared equally. The children of the rich and of the poor members, for goods were not to be held in common, were to be educated together in handicrafts, the arts, and the natural sciences. Medical care was to be furnished for the aged and the infirm. Indeed, 'there will be no need in our society to take any care, or to make provision for the aged time, or day of sickness, nor for children; for the aged will be better looked after than the young, the sick then the healthful, and the children after the death of their parents as before'.² The aim of the society will be to

¹ *London's charity enlarged*, 14-18.

² Cornelisson, Peter (pseud.), *A way propounded to make the poor . . . happy* (L., 1659). Most authorities agree in attributing this work to Hugh Peter.

banish all the evils that spring from both riches and poverty, and to provide a Christian and wholly tolerant sanctuary for all those that weary of religious controversy. All this and more might be accomplished if men in a spirit of Christian fellowship and humility would pool their resources, their energy, and their good will. Indeed, Peter most persuasively set forth the hope that such a settlement might be made in County Mayo, where the assurance of lands had been given, though we must note that within a year after the publication of the book the monarchy had been restored and Hugh Peter had been done to death as a regicide.

4. *In praise of famous men*

We have been endeavouring to explore the impulses which prompted so many men to give so generously of their means to the charitable needs of England. We have in earlier pages suggested that the reasons for the great outpouring of charitable endowments during the long interval, 1540–1660, were very complex indeed. In part this great generosity was in response to apparent and pressing need; quite as truly, it is most evident, men's growing sensitivity with respect to suffering and want occasioned a greater perception of need, or, more accurately, a broader definition of areas of need. We have just concluded a long discussion, necessarily quite repetitious in its insistence on certain axioms and attitudes, in which we have examined an enormous literature, principally comprised of sermons, in which the clergy and the moralists laid before men with ever-mounting emphasis and conviction the Christian obligation of charity and a doctrine of the social and moral injunction laid by God on wealth. This literature beyond any possible doubt constituted one of the very important impulses towards charitable giving; it was moving and hortatory; it assisted most significantly in establishing a climate of opinion which engendered certain attitudes and actions as an obligation of wealth; and it went very far towards establishing habits of giving or of bequeathing among certain classes of men. Most of these sermons were preached by clergymen of stalwart Puritan persuasion. They were all preached with deep conviction, and it must be remembered that they were addressed to living and to susceptible human beings in the congregation before the pulpit. These preachers were all essentially moralists, they were intensely evangelical, and they were in the course of a century to hew out of Scripture and historical experience an ethic which we can describe broadly as Protestant and much more specifically as Puritan.

We have reserved for separate discussion another considerable body of published sermons from this period which were even more expressly hortatory and which must have possessed an immense efficacy in evoking the good works of alms from the congregations at hand and the larger audiences which purchased and read these sermons. These were

the funeral sermons, the sermons in praise of famous men. It must be remembered that funeral sermons in this age were long, most carefully composed, and awaited with a kind of breathless uncertainty by the mourning family, since they could on occasion be brutally frank with respect to the demerits of the dead. These were funeral orations, or elegies, going far beyond the gentle and compassionate commentary of the offices provided by the Book of Common Prayer for the Burial of the Dead, and they were with few exceptions preached by clergymen who can certainly be identified as Puritans. Those with which we are concerned are funeral sermons for famous men and women as the Puritan mind and conscience had come to assess human values. In all of them it is the work of charity, the alms disposed, the grammar school founded, which is extolled as the abundant proof of grace in the life of the deceased person and the assurance of election among God's saints in the life to come.

It is most significant that in the main these sermons were preached over the bodies of merchants and their widows, faithful members of that class which had in the course of our period assumed such a vast measure of social responsibility within the English society. Moreover, when funeral sermons survive which annotate the virtuous lives of members of the nobility or gentry, it is not too much to say that they praise the dead for having possessed virtues and having disposed their wealth in a fashion becoming to a merchant. Most of the landed magnates so eulogized, it is also important to note, were in fact Puritans. The men so praised, whether of the merchant élite or of the gentry, were truly famous men because of their acts of charity; and such sermons firmly established their memories and their good works among the illustrious of a new age. In literally hundreds of wills, often of humble men and women in remote counties, bequests were left in acknowledged imitation of a famous London donor, to establish a school or an almshouse on a model prescribed by an earlier gift, or actually saying that the bequest had been inspired by an earlier and notable legacy. These sermons, then, possessed tremendous power of persuasion; no auditor or reader could possibly escape without at least a moment of earnest brooding on man's mortality and on a very personal death and funeral sermon that loomed in a not too distant future. The literature of these sermons is large, and deserves full analysis, but we must necessarily confine ourselves to a modest sampling, noting first certain of the relatively small number preached over the bodies of members of the landed classes and then a few of the much larger number preached to celebrate the good works of merchants. We should add that we have included in this body of material a certain number of 'elegies' and 'epitaphs', composed and published after the will of the dead man had been proved and the extent of his generosity made known, since these

pieces were identical in their social and moral utility and were read with the same avidity by large audiences.

Though the always short-tempered Queen Elizabeth charged Francis Russell, Earl of Bedford, with subsidizing all the beggars in England with his profuse alms,¹ that Puritan gentleman and nobleman was to be so extolled for his charitable virtues as almost to create a myth of a generosity that flowed from the very fact of his Puritanism. So, too, the Earl of Huntingdon, Henry Hastings, was famous for his charity and his purchase of advowsons for Puritan clergymen, having somewhat impaired his estate by his deeds of mercy.² Of him a popular ballad was to say:

To poore and to needie, to high and to low
 Lord Hastings was friendly, all people doth know;
 His gates were still open the straunger to feed
 And comfort the succorless alwaie in neede . . .
 He built vp no pallace nor purchaste no towne,
 But gaue it to schollers to get him renowne,
 As Oxford and Cambridge can rightly declare
 How many poor schollers maintained are there.
 No groues he inclosed, nor felled no woodes,
 No pastures he paied to doe himselfe good;
 To commons and countrie he liude a good friend,
 And gaue to the needie what God did him send.³

Similarly were the virtues of Sir Francis Walsingham praised in an *Epitaph* published shortly after his death in 1590. We are told that he was the 'cheefest stay' of all those who were in need and of the 'sincere preachers of Gods word'. Hence:

Farewell Sir Francis Walsingham, that usurie sore didst hate,
 That still didst good to rich and poore that came unto thy gate.
 Farewell the comfort of the poore, that to them almes did give,
 Farewell the stay to souldiers good, while he on earth did live.
 Farewell the comfort of the court, and Londons dailie freend,
 Farewell to thee that for the poore thy letters farre would'st send.

¹ Scharf, George, *A descriptive . . . catalogue of the collection . . . at Woburn Abbey* (L., 1877-1878, 2 parts), I, 19-20. Bedford (1527?-1585) was extolled in his funeral sermon, preached by Thomas Sparks, for his many virtues. Before his death he had founded an almshouse at Watford and a free school at Woburn. By his will (PCC 45 Windsor 1586) he disposed £120 for the poor of four parishes, left £40 for road repairs at Woburn, £20 each to Oxford and Cambridge, and £20 p.a. for the use of two poor divinity students at Oxford.

² *Hist. MSS. Comm., Hastings Manuscripts*, II, 44-45.

³ *The crie of the poore for the death of the . . . Earle of Huntington* (s.n., s.l., n.d.); in Lilly, Joseph, ed., *A collection of . . . black-letter ballads* (L., 1870), 228-231. Huntingdon (1535-1595) had decidedly Puritan leanings and was a supporter of the Huguenot emigres. He endowed a school at Ashby-de-la-Zouche, gave £40 13s 4d p.a. for the schoolmaster and lecturer at Leicester, and lent generous support to Emmanuel College. Camden tells us that he 'much wasted his estate by a lavish support of these hot-headed preachers'.

Farewell the sutor for the poore, that seldome let thee rest,
 Farewell the frend to fatherlesse and widdowes sore opprest.
 Farewell the care for countries good, when corne was prisde so hie,
 Farewell the knight that succourd'st those that then were like to die.
 Farewell and thousand times farewell thou good and worthy knight,
 That in the cause of poore and rich, full many a wrong didst right.
 Farewell thou good and freendly knight to schollers poore and bare,
 Of Cambridge and of Oxford to, of whom thou hadst great care . . .¹

So, too, rather more than a decade later, Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset, was praised in a funeral sermon preached by George Abbot, who was himself an archbishop with more than a little of Puritan sympathies. Abbot extolled Dorset, who had been married for fifty-three years and who for thirty years had kept a great household of at least two hundred persons, excluding workmen and 'other hired'. He had ever recognized that the Christian obligation of alms lay as a charge against his estate, and to perfect a life of charitable bounty had in his will left £1000 to establish a granary at Lewes, £2000 for the creation of a stock of grain that the poor of that town might be relieved in times of scarcity, and £1000 for the building of a chapel at Withyham.²

Thus the great magnates of the realm were praised in those relatively few instances when they were famed for their acts of charity, and more precisely if their charities flowed from the convictions inherent in Puritanism. More typical and far more numerous were the funeral sermons of members of the gentry, again principally Puritan, who had distinguished themselves by their good works. We are reminded in the sermon preached over the body of Sir Richard Leveson, who died in 1605, that during our lifetime our Christianity must express itself in alms, in good works which will still abide when we die. Yet in this day, 'good works live in exile from us'. We must take necessary steps, the preacher concluded, to 'lay up if not your harvest, at least your gleaning on the poor and they will bless you'.³ Similarly, if we may for chronological convenience treat him as among the gentry, William Russell, a son of the Earl of Bedford and an uncle of the Earl of Dorset, was in 1614 eulogized by the preacher of his funeral sermon for his continuous liberality to the needy. 'Hee was . . . the hand of Christ to the poore, who receiued his daily almes and his weekly allowance.' To learn

¹ Nelson, Thomas, *A memorable epitaph . . . for the death of Sir Frauncis Walsingham* (L., 1590).

² Abbot, George, *A sermon at the funerall of the . . . Earle of Dorset* (L., 1608), 16-18.

³ Page, *Sermon at funerall of Sir R. Leveson*, no pagin. A native of Bedfordshire, Samuel Page was educated at Oxford, where he was graduated B.A. in 1591. He was vicar of a Kentish parish for many years, dying in 1630. Sir Richard Leveson was the son of Sir Walter Leveson of Shropshire; he served almost continuously in the Spanish wars. He was made captain-general of an expedition against Spain in 1601 and in 1604 was designated vice-admiral.

their needs he would enter the houses of poor men, and 'finding out the great want of labouring men: that shaming to begge, liued more miserably then ordinary beggers, hee would often giue them good summes of money'. Poor gentlemen he would assist by anonymous gifts. In his peroration the preacher lamented that more landed men of great substance did not emulate Russell's quiet example of charity. It is shameful that such men do not 'share their estate with the poore . . . whom now they passe by with scorne and contempt. How farre short of [the example of Lord Russell] come our great men, who doe spend more upon pictures in their houses, then they doe upon the poore, the images of God . . . when Christs starving members cannot get a crumme of bread at their gates'.¹

The death of Sir Edward Lewkenor, High Sheriff of Suffolk, in 1618 afforded a perfect example of Christian charity, since his continuing generosity had laid a heavy charge on his estate and he died in debt, having in the last year of his life distributed 'more than £1000 more then ordinary'. In fact, so perfect was the opportunity that we have two treatises which profess to be his funeral sermon, which would seem to be gilding even a Puritan funeral lily. In any event both preachers agreed on Lewkenor's abundant generosity and on his deep conviction that he was no more than God's feoffee for his wealth. Sir Edward's house 'was full of hospitality and there was always a great crowd at his gate', for whom special provision was made three days in the week.² The second preacher, Bezaleel Carter, appealed to his auditors, 'Your selues can beare me record, how many of your poor people he cloathed with the fleeces of his sheepe, and what his custome was, for euery yeare of his life, to cloath one of your poore and naked ones'.³ Nor was this all, for Lewkenor had erected a special building near his house, provided with a large table on which his abundant alms were disposed to the hungry.⁴ But his sense of charitable reponsibility ranged far beyond his own gates, for 'every year he gave clothing to several towns for apparelling the poor', not to speak of 'his bountiful mind to other pious and religious uses, maintenance of learning, relieving of prisoners and the care of his poor neighbours oppressed with sickness'.⁵ These are

¹ Walker, William, *A sermon . . . at the funerals of . . . William Lord Russell* (L., 1614). Russell (1558?–1613) was the fourth son of the second Earl of Bedford. He served as a soldier in the Dutch wars and as an administrator in Flushing and in Ireland. His estate was small, but legacies of £30 were left to the poor and £20 for the repair of his parish church (PCC 86 Capell 1613).

² Oldmayne, Timothy, *Gods rebuke in taking from us . . . Sir E. Lewkenor* (L., 1619), 27.

³ Carter, Bezaleel, *The wise king* (L., 1618), 61.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 62–63.

⁵ Oldmayne, *Gods rebuke*, 29. Lewkenor left considerable landed property in Suffolk, though his estates were burdened with debt. There were no charitable legacies in his will (PCC 42 Meade 1618). His principal seat was at Denham.

persuasive passages, describing an undoubtedly religious and charitable man, and they were calculated to move to emulation all men whether of the seventeenth century or our own.

Sir Anthony Rous, who had kept a generous house for more than forty years, was praised for his great charity by his minister, Charles Fitz-Geffrey, in a funeral sermon published in 1622. Rous, it was emphatically explained, was 'none of those lay-nonresidents, who build faire houses, and immediately flie from them into some cabbine in a towne or city, as if they feared their houses would fall downe upon their heads . . . his house for many years was the centre of charity and hospitality, wherein met the lines of poore and strangers, drawn from a large circumference round about him'.¹ So, too, we are told, Sir Francis Pile was a righteous man, one of the elect famous for his openhanded charity. He was in fact the soul of charity, 'for the poore round about him, his heart, his hand, and his gate was ever open to them, the widow and the fatherlesse, the lame, the impotent, the poore children of the neighbour parishes were relieved constantly at his gates . . . he hath dispersed and given to the poore, his righteousness endureth' for ever.²

Moving two decades forward, deep into the period of the Puritan Revolution, we may conclude with two more funeral sermons, the one for a gentleman of large estates and the other extolling the charitable virtues of two great Puritan peers. We are told by the two preachers who seem to have preached at the funeral of Francis Pierrepont, of Nottinghamshire, that the dead man had been constant in his generosity to the poor, which included an annuity of £12 he had vested in an almshouse in Nottingham. He had served his country and his community well, but above all he had lived with justice and integrity, had been 'an instrument of much good', and had exemplified those two rare charitable virtues of righteousness and mercy.³ In this same year (1658) the two great peers, the Earl of Warwick and the Earl of Essex, were extolled by the notable divine, Edmund Calamy, for their many charitable virtues. Their deaths remind us that all men, great and humble, must die. Even the greatest of this world go forth from it with nothing,

¹ Fitz-Geffrey, Charles, *Elisha his lamentation* (L., 1622), 46. Sir Anthony Rous's fourth son was Francis Rous (1579-1659). Sir Anthony was himself a strong Puritan and was Sheriff of Cornwall in 44 Elizabeth. He had presented the living of Halton to Fitz-Geffrey, who was a poet of some little fame.

² Parsons, *Christians remembrance*, 35-36. Pile, who died in 1635, was a very rich landed proprietor in Wiltshire. His charitable bequests were modest, £20 being left the poor in four parishes where he held land and £1 to the use of Salisbury Cathedral (PCC 1 Pile 1635).

³ Reynolds, William, and John Whitlock, *The vanitie and excellency of man* (L., 1658), Sermon I, 5, Sermon II (*The upright man*), 2-6. Pierrepont was possessed of a large estate in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. He left £6000 each to his two daughters. He was a younger brother of the Marquis of Dorchester. (PCC 368 Wootton 1658).

naked before God, and they can leave nothing of enduring worth save the good works that they have accomplished during their lives. 'Greatnesse,' Calamy exclaimed, 'without goodnesse will be but as a great fagot to burne them the more in hell', with the consequence that the rich and powerful must the more 'labour to be righteous as well as rich, and great men to be good'.¹ Of the good works, of the faith and holy zeal of the Earl of Warwick there could be no doubt whatever. A pious and a good man, he had most carefully filled his inherited livings in the church, had supported many painful ministers of God's Word, and had been constantly 'merciful and charitable to the poor members of Jesus Christ'. His whole aim and purpose in a useful life had been to appear 'for God and for his cause and servants', even in the days when such courage and righteousness had been dangerous in the realm of England.²

We have examined a fair, and a typical, number of funeral eulogies addressed to the living over the bodies of landed gentlemen and magnates who in their lifetime had exhibited that quality of Christian mercy and charity which the age had come to expect and all but to require. These were principally Puritan gentry, and the preachers of these funeral sermons were with few exceptions Puritan as well. But there was now another gentry, that of commerce, which from 1540 onwards bore a far larger burden of social responsibility than did the gentry of land, a new aristocracy of trade whose ideals, whose convictions, and whose deeds of charity were quite literally transforming the social fabric of England. Inevitably, therefore, a far larger number of these funeral eulogies survive for men and women of this class, sermons designed not only to commemorate the great contributions made by the dead but to stir the auditors to equally laudable works. Almost all these sermons were preached by city clergy to extol the services and the alms of London merchants distinguished at once for their wealth and piety. We should now examine at least a few of the many of these published tracts.

In 1570 Alice Avenon, the wife of the Lord Mayor of London, Alexander Avenon, was extolled after her death for her many Christian virtues:

Unto the poor opprest with sicknesse, grieve and payne
To minister and give reliefe her hart was ever fayne,
The poore have lost a nurse to helpe their needie state.
The poore by almes and lyberall giftes to tender longe she sought.³

Just a decade later William Lambe, a very rich merchant and cloth-worker of London and one of the most generous of the benefactors of

¹ Calamy, Edmund, *A patterne for all* (L., 1658), 14, 15. ² *Ibid.*, 36-37.

³ Phillips, John, *An epitaph on the death of the ladie maioreesse* (L., 1570). This thrice-married lady was the daughter of a London mercer. Her first two husbands were mercers, but Alexander Avenon was an ironmonger who served at different times as president of three of London's hospitals and was lord mayor in 1569-1570. Alice Avenon left a bread charity for the poor of London.

his generation, died full of years and good works. In Thomas Fuller's words, he was a 'person wholly composed of goodness and bounty, and was as general and discreet a benefactor as any that age provided'. Abraham Fleming published two works memorializing Lambe in the year of his death. In the one, *An epitaph . . . upon . . . William Lambe*, the great merchant was praised for his abundant charity, 'for this he knew, by giving them, he lent unto the Lord'. In the second and larger work, *A memoriall of the . . . almesdeedes of . . . William Lambe*, Lambe was extolled as a rich and powerful merchant who had never lost his humility in the face of God. Will other rich men 'so die, that they may live in the Lorde? Then let them be charitable and pitifull, liberall and bountifull'. The rich man need not despair of his election, if his heart is moved by pity and if he holds his wealth to dispose on works called good by God. Happily, 'the Lord hath reserved unto himselfe a remnant of rich men, in these latter daies . . . whose light shining to the worlde, and their good workes plentifully employed to the benefitte of the comfortlesse, provoketh everie godly disposed person to glorifie our Father'. Such a man was William Lambe, whose record of good and noble charitable works Fleming then recited in detail.¹

The undoubted virtues of Helen Branch, the wife of Sir John, late the Lord Mayor of London, and herself the daughter of a London draper, were commemorated in eloquent detail. She had been generous and persistent in her charities, particularly those centring on the needs of her own parish, St Mary Abchurch. The death of so generous and wise a benefactor was an occasion of regret and mourning for London and all the realm:

You springs of arts, eyes of this noble realme,
Cambridge and Oxford, lend your learned teares,
To waile your own losse and to witnesse theirs:
Tell, you that have the voice of eloquence,
This bounteous ladie's large beneficence,
First to your selves, for love unto your lore,
Then severallie to everie kind of poore
Within this citie: To the Drapers' Hall,
To everie prison, everie hospitall,
To lunatickes, and poore maides' marriages,
And many other worthie legacies . . .²

¹ Fleming, Abraham, *An epitaph . . . upon . . . William Lambe* (L., 1580), *A memoriall of the . . . monuments and . . . almesdeedes of . . . William Lambe* (L., 1580). Lambe's will may be found in PCC 19 Arundell 1580. We shall deal at length with the career and the notable charities of this great merchant in the second volume of this study.

² Sylvester, Joshua, *Monodia, an elegie in commemoration of . . . Dame Hellen Branch* (L., 1594); in Grosart, A. B., ed., *The complete works* (Edinburgh, 1880, 2 vols.), II, 329-330. Dame Helen, who died in 1594, left not much more than £80 in charitable bequests, principally for the needs of the poor and for prisoners (PCC 31 Dixie 1595).

We may well reflect that all Elizabethan verse was not touched with poetic genius, but these lines none the less pay tribute to a woman of compassionate spirit and they do serve to commemorate those virtues which the merchant society had come to prize.

The great generosity and the innumerable social institutions already founded by the merchant aristocracy of London had come by the beginning of the seventeenth century to be a matter of justifiable pride, not only to its members but to the whole of the realm. These merchant princes were now famous men, of whom a certain pattern of charitable conduct was expected, on whom a very heavy weight of tradition already lay. Thus in 1601 an interesting tract recited with much pride and no little reverence the enduring works of men like Sir William Harper, Sir Thomas Rowe, and Sir Thomas Ramsay, whose munificence a generation earlier had raised up institutions which had great and continued value in the relief of poverty and in the enlargement of the circumference of opportunity for many men.¹ Such donors were now almost legendary, had become folk heroes, in a society which had framed new and most salutary social aspirations for itself, aspirations which it was rapidly translating into historical reality. These men took great pride in the achievements of their class, and from their pride flowed the necessity of an ever-enlarging charity as they came in their turn to emulate and to excel the pious deeds of their predecessors. Thomas Heywood sensed this psychological factor in merchant giving when he made a lord mayor, and a great merchant, describe with frank detail his humble origin and then reflect with pride that he had founded an almshouse and had contributed substantially towards the strengthening of the resources of a hospital.² In still another of Heywood's plays, the merchants of a preceding generation were introduced as principal characters. Sir Thomas Gresham was made, as it were, to will the Royal Exchange into being:

. . . it angers mee
That such a famous citie as this is,
Wherein so many gallant marchants are,
Haue not a place to meete in, but in this . . .
Ile haue a rooffe built, and such a rooffe,
That marchants and their wiues, friend and their friends
Shall walke vnderneath it as now in Powles.³

¹ Jaggard, William, *A view of all the lord mayors of London* (L., 1601), no pagin. Nicholas Bourman [N.B.], in his *Epitaph upon the decease of . . . Lady Mary Ramsey* (L., 1602), also recited the great charities which Sir Thomas Ramsay's widow had carried forward in her own right and, it might be added, with her own money.

² Heywood, Thomas, *The dramatic works* (L., 1874, 6 vols.), I, 57.

³ Heywood (W. W. Greg and M. Doran, eds.), *If you know not me* (Oxford, 1935), II, lines 544-553. The principal characters introduced in the two plays

In another even more perceptive passage Heywood introduced such great merchant donors as Gresham, Sir Thomas Ramsay, and Lady Ramsay, who were shown the portraits of famous merchant benefactors of a still earlier era.¹ The spirit of emulation, the determination to advance the good works of earlier merchant benefactors, and the great pride of status which animated these men was well and astutely portrayed by the dramatist. Lady Ramsay at once expressed her resolve to follow the example of those great charitable donors of the past who were merchant wives:

Why should not I liue so, that being dead
My name might haue a register with theirs . . .

while Gresham was made to say:

Why should not all of vs being wealthy men,
And by Gods blessing onely rais'd, but
Cast in our mindes how we might them exceed
In godly workes, helping of them that need . . .²

We have been noting a number of 'class epitaphs' which caught up and memorialized the great virtues and the incredible generosity of the merchant class in London. But it remains true that the individual panegyrics were probably more effective in their influences on other donors and in building by accretion not only the traditions of this remarkable social group but their fame as leaders in the society. Thus in 1612 Anthony Nixon dealt at length with the divers charities of Robert Dove, a merchant tailor who was actually of the second rank in terms of his wealth and generosity. Dove's generosity, the author urged, was so quick and so catholic that it flowed out in all the channels of need. His concern for the poor and the infirm was without stint, and he held in view the needs of all the great hospitals of London, for 'so did he but at Easter last, not three weekes before his happie departure out of this miserable world, send to each of . . . [them] thirtie and odde pounds a peece, to be imployed to the ease and comfort of such as were there detained'.³ He was bountiful towards the miserable prisoners of the city, generous towards young tradesmen 'beginning to trade in their professions, to helpe them forward in the world'; towards needy students in the university, and towards aiding the education of the children in Christ's Hospital. Wherever he went, and at all times, he was deeply moved by the spectacle of men willing to work who could find no employment. 'If he had seene poore men addicted to labour, he were Sir William Harper, Sir Thomas Rowe, Sir Thomas Ramsay and his wife, and Sir Thomas Gresham. All will be discussed in some detail in the second volume of this work.

¹ *Ibid.*, II, 760-843.

² *Ibid.*, II, 844-849.

³ Nixon, Anthony, *Londons dove* (L., 1612), sig. B⁴.

would set them on worke and cause them to be imployed to their better furtherance and encouragement. If he heard that any of his poore neighbours were decrepit or destitute of meanes to follow their professions, he would supply their needes' in order to save good and worthy men from slipping into the morass of hopeless poverty. He epitomized the virtues of a Christian and was an exemplar to the merchant community of which he was a part.¹

The theme of social responsibility and the proud tradition of the mercantile aristocracy in assuming its full burden was stressed in the visitation sermon which the illustrious Puritan divine, Thomas Gataker, preached at Tonbridge, Kent, in 1620. The school there had been founded in the mid-sixteenth century by the great London merchant, Sir Andrew Judd, receiving fresh and generous support in 1620 from Judd's grandson, another great merchant, Sir Thomas Smith, who was in the congregation on the occasion of Gataker's sermon.² The preacher commended Smith for not having deferred his charities wholly to his deathbed, having made bounteous and wise provision for a noble purpose 'while you may yet surviving your owne donation, your selfe see things settled in a due course, and receive comfort by view of the fruit and benefit that may thereby redound both to church and commonweale'. The benefactions made during the course of our lifetime have a peculiar efficacy not only for the donor but move out to the recipient with warmth and compassion. It may indeed be said that the 'good done at our end is like a lanterne borne after us, that directeth them that come after us, but affordeth us little light; whereas the good done in our life time is like a light borne before us, that both benefiteth them and us also alike'. This great example set forward by Smith should stir many men the better to provide for the crying needs of education, in order that the church and commonwealth may be supplied with the ability and learning which they require. 'What a great mercy of God then is to this land,' Gataker concluded, 'that . . . stirreth up the hearts and minds of worthy men to establish such courses, whereby instruction and learning may be conveyed to us and our children.'³

The virtues of a dead merchant, very possibly Thomas Adams, were more modestly and subtly immortalized by John Donne in a commemorative service for a deceased parishioner. But Donne's sermon too takes its place in a considerable body of literature which was establishing not only the Christian obligation of charity but the particularly notable role of London merchants in building the charitable institutions

¹ *Londons dove*, sig. C² ff.

² The benefactions of these London merchants will be discussed in the second volume of this work.

³ Gataker, Thomas, *Dauids instructor* (L., 1620), Dedic., 11; in *Certaine sermons* (L., 1637).

of the realm. Though the man whose life the congregation had gathered to commemorate had been dead for some years, it might be assumed that his soul was in the hands of God, for the certainty of good works was in him. He had provided for his family, which is the first requirement laid on us, and had 'also distributed something to the poor of this parish, yearly, this day, and something to a meeting for the conserving of neighbourly love', as well as endowing the commemorative sermon. Surely, the meaning of this sermon was not to praise the donor, the dead man, but to afford an occasion at which others might be encouraged to follow the example of his charity. We may be sure that they 'who have left permanent examples of good works, [may] well be believed, to receive additions of glory and joy, when others are led by that to do the like'.¹ Our charity, Donne seems to be saying, possesses a virtue quite beyond the immediate benefits which it effects, for it provides the certain example which will encourage others to emulate good works and thereby bring the Kingdom of God nearer to hand.

The immense benefaction of Thomas Sutton, the founder of Charterhouse, must have created some difficulties in composition and presentation for Percival Burrell, the preacher at Charterhouse who in 1629 discharged his obligation of eulogizing that great donor. Sutton's charitable legacy was the largest ever made in England, but it was well known that he was not a particularly religious man, while it was held generally, if somewhat unjustly, that he was one of the most fiercely competitive and grasping men in a ruthlessly competitive age. None the less, the sobering and compelling fact remains that this great donor had created a matchless charitable legacy and that almost the whole of his huge fortune, however gained, had been left for a worthy and godly purpose. Burrell handled his problem with great skill and grace in the anniversary sermon, in which he described Sutton as 'a captaine worthy to lead the whole Christian world, for he loued the people of God, and built a synagogue for the God of all people'. The preacher stated that he had no intention of canonizing the founder, it was rather his purpose 'to inuite an imitation of his blessed magnificence'. The building of good works must flow from faith, and faith is attested by the good and pious works of those who acknowledge that 'Christ . . . is the chiefe cornerstone, the foundation of foundations'. Sutton was in point of fact a quietly generous man through his whole life, though his crowning glory was the building and endowing of Charterhouse, which 'no cunning advocate, no greedy lord could undermine'.² Almost two hundred needy persons were daily fed on Sutton's bounty, twenty-four scholars were maintained in the university by his generosity, and all England

¹ Donne, *Works*, V, 302-303.

² Burrell here refers to the efforts of Sir Francis Bacon to overthrow the will; *vide* Bacon, *Works* (L., 1838), I, 494 ff.

was the better for his life and the pious determination with which it closed.¹

A few years later, in 1631, the charities of an humbler donor, William Fawcett, a member of a Norwich merchant family which had made substantial charitable contributions in Norfolk and Yorkshire, was praised at West Ham, Essex. Fawcett's own stewardship of his considerable wealth permitted the clergyman to express regret for 'the living corps, of those dead soules, that minde earthly things; who making gold to be their god in heaven, and honour, and pleasure their deitie on earth, expell the Lord of heaven and earth out of their hearts and habitations'. These are lost men, mired in the awful sin of avarice. God commands frugality, He requires diligence, and He does not condemn wealth as such, but lays special and rigorous burdens on those whom He has blessed with the fruits of substance. It is faith in Christ alone which imparts that humility, that generosity, and that compassion wherewith the rich may hope to enter the kingdom of heaven. 'Riches are the blessing of the Lord, and not to be contemned; it is the minde, and man, abusing riches is condemned . . . Heaven was never offended with any man, because hee had riches, but because he was had of riches; not as he was wealthie, but because he was wicked with his wealth'. We are but stewards of all our wealth, which we must as we are Christians dispose for the sustenance of our fellow men and for the glory of God. This understanding of the social responsibility for wealth was sensed by the dead man, who 'though mammon came thorow his fingers, yet hee washt his heart from the love of it. . . . For the space of this ten yeeres last past, his custome was at the yeeres end to take a survey of his temporall estate, which hee having briefly summ'd up in a sheete of paper; he made a godly prayer, and thanksgiving, which he annexed unto his account'.²

We should now move deep into the revolutionary period in our sampling of this rich and compelling body of elegiac materials and conclude with a few briefly noted funeral sermons for women donors, differing not at all in structure or argument from those of the earlier and more settled decades. Thus we may mention the sermon preached at the funeral of Lady Alice Lucie in 1648, who had for years instructed the porter at her gate to turn away no poor men. 'Everie week, in these times of scarcitie, shee sent manie loavs of bread to manie neighbour-towns; caussed her corn to bee sold in the markets by the smallest

¹ Burrell, Percival, *Suttons synagoue* (L., 1629), I, 3, 7, 25. A detailed discussion of Sutton's foundation and his other charities (1611) will be provided in the second volume of this study.

² Layfelde, Edmund, *The soules solace* (L., 1633), 36, 48, 50-58, 63, 65, 71, 118 ff. The charities of this merchant and his equally generous brother will be discussed in later volumes of this study.

measures, that it might not exceed the poor's abilitie', while each Christmas she distributed alms and food in a large area. She had great compassion for the old and the infirm, employing many of them at tasks which they could still perform. All her actions displayed that her faith was compounded of love, recognizing that the rich are blessed only that they may 'bee rich in good works, readie to distribute, willing to communicate, so laying up in store for themselves a good foundation'.¹ Similarly, a merchant's wife of London, Honor Vyner, was praised in her funeral sermon for her great works of mercy, for her resolution to do good to the poor and not to gain pious renown for herself. Her charity 'ran with a still and silent stream' in the manner of deep rivers rather than babbling brooks.² So too was Lady Elizabeth Capell eulogized for her good works through a whole lifetime, which are 'the foundation to support us . . . in the time to come of our death . . . and the time to come of the last tribunall'. The preacher at her funeral confessed that he had himself been her almoner and that large sums had been given him for distribution to poor and distressed ministers and others. 'She did not drop, but pour out her alms . . . her gifts . . . came freely and readily flowing.' Lady Capell knew that all she had was from the bounteous hand of God and that her greatest joy and happiness had been derived from her ability to do good in His name. The merit of faith and of works was in her.³

5. *To put the enemy to shame*

We have dealt with a complex variety of impulses to charitable giving which moved men in the course of our period, some noble and intensely spiritual, others coldly secular and pragmatic. We have just concluded the examination of an interesting and large body of funeral and elegiac material in which clearly the Protestant ethic expressed itself, perhaps crudely and often in bad taste, but always effectively and powerfully. Fame among his fellows, enduring good works, and the promise of spiritual reward in the world to come awaited the rich merchant who disposed his fortune in the interests of mankind. Here was supplied the most persuasively compelling impulse towards charitable giving on a wide and generous scale; here was a bargain in terms of perpetuity in

¹ Dugard, Thomas, *Death and the grave* (L., 1649), 49-51. Dame Alice was the daughter of Thomas Spencer of Claverton. She resided in Warwickshire at the time of her death. No charities were listed in her will (PCC 125 Essex 1648).

² Spurstow, William, *Death and the grave* (L., 1656), 47.

³ Barker, Edmund, *A sermon . . . at the funerall of . . . Lady Elizabeth Capell* (L., 1661), 24-25, 33. This lady was a grand-daughter of Baptist Hicks and the daughter and heiress of Sir Charles Morrison of Cassiobury, Hertfordshire. Her husband, Lord Capell of Haddam, was a Royalist leader who was executed by order of Parliament in 1649 after the siege of Colchester.

this world and the next. This is by no means to suggest that all or even most of the great charitable endowments of the merchants of London or of the gentry in the provinces were principally inspired by such crass and essentially self-preserving impulses, but rather that among a most complex congerie of motives, the structure of which we have sought to examine with some care, the possibility of becoming enrolled among generous and famous men, among the saints of God, could never have been wholly absent after about 1580. These munificent men, as we come to estimate them and seek to apprehend the impulses which moved them to actions of great compassion, were generally pious, genuinely concerned with the needs and the fate of their fellow men, and essentially noble in their deeds and in the impulses which animated them. But they remained human beings.

The donors of our period were also human in another sense. It must be said without doubt, as we conclude our examination of the well-springs of charitable action, that many of the benefactors of the age were moved to noble and generous actions in part at least in order to put the enemy to shame. These men were with very few exceptions not only Protestants; they were likewise Calvinists of extreme orthodoxy and rigour to whom Rome and all its works were anathema. Among all the reformed faiths, surely, only Calvinism showed no nostalgia for Rome, no trace of a cultural and spiritual inferiority complex vis-à-vis the ancient church. The Calvinist, and more especially the Puritan, in England opposed one system of infallibility with another equally infallible, and upon Rome and all its works he heaped not only his censure but his contempt. It was in part from this certainty of grace, this deep awareness of infallible conviction, that the enormous vitality of Calvinism during the first century of its pure estate sprang; it is equally from this glorious but vexing certainty of belief and purpose that the good works of the Calvinist flowed.

None the less, the English Protestant was throughout our period only thinly separated in time and environment from the ancient church and the monuments of its kind of charity. Not many years earlier its abbeys had been dispersed across the whole of the island, its hospitals and lazaret houses were still remembered, and the universities which its prelates had founded remained, though transformed, as a reminder of a Catholic past. Nor did the Catholic controversialists across the Channel fail to taunt an aggressive but a still new faith with the good works of the ancient church and with the niggardly charity which should in logic have been the consequence of the Calvinist's repudiation of the Catholic doctrine of works. Then too, men's memory being short and their historical sense fallible, after perhaps two generations Protestants themselves had to a degree forgotten the ruin in which mediaeval social and charitable institutions stood at the close of the fifteenth century, the

ruin which was monasticism when it disintegrated at the first touch of sovereignty. They forgot too that the good works of Catholicism were the accumulation of a half millennium and more, that it was against this background of an almost ageless past that the social accomplishments of Protestantism must be gauged. Nor could they realize, until the first glimmerings of historical and statistical awareness began to emerge in about 1610 that in the span of two generations Protestantism had in fact created in England a new social order and that in terms of effective charitable giving had outstripped by far the whole of the charitable accumulation of the mediaeval past.

Rome, then, the enemy of the faith, was never wholly absent from the merchant's mind as he ordered his charitable dispositions against the day of his death. Nor was it ever absent from the minds of the preacher and the moralist as they sought to bestir English Protestantism to a sense of its obligation and its destiny. In part this is a literature of bitter contempt for Rome, in part it consists of a purposeful exaggeration of the charitable achievements of the Catholic past in order to advance the good works of the age of the Gospel. Thus Bedel, preaching in 1571, exhorted his congregation to generous provision for the poor, 'for that is the gift that hath the promise of reward annexed unto it . . . what shall we have for helping the poore; surely blessing in this world, honor and deliverance . . . in the life to come'. This all Christian men of reformed faith must understand. Yet their charity seems weak and cold. 'Looke what . . . our fathers as fooles did lay forth . . . upon shameless friers . . . and fat bellyed monkes whose bellyes were their gods. . . . Where is the plentye of gold that garnished the erroneous church, the silver & jewels . . . geven forth to steckes and stones, the cloth that cloathed the pylgrime-god that felt no colde, the stocke that bought the candels to set before them, that had eyes and saw nought'. It is true that men of the past gave from the subjection of fear and to avoid the harshness of penalties which might be laid on their backs, but none the less they gave. We are discredited indeed if men moved by fear give more generously than those moved by the compelling reason of an implicit faith. 'Is this the life of Christians? Is this the fruite of our Gospell?' Bedel enquired, in concluding his moving sermon.¹

The irascible Philip Stubbes, writing in 1593, upbraided his fellow Protestants for neglect of their charitable duty and sought, he says deliberately, to shame them into good works by reciting the fruits of the charity of the Catholic past. For this purpose he had made a tour of the kingdom, to find 'the ancient monuments which our good forefathers left us (hospitalls, spittles, almshouses, churches, chappels, schools of learning, bridges . . . and the lyke) . . . some quite dissolved . . . and othersome so ruinatic and decayed, as if the first founders thereof were

¹ Bedel, Henry, *A sermon exhorting to pitie the poore* (L., 1572), no pagin.

now living . . . they would not take them for their owne'.¹ Protestants must, then, face up to the fact that the lives of their Catholic forbears were characterized by good works. He wondered, indeed, whether Protestantism has not been weakened by the doctrine that men are saved by grace alone, not understanding the fact that good works inevitably flow from a state of faith.² Good works possess their own inherent virtue, their great value to the society whether they are provided by a Catholic or by a Protestant, and too many of the visible good works of Protestant England are the inheritance of a Catholic past.³ The Catholic doctrine of works is a hideous error, 'repugnant and contrary to the Word of God', while Protestant charity is grounded upon the very word of life, yet members of the reformed faith are not moved to exercise this clear and Christian duty.⁴ The pressing and necessary task of Protestant charity is the clearing away of the evil of poverty, on which no more than a scant beginning has been made to the shame of England.⁵ The very monuments of the generosity of a superstitious past in England, the evidences of a generosity springing from wrong or irreligious sources, should serve to remind every man of the true and reformed faith that there is a charitable duty to be done, and that quickly, if he is to be worthy of his title of Christian and Englishman.

This theme, developed in different ways and with persuasive effect, was set forth by numerous writers during the whole course of the last century of our period. Thus, to move into the seventeenth century, Laurence Chaderton reminded his congregation that 'the papistes, they alwayes cast in our teeth the great and famous hospitalitie of their nobilitie, and clergie, the buylding of abbies, monasteries, and nunneries, cathedrall churches, colledges, with many other outward works: which in deede are such as do stoppe our mouthes, and put us protestants to silence'.⁶ In these great and worthy works the Catholic past has exceeded the Protestant present, William Guild, writing in Scotland, would agree.⁷ This fact should confound us, should make us examine with humility and trembling the faith and the grace which we as Protestants so earnestly profess. 'Where,' Chaderton enquired, 'is that Protestant that feedeth the hungrie, clotheth the naked, visiteth the prysoner and him that is sycke, that lodgeth the harbourless, without ceasing or beyng wearie of well doying? I speake not this to iustifie the papistes, or to condemne all Protestantes, but to shewe howe rare the woorkes of mercie are amongst those that seeme to put all their ioye and felicitie in . . . Christ.'⁸ Even Edward Waterhouse, writing when

¹ Stubbes, Philip, *A motiue to good workes* (L., 1593), Dedic.

² *Ibid.*, 37-40.

³ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 96, 128.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 89, 92.

⁶ Chaderton, *A godly sermon*, 52.

⁷ Guild, William, *The humble addresse both of church and poore* (L., 1641), no pagin.

⁸ Chaderton, *A godly sermon*, 53.

Puritan power and certainty were at their zenith, purposely mixed the good works of the Roman with those of the apostolic past in contrasting the achievements of earlier ages with the failure of Protestantism to assume the whole of its evident charitable obligation. He confessed that 'for my part I judg faith by works, and if living charity appear, I will not judg that a dead faith which moved it. They must have somewhat to say in extenuation of other mens charities, who never mean to be renowned by any of their own'.¹ In point of fact the whole of the Christian past has been marked by works of charity which the reformed faith must not only emulate but immensely excel if it is by its fruits to justify and to glorify the truth and piety with which it is vested.

Persistent, skilful, and effective as this preaching was, the auditors, and the readers, were not left in any doubt that Catholic charity, impressive as it may have been, proceeded from sources inspired by fear, superstition, and compulsion. There may well have been good fruits, even though they grew on 'a poisoned vine'. The whole of this literature was, then, essentially hortatory; its purpose was to move men of the true faith, men of the era of the Gospel, to assume the whole of their Christian duty, to be mindful that works of charity could spring even from an erroneous faith. 'We must do good unto all, yet especially to the househould of faith . . . they must haue . . . euen a double portion. If the almes of some fewe of the papists which are forwarder in giuing then their fellows, were examined by this rule, it would not dazle the eyes of some men as it doth.'² It remains compellingly true, and this we must never forget in our acts of charity, that 'a good worke maketh not a good man but a good man maketh a good woorke'.³ It is upon this rock of doctrine and upon this understanding of the meaning of Christ's teaching that the whole great edifice of Protestant charity must be securely and eternally built.

But even the hortatory advantages of dwelling on the good works of the Roman Catholic past, the propaganda value of lashing out angrily at the 'coldness of charity in these times', could not restrain the pride which men began to have in the immense achievements made by private charity in the century that followed the Reformation. This pride was, as we shall point out in detail, wholly warranted by the historical facts. This sense of achievement grew in vigour and in confidence as the great accumulations of charity, secular though they were in form and aspiration, brought into being the principal social institutions wherewith the modern world was to be fashioned. In point of fact, even the most sanguine of the writers who dealt with this theme grossly underestimated the immensity of the achievement that had been wrought by

¹ Waterhouse, Edward, *A modest discourse* (L., 1655), 174.

² Bird, *Lectures* (1598), 19.

³ *The testament of master W. Tracie* (Antwerp? 1535), no pagin.

generous, responsible, and high-minded men in the age. In one sense this declaration of attainment, against the background of the past, was difficult for an age which loved to dwell with an almost self-conscious and stylized morbidity on the golden age that lay behind and on the evil and corrupt present. But facts spoke in compelling terms even to Elizabethan and Jacobean inclinations.

The first writer to emblazon the fact that 'our dayes are more happie and blessed than the dayes of our fore fathers', was Francis Trigge, writing, it may be noted, just a year after the defeat of the Armada. In his view, England lived in a blessed age of the Gospel in which men should have no regrets for a largely imagined past. Thus many mistakenly lament the destruction of the abbeys, commending their hospitality, their liberality, and their utility to the commonwealth. But the fact is that their generosity has been grossly overstated, and the charity of the Catholic past would have been impotent in supplying the needs of the poor in the recent past of England. They would not have been able 'to share I beleeeve in our age, so great liberalitie towarde so manye as we have tryed these many yeares next going before, and especially this deare yeere last past here in England. The which deare yeare truely, I thinke the Lorde sent to this our England . . . [as a] prooffe and tryall made of all men'. Englishmen of all classes and all estates were moved in that year of scarcity and want to vindicate their title as Christians and as Englishmen, to hold intact the fabric of the society by their private efforts springing from charity and compassion. 'These men gave more in their penurie, and even of their owne scarcitie and want than all these monkes of their abundance and great superfluitie, neither of that yeare onely, but of everie yeare.' England may well be proud of the fact that no man is any longer permitted to perish from hunger, or to subsist upon funeral doles and scraps of charity, as far too many did in the vaunted days of the abbeys and, for that matter, as recently as in the reign of the Catholic Queen Mary.¹

Protestant charity, it was held, was characterized by modesty and by the effective concentration of resources on pressing areas of human need, as contrasted with the vainglory and the great but empty monuments of the Catholic past. Catholic charity was fabricated of stone, whereas the charity of men of true faith gives men bread. But even in terms of the institutions built by charity, 'since the Gospel has enlightened the church, there have been more deeds of charity, colleges, schools, hospitals, etc., founded, than in the time of popery', one writer held, though these godly donors understood that holy works do not purchase our salvation.² Thus we discover in the manifold works of charity which spread over the whole of England 'the true miracles of our church' as

¹ Trigge, Francis, *An apologie or defence of our dayes* (L., 1589), 7-9.

² Wakeman, *Poore-mans preacher*, 25.

opposed to the papists, maintained another eloquent preacher.¹ The evidence of God's holy works is at every hand as true religion has been restored, 'witnessse your owne eies and eares this very day, heere at home amongst your selues', the preacher admonished his London audience, 'which may heare and see the multitudes of Christ his poore . . . most charitably and carefully releueed in your hospitals, to the great glory of God, the comfort of the poore and afflicted, and the eternall memorie of the worthy founders and benefactors of the same'.² Protestants might, indeed, held Robert Wakeman, as they reflected on the inestimable good wrought by London's hospitals alone, 'pronounce of London, for these her singular deedes of charitie, that her faith, and the fruit of her faith, her many good works, are famous throw the whole world: neither doe I thinke that any one citie hath given more worthy testimonies of a true and lively faith'.³

This great pride in the achievements of Protestant charity, in the great institutions built by the generosity of private men, found its finest and most persuasive documentation in the quiet but replete pages of John Stow's massive work of historical scholarship, *The Survey of London*. First published in 1598, the work constitutes a kind of eulogy of the good works of London's merchants, being the annal of an incredible and a sustained generosity which created not only a great urban society, but one whose benefits spread across the length and breadth of the land. This record of private generosity, of Protestant good works, is all the more impressive because it was in a sense quite unintended, for it is the throbbing genius, the *ethos*, of London that Stow is seeking to capture in his many pages. But the documentation is there in overwhelming abundance, in parish after parish, ward after ward, generation after generation. Stow pauses for no moralizing, he draws no conclusions, he raises no cry of triumph against the mortal enemy, Rome; the immense impact of the work is all the stronger for that. It is at bottom the account of a great and enduring work of civilization wrought by rich but inconspicuous men according to a design which they all held so clearly and so confidently for their city and their age. England read and she was proud as this great work surveyed the vast accomplishments which, in this 'time of the Gospel', had been wrought by a relatively small group of men of charitable disposition who, imbued with a deep and brooding sense of social responsibility, had built a culture as well as a city. Stow's whole emphasis, his whole preoccupation, was intensely secular, but men could scarcely help reflecting that his almost staccato recital of the record of London's

¹ Tynley, Robert, *Two learned sermons* (L., 1609), 68. Tynley (1562-1616) was a native of Kent. Educated at Oxford, where he was graduated B.A. in 1582, he served as Vicar of Witham, Essex, Canon of Ely (1603), and Canon of St Paul's (1608). He also held livings in Suffolk and in Cambridge.

² *Ibid.*, 67.

³ Wakeman, *Poore-mans preacher*, 25.

generosity was after all the fruit of the reformed gospel. The ends which eloquence seek are sometimes the better attained without its distracting intervention. Though we shall never know, the fact that the total of London's truly vast generosity approximately trebled in the generation after the publication of this great book may not be unconnected with its appearance.¹

Of a very different temper indeed was the long and eloquent recital of Protestant charity incorporated as an appendix to his popular *Synopsis papismi* by Andrew Willet.² This catalogue, which was to be widely read and quoted, was an exultant essay on the immense charitable achievement which had been wrought in England during the period of roughly sixty years extending from the 'settling of the Gospel' with the accession of Queen Elizabeth to about 1620, with particular emphasis on the vast charitable endowments created by London's generosity. Depending heavily and without acknowledgement on Stow's patient and unpretentious research, Willet cited first the charities of the Protestant sovereigns, then of the peerage, and then in closely packed pages the long annal of 'the particular gifts and workes of charity by divers worshipfull and well disposed citizens of London'. Though he did not examine wills and complains that the livery companies were unwilling to open their records for his perusal, Willet poured out a recital of giving which was perhaps all the more persuasive and impressive because it was wholly unsystematic in form. He was deeply persuaded that his record proved that 'the Gospell in the space of 60. yeeres hath brought forth more fruit, than twice so many of the late times of popery can shew', while he declared himself certain that more free schools and alms-houses had been founded in this short interval than in the whole of the Middle Ages.³ He therefore proposed to 'stop' the 'slanderous mouths' of all papists who held that the reformed faith was devoid of charitable works, and to lay out for all men to read a 'golden catalogue' of the good works that began to flow in a mounting stream directly the true religion had been well and securely established in the realm.

Willet took particular pride in the charitable giving of London, which he believed exceeded that of any city in the world, but even so he reminded his readers that the great generosity of the city was but typical

¹ We deal thus briefly and generally with Stow's work only because of the heavy dependence we shall have on it in our later treatment of London.

² The dating of this catalogue of charitable works presents certain problems. It did not appear in the earlier editions of the *Synopsis*, which was first published in 1592, but was certainly written by Willet some little time before his death in 1627. The appendix was dedicated to Sir Thomas Middleton, Lord Mayor of London in 1613-1614, while the preface to the reader was signed by Willet as from Barley, Hertfordshire, in 1613. There are, however, references to events later than 1613, and it seems probable that the book was completed in rough draft by Willet in 1613 and that minor additions were made prior to the posthumous publication in 1634 by the author's son-in-law.

³ Willet, *Synopsis* (1634), 1219.

of the realm at large. His evidence would show that the charitable works of Protestants by far exceeded those of Catholicism in number, in greatness, and in quality, since 'theirs were done in the pride of their heart, in opinion of merit to purchase remission of sinnes', that of Protestants only to 'serve as testimonies of our faith'.¹ This proud record of generosity, of giving for socially useful purposes, affords abundant and irrefutable evidence that men of true faith and understanding need not be compelled and tricked into generosity by fear, by false promises or by the damnable teaching that salvation may be purchased by benefactions which simply serve the selfish ends of the priesthood. These gifts, large and small, were made by men and women moved to compassion because they understood the meaning of the Christian obligation of charity. He spoke with particular pride of Sutton's immense benefaction, it being 'the greatest gift, that these many hundred yeeres was giuen by any one man, to charitable vses, and I doubt whether the like can bee shewed to haue been done in this land in any age'.² But this was only the largest of a myriad of substantial benefactions, made in life or at death, which have so greatly advanced the cause of Christ in England and which have made of the realm a better place for Christian men to live in. He has, he tells us, spoken principally of donors 'now at rest in the Lord', but he knew as well of many men who with great modesty had carried out significant works of charity while still living, 'and their charity is so much the more commendable, because they are content to part with a portion of their wealth, before it leave them: whereas men dying, cannot carry their substance with them, they must leave it to the world'.³ Even more, he confesses he simply has not had time or opportunity to note 'names that are not in this booke expressed', but these we may be sure are 'in Gods booke of remembrance registred'.⁴

It was Willet's conclusion that the city of London alone had in the space of two generations given upwards of £600,000 for charitable uses, while he felt certain that the two universities had been strengthened with benefactions totalling at least £360,000. He confessed that he had 'no auditors account in hand' and that his estimates were roughly gathered, for 'sometimes I doe but rove at the summe', but he was convinced that England had advanced far indeed in resolving her social and human problems as the teaching of the Gospel came to animate men's impulses and actions. Hence he would conclude that the 'slandrous objection of the papists' have been well answered, for these great acts of charity and mercy 'doe glister as pearles and the workers thereof doe shine as starres amongst us'.⁵

¹ Willet, *Synopsis* (1634), 1219.

² *Ibid.*, 1221, 1231.

³ *Ibid.*, 1231.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1233.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1243. Willet's estimate is very rough and certainly incomplete. This matter will be fully discussed in the second volume of this study.

This work was an extremely important document in the history of ideas and in the history of social development in England. Though inexact, roughly cast, and almost casually written, it brought together, principally by borrowings from Stow, the long 'golden' catalogue of London's great generosity almost precisely as the full flood of that giving was attained. It was a proud and almost haughty review of the past generosity of the city and it most dramatically and accurately sensed that social forces of immense historical significance had somehow been freed in England at about the time of the great Queen's accession. Willet's explanation was arrogantly and simply stated: this noble annal of giving simply confirmed the inevitable good works of the Gospel, displayed fully and triumphantly what the elect could accomplish once released from the thralldom of Rome and its priesthood. Willet sets forth for all men to read the roster of the famous men of a new age, an age in which new classes were assuming an enormous measure of social responsibility and laying out the clear design of a new order of a society which they were building with their own wealth. It is our own reading of the evidence so abundantly provided in this amazing age that essentially secular aspirations were flourishing, were in fact triumphing. Willet construed the evidence to mean that he had witnessed in his own lifetime the triumphant climax of the accomplishments of the elect, the putting to shame of the enemy of the true faith. Whether he was right or wrong in his analysis, he had at the very least provided still another immensely powerful impulse for Protestant charity and had, almost as an afterthought, in a moving appendix to a tedious and otherwise quite unimportant controversial work, published a brief and sparse treatise of extraordinary historical significance.

As we have suggested, Willet's work was widely read and its main contention was very soon fully absorbed into the body of Protestant teachings in England. A few references will suggest how quickly and how effectively his argument was used by other preachers. Thus Thomas Anyan, in a sermon preached in London in 1615, in making the point that a good life is the inseparable 'companion' of faith, held that this very teaching of the reformed church in England 'hath brought forth so good fruit that since the first yeare of our late soveraigne Queene . . . there haue beene more hospitalls, publicke schooles, libraries, colleges, and places for learning, built, adorned, and now in building, then ever were before in any one 60 yeares'.¹ Nor did John Donne hesitate to employ Willet's contention, and language, in one of his great sermons. The 'shamelesse slanderers' who have held that Protestantism is weak in charity because it disavows the teaching that salvation may be

¹ Anyan, *A sermon*, 37. A native of Kent, Anyan was graduated B.A. from Oxford in 1602. He served as President of Corpus Christi College from 1614 to 1629 and held numerous ecclesiastical preferments. He died in 1632.

gained by works, are confounded indeed when we reflect that 'there have been in this kingdome, since the blessed reformation of religion, more publick charitable works perform'd, more hospitals and colleges erected, and endowed in threescore, then in some hundreds of years, of superstition before'.¹ The great Puritan divine, Edward Reynolds, was more scrupulous in citing his authority in a sermon preached in 1658 before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, when he indicated that he would 'press upon London the example of London' in his plea for even greater generosity in meeting the need which all men could see about them.² The same thesis, the same appeal to the generosity and the pride of London, had been earlier employed by the Bishop of London in calling for funds with which the restoration of St Paul's might be undertaken. The reign of King James was a proud age in which schools, libraries, colleges, hospitals, and other great works of charity were carried forward and completed. England may well be called the ring of Europe, and 'your city is the gem . . . there is yet one thing wanting vnto you, if you will be perfit, perfit this church'.³

All this exultation, this sense of an immense social task well done, was caught up at the end of this age in the writings of a good and a great man, a man in whom compassion for all humanity was instinct, Thomas Fuller. The well-springs of the flood of charity that had formed the social history of the previous century were not for the sophisticated Fuller so clearly marked as they had been for a Willet or a Reynolds, but he had an intuitive sense that a great social revolution had taken place, which had been carried through by private men moved by new aspirations that were not wanting in nobility. Fuller's mind broods over the great benefactions and the men, pious and profane, spiritual and worldly, who had made them. Fuller sensed, as an eminent historian in commenting on him and his genius has well said, that the age of which he wrote was the great era 'of collectivism, of social construction, of educational and charitable endowment. Of no age are the worthies still so vivid to us. In hundreds of parish churches we still see their marble or alabaster effigies . . . under great canopies, with their quarterings, their pedigrees and their children complacently grouped around them. . . . From whatever motive, they all, lawyer or merchant, peer or gentleman, Anglican or Puritan, founded something for that society of which none ever forgot his membership'.⁴ These were the men of whom Fuller wrote, theirs the virtues which he celebrated in a homely and inimitable style.

¹ Donne, *Sermons*, II, 234. This sermon was preached in 1618 or 1619.

² Reynolds, *Rich mans charge*, 42. And cf. Waterhouse, *Modest discourse*, 251-255; Hakewill, George, *An answer to a treatise* (L., 1616), 253.

³ King, John, *A sermon at Paules Crosse* (L., 1620), 43-46, 55.

⁴ Trevor-Roper, H. R., in *The New Statesman and Nation*, January 10, 1953, 42.

Fuller quite rejected the thesis, already persuasively advanced from opposite points of view and for different ends by both Catholic controversialists and extreme Protestant social reformers, that the Reformation had itself resulted in a spoliation of ecclesiastical properties held and administered for charitable purposes. He recited the good works effected by Henry VIII with much of the wealth that came into the hands of the Crown and dwelt at length on the broad foundations laid for English charitable institutions by his son.¹ On this base of royal policy, private charity began early in the reign of Elizabeth to raise the immense edifice of social institutions which was all but completed in the course of a century.² This great outpouring of generous wealth for the accomplishment of more good works than the world had ever known before proceeded, Fuller held, from a new and a very different understanding of the nature of alms from that which had inspired the faulty charities of the Middle Ages. Charity, since the advent of the Reformation, had not been 'parched up by the fear of the fire of purgatory, but kindly ripened with the sun'.³ For a short time, Fuller quite correctly taught, Protestantism stood still, stunned and paralysed by the horrors of the Marian Counter-Reformation, almost barren of good works. But 'since her beginning to bear fruit, she hath overtaken her Roman co-rival, and left her fairly behind'.⁴ Fuller would lay no prescription against the instinct to charity, professing to 'let the charitably minded do what, when, where, how, to whom, and how much God and their own goodness shall direct them'. But he wished that more donors would carry forward their good works during their own lifetime and he could not but deplore the fact that the great streams of charity of the past century had not watered such areas of need as Christian captives in the Barbary states, needy clergy, and servants who had spent their lives in the service of one family.⁵ For the rest he was content as he recited in matchless prose the immense cultural and social achievements of the worthies of England. To an estimate of this great achievement we must now lend our own attention.

¹ Fuller, Thomas, *The church history of Britain* (L., 1837, 3 vols.), II, 116 ff., 252-259, 337, *et passim*.

² *Ibid.*, III, 91, 153, 235-242, 255, 260-261.

³ Fuller, Thomas (P. A. Nuttall, ed.), *The history of the worthies of England* (L., 1840, 3 vols.), I, 52.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 52.

⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 49, 50-51.

VII

The Achievement

A. THE GENERAL SWEEP OF THE EVIDENCE

We have seen that, towards the close of the age with which we are concerned, thoughtful and perceptive men, observers like Stow, Willet, and Fuller, came to reflect with pride on the immensity of the achievement which had been wrought in England by private charity. And well they might, for in the course of these years the curse of poverty had been chastened, humane care had been arranged for the derelict, and the area of opportunity for aspiring youth had been enormously enlarged. A quiet but a veritable revolution had occurred during which private donors, men who held in view a vision of the future, had repaired the damage society had sustained from the slow ruin of the Middle Ages and had then laid firmly and surely the foundation of the liberal society of which we are the inheritors. It was a revolution too in which men's aspirations for their own generation and those to come had undergone an almost complete metamorphosis, as the essentially religious interests of the later Middle Ages yielded to social aspirations which were most aggressively secular and which wrested from the church the control and the direction of the institutions which lend care to men's bodies and tuition to their minds. The historical price the great donors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries exacted for the immense contributions which they made was the secularization of the society and its institutions.

We shall now examine in detail the achievements of private charity during our long period, dealing in all cases with the aggregates for our group of ten representative counties, and reserving a discussion of the materials for the individual counties for the later volumes of this work. As we have earlier warned, we shall inevitably refer to this sampling of ten counties as *All England*, though, as we have suggested, it seems evident that the area with which we are dealing included almost exactly one-third of the land mass of the realm, one-third of its parishes, a third of its population, and something like one-half of its wealth.¹ We are describing, then, a considerable fraction of the whole, but it remains a fraction.

¹ *Vide ante*, 26-29.

In the course of our period we have counted 34,963 private donors who gave for charitable uses the enormous sum of £3,102,696 9s. These donors were not evenly distributed among the ten counties under examination, almost two-thirds (64.88 per cent) of them having been concentrated in the three counties of Yorkshire, Middlesex, and Kent, while of the total of charitable funds provided almost 61 per cent was disposed by the incredible generosity of London's benefactors.¹ Further, it will be observed that the average charitable benefaction differs markedly in the various counties, ranging downwards from the almost unbelievably high average of £255 12s 2d for London to the modest £28 4s 6d for Yorkshire. This difference only in part reflects the relative wealth of the several counties, for in certain areas, such as Yorkshire and Kent, there was, for reasons to be discussed later, a very considerable, and certainly salutary, participation of humble classes of men in the charitable history of the county, while in London there was almost no contribution made by a rootless and fluid urban poor.

It will immediately be observed that, when London and Bristol are taken together, these urban communities account for nearly two-thirds (63.9 per cent) of the total of all charitable wealth provided in the ten counties studied, which, as we have said, included a third of the land mass of the realm and something like half of its wealth. Significant as this is, it still understates the decisive quality of the urban contribution to the charitable needs of the age, to the building of its badly needed social resources, if we take into account the total of funds contributed by other but smaller cities and market towns within the various counties under review. Confining our listing to those urban communities contributing as much as £10,000 of charitable endowments, it appears that urban England was to give very nearly three-fourths of the total of the charitable wealth of the age.² This was of course a decisive contribution, one which largely shaped the social growth of the period and which to

¹ County	Known donors	Per cent of whole	County total			Per cent of whole	Average benefaction		
			£	s	d		£	s	d
Bristol	531	1.52	92,042	6	0	2.97	173	6	9
Buckinghamshire	1722	4.93	88,152	6	0	2.84	51	3	10
Hampshire	1956	5.59	87,060	13	0	2.81	44	10	2
Kent	6662	19.05	251,766	12	0	8.11	37	15	10
Lancashire	939	2.69	103,753	5	0	3.34	110	9	10
London	7391	21.14	1,889,211	12	0	60.89	255	12	2
Norfolk	2714	7.76	177,883	11	0	5.73	65	10	10
Somerset	3629	10.38	116,531	16	0	3.76	32	2	3
Worcestershire	787	2.25	52,643	14	0	1.70	66	17	10
Yorkshire	8632	24.69	243,650	14	0	7.85	28	4	6
Totals	34,963	100.00	3,102,696	9	0	100.00	88	14	10

² See table at foot of the next page.

a large degree determined the future development of English life and institutions. In a quite overwhelming sense this vast contribution of £2,262,709 7s of urban wealth for the institutional needs of the realm is the measure of the immense social responsibility undertaken by the mercantile élite of England. This, then, was the contribution of a very small, but a rich and generous class, animated, whether in London or in Hull, by tightly disciplined and clearly held aspirations which men of this group were prepared to translate into historical reality by the substance of their own wealth. Here we find the clue to the social metamorphosis under way in England through the full span of our period.

It should be stated again that the great *corpus* of charitable funds accumulated by the society during the years under study were given both by bequest and by dispositions made during the lifetime of donors. Though the proportions are not precise, having been derived from an extensive sampling, something like 63 per cent (63.17 per cent) of the total of charitable wealth was vested by bequest, and the considerable remainder by living gifts.¹ Further, as we have pointed out, these funds were composed both of enduring capital gifts and of more casual, and in most cases, much more modest, gifts or bequests for immediate use. It is rather surprising, however, that of the vast total of charitable moneys with which we are concerned, the great mass, £2,551,880 19s in all, was left in the form of endowments in order to secure in perpetuity the charitable intentions of the donors. In all, therefore, rather more than 82 per cent of the whole of the charitable accumulations of the era were endowments, yielding, we should suppose, at least £127,600 p.a. for a great variety of salutary social uses by the close of our period.² This was, we need scarcely say, an immense capital sum, dedicated to specific charitable ends, while the income flowed out each year in a fruitful and life-giving stream. It is, as we have already indicated, quite impossible to measure this great wealth in modern terms or by modern standards. But some sense of the worth and meaning of the sum is suggested when we reflect that the charitable income available in our counties alone for good and healing causes at the close of our period

	£	s	d		£	s	d
London	1,889,211	12	0	Worcester	15,149	1	0
Bristol	92,042	6	0	Rochester	14,803	7	0
Norwich	53,018	5	0	Hull	12,218	15	0
Canterbury	48,605	2	0	Greenwich	12,143	15	0
York	26,067	9	0	Wells	11,560	7	0
Manchester	23,028	0	0	Basingstoke	10,920	19	0
Winchester	17,393	2	0	Bruton	10,286	1	0
Taunton	16,046	11	0	Faversham	10,214	15	0

¹ *Vide ante*, 23-25, for a fuller discussion of this matter.

² See first note *op. cit.* p. 243.

approximately equalled the whole of the royal revenues as they stood in 1540,¹ while the total capital value may very possibly have amounted to as much as 4 per cent to 5 per cent of the whole of the capital stock of England as it stood in 1660.²

These great funds were in the early decades of our long period accumulated quite slowly, the total provided by donors in the first six decades, which we may well regard as the closing years of the Middle Ages, having reached an aggregate of £525,595 1s, or a little less than 17 per cent of the whole of the accumulations during our period. The average rate of giving during this interval was thus of the order of £87,600 per decade (£87,599), with a particularly notable climax of giving in the first decade of the sixteenth century, when the substantial sum of £131,220 5s was provided for charitable uses.

The curve of giving fell very steeply indeed during that troubled decade 1541–1550 when the great King's health was quite as uncertain as were his religious intentions and during the first unsettled months of the reign of Edward VI, no more than £71,388 15s having been provided in these years by donors whose aspirations were beclouded by an almost overwhelming uncertainty. But in the decade following, despite the Marian interlude, the 'good works of reformation' quite literally poured out, when the astonishing total of £155,643 6s was given for a variety of uses, an amount not to be equalled, it may be observed, until the first decade of the seventeenth century. These gifts were principally made by men moved by the stirring pleas of the great preachers of the Edwardian Reformation, Latimer, Ridley, Hooper, and the rest, who were warm in their confidence, resolute in their demands on the reformed conscience, and fresh and humane in their view of the social

Vide ante, 24–25, for a more detailed analysis of these figures. We should here, however, provide a table setting out the full particulars:

County	Per cent capital	Total capital			Total outright			Grand tota		
		£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d
Bristol	91.00	83,767	10	0	8,274	16	0	92,042	6	0
Buckinghamshire	82.40	72,631	17	0	15,520	9	0	88,152	6	0
Hampshire	80.09	69,722	18	0	17,337	15	0	87,060	13	0
Kent	81.35	204,799	14	0	46,966	18	0	251,766	12	0
Lancashire	76.83	79,709	16	0	24,043	9	0	103,753	5	0
London	82.60	1,560,422	16	0	328,788	16	0	1,889,211	12	0
Norfolk	80.96	144,019	2	0	33,864	9	0	177,883	11	0
Somerset	80.86	94,224	4	0	22,307	12	0	116,531	16	0
Worcestershire	80.51	42,381	7	0	10,262	7	0	52,643	14	0
Yorkshire	82.17	200,201	15	0	43,448	19	0	243,650	14	0
Totals	82.25	2,551,880	19	0	550,815	10	0	3,102,696	9	0

¹ Dietz, *English government finance*, 138–140.

² *Vide ante*, 26–29, for a discussion of this matter.

obligations of the Christian conscience. The almost heady achievement of this quite amazing decade is all the more remarkable when we reflect that of the total provided for charitable uses only a little more than 21 per cent was given during the tragic, the hopeless, reign of Queen Mary, even though her tenure of power occupied more than half of the decade.

During the Elizabethan period the curve of charitable giving in England mounted slowly, though very steadily, in no decade attaining the great heights of the Edwardian years. In average terms, something like £111,000 was provided in each of the four decades, but it was not until the second half of this interval that the flow of charitable benefactions began in an abundance springing from certainty of aspirations. In all, £445,672 19s was given for charitable uses during the Elizabethan era, this sum amounting to slightly more than 14 per cent (14.36 per cent) of the whole for our long period. It is most evident that the first half of Elizabeth's reign was marked by a ruthlessly competitive and acquisitive spirit on the part of the two classes, the merchants and the gentry, which were ultimately to bear such a heavy burden of social responsibility. As we have seen, mounting social and economic distress, the increasing concern and the steady policy of the government, and the sustained preaching of the necessity for liberality and charity were to have their full and mensurable effect only in the more mellow and certain period of the last two decades of the reign when truly large charitable aggregates began to be gathered, preparing, as it were, for the golden flow of charity in the four decades which we have called the early Stuart period.

In so many respects it may be said that the Elizabethan age enjoyed its full fruition in the next generation. This is true in the realm of domestic architecture, in letters, and in some respects in the history of thought, and it is certainly overwhelmingly true with respect to charitable giving and the assumption by the society of immense burdens of social responsibility. For one thing, it must be remembered that men who drew their wills, men who left large charitable bequests in the years 1601-1630, had on the whole reached their maturity and had formed their aspirations for their society in the preceding generation. Thus does the present always lie in debt to the past. Nor should we forget that the passage of the great Elizabethan social code at the close of the Queen's reign marks a kind of climax of discussion and decision with respect to the future of the society. In particular, as we have earlier pointed out, the passage of the acts defining charitable trusts lent an enormous and an immediately observable impetus to charitable giving, the fruits of which were to be gathered in the early Stuart period. The result was that the curve of charitable giving lifts with a really incredible steepness during the first four decades of the seventeenth century. In all, the huge total of £1,437,490 3s was provided for one or another

charitable purpose during this relatively short interval, this amounting to somewhat more than 46 per cent (46.33 per cent) of the whole given for charitable uses during our entire period. The magnitude of this achievement is suggested when we say that in the one generation extending from 1611 to 1640 a larger total was provided for charitable needs than during the course of the long interval from 1480 to 1600. In average terms, approximately £359,372 was given in each of the decades of this period. During the two great decades 1611–1630, when the flood-gates were fully opened, principally by merchant generosity, upwards of £853,270 was provided for charitable purposes by men and women of our ten counties, surely on a scale of giving never before equalled and probably never again, in relation to the assets of the society.

But the forces of disruption and uncertainty were at work in the society, or more exactly in the polity, and men's aspirations began once more to be clouded by irresolution and hesitancy. In the Laudian decade, 1631–1640, the charitable total fell away significantly, for it was clear that the tensions now wracking the realm could be relieved only by a formidable test of power between the opposed forces in the state. During the two decades of grave civil and religious dislocation, as was inevitable, the curve of charitable giving declined very steeply indeed. In this interval, if a small total which cannot be precisely dated may be included, £466,906 5s was disposed for charitable causes, this amounting to 15.05 per cent of the whole sum for our period. Steep as was this decline, there were still very large amounts being given in each decade, while the sum for these twenty years, it must be observed, somewhat exceeded that provided during the whole course of the Elizabethan age. Moreover, with the restoration of political stability under the Commonwealth and Protectorate, the trend of giving mounted upwards sharply once more, the most substantial total of £242,749 19s having been provided during the last decade of our age.

As we assess the data, then, our first conclusion is that the totals given for charitable uses in England held on a low but a remarkably level plane until the decade of the Edwardian Reformation. After a kind of precocious climax in that interval, the curve of giving began to rise steadily to its astonishing culmination over the full course of a generation in the early seventeenth century. There is the clear suggestion of gathering momentum as one examines the table or the curve herewith provided, a momentum which found its full expression in the incredible generosity which marks the years 1611–1640.¹

When the data are analysed more closely and qualitatively, as it were, a second and even more significant conclusion may be drawn which provides the underlying thesis of this work. As we view our whole period, there was not only a most formidable and fruitful increase in

¹ See table on p. 246.

the amounts given by private donors for charitable uses, but there was a truly revolutionary shift in the charitable uses for which these amounts were given. Furthermore, it is evident that these two principal forces, the gathering momentum and the shift in men's aspirations, were inter-related, were in fact simultaneous. All our evidence would suggest that the second of these great social forces fed and animated the first: that as men's aspirations underwent swift and conclusive change, new and compelling areas of need were laid open, into which funds flowed as men became persuaded of the central significance for themselves and their society of the new good works to which they had set their hands and dedicated so much of their fortunes.

This great, and permanent, change in the structure of men's aspirations may be dated very clearly from the decade of the Edwardian Reformation, which for many reasons we are now persuaded was more conclusive in its effect on the English mind and faith than we had here-

Totals of charitable benefactions by decade intervals:

<i>Decades</i>	<i>Decade totals</i>			£	s	d
	£	s	d			
1481-1490	49,383	19	0			
1491-1500	75,472	19	0			
1501-1510	131,220	5	0			
1511-1520	81,868	12	0			
1521-1530	107,405	17	0			
1531-1540	80,243	9	0			
				525,595	1	0
1541-1550	71,388	15	0			
1551-1560	155,643	6	0			
				227,032	1	0
1561-1570	92,926	4	0			
1571-1580	105,980	2	0			
1581-1590	120,550	11	0			
1591-1600	126,216	2	0			
				445,672	19	0
1601-1610	210,058	2	0			
1611-1620	424,129	9	0			
1621-1630	429,141	1	0			
1631-1640	374,161	11	0			
				1,437,490	3	0
1641-1650	216,070	9	0			
1651-1660	242,749	19	0			
No DATE	8,085	17	0			
				466,906	5	0
TOTAL	3,102,696	9	0			

These decade totals are presented as Curve 1 in the Appendix.

tofore supposed. A steep and a decisive decline in the amount and in the proportion of giving for religious purposes occurred in this period as men's concern turned with an almost frenzied zeal to a great variety of secular needs which they felt laid a heavier charge on their charitable resources than did the requirements of the church, whether Calvinist or Romanist. As we shall have frequent occasion to point out, these benefactions tended to be militantly and aggressively secular in temper and in purpose, though it by no means follows that the donors were not themselves men of the sternest possible piety. None the less, their gifts betray an evident anti-clericalism, a disposition to vest their endowments securely in trustworthy lay hands, and the explicit conviction that for too long the church in its institutional aspect had drained off far too large an increment of the social wealth of the community.

The cold logic of our curves would, indeed, suggest that these sentiments, this great metamorphosis, in men's aspirations, had begun in England well before the Reformation, for proportionately the amount being dedicated by the society for religious uses began to decline quite steeply and continuously after 1510. None the less, taking in view all the decades prior to the Reformation, the very large total of £281,158 15s was dedicated by pious donors to the various needs of the church, this amounting to somewhat more than 53 per cent of the whole amount given for charitable causes during this interval of sixty years. Another substantial total of £131,170 5s, this being almost 25 per cent of the whole, was provided, principally by the great prelates, for educational uses, which in this era were of course not only controlled by the ecclesiastical authorities but lent almost exclusive service to their needs. The relatively modest remainder was spread among the other great charitable heads, 13.33 per cent of the total being disposed for poor relief, 6.18 per cent for municipal uses, and an insignificant amount for the various instrumentalities of social rehabilitation.¹

Reference to the table just cited will suggest at once, and that most compellingly, that an immense social and cultural revolution occurred during the interval of the Reformation, despite the frantic, and almost wholly unavailing, efforts of Mary Tudor to stem the tide of change. While, as we have noted, the average decade rate of giving increased during this brief interval, the amount and the proportion provided for the many needs of the church sank with an incredible velocity. In the long interval prior to the Reformation giving for religious causes had for each decade averaged very nearly £47,000, while in the years 1541-1560 it averaged somewhat less than £17,000. More significantly, the total of £33,526 5s designated for religious purposes amounted to not more than 14.77 per cent of the whole of charitable wealth for the

¹ *Vide* Table I (Appendix) and the accompanying bar graphs for the detailed analysis.

period. While this catastrophic decline in the support of ecclesiastical needs was taking place, there was a tremendous burgeoning out of support for all the great secular uses. Thus the interesting and hopeful outlays on the institutions experimenting with the possibility of the social rehabilitation of the poor commanded £68,589 17s of funds, or well over twice as much as was given for religious uses, while the £61,383 4s given for the direct relief of the poor in percentage terms (27.04 per cent) exhibited an interest in this pressing problem somewhat more than double in intensity that of the preceding period. The £48,320 9s given for educational uses amounted to about 21 per cent of the whole, a little less than in the decades prior to the Reformation, but with the extremely important difference that this substantial sum was principally dedicated to the founding of schools under firm secular control.

These very strong and compelling changes in the structure of English aspirations were not only confirmed but were rendered permanent in the course of the Elizabethan age. The great Queen did far more than lead her people and her age, she was herself in a complete sense identical with her people and her age. Intensely secular, concerned at bottom only with the substance of power, coldly suspicious of the clerical mind, she was the embodiment of a secularism which nearly destroyed the fabric of the church and the clergy which she had founded. Not only did the rate of giving for religious needs fall to slightly under £8000 for each decade of the period, but the £31,959 7s provided for these uses in this interval represents no more than 7.17 per cent of the great sum advanced for all charitable purposes in the course of the reign. In perhaps more meaningful terms, we observe in this remarkable period an intensity of interest in the needs of the church only one-seventh that exhibited in the years prior to the Reformation, and only half that shown during the two decades of the Reformation itself. In point of fact, less was given for religious purposes than for any other great charitable head, even the amount provided for municipal uses (£33,720 5s) somewhat exceeding that given for the totality of the needs of organized religion in the realm. Relatively, the care of the poor absorbed a much larger proportion (39.03 per cent) of all charitable funds, the £173,944 4s given for this purpose constituting a very real and demonstrably helpful contribution towards resolving the age-old problem of poverty and human misery. Another large total (£139,947 8s) was given for the pressing and hopeful uses of education, the proportion (31.40 per cent) devoted to this purpose in the Elizabethan period being greater than that observed in any other interval. Finally, the considerable sum of £66,101 15s was given for the prosecution of various experiments in social rehabilitation, this amount, it may be noted, being more than double that devoted to all religious needs. This, most evidently, was an age of almost complete secularism of aspirations on the part of men who were in the main

personally pious to a fault, and the most generous of whom were possessed of a piety tinged with an evangelical fervour most distasteful to their Erastian and very probably sceptical sovereign.

It is only by comparison with the Elizabethan age that we may say that the crying needs of the church gained some larger measure of support during the early Stuart period, when, as we have seen, the immense outpouring of charitable giving was to occur in England. In part, this modest revival occurred because most visibly the church was in process of serious decay, in part because the Stuarts lent warm and continuous support to the needs of the church, mounting to an almost frantic appeal in the period of Archbishop Laud's dominance in the affairs of church and state, and finally because comprehended within the substantial total afforded for religious needs there is a very large sum given by Puritan laymen engaged in a formidably bold effort to capture the church through its clergy. In all, £256,522 was provided for one or another need of the church, this comprehending 17.85 per cent of all charitable funds for the interval. This was modest indeed when contrasted with the enormous total of £383,594 1s (26.68 per cent) given for the various educational interests of the age. And it was quite dwarfed by the huge total of £620,480 provided by countless benefactors for a frontal assault on poverty, an amount which was singularly useful because almost the whole was in the form of capital. Very substantial sums were also disposed for the agencies of social rehabilitation (£119,340 15s) and for municipal betterments (£57,553 7s), though it will be observed that proportionately both these interests show a marked decline when compared with the two preceding intervals.

In the course of the era of the Puritan Revolution the requirements of the poor commanded a slightly higher proportion (43.58 per cent) of the charitable wealth of England than in any preceding period, the £203,485 18s so designated representing a huge further commitment to the institutions with which poverty was being curbed in England. The interest maintained in this tumultuous period in education was proportionately (27.94 per cent) slightly greater than in the preceding interval (26.68 per cent), the total of £130,461 9s. given for this use being almost as large as that provided during the Elizabethan age, somewhat incorrectly famous for its foundation of grammar schools. Interest in the maintenance of the church, even of the 'godly church' which seemed now to be at hand, waned considerably, the 12.09 per cent of all charitable funds dedicated to this purpose being sharply lower than in the preceding era, though it should be remarked that in this brief period a much larger total (£56,462 8s) was given for religious uses than in the whole of the Elizabethan age. A substantial total of £54,707 7s was provided for experiments in the rehabilitation of the poor, this being 11.72 per cent of the whole, while proportionately the

£21,789 3s designated for municipal improvements represents a slight gain over the early Stuart interval.

In summary, we may note that taking our whole long period in view, it was the needs of the poor that commanded the bulk of men's benevolence, well over a third (36.40 per cent) of the whole of their immense charitable giving having been disposed for this worthy and certainly pressing need. The closely related interest in education, in the enlargement of the circumference of opportunity, remained remarkably constant through this period of almost two centuries, while on balance something more than a fourth (26.86 per cent) of all charitable funds were devoted to this fruitful purpose. Considerably less was given for religious uses, the total of £659,628 15s so designated amounting to not much more than a fifth (21.26 per cent) of the vast total wherewith men were altering and bettering the social institutions of their age. Almost half as much, 10.30 per cent of the whole sum, was risked by wise and often prescient donors on a great variety of essentially experimental undertakings in which the cure of poverty was sought, while rather more than 5 per cent (5.18 per cent) of all the charitable wealth accumulated during our period was disposed for the betterment of the fabric of the communities in which men lived.

These trends and the curves which document them reflect of course the aspirations of many thousands of individual donors, of numerous classes of men, and of widely separated areas of a society which was only then becoming homogeneous. We shall later comment in detail on the amazing differences in the structure of aspirations as we compare class with class, but we should now speak at least briefly of certain important differences among the counties under study. Thus we have just observed that for England donors of our period gave 36.40 per cent of all their charitable benefactions for the relief of poverty, whereas in the individual counties this proportion ranges from the 22.01 per cent devoted to this purpose in Lancashire to the incredibly high proportion of 52.04 per cent in Buckinghamshire.¹ We have no really persuasive

¹ Proportion of total charitable funds disposed for poor relief:

	<i>Total</i>			<i>Per</i>
	£	s	d	cent
Bristol	42,306	10	0	45.96
Buckinghamshire	45,872	13	0	52.04
Hampshire	36,002	4	0	41.35
Kent	102,519	7	0	40.72
Lancashire	22,836	7	0	22.01
London	664,608	14	0	35.18
Norfolk	60,075	6	0	33.77
Somerset	50,500	18	0	43.34
Worcestershire	23,115	17	0	43.91
Yorkshire	81,513	13	0	33.46

explanation for the preoccupation of the Buckinghamshire gentry with the needs of the poor, though in Lancashire it is clear indeed that the very small sum provided for poor relief reflects the almost fanatical interest of its donors in winning the county for the reformed faith and in remedying the pervasive want of educational opportunity in this then remote and backward shire. The proportion (35.18 per cent) designated by London donors for poor relief was, it will be noted, almost precisely that for England at large, while in Bristol, the other urban complex examined in detail, the proportion (45.96 per cent) devoted to the needs of the poor was exceeded only by that so disposed in Buckinghamshire.

Even cursory examination of the resources given for experiments in social rehabilitation in the several counties will suggest that these were a form of speculative undertaking most highly favoured by the merchant class throughout the realm. The aim of these donors was to destroy poverty by effecting its cure, and the merchants were prepared to stake very large sums indeed in these hopeful, aggressive, though often naïve, ventures.¹ Thus in London the amazingly large proportion of 13.32 per cent was devoted to this broad purpose, while in Bristol rather more than 10 per cent (10.42 per cent) was ventured. Almost as large a proportion (9.63 per cent) was dedicated to the ends of social rehabilitation in Norfolk, where the merchant aristocracy of Norwich was intensely interested in experiments of this kind. The remaining, and more typically rural, counties displayed markedly less interest in these appealing but novel undertakings, the proportion of total wealth so dedicated ranging from 2.66 per cent in Somerset to 5.94 per cent in Worcestershire.

The proportion of charitable funds devoted to the various municipal betterments in the several counties, on the other hand, suggests no sensible statistical pattern. These proportions range from the unbelievable low of 0.78 per cent for Somerset, which seemed even to despair of its notoriously evil roads, to the remarkably high 10.92 per cent in principally rural Hampshire. Norfolk likewise devoted a gener-

¹ Proportion of total charitable wealth designated for social rehabilitation:

	<i>Total</i>			<i>Per</i>
	£	s	d	cent
Bristol	9,592	1	0	10.42
Buckinghamshire	3,920	2	0	4.45
Hampshire	3,846	1	0	4.42
Kent	12,043	4	0	4.78
Lancashire	3,153	12	0	3.04
London	251,728	13	0	13.32
Norfolk	17,127	16	0	9.63
Somerset	3,101	2	0	2.66
Worcestershire	3,128	4	0	5.94
Yorkshire	11,805	17	0	4.85

ous proportion (10.58 per cent) of its charitable assets to municipal uses, particularly to endowments intended to afford tax relief, while the lusty and proud burghers of Bristol dedicated 9.10 per cent of their charitable wealth for the betterment of the fabric of their city. London, on the other hand, which had the most maturely developed tradition of employing the taxing power for improvements today commonly carried forward as a charge on the whole community, was little interested in such outlays, only 4.95 per cent of its huge charitable aggregate being so designated.¹

Devotion to the need for the enlargement of educational opportunity was, it is clear, most evenly dispersed among the several counties.² The two exceptions are Lancashire and Yorkshire, both remote and backward, into which there flowed very large benefactions from London merchants, usually natives of the two counties, who were determined to bring these regions level with the realm at large in terms of the educational resources which men had come to realize were essential if the ignorance in which poverty bred was to be dispelled. In Lancashire, the really staggering proportion of 41.79 per cent of all charitable funds was dedicated to this worthy purpose, a far larger share, incidentally, than was devoted there to any of the other great charitable causes. An extraordinarily large proportion of charitable wealth was likewise disposed

¹ Proportion of charitable wealth designated for municipal betterments:

	<i>Total</i>			<i>Per</i>
	£	s	d	cent
Bristol	8,378	5	0	9.10
Buckinghamshire	7,757	19	0	8.80
Hampshire	9,511	6	0	10.92
Kent	11,558	15	0	4.59
Lancashire	1,265	10	0	1.22
London	93,593	16	0	4.95
Norfolk	18,820	15	0	10.58
Somerset	905	15	0	0.78
Worcestershire	2,862	9	0	5.44
Yorkshire	6,121	11	0	2.51

² Proportion of charitable wealth designated for education:

	<i>Total</i>			<i>Per</i>
	£	s	d	cent
Bristol	19,635	7	0	21.33
Buckinghamshire	18,741	2	0	21.26
Hampshire	21,626	4	0	24.84
Kent	58,255	16	0	23.14
Lancashire	43,359	13	0	41.79
London	510,890	17	0	27.04
Norfolk	40,920	4	0	23.00
Somerset	30,158	7	0	25.88
Worcestershire	14,093	14	0	26.77
Yorkshire	75,812	8	0	31.12

for educational purposes in Yorkshire, the £75,812 8s dedicated to this constituting nearly a third (31.12 per cent) of the whole of the considerable charitable funds of that county. In the remaining counties the differences were remarkably slight, all falling within the narrow range of from 21.26 per cent in Buckinghamshire to the 27.04 per cent given for this great use in London.

By far the most striking and interesting of the differences in the charitable aspirations of the several counties is to be observed in the proportion of their charitable wealth which they disposed for the various religious needs of the age.¹ In Lancashire and Yorkshire the proportion devoted to religious uses far exceeded the nation's average of 21.26 per cent, principally because of 'missionary funds' flowing into these remote counties from London, most of which bore a distinctly Puritan stamp, and because the parochial structure of these two counties was at the outset of our period far from complete. In most revealing contrast to the 31.94 per cent of all charitable funds devoted to religious causes in Lancashire, such rural counties as Buckinghamshire (13.45 per cent) and Hampshire (18.46 per cent) gave only a slight proportion of their wealth for such purposes through the whole long course of our period. As we should expect, both the great urban complexes under study were coldly secular in their preoccupation, London giving 19.50 per cent of its immense charitable wealth for religious needs and Bristol no more than 13.18 per cent. These differences are extremely interesting and important: the quite complex causes, which reveal a great deal concerning the steady drift of the realm towards secularization of aspirations, will be considered in detail in later volumes, where the evidence for the several counties is examined.

B. THE GREAT CHARITABLE CAUSES

1. *The poor*

We have seen that in the whole course of our period the relief of poverty was by far the most significant of all the charitable concerns of donors.

¹ Proportion of charitable wealth devoted to religious uses:

	<i>Total</i>			<i>Per</i>
	£	s	d	cent
Bristol	12,130	3	0	13.18
Buckinghamshire	11,860	10	0	13.45
Hampshire	16,074	18	0	18.46
Kent	67,389	10	0	26.77
Lancashire	33,138	3	0	31.94
London	368,389	12	0	19.50
Norfolk	40,939	10	0	23.01
Somerset	31,865	14	0	27.35
Worcestershire	9,443	10	0	17.94
Yorkshire	68,397	5	0	28.07

To one or another kind of direct relief men and women of the age were to give the really immense total of £1,129,351 9s of funds, this amounting to somewhat more than 36 per cent (36.40 per cent) of all the charitable wealth disposed by the age.¹ But this great outpouring was not spread evenly through our period, men during the six decades prior to the Reformation having disposed no more than £70,058 3s for the several forms of poor relief, this being only about 13 per cent of the whole of their charitable giving. In proportionate terms, the intensity of interest in the plight of the poor was almost exactly doubled in the brief interval of the Reformation, donors of those years having provided £61,383 4s for the needs of the poor, or 27.04 per cent of all their benefactions. Significantly, the total amounts designated for this use rose steadily during the Elizabethan age, from £28,203 1s in the first decade of the period to £56,133 10s in the last, the most substantial total of £173,944 4s having been given during this interval of four decades, which amounts to upwards of 39 per cent of all charitable wealth and which represents a proportionate intensity of interest approximately treble that displayed in the later mediaeval decades.

The effects of the economic crisis occurring in the last decade of the century, the consequences of the general discussion of poverty associated with the passage of the Elizabethan poor laws, and, above all, the fruitful results of the enactment of the law defining and protecting charitable trusts were immediately and most dramatically evident in the first decade of the seventeenth century, when the large total of £104,492 19s was provided for the several agencies of poor relief, an amount approximately double that given in the last decade of Elizabeth's reign. Even so, this great achievement was no more than a harbinger of the immense generosity of the remaining decades of the early Stuart period, which reached its climax in the years 1621-1630 when £198,672 7s was provided for the succour of the needy. In these amazing four decades the staggering total of £620,480 was given for various forms of poor relief, this amounting to 43.16 per cent of the whole of the great sum designated for charity during these years and constituting well over half (54.94 per cent) the prodigious amount to be given for such uses in the whole course of our period. There was, inevitably, a falling away in the rate of giving for poor relief during the disrupted and uncertain years of the Puritan Revolution, but it should be observed that the most substantial sum of £203,485 18s provided in this brief interval represented 43.58 per cent of the whole of the charitable wealth of the period and was in fact a considerably larger sum than that given for this purpose in the whole course of the Elizabethan age.

Not only was there a steep and steady rise in the amounts provided

¹ *Vide* Table II and the accompanying curve (Appendix) for the details of the discussion.

for poor relief as our period progressed, but there was an extremely important change in the quality of the sums given. Thus in the first decades of our age, in certain precocious communities like London and Bristol until about 1520, and in more backward, or at least conservative, counties like Somerset and Yorkshire until about 1560, the rather slender sums given for such an important head as outright, or household, relief were in the main disbursed as doles, particularly in connection with funerals, for the immediate use of the recipients. But towards the middle of the century, as we have suggested, this typical, but on the whole wasteful, if not harmful, form of mediaeval almsgiving was superseded by endowments most carefully established and regulated, the incomes to be employed in perpetuity by responsible trustees for the relief of the poor under conditions set down with great care. In all, the wealth given for the purposes comprised under the head of *Outright Relief* was, taking our whole period in view, largely capital in form. The proportions range from about 77 per cent for such counties as Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Somerset, and Yorkshire, to the remarkably high proportion of 90.05 per cent for Kent, while for our whole group of counties this proportion was 83.31 per cent of the whole amount.

The great sums devoted quite directly to the relief of poverty may for convenience be divided into those amounts which have been classified as having been given for outright relief, for general charitable purposes, or very specifically for the aged, and those endowments which were disposed for the founding of almshouses. The first grouping we may in turn regard as amounts disposed to assist the poor in their own houses, as household relief, when it was the intention to prevent the disruption of the family by applying such relief as might be necessary until employment could be found, illness cured, or a moral reformation of the wage-earner effected. Huge sums were disposed for this purpose during the course of our period, the £585,385 6s designated for outright relief alone constituting 18.87 per cent of the whole of the accumulation of charitable wealth and being by a fair margin the largest sum devoted to any single charitable purpose. There should be included as well in this grouping a most substantial total of £121,408 2s of endowments established for general charitable uses, at the discretion of the trustees, which as we have earlier noted were almost wholly devoted to household relief, at least during our period; and there was as well a sum of £5143 designated under rigorous restrictions for the household relief of aged persons of various sorts. In all, therefore, the massive total of £711,936 8s, comprising almost 23 per cent (22.95 per cent) of the whole of the charitable wealth of the realm, was dedicated by many thousands of donors for the household relief of the poor.

It is very evident that the care of the poor became the central social preoccupation of men of our period after about 1550. Funds devoted to

this great purpose flowed into several channels, but, as we have just suggested, by far the largest amounts were dedicated to uses which we may fairly describe as household relief. These donors were principally intent on establishing endowments in the parishes, the income of which would be employed by trustees, who most typically were parish officials in various combinations, for the support at a subsistence level of needy and worthy poor, legally resident in the parish. Though these benefactions were evoked by the highest motives of generosity and compassion, they were not sentimental and they normally established stipends which could hardly have lent full support to a family even in a rural community. To put it bluntly, these charitable payments were designed to do no more than keep a family from starvation and really abject want, the intention being to supply every persuasion to the wage-earner to find full, or at the very least, supplementary employment. As we shall see, the really impotent and the derelict were carefully separated from the able-bodied poor, the unemployed, and were provided either with permanent pensions or, ideally, permanent sanctuary in almshouses.

As we have said, by no means the whole amount given for household relief was vested in the form of endowments, but after 1550 a very large proportion indeed was so disposed. In all, about 86 per cent of the whole of the wealth given for these purposes which we have grouped under the general head of household relief was settled as capital, with the consequence that the enormous sum of £608,142 9s was prudently and thoughtfully vested by donors in trusts which would lend care for the poor in perpetuity. This means, of course, that a very large annual income of perhaps £30,407 was by the close of our period available in the hundreds of parishes of which our ten counties were comprised for the relief of a poverty which the society had come to accept as its responsibility. This, as we have seen, was a far larger amount than was in any year assessed on these communities under the existing and wholly competent legislation, and it may well be that this great achievement in social responsibility was in part at least the consequence of the resolution of responsible men to assume this enormous load as an act of charity rather than as a requirement of law. In our more detailed studies of the several counties, we shall have occasion to observe that donors in most cases established the stipend, the rate of distribution, to needy families, in average amounts ranging from about £2 p.a. for the full support of a destitute family in such counties as Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, and Yorkshire, to £2 15s p.a. in London or £2 16s p.a. in Worcestershire. In all, it is our reckoning that these endowments for household relief lent full support, according to the standards of subsistence for the age, to nearly 13,000 families in these ten counties alone. It is quite futile to attempt any accurate estimate of the number of human beings thus protected from disaster, if not from starvation,

because poverty was so frequently an aspect of old age in the early modern world, but surely it would be most conservative to assume that the family unit in average terms included at least 3·5 persons, which would in turn suggest that upwards of 45,000 men, women, and children (for poverty was also not uncommonly a consequence of a very high birth-rate) were at all times sustained by these great endowments. In other words, again in the somewhat deceptive terms of averages, something over four families were being supported in each of the 3033 parishes comprehended within the area with which we are concerned. Our evidence would in fact suggest that if these capital funds had been well and evenly distributed over the region under study, they would have been very nearly sufficient for the minimum purposes for which they had been established. Unfortunately, as our discussion of the counties will suggest, these great endowments tended to be concentrated in areas of ever-increasing opportunity, with the result that something like a third of all the parishes with which we are concerned were ill favoured indeed with these helpful and healing moneys. It was precisely here that private charity failed, here that real suffering could occur, and here that the ministrations required by law had in periods of economic crisis to be carried forward. But all the frailties and shortcomings notwithstanding, this is a record of magnificent achievement, of a sensitive assumption of a vast burden of responsibility by an age, and by classes, which had come to care deeply about the material fate of their fellow men.

The fruitful concern which donors of our age displayed for the relief of the worthy poor in their households was accompanied by a steadily mounting attempt to provide for the care of the hopelessly indigent, the permanent casualties of the society, in carefully constituted almshouse foundations. We shall want to consider this remarkable social achievement in some detail, since it not only added most impressive institutional strength to the efforts of individual men of this period to curb and control the evil forces of poverty in their society, but in a true sense may be said to delineate the whole structure of their conception of charity. In the course of time the term 'almshouse' has acquired a socially unpleasant connotation, with the result that we tend to forget that it is a noble word and that the men who founded the innumerable almshouses of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were moved by the highest instincts of piety and social concern.

There remained to men of the early modern world a still valuable, though sadly attenuated, mediaeval inheritance in numerous hospitals, a fraction of which had from the time of their foundation assumed the responsibilities which the sixteenth century came to associate with almshouses. Mediaeval hospitals performed a variety of functions, some having been founded for the care of the sick and infirm, others for the aged, for the insane, the lepers, the orphans, and still others for the

care of the hopelessly poor and impotent. A most valuable study has listed 731 of these foundations made prior to 1547, of which it would appear that something like 640 were established before the beginning of our period.¹ It is most interesting to note that of the whole number, fully 73 per cent. were founded prior to 1350. The often inadequate local evidence in our counties at least would suggest that approximately half of the mediaeval foundations at some time in their history fulfilled those functions which the sixteenth century required of almshouses. Not only was the great movement of foundation at an end by 1350, but grave abuses and neglect had set in which an act of Parliament sought unsuccessfully to avert in 1414, the preamble stating that there were 'many hospitals . . . now for the most part decayed, and the goods and profits of the same, by divers persons, spiritual and temporal, withdrawn and spent to the use of others, whereby many men and women have died in great misery for default of aid, livelihood, and succour'. As our authority suggests, these abuses and neglects were manifold. Trustees frequently regarded these hospitals as private hostels; room and lodging covenants were frequently given or sold; and many of those under monastic control simply had their revenues expropriated. The fabric of these institutions was frequently permitted to fall into ruin, and, most serious of all, there were diversions of trust income to ecclesiastical or private uses on a very wide and a wholly shocking scale.²

It should be emphasized as well that a large proportion of these mediaeval foundations were at no time endowed, with the inevitable consequence that they disappeared at the first touch of neglect or abuse. Most of the remainder were never substantially endowed by the founders or later mediaeval philanthropists, and these too were ill-prepared to meet substantial neglect or maladministration. The unhappy result was that most of these great works of early mediaeval piety had either disappeared long before or were derelict when a new era opened in about 1480. Though we have no confidence that our data will hold for all of England, some further analysis of the facts as they do apply to our region may be of value. There appear to have been something like 262 hospitals founded in these ten counties prior to 1480, of which we are fairly confident 140 to 150 had at some time fulfilled the functions of almshouses. In 1480 not more than seventy-four of these institutions remained,³ and of this number nearly half were either derelict or were

¹ Clay, R. M., *The mediaeval hospitals of England* (L., 1909), Appendix B.

² *Ibid.*, 212-225.

³ The number of these almshouses was by counties:

Bristol	5	London	8	
Buckinghamshire	4	Norfolk	10	
Hampshire	4	Somerset	6	
Kent	12	Worcestershire	2	
Lancashire	0	Yorkshire	23	Total: 74

so badly managed that almost the whole of their usually scanty income was being diverted or employed for essentially administrative (or bureaucratic) purposes.

These, then, were the resources with which our period began, resources which had been materially strengthened even before the advent of the Reformation. The Reformation statute granting the hospitals to the Crown intended that 'the premisses [shall be] used and exercised to more godly and vertuous uses', that they should be reconstituted and not destroyed. In our counties at least this injunction was faithfully followed save in those rather rare instances where by long fact and tradition the whole of the income had been improperly diverted to monastic uses or for the support of chantries. In other words, in so far as these institutions performed the function of almshouses they were preserved and strengthened when they were vested in secular control, usually in the municipal authorities who had intervened to save them.¹ Further, as we shall note in detail in our study of the counties, almost all of these earlier foundations, having been reconstituted, and often re-founded, were greatly strengthened in their endowments and in their good works within a generation after the Reformation. Among the many myths still clustering around the English Reformation, not the least is the one persuading us that the mediaeval hospitals were destroyed.

During the course of our period the enormous sum of £417,415 is was vested by benefactors in almshouse foundations in the regions with which we are concerned. Since save for trifling sums this great total was in the form of capital gifts,² these new foundations of the early modern era were securely established, lending permanent and ever-increasing aid as the society sought to come to effective grips with the age-old problem of poverty. As the curve presented below will suggest,³ the support lent to almshouse foundations gathered formidable momentum after 1540 as responsible men sought to link these establishments with the great endowments which they were simultaneously creating for the care of poor men in their own households. Even in the decades prior to the Reformation, steady and by no means insignificant support was lent to this worthy cause, with a notable sum having been vested for this purpose in the years 1501-1510. But new and powerful impetus was supplied to this development during the short interval of the Reformation, when the £22,432 18s so disposed fell but little short of the amount given in the six preceding decades. After a relatively inaus-

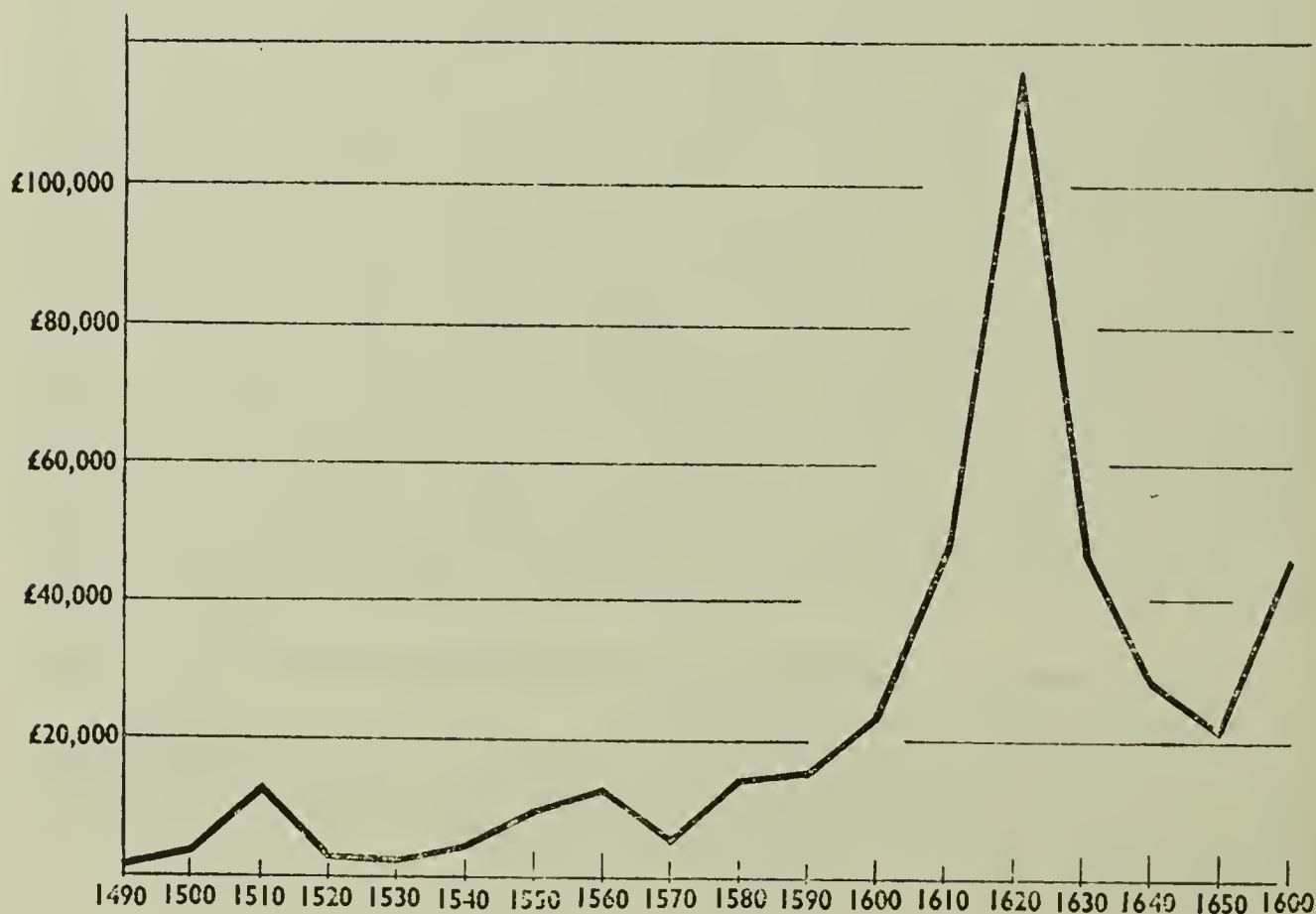
¹ This also seems to be the conclusion of Leonard (*English poor relief*, 208-209) and of Clay (*Mediaeval hospitals*, 227-243).

² The proportion of capital gifts for the support of almshouses ranges from 96.92 per cent in Hampshire to 99.91 per cent in Worcestershire. For the whole group of counties 99.30 per cent was in capital form.

³ See p. 260.

picious beginning in the first of the Elizabethan decades, gifts for the founding of almshouses began to mount steadily and most impressively, with the result that for the whole interval of four decades the substantial total of £58,768 12s has been recorded. Great and fruitful as this capital was, it was but an earnest of the immense outpouring of wealth for this purpose during the first three decades of the seventeenth century. In the years 1601-1610, £48,157 15s was vested for this use, while in the next decade the really incredible total of £116,225 12s was given, principally by London donors, for the foundation of new almshouses or the strengthening of older endowments. In this one decade, in point of fact, somewhat more was provided for this charitable cause than in the whole of the long period extending from 1480 to the close of the sixteenth century. For reasons not wholly clear, the momentum of giving for almshouses slackened significantly and steadily for three successive decades after 1620, to rise again most abruptly in the final decade of the era of the Puritan Revolution. Among the explanations, which will be considered in greater detail in our county analyses, are the widespread persuasion that quite enough foundations had been made to lend succour to the really hopelessly indigent, the general pessimism which characterized the decade immediately preceding the outbreak of the Civil War, the dislocations of the decade 1641-1650, and the mounting interest in the prevention of poverty as contrasted with its relief. Be this as it may, surely this is an annal of a magnificent and a noble achievement wrought by private men who had become

GIFTS FOR ALMSHOUSE FOUNDATIONS



increasingly sensitive to human suffering. The capital provided for almshouse foundations in the course of our period amounted to 13.45 per cent of the whole of the charitable wealth afforded by the age, being exceeded among the several charitable heads only by the benefactions made for outright relief (18.87 per cent) and by the great sums dedicated to the founding of schools (14.47 per cent).

There were, of course, considerable differences in the intensity of interest in almshouse foundations among the several counties.¹ Thus in Lancashire only £2122 4s was provided for almshouse foundations, this being a meagre 2.04 per cent of the whole of its charitable resources, a disinterest presumably accounted for principally by the persistent, one can almost say fanatical, devotion of its donors to the needs of education and of the reformed faith. In Hampshire, too, a remarkably low proportion (7.55 per cent) of all benefactions was dedicated to this use, largely because it was a rural county in which there was a particularly marked concern with the outright relief of the poor, to which it lent 32.27 per cent of all its charitable funds, a substantially higher fraction than that observed in any other county in England. For the rest, the proportions range within the more normally narrow limits of the 10.20 per cent to be found in Norfolk to the 25.24 per cent of all charitable wealth devoted to the founding and endowing of almshouses in Somerset.

This was indeed a momentous and a memorable achievement which charitable men had wrought with their own substance in England. We have observed that as our period began there were seventy-four surviving almshouses in the great region under study, of which almost half were in terms of performance of function derelict. In the course of our period 309 endowed foundations were made in our ten counties by private benefactors, including those mediaeval foundations which were reorganized and then adequately endowed. Moreover, donors resident in our counties had founded and endowed seventy-eight almshouses in other parts of England, while they had established as well seventy-one unendowed institutions within our group of counties. In all, then,

¹ The proportion of all charitable wealth vested in almshouse foundations in the several counties was:

	<i>Total</i>			<i>Per</i>
	£	s	d	cent
Bristol	16,677	13	0	18.12
Buckinghamshire	16,287	6	0	18.48
Hampshire	6,574	6	0	7.55
Kent	44,614	3	0	17.72
Lancashire	2,122	4	0	2.04
London	237,636	11	0	12.58
Norfolk	18,146	7	0	10.20
Somerset	29,413	13	0	25.24
Worcestershire	7,106	1	0	13.50
Yorkshire	38,836	17	0	15.94

these benefactors had permanently endowed 387 almshouses, while the seventy-one foundations without stocks, though usually ephemeral in the long range, were at least to serve the era under discussion with their fruitful and kindly works.¹

There were wide and interesting differences in the views of founders with respect to the amount required to support an almsman with all the necessities of life, and very frequently indeed with certain of the amenities, one is happy to say, ranging from the incredibly low average of £1 16s p.a. for Lancashire to the certainly comfortable £4 8s 7d p.a. for Buckinghamshire. London's donors, it may be observed, in average terms regarded £4 4s p.a. as a reasonable stipend for its own almspeople, while by their deeds of gift establishing an average of £3 10s 1d p.a. in the numerous almshouses founded by them in other counties. The wills and the deeds of gift for these many foundations stipulated that a total of 6389 almspeople were to enjoy full support in these establishments, a number certainly exceeded by the close of our period, as the founders' constitutions tended inevitably to be enlarged. This means, of course, that in not too meaningful average terms, endowments and institutions had been provided which secured in perpetuity the succour of rather more than two almspeople in every parish in the counties with which we are dealing. Even more impressively, it means, when we consider this immense achievement in relation to the provision made for household relief, that by the close of our period upwards of 51,000 unfortunate

¹ Analysis of almshouse foundations:

County	<i>Number of certainly surviving mediaeval founda- tions, en- dowed and un- endowed</i>	<i>Number of endowed founda- tions, 1480-1660</i>	<i>Number endowed elsewhere by donors of the ten counties</i>	<i>Unen- dowed foun- dations</i>	<i>Alms- people to be supported</i>	<i>Average stipend pre- scribed</i>		
						£	s	d
Bristol	5	9		1	160	4	5	0
Buckinghamshire	4	22		1	140	4	8	7
Hampshire	4	15			105	3	9	7
Kent	12	48		6 (?)	687	4	0	0
Lancashire	0	6	2	2	23	1	16	0
London	8	67		11	1600	4	4	0
London—for other counties			72		1100	3	10	1
Norfolk	10	35	4	6 (?)	1310	2	12	0
Somerset	6	35		11	343	3	10	9
Worcestershire	2	12		4 (?)	108	3	0	8
Yorkshire	23	60		29	813	2	7	9
Totals	74	309	78	71 (?)	6389			

beings were at all times being relieved in their homes or wholly supported by the great almshouse endowments vested by this most generous age. These donors, to quote one of them, had in truth 'wrought mightily the good works of the Lord'.

2. *Social rehabilitation*

Very closely connected with these massive outlays for poor relief were other large benefactions whose primary purpose, however, was the rehabilitation of the poor rather than their relief. These were in the main quite novel, and experimental, undertakings of men who were persuaded that poverty could never be mastered unless an attack should be made on its roots. Their gifts, then, were hopeful, were made by men prepared to take long and speculative risks to test their conviction that degrading poverty could be prevented if the ambit of opportunity were greatly enlarged, especially for the children of the poor. These donors, much of whose capital was inevitably wasted, were in fact precocious in their understanding of the true nature of the problem of poverty in the industrial society and they were opening up lines of experimentation which in the course of the next three centuries were to have most fruitful development. In the main, experimental ventures of this sort, quite untried and breaking sharply with the mediaeval conception of alms, were favoured by men accustomed to risk-taking on a large scale. It is therefore not surprising that the bulk of this capital was provided by merchant donors, though it does none the less seem quite extraordinary that almost 82 per cent of the whole amount should have been disposed by London and Bristol donors.

In the whole course of our period the substantial total of £319,446 12s was given for the various experiments in the social rehabilitation of the poor, this amounting to slightly more than a tenth (10·30 per cent) of the whole of charitable wealth. Only slight interest was displayed in such ventures in the decades prior to the Reformation, the £10,706 18s so provided amounting to only about 2 per cent (2·04 per cent) of the charities of the era, while of this total, it may be observed, almost exactly half was for the somewhat old-fashioned and sentimental purpose of marriage subsidies for poor but respectable young women.¹ But in the hopeful and boldly experimental period of the Edwardian Reformation there was an immense upsurge of interest in all sorts of measures designed to secure greater protection and opportunity for the poor, with the result that £68,589 17s was given for such uses in this short interval of two decades. During these years, in fact, somewhat more than 30 per cent of all charitable funds were designated for these uses. There was a steep falling away in this prodigious giving during the first

¹ *Vide* Table III and the accompanying curve (Appendix) for the particulars on which this general discussion is based.

decade of the Elizabethan age, when £17,283 4s was earmarked for these undertakings in social betterment, but a glance at the curve suggests that there was thereafter a steadily mounting interest in these uses, reaching a new and a somewhat more fruitful climax in the last decade before the outbreak of the Civil War, when £40,527 11s was provided. In the course of the four decades comprising the early Stuart period the very large total of £119,340 15s was given, almost wholly by London and Bristol merchants, for various experiments, it being notable that, marriage subsidies aside, each of the heads under which we have gathered these charities received most substantial support. None the less, this large sum must be set against the immense charitable outpouring of this remarkable period, it having comprised actually no more than 8.30 per cent of the whole amount, a sharply lower proportion than that (14.83 per cent) observed in the Elizabethan era. The total of benefactions for the several types of experiments dedicated to social rehabilitation fell away only slightly during the revolutionary era, the £54,707 7s given for these uses in this short interval amounting to 11.72 per cent of the whole sum given for all charitable uses. In fact, it may be said that these bold and often fruitful undertakings, ventures as it were with risk capital dedicated to worthy social ends, appealed greatly to merchants and most particularly to merchants of staunch Puritan persuasion.

Since the dominant interest in the various schemes for social rehabilitation was almost uniquely a burgher phenomenon, we shall reserve full discussion of this most significant social development to our comment on the huge investment which London made in these undertakings.¹ We shall now, accordingly, content ourselves with relatively brief and sparse statistical notes on the six heads under which a bewildering variety of bold and vigorous schemes has been grouped.

There was throughout our period a steadily growing concern with the plight of prisoners, and more particularly prisoners for debt. It should be recalled that prior to the Elizabethan period there were few prisons, the principal places of detention being the common gaols, of which there were perhaps as many as two hundred operated by diverse municipal or county authorities. They were mainly operated for profit, the gaoler gaining his livelihood from fees exacted for all services and for food beyond the 'county bread' which an Elizabethan statute at least required for the care of convicted felons.² Conditions in local prisons, as well as in the great London prisons which were reconstituted by Elizabeth, were barbarous beyond description, suffering, starvation, filth, and disease being chronic in all of them.³ These conditions began

¹ In the second volume of this study.

² 14 *Eliz.*, c. 5.

³ This situation will be discussed in some detail in the second volume of this study.

in about 1560 to trouble the conscience of many men, most particularly because of the hopeless situation of hundreds of men imprisoned for debt, who if they could procure no help from family or friends were in a truly helpless condition. Merchants and tradesmen who were accustomed to speculative risks, and who were themselves from time to time in danger from their creditors, viewed this social need with a keen interest, seeking by their endowments to provide means by which respectable men imprisoned for small debts could be released and rehabilitated.

During the whole of our period the considerable sum of £38,967 13s was disposed for the relief of prisoners, this amounting to 1.26 per cent of the total of England's charitable wealth. It is most interesting to note that of this total the merchants of London and Bristol contributed the incredibly large proportion of 91 per cent (91.39 per cent), nearly the whole of which was in capital sums. Concern for the sufferings of prisoners was by no means wholly lacking even in the late mediaeval decades, £2099 6s having been given for this use prior to 1540, in the main for outright distributions to needy prisoners of all sorts. The concern of donors during the Reformation decades was also relatively slight, no more than £1209 15s having been contributed and again largely as outright largess. But a greatly heightened interest in the fate of prisoners for debt set in quite precisely at 1560, gathering momentum with every decade in the course of the next two generations. During the Elizabethan age the substantial total of £9222 9s, almost all being endowment, was vested for the relief and rehabilitation of prisoners, while in the course of the early Stuart era really large totals are noted in each decade, with a capital accumulation for the four decades of £19,846 17s for this wholly worthy purpose. There was widespread and vociferous interest in prison reform and in the amendment of the law relating to imprisonment for debt throughout the revolutionary years,¹ which was doubtless reflected in the large total of £5149 17s given by donors in the decade of the Civil War and in the very modest sum of £1439 9s provided in the decade of the Protectorate, when substantial reforms were carried through.

In all, upwards of £28,000 of the amount given by benefactors of our period for the relief of prisoners was in the form of endowments, thereby providing a superbly charitable income principally employed to secure the return of small debtors to their families and to useful and self-sustaining lives. Since the terms of the deeds of gifts vary in a most bewildering fashion, even when they are precise at all, it is not possible to suggest quantitatively the measure of the relief and the social good which flowed from an annual income of somewhat more than

¹ Niehaus, C. R., *The issue of law reform in the Puritan Revolution* (Harvard University, unpublished doctoral thesis, 1957), 100-105, 195-196, 222-223.

£1400 available to trustees for these uses. In general, donors instructed their trustees to use income for the redemption of prisoners for debts and charges in the range of from £2 to £5, and so one would suppose that at the very least as many as three to five hundred persons each year regained their franchise as respectable artisans and lesser tradesmen as a consequence of the sensitive response of many donors to one of the shocking ills of the age.

Much larger capital amounts (77·54 per cent) were vested, again principally by urban donors, for the creation of loan funds wherewith respectable poor men might on sufficient surety borrow at no, or at a nominal, interest rate, or, more commonly, from which young men who had completed their apprenticeships and who possessed no resources of their own, might secure the capital required as they began their callings as tradesmen, artisans, or merchants. During the years under study the massive total of £63,242 11s was provided by benefactors as capital for this worthy purpose. This large accumulation of risk capital was principally made for the benefit of worthy young men of London, £43,942 1s having been so designated. But it is most significant that considerable sums were likewise gathered in all save one of our counties, ranging from the £290 available in Hampshire to the £6833 1s which Norfolk afforded, principally, it might be noted, as a consequence of the generosity of Norwich merchants.¹

These loan funds, all being capital, were an invention of our age, being increasingly favoured as instrumentalities of social rehabilitation as benefactors observed the immense social good, and the very few defaults, resulting as such capital was accumulated. We have noted no such endowment in the first decade of our period, but a beginning was made in the next, and relatively modest amounts were provided in the remaining decades of the period prior to the Reformation, with the result that a total of £2189 2s of this capital was available and at work by 1540. Substantially more was dedicated to this use during the two decades of the Reformation, while in the first years of the Elizabethan era the

¹ The amounts available for loans in the several counties, with the proportion as it relates to the total of charitable funds:

	<i>Loan capital</i>			<i>Per cent of total charities</i>
	£	s	d	
Bristol	5,118	0	0	5·56
Buckinghamshire	—	—	—	—
Hampshire	290	0	0	0·33
Kent	894	15	0	0·36
Lancashire	666	0	0	0·64
London	43,942	1	0	2·33
Norfolk	6,833	1	0	3·84
Somerset	877	0	0	0·75
Worcestershire	1,820	0	0	3·46
Yorkshire	2,801	14	0	1·15

impressive total of £10,967 was vested for the purpose. Very large amounts were in fact given in each of the Elizabethan decades, with the result that the total of £24,737 8s accumulated during these years slightly exceeded the amount to be provided in the early Stuart interval. The intense interest in this agency of social rehabilitation was well maintained during the revolutionary era, £9803 4s more of capital having been made available as an addition to the now large stock of loan moneys.

It should be emphasized that this substantial capital stock of £63,242 11s, representing as it did 2.04 per cent of the whole of charitable funds, was available under usually carefully ordered, but always generous, provisions, as capital in needed amounts for young men with no resources of their own who were of good character and who had by apprenticeship gained the requisite skills for the pursuit of their calling. It should be noted as well that this capital had been given wholly for this purpose, under the deeds of gift bearing either no interest for the period of the loan or at the most an uneconomic interest charge. These funds were established with a quite bewildering variety of conditions, but it may at least be said that donors seem generally to have agreed that a young man beginning his trading as a merchant in London required a capital stock of about £70, and a little more than £40 in the provincial cities, while something like £30 was thought to be the requirement for a young tradesman about to open his doors. Disregarding the amounts left specifically as emergency loans for the true poor, therefore, we may with some certainty assume that by the close of our period capital was freely available wherewith at the very least 800 to 1000 aspiring young men could be and were launched on trading careers. Our own reading of literally hundreds of wills in which merchants testify to the great good accomplished by these loan funds, as well as the clear evidence that very little of this capital was lost, attest the enormous social and economic value of this instrumentality of social rehabilitation. Nor was this all that had been made available for this general purpose. We have included under the heading of *The Poor* upwards of £29,000 of additional capital which the donors specified was to be lent to worthy but needy tradesmen on which, however, an economic interest rate was to be levied for distribution as poor relief. Great and viable resources had been established in an age of limited credit, no banking facilities, and harsh competitive trade for the benefit of young men who thereby escaped from the grip of poverty and who became not only men of responsible substance but almost invariably generous charitable donors in their own turn.¹

Closely related in purpose and sentiment to the loan funds were the apprenticeship endowments established principally in the second half of

¹ These loan funds will be discussed much more fully in Volume II, since they were so classically a London invention.

our period. The rapid accumulation of these stocks after about 1590 was organically linked, it seems evident, with the development of social thinking and legislation on the whole matter. The system of apprenticeships had remained a voluntary guild instrumentality until by statute law in 1562 a period of seven years of service was established as the minimum for learning any craft or trade. The legislation was inspired in part by a resolution to raise the standards of industrial and commercial production and in part to bring still more force to bear in the general attack being made on the problem of poverty.¹ It was thought, too, that vagrancy might thereby be to a degree prevented, since justices of the peace were fully empowered to bind any unemployed or resourceless minor to any person qualified by law to accept an apprentice in trade or in husbandry, while in 1601 these local officials were vested with authority to bind at their own discretion the children of paupers, vagrants, or families overburdened with children. The legislation provided no really adequate machinery for administration, though in the towns and cities the existing companies undertook a fairly tight and efficient enforcement. In the rural areas enforcement was placed in the already tired hands of the justices of the peace, who, our evidence would most strongly suggest, did very little in applying the law until the zealous policy of the Privy Council prodded them into a reluctant activity in the reign of Charles I. The great weakness of the system as so rigorously prescribed by law lay in the unskilled trades and crafts where there were few traditions, low standards of workmanship, and no corporate bodies competent either to administer the training or to protect apprenticed children from exploitation masquerading in the guise of training.

In total, the benefactors of our counties provided the relatively modest sum of £38,729 6s for the support of apprenticeship schemes, this being 1.25 per cent of the whole of the charitable resources of our period, and approximately the amount, it may be observed, given for the amelioration of the lot of prisoners. Some small proportion of this sum was given outright for the binding of individual boys or girls, but a very large proportion indeed (98.18 per cent) was vested in the form of endowments. These endowments were of two kinds. By far the larger sum, amounting to more than three-fourths of the whole, was disposed to secure the binding of poor boys in recognized and named companies under the traditional requirements of these societies, while the lesser sum was vested, usually in parishes, simply to secure the binding of boys and girls to responsible persons who would provide them with some measure of training in domestic, craft, or agricultural skills. Though it is not possible to establish exact data, because of alternative choices frequently permitted by donors to their trustees, we can say that considerably more than half of the whole amount dedicated to

² Dunlop, O. J., *English apprenticeship* (L., 1912), 60-65.

apprenticeships was so disposed that likely boys from all parts of the realm might be admitted and sustained during the period of their apprenticeship in the various London companies, a training which, very properly, was highly regarded indeed and which opened wide the doors of opportunity for able and ambitious youths.

As a glance at the relevant table¹ will suggest, there was almost no interest displayed by donors in apprenticeship endowments prior to 1560 and only modest interest prior to 1590. The total of funds in hand for this use in the earlier years amounted to no more than £528 14s. But the last decade of the Elizabethan era witnessed a very sharp, a dramatic, rise in the intensity of concern with this mechanism of social rehabilitation, the substantial capital of £2683 being so disposed in these years. Somewhat lesser contributions were made during the first two decades of the early Stuart period, while enthusiasm for this charitable use mounted markedly during the years just prior to the Civil War (1621–1640), when a total of almost £12,000 of these funds was vested. Interest in these endowments reached its climax during the unsettled period of the Puritan Revolution when, despite most adverse political and economic conditions, the substantial total of £19,907 6s was disposed for a great many apprenticeship endowments, amounting to rather more than half of the whole capital provided for this use during our entire period. In part, of course, this does exhibit the Puritan persuasion that self-help was more salutary than outright relief of the poor, but the evidence of the many wills in which these sums were disposed makes it clear that these merchants were more often moved by the striking proof of the immensely useful work carried forward by such endowments over the period of their own lifetimes.

It is remarkable as we review the data more closely that over our period as a whole London donors remained relatively indifferent to these apprenticeship plans.² It is true that the £19,587 18s vested by

¹ *Vide* Table III (Appendix).

² The amounts and proportions given for apprenticeship endowments in the several counties are:

	<i>Total</i>			<i>Per</i>
	£	s	d	cent
Bristol	1,880	0	0	2.04
Buckinghamshire	855	0	0	0.97
Hampshire	1,733	6	0	1.99
Kent	3,580	0	0	1.42
Lancashire	854	6	0	0.82
London	19,587	18	0	1.04
Norfolk	4,984	0	0	2.80
Somerset	509	3	0	0.44
Worcestershire	666	10	0	1.27
Yorkshire	4,079	3	0	1.67
	38,729	6	0	1.25

London donors for this use amounted to slightly more than half the total, but in proportionate terms London gave considerably less than did donors in numerous rural counties. Much of London's generosity is included in the totals of other counties, but it remains true that as merchant benefactors looked back on their own careers, and most of them had come up from the provinces, they tended to assess as socially more valuable such charitable outlays as loan funds or education. This somewhat sceptical attitude prevailed among the group who were to exercise a dominant role in fashioning the structure of social institutions in England until, as we have suggested, the very close of our period when, having been persuaded of the good works done by these endowments, London began to vest large amounts for this worthy cause.

Though there are many variables, it is possible to say that in average terms a London benefactor took the view that about £4 15s was a sufficient stipend to secure the binding of an apprentice, while in the provinces £3 10s was regarded as a reasonable amount. In all, then, by the close of our period the income available from apprenticeship endowments was probably sufficient to secure training for a constant flow of something like 475 youths a year, drawn from a social and economic background in which there was no hope and transposed to an environment in which not only a livelihood in an honest calling but very great rewards indeed were opened up to aspiring youths. A most useful and demonstrably successful mechanism of social rehabilitation had been well advanced by the close of our period.

London donors likewise remained sceptical, in this case throughout our period, of the many schemes attempted in England, under the hortatory prodding of law and sermons, to provide work for the poor either in formally constituted workhouses or on stocks of goods distributed to cottage labourers. The first large-scale undertaking of this sort is to be observed at Bridewell, organized in London in the mid-sixteenth century, for the dual purpose of offering remunerative employment and subjecting sturdy vagabonds to the curative discipline of honest labour.¹ Houses of correction were enjoined by the statute of 1576, to be set up on the model of Bridewell, and it has been estimated that as many as two hundred were so founded, usually for short terms and at public charge.² For some little time there appeared to be a measure of hope in these institutions, but they gradually lost their essentially charitable purpose and well before the close of our period had become little more than places of detention and enforced labour for vagabonds and other rootless persons.

¹ The history of this important institution will be fully dealt with in the second volume of this study.

² Webb, Sidney and Beatrice, *English prisons under local government* (L., 1922), 12-13.

Consequently, a differentiation in purpose so far as charitable funds were concerned became clearly established early in the seventeenth century under which private donors lent their support to more carefully designed and disciplined workhouses, where the reputable unemployed could find gainful employment at simple but useful tasks, or gave money to schemes for carrying out such work in the homes of the poor. Few of these plans succeeded, or remained solvent, for more than a few years. The mercantile élite were persistently and correctly sceptical since they understood, as projectors and the Privy Council did not, that greater skill and training were required for such operations than could possibly be provided if they were to be self-supporting and, as witness a particularly persuasive example financed in Reading by London generosity,¹ they would bankrupt competitive private undertakings if they were in fact well organized. These practical difficulties and objections are well set out in a report made to an insistent Privy Council by the Deputy Lieutenants of Hertfordshire in 1620 on the effort made to establish 'the trade of the new drapery' in that depressed area. They had found it impossible to raise funds from the substantial men of the community in order to launch the undertaking, because of discouragement at the failure of a similar scheme in Hatfield not many years before where '£100 a year has been spent, yet few are instructed in the trade and the burdens of the poor there much increased'. In eight towns they had compelled contributions and a trial was made with the aid of a projector who offered assurances that the necessary skills could be learned in two or three weeks. The skills were in fact not mastered in twenty weeks, the poor could not earn enough for their own subsistence, and the whole community regarded this valiant effort as a failure.²

This brief discussion of an exceedingly complex subject, more fully dealt with in the counties, may at least have set out the principal reasons why workhouses and stocks for the poor failed to elicit substantial charitable support. In the whole course of our period £29,869 15s was vested for such uses, this amounting to no more than 0.96 per cent of the whole of English charitable wealth. Nothing at all was provided for this purpose in the decades prior to the Reformation, while it was 1570 before as much as £591 13s of capital had been accumulated. An earnest trial was made of what so evidently appealed in a most beguiling fashion to unpractical men in the decade 1581–1590, when the substantial sum of £3649 13s was disposed for these purposes. The results, as we have seen, were most discouraging, with the consequence that the total of such benefactions ranged in decade terms between the modest sums of £866 13s and £2144 for the next generation. The Privy Council brought intensive pressure to bear for another trial in the period

¹ This instance will be dealt with fully in the second volume of this study.

² *S.P. Dom.*, 1620, CXV, 13.

of Archbishop Laud's dominance, and the impressive total of £8455 10s was disposed for these uses in the last decade before the outbreak of the Civil War. The results, it may categorically be said, were unimpressive, but none the less the whole conception of self-help for industrious though unemployed men was to make a strong appeal to the Puritan mind and to the innumerable projectors who wrote during the period of its dominance. Consequently, another large charitable investment was made in these schemes during the decade of the Civil War, when £6730 9s was given for their support, with, however, a most precipitous decline of interest in the final decade when the £1287 so disposed reflects the ultimate discouragement of men with this appealing but wholly impractical form of social rehabilitation.

If London wealth remained stubbornly sceptical of the social benefits to be derived from workhouse schemes, it had no doubts whatever regarding the humane necessity of providing adequately, indeed generously, for the care of the sick. The mediaeval hospitals had offered some measure of relief for the helplessly ill, the craft guilds rather more, but with the opening of the sixteenth century there was practically no organized system of succour available for the treatment of illness, which was of course the handmaiden of poverty.¹ This shocking situation was eloquently denounced by the great Edwardian preachers and the civic conscience of London was aroused to carry through the organization and endowment of the immensely effective royal hospitals, which were not only to save the rapidly growing city from almost predictable social disaster but to establish models which the rest of England, and, for that matter, the western world was to follow.

In the course of our period the enormous total of £135,346 12s was provided for the support of hospitals or for the care of the sick in pest-houses or in their own homes. This great sum accounts for 4.36 per cent of all the charitable wealth accumulated in England. Though no county was wholly barren of such benefactions, it remains true that the warm and the sustained interest of London's donors in this charitable use accounts for the incredibly high proportion of 96.69 per cent of the whole sum.² Accordingly, we shall reserve detailed treatment of this extraordinarily interesting and important achievement of the age to our discussion in a later volume of London's charitable contribution, contenting ourselves here with a few generalized observations.

The all too evident needs of the sick and the ruinous connection of illness with poverty were by no means ignored in the long interval prior to the Edwardian Reformation, but men's instincts to be helpful were chilled and frustrated by the want of institutional agencies through

¹ Levy, Hermann, 'Economic history of sickness', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, XIII (1943), 42-57, and XIV (1944), 135-160.

² See table on next page.

which their benefactions could be rendered socially useful. Thus in the first seven decades of our period the not insubstantial total of £1608 11s was provided, principally in London, for direct assistance to the sick in their own households, for pesthouses, or as stipends for physicians who would undertake the care of the deserving sick in specified parishes. The towering climax came in the following decade, 1551–1560, when the great London hospitals were founded, the enormous total of £61,428 19s having been given for their support and initial endowment. Though this great achievement dominates our whole period, it should be pointed out that the substantial sum of £4064 19s, almost the whole of which was endowment, was provided for the needs of the sick in the first Elizabethan decade, and that with the exception of one decade, the amounts disposed for the humane care of sick men rose steadily from interval to interval to reach a secondary peak of generosity in the decade just prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, when the substantial total of £12,511 12s was given, principally again by London generosity.¹

The amount and the proportion designated for hospitals and other care for the sick was as follows for the several counties:

	<i>Total</i>			<i>Per</i>
	£	s	d	cent
Bristol	5	0	0	0.005
Buckinghamshire	320	0	0	0.36
Hampshire	171	10	0	0.20
Kent	1,994	1	0	0.79
Lancashire	30	0	0	0.03
London	130,872	17	0	6.93
Norfolk	740	4	0	0.42
Somerset	716	13	0	0.61
Worcestershire	100	0	0	0.19
Yorkshire	396	7	0	0.16
	<hr/>			<hr/>
	135,346	12	0	4.36

¹ GIFTS FOR HOSPITALS AND CARE OF THE SICK



From 1560 onwards, the tradition was well established that every London merchant of substance left at least something to one or more of the London hospitals. While there were relatively few massive gifts, the accumulation of these bequests of from £10 to £100 was to bring most impressive and well-sustained resources to bear on the formidable task of providing medical care and sanctuary for the poor and securing their social as well as their economic rehabilitation once their cure had been gained.

Finally, in discussing the various agencies of social rehabilitation with which this confident and generous age experimented, we should comment at least briefly on what is statistically the least important. These were the various arrangements under which marriage subsidies were provided for poor but deserving young women, and rather rarely young men, who could bring no portion to the new household which they and the society wished to create. In total, only £13,290 15s was given for this interesting, if sentimental, use which in almost every particular refuses to conform to any sensible statistical pattern. This, perhaps, is what makes this relatively unimportant charitable head worth some comment. For one thing, these amounts were in four counties wholly given as direct gifts for immediate use by the recipients, while in two counties (Buckinghamshire and Kent) they were in large part vested as endowments. In three rural counties only trifling amounts were provided for this charitable use, while in two they had some real significance in the structure of charitable institutions. They tended to be established by sentimental gentry and their wives, yet by far the largest was endowed by a London merchant, and a bachelor at that, for the benefit of Welsh maidens, the difficulties of administration of which led his harassed company, which had been named trustee, to plead with intended benefactors 'never to leave portions to marriageable maidens, especially if they be Welsh'. Finally, this charitable use is remarkable for the fact that the curve of interest in it, while never significantly high, remains more nearly level than that for any other single charitable head. Thus £122 13s was given for this purpose in the first decade of our period, £65 in the last. It is true that there was a slight peak of interest in the decade 1531-1540 when the substantial total of £3559 10s was given for marriage portions, to be followed by a singularly level intensity of interest for almost a century until £2050 was given in the years just prior to the Civil War. But this scarcely affects the structure of giving for this use, which simply appealed through the years to a relatively small number of donors of all sorts, all classes, and all degrees of wealth. It is pleasant, indeed, to reflect on the persistence of this sentimental, yet doubtless useful trend of giving for still another outlay designed to assist in the social rehabilitation of young people.

3. *Municipal betterments*

A large and most diverse group of benefactions has been included under the several heads which we have gathered under the covering title of *Municipal Betterments*. The general nature of these gifts for essentially public uses has been previously discussed,¹ and we shall, of course, deal in some detail with this bewildering variety of useful benefactions in our treatment of the several counties. Broadly speaking, most of the gifts made for municipal improvements in our period were designed to strengthen and better the physical fabric of community life by lending support in areas which today, and long since, have been regarded as the province of government. One tends to forget how narrowly sovereignty defined the frontiers of its responsibility in this earlier age, how much it left to the discretion and generosity of private men.

In the whole course of our period private benefactions totalling £160,776 1s, or 5.18 per cent of the charitable funds of the age, were given by donors for municipal betterments. While not a great sum, amounting, for example, to not much more than was provided for the care of the sick and hospitals, it none the less represents a most substantial addition to the fabric of the community and was sufficient to add considerably to the amenities of life in the towns and countryside of the realm. It is remarkable, too, that though there were shifts from one sphere of interest to another, the curve of giving for this general purpose was on the whole steady and level throughout our long period.² The range of benefactions for this use by decade intervals extends from £4130 8s (1511–1520) to £24,178 14s (1611–1620). In the more meaningful terms of the proportion of funds given in each of our great intervals for municipal improvements, the spread is much narrower, extending from the 4 per cent so disposed in the early Stuart period to the 7.57 per cent given for such uses in the Elizabethan era.

It should be noted, however, that when we turn to the data for the several counties, considerable and interesting differences appear in the degree of intensity with which men addressed themselves to these municipal tasks.³ Thus in counties like Lancashire, Somerset, and Yorkshire relatively little could be spared from the more urgent charitable concerns of the age for the amenities of community life. London donors also gave only modestly to municipal betterments, in this case undoubtedly because the city had made considerable progress in employing the taxing power for so many of the uses comprehended under this general head. In Bristol, on the contrary, the very high proportion

¹ *Vide ante*, 46–48.

² *Vide* Table IV (Appendix) and accompanying curve.

³ *Vide* table on next page.

of 9.10 per cent of all charitable benefactions was disposed for municipal improvements by merchants who went far towards providing the city with its essential services before our era was ended. In Norfolk a slightly higher proportion of funds was given for these uses, principally by Norwich merchants who were likewise changing the physical aspect of their city while creating its social institutions.

Throughout our period remarkably sustained interest was exhibited by benefactors in the *general uses* of their communities: the building of town halls, the provision of corporate plate, endowments to secure the lessening of tax burdens, and a great variety of other gifts designed to make divers communities more attractive and agreeable places in which to work and live. In all save three decades, more than £1000 was given for such purposes, while the respectable total of £45,399 6s represents 1.47 per cent of the whole of the charitable funds of our age. The climax of interest in this particular need was, interestingly enough, attained in the decade of the Civil War, when the impressive total of £7299 was provided, with an earlier climax in the last decade of the Elizabethan interval, when £5652 16s was given for such uses. There were most striking differences in the degree of concern for these general municipal uses in the several counties, London, for example, devoting only a fraction of 1 per cent to such purposes, and Lancashire and Somerset no more than trifling amounts. In point of fact, this particular interest was very highly concentrated in Hampshire and Norfolk, which together supplied very nearly half the total for our whole group of counties.¹

As we should expect, a large proportion of the considerable sums accumulated by the various companies and other trading societies under deeds of trust for their own or the public benefit was given by London donors for the uses of the great London livery companies. In all, the

Proportion of total charitable wealth disposed for municipal betterments in the several counties:

	<i>Amount</i>			<i>Per</i>
	£	s	d	cent
Bristol	8,378	5	0	9.10
Buckinghamshire	7,757	19	0	8.80
Hampshire	9,511	6	0	10.92
Kent	11,558	15	0	4.59
Lancashire	1,265	10	0	1.22
London	93,593	16	0	4.95
Norfolk	18,820	15	0	10.58
Somerset	905	15	0	0.78
Worcestershire	2,862	9	0	5.44
Yorkshire	6,121	11	0	2.51
	<hr/>			<hr/>
	160,776	1	0	5.18

¹ See table on next page.

substantial total of £60,656 14s was provided by merchants and tradesmen explicitly for their companies, this amounting to almost 2 per cent (1.95 per cent) of all the charitable wealth accumulated during our period. Broadly speaking, we observe a steadily mounting interest in such benefactions from the first decade of our period, in which £554 13s was provided for this use, to the point of climax of such generosity in the decade just prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, when the impressive total of £9037 4s was provided. But even in the years prior to the Reformation a total of £8945 10s had been given as endowments for company uses, a rate of giving well sustained during the years of the Reformation, when £3450 4s was given by benefactors, almost wholly of London. Really substantial sums were accumulated by the companies during each decade of the Elizabethan era, £11,933 1s having been so disposed over the four decades, while in the early Stuart interval such gifts mounted steadily and rapidly to a total of £28,509 12s for these years. There was, inevitably, a sharp diminution of such gifts during the decade of the Civil War, but once political and commercial conditions had been rendered more stable, such benefactions began to rise rapidly again, with the result that the substantial sum of £5390 8s was given in the closing decade of our period.

As has been noted,¹ all these benefactions were vested in the companies either for their own use—for the upkeep of their halls, for their dinners and other ceremonial occasions, or for the carrying forward of their own charities—or as owners in the public interest. These were sums absolutely vested in the companies, which, as we shall point out in detail in our discussion of London, were as well trustees for immense capital which they administered for a great range of charitable causes. This rapidly growing wealth undoubtedly expressed the understanding of donors that the livery companies had come to possess, well

The proportion of all charitable funds disposed for general municipal uses in the several counties:

	<i>Total</i>			<i>Per</i>
	£	s	d	cent
Bristol	3,955	0	0	4.30
Buckinghamshire	2,742	0	0	3.11
Hampshire	6,992	11	0	8.03
Kent	2,448	10	0	0.97
Lancashire	264	5	0	0.25
London	9,424	7	0	0.50
Norfolk	15,032	18	0	8.45
Somerset	321	6	0	0.28
Worcestershire	1,895	17	0	3.60
Yorkshire	2,322	12	0	0.95
	<hr/>			<hr/>
	45,399	6	0	1.47

¹ *Vide ante*, 47.

before our period had closed, a semi-public status, and it certainly testifies to the immense prestige which they had attained as skilful and responsible trustees of huge aggregates of charitable capital held in the public interest. Inevitably, therefore, London merchant donors tended to make most generous provision for their own companies and very frequently for all the livery companies, with the result that giving for this charitable use was heavily concentrated in London. In all, London donors gave the large total of £56,511 1s for this purpose, or rather more than 93·17 per cent of the whole.

Still another considerable amount was accumulated in the course of our period for a great variety of purposes best described as public works, at least principally listed in earlier pages.¹ All these contributions for roads, bridges, harbours, streets, and the rest were in areas of need for which the state had as yet assumed only slight responsibility and which the church had declared to be proper objects for mediaeval piety.² In the course of our period the impressive total of £54,418 19s was disposed by private donors for public works of a most complex variety, though it should be noted that well over half (56·81 per cent) of the whole amount was for the building or the maintenance of roads which were not only generally in an incredibly poor state of repair but which were most severely retarding the commercial and industrial development of the nation. The whole sum given for this purpose was an aggregate of charitable giving of some thousands of donors, small bequests, particularly for highways, having by 1580 become traditional among all classes of substantial men in certain of the rural counties.

The support of public works by private donors was steadily maintained throughout our long period, the amount provided falling below £1000 in only one decade (1601-1610). In the years prior to the Reformation the substantial total of £14,207 14s was given by donors for the carrying forward of public works, a very large proportion of all the funds designated for municipal betterments having been given for this use. Almost half as much (£7013 7s) was provided for public improvements during the short interval of the Reformation, while there was a most noticeable and somewhat inexplicable lessening of interest in these needs during the Elizabethan age, when only £9347 12s was given. Substantial contribution to the bettering of public works was made in all save one of the four decades of the early Stuart interval, a total of £19,811 14s having been provided for the purpose, while in the period of the Puritan Revolution such benefactions fell away quite steeply, the total of contributions for these years having been £4038 12s.

When, however, we turn to the individual counties this record of

¹ *Vide ante*, 47-48.

² Wilkinson, T. W., *From track to by-pass* (L., 1934), 25, 31-32.

remarkably level interest in public works by no means appears.¹ In the rural counties of Buckinghamshire and Kent quite substantial proportions of all charitable wealth were given for the improvement of highways, while in Bristol £4349 18s, or 4.73 per cent of the whole, was designated for such needed purposes as building and clearing streets, bettering the water supply, and for the improvement of the harbour and docking facilities of that proud and aggressive city. London, while contributing slightly more than half of the total, none the less in the more significant terms of proportions lent a rather grudging and cautious support to such outlays which tended in any case to be fairly satisfactorily provided by the public authority. Donors in certain other rural counties, such as Hampshire, Somerset, and Lancashire, where the roads were notoriously bad, may well have felt that substantial improvements lay beyond the resources of private charity, for only modest proportions of their charitable wealth were assigned to the bettering of public facilities.

4. *Education*

English culture was at once moulded and transformed by the vast extension of educational opportunity which took place in the course of our period. This metamorphosis, revolutionary in its nature, was almost wholly the consequence of the sustained, the almost obsessive, determination of private donors to help able and aspiring children, however poor, and to open avenues for their educational progress extending from remote rural schools to and through the universities. It is not too much to say that private charity in the years under study literally founded a system of secular education in England, which at the close of our period was at once more competent and comprehensive than the nation was to possess again until deep in the nineteenth century. Men of our period were earnestly persuaded of the virtue and the necessity of education

¹ The proportion of total charitable wealth disposed in the several counties for public works was as follows:

	<i>Amount</i>			<i>Per</i>
	£	s	d	cent
Bristol	4,349	18	0	4.73
Buckinghamshire	5,015	19	0	5.69
Hampshire	217	2	0	0.25
Kent	7,936	15	0	3.15
Lancashire	1,001	5	0	0.96
London	27,604	8	0	1.46
Norfolk	3,282	13	0	1.85
Somerset	553	9	0	0.47
Worcestershire	944	19	0	1.79
Yorkshire	3,512	11	0	1.44
	<hr/>			<hr/>
	54,418	19	0	1.75

and were prepared to spend heavily of their own fortunes in order to bring the requisite resources into being.

This preoccupation with the founding of a national system of education may be said to extend through the whole of our period, though it is of great importance to note that it was transformed and then made immensely stronger shortly after the full effects of the Reformation came into play. In general terms, the great donors prior to 1540 were rich and usually worldly prelates, quite as much princes of the state as of the church, who gave generously of their wealth for the strengthening of the universities, which in 1480 were by any standard of appraisal in a state of shocking decay. Then abruptly with the Reformation the whole emphasis swung to the foundation and endowment of grammar-school education, almost the whole of the burden being assumed by the mercantile aristocracy and the gentry, men whose aspirations were vigorously secular and who took most elaborate pains to vest their incorporations in lay hands. While still in the process of forming, and in their view completing, the structure of secondary education, these men, or their sons, began linking the schools which they had founded to the universities by rich and elaborate scholarship endowments and then moved to strengthen and revivify the universities themselves by the founding of new colleges and the augmentation of the meagre university endowments gathered as a consequence of mediaeval piety. The flow of gifts from these donors did not set in in full tide until there was assurance that the universities were safely and soundly Protestant, and then great and well-conceived benefactions, invariably carefully ordered, played a probably decisive role in the revolutionary process which brought about the secularization of the universities. We must recall that in the age of Henry VIII the university curriculum, and the whole environment, was regarded as neither appropriate nor quite respectable for the son of a squire or a merchant unless malevolent fate had disposed him towards the priesthood, while by the close of the Elizabethan era a very large proportion even of members of the House of Commons had at least been matriculated in the universities.

Our period was, then, deeply persuaded of the virtues and necessity of education, education for youth of all classes who wished it and who possessed the native ability to pursue a curriculum of considerable academic rigour. This persuasion was most firmly held by the mercantile élite, whose devotion to the cause of education for a period of about sixty years may with reasonable accuracy be described as fanatical. Though it is exceedingly difficult to assess any such great and complex cultural movement, the eloquent and we may believe wholly honest expression of purpose to be found in many hundreds of deeds of gift and wills establishing schools, setting up scholarship funds, or adding some further measure of strength to the universities do reveal the prime forces

which moved men of this period to bring to fair completion a noble and an enduring work.

Above all, these benefactors believed that the enlargement of educational opportunity was the most effective instrumentality which the society could contrive in the endless and grim war it was waging on poverty. Poverty, hopeless poverty, they sensed was bred in ignorance, and it was ignorance against which their great endowments were set. To these men, then, the founding of a free school was inspired by motives not dissimilar to those which could as easily have led to the creation of an apprenticeship scheme or a loan fund to assist young merchants. It was an instrument of social rehabilitation which they were creating with their great generosity. They were determined that no boy with native ability infused with ambition should be denied opportunity and they sensed, certainly correctly, that education alone could break the shackles which bound whole classes of men. The testimony to this impulse, to this intention, is often moving and as often intensely personal. Thus scores of London merchants of humble provincial birth, who had won great wealth, when they came to set their worldly affairs in order, bethought themselves of the poverty and ignorance which had all but overwhelmed them. This explains, as they themselves so frequently confessed, why so many of them ordered the founding of a free school or a great scholarship fund in the home parish with which they had had few if any ties for a full generation. They remembered their own youthful hardships, the narrowness of the margin of their own emancipation, as they set out in poignant personal terms the motives which impelled them to make their foundation, sometimes quite unwisely, in that particular parish, as if to ensure for ever opportunity for boys not unlike themselves in this remembered corner of England. These were very human men, men not unlike ourselves, and they were good men, for the title of goodness is not weakened by the fact of sentimentality.

These great benefactors testify as well to a second important and exceedingly complex moving force as they created their endowments for the widening of educational opportunity. They were Protestants, and they were for the most part evangelical Calvinists of Puritan persuasion. They designed these foundations, whether a grammar school in Yorkshire or Emmanuel College, to assist in bringing about the Kingdom of God on earth and to levy holy warfare against the ignorance from which they so ardently believed popery specifically and untruth generally sprang. They believed confidently, if naïvely, that if all men were endowed with ability to read and to ponder the Word of God, not only would one truth, one transcendent truth, prevail, but that it would be the pure and complete truth not long since preached in Geneva. They were determined to bring about this miracle, which while it bred more

sects than it united, which while it failed to evoke universal truth, was in due time to secure universal literacy. The depth of the passion of these men as they contemplated the good that must flow from vastly broadening the ambit of educational opportunity is very great and must be credited with absolute sincerity. Their aspirations were clear, firmly stated, and sufficient to move them to noble and immensely effective action. These men wished a learned clergy: in a half-century the institutions which they had founded had created one. They were appalled by lingering popery in the fastnesses of Lancashire and the West Riding, which they largely rooted out by the founding of grammar schools, scholarships, and lectureships, with the result that both regions, it may almost be said, moved from Rome to nonconformity without ever having been truly Anglican at all. These donors, most of whom were London merchants, knew precisely what they wanted, and they possessed the wealth and the firmness of resolution to implement their most formidable intentions. They were in many ways naïve, they narrowly failed in their determination to win England for Geneva, they doubtless overestimated the pragmatic benefits of education, but they none the less shaped the whole cultural development of the western world and set that development along lines which we even now pursue. These were men who wrought mightily.

The donors of our age brought immense resources to bear as they sought to attain the ends to which their aspirations were dedicated with such warm and persistent intensity. Thus in the course of our period the vast total of £833,493 12s was disposed for the several educational purposes, this amounting to nearly 27 per cent (26.86 per cent) of the whole of the charitable resources accumulated during the years under examination. Not only was this capital much larger than that devoted to the great purposes of social rehabilitation and municipal betterments combined, but it was also greatly in excess of the amount given for all religious purposes during the whole of our period. It was exceeded, and that very considerably, only by the huge sums mustered for the direct relief of poverty, the prevention of which, as we have seen, at least in part evoked these great educational endowments.

Benefactions for educational purposes commanded almost a fourth of all philanthropic funds even in the decades prior to the Reformation. During these six decades a total of £131,170 5s was given for such uses, or somewhat less than half the huge sum provided in these years for the needs of the church. The amounts so given during the first two decades of the period were relatively modest, but from 1501 to 1530 really substantial sums were given, principally, as we have suggested, by the upper clergy. The prime interest of these donors was in the universities, where several of them made great foundations, with the consequence that a heavy proportion of all their educational benefactions in

this period were disposed for this use.¹ Thus in the years prior to the Reformation well over twice as much was given for university needs as to the foundation of schools. This disposition was precisely reversed during the brief interval of the Reformation, upwards of £29,000 being vested for school endowments as contrasted with rather less than £15,000 for augmenting the financial resources of the universities. In total, the most substantial capital of £48,320 9s was given during these two decades towards all educational needs.

Even larger sums were disposed by Elizabethan donors for educational uses, with the result that in the course of forty years the massive total of £139,947 8s was provided, this amounting to very nearly a third (31.40 per cent) of the whole of the charitable wealth of the era and contrasting most dramatically with the really trifling proportion (7.17 per cent) of charitable funds dedicated to religious needs in this incredibly secular era. It is significant too that of the great sum given for educational uses more than half was for grammar-school foundations, this capital of £72,736 13s considerably exceeding the total vested for schools in the preceding eighty years. The age of the foundation of the English grammar schools was at hand.

But the great, the prodigal, outpouring came in the early Stuart period, when in four decades the enormous total of £383,594 1s was provided for the several, and interrelated, educational uses. This sum far exceeded the total given in the whole of the preceding one hundred and twenty years, and, for that matter, there is reason to believe during the whole of the past two centuries. Moreover, almost 58 per cent (57.51 per cent) of this immense sum was given for grammar-school foundations, the £220,599 15s so provided accounting, as we shall shortly observe, for the settling of schools across the length and breadth of England. The climax of this great surge of giving for educational uses was attained in a most remarkable period of twenty years, 1611-1630, when the incredible total of £249,331 11s was provided, principally by London generosity, for this whole range of needs. In other words, very nearly 30 per cent of the vast sum given during the full course of our period for the founding of a system of education in the realm was vested during this brief interval.

There was inevitably a falling away in giving even for these uses during the period of the Puritan Revolution, though it should be noted that relatively a somewhat larger proportion of charitable wealth was so dedicated even than in the early Stuart era. In these years the large total of £130,461 9s was settled for educational uses, of which almost £90,000 was for still more grammar schools. In fact, one is dazzled by the vastness of the contribution of the early decades of the century, and

¹ *Vide* Table V (Appendix) and the accompanying curve for the particulars of this discussion.

hence inclined not to lend full credit to the amazing accomplishment of the revolutionary era, when almost as much was given for educational causes as during the whole of the Elizabethan age.

From 1550 onwards the interest of benefactors was to be concentrated on the strengthening, one can with fair accuracy say the founding, of grammar-school education in England. We have suggested that this almost obsessive preoccupation with the enlargement of educational facilities was the consequence of complex but most powerful motives to be observed particularly in the merchant class. There was, moreover, a considerable body of literature 'in praise of learning' which undoubtedly exercised some measure of influence, two examples of which may be mentioned, one drawn from a relatively early date in our period and the other from its close. William Kempe, writing in 1588 and dedicating his book to the mayor and burgesses of Plymouth, emphasized particularly the utility of learning. Some father, he tells us, 'will rubbe his forehead and . . . aske why . . . spend . . . goodes and possessions about that which cannot feede the belly, nor clothe the backe'. The answer, Kempe assures us, is simple and incontrovertible. It is learning alone that moulds a civilization, that separates man from barbarism, and it is learning alone that brings men to a knowledge of the Gospel requisite for salvation. Thus even the naturally endowed boy can neither 'aspire to heavenly blessing' or 'winne worldly felicitie' with 'his unlettered wit'. Hence any nation must seek to extend the benefits of education as widely as possible, for thus is the whole commonwealth strengthened and the Kingdom of God advanced. In terms of more local reference, the writer pointed out that Plymouth must regard its schools as its principal asset, for by them alone will the merchants, the 'maisters in the arte of nauigation', the magistrates, and the clergy be secured for the needs and services of the city. All of western England, he concluded, suffered from a still too straitened educational opportunity, which would be corrected only when there was to be found 'even in marchants shops, learning more plentiful then wares'.¹

Similar if more eloquent sentiments were set forth in 1657 by the great preacher Edward Reynolds, in a funeral sermon for a schoolmaster of St Paul's School. Learning, Reynolds submits, is alone competent to discern truth and it is God's will that we should set ourselves to this high task. 'All good learning and wisdom is *per se*, and in its owne nature desireable, as an ornament and perfection to the mind, as a part of that truth whereof God is the author . . . all secular learning is the knowledge of Gods works . . . a small emanation from eternal verity'.² Learning is consequently essential not only to the state but to a truly religious com-

¹ Kempe, William, *The education of children in learning* (L., 1588), no pagin.

² Reynolds, Edward, *A sermon touching the use of humane learning* (L., 1658),

munity, and any man who opposes its extension stands guilty of ignorance or malice.¹ In fact, so indispensable are the schools of England that the profession of the teacher must be made so respected and honoured that men of great learning will more often be attracted to the calling.² The schools of the nation are a precious asset, requiring even more of support and care if they are to carry forward a noble and a necessary work already well begun.³

There has been considerable and sustained controversy on the extent of the educational facilities in England just prior to the Reformation, and even more regarding the effect of the Henrician and Edwardian expropriations on existing school foundations. The principal authority apparently wrote as a somewhat extreme Protestant, but was choleric as he contemplated what the Reformation sovereigns might have achieved had they appropriated more of the monastic and chantry spoils to the strengthening of secondary education in the realm. The consequence, if the ten counties under study are in any sense typical, has been a gross over-estimate of the number of grammar schools actually in existence and functioning in say 1480, as well as a considerable exaggeration of the number of functioning schools closed as a result of the chantry confiscations. Though the statistics offered are confused, it seems evident that a most inexact appraisal of English grammar-school education results from the fact that it has been assumed that any school,

¹ Reynolds, *A sermon*, 23.

² *Ibid.*, 26.

³ This general view was opposed by Bacon in the brilliant but servile brief prepared for the King when an outrageous attempt was made to break Thomas Sutton's great will. (This interesting and important case will be fully discussed in the second volume of this study.) Bacon opposed the founding of Charterhouse, among other reasons, because the proposed school would add still another grammar school where there were in fact too many. The numerous schools of the realm had, he held, drawn youths from trade and husbandry, with the result that there were 'more scholars bred, than the state can prefer and employ'. Consequently, Bacon would divert this portion of Sutton's huge bequest to the universities (*Works*, I, 495-496). This view had small impact on the circumstances to which it was so skilfully addressed and on English thought, though it was frequently and specifically rebutted. As one would suppose, it was most effectively answered by the gentle Fuller, who confessed that there had been some concern because of the 'multitude of schools' founded and supported in England by private generosity. Such men in effect argued that because 'the nursery is bigger than the orchard, the one breeding more plants than the other can maintain trees; and the land not affording sufficient preferment for them, learning is forced to stoop to mean courses, to make a livelihood' (*Worthies*, I, 45). This argument, Fuller maintained, was irrelevant and absurd because it dwelt on the occasional harm done to individuals, while ignoring the great and necessary good flowing into the whole society from the schools of the realm. In fact, one Scottish writer held that it was indispensable that schools be founded in every parish in the realm and that additional colleges be established 'in some the most eminent parts of the kingdome' to add to the inadequate facilities of the two universities (Cockburne, William, *Respublica de decimis*, Edinburgh, 1627, 4).

any intent to found a school, or any reference to monastic education is reckoned not only as a mediaeval school founded but as a school actually functioning at the close of the Middle Ages.¹ The evidence, at least in the counties under review, would seem rather to suggest that the number of mediaeval foundations in which lay children might gain instruction was limited indeed and that by 1480 most of these foundations had been gravely weakened or had been closed, while instruction for laymen was most uncommon in the monasteries.² Far more important in establishing the structure of mediaeval secondary education were the chantry schools, a considerable number of which were founded in our ten counties, with, however, hazardously small and restricted endowments. Unfortunately, chantry foundations rarely survived in any case for longer than a century, with the result that there were relatively very few functioning chantry schools in 1480, fewer still at the time of the Expropriation. Finally, our evidence, derived principally from local sources, would suggest that in these ten counties at least no school connected with or deriving support from a monastic foundation was permanently suppressed, though these schools were reorganized and did in most instances shortly gain adequate support as lay benefactors moved swiftly and effectively to sustain them with endowments. Further, the Chantry Commissioners took the most elaborate pains to protect existing schools, or more usually the informal and part-time services of a stipendiary priest, often searching valiantly and unsuccessfully for a school which the deed of gift suggested should exist but which had in fact long since lapsed. The educational function was ordinarily carefully separated, when it existed at all, from the uses now deemed superstitious, and then being re-founded was vested with properties representing the capital heretofore employed for educational purposes. All these matters will be discussed in detail in the later volumes of this study, but it may be suggested here that though a few existing chantry schools were closed as a result of the chantry confiscations, a larger number of lapsed or moribund schools were reinstituted. On balance, it would be our judgment that the spoliation of the monasteries and the expropriations of the chantry endowments benefitted rather than harmed the slender educational resources surviving from the Middle Ages.³

¹ Leach, A. F., *English schools at the Reformation and Schools of medieval England*.

² This view is also advanced by Rowse (*England of Elizabeth*, 491) and most convincingly by Miss Eileen Power (*Medieval English nunneries*, Cambridge, 1922, 261-270) in so far as the education of girls is concerned.

³ We speak with some confidence, of course, only of the ten counties under study. The somewhat similar views of other writers who have comprehended the whole of England in their judgment should be noted: Watson, Foster, *The old grammar schools* (Cambridge, 1916), 46-47; 'Charity schools', *Westminster Review*, n.s., XLIII (1873), 450-472; Stowe, A. M., *English grammar schools in the reign of Queen Elizabeth* (N.Y., 1908), 9-20, 157-170.

Stretching as far as we can not only our definition of what a school must be but likewise what is implied in its actual function, we may say that in our ten counties there were thirty-four schools offering instruction to lay youth in 1480, of which, it should be noted, certainly two and probably four had closed for want of financial support before 1540.¹ This, then, was the meagre inheritance surviving from the Middle Ages. the foundation on which men began to build well and solidly even before the advent of the Reformation. In point of fact, the whole discussion of this question so exclusively in terms of the Reformation seems at once unfortunate and a little irrelevant because most clearly the aspirations of men for a vast enlargement of the opportunities for secondary education were deeply imbued a full generation before this great revolution occurred. The sentiments of most of these early donors were secular, they were often balked or constrained by a jealous ecclesiastical authority, and their educational interests were in large part derived from the humanistic, the Renaissance forces, which made a considerable and a too much neglected contribution to English life and thought in the course of the first of our time intervals.

During the long period 1480–1540, a total of £36,292 13s was vested by a considerable number of donors for the foundation of grammar schools or for the strengthening of existing institutions. The amounts given in the first half of this interval were relatively modest, but it seems clear that new and compelling forces were at work in the society from 1511 onwards to 1540 when decade totals ranging from £7379 12s to £10,062 4s were provided for this great and beneficent use. Some measure of the magnitude of the accomplishment of this early and neglected period may be gained when it is considered that this capital very nearly equalled the wealth being employed for the support of all existing grammar schools in our ten counties in 1480.² Significant and hopeful as was this achievement, it was quite overshadowed by the intensity of interest shown in school foundations in the brief interval of the Reformation, when the large total of £29,399 10s was provided for school foundations in every part of England. The curve of giving, it will be observed, rose most strongly and dramatically in the Edwardian years, when the quite astonishing total of £21,172 18s was vested for the enlargement and betterment of school facilities throughout the realm.³

This extraordinary generosity was, in fact, only scantily excelled in

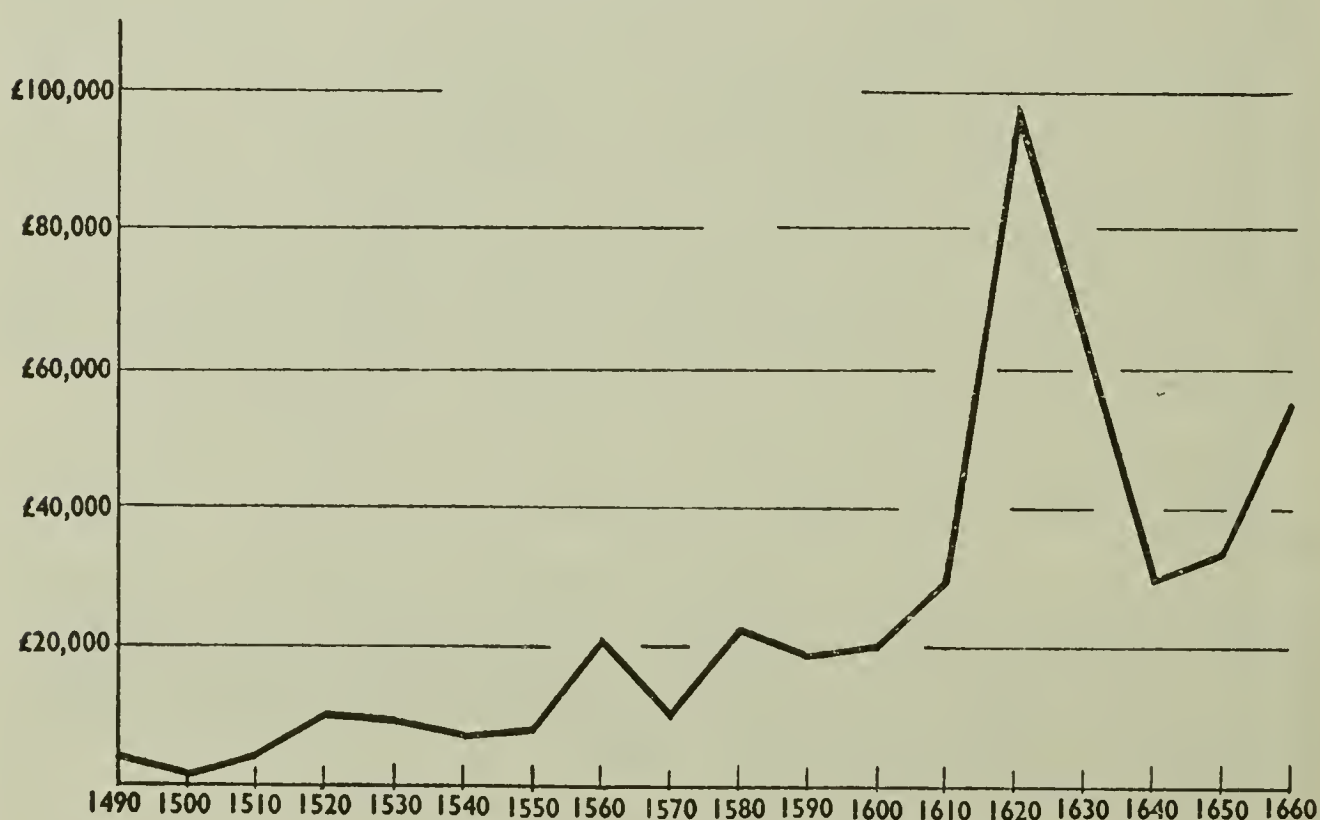
¹ Again, we must reserve discussion of the particulars to the later volumes of this work.

² Few of the schools in 1480 enjoyed considerable endowments. The computation is made by adding to endowment values the capital worth implied in assured income from monastic, chantry, or other sources. It should be further noted that certain of the income values date from the time of the Expropriation and hence are probably only roughly accurate.

³ See graph on next page.

any one of the Elizabethan decades, though the steadiness with which funds were poured into these foundations in this era accounted for the fact that during these years the large total of £72,736 13s was added to the educational resources of the nation. But as was to be the case in so many areas of generosity, this was only a prelude to the surging flood of benefactions in the early years of the seventeenth century. In the course of the early Stuart period the immense total of £220,599 15s was provided by benefactors, mostly of London, for the founding of schools in every quarter of the realm. The measure of this achievement is suggested when we reflect that of the vast total provided for school foundations during our whole period very nearly half must be credited to this generation of almost prodigal generosity, while, even more remarkably, well over a third (35·84 per cent) of the whole sum for our entire age was disposed in the space of two decades, 1611-1630. It is not too much to say that the basic structure of English secondary education as it was to exist for a very long time was literally created in the early Stuart period. It is in these years that we find the climax of this great movement, which was to bear such rich fruit in terms of social and cultural advancement and so vastly to enlarge the arc of opportunity in the realm. But it was by no means the whole of the contribution to be made during the course of our period. In the brief interval of the Puritan Revolution, distracted and torn as it was, the huge total of £89,870 17s was provided by a host of donors for the further extension and, as they confidently thought, the completion of secondary education in England. This great sum, it may be observed, far exceeded the total provided during the whole of the Elizabethan age, while in terms of yearly rate of giving for this most

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worthy cause it represents but a relatively slight diminution from that even of the early Stuart period.

In all, then, donors of our age gave of their substance the immense total of £448,899 8s for the creation of a national system of education in England. Beginning with most meagre resources from the mediaeval past, these men had greatly extended the whole range of opportunity for aspiring youths and had established educational resources which were on balance not to be substantially improved for all of two centuries. They had addressed themselves to this great undertaking with a steady purpose from the beginning of our period, with what can only be described as an obsessive concern after 1550. They had in the final reckoning devoted somewhat more than 14 per cent (14.47 per cent) of all their charitable giving to this one great purpose, almost the whole being in capital form, thereby ensuring for future generations the opportunities which they wished all English youth to enjoy.¹ Theirs was a very great and a salutary achievement which was to transform an entire culture.

Every county shared in this great charitable achievement, though by no means in equal proportions. Thus Buckinghamshire and Somerset, with relatively slender resources and deeply absorbed as they were with the problem of poverty, made proportionate contributions for this educational use which were well below the national average. Bristol dedicated a very large proportion (20.16 per cent) of all its charitable wealth to building its own magnificent system of schools while giving almost nothing for other educational uses. Lancashire, greatly aided by London wealth, vested the staggering proportion of 31.98 per cent of all its charities for this one purpose, bringing itself level and more with the rest of England by these heroic exertions of about a century. While London's immense generosity for educational uses was remarkably evenly spread over the several heads, its huge total contribution of £259,263 2s, given principally for the founding of schools outside Middlesex, accounts for the decisive proportion of almost 58 per cent (57.76 per cent) of the whole great sum dedicated by England for this use.² All classes shared importantly in this epical undertaking, but it was the merchant wealth of London, of Bristol, of Norwich, and even of the raw new towns of the West Riding that first conceived and then completed this grand design.

The great achievement is all the more impressive when we reflect on it in terms of the number of schools actually founded during the age. In this era, we must recall, £500 would build and endow a school of fair

¹ By counties, the proportion of the whole amount given for grammar schools which was capital in form ranges most narrowly from 99.11 per cent for Lancashire to 99.96 per cent for Norfolk.

² See table on next page.

strength; £1000 was quite sufficient for a school of notable resources. There were, as we have said, thirty-four functioning schools in our ten counties at the outset of our period, few of which were supported by endowments. In the course of our period a total of 305 schools was established and endowed in our counties, of which a large proportion were grammar schools and very nearly all institutions providing free tuition for needy boys. In addition, we have counted 132 schools which were founded and endowed by donors of this group of counties in counties other than that of the donor, almost all (123) being the munificent gift of London to other parts of the realm. In sum, then, we may say that benefactors resident in the counties under study founded and endowed a total of 437 schools prior to 1660. Nor was this by any means all. Donors of these counties also made some contribution to 105 additional schools within our area, to schools which often enjoyed a hopeful beginning, performed significant and treasured services to their communities, but which failed to attract endowments before the close of our period. Though we are concerned only with those schools to which charitable benefactions were made, it should also be recorded that there was a fair number of schools, several being at least for a season strong institutions, which were wholly supported by taxation levied by the community or by tuition fees exacted from parents. In summary, then, we may say that a total of 542 schools were during the years with which we are concerned either endowed or partially supported by private charity, while a much smaller but uncertain number were otherwise sustained in their work.¹ Furthermore, as we shall have occasion to point out in detail in our analysis of the county evidence, these foundations were distributed rather evenly and sensibly over the great area which we are studying, the foundations falling into a pattern before our period was out. In only two counties could a boy have lived at a distance

The proportion of total charitable wealth devoted to grammar-school foundations in the several counties was as follows:

	<i>Amount</i>			<i>Per</i>
	£	s.	d.	cent
Bristol	18,559	7	0	20.16
Buckinghamshire	6,789	2	0	7.70
Hampshire	9,850	11	0	11.31
Kent	28,308	18	0	11.24
Lancashire	33,185	9	0	31.98
London	259,263	2	0	13.72
Norfolk	20,865	0	0	11.73
Somerset	9,902	5	0	8.50
Worcestershire	13,602	18	0	25.84
Yorkshire	48,572	16	0	19.94
	<hr/>			<hr/>
	448,899	8	0	14.47

¹ See table on page 291.

of more than twelve miles from an available grammar school in which he might have found free tuition under the terms of the founder's deed of gift. No city and no market town in all the ten counties lacked a school, while there were few really large villages without some place of instruction. Or to put it another way, there was by 1660 an endowed grammar school for something like each 6000 of the estimated population of this great area, one for each 4400 of population if the unendowed schools be added as well.¹ This was the achievement of our age; it was an achievement of which any age might well be proud.

Closely, often generically linked with these many grammar-school foundations were the scholarship funds and, occasionally, even the fellowship funds² which served to strengthen both secondary and higher

School foundations made in the group of ten counties, 1480-1660:

	<i>Number endowed 1480-1660, in- cluding mediaeval schools refounded and endowed</i>	<i>Number founded but unendowed</i>	<i>Number of endowed schools founded in other counties</i>
Bristol	3	0	0
Buckinghamshire	13	0	0
Hampshire	15	6 (?)	0
Kent	28	3	2 (?)
Lancashire	57	5	1 (?)
London	30	31	123
Norfolk	26	11	2
Somerset	13	7	1 (?)
Worcestershire	20	4	0 (?)
Yorkshire	100	38	3
	305	105	132 (?)

The total of 437 endowed schools founded in or by these ten counties would, we believe, suggest that there must have been at least an equal number of grammar schools founded in the rest of England, assuming that we have in fact accounted for the whole of London's extra-mural foundations. Intensive local research would be required to determine the exact number, but it seems evident that all estimates of grammar-school foundations made during our period have been much too low.

¹ This computation assumes an increase of 30 per cent in the population of our area in the course of the interval 1600-1660 (*vide ante*, 26-27, 63).

² The distinction between 'scholar' and 'fellow' was not clearly marked in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in official usage or in common speech. Not until 1440, in the statutes of King's College, was there mention of the transition from scholar to fellow, and the word 'scholarship', as applying to the status or emoluments of a student at a school, college, or university, seems not to have been used until 1535. Here and elsewhere in this work, we have kept the modern usage, meaning by 'scholarship' the funds supporting or helping to support a student in a school, college, or university, and by 'fellowship' the status or emoluments of a graduate fellow, one of the teaching or voting members of a college or university.

education and which created widespread opportunities for apt and aspiring students to proceed to the universities for the completion of their education. In many instances these endowments were vested in the universities for the benefit of particular schools, while the responsibility for stated visitations was placed upon the favoured college. In other cases, donors expressed a restrictive preference for boys from a named county or even a larger region, a testamentary device also not uncommon in the endowment of fellowships. Still other benefactors were more concerned with the strengthening of the resources of a particular college, consequently imposing no school or geographical restrictions on the scholars or fellows to be appointed to the foundation, though frequently describing in restrictive detail the qualifications of learning and character deemed desirable.

We know very little regarding the scholarship and fellowship resources of the universities in 1480, almost nothing about the scholarship funds of the few grammar schools then in existence. Just enough knowledge can be gleaned to lend some weight to the unsupported statement that such wealth in the hands of the universities was meagre in 1480, almost non-existent in the schools. On these scarcely outlined foundations, then, men of the early modern era began to build well and generously, moved as they were by the deep conviction that educational opportunities must be greatly extended and that they must be secularized. In the course of our period benefactors were to provide the enormous total of £145,055 7s for such worthy uses, this amounting to 4.67 per cent of the whole of the charitable wealth of the age. Furthermore, it should be noted that nearly the whole (97.89 per cent) of this massive sum was in the form of endowments, thereby ensuring permanent strength and vitality both to the grammar schools and to the universities which these funds served to link into a system of national education.

The undergirding of English education with scholarship and fellowship resources got modestly under way in the pre-Reformation years, during which the substantial total of £16,369 9s was vested for such purposes, of which, it may be noted, a large proportion was given in the single decade 1521-1530. This rate of giving was by no means maintained during the brief interval of the Reformation, the unsettling effect of the Henrician expropriations being suggested by the trifling total of £207 13s contributed in the years 1541-1550. Many, indeed most, of the scholarship funds in prior years had either been connected with chantry foundations or had been provided by clerics, with the result that a short interval elapsed before the flow of wealth gathered momentum in the secular foundations that followed. Then beginning with the rather cautious sum of £3125 17s disposed for these educational purposes in the first decade of the Elizabethan age, these endowments

mounted almost steadily from decade to decade until the interval just prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, when the large capital of £29,965 5s was provided.

The whole amount given for scholarships and fellowships in the course of the Elizabethan age was £26,701 1s, a considerable and a most useful sum which was, however, quite dwarfed by the capital of £72,410 13s provided for these uses in the first four decades of the seventeenth century. So great was the interest of donors of the early Stuart period in such endowments, in point of fact, that about half the funds provided during the course of our whole period was disposed in this single interval. The intensity of interest in scholarship foundations, so largely centred in merchant donors, was well maintained during the brief interval of the Puritan Revolution, the £25,506 6s given during these years being but little less than the total for the much longer Elizabethan age.

Though at least some helpful contribution was made in each county towards creating this wholly magnificent structure of educational opportunity, there were marked differences in the intensity of dedication to this charitable cause.¹ Norfolk, Yorkshire, and Buckinghamshire devoted a substantially higher proportion of their charitable wealth to this purpose than did the generality of counties, the first two, moreover, principally with little help from London. But as was so often the case, the aspirations and the immense generosity of London were to lend decisive support to this great venture in extending so widely educational opportunities for the youth of the nation. London donors alone gave £92,465 8s for this purpose, or not far short of two-thirds (63·74 per cent) of the whole massive sum. Bristol, in the sharpest possible contrast, made only token contribution to this great need, being preoccupied as always with its own parochial concerns, for which it provided so lavishly.

¹ The proportion of total charitable funds devoted to scholarship and fellowship endowments in the several counties was as follows:

	<i>Amount</i>			<i>Per</i>
	£	s	d	<i>cent</i>
Bristol	473	0	0	0·51
Buckinghamshire	5,003	0	0	5·68
Hampshire	3,117	13	0	3·58
Kent	10,648	13	0	4·23
Lancashire	4,688	8	0	4·52
London	92,465	8	0	4·89
Norfolk	10,576	6	0	5·95
Somerset	3,655	10	0	3·14
Worcestershire	330	15	0	0·63
Yorkshire	14,096	14	0	5·78
Totals	145,055	7	0	4·67

We have sketched all too briefly and inadequately an historical achievement of very great significance, for by these generous benefactions the whole fabric of education in the realm was strengthened and secured, higher and secondary education firmly linked together, and the arc of educational opportunity vastly extended. These foundations and the stipends which they provided may seem small to us, but they were sufficient and often exceedingly generous for the time. Though we shall discuss them in some detail as in later volumes we consider the several counties, it may be said here that men of our age had created 487 new scholarships in the universities, with stipends ranging in a most bewildering fashion from 10s p.a. to one princely grant of £20 p.a. In average terms, these awards were set by their donors at £6 4s 1d p.a., which absorbed something like £3022 p.a. of the available income of about £7100 which had been established by this large group of benefactors. Moreover, in the course of our period gifts were made for the augmentation of existing stipends, with a total outlay for this purpose of £1014 7s p.a. as donors sought, principally in the seventeenth century, to mend the damage wrought on sixteenth century foundations by the eroding process of inflation. In all, then, 487 scholars were being supported in the universities before our period had closed as a consequence of the remarkable generosity of our age, a most substantial number indeed when we reflect that not more than 5400 students were matriculated at Oxford and Cambridge towards the end of James I's reign. Nor was this the full measure of the contribution of the age, since about £260 p.a. had been vested in scholarship endowments limited to the assistance of worthy students enrolled in the grammar schools founded during this period, while almost £2800 p.a. had been dedicated to the support, and augmentation, of upwards of 100 new fellowships in the two universities.

Even larger sums were given by donors of our period towards the support, the rejuvenation, and the enlargement of the two universities. Any accurate appraisal of the financial resources disposed by Oxford and Cambridge at the beginning of our era seems to be quite impossible to hew out of the jumbled quarry of fact and legend, but it is generally agreed that both universities were meagrely endowed and were in a far from flourishing academic state at the outset of the Tudor age. We have included in our reckoning a great variety of benefactions: the numerous and relatively rich new collegiate foundations, the augmentation of the resources of older colleges, the mending of old and the building of new fabric, the founding of professorships and lectureships, endowments for the general support of the universities, large sums dedicated to the strengthening, one should perhaps say the creation, of two great scholarly libraries, as well as the collections of several of the colleges, and, by no means unimportantly, the efforts, not favourably regarded by the older

universities, to create quite new institutions of higher learning in the founding of Gresham College, Sion College, and the ill-fated Chelsea College. We shall deal with the particulars in our county treatments, though we should perhaps here note that the great benefactions which we have now to analyse are limited to those flowing in a golden stream from donors in the ten counties under examination.

In all, donors of our era vested the very large total of £231,195 10s in the universities, this accounting for the generous proportion of 7.45 per cent of all their charitable gifts. Some measure of the generosity of this contribution is suggested when we observe that the great sum was approximately the same as that devoted to all church building during our long period, and was considerably more than half as much as was provided for all the schemes of social rehabilitation by the burgher benefactors of the age.

As we have previously commented, the great and certainly the needed work of strengthening the resources of the universities was well begun in the period prior to the Reformation, when the substantial total of £78,335 8s was disposed, mostly by princely and prelatial gifts, for this purpose. Almost the whole of this large sum, be it noted, was concentrated in the generation 1501-1530, which may fairly be described as the age of Christian humanism in England, an age when it seemed for a tragically brief season as if the ancient church and its institutions might be preserved and reformed from within. Substantial, if sharply diminished, support was continued during the brief interval of the Reformation, a total of £14,793 1s being supplied for a variety of purposes, and by a considerable number of donors, for the augmentation of the resources of the two universities. The Elizabethan period witnessed the final shifting of responsibility into lay hands, but it was a responsibility not readily or generously assumed for a full generation, particularly by the great merchant donors who remained somewhat suspicious of both institutions until Emmanuel College and Sidney-Sussex College had been founded and their good works had become manifest, and who in any case were then devoting their charitable wealth with an almost obsessive absorption to the founding of grammar schools and the creation of scholarship endowments. The result was that in the whole course of the Elizabethan age not more than £40,384 was disposed by donors for the uses of the universities, only slightly more than half the great total given in the somewhat longer interval prior to the Reformation. But the tide of lay generosity turned towards the universities late in the Queen's reign, most substantial and well-sustained totals having been given, principally from London, in each of the first four decades of the seventeenth century. The total given for the strengthening of the universities during these years was the large sum of £86,334 11s, with a steep climax of intensity of concern in the years 1621-1630 when the

huge capital of £39,491 was so disposed. The almost prodigal generosity of this period towards the universities, however, slackened dramatically indeed in the decade of Laud's dominance, when sternly Calvinistic London benefactors tended to withdraw their support as the Archbishop's pressure on the universities began to bear its fruit. Nor did this decline cease during the two decades of Puritan hegemony in England, when the modest £11,348 10s designated for the further strengthening of university resources should be contrasted with the huge total of £89,870 17s provided for grammar-school foundations and the £25,506 6s given for the endowment of scholarships.

When we turn to the counties, we observe most striking differences in the interest displayed in this great charitable need. London was, as usual, decisive in its support, though, as we have noted, the flood of its generosity was long delayed. London donors gave in all the immense capital of £154,591 5s for the advancement of higher education, this accounting for almost exactly two-thirds (66.87 per cent) of the whole sum and representing 8.18 per cent of all London's own enormous charitable wealth. Somerset contributed proportionately even more generously (14.16 per cent), though its impressive outlay of £16,495 12s was accounted for largely by Wadham's great foundation at Oxford. In contrast, such principally rural counties as Worcestershire and Lancashire gave most modestly indeed towards the support of university education, the latter certainly because little could be spared after the immense outlays made by its donors for grammar-school foundations. Bristol once more displayed its almost arrogantly intensive parochialism, contributing, as always, only a trifling sum for an extra-mural need. Bristol did immensely well for itself, but it had little to spare for the needs of the larger community which was England.

Finally, in our discussion of the resources vested by donors who blessed the England of our period with rich cultural and educational institutions, we must at least mention the gifts made to secure the founding of libraries, not including those of the universities. In all, the relatively modest capital of £8343 7s was provided for this purpose, principally, it should be noted, after 1600. In the early Stuart period £4249 2s was disposed for this charitable use, while almost as much (£3735 16s) was left during the two decades of Puritan supremacy. The amounts, then, were not large, but they did suffice to establish three public libraries, in Bristol, Manchester, and London, as well as to lend further support to the oldest public library in the realm, that at Norwich. Almost as importantly, donors of our period established eleven, very possibly twelve, small collections in grammar schools, parish churches, or cathedrals, with the express provision that they should be made available under proper restrictions for public use. Only a modest beginning had been made in this wholly new field of universal education, but

it was a firm and a well-conceived beginning. This charitable outlay, quite as truly as the massive endowments for schools, for the universities, and for scholarship foundations, attests the warm and persistent devotion of men of this remarkable age to the conviction that poverty might be cured, the lot of mankind bettered, and the Kingdom of God attained by the extension of educational opportunity to all those who would receive it.

5. *Religion*

We have dealt at some length with the ever-broadening secular concerns of men of our period. Quietly, steadily, and irresistibly a profoundly important metamorphosis in men's aspirations had occurred which led them to devote their energies and their substance to the creation of new institutions having as their concern the fate of men in this world. As importantly, old institutions, such as the schools and the almshouses, were recast in a secular mould and then immensely enlarged and strengthened by lay donors who settled them on trustees moved by identical social aspirations. There were unmistakable evidences of this rising secularism, destined ultimately to master English culture, well before the advent of that exceedingly complex historical phenomenon which we call the Reformation. The Reformation itself was, in fact, partly a consequence of powerful and scarcely restrained forces of secularism and anti-clericalism deeply rooted in English thought. The great shift in men's aspirations, with which this study is at bottom concerned, has been fully demonstrated in the discussion of the several great secular charitable interests which were developed and exploited with such amazing generosity and such warm devotion by the men and women of our era. This, as it were, is the positive evidence with which we have been concerned. We now turn to a discussion of the religious charities of our age, to a depressing annal which exhibits all too starkly the negative evidence.

It may be suggested that the graphic evidence presented in connection with Table I tells us at a glance what happened over this period of almost two centuries, during this hinge period in the history of a great culture.¹ In the full course of our period donors disposed the substantial total of £659,628 15s for a great variety of religious uses, for maintaining the elaborate and essential offices of the church, this amounting to slightly more than a fifth (21.26 per cent) of all their charitable wealth. These benefactions were in total only a fraction of the great sums designated for the care of the poor and were far less than the capital provided for the several educational uses.

But far more important was the steep and irrevocable relative decline of men's interest in most pressing religious needs when measured

¹ *Vide* the bar graph submitted with Table I (Appendix).

against their immense contribution to the secular concerns of the age. Thus during the two generations prior to the Reformation they gave the very large total of £281,158 15s for various religious causes, this accounting for 53.49 per cent of all their charities and, even more significantly, constituting almost 43 per cent (42.62 per cent) of the whole amount which donors of our age were to provide for religious uses. This was a great achievement. One may reasonably suppose, indeed, that men in this era gave to the church roughly the resources required of their generosity for the carrying forward of its services and the due maintenance of its immense fabric. When, however, we examine the evidence in more detail, it becomes clear that the climax of giving for religious purposes was reached as early as the first decade of the sixteenth century, and that beginning most dramatically with the year 1510 there set in a steep and an irreversible decline, which was both absolute and relative, not arrested for a full century.¹ During the troubled decades of reformation and religious experimentation, as we should expect, giving for religious uses declined abruptly, the £33,526 5s provided in these years amounting to no more than 14.77 per cent of all charities, thus displaying proportionately far less interest in the needs of the church than in other of the great charitable heads such as poor relief (27.04 per cent), social rehabilitation (30.21 per cent), and education (21.28 per cent).

Even this slender and grossly inadequate support for the requirements of the church was in the course of the incredibly secular Elizabethan age to be in relative terms almost exactly halved. During this long and famous age only £31,959 7s was disposed by donors for religious uses, this constituting no more than 7.17 per cent of all charitable wealth, a smaller proportion even than was devoted to municipal betterments (7.57 per cent), and insignificant indeed when assessed against the Elizabethan preoccupation with the other great charitable uses. Still more significantly, the total designated for religious causes during the whole of this era was substantially less than the amount given in any, save one, of the decades of the two generations preceding the Reformation. This amazing, this truly revolutionary, shift in sentiment and aspirations was, as we should expect, most markedly an urban phenomenon, though the stark secularism of the age is fully and dramatically evident in every county in the realm. An immensely important and a permanent metamorphosis in the structure of men's aspirations had occurred as a consequence of the complex and powerful historical forces which this study seeks to analyse.

Elizabethan secularism was so intense and so sustained, as we shall see in county after county, that grievous damage was wrought by men's indifference to the fabric, the offices, and the ministry of the church. It

¹ *Vide* Table VI (Appendix) and the accompanying curve.

is ironical indeed that pious rectors and historians have for three centuries past blamed on the brief episode of Puritan hegemony the essentially irreparable damage done in the course of the reign of that great sovereign whose inscrutable personality only partially concealed an indifferent temper in religion, a coldly Erastian policy, and a basic contempt for the clerical mind. But in this respect, and this was true of her whole regimen, the mind and policy of Elizabeth reflected, always to an enhanced degree, the mind and the aspirations of her people. In this fact, indeed, consists the greatness of this illustrious ruler.

The church could scarcely endure if the intense, the almost contemptuous, secularism of the Elizabethan age were to persist. The Stuarts were pious sovereigns, deeply concerned with the needs of the church and alarmed by the stark secularism of their subjects. James, in an inept and erratic fashion, and Charles, under Laud's guidance, in a harsh and compelling manner, both sought to help the church in its great and manifest needs and endeavoured to create a climate of opinion which would restore the requirements of faith to the Christian conscience of their people. Though their efforts not only failed but assisted in bringing on the Civil War, there was a considerable relative and a very substantial absolute increase in giving for religious causes in the course of the early Stuart period. In all, £256,522 was disposed for the needs of the church, this amounting to 17·85 per cent of all charitable benefactions for the interval and exhibiting an intensity of concern somewhat more than double that of the Elizabethan period. It must, however, be said that a closer analysis of the data suggests that much of this increased concern for very real and certainly pressing religious needs was forced, and from Laud's point of view much of it was illusory. Relatively speaking, the benefactions provided in the first decade of the Stuart period were almost as starkly secular as those of the whole Elizabethan era, while nearly half the large total for the whole of the early Stuart period was concentrated in the single Laudian decade (1631-1640) when the really huge sum of £125,388 11s was disposed, principally by reluctant givers who were subjected to pressures which could approach *force majeure* in their intensity. The completion of the rehabilitation of St Paul's Cathedral had become for Laud a symbol of the success of his whole zealous but dangerously misguided policy, for he fully sensed the fact that the long Elizabethan and Jacobean neglect of the half-ruined fabric of the church was the national symbol for the cold and hard indifference of a great but an intensely secular age. Much of the huge sum raised for St Paul's, with the full majesty of sovereignty directing the effort, was, from the point of view of the principally Puritan merchants who made large but grudging contributions, given under a pressure which approached extortion, though we have, as we

must, reckoned these as charitable contributions.¹ So, too, persistent but far less successful pressure was brought to bear on the counties of England to mend their crumbling fabrics, with the result that in this one frantic decade the large total of £85,438 6s was spent on church building in the whole of the area with which we are concerned, substantially more, it may be noted, than in the whole of the preceding century. But Laud, his sovereign, and his church, or more accurately his conception of the church, paid a terrible price not many months after this decade had closed for having lifted thus modestly the proportion of charitable benefactions dedicated to religious uses. Laud must himself have sensed the danger, for ominously enough during the early Stuart era the second largest sum, £46,253 12s, recorded for any religious use was dedicated to the endowment of Puritan lectureships, a movement bitterly opposed and finally throttled by the Archbishop. Laud and his government were barely able to restrain this movement; he knew full well that immense and resolute Puritan wealth stood ready, quite literally, to purchase the Church of England with coin of the realm. The interdiction of sovereignty had of necessity to be laid across the course of this resolution.

During the period of Puritan triumph, support for the various religious uses fell away considerably, though not dramatically, from the level so ruinously established in the early Stuart era. Donors of this period gave in all £56,462 8s to the church, this constituting 12.09 per cent of all charitable benefactions and very possibly representing the true measure of the intensity of the religious preoccupation. Puritanism, having gained by force of arms that which it could not purchase, showed itself essentially subject to the same social and historical pressures that had characterized English life and thought for a century past. The donors of this age, their wills would seem to testify, were deeply and genuinely pious men, but they were at bottom intensely secular in their aspirations for their own age and for the future of England; so perhaps was Puritanism itself.

The needs of the church were so multifarious, the traditional dependence on free gifts so great, the whole institutional organization of the church and its worship so complex, that we must needs examine the several heads under which we have reckoned benefactions, in order to assess more accurately the devastating effects of secularism in the England of our age. Though the total amounts were never large, it seems probable that the most sensitive of all the barometers of loyalty to the church and its offices were the gifts, usually made by bequest, for the general, the unrestricted, uses of the church and the support of its services. A most miscellaneous group of offerings has been gathered under this head,² such benefactions having been almost universal,

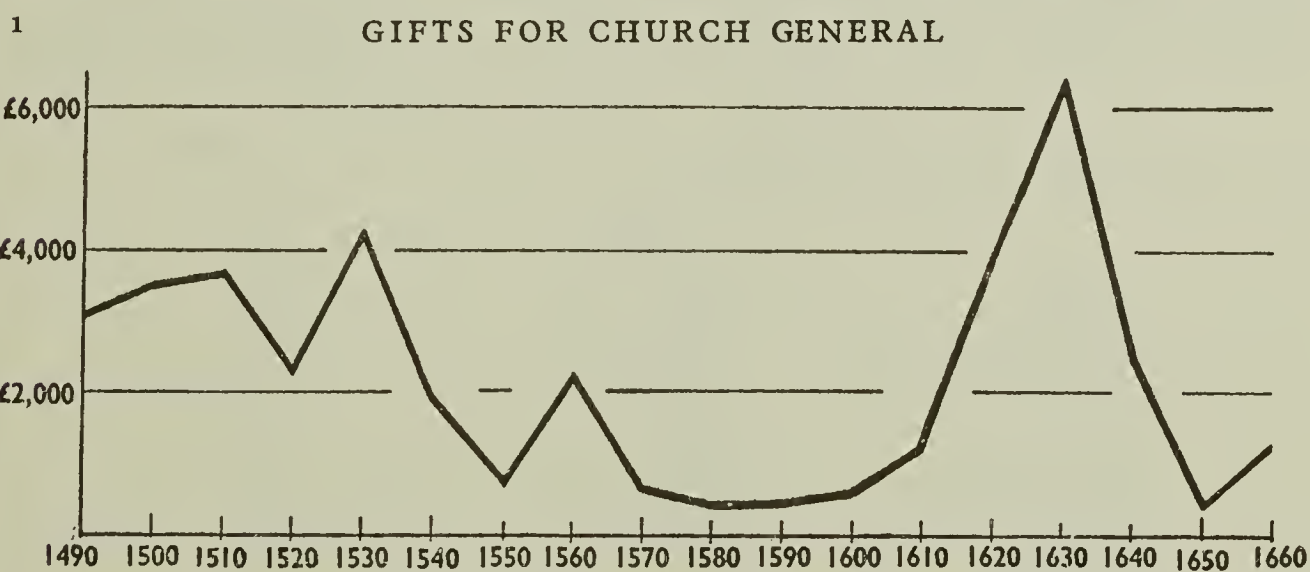
¹ This interesting and important matter will be fully discussed in the second volume of this study.

² *Vide ante*, 50, for a fuller listing.

usually in tiny sums, prior to 1530 in all counties and until about 1570 in several of the more completely rural provinces. The quite modest total of £40,763 15s was given for this use during the years under study, this amounting to no more than 1.31 per cent of all charitable funds, and providing in dubiously relevant average terms only slightly more than £13 8s for each of the many parishes comprehended in our group of counties during this long span of nearly two centuries.

Prior to the Reformation, or more precisely prior to 1530, these small but ubiquitous gifts had constituted an extremely important source of assistance in maintaining the offices of the church. Thus in the years before 1540 such contributions had attained the substantial total of £18,992, or upwards of £6 in average terms for the 3033 parishes with which we are concerned. Moreover, it should be emphasized, this contribution of late mediaeval piety accounted for nearly half the sum garnered for this significant use during the whole of our period. Such giving sloped off steeply after 1530, with little indication of renewed interest for almost three full generations.¹ In the twenty years of the Reformation, £3054 17s was provided for this use, while in the age of Elizabeth benefactions for general church purposes fell away abruptly and calamitously. The total given for this purpose in the course of these forty years was a trifling £2151 17s, or in average terms not much more than 14s for each parish in our regions.² Further, it will be observed that the curve for the whole interval was remarkably steady, each small decade total representing, so to speak, the irreducible minimum of concern on the part of humble and conservative benefactors, for the most part in rural parishes.

There was some measure of revival of interest in the general needs of the church during the early Stuart period, noted in both rural and urban



² An unsigned memorandum in the State Papers, composed in a decade in which in our ten counties the contribution for the general uses of the church totalled no more than £599 16s, in protesting against the sale of lands which of right were possessions of the church, complained bitterly of the want of support for the needs of the church (*S.P. Dom.*, 1593, CCXLIV, 68).

parishes, the total of such benefactions amounting to £14,239 19s, for this long interval. This interesting upswing was particularly marked in the two decades 1611-1630, when about £10,500 was given for this use, though it must be pointed out that relatively this whole development appears insignificant indeed when measured against the amazing charitable outpouring of this age for secular causes. During the Cromwellian period such benefactions fell away steeply once more, though hardly to the Elizabethan depths, the not very impressive total of £2324 5s having been provided during these years.

These interesting and significant trends are, as we shall see in our discussion of the several counties, to be observed in all parts of the realm, though there were substantial differences both in the time when secularism overcame the various communities and in the velocity of its momentum. Taking our whole period in view, the donors of London and Buckinghamshire gave relatively no more than trifling sums for this religious use, while those of Lancashire, Norfolk, Kent, and most particularly Somerset, gave quite substantially for this purpose, perhaps always more important symbolically than financially.¹

We have included no head for gifts made for the support of monasticism in our period, having rather distributed such items to other appropriate categories of religious giving, all save one of which, prayers for the dead, persisted throughout our period. At the same time, we have recorded these benefactions with care and should comment at least briefly on the relatively slight support being lent to monastic institutions long before their expropriation was contemplated by Henry VIII and his ministers.

There is abundant evidence to suggest that English monasticism was in process of slow dissolution well before our period began. The great surge of foundations occurred in a relatively short period from the eleventh century to the early thirteenth, with few foundations being

¹ The proportion of all charitable wealth designated for the general uses of the church in the several counties was:

	<i>Amount</i>			<i>Per</i>
	£	s	d	cent
Bristol	1,702	2	0	1.85
Buckinghamshire	534	13	0	0.61
Hampshire	1,456	16	0	1.67
Kent	5,672	2	0	2.25
Lancashire	2,118	8	0	2.04
London	16,863	11	0	0.89
Norfolk	4,801	8	0	2.70
Somerset	3,794	5	0	3.26
Worcestershire	837	9	0	1.59
Yorkshire	2,983	1	0	1.22
	<hr/>			<hr/>
	40,763	15	0	1.31

made in any part of England after 1325. Nor was that all, for a decline in the number of monks serving the existing establishments also set in during the fourteenth century, which by the opening of our era may have reduced by a full half the number of the regular clergy. The monastic life, for a variety of reasons, simply failed to attract sufficient priests, many small houses were of necessity abandoned, and many more in the early sixteenth century possessed so few brethren that the proper spiritual offices could not be maintained.¹

These general observations are most precisely documented when we assess the support lent to the institution of monasticism by men of our age. In the course of two generations donors gave for various monastic uses £56,692 7s, of which it should be noted about 43 per cent was provided by royal benefactors for monastic purposes in London. These benefactions, swollen as they were by royal generosity, represented approximately a tenth of all charitable wealth disposed in the years 1480–1540, while it is noteworthy that in no county, London aside, was as much as 7 per cent of charitable giving directed to the needs of the many monastic establishments in the regions with which we are concerned. Moreover, when the purposes for which these funds were given are more closely analysed, it will be seen that of this total only a small amount (£6170 6s) was disposed for the general or free use of the monasteries and that no more than a trifling sum (£2720 5s) was vested directly for the support of the regular clergy. Rather more than half of the whole sum was disposed, for the most part in trusts, for the maintenance of prayers for the dead, while the grossly inadequate outlay of £18,576 16s was made for the support of the vast and the decaying fabric of the many monastic establishments to be found within our counties.²

This means that in average terms the whole great institution of monasticism in our region, with all its many services and needs, received a flow of sustaining funds of not quite £1000 a year. This support was totally inadequate when measured against the needs, trivial when assessed against the immense wealth with which an earlier age had established these monasteries. Using Savine's impressively careful data, we may estimate that the monastic institutions of our region possessed on the eve of expropriation capital resources of the order of £1,129,830, or something over 41 per cent of the monastic wealth of the whole realm. In the course of two generations men of our period contributed no more than an additional 5 per cent towards the sustenance of these numerous establishments, an amount far from sufficient to repair the

¹ Coulton, *Five centuries of religion*, III, 540–558; Snape, R. H., *English monastic finances in the later middle ages* (Cambridge, 1926), 20–22; Hughes, *Reformation in England*, I, 36–71; Holdsworth, *English law*, IV, 36–37.

² See p. 304.

Distribution of monastic benefactions, 1480-1540:

	Prayers			Clergy			Fabric			General			Total			Per cent of county total, 1480-1540
	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	
Bristol	5	0	0	6	0	0	626	13	0	501	7	0	1,139	0	0	6.77
Buckinghamshire	162	15	0	11	11	0				7	14	0	182	0	0	2.04
Hampshire	119	0	0	8	14	0	78	13	0	2	11	0	208	18	0	1.35
Kent	970	6	0	1960	17	0	868	19	0	982	7	0	4,782	9	0	6.42
Lancashire	153	14	0	24	3	0	194	19	0	421	17	0	794	13	0	3.57
London	23,884	12	0	194	9	0	15,420	8	0	2384	3	0	41,883	12	0	16.75
Norfolk	840	1	0	179	3	0	263	6	0	725	11	0	2,008	1	0	4.60
Somerset	401	10	0	12	4	0	702	10	0	676	10	0	1,792	14	0	5.80
Worcestershire	347	5	0	0	18	0	2	15	0	25	1	0	375	19	0	3.25
Yorkshire	2,340	17	0	322	6	0	418	13	0	443	5	0	3,525	1	0	6.86
Totals	29,225	0	0	2720	5	0	18,576	16	0	6170	6	0	56,692	7	0	10.79
	(51.55 per cent)			(4.80 per cent)			(32.77 per cent)			(10.88 per cent)						

ravages which time, fire, slow erosion, and maladministration had wrought on the fabric and on the endowment of English monasticism. In London alone, and there only because of royal generosity towards Westminster Abbey, was monasticism even maintained in its existing strength, while in six of our counties less than 2 per cent was added to monastic wealth by pious donors in the two generations prior to the Expropriation.¹

Finally, it should be remarked that when we take our whole region into account the curve of support for monasticism declined steadily throughout our period, a dramatic and withering indifference charting a decline which there is reason to believe had set in well over a century before the accession of the Tudors. There were many and most complex causes for this decline of popular support for monasticism, a phenomenon which in a broad sense was quite as truly European as it was English. But among the most important of them, in our ten counties at least, were the fact that, despite its huge vested wealth, English monasticism was by the beginning of our era making only a slight social contribution to the pressing needs of the age by the distribution of alms, and the growing realization that such meagre alms as they did distribute were, because of their casual and undisciplined nature, probably on balance harmful. We shall examine this important question in detail in our discussion of charities in the several counties, but we may here suggest that the conviction was almost universally held, well before the Reformation, that English monasticism no longer served any important social function, while many responsible and devout men had come to question its spiritual efficacy. The springs of support for monasticism had dried up in England long before the Reformation; the whole institution collapsed at the touch of sovereignty.

¹ Relation of gifts to monasteries (1480–1540) to total estimated capital worth at the time of the Dissolution. (A multiplier of 20 has been used on Savine's estimates of income worth.)

	<i>Capital worth</i>			<i>Gifts</i> <i>1480–1540</i>			<i>Per cent</i> <i>of worth</i>
	£	s	d	£	s	d	
Bristol	20,077	0	0	1,139	0	0	5.67
Buckinghamshire	21,236	0	0	182	0	0	0.86
Hampshire	103,751	0	0	208	18	0	0.20
Kent	137,948	0	0	4,782	9	0	3.47
Lancashire	33,975	0	0	794	13	0	2.34
London	230,678	0	0	41,883	12	0	18.16
Norfolk	103,605	0	0	2,008	1	0	1.94
Somerset	158,891	0	0	1,792	14	0	1.13
Worcestershire	80,981	0	0	375	19	0	0.46
Yorkshire	238,688	0	0	3,525	1	0	1.48
	1,129,830	0	0	56,692	7	0	5.02

While also subject to a notable decline, the flow of funds, whether capital or income, for the support of prayers for the dead exhibits no such withering as that which we have noted in our discussion of monasticism. There were few recorded chantry foundations in England prior to the beginning of the thirteenth century, but the late decades of that century witnessed a vast outpouring of funds for the endowment of prayers, the movement being greatly assisted by the rich foundation made in 1290 by Edward I on the death of his queen. The climax of benefactions for these foundations was attained in the fourteenth century, when several thousand were probably established, leading, as Coulton has put it, to a kind of 'liturgical bankruptcy', since cathedral churches, monasteries, and even parish churches had assumed on trust more precise obligations for masses for the souls of the dead than could possibly be fulfilled. The episcopal authorities were gravely concerned not only because of the neglect of the spiritual responsibilities thus undertaken, but because so large a proportion of religious benefactions was dedicated to the maintenance of stipendiary priests whose duties were at once light and not easily disciplined. The inevitable consequence was that in the course of the fifteenth century most of the earlier foundations simply disappeared, funds were devoted to other uses, and the whole institution of endowed prayers fell into considerable disrepute.¹

Though the evidence is most uncertain, we may believe that the marked decline in the foundation of chantries which marks our period as contrasted even with the preceding century was occasioned by a widespread distrust of the church in its capacity as administrator of endowments in perpetuity rather than any substantial and heretical doubts concerning the efficacy of prayers for the dead. Very substantial sums, of capital and income, were dedicated by men and women of our period for the repose of their souls, but normally under terms and conditions which bespoke an almost complete distrust of the church as an administrator of trusts. Thus reversionary clauses were common, secular bodies, such as merchant companies, were constituted trustees, minute and binding instructions charged with suspicion were laid down, and increasingly prayers were linked almost incidentally to essentially secular foundations such as schools, almshouses, or university fellowships.² With the Reformation, of course, the whole question of the efficacy of such foundations became a matter of central doctrinal significance, priests being forbidden by law as early as 1529 to accept stipends for

¹ Cook, G. H., *Mediaeval chantries* (L., 1947), 8-9, 33-50, 58-60; Coulton, *Five centuries of religion*, III, 65-86.

² Wood-Legh, K. L., 'Some aspects of . . . chantries', *Royal Historical Society Trans.*, 4th ser., XXVIII (1946), 56-59; Cook, *Mediaeval chantries*, 58-59.

saying prayers for the dead, while in 1547 chantries were dissolved by law. It is most significant that Queen Mary's valiant and somewhat frenzied efforts to restore prayers for the dead failed almost completely, only slender capital sums being risked for this purpose by donors during these tragic years, while such prayers were absolutely and finally prohibited by the Elizabethan injunction of 1559.¹

In total, the substantial sum of £149,656 11s was provided for prayers by donors of our period, amounting to 4.82 per cent of all benefactions. More pertinently, such gifts and bequests loom very large indeed in the years prior to the Reformation, when the massive total of £140,864 3s disposed for prayers represents more than a fourth (26.80 per cent) of all charitable wealth, greatly exceeding the amount provided for any other single charitable use and being almost exactly double the whole of the sum disposed under all heads for the succour of the poor. There are in all some thousands of these bequests, most donors of course having provided no more than a few shillings for a trental of prayers or an anniversary mass, or establishing a small capital sum to ensure an obit for a stated term of years. But, as we shall note in our discussion of the counties, a considerable number of these benefactions were very substantial indeed, being capital sums for the foundation of perpetual chantries. It is rather surprising that of the whole amount left for prayers the very large total of £124,152 13s, this being upwards of 80 per cent (82.96 per cent) of the whole, was in capital form. In other terms, these creations of our period were sufficient, had there been no attrition, to provide an annual income of perhaps £6000 for the support principally of stipendiary priests. Since the average stipend designated in these deeds of gift was £6 3s 9d p.a., this means

¹ The royal injunctions of Edward VI (1547) ordered a most important change from the traditional form of praying for the 'present felicity' of the dead to 'ye shall pray for all them that be departed out of this world in the faith of Christ that they with us, and we with them at the day of judgement, may rest both body and soule . . . in the Kingdome of Heaven' (Frere, W. H., ed., *Visitation articles and injunctions of the . . . Reformation*, 3 vols., L., 1910, II, 130). The Elizabethan injunction was even more strongly worded, requiring the clergy to do no more than to 'praise God for all those that are departed out of this life in the faith of Christ, and pray unto God that we may have grace so to direct our lives after their good example, that after this life we with them may be made partakers of the glorious resurrection' (*Ibid.*, III, 29). Archbishop Parker's *Articles* of 1560 warned the clergy that prayers for the dead were by law forbidden (*Ibid.*, III, 84), while the bishops were very specific in prohibiting their clergy from making 'the communion a mass of requiem . . . persuading the people to pray for the dead' (*Ibid.*, III, 167, 209, 289-290). Despite the pressure of the law and the persistent efforts of the bishops, it is interesting to note that at least some small amounts were left by will for a generation after the accession of Queen Elizabeth (the total is £201 7s) for prayers for the souls of the testators, without occasioning any difficulty in probate. Save for one in the Laudian period, these bequests disappeared after 1590.

that something like 1000 priests in England may well have received the whole or most of their support from these late and doomed foundations. The capital thus disposed, it is lamentable to report, approximately doubled that so painfully provided during our entire period for the support of the desperately poor parochial clergy of England. The whole of this capital for prayers was expropriated and was applied principally to a variety of secular uses. It seems tragic indeed that it could not have been disposed either by the donors or by the Crown to lifting the annual stipends of the parochial clergy of our ten counties, in average terms, by almost £2 p.a. each.

In no single respect, it may certainly be noted, did private charity fail more conspicuously than in bettering the status and the lives of the parish clergy. Broadly speaking, tithe income in the Middle Ages was sufficient to support the parochial clergy and the church fabric had it been solidly or even principally devoted to the central needs of the church and its worship. But in the course of the mediaeval period a large proportion of parochial revenues was appropriated for the support of monasteries, with the result that over broad areas no more than a miserly fraction of the whole of revenues derived from the parishes was in fact dedicated to the ministry of the church.¹ The expropriations of the era of the Reformation in no sense worsened an already serious situation, but, by vesting the impropriations as pieces of property in lay hands, did tend to fix the system irrevocably, it being probable that by 1560 somewhat more than one-third of all parochial revenues were lay possessions. The position of the parish clergy was further worsened when, at the Reformation, marriage, with its attendant responsibilities, was embraced by the great majority of their number, with no increases in stipend; even more serious was the steady erosion of the inflationary process against their fixed and very small incomes. Elizabeth displayed neither interest nor sympathy with the plight of the parochial clergy of the realm, though the always courageous Grindal warned her that 'this Church of England hath been by appropriations (and not without sacrilege) spoil'd of the livings, which at the first were appointed to the office of preaching and teaching. Which appropriations were first annexed to abbies, and after came to the Crown, and now are disposed to private men's possessions, without hope to reduce the same to the original institution. So that at this day, in my opinion, where one church is able to yield sufficient living to a learned preacher, there are at least seven churches unable to do the same.'²

¹ Henry Spelman (*English works*, L., 1727, 35) estimated that 3845 of 9284 parishes had been impropriated. In some areas conditions were wretched indeed; in Yorkshire, for example, 392 of 622 parishes were impropriated. Weever (*Ancient funerall monuments*, 194) estimated that 3236 parishes were impropriated.

² Kennett, White, *The case of impropriations* (L., 1704), 172.

It was not until the early Stuart period that any considerable secular concern was shown for the plight of the clergy. In the House of Commons the Puritan members particularly brought forward plans to better the lot of the parochial clergy, principally at the expense of the bishops and the cathedral clergy, who were also large holders of impropriations. As we shall see, the Puritan tactic was to secure more pulpits for earnest and godly preachers by the purchase or gift of impropriations and the founding of lectureships, but there was simultaneously an effort made by Archbishop Laud with the support of the King to persuade pious benefactors to return impropriations to the church from which they had originally been secured by the monastic foundations. This effort, which Bishop Kennett has traced out with care, was not impressively successful,¹ though the concern displayed by Laud and his followers undoubtedly did inspire capital gifts of considerably greater value designed to secure the augmentation of clerical income.²

During the whole course of our period £71,551 14s was disposed for the maintenance of the clergy by men concerned about their poor estate. Such contributions were relatively modest during the decades prior to the Reformation when £9291 15s was provided for this use, principally, it may be said, in testamentary gifts for named parish priests or sums to be divided amongst the monks of a particular religious house. Approximately the same intensity of interest was maintained during the short interval of the Reformation when £3626 10s was devoted to the augmentation of clerical incomes, with the important difference that a much larger proportion was in capital form. But even this modest flow of funds for the support of the parochial clergy all but dried up during the amazingly secular age that was to follow, the whole sum provided in the Elizabethan interval amounting to no more than £4253 6s. This really insignificant amount, given over a period of four decades, is all the more inadequate when we recall that this was precisely the period when the economic condition of the clergy was at its worst and that the government itself made no move to lend any assistance to well over half the parochial clergy of the realm, who simply could not live and carry on their ministry with the stipends available to them.

Substantial, though still modest, improvement in the status of the parish clergy was to occur in the early Stuart period. As agricultural prices rose steadily, the economic position of those of the clergy who possessed the whole of the glebes and the tithes rose accordingly,

¹ *Vide* Kennett's annotations in his own copy of *The case of impropriations*, preserved in the Bodleian Library. This source was brought to my attention by Christopher Hill's valuable *Economic problems of the church* (Oxford, 1956), to which remarks in this paragraph are also indebted.

² For examples, *vide* *S.P. Dom.*, 1633, CCL, 57; 1637, CCCLXXII, 67; 1640, CCCCL, 36. For a typical statement urging the return of impropriated tithes, *vide* Squire, *Three sermons*, 105-107.

though, as we have suggested, these conditions applied to no more than a fraction of the clergy of the realm. Even more help was lent by a sharp rise in the contributions made during these years either by the return of impropriations or, and much more importantly, by the creation of endowments designed to secure the augmentation of the stipends of clergymen in particular parishes. In all, the substantial total of £37,540 4s was given during this interval for this desperately needed use, almost the whole of which was in capital form. This rate of giving was well maintained during the period of revolution, £16,839 19s having been vested as endowments to secure augmentations by men and women who were confident that the true gospel had at last triumphed.

Still, when we take our whole period in view, the contribution made by private donors towards the better maintenance of the parochial clergy was slight indeed. The total of £71,551 14s so provided amounted to no more than 2.31 per cent of the whole of the charitable wealth disposed in our era, while the amount did not greatly exceed the sums given for such relatively minor uses as loan funds or for company needs. Moreover, of the whole amount not more than £57,437 15s (80.27 per cent) was in the enduring form of endowments, which would suggest that at the close of our period, in average terms, something less than £1 p.a. had been added to clerical stipends in the parishes of our area. There were, of course, pronounced regional differences in the degree of interest exhibited in the needs of the parish clergy, such counties as Somerset and Worcestershire having made no more than token contribution to this great need.¹ In Kent, Norfolk, and Lancashire, on the other hand, far more substantial contributions were made, while in Yorkshire, where the economic status of the clergy was notoriously degraded, the really helpful total of £15,661 9s was contributed for the augmentation of stipends, this being 6.43 per cent of all the charitable wealth there disposed.

¹ The proportion of total charitable wealth devoted to the augmentation of clerical stipends in the several counties follows:

	<i>Amount</i>			<i>Per cent</i>
	£	s	d	<i>of whole</i>
Bristol	1,223	3	0	1.33
Buckinghamshire	1,625	10	0	1.84
Hampshire	1,693	12	0	1.95
Kent	8,718	17	0	3.46
Lancashire	2,425	15	0	2.34
London	34,822	0	0	1.84
Norfolk	4,279	15	0	2.41
Somerset	848	16	0	0.73
Worcestershire	252	17	0	0.48
Yorkshire	15,661	9	0	6.43
	<hr/>			<hr/>
	71,551	14	0	2.31

Conjoined with the rather feeble interest in lifting the stipends of the parochial clergy by the endowment of augmentations was a far more powerful effort on the part of Puritan donors to raise the standards of preaching and the whole level of the clerical status by the foundation of lectureships within existing churches. Formidable and substantial as this movement was, it is apparent that Puritan generosity for this charitable use was restrained only by the suspicion of the governmental and ecclesiastical authorities, giving way in the Laudian period to a prohibition sanctioned by confiscatory power. This whole interesting movement, which deserves to be carefully studied from the rich materials available, seems to have had three principal aspects.

The first and certainly the most important motive on the part of the Puritan merchants who supplied most of these endowments was to secure a preaching clergy, particularly in those areas which had not been wholly won from Rome or in key pulpits where the Gospel according to Geneva could be most effectively preached by men carefully selected for their evangelical fervour. The case of John Shaw, a native of Yorkshire, comes to mind as typical. A graduate of Cambridge, where his Puritanism was freely expressed, Shaw was none the less licensed by Bishop Morton and in 1630 gained a lectureship at Brampton, Derbyshire, where he remained for three years. At the suggestion of friends he went to London, probably in 1633, where he knew 'there was at that time (and formerly had been) a custom for the merchants and other tradesmen that lived in London, so many of them as were al borne in the same county, to meet at a solemn feast (upon their own charges) . . . and then to consult what good they might do to their nativ county by settling some ministers (or some other good work) in that county'. Shaw preached before a number of merchants who were natives of Devonshire and these men in the next year settled him as lecturer in the market town of Chumleigh, where he remained for three effective years until Laud's attack on the whole system of lectureships under lay (and Puritan) control brought his ministry to an end.¹

The second aspiration of the founders of Puritan lectureships was to secure for the church an able and a more learned clergy. We sometimes forget that only a relatively small proportion of the Elizabethan parochial clergy were as late as 1580 graduates of the universities and that their deficiencies became all the more glaring as the general level of literacy and education was almost precipitously raised by the cultural

¹ 'The life of master John Shaw', in *Surtees Society Publications*, LXV (1875), 126-129. It might be added that Shaw then returned to York, where he was appointed lecturer at All Hallows in the Pavement. He shortly collided with Archbishop Neile, who accused him of being a leader in the strong Puritan party in the city, but Shaw remained undisturbed under the protection of the Puritan Earl of Pembroke.

impact of the many grammar schools being founded in all parts of the realm. The lecturers appointed under the new endowments were, in general, learned as well as highly gifted men whose attainments were so conspicuous as to exert on the episcopal authorities an irresistible pressure to seek in turn to raise clerical standards generally. A swift and a most substantial betterment resulted as the flow of graduates from hundreds of new grammar schools to the newly strengthened universities set in, with the consequence that in as backward a county as Worcestershire, where in 1580 no more than 23 per cent of the clergy were university graduates, more than half were so trained in 1620, and nearly all (84 per cent) by the close of the early Stuart era.¹

Finally, it may be suggested, these merchant donors in about 1625 joined their efforts in a common undertaking which the ecclesiastical authorities could only regard as a conspiracy to secure control of the clergy with the intention of converting the church by purchase into the Puritan mould. This interesting and most significant episode has been well and thoroughly discussed by earlier writers,² but we might here say that when judgment was rendered against the lay feoffees in 1632 those shrewd and determined men had already gained control of eighteen impropriations and eleven advowsons by the device of purchasing from lay impropriators and settling the legal power of appointment and the income thus gained under trust covenants firmly vested in lay and godly hands. Laud was very properly alarmed, since he was fully aware of the immense wealth that stood poised and ready to wrest power and the control of policy from him and his bishops. The endowment of lectureships did not come to an end in 1632, but any massive Puritan undertakings had for a season been frustrated. It is no wonder that Puritan hatred and distrust of Laud was after 1632 implacable.

Steadily restrained and opposed as was this charitable use, so powerful were the impulses that animated it that in the relatively brief span of about eighty years almost exactly as much was supplied, nearly all of it capital, for the founding of lectureships as was given during the course of our whole period for the maintenance of the parochial clergy.³ In all, the substantial total of £70,267 18s was vested for the endowment of lectureships, this amounting to 2.27 per cent of the whole *corpus* of

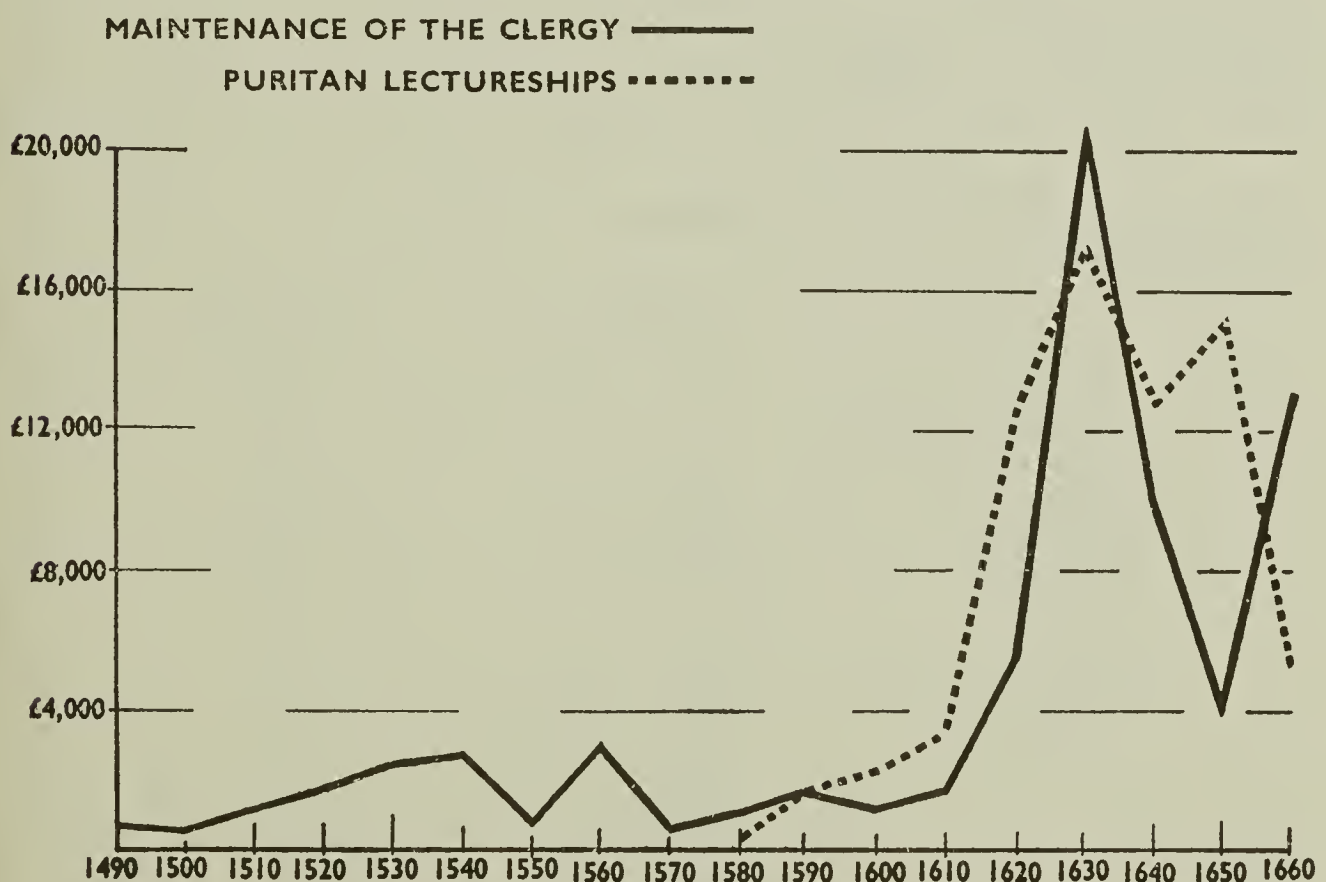
¹ Hill, *Economic problems of the church*, 207. *Vide ibid.*, 239, for a most discerning comment on the general improvement in the intellectual standards of the clergy.

² Gardiner, S. R., *History of England* (10 vols., L., 1896-1901), VII, 258-262; Kirby, E. W., 'The lay feoffees', *Journal of Modern History*, XIV (1942), 1-25; Calder, I. M., 'A seventeenth century attempt to purify the Anglican church', *American Historical Review*, LIII (1948), 760-775; Parker, H. A., 'The feoffees of impropriations', *Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Publications*, XI (1906-1907), 263-277; Hill, *Economic problems of the church*, 252-263.

³ See graph opposite.

charitable wealth accumulated during our period. The movement began very modestly and tentatively towards the middle of Elizabeth's reign, gathering momentum slowly but steadily with the result that a total of £4307 16s was provided for the purpose by the close of the century. Modest as was this sum, it is interesting to note that it slightly exceeded the slender amount given during the whole course of the reign for the augmentation of the stipends of the parochial clergy. The total disposed for lectureships in the first decade of the next century rose abruptly to £3436 and then almost quadrupled in the following decade, when £12,823 7s was given. The climax came in the years just prior to the legal decision which ran so catastrophically against the feoffees for impropriations, the very substantial total of £17,323 7s having been given for lectureships in the years 1621-1630. There was a considerable, though hardly an abrupt, falling away in the last decade before the outbreak of the Civil War, when £12,670 18s was dedicated to the founding of lectureships, though closer analysis reveals that a heavy proportion of this sum was given in the first two years of the decade. Giving for this godly purpose increased markedly in the decade of the Civil War, to the impressive total of £15,066, and then declined steeply when under the Commonwealth and Protectorate it seemed that the church as defined by the godly was secure. The whole movement, then, was effectively concentrated in a relatively brief period of forty years (1611-1650) when the large total of £57,883 12s was vested for lectureships, this being 82.37 per cent of the whole amount so dedicated.

GIFTS FOR MAINTENANCE OF THE CLERGY AND PURITAN LECTURESHIPS



The support of Puritan lectureships was largely the contribution of London and provincial merchants who possessed the evangelical fervour and the considerable substance, and who had available the legal skills required to undertake a complex benefaction of this kind. London wealth was even more than commonly decisive in the establishment of these trusts, nearly 71 per cent of the whole amount having been given by its donors. Relatively heavy outlays for this charitable purpose were also made in Hampshire and Yorkshire, with a very substantial vesting of such endowments in Lancashire, where, as we shall see in a later volume, the founding of lectureships was importantly connected with the organized effort being made to wrest the county from Rome. In the remaining counties in our group, the interest displayed in this significant undertaking was very slight indeed.¹

Doubtless one of the most sensitive of all indicators of men's loyalty to the church and devotion to its needs is the care which they give to its fabric. Under the large head of *Church Repairs*, as has been explained,² we have grouped a great variety of contributions for the repair of churches, the embellishment of their furnishings, and the provision of objects used in divine services. Generally speaking, such benefactions sprang from instincts of deep piety and reverence, though, when the fabric of a parish church was in really bad repair, moving secular instincts of local pride must likewise have been involved. It is with the analysis of the curve of this interest in the maintenance of church fabric that we are now concerned.

The exact nature of the responsibility for the care of church fabric was not well defined either at the beginning or at the close of our period, nor were attempts so to define it at all successful. Thus the duty of impropriators to maintain churches in repair was never legally established despite the persistent efforts of the bishops, the common law

¹ Proportion of total charitable wealth vested in Puritan lectureships in the several counties:

	<i>Amount</i>			<i>Per cent of whole</i>
	£	s	d	
Bristol	1,410	0	0	1.53
Buckinghamshire	404	0	0	0.46
Hampshire	2,200	0	0	2.53
Kent	1,724	14	0	0.69
Lancashire	4,963	14	0	4.79
London	49,744	10	0	2.63
Norfolk	1,920	0	0	1.08
Somerset	1,020	0	0	0.88
Worcestershire	520	0	0	0.99
Yorkshire	6,361	0	0	2.61
	<hr/>			
	70,267	18	0	2.27

² *Vide ante*, 51-52.

courts tending to set prohibitions against efforts to distrain these lay proprietors. Successive royal injunctions from 1536 to 1559 made it clear that the clergy were expected to employ a full fifth of their revenues towards the maintenance of the fabric of the chancels of their churches, while the parishes were required, if need be by rates, to maintain in decent repair the rest of the building and the churchyard.¹ It seems probable that rates were infrequently imposed for this purpose prior to 1560, the contribution of the clergyman and the pious benefactions of the parishioners being, save for disastrous occurrences, normally sufficient to meet the requirements of the magnificent gothic inheritance with which England was endowed.

But, as we shall see, lay interest in the maintenance of fabric fell away sharply and disastrously, while it is all too clear that efforts to impose rates were most vigorously resisted by the principal landowners of many parishes, men who were quite prepared to endure excommunication rather than spend their substance on the repair of structures which not infrequently their own ancestors had built.² The improprators continued to resist all efforts to oblige them to assume responsibility, most parish clergy were too poor to meet the chancel dilapidations, and despite the exhortation in 1619 of all the bishops to parishioners to assume the burden as a charitable duty, no considerable interest could be aroused in the repair, much less the maintenance, of a rapidly disintegrating church fabric. The ruinous condition of hundreds, very probably thousands, of parish churches throughout England is abundantly testified to by every available source. Thus in Norfolk and East Suffolk, Bishop Redman's visitation of 1597 would suggest that almost one-seventh of the 806 churches of the diocese were in a state of disrepair ranging from 'decayed' to 'ruinous decay'.³ At about the same date Philip Stubbes tells us that many churches were in a ruinous state, with roofs thatched with straw, chancels in decay, and windows and doors gone.⁴ A generation later the full consequences of a half-century of almost complete neglect was summarized for Buckinghamshire in a survey of 116 churches, those of the larger towns being not included; of all these churches only three did not merit some censorious comment. In all, 107 of these edifices were in a state of serious decay and neglect, the almost oppressively certain evidence being not so much that poverty had prevented decent care of the fabric as that no one, clergyman or parishioner, had taken the trouble to make even minor repairs that

¹ Frere, *Visitation articles*, II, 11, 106, 122, 188, 262, 294, 336, 365, 402; III, 3, 13, 210, 221-222, 225, 255, 281-282, 285, 310-311, *et passim*.

² For instances, *vide* *S.P. Dom.*, 1635, CCLXXXVIII, 71; 1637, CCCLXXI, 90; CCCLXXII, 85; 1638, CCCCII, 31.

³ Williams, J. F., ed., 'Bishop Redman's visitation, 1597', *Norfolk Record Society*, XVIII (1946).

⁴ Stubbes, *A motiue to good workes* (1593), 80.

might at least have stayed the process of disintegration.¹ This condition, no worse in Buckinghamshire than in other regions, moved the always sagacious Thomas Fuller to confess that 'it grieves me to see the superstition of the former insult over the religion of this present age, bragging that she left us ten thousand churches and chapels, more or less, ready built, if we can find but repairers to keep them up'.² But 'the repairers to keep them up' were simply not forthcoming in the sternly secular age with which we are concerned.

In the whole course of our period private donors gave for the maintenance and repair of upwards of 3000 parish churches in the region under study the wholly insufficient total of £91,189 15s, this representing no more than 2.94 per cent of all charitable wealth. This amount, almost the whole of which was in the form of outright gifts,³ in average terms supplied only £30 1s 4d over a period of almost two centuries for each of the churches in our ten counties, though the fact is that it was largely concentrated on about half the churches of the area. Even more significantly, most of the giving for this important and certainly pressing charitable use was concentrated in the years prior to the Reformation, when a total of £42,312 13s was provided for the care of the fabric of parochial and monastic churches, this being upwards of 46 per cent of the whole sum given throughout our long era. Even during these earlier years there were many ecclesiastical complaints regarding the neglect of fabric, but it seems probable that the average rate of giving of something over £7000 a decade so stubbornly maintained through this interval was at least scanty sufficient for the care of the fabric as well as permitting several counties to indulge in the craze for towers and porches which marked the era. During this interval of six decades very nearly £14 (£13 19s) was available in average terms for the care of the fabric of each of the 3033 parish churches and chapels of the huge region under discussion.

Private contributions for the maintenance of parish churches sank abruptly, dramatically, and significantly with the advent of the Reformation. In the years 1541-1560 the modest total of £5146 6s of contributions has been reckoned. But even this seems generous indeed when we turn to that unblushingly secular age which followed. During the whole course of the Elizabethan era, gifts and bequests for the maintenance of the church fabric sank to an average decade rate of giving of only slightly more than £1570. In this long period, no more than £6283 7s was disposed for this purpose, despite the now frantic com-

¹ *S.P. Dom.*, 1637, CCCLXVI, 79; CCCLXIX, 59.

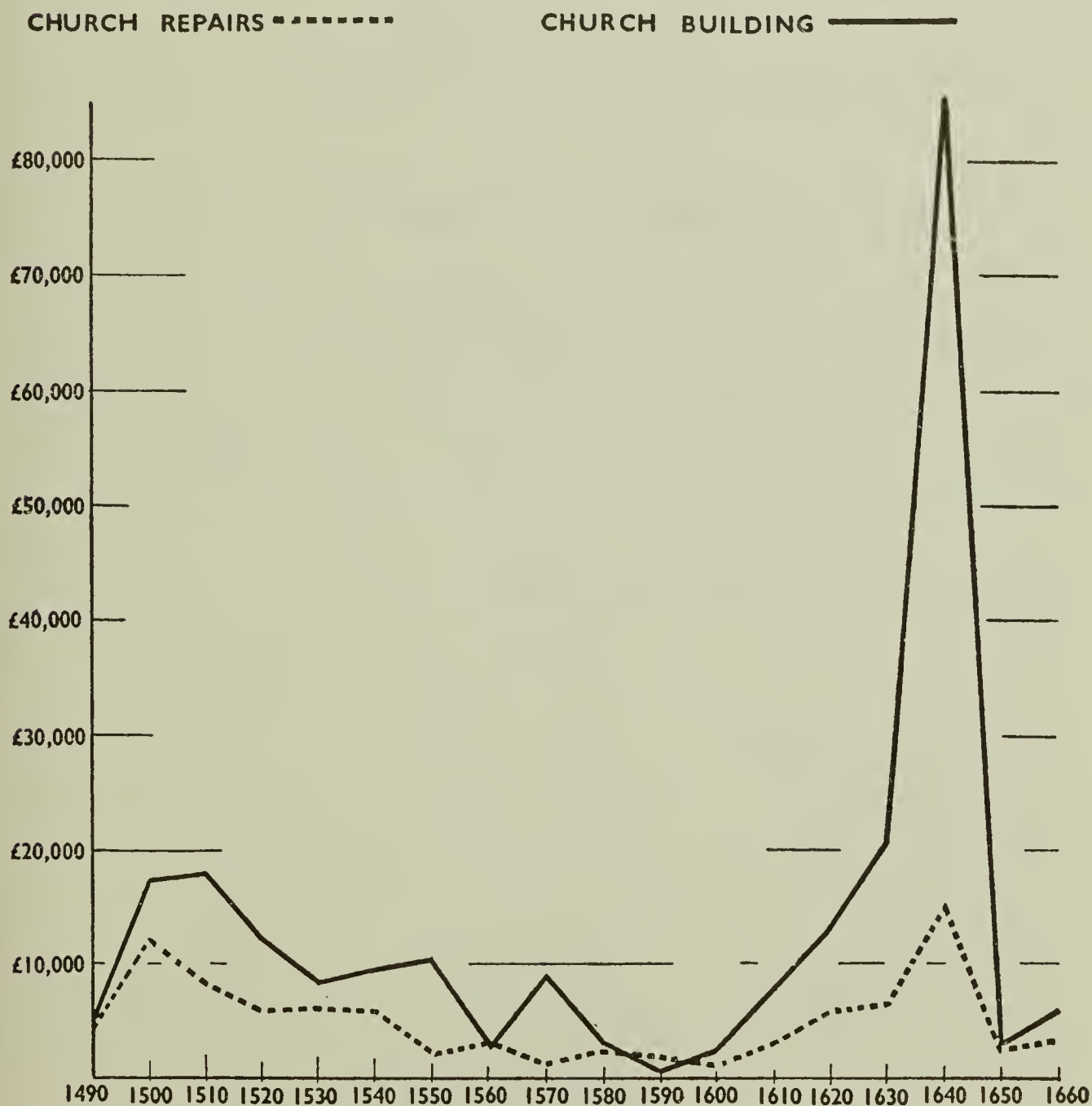
² Fuller, *Worthies*, I, 43.

³ The proportion of gifts for church repairs which were outright ranged from 37.29 per cent for Buckinghamshire to 97.98 per cent for Kent. Buckinghamshire was unique in its disposition to vest such gifts in capital form.

plaints from responsible ecclesiastical officials that the church fabric of England was in a state of disintegration. Incredible as it may seem, only £2 1s 5d was provided, in average terms, for each church in our whole area, while there is reason for believing that a similar study of the whole of England would reveal an even lower rate of contribution.¹

Nor was there any really substantial improvement, any real evidence of interest during the first decades of the early Stuart period, despite the desperate representations of the bishops and the active support of the central government. Though scores of churches were literally collapsing or being declared unsafe for worship, the curve of contribution for the now appalling need rose only very slowly from the £2922 5s given during the first decade of James's reign to the £6526 18s provided in the years 1621-1630. It is wholly accurate to say that over a span of ninety years the church fabric of the realm had been almost completely neglected by private donors, and this precisely during the years when,

¹ GIFTS FOR CHURCH REPAIRS AND CHURCH BUILDING



as we have pointed out, other resources were only inadequately available. This was the age when irreparable damage was done to many, perhaps most, of the churches of England, damage springing from a widespread and almost irresponsible indifference which was the fruit of Elizabethan secularism. Cromwell and the Puritans were on occasion responsible for changes in fabric and decoration which proceeded from their conception of worship, but, sentimental vicars and their descriptive leaflets notwithstanding, their brief inheritance and custodianship was of a gothic ruin on a national scale. It was this against which Archbishop Laud waged such a relentless and hopeless campaign, for his every move and every policy were suspect and stubbornly opposed precisely by those men who possessed vast substance which they were pouring into every area of secular charitable need. During the decade of his greatest power, it is true, the total given for church repairs rose abruptly to the considerable sum of £15,078 6s. But these 'gifts' in form were in fact often exactions. It was too little, it was too late, and it could not be sustained beyond the day of this strange man's fall. With the outbreak of the Civil War, contributions for the care of fabric fell steeply again to a level suggesting an intensity of interest roughly twice that of the Elizabethan era, but wholly inadequate for a still urgent need.

It may also be observed that there are most striking differences in the degree of intensity of interest in church repairs and maintenance among the several counties. The great urban areas, as we should expect, gave no more than really trivial proportions of their charitable substance for such uses, while in most of the rural counties, too, the amounts dedicated to this purpose were wholly inadequate.¹ Thus in Buckinghamshire, Worcestershire, and Yorkshire, where conditions were particularly bad, the proportion of funds given for this need ranged narrowly and most modestly from 2.78 per cent to 3.43 per cent of the whole. Only in

¹ Proportion of total charitable wealth given for church repairs in the several counties:

	<i>Amount</i>			<i>Per cent</i>
	£	s	d	<i>of whole</i>
Bristol	872	7	0	0.95
Buckinghamshire	2,958	4	0	3.35
Hampshire	2,967	0	0	3.41
Kent	19,138	9	0	7.60
Lancashire	5,802	4	0	5.59
London	33,601	12	0	1.78
Norfolk	13,004	13	0	7.31
Somerset	4,265	0	0	3.66
Worcestershire	1,806	6	0	3.43
Yorkshire	6,774	0	0	2.78
	<hr/>			<hr/>
	91,189	15	0	2.94

Kent and in Norfolk, both counties having quite certainly an excess of churches, were substantial and just possibly scanty adequate amounts provided for the care of the magnificent fabric which both regions had inherited from the Middle Ages.

We may believe that this amazing and persistent neglect of the church fabric was in part due to the fact that the mediaeval frenzy of church building had left the nation endowed with more and very frequently with larger houses of worship than rural England needed or than it would support directly the sustained and effective pressure of the priesthood was lifted in the era of secularism which began well before the Reformation. This fact, too, may help to explain the relative indifference of donors during most of our period to the building of new churches in parishes where the ancient edifices had either become derelict because of long neglect or inadequate because of the natural growth of population. We have endeavoured, under difficulties earlier discussed, to arrive at rough estimates of amounts given during our period for the building of new churches, the rebuilding of old and decayed edifices, and improvements on existing churches which were so considerable as to amount to rebuilding rather than extensive repair.¹ It should be stressed that our lists, which will be fully discussed in the several county analyses in later volumes, include only new construction carried forward in whole or in part by voluntary contributions, there having been a few instances, to our knowledge, of building financed by rates prior to 1540.

Granted that the realm at large was over-churched in 1480, or perhaps more accurately in 1540, this was by no means the case in all parts of England a century later. For one thing, there was a steady and a most considerable increase in population during the whole of our period. Far more importantly, there was a very rapid growth of numerous market towns and not a few industrial and urban complexes, which resulted in acute strain on the existing parochial system and which really called for extensive new building. Further, as we shall stress in later volumes, the parochial structures of certain counties, most notably Lancashire and Yorkshire, were far from complete even in 1540, with the result that in such areas, also growing rapidly in population, there remained throughout our period a pressing need for new church or chapel building. Finally, the infirmities of gothic construction, the almost complete neglect of a century, and the inevitable destruction of fire, wind, water, and sea had simply wiped out a large number of churches which in most cases a truly pious age would have rebuilt. Though we have made no systematic study of the matter, our notes on building record quite incidentally the destruction or abandonment of 306 parish churches in the ten counties with which we are concerned during the course of this

¹ *Vide ante*, 33-34, 52.

period of almost two centuries. These churches, and doubtless many more of which we have no record, were destroyed and were not replaced.

The need was generally recognized, but attendance to it either in literature or in fact was at best perfunctory and insufficient. The Queen's homilies, published first in 1563, did call upon men to keep their churches in sufficient repair and declared it 'sinne and shame to see so manye churches, so ruinous, and so fouly decayed, almoste in euery corner', and reminded Christian men of their obligation to build new churches.¹ Two generations later a moderately Puritan writer, while deploring any decoration that smacked of popery, complained against the general decay of churches and the fact that pious donors neglected the pressing need for the building of new and comely places in which God might be honoured.² In fact, another writer suggested, the age was one far more notable for the pulling down than the putting up of churches, despite evident need and the example of the rich generosity of a former era.³ When churches were destroyed or fell in final decay, even in quite large parishes or market towns, neither local efforts nor subscriptions taken over large areas were sufficient to secure the necessary funds even for the starting of the work of rebuilding.⁴ Archbishop Laud applied a fanatical energy to the huge task of building and rebuilding, with, it must be said, almost no success whatever save for the symbolic triumph of completing the rebuilding of St Paul's. In point of fact, by far the most important contribution was to be made under the Commonwealth and Protectorate when numerous chapels, gaunt and severe though they usually were, were built principally at governmental expense in remote, neglected, and backward areas of the land. But despite the need, at no stage after 1540 did private donors concern themselves seriously with the task in hand. In the whole course of our period we have counted in our ten counties a total of 123 churches which were either built or rebuilt, as well as 79 chapels of ease which were constructed, almost wholly in Lancashire and Yorkshire, in areas now populous which were inconveniently distant from the parish church. Of this total of 202 places of worship added to the fabric of faith in England, more than half (104) were in Lancashire and Yorkshire, leaving an extraordinarily trivial accomplishment for all the remainder of a great and populous region. Taking our whole area into account, far fewer church edifices were built or rebuilt than we know by a most inadequate census to have been destroyed. Not only was the

¹ *The second tome of homelies* (1563), 'An homely for repayringe . . . of churches'; in *Certaine sermons* (1676), 163.

² Brinsley, John, *The glorie of the latter temple* (L., 1631), 15-19.

³ Guild, *Humble addresse* (1641), no page.

⁴ For examples: *S.P. Dom.*, 1636, DXXXVI, 6-7; 1657, CLV, 44.

church fabric of England gravely damaged by the studied and persistent failure to lend it adequate maintenance, it was seriously diminished in this coldly secular age by failure to replace that which time and neglect had ruined.

During the long period under review it is true that the not inconsiderable estimated total of £236,199 2s was given for church building in England, this constituting 7·61 per cent of all charitable wealth and being slightly more than the amount contributed to the needs of the universities in this same interval. But it should be immediately observed that a large proportion (29·51 per cent) of the whole amount was provided by donors prior to the Reformation, the £69,697 7s given in these six decades having been sufficient to build well over half of all the new churches (chantry chapels not included) constructed during the whole of our era. Further, when this sum is added to the enormous total of £85,438 6s which Archbishop Laud raised and exacted in a single decade, principally for the rebuilding of St Paul's, it will be noted that close to two-thirds (65·68 per cent) of the whole amount provided by our age for church building may be attributed either to the completion of the fabric of the mediaeval church or to the desperate and historically eccentric achievement of the Archbishop. All the rest of our period remained starkly secular as it contemplated the need occasioned by the decay and even the destruction of a noble inheritance.

Men of our age had brought about a great and an enduring historical achievement as they translated their aspirations into institutional reality. We have seen that a profoundly significant and permanent shift had occurred in the structure of their aspirations as they came to contemplate and then to embrace the variegated secular needs of their age. It was not so much that they repudiated the religious aspiration, for they were godly and pious men, as that they lent such full and excited devotion to the support of new needs and new obligations that they came to neglect when they did not ignore the old. We have seen that men of our period addressed themselves with a persistent and intelligent intensity to the ancient problem of poverty, having by the close of our age erected effective and magnificently endowed institutions for its relief and cure. They had opened up whole areas of new opportunity by their bold and energetic experimentation with a great variety of schemes for social rehabilitation; they had beautified their cities and had made the whole of the realm a more pleasant and a better place in which to live by their own generosity. They had founded and had then endowed an impressive and a beautifully articulated system of education which ensured a vast extension of opportunity for all youth bright and ambitious enough to aspire to enjoy its benefits. They had, in sum, laid securely and deeply the foundations of the liberal society of which we are the inheritors, and they had embraced a body of aspirations for man and his society

which still animate the best of thought and the best of action in the world which we have received from them. This, surely, is achievement enough for any age.

C. THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF CLASS ASPIRATIONS

1. *Introductory comment*

We have sketched in broad terms the record of a great achievement wrought by private benefactors in England in the course of the early modern period. Though men and women of every class made some contribution to the rapid building up of the enormous total of this historically effective and immensely viable wealth, it remains true that most of the heavy burden of responsibility was assumed by a small group of donors who were members of two relatively very small classes, the merchants and the gentry. We shall now examine not only the measure of responsibility assumed by the several classes of men in the England of our age, but shall note with particular interest the quite different pattern of aspirations, and of fulfilment, as we move from class to class. We shall also be much concerned with the vitally important fact that in certain classes the whole structure of aspiration began to shift at an early date from an essentially religious preoccupation to a wide and pressing concern for a variety of secular needs, thereby establishing the pattern of charitable interest and giving which well before the close of our period was to be accepted, with varying degrees of completeness, by all classes of men. The merchants, and more particularly London's merchants, were almost prescient in their sense of the slope of history in this period and at a very early date indeed laid out and then began rapidly to implement a whole fabric of social institutions which were to bring about a cultural revolution in England. Other classes of men, we shall observe, yielded most slowly and grudgingly to the momentum of change set in motion principally by the merchants and the gentry.

Tudor and Stuart institutions were, then, largely shaped by two small and also relatively recent classes of men. The gentry and the merchants assumed during the course of our period an immense burden of social responsibility heretofore, in so far as it was borne at all, vested by society in older and powerfully placed classes. The Tudors, with a sure sense of history, reposed their government and policy in large measure on these new, these vigorous, and these most aggressive classes which were moving with great confidence and certainty towards translating their bold aspirations into social reality by prodigal outlays of their own substance. With responsibility, with the fluid wealth these classes disposed, there went as well the aspiration of power, which even before the close of the great Queen's reign was engendering friction and which was in little more than a generation to engulf the hapless Stuarts. These

men were in fact creating an England which the Stuarts only dimly understood, and which, in so far as they did understand it, they disliked and intensely feared. Forces of change were powerfully under way in England from 1590 until 1640 which could not be brooked and which had in no small part been released and then most effectively directed by the great charitable foundations of these donors, animated as they were by strongly secular aspirations. Power is the inevitable concomitant of responsibility. These donors, drawn so largely in effective terms from the mercantile élite and the gentry, had as it were moved with their wealth, their generosity, and their vision, into vast social areas—those of poverty, of want of opportunity, and of want of knowledge—which lay as dangerous and forbidding wastes in the early modern society, and they had before our period was done rendered them fruitful by the great and enduring institutions which they created. They had, it is not too much to say, formed the shape of the modern world.

We shall need first of all to set out our definitions of the several classes of men before proceeding to an analysis of the extent and nature of their contributions. Thus we have included benefactions made by the Crown, by which is meant members of the royal family, seeking, we trust successfully, to limit such entries to those which actually came from the private fortune of the royal family. This means, of course, that we have intended to exclude those royal foundations which, as was so often the case during the period of the Reformation, amounted to no more than a redistribution of social assets, valuable and important as they may have been. Nor have we included as royal benefactions the many foundations named for the ruling monarch out of courtesy, when, as was usually the case, the charter was all that was supplied, and that usually at a fee. It might also be mentioned that we have in this one instance consciously introduced duplication into the donor count, since royal gifts tended to be substantial and were made in every county, with the result that the number of donors (thirty-six) under this head refers rather more accurately to the number of benefactions than to the actual members of the royal family (seventeen) who made charitable gifts.

The nobility offer no problem of definition and, as we shall later note, were in any event relatively unimportant in the contribution which they made to the development of the institutions of modern England. The gentry, on the other hand, were of very great importance indeed and raise several thorny problems of definition.

We have, for one thing, found it advisable to divide the class into two fairly well-defined groups, the upper gentry and the lower gentry, not only because their social position, their wealth, and their generosity show clear and clean evidences of differentiation, but because the structure of aspirations exhibited by the two classes is markedly different. By the upper gentry we mean simply the knights and their imme-

diate families, whether the title of honour was obtained in effect by inheritance of a social status long enjoyed, for reward to a soldier or courtier, or, as was so common, by the lucrative practice of law. There is one exception: in the not insignificant number of cases when a great London merchant was elevated to the upper gentry after settling in his mature years on the estates he had purchased for such complex reasons, we have perhaps with some injustice to his memory and his thrusting ambition persisted in calling that man merchant who won his wealth in commerce. The upper gentry were, of course, a relatively small class at any given moment of reckoning, though our own fragmentary evidence would suggest that Wilson's rather offhand estimate of five hundred such families in 1600, which Professor Tawney seems to accept, sets the number somewhat too modestly.¹

We have treated as members of the lower gentry those persons who so described themselves in their own wills or deeds of gift. This status we have also conferred on their widows and sons when they too left charitable benefactions. At bottom, Professor Tawney is certainly correct in suggesting that this was a class whose 'position [was] determined, not by legal distinctions, but by common estimation'.² It was a class firmly wedded to land, and it was a class of amazing fluidity of composition, being fed steadily from the yeomanry below, from whom in the lower ranges of wealth and status it cannot easily or sharply be separated. We have, in fact, seen a great many wills in which a testator in one place describes himself as a yeoman and in another as a gentleman, the uncertainty existing in his own mind because he and his family were at the point of a social translation which had not yet fully taken place. And we have seen other wills in which a man firmly describes himself as a gentleman whose executors or an officer of probate with equal firmness placed back in the yeomanry from which in common estimation he had not yet emerged. This class was likewise fed and enlarged throughout our period from the mercantile élite, with which it had ever stronger ties, from the professions, and from the younger sons of the upper gentry. It was a large class indeed as compared with the upper gentry, and clearly its numbers increased greatly during the course of our period. Wilson believed that something like 16,000 families were numbered in the class as early as 1600, while more recent research would seem to suggest that, in rural counties at least, between 2.6 per cent and 5 per cent of the total population was included in this class.³

¹ Wilson, *State of England*, 23; *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, XI (1941), 2-3. ² *Idem.*

³ Tawney, A. J. and R. H., 'An occupational census of the seventeenth century', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, V (1934), 47; Barley, M. W., 'Farmhouses and cottages, 1550-1725', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2d. ser., VII (1955), 291. Tawney's figures are from Gloucestershire, those of Barley are from Nottinghamshire. Both, it should

Though it does not seem possible to be very precise regarding the size of the class at any given date, we can with confidence say that it increased greatly in the course of our period and that its whole structure was marked by an almost unbelievable fluidity. It was in so many ways a new gentry, usually rooted in monastic lands, if its members were relatively old; in land speculations, the law, trade, or the yeomanry if recent in status. We are told that nearly two-thirds of the gentry of Bedfordshire in 1620 were families unknown to the class in 1668,¹ while half the manors belonging to members of the class in Shropshire changed hands in the course of two generations. A member of a relatively old gentle family of the Isle of Wight noted in scathing and libellous detail how recent indeed was the status of the gentry of his neighbourhood, unless, be it said, they had at some stage intermarried with the Oglanders. One had begun life as an apprentice to a shoemaker, another was bred a serving man, another family 'were never written gentlemen till late', another had married as his second wife 'his maid, a poor wench', another had married a whore, another had purchased his estate with wealth gained as a merchant, and still another was the son of a man 'between a gentleman and a farmer'.² A later and more objective commentator on the amazing fluidity of this class tells us that in Staffordshire in the interval 1609-1669 half the land of the county had come into the hands of new owners; that whereas in 1609 there had been only three 'citizen owners', there were in 1669 three barons, four baronets, and twenty esquires who had purchased land with wealth made in trade.³

The lower gentry were, then, a thrusting and a highly mobile class, possessed of great toughness and resilience, and bound neither by firmly rooted traditions nor by entails. The more successful of them were in fact agricultural capitalists, close enough to the land to sense the new possibilities of exploitation and close enough to the people surrounding them to undertake, under Tudor tuition, a large measure of social responsibility. As we shall see, they were not even in relative terms particularly rich, but great prizes lay open for the abler and more adventurous members of this somewhat amorphous social group. They

be noted, do not differentiate between the upper gentry and the lower. Tawney's figures may be questioned because they do not seem to include a sufficient proportion of labourers and servants, an enormous class most difficult to assess in this or any other respect, while Barley's, depending on inventories, are certainly much too high (5 per cent) because the propertyless are not included. Our own efforts at a calculation, based on wills and inventories, were frustrated for the same reasons and are not included, though they run rather closer to the estimate (2.6 per cent) provided by Professor Tawney's useful calculations. We believe his proportions, as well as our own discarded estimate, to be too high.

¹ *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, XI (1941), 21-22.

² Bamford, Francis, ed., *A Royalist's notebook* (L., 1936), 137-183.

³ Degge, Simon, 'Observations upon the possessors of monastery-lands', in Erdeswicke, Sampson, *A survey of Staffordshire* (L., 1723).

had in the main attained gentility very recently, and their interest in arms, in elaborate houses, and the other symbols of status did not pass unnoticed by their contemporaries. It was principally of them that the always astute Gervase Holles wrote, in speaking of Lincolnshire, which he knew as a learned antiquary: 'There is nothing appears to me more ridiculous or more nearly allied to a vulgar spirit then what I meet wth in most gentlemen of England, namely a vayne affectation to fly beyond the moone and to credit themselves . . . wth long and fictitious pedigrees. How many have wee that will confidently tell you their sirnames flourished even in the Saxon times. . . . How many have wee in Lincolnshire that will affirme themselves to have beene gentelmen there ever since the Normans' entrance, when I know there are scarce sixe families in the whole county that can make prooffe they had one foot of land there the 20th yeare of K. Henry the third'.¹

As we have suggested, the line of definition of status between the rich yeomanry and the lesser gentry was indistinct, often confusing men of the period with respect to their own position. It was, to put it bluntly, largely a matter of wealth and of aspiration, for many of the yeomanry preferred to retain their status. The yeoman class begins to emerge importantly at quite different dates in our several counties, but in all it had become by the middle of the sixteenth century a numerous and substantial rural middle class whose chief concern was with land.² The yeomen were in the main proprietors of freehold lands, though many, perhaps most of them, held copyhold or leasehold lands as well. Wilson thought that as many as 10,000 of them were really very substantial men, though their advantage as skilful and aggressive farmers was being lost as the lesser gentry turned with greater capital to the exploitation of their estates, while this same authority believed that there were an additional 80,000 families of the class holding more modest but still comfortable estates.³ These were men who bore the brunt of the burden of local administration, serving as constables, churchwardens, and as overseers of the poor. They were, then, directly concerned with poverty, deeply conscious of the social threat which it contained, and were as a class early inclined to leave a large proportion of their benefactions to the relief of indigence.

Far below them in wealth and status were the husbandmen, an amorphously defined class embracing a very large proportion of the rural population in all counties. Few of them owned land, most of them were small tenant farmers, and in average terms at least they were separated by a wide economic gulf from their yeomen betters. Yet, as we shall see, they were by no means devoid of a sense of social responsibility, since

¹ Holles, *Memorials*, 3.

² Campbell, Mildred, *The English yeoman* (New Haven, 1942), 3-20.

³ Wilson, *State of England*, 19.

some thousands of their tiny gifts and bequests have been included in the massive charitable funds accumulated in this age. Finally, there was a still more numerous class of agricultural labourers and servants, certainly the largest single social group in England. Unfortunately, we know little about the lives and aspirations of men of this class. We have watched for their gifts and bequests with particular care, but this was on the whole a class which did not draft wills because it had nothing to bequeath. This was in fact the very class in which poverty was endemic throughout our period, a class never far above the level of subsistence, and with scant resources to carry it through periods of economic difficulty. It was to the relief and sustenance of the agricultural poor that most of the prodigious national effort which we here describe was directed.

Since their status, their wealth, and their charitable, if not their spiritual, aspirations differed so markedly, we have also thought it well to divide the clergy into two classes, the upper clergy and the lower clergy. By the former, of course, we mean the bishops and, until the Expropriation, the great abbots and priors. For all purposes of computation, though with some slight degree of resulting inaccuracy, the lower clergy have been treated as a rural class, since upwards of 90 per cent of these donors were in fact residents of rural England.

Turning to the urban classes with which we are concerned, we have regarded as merchants those men who so describe themselves in their wills or in other pertinent documents. We shall deal much more fully with the sociology of the merchant class in our discussion of London, comprising the second volume of this work, but it may here be said that with rare exceptions these were men engaged in wholesale trade, though a considerable number of them were devoted to enterprises so extensive and diverse as to cause them to be more properly regarded as speculators and entrepreneurs. It was a small class, even in London, recruited constantly from the provinces, and marked from the earlier decades of our period by clearly and tenaciously held aspirations for the society and the age. It was in average terms a very rich class, and the wealth which it possessed gained enormous added power because it was fluid and disposable. This was the class which was to exercise a decisive influence in forming the basic aspirations of our age, translating them with prodigious generosity into historical reality by the enduring institutions which it founded. Merchant fortunes were quickly won, and could be as quickly lost, and were rarely indeed carried as trading fortunes through a second generation. Men of this group were still a little uncertain of their status, tended themselves to marry and all but to require their widows to marry within the class. Yet the very fact of their great wealth, the boldness of their vision, the massive generosity of their charities, and their willingness to assume an immense burden of social responsibility

created for them the reality of status.¹ The age came rather quickly to sense that here was a new aristocracy, in fact socially and historically the most significant element of aristocracy in the realm. The mercantile élite quickly realized, too, the many points of identity in their own aspirations, in their conception of what England ought to be, with the gentry of the land. The merchants themselves bought lands as investments to ensure otherwise fragile fortunes, to secure the status wished by a wife or contemplated for a son, and their daughters, richly endowed, were prizes for whose dowry gentlemen and even the shrewdest of the peers might aspire. Apprenticeships in the London livery companies became valued opportunities for younger sons by gentlemen who now remembered that the great Queen herself had called Sir Martin Calthorpe and Sir Godfrey Boleyn kinsmen.² Gentility, it was pointed out, may well be bred in the counting-houses, for 'there are at this day not a few, whose . . . great-grandchildrens children are reputed amōg the oldest and best families of their shires, without any relation to London, which notwithstanding raised them'.³ Both classes, merchants and gentry, were aggressive, articulate, secular in their instincts, and generous in their acceptance of new and uncharted areas of responsibility. Their interests and their aspirations ran together, said Henry Robinson, the astutest of the observers of the social and political revolution then under way, and in the merging of the aspirations of the gentry of the market place and of the land the future of England would be attained.⁴

A much larger urban class, though not notable for its charities, was the tradesmen. These men ranked far below the merchants in wealth, prestige, and civic pride, being a quite amorphous social group, usually without strong traditions or corporate organization. We have regarded as tradesmen all shopkeepers and retailers not of merchant rank, members of lesser companies, and members of a number of urban occupations such as innkeepers, brewers, and chandlers, who are not easily classified but who were solid members of the urban middle class. Closely related to them was still another urban group, which for want of more precise information we have described simply as 'additional burghers'. These were men, or very frequently their widows, who failed to describe themselves adequately in their wills or deeds of gift, but who are known to have held minor civic office, to have been en-

¹ It would lead us far astray to pursue this interesting point. For examples of the literature establishing the status of the merchant, *vide* Wilkinson, Robert, *The merchant royall* (L., 1607); Price, Daniel, *The marchant* (Oxford, 1608); Pemberton, William, *The godly merchant* (L., 1613); Preston, John, *Christ's reward* (L., 1655); Reynolds, Edward, *True gain* (L., 1657).

² Bolton, Edmund, *The cities advocate* (L., 1629), 8-10.

³ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁴ Jordan, W. K., *Men of substance* (Chicago, 1942), 218-220.

rolled as freemen of their cities, or whose wills make it clear that they were engaged in some sort of commercial activity. Both the average size of their charitable bequests and, more importantly, the structure of their charitable interests make it statistically evident that most of them were in fact tradesmen, with some admixture of small merchants who cannot be certainly identified.

We have also been particularly interested in gathering details concerning all the benefactions of the artisans and urban poor, a large and a rapidly growing class which our evidence would suggest constituted fully 80 per cent of the population of the provincial cities and possibly 90 per cent of the population of London. This is, of course, a population group offering most interesting comparisons with the husbandmen and agricultural labourers of rural England. These were the working men of the cities, the artisans, the industrial workers, the porters, the servants, and the floating mass of unemployed who throughout our period comprised a labour surplus in every city with which we have been concerned. Regrettably, we have learned relatively little about them or their aspirations, since they were on the whole rootless and propertyless men, too poor either to draw wills or to provide even nominal charitable gifts during their lifetimes.

Counted also as an urban group are the rising professional classes, centred principally on London but with smaller entities well established before our period was out in every provincial city and in numerous market towns. This group, as we shall note, was at once relatively numerous and extraordinarily generous. The largest number were lawyers, who were likewise on balance the largest donors, they being followed numerically by the physicians, public officials and civil servants, scriveners, notaries, apothecaries, teachers, parish clerks, administrators (as, for example, the full-time director of the affairs of a large almshouse), artists, scholars, and the rest.

Finally, we have a large group of donors, both urban and rural in composition, whom reasonably diligent and certainly extensive research simply failed to identify with respect to status. These benefactors comprise almost 19 per cent of all individual donors and have necessarily been described as 'unidentified donors'. A large proportion of them were women, who are extraordinarily difficult to identify if in their wills they clothe themselves in the eternal anonymity of the title 'widow' or 'spinster' and are equally vague with reference to their forbears and collateral relations. It may be said that the size and structure of gifts and bequests made by members of this group would suggest that in so far as they were urban dwellers they possessed the composite character of tradesmen and that the much larger number who were residents of rural parishes fall somewhere in this defining respect between the status of the yeomanry and the lower gentry.

2. *The means of grace*

Before turning to a study of the contributions and the patterns of social aspiration of the several classes, it will be well to say as much as we can regarding their wealth and their relative generosity as they drew upon that wealth for social purposes in which they believed. It must be emphasized that the assessments that follow are for no more than a very small fraction of donors in any one class and that for various reasons, with which we shall deal, they may not be typical either of those members of a social class who made charitable contributions or of the class as a whole. These assessments of the total wealth of the estates of donors of the several social classes are in the first place approximate, having been drawn from wills, which tended chronically to over-value property, and from inventories and inquisitions *post mortem*, which tended quite notoriously to under-value lands and chattels. It should also be pointed out that we are supplying average amounts derived from a long historical period in which the purchasing power of money was steadily declining. Further, our figures provide a reasonably reliable estimate only of the disposable estate, since we have had no reason to explore in the historical wilderness of entails. These data, then, attempt to assess only the disposable wealth available to donors, which, however, is socially and historically the effective and fruitful wealth of a man or of a class. Since the wealth of most merchants was in cash, inventories, and negotiable debts, though even the most prudent often died with 'desperate debts' to harry their executors, their assets are not only easily totalled but were easily liquidated, with the result that relatively we may somewhat exaggerate mercantile fortunes. But we must hastily add that those whom we have treated as the 'great merchants' of London in average terms likewise held as much in landed wealth as did the upper gentry of four of the eight rural counties with which we are concerned. Finally, we should point out that these appraisals are of the estates of men drawn statistically from the oldest segment of the population, of men who normally at least had enjoyed sufficient time to put their affairs in order in contemplation of death. Thousands of the wills we have read indicate, frequently with precise amounts or values given, which we scarcely need say have not been included in estate values, that dowries have been settled on daughters, provision made for younger sons, trusts already established for wives, daughters, and other dependents, and personal gifts made to friends or apprentices. Many wills, too, make it clear that a once prosperous merchant or gentleman had in old age lost his grip on affairs and that the estate left was no more than a shell of a once considerable fortune. These data, then, do to some quite unknown but substantial degree tend to reflect the erosion which age and dispositions made in contemplation of death had brought to bear on their earlier maximum value.

Our figures for the estate values of peers making charitable benefactions are too fragmentary to be of worth and hence will not be cited. The wealth disposed by only nine members of this class can be approximated, this being much too small a sample, and much of the landed worth even for this small group was locked in entails which cannot be valued with any reasonable degree of accuracy. Our sparse data do, however, suggest an average true, or net, wealth for the nobility considerably more modest than most estimates we have seen.¹ There has been sustained and brilliant discussion of the tangled question of the

¹ The subject is most tangled in controversy, and we stand in great need of averages rather than of proofs adduced from easily available but individual instances. We do have good figures for 1436, the always careful Gray having estimated that in that year the average baronial landed wealth (and here and below we have converted to capital sums by applying the multiplier 20) was of the order of £17,300 (Gray, H. L., 'Incomes from land in England in 1436', *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, XLIX, 1934, 622). A seventeenth century observer, Wilson, though he despaired of the problem, suggested as an average that the great magnates of his age might have possessed a total worth of about £100,000, while the lesser nobility, the barons and viscounts, disposed estates valued at a little more than £58,000 (*State of England*, 20-22). Reasonably reliable data from the later years of our period, prepared in connection with the work of the Committee for Compounding, suggest an average worth for the estates of the Royalist peers of £30,290, the values for individual peers ranging widely and wildly from £340 for one impecunious earl to the great sum of £150,000, at which the worth of the Earl of Thanet was appraised (Klotz, E. L., and Godfrey Davies, 'The wealth of Royalist peers and baronets during the Puritan Revolution', *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, LVIII, 1943, 218-219). Stone, who believes that the wealth of the nobility was declining absolutely as well as relatively in the Elizabethan period because of failure to deal with the inflationary process then under way, excessive standard of living, and chronic litigation, seems to set the 'average' at between £40,000 and £60,000 of capital worth for something like sixty of the Elizabethan peerage and holds that the whole class stood in considerable financial danger when it was saved by James's lavish favour and by aldermanic marriages (Stone, Lawrence, 'The anatomy of the Elizabethan aristocracy', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, XVIII, 1948, 19-20, 38, 40, *et passim*). Professor Trevor-Roper, in reply, agrees that the Elizabethan peerage was in real economic difficulties, but says that the noble families were saved by their tenacious disposition to hold their central estates in a rising land market, while he very correctly stresses the recuperative powers an estate possessed when the key lands were not sold (Trevor-Roper, H. R., 'The Elizabethan aristocracy', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2d. ser., III, 1951, 288-289). In a later and very valuable study of the estates of twenty-three peers of the period 1617-1642, he arrives at an average worth of about £169,000 for those included in the sample. The list, it should be said, tends to include a disproportionate number of the 'great peers' and for other reasons seems to be set too high (*The gentry 1540-1640*, L., 1953). It is our own very general conclusion that the estates of the peerage declined sharply in a relative sense and slightly in an absolute sense throughout the sixteenth century, rising very rapidly in the seventeenth century, when, it must be remembered, the peerage was on the whole a much larger and a very different body. The extremely important point of the amazing fluidity even of the landed classes must always be borne in mind in these discussions.

wealth of the peerage and of the gentry in recent years, which has now reached the stage at which most extensive research of a quite dull but extremely important kind is required if further light is to be thrown on the matter. As we shall later point out, the nobility made only slight contribution to the social needs of England during our period, withdrew from responsibility which they had once assumed as a matter of class obligation, and were as a class relatively unimportant in the shaping of the course of modern social and cultural history. This may be because their wealth was locked in land and leases, because they had failed to adjust their wealth and standards of living to the requirements of a new age, or, and we think this, broadly speaking, more likely, because the whole slope of historical and social change ran counter to their own essentially cautious instincts. In any event, they left little of their wealth for charitable uses.

We feel on much more certain ground in our assessment of the wealth of the upper gentry who left charitable benefactions and whose estates can be appraised with fair accuracy. There were ninety-eight such estates in the course of our period, for which an average worth of £3484¹ may be established, while the median estate amounted to £3014. There are, it must be emphasized, amazing regional differences, the average worth of men of this class ranging from £1669 for Somerset and £1984 for Yorkshire² to the very substantial average total of £12,298 for Norfolk.³ In fact, our evidence suggests both consistently and persuasively that any discussion of the wealth of any landed class, and most particularly of the gentry, is quite meaningless unless the approach is undertaken on a carefully established regional basis. Thus it seems clear that the average Yorkshire knight disposed rather less in wealth than did the squire of Buckinghamshire or Worcestershire. But wherever resident, men of this class were in average terms extremely well-to-do, were deeply sensitive to the needs of their communities, and if the estate values suggested by this probably inadequate sampling are valid, left the surprisingly large proportion of 7.12 per cent of the whole worth of their estates for charitable uses. Here again, however, there are extremely interesting and important regional differences, the upper gentry of Kent, who were so often non-resident, having left no more than 2.57 per cent of the total worth of their estates to charitable causes,

¹ For this and all other classes, save for husbandmen and yeomen, estate values have been reckoned to the nearest £.

² It should be said that the validity of these averages, and the same is true for the lower gentry, is weakened by the disproportionate number included from Yorkshire.

³ For further details of this matter, *vide* Table VII (Appendix). It should again be remarked that for the upper gentry and all other classes we have been able to include in these estimates only the relatively small proportion of charitable benefactors whose estates can be accurately valued.

while those of Yorkshire and Somerset, surely among the poorest in England, left 10.77 per cent and 11.22 per cent respectively for charitable uses.

There are much fuller, and hence probably more reliable, data for the lower gentry. The estates of 342 of those who made charitable contributions during the course of our period have been appraised, the average estate being valued at the surprisingly low figure of £980, suggesting an average income of not more than £50 p.a. for members of the class. Even if the ubiquitous and relatively very poor Yorkshire gentry are wholly excluded from our computations, the average worth rises to only £1319. The median estate for the whole group may be valued at £1179. Among this class, too, there were marked regional differences, ranging from an average worth of £2565 for the relatively rich landed gentry resident at the time of their death in London and in Middlesex to the £699 for Lancashire and the £693 for Yorkshire. Referring again to our sampling of counties, the proportion of the total estates left to charity by men of this class may be set at 4.29 per cent of the whole, but again with quite an amazing range from the 1.60 per cent thus disposed by the tight-fisted Norfolk gentry to the extremely generous 13.78 per cent recorded for Kent.¹

¹ Professor Gray suggests that the worth of members of the lower gentry in 1436 was considerably lower, in the range (again converting to capital amounts) of from £400 to £780, while that of the knights ran from £1200 to £3740 (*Eng. Hist. Rev.*, XLIX, 1934, 624-630). Hoskins tells us that in 1522-1523 in Devon only eight of the gentry of the whole county were assessed who held lands valued at £100 p.a. or more, the generality of the gentry, upper and lower, having landed estates worth from £50 p.a. to £100 p.a. (Hoskins, W. G., *Devon*, L., 1954, 82). Wilson was certainly wildly inaccurate in his offhand estimates of a worth of from £1000 to £2000 p.a. for the upper gentry and from £500 to £1000 p.a. for the squirearchy (*State of England*, 23-24). Sir John Oglander, a careful and accurate business man, tells us that in 1623-1624 he spent £450 9s 6d, which was more than any other man on the Isle of Wight could dispose, while in 1631 he recorded his outlay of £747 3s 5d in 'his own blood', since it far exceeded the worth of his estate (Bamford, *A Royalist's notebook*, 231-238). Professor Tawney proves that the gentry were acquiring land most aggressively during the whole period 1560-1640 but does not make it clear that this was a consequence of the rising wealth of the gentry rather than because the class itself was expanding very rapidly in numbers (*Econ. Hist. Rev.*, XI, 1941, 1-38). We believe that our estimates of wealth for both the upper gentry and the lower gentry may not be far off the mark in appraising their relatively modest wealth through the period as a whole. We are not so certain regarding the curve of that wealth because our sample when arranged in periods is inadequate and, even more importantly, because we cannot estimate the related curve of the inflationary process. But it is our impression that the wealth of both groups rose very steeply absolutely and only slightly relatively in the century 1540-1640. More important to the whole discussion is the fact that the class was amazingly fluid. When we speak of the gentry of 1640 we are simply not, with few exceptions, speaking of families who possessed that status in 1540. Moreover, the class itself expanded in numbers enormously during the course of this amazing

We have particulars regarding the estates of a large number (615) of yeomen who left charitable benefactions, though it will be observed that a disproportionate number of these appraisals are drawn from Somerset and Yorkshire, both being in our period relatively poor counties. In average terms these yeomen left estates valued at £181 12s 4d, a surprisingly substantial figure, while the median estate for members of the class was £164 3s 2d. Once again, the range was very wide when we scrutinize the data by counties, the yeomanry of Kent and Norfolk having possessed estates with the most comfortable average value of £415 9s 8d and £442 12s 9d respectively, while those of Somerset and Yorkshire were relatively quite poor. Thus in average terms it may be said that a Norfolk yeoman possessed a substance almost four times as great as that disposed by a yeoman of Somerset, while again in average terms the yeomanry of Norfolk and Kent were not much less prosperous than were the lesser gentry of such counties as Yorkshire and Lancashire. This fact once more suggests the great difficulty, the very real danger, in generalizing about data in our period, particularly for classes as amorphously defined as the gentry and the yeomanry. The yeomanry particularly, certainly more markedly than any other single class save the merchants, were rising rapidly in wealth and in status through most of our period. While they were no more than an emerging class in most counties before 1540, during the Elizabethan era yeoman estates possessed an average worth of £91 7s 9d, whereas in the early Stuart era the average value of their estates showed an amazing increase to £188 2s 4d. This was one class which both relatively and absolutely did well for itself during much of our period, though its decline had begun by the close of our age. This interesting, admired, and sturdy class assumed a considerable degree of social responsibility in every county with which we are concerned, our sampling suggesting that these men left 4.47 per cent of the whole worth of their estates for charitable causes, again with a quite wide range when we refer to the several counties. Thus the yeomanry of Norfolk, the most prosperous of the realm, left only 1.05 per cent of their wealth for charitable uses, they being even more cautious in their outlays than their betters among the lower gentry of the county,

century. Finally, we are strongly inclined to the view that after the period of digestion of monastic spoils and the profitable but speculative gains of laying land down to sheep grazing was past (*ca.* 1570), most of the gains in wealth made by particular members of the class were as a consequence of the influx of London wealth into the gentry and the growing tendency of members of the class, probably because their estates barely supported their standards of living, to indulge in speculative risks in ventures ranging from coal mining to the plantation of America. We are in this whole connection much impressed by Professor Trevor-Roper's statement that of the seventy-odd Elizabethan and Jacobean houses about which he knows the particulars only one was built from landed wealth, all the rest being monuments to success in trade or at the court.

while those of Kent, where the class was early and solidly established, disposed the very considerable proportion of 6.57 per cent of all their wealth for charitable causes.¹

The enormous class which we have described as husbandmen gave little to charity, principally, we should suppose, because it was only scantily above the line of poverty. A far greater economic gulf separated the husbandmen from the yeomanry than separated the yeomanry from the lower gentry, though it must be emphasized that this was a rural class with some measure of status, of great respectability, and with sufficient substance to support itself, save in times of general hardship, and to make modest but extraordinarily interesting contributions for charitable causes which appealed to its conservative instincts. For England as a whole, the estates of members of this class have been assessed in average terms at £21 11s 6d, though it should at once be observed that this sum is considerably affected by the large number of these estates which we have found and valued in Somerset, where the class was badly off during the whole of our period, its average worth there being no more than £12 5s 6d. The class was also economically submerged in Kent, while in four of our counties the average worth of upwards of £30 suggests a much more comfortable status for a class which comprised a very large proportion of the total population of the realm.

But it was urban wealth, and more specifically London wealth, which was to be decisive in framing the pattern of social aspirations in the England of our period and in translating those aspirations into effective and enduring institutions. The merchant class, the smallest of all clearly defined social groups save for the peerage, was to assume an immense

¹ Wilson thought the yeomanry were declining as early as 1600, though he believed that there might well be 10,000 such families of rich yeomen disposing from £300 to £1000 yearly, while there might be as many as 80,000 with estates valued at from £300 to £500 (*State of England*, 19). These estimates are much too high; there certainly was a well-defined group of very rich yeomen, but of the 615 regarding whose estates we have precise knowledge there were only 11 with wealth of more than £1000. A careful recent estimate sets the value of the average yeoman estate at £176 10s in Leicestershire in about 1640 (*VCH, Leics.*, II, 201), while Miss Campbell, having examined upwards of three thousand deeds relating to yeoman land purchases, tells us that 59 per cent of their land purchases involved sums of £100 or less, 78 per cent sums of £200 or less (*English yeoman*, 78). Though the analysis is not so applied, we should suppose that Barley's analysis of Lincolnshire estate inventories would most helpfully document the rise of the yeomanry in that region, where in 1540 only 4.4 per cent of all estates were valued at £100 or more, this proportion having risen to 8.2 per cent in 1605 and to 16 per cent in 1635 (*Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2d. ser., VII, 1955, 293). These figures, it should be noted, would certainly be substantially increased had the wills and inventories in the PCC and the PCY, where rich yeomen's wills tended to be proved, been consulted as well as those in the district registries.

burden of social responsibility and early to establish its leadership in laying out the course which English social and institutional history was to take. This was a class armed at once with firmly held aspirations and with the viable wealth necessary to give them full effect. Taking in view the whole of England, there were 569 merchant donors making charitable benefactions whose estates can be accurately valued, whose average estate may be appraised at £5815 7s 7d. This figure is, however, almost meaningless because of the vast difference in wealth existing between the average provincial merchant and that of his London confrère. But even the provincial merchant was in average terms a rich man, his estate during our period being worth £1428 3s 9d, an amount, it will be observed, considerably in excess of that of the lower gentry of the realm. But in London, taking into account both great merchants and lesser merchants, between whom there was a great economic difference, the average merchant fortune during our period may be set at £7780 2s 7d, or well over twice that of the upper gentry of England.¹ Very broadly speaking, it can be said, indeed, that in London the average estate of lesser merchants was somewhat less than but comparable to the wealth of the lower gentry, while that of the great merchants was not far off from the disposable wealth in the hands of the nobility of the realm. All this is of great social and economic importance, but of even greater social significance is the added fact that the merchants of this period, whether of London or of the provinces, were so prodigally generous. Of all the great wealth which they disposed, the merchants of England left more than a sixth (17.25 per cent) for charitable uses, not taking into account the great sums which so many of these donors had vested during their lifetimes. This telling proportion ranged widely, though it was always very high, from 6.12 per cent for a small group of Kentish merchants whose estates can be valued to an incredible 41.54 per cent for a larger group in Somerset, while the decisively important London proportion of the total worth of merchant estates vested for charitable causes was 16.76 per cent. No class in England, then, even approached these men either in disposable wealth, in clarity and aggressiveness of aspirations, or in generosity in seeking to attain the social ends which they held so tenaciously in view.

A great economic as well as social gulf separated the merchant aristocracy from the tradesmen, while, as we shall later note, there were also most pronounced differences in the aspirations held by these two urban classes. While it can be said that in average terms men of this class left estates valued at £587 10s 6d, it is more meaningful to point out that a London tradesman of our period, again in average terms, possessed an estate valued at £1463 1s 3d, of considerably greater value

¹ We here deal only very briefly with the subject of the merchant wealth of London, since it will be discussed in detail in the second volume of this work.

than the average estate of the lesser gentry, whereas a provincial shopkeeper left an estate valued at no more than £234 19s 9d, not considerably more than that of the average yeoman. It should at once be said, however, that in social terms this wealth was extremely important and viable, since a full eighth (12.46 per cent) of it was disposed for charitable causes, it thus having possessed a social utility almost thrice that of the wealth of the lesser gentry or of the yeomanry.

We have far fewer data than we would wish regarding the value of the estates of artisans making charitable dispositions, our findings for London being particularly meagre. It should also be said that such figures as we do have tend to be drawn from the estates of skilled artisans and craftsmen who had been able not only to support their families but to build up modest competences. For all our counties, the average estate of an artisan may be valued at £43 4s 6d, or approximately twice that of the husbandman of the period. In such counties as Somerset, Buckinghamshire, and Worcestershire the average values are very modest indeed, whereas in London and more particularly in Norfolk, where most of our estates are those of highly skilled mechanics connected with the cloth trade, the average far exceeds that of the country at large.

We may conclude this discussion with notes on the wealth of two other classes for which, regrettably, we have too little information to permit extended discussion. We have assessed the estates of 128 of the lower clergy, but the average of £224 6s 8d is really meaningless because of the not infrequent instances of clergymen inheriting considerable landed fortunes as scions of the gentry, or, as in London, which has been omitted entirely, of members of the clergy inheriting very large estates from merchant fathers or brothers. Our data for the professional classes are also far too scattered and meagre to permit useful discussion, though it may at least be said that of the seventy-six estates regarding which we have full information the average worth was relatively very high, £2548 19s 8d, and that of these the largest single group were lawyers and judges, twenty-two in all, whose estates possessed an average worth of £2348 13s.

3. *The measure of responsibility*

We have dealt in an incomplete and perhaps inconclusive fashion with the means which the several classes of men disposed during our period. We have sought at least to measure roughly the amount of wealth, of disposable wealth, at hand, but the important concern for us is the intensity with which the various classes undertook the immense social responsibilities of the age. Here we have differences far more striking and far more important historically than wealth itself, which might be either socially sterile or immensely fruitful. Further, we have been concerned, in the discussion just finished, only with a relatively small

number of our many donors, those whose estate values could with some reliability be established; we are now concerned with the flow of charitable funds from all our nearly 35,000 donors, in so far as they can be grouped into the several social classes of which humanity was then comprised. Of our 34,963 individual donors, the social status of 28,362, or 81.11 per cent of the whole number, has been determined, there being a residuum of 6601 who remain cloaked in social anonymity. It is first of all significant that only about half (49.53 per cent) of our donors were rural dwellers, though without any doubt the rural population in the whole area under consideration comprised something like 80 per cent of the total population.¹ In other words, the relatively small urban population of these regions contributed a far larger, a most disproportionate, number of donors (31.47 per cent) than did all the rural groups.² When this fact is further assessed in terms of the extent of contribution, measuring the degree of responsibility assumed, the disproportion is all the more startling, since a relatively small urban class provided more than 62 per cent (62.46 per cent) of all the charitable funds accumulated, as contrasted with about 21 per cent (21.52 per cent) which may certainly be attributed to the several rural classes.

The powerful and effective intervention of the numerically tiny merchant class of England in the social and cultural needs of the nation is suggested immediately when we observe that they comprised more

¹ In the following table, R indicates Rural, U, Urban.

<i>Class</i>		<i>Number of donors</i>	<i>Percentage of total benefactions</i>	<i>Percentage of all donors</i>
			<i>per cent</i>	<i>per cent</i>
Crown		36	4.63	0.10
Nobility	R	192	4.02	0.55
Upper gentry	R	959	5.53	2.74
Lower gentry	R	3753	5.84	10.73
Yeomen	R	5144	1.49	14.71
Husbandmen	R	5079	0.09	14.53
Agricultural labourers	R	634	0.005	1.81
Upper clergy	U	175	4.97	0.50
Lower clergy	R	1561	4.55	4.46
Merchants	U	3679	43.17	10.52
Tradesmen	U	2640	4.82	7.55
Burghers	U	1557	2.91	4.45
Artisans	U	2087	0.28	5.97
Professions	U	866	6.31	2.48
Unidentified		6601	11.40	18.89
Totals		34,963	100.01	99.99

² It should be noted that throughout this discussion the benefactions of the Crown and of all unidentified donors have been excluded.

than a tenth of the whole number of donors and gave the staggering proportion of 43·17 per cent of the whole immense sum accumulated for charitable uses during our entire period. It is sobering indeed to realize that they alone gave very nearly half the total which may certainly be ascribed to donors of known classes, and that they alone gave almost twice as much as all the rural classes of England combined. They are followed in importance by the gentry, which as an entity contributed rather more than 11 per cent (11·37 per cent), and they in turn by the clergy as a whole, which gave somewhat more than 9 per cent (9·52 per cent) of the whole charitable wealth. The rapidly growing and on the whole the comfortably rich professional classes gave most liberally in relation to their numbers, somewhat more than 6 per cent of the whole amount having been afforded by their great generosity. No other single group of men gave as much as a twentieth of England's charitable resources, it being remarkable that not only the professions but the tradesmen as well were to give substantially more than the 4·02 per cent of charitable wealth provided by a nobility which had all but abandoned the social responsibility it was traditionally supposed to bear. There remains something more than 11 per cent of the aggregate of charitable wealth given by men of uncertain status of whom it can only be said that the larger number were rural dwellers.

When we seek to measure the differing degrees of social responsibility of men of our age, even by relatively refined groupings of social classes, we still speak somewhat inexactly of the process by which social change was accomplished in England. Men gave as individuals, disciplined normally by the aspirations of the class and the generation to which they belonged, though in the whole of this essay we have said little about them as individuals, reserving this emphasis for the discussion in subsequent volumes. Yet there were very great differences in the scale of giving by individual donors, as wealth, intensity of aspiration, and purposefulness determined whether a benefaction would be nominal at best or quite sufficient to endow an almshouse or a loan foundation. We have accordingly analysed the 'depth of giving' of donors of known social status in three of our counties, London, Somerset, and Yorkshire, in which are to be found almost exactly half of all donors and which together contributed upwards of 72 per cent of the charitable wealth accumulated in the England of our period. There were in all 17,450 of these donors, who together gave the enormous total of £2,057,709 13s of charitable capital, or the very substantial average sum of £117 18s 5d for each benefactor.

Yet the great mass of these gifts, from donors of every class, fell within the range of 1d to £9 19s. Though the total of gifts made within these limits amounted to only slightly more than 1 per cent (1·04 per cent) of the immense whole of charitable wealth provided in these three

counties, this was the measure of the charitable benefactions made by almost two-thirds (65.22 per cent) of all donors.¹ This is to say that a very large group of 11,381 gave in all no more than the relatively unimportant total of £21,363 10s towards the charitable needs of the age. Such was the measure of generosity and participation of great numbers of men drawn from all classes, though a gift of £9 19s might represent only a token gift for a nobleman and the life savings of a husbandman. It is interesting to note that here are to be found more than a fifth (21.88 per cent) of all donors of the upper gentry, upwards of 58 per cent of the lower gentry, and about 55 per cent of the lower clergy. Included in this category, as we should expect, are almost 87 per cent of all yeoman donors and nearly all (99.57 per cent) husbandmen. Somewhat surprisingly, we find among these relatively very modest donors well over a fourth (27.81 per cent) of all merchant donors, closer analysis suggesting that these were men, often quite rich, who honoured the rigorously charitable tradition of their class with only token contributions and who, unless the smallness of their bequests could be explained by reverses of fortune or estates encumbered with obligations, were despised for the fact by their contemporaries.

A relatively small proportion (7.72 per cent) of all donors made gifts or bequests in the next range of generosity extending from £10 to £19 19s, the total of such benefactions constituting somewhat less than 1 per cent (0.82 per cent) of the whole of the charitable resources of these counties. It is interesting to observe, though, that the measure of the generosity of nearly 73 per cent (72.94 per cent) of all donors, men and women of all classes, is to be found within the range of the most nominal gift of a penny or so to just short of £20, though the total amount of their charity accounts for somewhat less than 2 per cent (1.86 per cent) of the great sum with which we are concerned.

In the next range of giving, amounts between £20 and £99 19s, we find a large proportion of capital sums, of endowments some hundreds of which survive to the present day. These were, in terms of seventeenth century purchasing power, substantial charities, quite sufficient to ease materially the burden of poor relief in a rural parish, to found a modest scholarship, or to create a useful loan fund. There were 2437 donors making such gifts, the total of their benefactions accounting for slightly more than 5 per cent of all the charitable wealth disposed by these counties. It is significant that between a fifth and a fourth of all donors of such classes as the lower gentry, the merchants, the tradesmen, and the professional groups are to be found in this range of generosity.

The next range of giving, in amounts of from £100 to £499 19s, in-

¹ For this discussion *vide* Table VIII (Appendix, pp. 378-381), where the depth-of-giving data are set out for these three counties in a composite table, and where bar graphs are also presented.

cludes very considerable endowments indeed, this being quite sufficient to found a modest almshouse, to create a substantial apprenticeship foundation, or fully to provide for the relief of the poor in most rural or village parishes in England. There were in all 1650 such donors in these three counties, composing not much short of a tenth (9.46 per cent) of the whole number, while the total of their benefactions represented about a sixth (16.91 per cent) of all the charitable funds under discussion. It is interesting to observe that nearly half (46.24 per cent) of the donors giving within this range were merchants and that five notably generous classes, the merchants, the lower gentry, the tradesmen, the burghers, and the professional groups, account for upwards of 82 per cent of these most substantial benefactions. In fact, it may here be pointed out that so economically formidable was the capital sum of £500 in the England of this period that somewhat more than 96 per cent of all our donors gave smaller benefactions.

A man must needs have been very rich indeed to provide an endowment of from £500 to £999 19s for charitable uses, since it will be recalled that the average total wealth even of the lower gentry of the realm probably did not exceed the larger of these amounts. These were sums ample enough to found a large almshouse, to establish a well-endowed grammar school, or to create a lectureship foundation even in London; yet there were in all 311 such donors, comprising 1.78 per cent of the whole number, who together gave the very large total of £212,743 15s for various charitable uses, this amounting to about a tenth (10.34 per cent) of the whole sum. It is most significant that of these donors rather more than half (51.13 per cent) were merchants, as compared with an eighth (12.54 per cent) who were drawn from the upper and lesser gentry combined. As importantly, of this group of large benefactors, who were creating institutions with their generosity that were to remake England, nearly four-fifths (77.81 per cent) were members of the several urban classes. Here we discover the true centre of gravity of socially important wealth in England, here we discover the true pillars of the new society which was being built by the incredible generosity of this period.

All this is even more fully revealed as we analyse the social origins of the great benefactors, the pillars of the society, who created charitable endowments of £1000 or more. There were 323 such benefactors in these three counties, accounting for only a tiny proportion of all the donors in these regions. In all, this very small group of men and women gave the staggering total of £1,353,555 15s, or close to two-thirds (65.78 per cent) of the whole of the charities of the counties under consideration. The charitable endowments disposed by these donors were truly huge, amounting in average terms to the great sum of £4190 11s 6d, capital sufficient for the creation of renowned and enduring institutions. In fact, we may well say that this relatively very small group of donors

were to create the institutions of modern England and that it was their aspirations which were to be decisive in determining the whole slope of social and cultural history in the modern world. These great donors were predominantly, of course, drawn from the merchant aristocracy, there having been 189 merchant benefactors, or somewhat more than 58 per cent of the whole number. The second largest number, thirty in all, were members of the several professional classes, a considerably larger number, incidentally, than we have recorded for the great and lesser gentry combined. Something more than four-fifths (80.50 per cent) of all these great donors, who so decisively shaped the development of modern institutions, disposed urban wealth, which was aggressive, intensely secular, highly viable, and disciplined by certainty of aspiration. Though many thousands of men and women had made their due contribution, often at great sacrifice, it remained for this small group of donors to provide the ultimately important resources required for the completion of the grand design which men held so tenaciously and courageously for the betterment of the world in which they lived.

4. *The aspirations of the several classes of men*

We have been examining in some detail the quantitative contributions of the several social classes, and of individual donors within those classes. But of equal importance is what may be described as the qualitative interests of the several classes, since here is revealed the whole structure of aspirations held by these groups, aspirations which were in quite differing degrees to be translated into institutional reality. We shall note that there were profoundly different views held of the needs of mankind by the various social groups, just as we shall later observe markedly different rates of velocity of change in aspirations among them. We shall now comment rather fully on the commitments made by the various social classes to the several great heads under which we have grouped their charitable benefactions, with some remarks as well on significant regional differences as they may appear.¹

¹ It would be tedious indeed to comment on the individual charitable heads, the tables for which were too cumbersome to present. Reference to Table X, where the broad aspects of the contributions of the various classes are submitted, will be helpful in following this discussion. It will also be recalled that taking all donors and all classes into account the *all-England* totals and distributions were as follows:

	<i>Social</i>	<i>Municipal</i>		
<i>Poor</i>	<i>Rehabilitation</i>	<i>Betterments</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Religion</i>
£1,129,351 9s	£319,446 12s	£160,776 1s.	£833,493 12s	£659,628 15s
(36.40 per cent)	(10.30 per cent)	(5.18 per cent)	(26.86 per cent)	(21.26 per cent)

The table, in necessarily abbreviated form, on which this discussion is based is presented as Table X (Appendix).

The nobility, who accounted for no more than a modest 4.02 per cent of all charitable wealth in our period, were also on the whole eccentric in the range and quality of their interests and distributions. An extremely high proportion (52.68 per cent) of all their benefactions were dedicated to poor relief; only the very poor classes of the society gave in proportion as much for this purpose. In three rural counties, in fact, their devotion to this cause was so great that upwards of 68 per cent of all their giving was for the succour of the needy, with the extraordinary proportion of about 91 per cent so provided in Kent. Though members of the nobility made a number of great almshouse foundations, the peers in general were far too often inclined to follow mediaeval precedents by leaving large sums to be distributed as funeral doles or as immediate alms on a vast scale, such distributions, as we have frequently noted, possessing only slight social utility. The second great concern of the nobility was with the strengthening of the educational resources of the nation, to which they gave almost a fourth (25.63 per cent) of all their charitable funds, or only slightly less than the national average. Their interest in this regard was heavily concentrated on the needs of the universities, over-matched only by that of the upper clergy and the professional classes. The interest of the class in the new and extremely important experiments in social rehabilitation which characterized the age was relatively most modest (2.97 per cent), while their want of concern for municipal betterments, absorbing only 1.27 per cent of all their charitable funds, was rivalled only by the husbandmen and the upper clergy. Somewhat surprisingly, the proportion (17.45 per cent) of their charitable wealth devoted to religious uses was markedly lower than that of the realm at large, with, however, a quite high proportion of their total charitable wealth having been designated for chantries (6.03 per cent) and church building (5.42 per cent). We may conclude that on balance the nobility of this period were remarkable for neither the extent nor the quality of their benefactions. Distrusted and harassed by the Tudors, their estates locked in entail and too often poorly managed, bound to standards of living and housing which could impose very heavy debits on their resources, this was a class which had surrendered not only the prime responsibilities for the social order but the determination of the future course of social history to newer, more vigorous, and infinitely more generous classes of men.

One such class was the upper gentry, a relatively small social group in the England of this period, who were to contribute in all £171,658 9s of charitable wealth, or 5.53 per cent of the whole great total for the society. To the needs of the poor the great gentry gave rather more than 36 per cent of all their charitable resources, with a particularly heavy concentration of funds for the endowment of poor relief in their own parishes. Their concern for this great need was almost precisely of the

intensity of the nation at large (36.40 per cent), but from county to county exhibited a rather wide spread of from about a fourth (24.08 per cent) given for this use in Lancashire to the amazingly high proportion of three-fourths (76.82 per cent) in Worcestershire. These men devoted almost exactly a third (33.66 per cent) of their benefactions to the betterment of the educational resources of the nation, considerably more, it will be noted, than the proportion for the realm at large (26.86 per cent), with their contributions about evenly divided between the universities and the founding of grammar schools in their own communities. They were only cautiously interested in schemes of social rehabilitation (4.87 per cent), while proportionately their concern with municipal betterments (2.02 per cent) was not much greater than that of the nobility. Their devotion to the needs of the church, to which they gave 22.80 per cent of all their funds, was roughly comparable to that of the society at large, with, however, a persistent and old-fashioned tendency to endow chantries and prayers generally (8.60 per cent) that considerably exceeded the contributions made for this purpose by the nation as a whole. In several counties, most notably in Hampshire, Lancashire, and Norfolk, a very substantial proportion of the gifts of the upper gentry were dedicated to religious needs, while in one, Buckinghamshire, where there was a considerable infusion of London blood and wealth in the class, the upper gentry were throughout our whole period resolutely secular in their aspirations, no more than 8.43 per cent of their benefactions having been made for religious uses.

The structure of aspirations exhibited by the lower gentry differs markedly from that which we have just analysed of their greater and richer brethren. The lesser gentry comprised a large and a substantial body of donors whose benefactions totalled £181,092 7s, or not quite 6 per cent (5.84 per cent) of the whole of the charitable wealth of England. Since, broadly speaking, as we descend in the social scale for both rural and urban groups, concern for the needs of the poor increases in a most marked fashion, it is not surprising that men of this class devoted a substantially larger proportion of their charitable wealth to this worthy purpose than did the great gentry. In all, they gave the large total of £80,619 1s to this use, this being 44.52 per cent of their total benefactions, with a particularly heavy concentration on endowments for parochial relief. In five of our counties the preoccupation of the gentry with the needs of the poor was so great that well over half of all their gifts were for this use. The gentry disposed relatively modest sums for municipal improvements (2.97 per cent), while only slightly more (3.85 per cent) was given for experiments in social rehabilitation; the founding of apprenticeship endowments and the setting up of workhouses both had some measure of interest for them. They devoted far less of their capital wealth to education (23.35 per cent) than did the upper

gentry, exhibiting quite steadily a slightly greater interest in the founding of schools than in the strengthening of the universities. Their devotion to the church and its needs, to which they gave about a fourth (25.31 per cent) of all their charitable wealth, was slightly more intensive than that of the nation at large, with a notably high proportion of their funds having been given for prayers (11.00 per cent) and for church repairs. It should be said, however, that in this one respect there were notable differences in the intensity of interest among the lower gentry in the various regions, the proportion of total charitable wealth devoted to religious needs ranging from an incredibly low 6.91 per cent for Buckinghamshire to the 42.29 per cent for Yorkshire. But the gentry in all counties were substantial and responsible men, deeply concerned with essentially local needs, whether it was the care of the parish poor or the fabric of the parish church, and exhibiting throughout the realm a remarkably homogeneous and disciplined concern for the welfare of the society to which they were to make such a variety of contributions.

We have observed that the gentry in its lower social and economic strata merged with the yeomanry from which so many of its members had sprung. Be that as it may, the composite aspirations of the yeomanry differed markedly and significantly from those of the gentry. The yeomen, comprising as they did the largest group of donors for any single class, made what can only be regarded as a modest charitable contribution, the £46,114 14s afforded by them constituting only 1.49 per cent of the charitable wealth of the realm. Their preoccupation was with the needs of the poor, among whom they lived in the closest contact and whose affairs they ordered so directly. Far more than half (56.52 per cent) of all their charitable resources were given for the care of the needy, this proportion rising to above two-thirds in two of our counties. It is also significant that almost the whole of their contribution was disposed for direct household relief, the £1194 13s given by the class for almshouse endowments representing but 2.59 per cent of the sum of their charities. Yeomen made only slight contribution (2.63 per cent) to the schemes for social rehabilitation, though proportionately they made the largest commitment (6.29 per cent) of any rural class to municipal betterments, their particular concern with highway repairs bespeaking the struggles they had had with the wretched rural roads of the age. Relatively, their gifts for the advancement of education (14.41 per cent) suggest an intensity of interest only half that of the nation as a whole, since in general schools were being founded for them rather than by them. None the less, they did contribute the not inconsiderable total of £5943 18s for the founding or strengthening of schools, with more modest amounts for scholarships and libraries. The very existence of universities must have been little more than a remote report to most

of them, the class having contributed precisely £1 to their support in the whole course of our period. The yeomanry, finally, were only mildly concerned with the religious needs of the age, to which they gave no more than a fifth (20·16 per cent) of all their charitable funds, with, it might be added, a fairly even distribution among the numerous heads of religious interest.

There were almost as many donors drawn from the ranks of the husbandmen as from the yeomanry. We have, therefore, a very large and probably representative sampling from this huge class, which, as we have earlier suggested, was separated from the yeomanry by a broad social and economic gulf. So too the aspirations of the two classes are amazingly dissimilar. In all, the 5079 husbandmen with whom we are concerned contributed the relatively tiny sum of £2815 15s to charitable uses, this being no more than 0·09 per cent of the charitable resources of the nation. A very large proportion (44·45 per cent) of the whole sum was left or given by these poor and humble men for the maintenance of the church which so many other classes of men had all but abandoned. This warm support was continuous throughout our period, was principally directed towards tangible and everyday needs such as church repairs (11·79 per cent) and the general uses of the church (19·90 per cent), and was consistently strong in every county of England, save in the singularly secular county of Buckinghamshire. These were humble, conservative, and certainly deeply pious men, the pattern of whose aspirations and whose basic interests changed only slowly and reluctantly as our period progressed. They were concerned, too, with the needs of the poor, to which they gave a large proportion (50·43 per cent) of all their charitable wealth, almost the whole amount being in the form of direct alms. Together, the needs of the poor and the requirements of the church absorbed almost the whole (94·88 per cent) of their tiny and we may be sure most carefully considered benefactions, the needs of education, for example, commanding somewhat less than 2 per cent (1·92 per cent) of their funds. There is historical irony in the fact that they regarded with disinterest the founding of a system of education which was in due time to redeem their class.

We turn now to the clergy, with the preliminary observation that the difference in the structure of aspirations between the prelates and their humbler brethren was so strikingly great as to suggest not only wholly different modes of life and thought but very nearly different vocations. There were 175 of these upper clergy, bishops and abbots, who in the course of our period contributed the relatively very large total of £154,194 3s to charitable causes, this constituting 4·97 per cent of the whole of the social wealth of our era. These were, then, on the whole great gifts, the average benefaction of £881 2s 2d being higher than that of any other social group, the Crown aside. The structure of

aspirations displayed by these gifts is all the more interesting because, broadly speaking, the fact of the Reformation changed the complexion of prelatical charitable giving scarcely at all, save that Protestant bishops were much poorer than the great prelates who had preceded them. The most arresting fact is that the upper clergy throughout our period exhibited but slight concern for the needs of the poor, the 10·04 per cent of funds disposed for this purpose suggesting an intensity of interest only one-third as great as is to be observed in the most nearly comparable lay social group. Furthermore, such wealth as was afforded for the care of the poor was principally devoted to the founding of alms-houses, no more than the really tiny proportion of 3·63 per cent of all their charitable wealth having been disposed for direct alms or for endowments to provide household relief. This inevitably suggests not so much inhumanity in the great clergy, for surely the grim struggle with poverty was the central social problem of the age, as preoccupation with other matters and a want of understanding of the mood and the direction of thought in the England of this age. The central aspiration of the great clergy was in fact the strengthening of the educational resources of the nation, to which they devoted the amazing proportion of 63·45 per cent of all their charitable giving, only two other social groups even rivalling them in this intensity of interest. Thus they gave almost nothing (0·76 per cent) to the fabric of their communities and only modestly (2·50 per cent) to the experimentations fruitfully under way in social rehabilitation, which might well have possessed some measure of interest for them. Most surprisingly, perhaps, they devoted only a slightly larger proportion of their charitable giving than the nation at large to the needs of the church, which they could describe so movingly and eloquently in their tracts and sermons. Here their principal concern was of course inevitably with church fabric, with repair and new building, which together absorbed 13·75 per cent of all their charitable funds. It is especially noteworthy that they gave markedly less than most rural classes to secure prayers for the repose of their own souls (4·01 per cent), this being in fact less proportionately than that so provided by all classes save for the merchants, who tended to be at once prudent and anti-clerical, and the professional classes, which were not untinged with scepticism. The great clergy of England, throughout our period, were among the most secular of all classes in an increasingly secular age.

The lower clergy likewise made a substantial total contribution to the social needs of England, their gift being £141,080 4s and representing 4·55 per cent of the charitable wealth of the realm. Very few of the 1561 of the lower clergy who made contributions were rich men, and so their bequests were in the main modest, the average gift of £90 7s 7d being relatively quite high only because of large benefactions made by a few

members of the class who had inherited considerable fortunes from merchant fathers. The pattern of their social interests was very different indeed from that of their great confrères, though the lower clergy too devoted a large proportion (44.00 per cent) of their wealth to the advancement of educational opportunities. Their generous gifts were spread remarkably evenly to grammar schools, to the universities, and to scholarship foundations, to which last they gave more in proportion (13.16 per cent) than any other class in England. Though they gave far more both proportionately and absolutely towards poor relief than did the prelates, the 26.33 per cent of their wealth dedicated to that great and central need of the age leaves them, none the less, after the bishops, the most insensitively concerned class in the realm. This is difficult to understand, since they worked and lived closely with the poor, exhorted their congregations to acts of charity, and could not have escaped from the harsh realities of the problem with which all classes of the realm were engaged. Further, their proportionate support for plans of social rehabilitation (2.29 per cent) and their undertakings for municipal improvements (4.27 per cent) were far less substantial than was afforded by the generality of donors. Finally, they gave to the church in its great need no more than 23.10 per cent of all their gifts, this being in fact slightly less than the measure of support (23.24 per cent) afforded by the bishops and abbots, their interests being spread rather evenly among the several religious uses, but with a high proportion (6.20 per cent) of their resources being dedicated to the prayers for the dead so meagrely sustained by the bishops. All the clergy, whether the great or the parochial, did lend continuous and certainly valuable support to the needs of education, but they did so by separating themselves to a notable degree from the main stream of English life and thought. Even in their central preoccupation with education, they disposed funds which were slight indeed when compared with the massive and decisive support which the small but very rich and very generous merchant class brought to bear.

The benefactions of the merchant class were to be dominant, indeed decisive, in the settling of the social aspirations of modern England, not only because of their enormous scale but because they were on the whole so perfectly ordered and disposed as trusts creating permanent institutions. Then, too, there was social weight in their gifts which lent to them an enhanced value and power, because the merchants sensed more quickly than any other class, save possibly the professions, and this means largely the lawyers, the slope of English life and needs. Finally, the merchant class, whether of London, Bristol, or a dozen provincial towns, to a most remarkable degree showed the same aspirations at the same time, introducing thereby a class solidarity, an articulate expression of purpose, and a social leverage which enabled them to create

great and pervasive institutions as if from a blueprint which all merchant donors seem to have held in mind. The enormous total of £1,339,498 18s was provided for charitable uses by this relatively very small body of men, comprising the incredibly high proportion of 43·17 per cent of the whole of the charitable wealth of the realm. Not only was this prodigious sum almost seven times as great as the total provided by the next most generous class, the professions, but it considerably exceeded the combined contributions of the whole of rural England, and England was still overwhelmingly rural in population and predominantly rural in wealth.

The merchants were generously and continuously concerned with the needs of the poor, to which they devoted 40 per cent of all their charitable wealth, though it should be noted that they gave more circumspectly and thoughtfully than the other typically urban classes. They gave little indeed in direct alms, marshalling their resources in huge capital aggregates, carefully vested and ordered, which were designed to afford permanent succour to classes of men whose personal security was marginal in the new economy which the merchants were themselves creating. They displayed as well a lively and a sustained interest in the experimentation designed to secure the rehabilitation of the salvageable poor, to which they devoted the very considerable proportion of 14·23 per cent of all their charities, bearing, in fact, the amazing load of 60 per cent (59·66 per cent) of the total outlay for such undertakings in the whole of the great area with which we are concerned. Their concern with municipal betterments was relatively modest, 6·92 per cent of their wealth being disposed for such uses, most of these prudent men preferring to bring into being capital sums and institutions rather than to undertake useful but perishable outlays. They dedicated almost exactly a fourth (24·95 per cent) of all their charitable wealth to strengthening, one can almost say to founding, the educational resources of the realm, though in this respect the intensity of their concern was markedly less than that displayed by the clergy and the professional groups. But there was one important difference, since the merchants concentrated their benefactions principally on grammar-school foundations, to which they devoted 18·16 per cent of all their charities, a far larger amount than they disposed for any other single charitable cause except the household relief of the poor (18·64 per cent).

All this left little indeed for the requirements of religion, the total of their contribution to this vast area of need amounting to no more than 13·91 per cent of all their benefactions. This establishes the merchants as decidedly the most secular of all social classes in England, save for the professions, and lends an immensely powerful secular bias to the whole of their massive social contributions. This is all the more pronounced when we consider that by far their strongest single religious

concern was with the founding of Puritan lectureships (3.54 per cent), gifts distrusted or actively opposed by the ecclesiastical authorities of the realm. This pervasive and aggressive secularism was, as we shall see, characteristic of the class even in the late mediaeval period, their dispositions for prayers (3.04 per cent), for example, being substantially less than those of any other class in the society. There was at no time much of heresy in the class—they were too unenthusiastic for that—but there was, long before the advent of the Reformation, a deep and an unconcealed anti-clericalism in the temper of the class. The merchant fraternity embraced Protestantism almost at once, and it was a Protestantism from the beginning tinged with Puritanism. They were as a class deeply pious men, but theirs was a lay view of the church and of Christianity, which they translated into intensely secular aspirations.

The tradesmen comprised a large donor group, whose substantial charitable contributions of £149,642 19s seem small only when contrasted with the immense generosity of the merchants. Their philanthropy amounted to 4.82 per cent of the whole for England, being somewhat less but still comparable to the contributions of such classes as the upper gentry, the lower gentry, and the upper clergy, while it was well over three times as great as the amount contributed by the yeomanry. The charitable interests of the class were well defined and were less determined by the formidable preoccupations of the mercantile aristocracy than might be supposed. Thus they gave a much greater proportion (49.06 per cent) of their wealth for poor relief than did the merchants, with a particular concern for household and parochial relief, to which they dedicated relatively nearly twice as much of their gifts (35.73 per cent) than did their richer neighbours (18.64 per cent). It is interesting, too, that they gave a slightly higher proportion (15.22 per cent) of their wealth to the many schemes for social rehabilitation than did their merchant contemporaries, displaying a particularly active interest in the establishment of loan funds and the support of hospitals. They were likewise considerably more disposed to make outlays for municipal betterments, to which they devoted 8.43 per cent of their charities, this being by some margin the highest proportion given by any class for such uses. Quite significantly, the tradesmen were relatively unconcerned with the building of the educational resources of the nation, designating no more than 12.61 per cent of all their funds for this use, thereby exhibiting an intensity of interest only half as great as that which moved the merchant donors. Further, their concern for education was in most cases intensely local, substantial gifts (£9759) having been made for grammar schools in their own communities and for scholarship funds (£8436 17s), but with no more than a nominal contribution (£257) for the strengthening of the universities. In their general attitude towards religious needs alone was the structure

of their aspirations closely comparable to that of the merchant aristocracy, the tradesmen having disposed an almost identical and certainly slight proportion (14.68 per cent) of all their charitable wealth for this purpose.

The whole structure of charitable contributions made by the imperfectly identified class which we have called 'additional burghers' suggests, as we have previously indicated, that most of them were in fact tradesmen, as does the average amount of their benefactions. In all, men of this group gave £90,223 4s for the various charitable uses, or 2.91 per cent of all charitable wealth. The spread of their interest was so closely comparable to that of the tradesmen that no detailed comment is required, save to say that they gave a slightly greater proportion of their means for poor relief than did the shopkeepers and likewise displayed considerably less interest in various outlays for municipal betterments.

We have been especially interested in assessing the structure of aspirations displayed by the considerable body of artisans whose gifts and bequests have been recorded. There were 2087 of these men, principally skilled workmen, who comprise 5.97 per cent of all donors but whose total contributions represent no more than 0.28 per cent of the charitable whole. None the less, the average charitable benefaction (£4 3s 4d) made by this group is surprisingly high, while the sturdy social independence displayed by them in London, Bristol, Norwich, and in the industrial towns of Kent and the West Riding is of considerable significance. As we should expect, they were considerably more concerned with the needs of the poor, to which they devoted 57.49 per cent of their whole contribution, than was any other urban group. Almost all their wealth was disposed not as outright alms but in the more enduring and efficacious form of modest augmentations to existing parochial endowments for household relief. They likewise disposed an amazing proportion to the bold and hopeful experimentation under way in social rehabilitation, relatively almost twice as much, it might be added, than any of the more cautious rural classes. Nor were they without civic pride, for they bestowed 5.49 per cent of all their gifts on a great variety of municipal improvements. They were not, however, substantially interested in the schools being founded for the cultural emancipation of their own children, devoting no more than 5.67 per cent of their gifts for this use, and almost the whole of that modest sum for the support of scholarships. It is most interesting to observe that these humble but evidently independent men were consistently more generous towards meeting the needs of the church than any other urban class, they having dedicated 23.72 per cent of all their benefactions to such uses, this being, in fact, slightly greater than the proportion so vested by the generality of men (21.26 per cent) in our period. Perhaps

the nature of their callings explains the fact that their religious concern was very heavily concentrated on the repair and maintenance of the church fabric, to which they devoted the amazing proportion of 9·85 per cent of all their charitable gifts, suggesting an intensity of concern for the churches, which they so evidently loved, something like six times that of their merchant employers. Surely it is significant that this one concern, this intensity of interest, was exceeded only by that of a somewhat comparable rural class, the husbandmen.

One of the most interesting, homogeneous, and generous of all the social classes in the England of our period was comprised of men of the several professions, including, as we have earlier noted, a fair number of professional administrators and public officials. By far the most numerous group were the common lawyers, who were not, however, conspicuously more generous than the class as a whole and whose own cultural and social aspirations were remarkably similar to the other professional groups here included. This class was still relatively small, its 866 donors accounting for no more than 2·48 per cent of all benefactors, but it was at once rich and very generous, the average contribution working out to the high figure of £225 18s. This small but cohesive social group, in fact, contributed the enormous total of £195,630 9s to charitable causes, this being 6·31 per cent of the whole of the charitable wealth of England and an amount substantially exceeding that disposed by any other single social group save, it need scarcely be said, the merchants.

The structure of social aspirations held by the class differs markedly and consistently from all others. Thus these men gave a slighter proportion (32·82 per cent) of all their wealth for the relief of the poor than did any other social group except the clergy. They were particularly dubious regarding endowments for the household relief of the poor, devoting most of their funds for this general purpose to the founding and endowing of almshouses, to which they gave a proportion (18·91 per cent) of their charitable wealth exceeded only by that vested by the nobility. As essentially prudent men, they were conspicuously disinterested in the experiments in social rehabilitation (3·47 per cent) and in the various needs of their municipalities (3·56 per cent), though the class was of course urban. The class was, however, throughout our period almost fanatically devoted to the strengthening and extension of educational opportunity, to which it devoted almost half (49·49 per cent) of all its charitable wealth, a proportion exceeded only by that given by the upper clergy. Themselves products of the universities, with skills forged by education, they vested very large sums for all educational uses, but were moved by particularly generous sentiments towards the universities, to which they gave £62,568 2s, a far larger sum, and, we should add, a far larger proportion than that so disposed

by any other social group in the England of our period.¹ This was a class animated by clearly and aggressively defined aspirations for the age, and these aspirations were intensely secular. The professional group gave no more than a tenth (10·67 per cent) of all their wealth for the various religious needs, suggesting a cold and stark secularism shared by all the powerful urban groups but scarcely rivalled by any save the merchants (13·91 per cent). These were men, like the merchants, who knew precisely what they wanted the world to be and who possessed the fluid wealth as well as the conviction and generosity to bring it into being.

There remains for brief comment a considerable sum, £353,573 16s, representing upwards of 11 per cent of all charitable wealth, which was given by donors of uncertain social status, of which there were 6601, or by persons quite unknown who have not been counted as individual donors at all. These last were with few exceptions contributors to the large total of £153,385 17s given by unknown donors for church building in the England of our age, this being comprised principally of amounts raised by voluntary subscriptions in an individual parish, in groups of parishes, or in great areas where royal briefs were issued. Also remaining is a substantial total of about £200,000 contributed to various charitable uses by persons of uncertain social status, but whose names are known and who have been reckoned as donors; such benefactions tended to be small, were rarely designed to found institutions, and were very heavily concentrated (£64,952 1s) under the head of the outright relief of the poor.

Though women are hardly a social class, we might appropriately conclude our analysis of the structure of class aspirations with some comment on their charitable interests. This subject will be treated in detail in our discussion of the several counties; so our remarks here will be limited to certain general conclusions which may be drawn from the data. In all, there were 4699 women donors who made gifts or bequests for charitable uses during the course of our period, they having constituted the most substantial proportion of 13·44 per cent of all donors. It should at once be added that this total considerably understates the participation of women in the social and economic life of the period, since this is the number of women who made individual benefactions, the numerous joint gifts, doubtless often inspired by the wife, having in all cases been credited to the husband. Though the number of women

¹ The amounts and proportions contributed for the strengthening of higher education by other social groups making significant gifts were:

	£	<i>Per cent</i>
Upper clergy	37,604	24·39
Nobility	28,100	22·54
Upper gentry	26,714	15·56
Merchants	25,591 14s	1·91

making personal contributions was proportionately slightly higher in London (14.88 per cent) and Bristol (15.44 per cent), it is significant indeed that in all regions, rural and urban, the proportion of women donors was spread in the amazingly tight range of from 11.28 per cent for Lancashire to the 15.44 per cent noted in Bristol.¹

These women were drawn from all ranks of the society, though, as we should expect, there are relatively few who may certainly be identified as possessing the status of artisans or husbandmen. Something over half the total number were widows, very often of uncertain status; a considerable number were spinsters; and a surprising number, about a fourth of the whole, were married women who, with their husbands' consent, disposed or bequeathed property of their own right. The largest number were drawn from the yeomanry, with women of the lower gentry almost as numerous, though it is important to observe that in relation to the number of men donors women of the merchant and tradesman classes were even more numerous.

This considerable body of women donors contributed the substantial total of £272,167 8s to various charitable causes, this representing not quite 9 per cent (8.77 per cent) of the whole of the charitable wealth of the realm. Though we have seen that proportionately the number of women donors varied only insignificantly from county to county, this was by no means true with respect to the sum of their contributions. Here we discover remarkable variations, ranging from the very low proportion of 3.92 per cent in rural Hampshire to the amazingly high proportion of 13.01 per cent in even more solidly rural Buckinghamshire. Most interesting, however, is the fact that in remote and presumably backward Yorkshire women donors accounted for 12.55 per cent of all the charitable wealth of the county, while in London women gave no more than 9.14 per cent of its immense charities. For England as a whole, of course, the data under discussion suggest that women controlled and disposed nearly 9 per cent of all wealth, a proportion which must in point of fact be considerably understated, for one thing because we have conclusive evidence that women were not relatively so charitably inclined in the disposing of their wealth as were the generality of men in the era. The conclusion follows that women possessed far more of disposable wealth and certainly far greater independence of judgment than has commonly been supposed. The ultimate test of ownership, after all, is the ability to bequeath wealth or to give it away.

The women of our era, some of whom rank among the really great and farsighted donors, gave in a pattern which suggests not only independence of judgment but a maturity of understanding which we find very impressive indeed. Thus they devoted upwards of 44 per cent of all their charitable funds to the various forms of poor relief, concentrating

¹ *Vide* Table IX (Appendix) for the details on which this discussion rests.

this considerable sum principally on endowments to secure household aid in their own parishes. Here, too, however, there were quite astonishing regional differences, from the very low proportion assigned to this use in Lancashire (21.21 per cent) and Norfolk (33.03 per cent), to the incredibly high proportion (85.55 per cent) so vested by women donors in Buckinghamshire. But, as compared with the generality of benefactors, women donors were on balance much more substantially committed to the care of the poor than were their husbands and fathers.

Women donors had but scant interest in financing municipal improvements of any kind, the modest 2.63 per cent devoted to this purpose suggesting an intensity of concern only about half as great as that displayed by all donors (5.18 per cent). At the same time, they exhibited a most lively interest in the experiments under way for the social rehabilitation of the poor, to which they gave the impressive proportion of 10.94 per cent of all their funds, this being in fact slightly greater than the proportionate interest exhibited by donors in general. In such diverse counties as London, Worcestershire, Lancashire, and Bristol, this dedication to new and hopeful methods of dealing with the ancient problem of poverty was particularly marked.

The contributions made by women donors to the educational needs of the realm were only slightly less proportionately than for the generality of donors, nearly 24 per cent of all their charitable wealth having been disposed for this use. But here there were great regional differences, ranging from the insignificant 5.65 per cent so provided in Buckinghamshire to the really massive proportions observed in such counties as Lancashire and Norfolk.

Most surprising, however, is the fact that women donors were as a group far more determinedly secular in the pattern of their aspirations than the benefactors of the era as a whole. They gave in all no more than a modest 18.07 per cent of their wealth for religious needs, thereby establishing themselves as far more implacably secular than any of the large rural social classes and comparably as secular as the great urban groups. In county after county the proportion of their benefactions made for religious uses fell sharply under that noted for the county as a whole. Their interests were in the main centred on the needs of mankind in this world, to which they made due and considerable contribution in their own right and in their own way.¹

¹ A careful and full-scale study of the realities of the position and wealth of women in this period would be most rewarding. For too long we have mistaken the law, what was supposed to be the status, for the reality. Particularly important is the undoubted fact that women gained immensely in status during the period of the Civil War and the ensuing era of unsettlement, when their husbands were away in military service or prudent exile. In every county, significantly, the charitable benefactions of women rose sharply in proportion during these years. The most valuable of several discussions of the legal position of

5. *The velocity of change*

The several classes of men in the England of our period not only assumed different degrees of social and historical responsibility and displayed different patterns of social aspiration, but they yielded in a quite varied fashion to the dominant pressures of the era. Certain social groups from the beginning offered abundant evidence of deep concern for the material needs of mankind, displaying a secularism of aspiration that became more steadily pronounced until it was all but complete, while other classes yielded only slowly and incompletely to the new and dominant forces of the age, the degree of their participation and the relative extent of their contributions becoming ever slighter. We should now lend brief attention to this most significant difference in the velocity of change amongst the several social classes. This we may perhaps best do by establishing curves which compare the proportion of total charitable contributions given to religious uses in the several intervals with the proportion dedicated to the relief of the poor. For this purpose we have added the amount given for poor relief strictly defined to the amount vested for experiments in social rehabilitation. We shall also limit ourselves to a consideration of certain of the social classes, setting out the full data more elaborately in an appended table.¹

The upper gentry in the years prior to the Reformation displayed but slight concern with the needs of the poor, to which they contributed about an eighth (13.23 per cent) of all their benefactions, while the needs of the church commanded about 69 per cent (68.78 per cent) of their charitable resources. The class responded immediately and sensitively to the impact of the Reformation, since in the short interval from 1540 to 1560 the proportion of gifts made for religious uses fell away by almost two-thirds, while that devoted to poor relief increased by a factor of five. The metamorphosis of aspirations for the class was substantially completed during the course of the Elizabethan era, when the proportion of gifts made for religious uses declined to a meagre 9.89 per cent of the whole, while that vested for the needs of the poor held approximately steady at 60.38 per cent of the whole.

The lesser gentry in our earliest interval disposed a slightly higher proportion of their charitable wealth (14.11 per cent) for the relief of the poor, and also a somewhat greater fraction (70.12 per cent) for religious uses. The class yielded more slowly than did the great gentry to the dominant forces of the age, it having disposed a still generous 44.62 per cent of its charitable contributions for religious needs during

women in this period is E. T., *The lawes resolutions of womens rights* (L., 1632). The best recent treatment may be found in Dame Doris Mary Stenton's *The English woman in history* (L., 1957), which, however, somewhat neglects the rapid betterment of the social and economic position of women in this period.

¹ *Vide* Table XI (Appendix pp. 385-387).

the course of the Reformation, while the support of the poor in this interval commanded no more than a third (32·76 per cent) of its resources. With the lesser gentry lagging approximately twenty years behind the upper gentry in historical responsiveness, the change in the structure of aspirations was even more radical during the Elizabethan era, when the amount provided for the care of the poor rose very steeply to 63·21 per cent of the whole, while that given for the multifarious needs of the church declined abruptly to a trifling 8·71 per cent of the charitable dispositions made by the class in this era.

The yeomanry as a class reacted even more slowly to the pressures of the age, and then with a kind of violence of shift in aspirations that makes them particularly interesting. At the outset they displayed a firm conservatism, disposing four-fifths (80·75 per cent) of all their charitable wealth for the several religious uses, while the needs of the poor in their communities commanded no more than 12·21 per cent of the whole. The proportion disposed for poor relief rose most abruptly in the course of the Reformation era to about half of the whole (50·49 per cent), while the devotion of the class to religious needs declined only moderately in relation to most classes, to 42·18 per cent of their total contribution. But in the course of the Elizabethan era a most radical adjustment of class aspirations was to occur, the proportion of contributions for all religious purposes falling precipitously to not much more than a twentieth (5·18 per cent) of the whole, while almost 60 per cent of the sum of yeoman charitable wealth was dedicated to the needs of the poor. For this class relative stability in the structure of aspirations was not to be attained until the early Stuart era, the proportion of gifts made for the benefit of the poor rising very steeply again to 74·19 per cent of the whole amount, while contributions to the uses of the church rose only most modestly to 8·37 per cent of the whole.

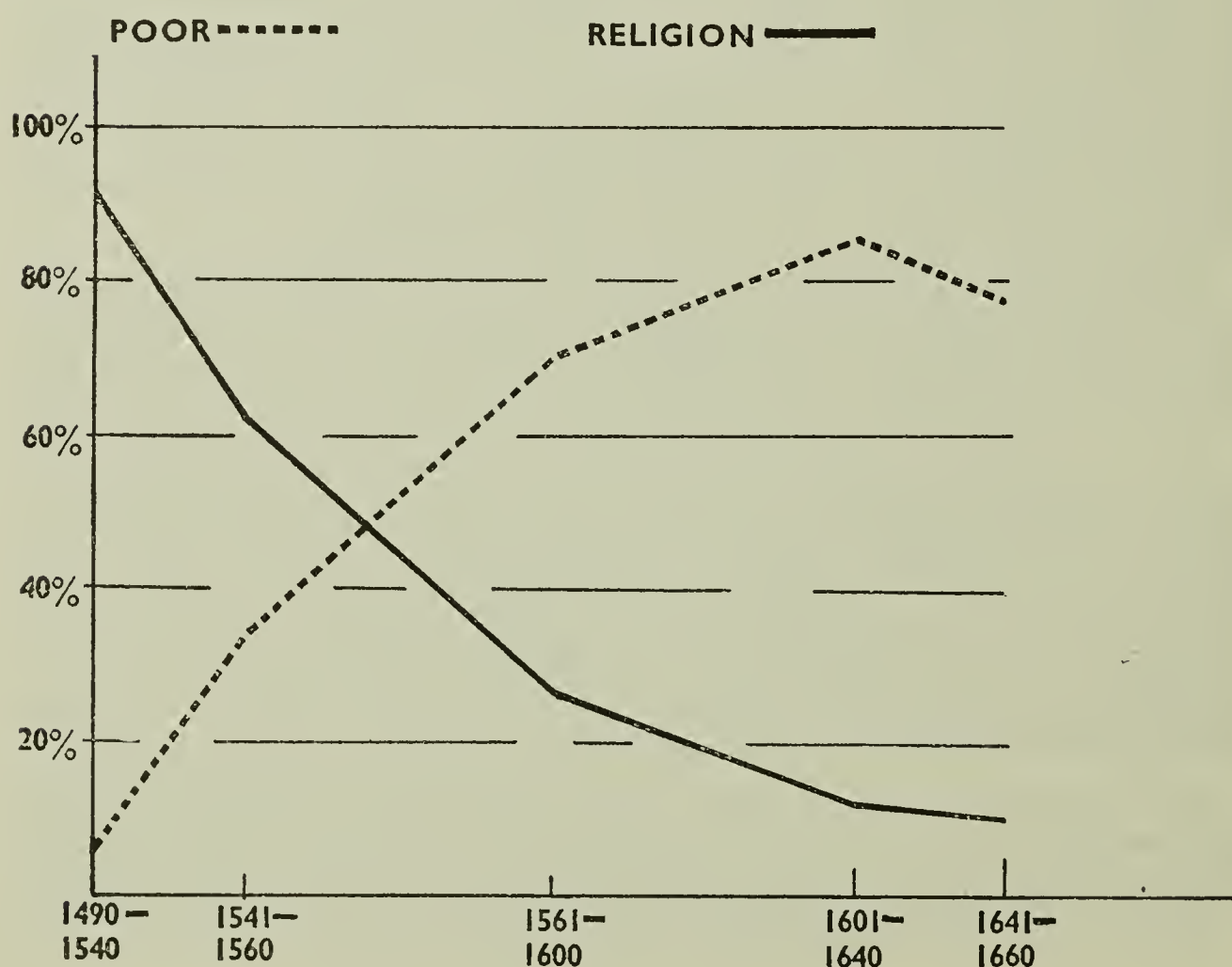
Though their charitable contributions were in weight and consequence slight indeed, the husbandmen, certainly the most conservative social class in England, are extremely interesting as one watches the slow metamorphosis of the structure of their social aspirations. This process, as the curves presented below will suggest, was to require the whole of our long period.¹ Even at the outset, these humble men, mostly illiterate and infinitely cautious, contributed the incredibly high proportion of 91·25 per cent of all their charitable total for one or another religious use, quite the highest for any class in the society, while to the needs of the poor, among whom so many of them were on occasion numbered, they gave not much more than 5 per cent of their charitable total. The slow process of change had clearly begun during the Reformation interval, when about a third (33·84 per cent) of their benefactions were disposed for poor relief, but they as a class still gave not far

¹ See graph on next page.

from two-thirds (62.16 per cent) of all their wealth for the support of the church. In the course of the Elizabethan era, this relatively very slow metamorphosis continued, almost 70 per cent of the benefactions of the class having been disposed for the needs of the poor, though the husbandmen continued to give rather more than a fourth (26.75 per cent) of their small but hard-won charitable sums for the support of the church, suggesting an intensity of concern and loyalty twice as great as that of the next most conservatively committed class. The process of change in aspirations was not completed among these men and women until a century after it had occurred among the richer and more sophisticated social classes, the proportion of charitable wealth designated for religious uses at last falling sharply to 11.72 per cent during the early Stuart years, when the extremely high proportion of 85.08 per cent of all charitable sums contributed by the class was given for the needs of the poor. The pattern of aspirations of men and women of this class had changed slowly and cautiously over the course of more than a century, but in 1640 it stood complete.

We have already had occasion to observe that the clergy were singularly modest in their support of religious causes through the whole course of our period. If we may confine our attention to the lower clergy, we note that a most pronounced shift in the pattern of clerical

GIFTS BY HUSBANDMEN FOR POOR AND RELIGION
(IN % OF TOTAL GIFTS)

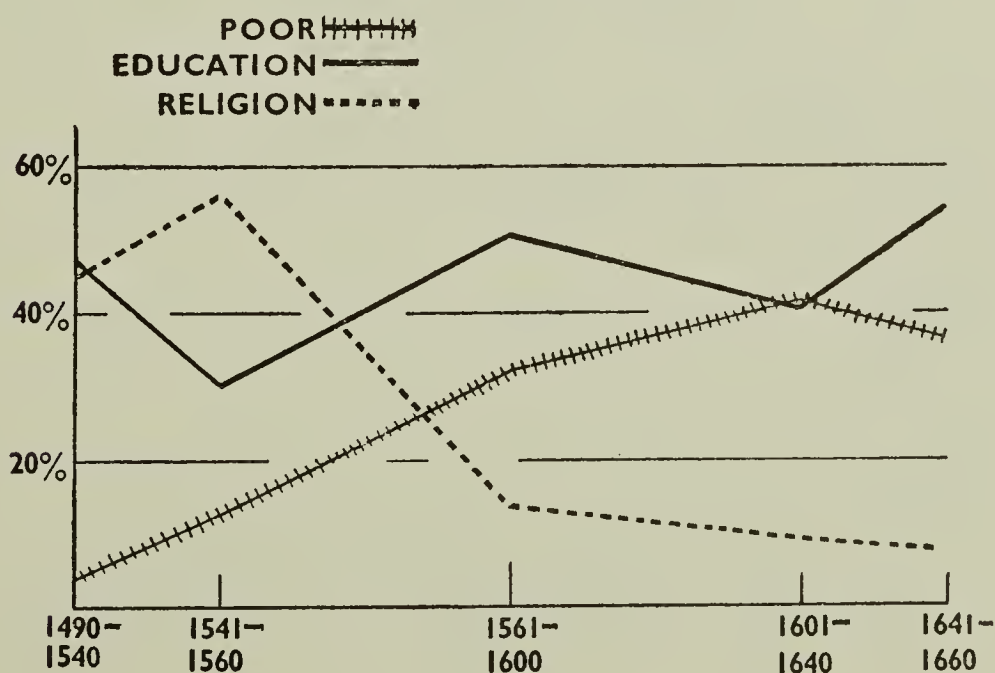


interest does take place, but with less violence, since the devotion of the class to educational needs was steadily maintained in every interval.¹ Thus in the decades prior to the Reformation, the clergy disposed a relatively modest 45.42 per cent of their charitable benefactions for ecclesiastical uses, while sparing no more than a shockingly low 4.24 per cent for the needs of the poor. The preaching zeal of the reformed clergy had its effect, since, in decided contrast to every other social group in England, the proportion of wealth the lower clergy gave to religious uses rose substantially during these years to 56.50 per cent of the whole, while contributions to the requirements of the poor rose slightly to about an eighth (12.57 per cent) of all their gifts. The clergy reacted much as did other men to the harsh secularism of the Elizabethan era, only 13.86 per cent of all their charitable wealth being disposed for religious causes, while almost a third (32.73 per cent) of their funds was given for the care of the poor. The economic as well as the social plight of the clergy during these years is most dramatically suggested by the fact that in the course of these four decades their charitable benefactions amounted to no more than 3.61 per cent of the whole of their gifts during our entire period, whereas other classes were giving in a range of from 9.58 per cent to 25.03 per cent of the whole of their contributions. Proportionately, however, the devotion of the lower clergy to the needs of the church continued to fall slowly but steadily for the remainder of our period, to the 9.38 per cent so given in the early Stuart interval and 7.41 per cent during the unsettled years of revolution, while benefactions for the care of the poor tended to mount modestly until the Civil War was at hand.

The merchants, who as a class were to exercise a dominant role in

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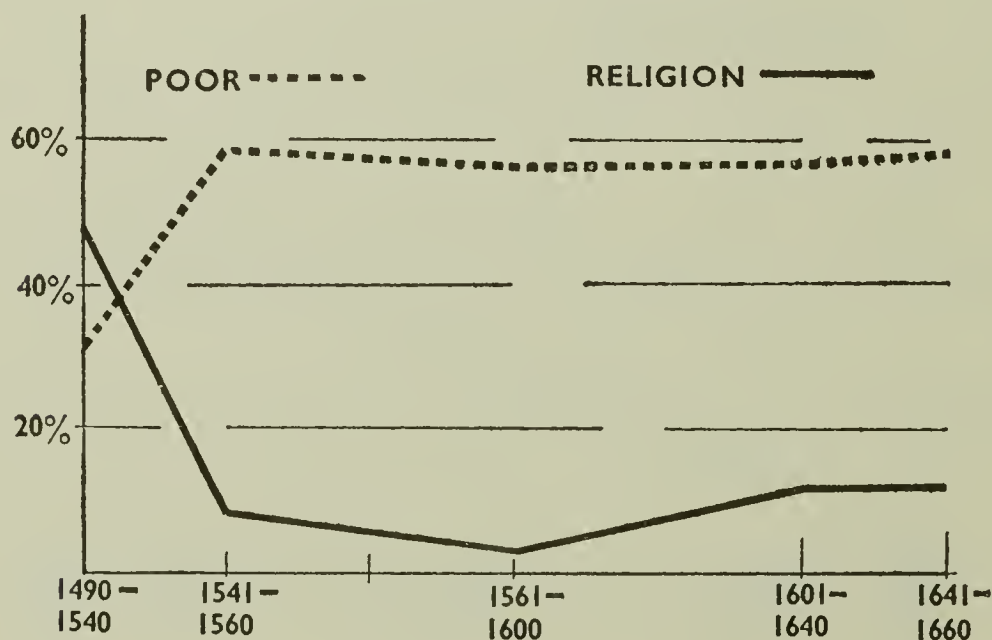
GIFTS BY THE LOWER CLERGY
FOR POOR, EDUCATION, AND RELIGION
(IN % OF TOTAL GIFTS)



shaping the aspirations and the institutions of England, not only because of the massive weight of their gifts but because of their qualitative strength, even in the years prior to the Reformation clearly and most precociously displayed a pattern of interest which other groups were to adopt from one to two generations later. During these early decades no other class was even remotely comparable in understanding the needs of the poor and the claims which they laid against the conscience of the age. The merchant aristocracy devoted 30.23 per cent of its charitable wealth to this cause. Moreover, of all lay classes, save for the nobility, the merchants were the most completely secular, having disposed even in these early years no more than the relatively very modest proportion of 48.38 per cent of their benefactions to the uses of the church. The impact of the Reformation was immediate and, it seems clear, welcome. Merchant contributions for spiritual causes fell abruptly to a slender 8.40 per cent of the whole, while quite as significantly the proportion of merchant wealth disposed for the succour of the poor rose at once to 58.73 per cent, a remarkably level curve thereafter being maintained through the next century, the merchants having early reached a mature assessment of the measures which they wished to take in the assault the whole society had now launched on an ancient evil. The Elizabethan era, however, saw an all but complete withering of merchant interest in the needs of the church, the incredibly tiny proportion of 3.16 per cent of their huge benefactions in this era having been devoted to spiritual uses. During the early Stuart interval this proportion rose modestly to 11.93 per cent of the whole, levelling off at about this amount for the remainder of the period.¹ These men had, then, been strongly secular in their aspirations from the outset of our period, and they quickly and confidently cast the pattern of their intentions in final form just as

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GIFTS BY THE MERCHANTS FOR
POOR AND RELIGION
(IN % OF TOTAL GIFTS)



their immense wealth began to flow so bounteously towards charitable ends. Their decision, taken so early and so irrevocably, was to be decisive as well for the social and institutional development of England.

D. ENGLAND BECOMES A NATION

The great charitable wealth whose origin and disposition we have sought to trace was principally important, of course, because of the immense good which flowed from it, not only to human beings of the period but to all the generations that have followed. These benefactions in their totality are perhaps principally significant, in social terms, because they betoken a new and ever-widening sensitivity on the part of a culture towards human suffering and want. It is not too much to argue, surely, that the ultimate virtue of any culture in any age may best be measured in precisely these terms, and, if that be so, the men and women of the era with which we have dealt had wrought a mighty and an enduring achievement.

But there is another aspect of achievement on which we should here comment at least briefly, leaving our fuller and documented discussion to the counties and most particularly to London. Most of the gifts and bequests which we have recorded were inevitably and surely properly made to meet local needs, to cure ills which men saw about them, and to enlarge the ambit of opportunity in a parish or village beloved because the donor was himself part of the stuff of its being. There was, however, an ever-increasing number of men who took a larger view, who in their dispositions sought to assess the needs of the whole nation or to bring relief and opportunity to distant parts of the realm where the economy was strait, where local leadership was wanting, or where the whole culture was backward. The charitable giving of our period was in consequence a most important solvent of the parochialism which marked the English society at the outset of our long period. The Tudors were skilful and persistent in their efforts to weld a nation out of its parts and by their policy and more particularly by the system of local administration which they created were to go far towards the attainment of this end. But the steady flow of charitable funds from parish to parish, county to county, and region to region was doing this beneficent work as well, an aspect of social and cultural change which Elizabeth recognized and powerfully assisted in the enactment of the poor laws which sought to define and to enforce the interdependence of all communities one with another. The problems with which she was struggling and the problems to which private donors were addressing themselves were, it came to be understood, national in scope and could be resolved only if the nation itself should be considered as a community. Out of the economic and social travail of the sixteenth century a nation was born.

Prior to the Reformation, giving for charitable purposes outside the donor's own parish, or the parish in which he was a landowner, was with few exceptions limited to monastic contributions, and even these, as we have seen, were relatively insignificant. Such occasional benefactions, too, were rarely made save by members of the nobility, the upper gentry, and the great clergy, social groups which themselves tended to possess relatively limited local ties. But shortly after 1540 a mensurable and certainly significant flow of charitable funds from numerous classes and in the main for intensely secular purposes set in from one region to another, with most fruitful and interesting results. This breaking down of the almost fierce parochialism which had characterized the England even of the early sixteenth century was greatly stimulated by the royal briefs which, beginning in the reign of Henry VIII, not only authorized but lent direct governmental encouragement to the solicitation of funds on a national scale for communities which had been grievously hurt by pestilence, fire, or economic disaster. As an example, in 1585 a national collection was authorized for the relief of Nantwich, Cheshire, which had recently suffered from a disastrous fire, the damage from which could not be repaired from local or regional resources. The Queen set herself down for a very large gift of £1000, while a member of the Privy Council and the Dean of St Paul's lent their names as starting subscribers with more modest gifts of £20 and £10 respectively. London and Middlesex followed, with gifts for this distant community totalling a little more than £717, while benefactions were reported from twenty-three additional counties, ranging from £8 from Rutland to £77 13s 5d from Surrey, from fourteen bishoprics, from twenty-one cities, and from the two universities, a total of £3142 os 8d having been raised by a national effort to secure the rehabilitation of a single, and remote, community.¹

We should not, of course, lend undue emphasis to the development of this concern for the nation as a social entity, for understandably and very properly the interests of most donors remained centred on needs with which they were well acquainted and on the improvement of communities of which they were themselves part. Most of the flow of extra-mural funds was, it should also be said, from parish to parish within the capacious entity which the county remained throughout our period. We possess no accurate estimate of the value of such gifts, but certainly most of the larger institutional foundations after 1580, and particularly the grammar schools and almshouses, were established for the benefit of a grouping of parishes and in not a few instances for very large areas within the favoured counties.

We can, however, measure accurately the endowments created within one county for the benefit of another, having, it should be noted,

¹ *S.P. Dom.*, 1585, CLXXXIV, 22, 23.

excluded from our listings all gifts to universities, which may more properly be regarded as gifts for the benefit of the whole nation and which by 1660 had attained the massive total of £231,195 10s, this representing 7.45 per cent of the whole of the charitable wealth accumulated in the course of our period.

In all, extra-county gifts during our age reached the very large sum of £623,302 19s, this being 20.09 per cent of the whole of the charitable wealth of the nation. These gifts were made to remedy needs of all sorts in other counties, though they were principally dedicated to the founding of schools and hospitals, to affording household relief to the poor, and to the establishment of lectureships. A glance at the accompanying table will at once suggest that there were quite amazing differences from county to county in the survival of parochialism.¹ Thus Bristol, urban community though it was, remained almost perversely parochial, bestowing no more than 0.79 per cent of all its great charitable wealth on the needs of other regions, while bringing to an almost precocious fruition its own magnificent social and institutional resources.² The western region generally seems to have remained parochial in its outlook, Somerset also bestowing less than 1 per cent of its considerable charitable wealth on other parts of the realm. But in the mature and relatively more prosperous southern counties such as Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, and Kent, very liberal proportions of their wealth were disposed to an amazing number of distant counties. Rich and generous Norfolk yet remained relatively insular in its interests, bestowing no more than 2.40 per cent of its charities on communities in twenty other

¹ Extra-county benefactions:

<i>County</i>	<i>Number of counties and countries benefitted</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Percentage of county total</i>
		£ s	<i>Per cent</i>
Bristol	12	735 4	0.79
Buckinghamshire	17	4,275 16	4.85
Hampshire	24	7,434 14	8.54
Kent	33	10,566 14	4.20
Lancashire	14	2,266 7	2.18
London	45	584,741 8	30.95
Norfolk	20	4,277 19	2.40
Somerset	15	1,019 5	0.87
Worcestershire	14	1,635 5	3.11
Yorkshire	35	6,350 7	2.61
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		623,302 19	20.09

² The parochialism of Bristol could be documented in many ways. In the collection for Nantwich (*vide ante* 362), for example, Bristol, though the third city of the realm, gave only £8 2s, an amount exceeded by fifteen other communities, including such relatively small towns as Bury St. Edmunds, which gave £53 15s 6d, Sandwich with £13 10s 3d, and King's Lynn with £12.

counties, though it should be added that no county in England was better supplied by the close of our era with endowments for groupings of its own parishes or for the benefit of the county at large.

Though the solvent of charitable giving was weakening the hard shell of parochialism in all the counties of the realm, it was in London that this process was to be completed in the course of our period. London, in fact, viewed the problem of poverty and the closely related problem of want of opportunity as essentially a national matter, with a full understanding that no effective or abiding improvement could be gained unless the whole of the community which was the nation was nurtured with life-giving streams of charity. Hence it was that there poured out from London, mostly from her great merchant donors, the vast sum of £584,741 8s, or not far short of a third (30.95 per cent) of the whole of her prodigious charitable capital. The scale of this giving is suggested by the fact that for the other nine counties in our sampling nearly a fourth (23.55 per cent) of all their charitable resources were supplied by London generosity, and we may safely assume that for the whole of the realm something like this formidable proportion prevailed.

We shall in the next volume of this study discuss in detail this incredible and fruitful generosity, which knew no parochial bounds, but we may here make at least a few general comments on the decisive influence which London wealth had in determining the aspirations of the age, and also in establishing the structure of its institutions. This merchant wealth founded and endowed seventy-two almshouses in all parts of the kingdom, and it created and endowed 123 schools across the length and breadth of the realm, as well as augmenting the resources of scores of existing but meagrely furnished schools. It intervened decisively in order to change the whole social and religious structure of a county like Lancashire, and it lent important aid to Yorkshire as that remote and heretofore backward county lifted itself in the course of a century level with the rest of the nation. These great funds, disposed throughout England, were then so singularly important not only because of their sheer mass, but because they were carefully designed, shrewdly vested, and set on tasks which needed badly to be done in areas which could not with their own resources quite lift themselves into modernity.

Thus it was that one great London donor, after investigation and reflection which would lend credit to a great modern charitable foundation, established a charitable trust the income of which was to afford carefully defined and skilfully administered poor relief in 219 parishes spread over more than half the counties of England and Wales. Most of these parishes Henry Smith had never seen, their people he had never known. But in this very fact is somehow embedded the kernel of true and abiding charity, just as in his great and pervading

generosity is to be found the essence of an understanding that the community which was England was one. Smith, and the great and generous merchant class of which he was an exemplar, was concerned with humanity, with the prevention and cure of suffering, which he could only know vicariously in his own age and in ages yet to come. Surely he, the London merchants like him, and the many thousands of small and humble benefactors whose acts of mercy we have also sought to memorialize, were in fact God's vicars among men.

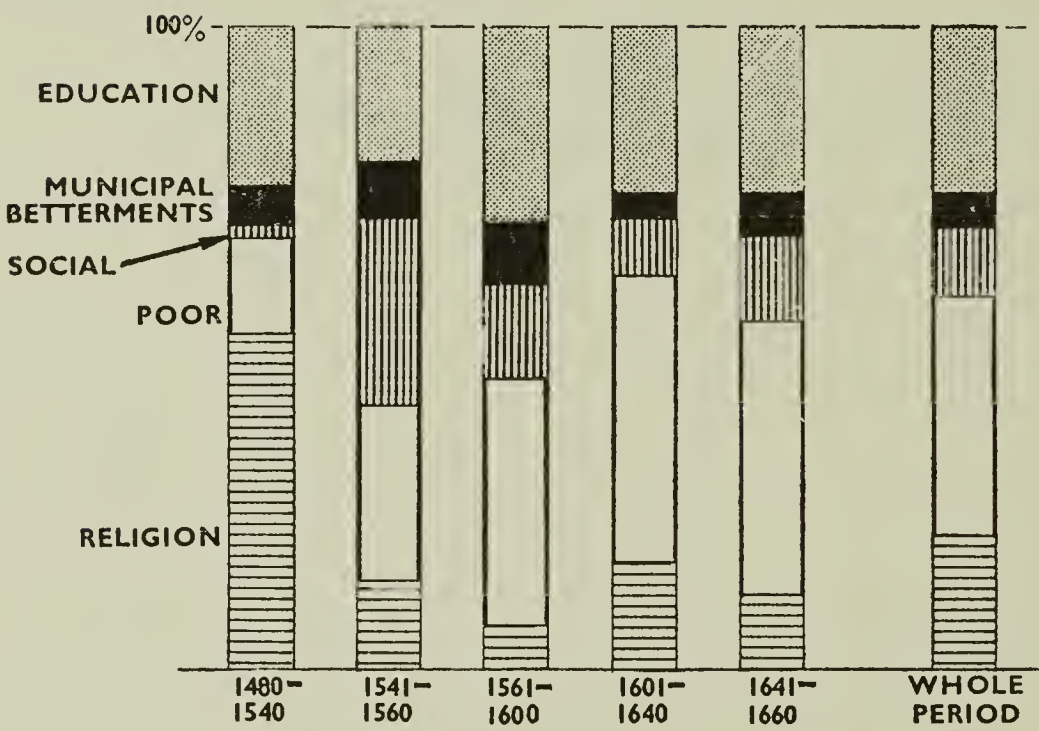
APPENDIX

CURVE I

TOTALS OF CHARITABLE BENEFACCTIONS BY
DECADE INTERVALS

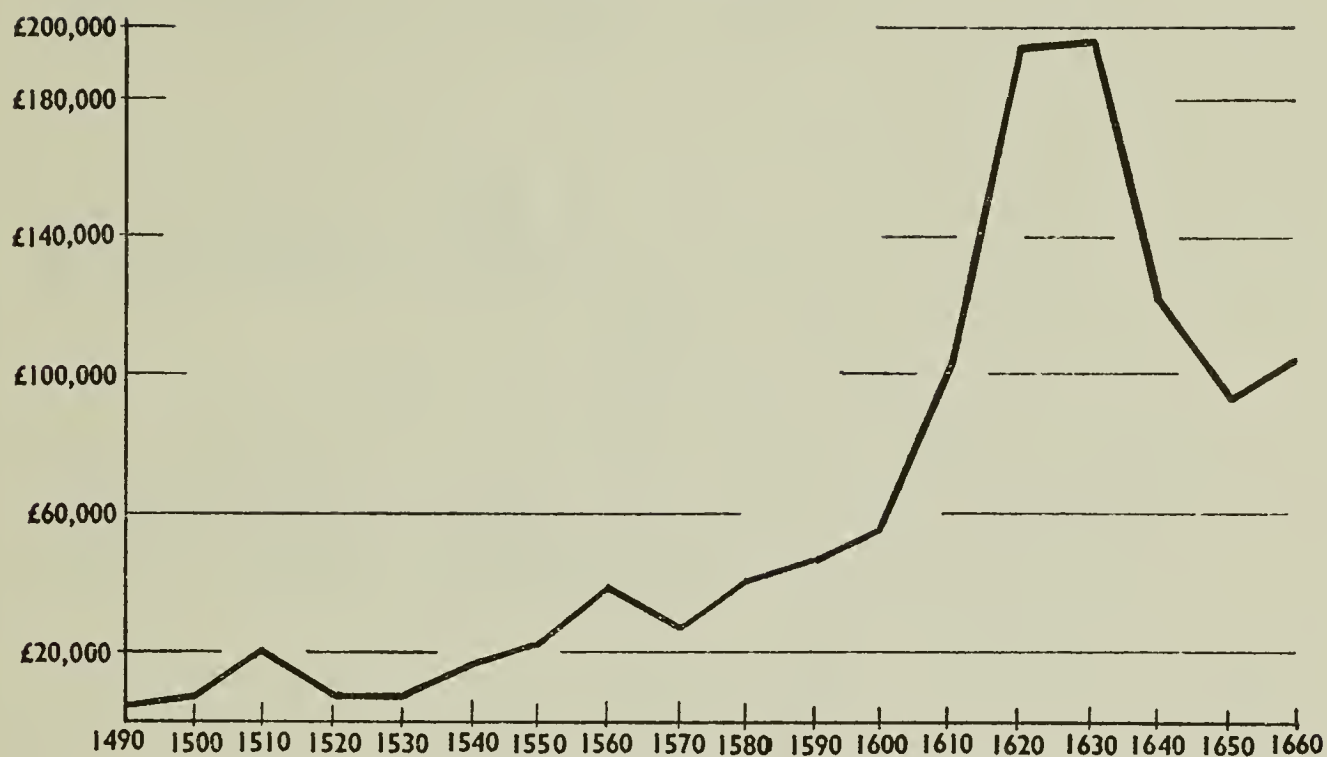


TABLE I
CHANGING STRUCTURE OF ASPIRATIONS



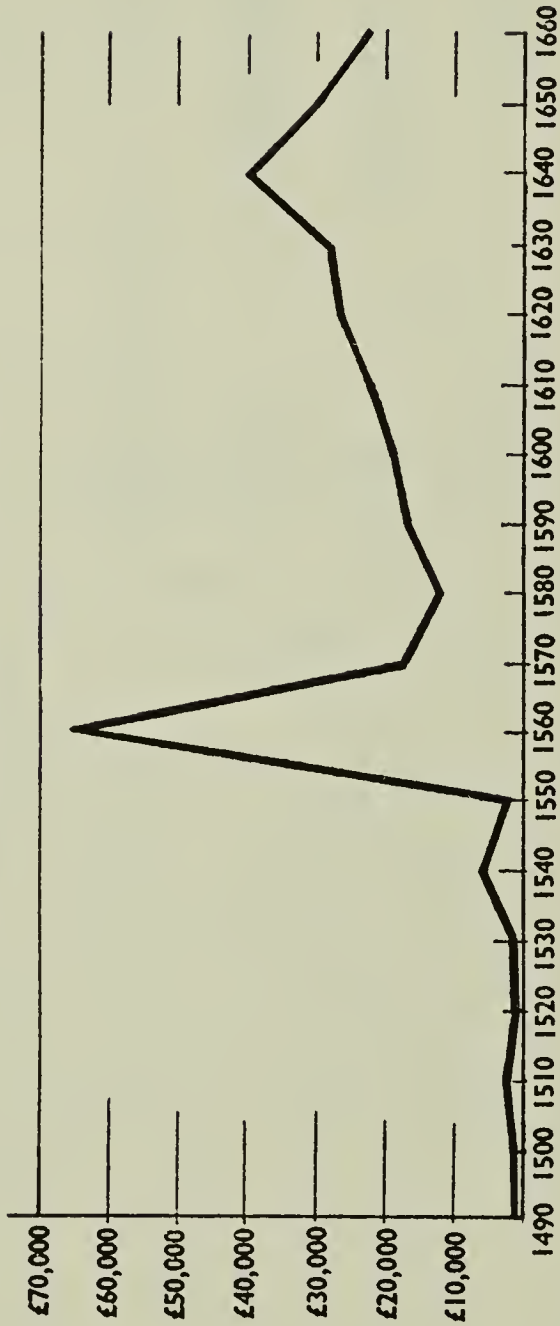
Interval	Poor	Social Rehabilita- tion	Municipal Better- ments	Education	Religion	Total
1480-1540	£ 70,058 3 (13.33%)	£ 10,706 18 (2.04%)	£ 32,501 5 (6.18%)	£ 131,170 5 (24.96%)	£ 281,158 15 (53.49%)	£ 525,595 1 (16.94%)
1541-1560	£ 61,383 4 (27.04%)	£ 68,589 17 (30.21%)	£ 15,212 6 (6.70%)	£ 48,320 9 (21.28%)	£ 33,526 5 (14.77%)	£ 227,032 1 (7.32%)
1561-1600	£ 173,944 4 (39.03%)	£ 66,101 15 (14.83%)	£ 33,720 5 (7.57%)	£ 139,947 8 (31.40%)	£ 31,959 7 (7.17%)	£ 445,672 19 (14.36%)
1601-1640	£ 620,480 (43.16%)	£ 119,340 15 (8.30%)	£ 57,553 7 (4.00%)	£ 383,594 1 (26.68%)	£ 256,522 (17.85%)	£ 1,437,490 3 (46.33%)
1641-1660	£ 203,485 18 (43.58%)	£ 54,707 7 (11.72%)	£ 21,789 3 (4.67%)	£ 130,461 9 (27.94%)	£ 56,462 8 (12.09%)	£ 466,906 5 (15.05%)
TOTALS	£ 1,129,351 9 (36.40%)	£ 319,446 12 (10.30%)	£ 160,776 1 (5.18%)	£ 833,493 12 (26.86%)	£ 659,628 15 (21.26%)	£ 3,102,696 9

TABLE II
POOR RELIEF



<i>Interval</i>	<i>Outright Relief</i>		<i>Almshouses</i>		<i>Charity General</i>		<i>Aged</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	£	s	£	s	£	s	£	s	£	s
1480-1490	2,518	4	1,531	3	1,301				5,350	7
1491-1500	4,650	13	3,558	12	351	11			8,560	16
1501-1510	5,208	17	12,829	15	1,878	7	100		20,016	19
1511-1520	3,104	11	3,044	17	2,168	10			8,317	18
1521-1530	4,454	15	2,543	4	1,491	13			8,489	12
1531-1540	9,802	19	4,646	4	4,873	8			19,322	11
Sub-total	29,739	19	28,153	15	12,064	9	100		70,058	3
1541-1550	12,996	19	9,807	19	365	14	1		23,171	12
1551-1560	21,280	15	12,624	19	4,305	18			38,211	12
Sub-total	34,277	14	22,432	18	4,671	12	1		61,383	4
1561-1570	16,916		5,379	18	5,907	3			28,203	1
1571-1580	26,552	3	14,110	13	744	6	100		41,507	2
1581-1590	30,265	10	15,675	18	2,158	3	1		48,100	11
1591-1600	31,218	4	23,602	3	1,217	13	95	10	56,133	10
Sub-total	104,951	17	58,768	12	10,027	5	196	10	173,944	4
1601-1610	51,586	14	48,157	15	4,618	10	130		104,492	19
1611-1620	76,047	14	116,225	12	2,917	14	2,017		197,208	
1621-1630	82,801	12	47,560	9	67,244	16	1,065	10	198,672	7
1631-1640	85,096	18	28,984	16	5,325		700		120,106	14
Sub-total	295,532	18	240,928	12	80,106		3,912	10	620,480	
1641-1650	60,073	9	21,484	4	12,198	3	450		94,205	16
1651-1660	57,741	9	45,547		2,220	13	483		105,992	2
No Date	3,068		100		120				3,288	
Sub-total	120,882	18	67,131	4	14,538	16	933		203,485	18
TOTALS	585,385	6	417,415	1	121,408	2	5,143		1,129,351	9

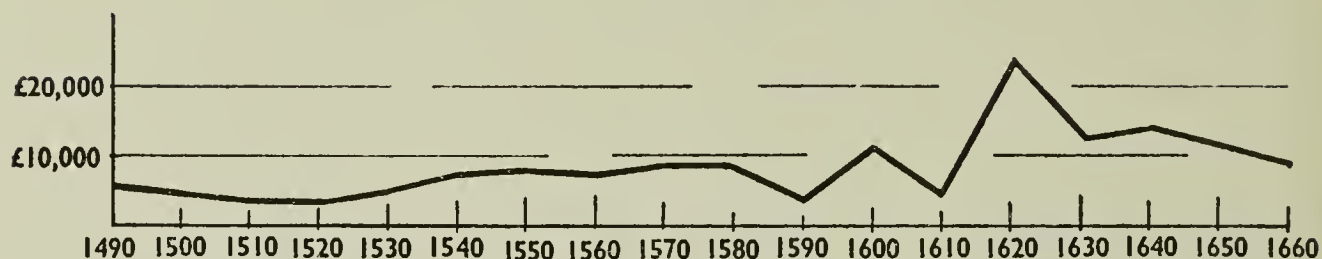
TABLE III
SOCIAL REHABILITATION



Interval	Prisons	Loans	Workhouses and Stocks	Apprenticeship Schemes	Sick and Hospitals	Marriage Subsidies	Total
1480-1490	£ 105 5				£ 488 9	£ 122 13	£ 716 7
1491-1500	229 8	100			35 6	407 14	772 8
1501-1510	432 7	974		0 13	212 2	511 2	2,130 4
1511-1520	175 3	66 15			98 12	343 18	684 8
1521-1530	148 10	200			202 9	352 2	903 1
1531-1540	1,008 13	848 7			84	3,559 10	5,500 10
Sub-total	2,099 6	2,189 2		0 13	1,120 18	5,296 19	10,706 18

I541-I550	390	8	1,070	60	3	487	699	2,707
I551-I560	819	7	2,289	326	13	19	5	65,882
Sub-total	1,209	15	3,359	386	13	12	10	68,589
I561-I570	1,130	8	10,967	205	73	19	9	17,283
I571-I580	2,337	12	3,256	1,363	13	13	18	12,499
I581-I590	2,149	17	5,077	3,649	13	8	6	16,725
I591-I600	3,604	12	5,436	866	13	10	15	19,592
Sub-total	9,222	9	24,737	6,084	14	10	13	66,101
I601-I610	4,448	13	4,512	1,692	6	6	18	22,434
I611-I620	4,737	2	7,880	2,144	16	12	4	27,917
I621-I630	4,541	16	5,262	3,036	10	10	13	28,461
I631-I640	6,119	6	5,498	8,455	10	12	11	40,527
Sub-total	19,846	17	23,153	15,328	9	6	15	119,340
I641-I650	5,149	17	4,563	6,730	9	19	5	30,877
I651-I660	1,439	9	5,220	1,287	6	13	12	23,677
No date			20	52	10		10	152
Sub-total	6,589	6	9,803	8,069	19	12	7	54,707
TOTALS	38,967	13	63,242	29,869	15	12	15	319,446

TABLE IV
MUNICIPAL BETTERMENTS



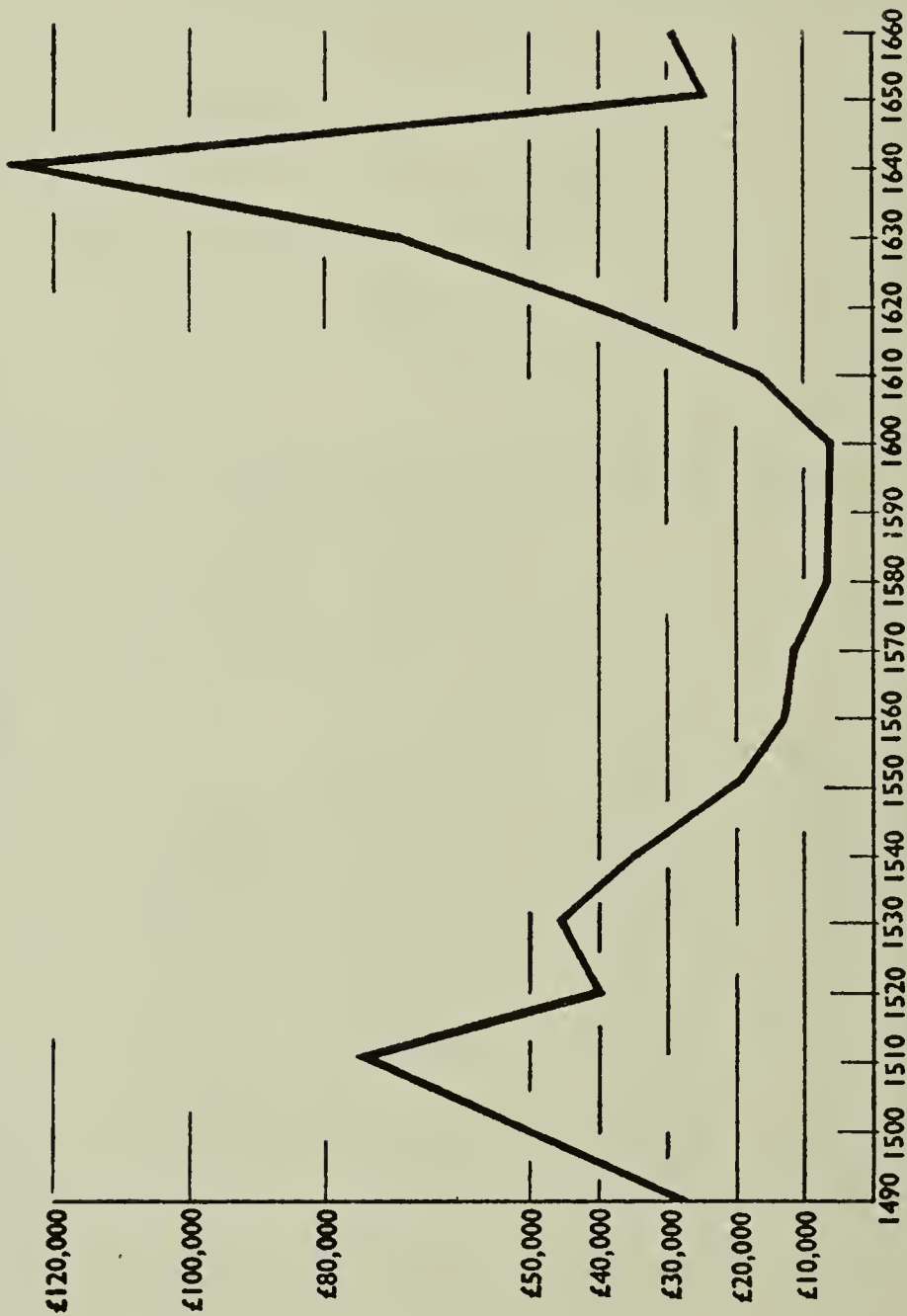
<i>Interval</i>	<i>General Uses</i>		<i>Companies for Public Benefit</i>		<i>Parks</i>		<i>Public Works, Roads, etc.</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	£	s	£	s	£	s	£	s	£	s
1480-1490	1,193	8	554	13	30		4,470	17	6,248	18
1491-1500	1,849	6	721	17			2,695	5	5,266	8
1501-1510	1,666	17	953	19	54	2	1,504	3	4,179	1
1511-1520	698	10	1,442	3			1,989	15	4,130	8
1521-1530	1,190	5	2,753	3			1,166		5,109	8
1531-1540	2,665	8	2,519	15			2,381	14	7,566	17
Sub-total	9,263	14	8,945	10	84	2	14,207	14	32,501	
1541-1550	2,269	17	852	4	5		4,631	3	7,758	4
1551-1560	2,473	18	2,598				2,382	4	7,454	2
Sub-total	4,743	15	3,450	4	5		7,013	7	15,212	6
1561-1570	4,313	13	2,090	17	12		2,433	7	8,849	17
1571-1580	1,624	1	4,383	19			2,593	9	8,601	9
1581-1590	837	2	2,266	16			1,561	11	4,665	9
1591-1600	5,652	16	3,191	9			2,759	5	11,603	10
Sub-total	12,427	12	11,933	1	12		9,347	12	33,720	5
1601-1610	763		3,336	5			780	12	4,879	17
1611-1620	2,804	13	9,018	16			12,355	5	24,178	14
1621-1630	2,084	8	7,117	7			4,625	11	13,827	6
1631-1640	3,380		9,037	4	200		2,050	6	14,667	10
Sub-total	9,032	1	28,509	12	200		19,811	14	57,553	7
1641-1650	7,299		2,424	19			2,733		12,456	19
1651-1660	2,573	4	5,390	8			1,265	12	9,229	4
No date	60		3				40		103	
Sub-total	9,932	4	7,818	7			4,038	12	21,789	3
TOTALS	45,399	6	60,656	14	301	2	54,418	19	160,776	1

TABLE V — EDUCATION



<i>Interval</i>	<i>Schools</i>	<i>Colleges and Universities</i>	<i>Libraries (Non- University)</i>	<i>Scholarships and Fellowships</i>	<i>Total</i>
	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s
1480-1490	3,894	2,767 10		499 13	7,161 3
1491-1500	1,200	1,694 14		4,519 13	7,414 7
1501-1510	4,230	24,075 7	60 14	1,808 7	30,174 8
1511-1520	10,062 4	15,791 1	100	1,943 2	27,896 7
1521-1530	9,526 17	30,384 10	4 7	6,372 16	46,288 10
1531-1540	7,379 12	3,622 6	7 14	1,225 18	12,235 10
Sub-total	36,292 13	78,335 8	172 15	16,369 9	131,170 5
1541-1550	8,226 12	9,263 1	30	207 13	17,727 6
1551-1560	21,172 18	5,530	30	3,860 5	30,593 3
Sub-total	29,399 10	14,793 1	60	4,067 18	48,320 9
1561-1570	10,377 6	13,760 13	32	3,125 17	27,295 16
1571-1580	22,647 3	7,220	83	6,393 19	36,344 2
1581-1590	19,171 17	16,789 1		8,902 3	44,863 1
1591-1600	20,540 7	2,614 6	10 14	8,279 2	31,444 9
Sub-total	72,736 13	40,384	125 14	26,701 1	139,947 8
1601-1610	30,314 18	16,010 15	111 12	14,354	60,791 5
1611-1620	97,774 9	19,634 7	222	15,462	133,092 16
1621-1630	63,118 17	39,491	999 10	12,629 8	116,238 15
1631-1640	29,391 11	11,198 9	2,916	29,965 5	73,471 5
Sub-total	220,599 15	86,334 11	4,249 2	72,410 13	383,594 1
1641-1650	33,345 6	6,636	835 12	12,732	53,548 18
1651-1660	55,387 18	4,712 10	2,900 4	12,749 6	75,749 18
No date	1,137 13			25	1,162 13
Sub-total	89,870 17	11,348 10	3,735 16	25,506 6	130,461 9
TOTALS	448,899 8	231,195 10	8,343 7	145,055 7	833,493 12

TABLE VI
RELIGION



Interval	Church General	Prayers	Church Repairs	Maintenance of Clergy	Puritan Lectureships	Church Building (Estimated)	Total
	£ ^s	£ ^s	£ ^s	£ ^s	£ ^s	£ ^s	£ ^s
I480-I490	3,109 8	16,703 16	4,387 19	779 8		4,926 13	29,907 4
I491-I500	3,515 19	19,881 9	12,274 14	514 10		17,272 8	53,459
I501-I510	3,730 18	43,710 15	8,282 5	1,172 12		17,823 3	74,719 13
I511-I520	2,351 17	19,116 18	5,660	1,703 10		12,007 6	40,839 11
I521-I530	4,331 12	25,623 10	6,015 16	2,420 14		8,223 14	46,615 6
I531-I540	1,953 3	15,827 15	5,691 19	2,701 1		9,444 3	35,618 1
Sub-total	18,992 17	140,864 3	42,312 13	9,291 15		69,697 7	281,158 15
I541-I550	788 6	6,090 7	2,071 15	731 1		10,342 18	20,024 7
I551-I560	2,266 11	2,512 4	3,074 11	2,895 9		2,753 3	13,501 18
Sub-total	3,054 17	8,602 11	5,146 6	3,626 10		13,096 1	33,526 5
I561-I570	659 5	72 14	1,141 14	468 13		8,952	11,294 6
I571-I580	438 8	15	2,223	1,077 3	267	3,021 4	7,027 10
I581-I590	454 8	6 8	1,794 1	1,599 3	1,771 13	570	6,195 13
I591-I600	599 16		1,124 12	1,108 7	2,269 3	2,340	7,441 18
Sub-total	2,151 17	79 17	6,283 7	4,253 6	4,307 16	14,883 4	31,959 7
I601-I610	1,272 14		2,922 5	1,734 11	3,436	8,093 13	17,459 3
I611-I620	4,104 16		5,910 6	5,538 17	12,823 7	13,355 9	41,732 15
I621-I630	6,423 10		6,526 18	20,574 14	17,323 7	21,093 2	71,941 11
I631-I640	2,438 19	70	15,078 6	9,692 2	12,670 18	85,438 6	125,388 11
Sub-total	14,239 19	70	30,437 15	37,540 4	46,253 12	127,980 10	256,522
I641-I650	487		2,431 10	3,927 1	15,066	3,070	24,981 11
I651-I660	1,372 14		3,273 19	12,792	4,640 10	6,022	28,101 3
No date	464 11	40	1,304 5	120 18		1,450	3,379 14
Sub-total	2,324 5	40	7,009 14	16,839 19	19,706 10	10,542	56,462 8
TOTALS	40,763 15	149,656 11	91,189 15	71,551 14	70,267 18	236,199 2	659,628 15

TAB I
AVERAGE WORTH OF CERTAIN SOCIAL GROUPS (1480-1660)
TO CHARITABLE USE

County	Upper Gentry			Lower Gentry		
	Number	Average Worth	Per cent to Charity	Number	Average Worth	Per cent to Charity
		£			£ s d	
Bristol						
Buckinghamshire	6	5,796		4	2,210	
Hampshire	4	4,113		4	1,802 10	
Kent	14	5,176	2.57	30	1,097	13.78
Lancashire				14	699	
London	6	2,722		16	2,565	
Norfolk	7	12,298	5.92	32	1,377	1.60
Somerset	18	1,669	11.22	53	1,040	2.64
Worcestershire				4	2,024	
Yorkshire	43	1,984	10.77	185	693	3.49
TOTALS	98	3,484	7.12	342	980	4.29

County	Merchants			Tradesmen		
	Number	Average Worth	Per cent to Charity	Number	Average Worth	Per cent to Charity
		£ s d			£ s d	
Bristol						
Buckinghamshire	47	1,921	27.00	18	148 9 1	5.16
Hampshire				4	359 18 0	
Kent	8	1,226	6.12	10	570 14 5	7.19
Lancashire	14	2,325		4	505 9 0	
London	393	7,780 2 7	16.76	91	1,463 1 3	14.13
Norfolk	26	1,335	13.92	21	391 0 8	4.02
Somerset	16	899	41.54	38	252 6 2	15.00
Worcestershire	4	1,153				
Yorkshire	61	1,066	24.97	131	179 2 8	7.03
TOTALS	569	5,815 7 7	17.25	317	587 10 6	12.46

VI

AD PROPORTION OF GROSS VALUE OF ESTATES DISPOSED
IN SELECTED COUNTIES

<i>Yeomen</i>			<i>Husbandmen</i>			<i>County</i>
<i>Number</i>	<i>Average Worth</i>	<i>Per cent to Charity</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Average Worth</i>	<i>Per cent to Charity</i>	
	£ s d			£ s d		
I	75 0 0					Bristol
16	390 10 0		12	30 18 10		Buckinghamshire
12	268 4 9		18	35 12 4		Hampshire
18	415 9 8	6.57	18	18 14 4		Kent
66	195 13 9		42	50 5 9		Lancashire
						London
36	442 12 9	1.05	8	38 1 0		Norfolk
147	117 13 5	3.52	335	12 5 6		Somerset
14	241 13 3		8	26 16 0		Worcestershire
305	148 0 3	5.70	205	28 10 2		Yorkshire
615	181 12 4	4.47	646	21 11 6		TOTALS

<i>Artisans</i>						<i>County</i>
<i>Number</i>	<i>Average Worth</i>	<i>Per cent to Charity</i>				
	£ s d					
5	49 3 2					Bristol
7	12 9 5					Buckinghamshire
						Hampshire
I	84 13 0					Kent
28	41 0 0					Lancashire
46	68 0 0					London
14	101 10 1					Norfolk
11	6 3 5					Somerset
3	18 5 0					Worcestershire
73	25 17 6					Yorkshire
188	43 4 6	5.83				TOTALS

TABL
DEPTH OF GIVING: ALL KNOWN DONORS OF THRE
(SUMMARY TABL

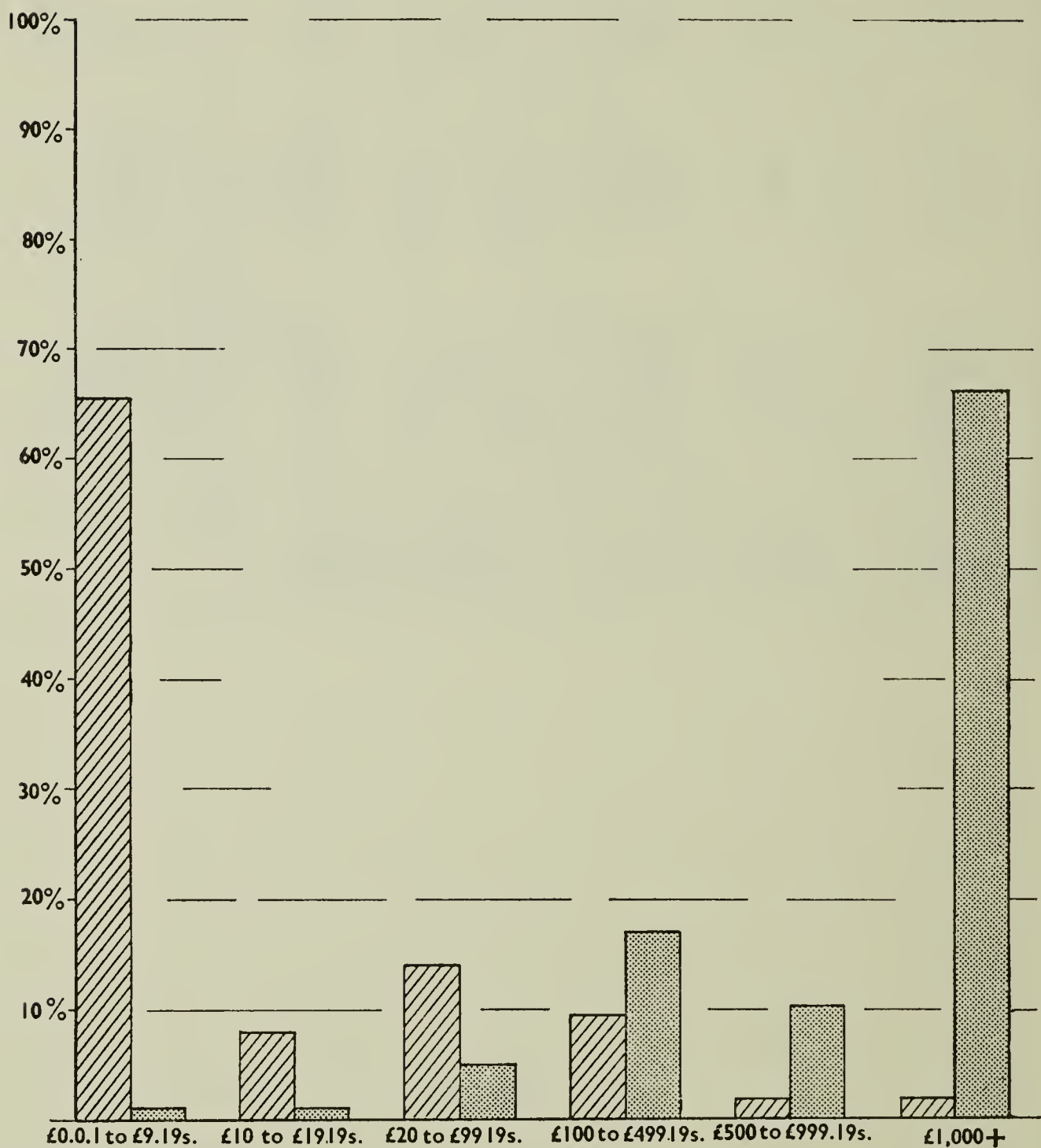
Total No. of Donors	Class	No. Donors	Gifts £0 0s 1d to £9 19s	No. Donors	Gifts £10 to £19 19s	No. Donors	Gifts £20 to £99 19s
			£ s		£ s		£ s
18	Crown	1	2			2	74 13
119	Nobility	13	59	7	82	38	1,315 7
416	Upper Gentry	91	383 16	65	799 15	130	5,973 8
1772	Lower Gentry	1032	2,981 5	224	2,766 13	342	14,741 8
2539	Yeomen	2204	4,343 10	119	1,477 19	178	6,564 8
3927	Husbandmen	3910	1,481 12	12	139 15	5	146 12
192	Agricultural Labourers (Yorks. only)	190	44 3	1	10	1	20
75	Upper Clergy	5	19 15	5	57	7	337 7
747	Lower Clergy	413	1,141 6	91	1,226 6	122	5,739 11
3121	Merchants	868	3,129 16	359	4,591 6	783	35,441 15
1781	Tradesmen	929	2,637 17	210	2,596 7	400	17,102 1
1021	Burghers	446	1,775 4	155	1,901 14	259	10,694 18
1091	Artisans	1045	1,865 10	23	268 13	20	816 13
631	Professional	234	1,498 16	77	938 9	150	6,184 19
17,450	TOTALS	11,381 (65·22 per cent)	21,363 10 (1·04 per cent)	1,348 (7·72 per cent)	16,855 17 (0·82 per cent)	2,437 (13·97 per cent)	105,153 (5·11 per cent)

II
COUNTIES: LONDON, SOMERSET, AND YORKSHIRE
(AND GRAPHS)

No. Donors	Gifts £100 to £499 19s	No. Donors	Gifts £500 to £999 19s	No. Donors	Gifts £1000+	Total Contributions
	£ s		£ s		£ s	£ s
6	1,166 7	1	653	8	120,750 6	122,646 6
31	8,170 11	14	9,839 14	16	69,438 7	88,904 19
95	19,148 7	22	14,848 11	13	31,018	72,171 17
148	27,470	17	11,027 8	9	29,499 14	88,486 8
36	6,137 5	1	540	1	2,180	21,243 2
						1,767 19
						74 3
27	7,042 12	13	8,808 3	18	82,849 4	99,114 1
91	18,163 3	14	9,293 1	16	69,889 7	105,452 14
763	172,010 15	159	112,397 6	189	812,085 11	1,139,656 9
191	39,310	31	20,244 7	20	28,858 9	110,749 1
143	26,264 9	15	8,992	3	4,600	54,228 5
2	200	1	696 11			3,847 7
117	22,954 7	23	15,403 14	30	102,386 17	149,367 2
1650 9.46 per cent)	348,037 16 (16.91 per cent)	311 (1.78 per cent)	212,743 15 (10.34 per cent)	323 (1.85 per cent)	1,353,555 15 (65.78 per cent)	2,057,709 13

DEPTH OF GIVING

LONDON—SOMERSET—YORKSHIRE
 (PER CENT OF TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND DONORS
 IN CATEGORIES OF SIZE OF GIFT)



Of each pair of columns, the left-hand column represents % of donors
 and the right represents % of contributions

DEPTH OF GIVING

LONDON—SOMERSET—YORKSHIRE

(PER CENT OF TOTAL NUMBER OF DONORS AND TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN SIX CATEGORIES OF SIZE OF GIFT)

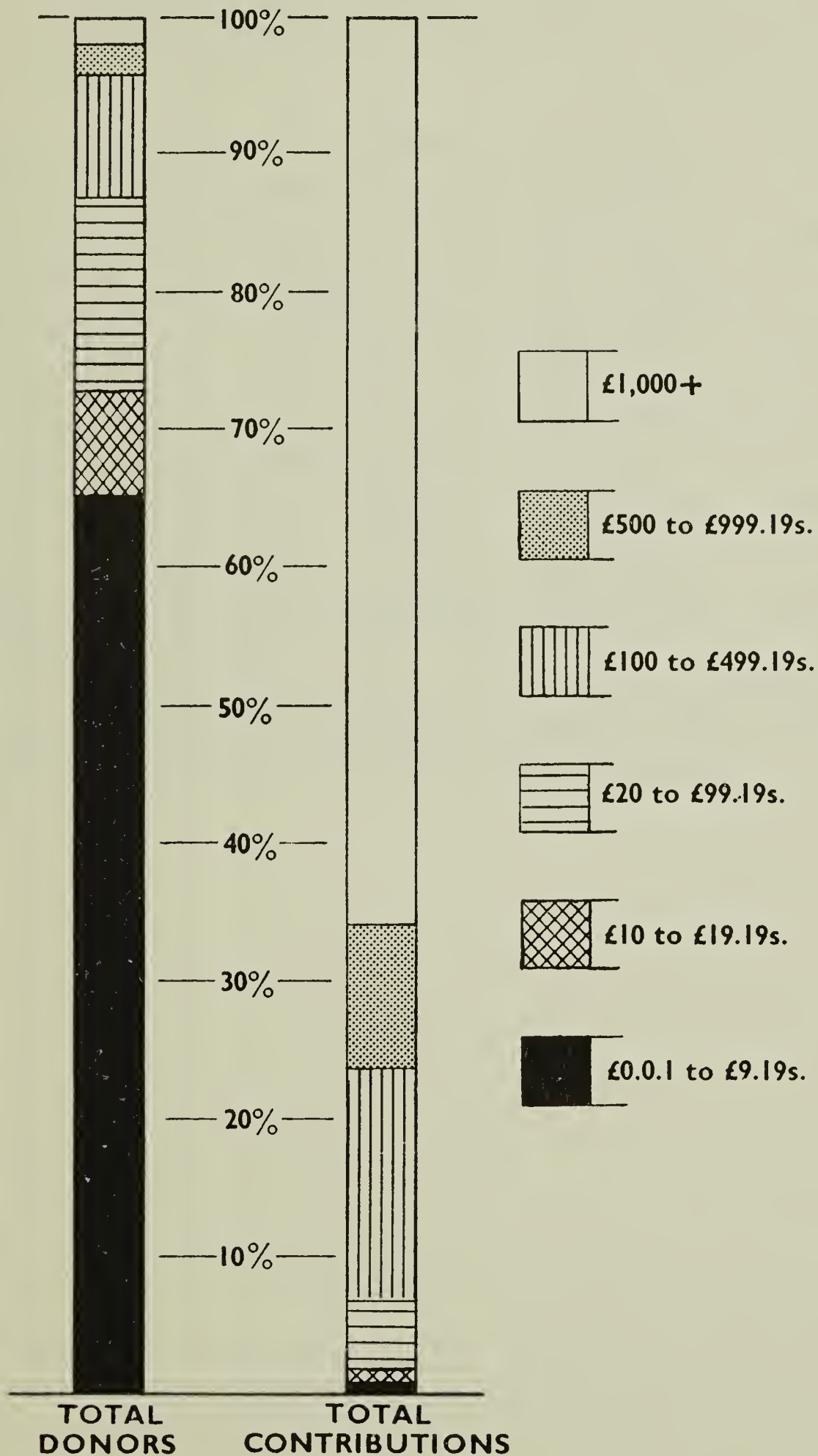


TABLE
STRUCTURE OF GIVING

<i>County</i>	<i>Known Donors</i>	<i>Women Donors</i>	<i>Per cent of all Donors</i>	<i>Total Contributions by Women</i>		<i>Per cent of Whole</i>	<i>Poor</i>
Bristol	531	82	15.44	£	<i>s</i>	7.58	£ <i>s</i> 4,043 11 (57.96 per cent)
Bucks	1,722	232	13.5	11,466	7	13.01	9,809 12 (85.55 per cent)
Hampshire	1,956	238	12.17	3,415	4	3.92	1,883 10 (55.15 per cent)
Kent	6,662	837	12.56	13,833	2	5.49	6,961 9 (50.32 per cent)
Lancashire	939	106	11.28	6,579		6.34	1,395 6 (21.21 per cent)
London	7,391	1,100	14.88	172,635	5	9.14	71,505 4 (41.42 per cent)
Norfolk	2,714	352	12.97	16,849	5	9.47	5,564 19 (33.03 per cent)
Somerset	3,629	531	14.63	7,028	5	6.03	2,866 12 (40.78 per cent)
Worcs	787	100	12.71	2,795	9	5.31	1,987 6 (71.09 per cent)
Yorkshire	8,632	1,121	12.99	30,589	7	12.55	14,968 8 (48.93 per cent)
TOTALS	34,963	4,699	13.44	272,167	8	8.77	120,985 17 (44.45 per cent)

WOMEN DONORS

<i>Social Rehabilitation</i>	<i>Municipal Betterments</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Religion</i>	<i>Totals</i>
£ s 571 6 3·18 per cent)	£ s 40 (0·57 per cent)	£ s 1,350 (19·35 per cent)	£ s 971 7 (13·92 per cent)	£ s 6,976 4
351 3·06 per cent)	198 18 (1·73 per cent)	648 (5·65 per cent)	458 17 (4·00 per cent)	11,466 7
60 1·76 per cent)	217 7 (6·36 per cent)	412 (12·06 per cent)	842 7 (24·66 per cent)	3,415 4
377 10 2·73 per cent)	495 14 (3·58 per cent)	2,328 13 (16·83 per cent)	3,669 16 (26·53 per cent)	13,833 2
620 1·42 per cent)	22 9 (0·34 per cent)	2,280 3 (34·66 per cent)	2,261 2 (34·37 per cent)	6,579
25,547 18 (4·81 per cent)	5,277 3 (3·05 per cent)	42,788 (24·78 per cent)	27,517 (15·95 per cent)	172,635 5
616 17 3·66 per cent)	261 10 (1·55 per cent)	7,658 19 (45·46 per cent)	2,747 (16·29 per cent)	16,849 5
514 3 7·31 per cent)	88 10 (1·26 per cent)	1,109 12 (15·78 per cent)	2,449 8 (34·84 per cent)	7,028 5
310 (1·09 per cent)	61 (2·18 per cent)	274 (9·80 per cent)	163 3 (5·84 per cent)	2,795 9
806 18 2·64 per cent)	487 8 (1·59 per cent)	6,237 5 (20·39 per cent)	8,089 8 (26·45 per cent)	30,589 7
29,775 12 (0·94 per cent)	7,149 19 (2·63 per cent)	65,086 12 (23·91 per cent)	49,169 8 (18·07 per cent)	272,167 8

TABLE X
STRUCTURE OF CLASS ASPIRATIONS

Class	Poor	Social Rehabilitation	Municipal Betterments	Education	Religion	Total Contributions
Crown	£ 27,304 9 (19.00 per cent)	£ 54,026 (37.61 per cent)	£ 2,173 (1.51 per cent)	£ 29,112 3 (20.27 per cent)	£ 31,028 2 (21.60 per cent)	£ 143,643 14
Nobility	65,669 7 (52.68 per cent)	3,700 (2.97 per cent)	1,581 13 (1.27 per cent)	31,961 (25.63 per cent)	21,751 4 (17.45 per cent)	124,663 4
Upper Gentry	62,916 3 (36.65 per cent)	8,358 9 (4.87 per cent)	3,460 6 (2.02 per cent)	57,780 9 (33.66 per cent)	39,143 2 (22.80 per cent)	171,658 9
Lower Gentry	80,619 1 (44.52 per cent)	6,972 2 (3.85 per cent)	5,382 11 (2.97 per cent)	42,280 18 (23.35 per cent)	45,837 15 (25.31 per cent)	181,092 7
Yeomen	26,062 8 (56.52 per cent)	1,211 11 (2.63 per cent)	2,901 5 (6.29 per cent)	6,644 14 (14.41 per cent)	9,294 16 (20.16 per cent)	46,114 14
Husbandmen	1,419 19 (50.43 per cent)	13 13 (0.48 per cent)	76 8 (2.71 per cent)	54 2 (1.92 per cent)	1,251 13 (44.45 per cent)	2,815 15
Agricultural Labourers	119 17 (72.75 per cent)	0 14 (0.42 per cent)	0 11 (0.33 per cent)		43 13 (25.49 per cent)	164 15
Upper Clergy	15,484 14 (10.04 per cent)	3,872 7 (2.50 per cent)	1,165 2 (0.76 per cent)	97,839 1 (63.45 per cent)	35,832 19 (23.24 per cent)	154,194 3
Lower Clergy	37,151 8 (26.33 per cent)	3,233 18 (2.29 per cent)	6,029 15 (4.27 per cent)	62,070 11 (44.00 per cent)	32,594 12 (23.10 per cent)	141,080 4
Merchants	535,712 13 (39.99 per cent)	190,589 5 (14.23 per cent)	92,632 9 (6.92 per cent)	334,203 18 (24.95 per cent)	186,360 13 (13.91 per cent)	1,339,498 18
Tradesmen	73,412 6 (49.06 per cent)	22,776 19 (15.22 per cent)	12,619 18 (8.43 per cent)	18,868 19 (12.61 per cent)	21,964 17 (14.68 per cent)	149,642 19
Burghers	49,022 19 (54.34 per cent)	10,526 3 (11.67 per cent)	2,877 1 (3.18 per cent)	13,066 17 (14.47 per cent)	14,730 4 (16.33 per cent)	90,223 4
Artisans	5,000 19 (57.49 per cent)	663 19 (7.63 per cent)	477 13 (5.49 per cent)	493 3 (5.67 per cent)	2,063 17 (23.72 per cent)	8,699 11
Professions and Public Officials	64,211 19 (32.82 per cent)	6,781 1 (3.47 per cent)	6,959 14 (3.56 per cent)	96,813 4 (49.49 per cent)	20,864 11 (10.67 per cent)	195,630 9

TABLE XI
CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE OF CLASS ASPIRATIONS

<i>Interval</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Social Rehabilita- tion</i>	<i>Municipal Better- ments</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Religion</i>	<i>Totals and % of Whole Contribution made in the Several Periods</i>
<i>Nobility</i>	£ <i>s</i>	£ <i>s</i>	£ <i>s</i>	£ <i>s</i>	£ <i>s</i>	£ <i>s</i>
1480-1540	3,578 16 (10.56%)	45 (0.13%)	893 7 (2.63%)	18,967 (55.97%)	10,406 5 (30.71%)	33,890 8 (27.18%)
1541-1560	813 6 (46.45%)	45 (2.57%)	153 6 (8.76%)	40 (2.28%)	699 7 (39.94%)	1,750 19 (1.40%)
1561-1600	8,989 1 (38.49%)	1,130 (4.84%)	420 (1.80%)	11,187 (47.90%)	1,630 (6.98%)	23,356 1 (18.74%)
1601-1640	42,398 (76.98%)	2,240 (4.07%)	105 (0.19%)	1,767 (3.21%)	8,567 12 (15.56%)	55,077 12 (44.18%)
1641-1660	9,890 4 (93.41%)	240 (2.27%)	10 (0.09%)		448 (4.23%)	10,588 4 (8.49%)
TOTALS	65,669 7 (52.68%)	3,700 (2.97%)	1,581 13 (1.27%)	31,961 (25.63%)	21,751 4 (17.45%)	124,663 4

<i>Upper Gentry</i>	£ <i>s</i>	£ <i>s</i>	£ <i>s</i>	£ <i>s</i>	£ <i>s</i>	£ <i>s</i>
1480-1540	4,180 16 (12.85%)	123 11 (0.38%)	483 6 (1.48%)	5,374 5 (16.51%)	22,388 14 (68.78%)	32,550 12 (18.96%)
1541-1560	3,464 13 (60.08%)	130 17 (2.27%)	157 (2.72%)	631 (10.94%)	1,383 8 (23.99%)	5,766 18 (3.36%)
1561-1600	8,485 14 (51.60%)	1,444 18 (8.78%)	265 (1.61%)	4,624 6 (28.12%)	1,626 5 (9.89%)	16,446 3 (9.58%)
1601-1640	30,312 17 (34.16%)	4,822 10 (5.43%)	1,713 (1.93%)	40,445 11 (45.57%)	11,449 13 (12.91%)	88,743 11 (51.70%)
1641-1660	16,472 3 (58.51%)	1,836 13 (6.53%)	842 (2.99%)	6,705 7 (23.82%)	2,295 2 (8.15%)	28,151 5 (16.40%)
TOTALS	62,916 3 (36.65%)	8,358 9 (4.87%)	3,460 6 (2.02%)	57,780 9 (33.66%)	39,143 2 (22.80%)	171,658 9

<i>Lower Gentry</i>	£ <i>s</i>	£ <i>s</i>	£ <i>s</i>	£ <i>s</i>	£ <i>s</i>	£ <i>s</i>
1480-1540	5,137 5 (13.68%)	161 7 (0.43%)	2,815 10 (7.50%)	3,105 11 (8.27%)	26,331 11 (70.12%)	37,551 4 (20.74%)
1541-1560	2,047 18 (31.10%)	109 1 (1.66%)	599 6 (9.10%)	890 (13.52%)	2,937 18 (44.62%)	6,584 3 (3.64%)
1561-1600	15,397 8 (57.96%)	1,394 13 (5.25%)	962 13 (3.62%)	6,496 7 (24.46%)	2,313 3 (8.71%)	26,564 4 (14.67%)
1601-1640	41,992 18 (55.43%)	3,000 1 (3.96%)	405 12 (0.54%)	22,193 (29.29%)	8,166 13 (10.78%)	75,758 4 (41.82%)
1641-1660	16,043 12 (46.32%)	2,307 (6.66%)	599 10 (1.73%)	9,596 (27.71%)	6,088 10 (17.58%)	34,634 12 (19.12%)
TOTALS	80,619 1 (44.52%)	6,972 2 (3.85%)	5,382 11 (2.97%)	42,280 18 (23.35%)	45,837 15 (25.31%)	181,092 7

TABLE XI—*cont.*

CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE OF CLASS ASPIRATIONS

<i>Interval</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Social Rehabilita- tion</i>	<i>Municipal Better- ments</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Religion</i>	<i>Totals and % of Whole Contribution Made in the Several Periods</i>
<i>Yeomen</i>	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s
1480-1540	756 8 (11.74%)	30 12 (0.47%)	453 6 (7.03%)		5,203 14 (80.75%)	6,444 (13.97%)
1541-1560	1,045 12 (47.77%)	59 9 (2.72%)	160 12 (7.34%)		923 7 (42.18%)	2,189 (4.75%)
1561-1600	6,693 13 (57.98%)	154 17 (1.34%)	1,911 10 (16.56%)	2,186 12 (18.94%)	597 13 (5.18%)	11,544 5 (25.03%)
1601-1640	10,844 7 (69.98%)	653 (4.21%)	269 3 (1.74%)	2,431 6 (15.69%)	1,297 13 (8.37%)	15,495 9 (33.60%)
1641-1660	6,722 8 (64.38%)	313 13 (3.00%)	106 14 (1.02%)	2,026 16 (19.41%)	1,272 9 (12.19%)	10,442 (22.64%)
TOTALS	26,062 8 (56.52%)	1,211 11 (2.63%)	2,901 5 (6.29%)	6,644 14 (14.41%)	9,294 16 (20.16%)	46,114 14

<i>Husbandmen</i>	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s
1480-1540	27 11 (3.81%)	10 5 (1.42%)	25 6 (3.50%)		658 7 (91.25%)	721 9 (25.62%)
1541-1560	178 7 (33.83%)	0 1 (0.01%)	21 1 (3.99%)	0 1 (0.01%)	327 15 (62.16%)	527 5 (18.73%)
1561-1600	407 12 (69.59%)	0 17 (0.15%)	18 10 (3.16%)	2 1 (0.35%)	156 14 (26.75%)	585 14 (20.80%)
1601-1640	569 4 (84.71%)	2 10 (0.37%)	9 9 (1.41%)	12 (1.79%)	78 15 (11.72%)	671 18 (23.86%)
1641-1660	237 5 (76.67%)		2 2 (0.68%)	40 (12.93%)	30 2 (9.73%)	309 9 (10.99%)
TOTALS	1,419 19 (50.43%)	13 13 (0.48%)	76 8 (2.71%)	54 2 (1.92%)	1,251 13 (44.45%)	2,815 15

<i>Lower Clergy</i>	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s
1480-1540	1,282 11 (3.89%)	114 9 (0.35%)	1,095 5 (3.32%)	15,513 5 (47.03%)	14,982 (45.42%)	32,987 10 (23.38%)
1541-1560	1,908 4 (11.65%)	150 6 (0.92%)	138 16 (0.85%)	4,930 7 (30.10%)	9,256 8 (56.50%)	16,384 1 (11.61%)
1561-1600	1,341 13 (26.38%)	323 1 (6.35%)	121 11 (2.39%)	2,595 3 (51.02%)	704 19 (13.86%)	5,086 7 (3.61%)
1601-1640	24,046 13 (38.42%)	2,365 2 (3.78%)	4,552 3 (7.27%)	25,754 16 (41.15%)	5,870 1 (9.38%)	62,588 15 (44.36%)
1641-1660	8,572 7 (35.67%)	281 (1.17%)	122 (0.51%)	13,277 (55.24%)	1,781 4 (7.41%)	24,033 11 (17.04%)
TOTALS	37,151 8 (26.33%)	3,233 18 (2.29%)	6,029 15 (4.27%)	62,070 11 (44.00%)	32,594 12 (23.10%)	141,080 4

TABLE XI—*cont.*
CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE OF CLASS ASPIRATIONS

<i>Interval</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Social Rehabilita- tion</i>	<i>Municipal Better- ments</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Religion</i>	<i>Totals and % of Whole Contribution made in the Several Periods</i>
<i>Merchants</i>	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s
1480-1540	29,737 (23·31%)	8,830 5 (6·92%)	15,844 4 (12·42%)	11,426 (8·96%)	61,716 17 (48·38%)	127,554 6 (9·52%)
1541-1560	23,796 6 (42·90%)	8,782 7 (15·83%)	6,601 9 (11·90%)	11,631 14 (20·97%)	4,660 18 (8·40%)	55,472 14 (4·14%)
1561-1600	68,479 5 (31·85%)	52,498 1 (24·41%)	19,036 7 (8·85%)	68,210 16 (31·72%)	6,803 (3·16%)	215,027 9 (16·06%)
1601-1640	313,269 12 (45·28%)	76,202 10 (11·01%)	38,230 10 (5·53%)	181,630 7 (26·25%)	82,564 17 (11·93%)	691,897 16 (51·65%)
1641-1660	100,430 10 (40·25%)	44,276 2 (17·74%)	12,919 19 (5·18%)	61,305 1 (24·57%)	30,615 1 (12·27%)	249,546 13 (18·62%)
TOTALS	535,712 13 (39·99%)	190,589 5 (14·23%)	92,632 9 (6·92%)	334,203 18 (24·95%)	186,360 13 (13·91%)	1,339,498 18

<i>Tradesmen</i>	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s
1480-1540	4,145 17 (23·25%)	132 14 (0·74%)	2,857 15 (16·03%)	464 17 (2·61%)	10,227 (57·36%)	17,828 3 (11·91%)
1541-1560	5,926 4 (49·09%)	2,052 19 (17·01%)	1,794 17 (14·87%)	877 (7·26%)	1,422 (11·78%)	12,073 (8·07%)
1561-1600	11,231 13 (51·01%)	3,496 11 (15·88%)	1,568 15 (7·12%)	4,664 7 (21·18%)	1,057 (4·80%)	22,018 6 (14·71%)
1601-1640	35,748 14 (50·75%)	14,344 19 (20·36%)	4,303 9 (6·11%)	8,221 13 (11·67%)	7,822 15 (11·11%)	70,441 10 (47·07%)
1641-1660	16,359 18 (59·97%)	2,749 16 (10·08%)	2,095 2 (7·68%)	4,641 2 (17·01%)	1,436 2 (5·26%)	27,282 (18·23%)
TOTALS	73,412 6 (49·06%)	22,776 19 (15·22%)	12,619 18 (8·43%)	18,868 19 (12·61%)	21,964 17 (14·68%)	149,642 19

<i>Artisans</i>	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s
1480-1540	481 5 (24·71%)	61 7 (3·15%)	159 16 (8·20%)		1,245 11 (63·94%)	1,947 19 (22·39%)
1541-1560	255 16 (53·95%)	27 3 (5·73%)	28 6 (5·97%)	2 (0·42%)	160 18 (33·93%)	474 3 (5·45%)
1561-1600	780 10 (71·46%)	172 14 (15·81%)	73 3 (6·70%)	27 9 (2·51%)	38 7 (3·51%)	1,092 3 (12·55%)
1601-1640	2,276 6 (67·11%)	325 5 (9·59%)	174 3 (5·13%)	57 12 (1·70%)	558 7 (16·46%)	3,391 13 (38·99%)
1641-1660	1,207 2 (67·30%)	77 10 (4·32%)	42 5 (2·36%)	406 2 (22·64%)	60 14 (3·38%)	1,793 13 (20·62%)
TOTALS	5,000 19 (57·49%)	663 19 (7·63%)	477 13 (5·49%)	493 3 (5·67%)	2,063 17 (23·72%)	8,699 11

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