



# The Victorian Age (1830-1901)

Sambourne House, London.

# 1. Queen Victoria



Franz Xavier Winterhalter, *The young Queen Victoria*, 1842

- Victoria became Queen at the age of 18 (1837) and reigned for 64 years until her death in 1901.
- Her reign was the longest in British history.

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Franz Xavier Winterhalter, *The young Queen Victoria*, 1842

- In 1840 she married Prince Albert, her cousin from Germany.
- They had nine children and their modest family life provided a model of respectability.
- During this time Britain changed dramatically.

## 2. The growth of the British Empire



British Empire throughout the World, 19th century, Private Collection.

- England grew to become the greatest nation on earth → ***“The sun never sets on England”***.



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British Empire throughout the World, 19th century, Private Collection.

- **British Empire** included Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Africa, Kenya, and India.

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- Great Britain imported **raw materials** such as cotton and silk and exported **finished goods** to countries around the world.
- By the mid-1800s, it was the **largest exporter** and **importer** of goods. It was the primary manufacturer of goods and the **wealthiest** country in the world.
- Because of this success, the British felt it was their **duty** to bring **English values, laws, customs,** and **religion** to the “savage” races around the world.

### 3. An age of social and political reforms

- **1832**: The **First Reform Act** granted the vote to almost all male members of middle-class.
- **1833**: The **Factory Act** regulated child labour in factories.
- **1834**: **Poor Law Amendment** established a system of workhouses for poor people.

### 3. An age of social and political reforms

- **1867**: The **Second Reform Act** gave the vote to urban working-class men.
- **1871**: **Trade Union Act** legalised workers' unions.
- **1884**: The **Third Reform Act** granted the right to vote to all male agricultural labourers.



# 4. The woman's question

- **Women's suffrage** did not happen until **1918**.



Suffragettes



*The Rights of Women or Take Your Choice* (1869)

# 5. Positive aspects of the age



Workers in a Tobacco Factory

***Industrial revolution:*** factory system emerged and the number of mills rapidly increased; a lot of people moved from the countryside to work in the new factories.

***Technological advances:*** invention of steam-powered machinery revolutionised industry and transport (railways)

# 5. Positive aspects of the age



Workers in a Tobacco Factory

***Economical progress:*** Britain became the greatest economical power in the world; in 1901 the Usa became the leader, but Britain remained the first in manufacturing.



# 6. Crystal Palace

Crystal Palace was built for the **Great Exhibition** of **1851**; it was **destroyed** by fire in **1936**

↓  
celebrated advances in science and technology



The Crystal Palace

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It had a **political purpose** → it showed British economic supremacy in the world.



The Crystal Palace

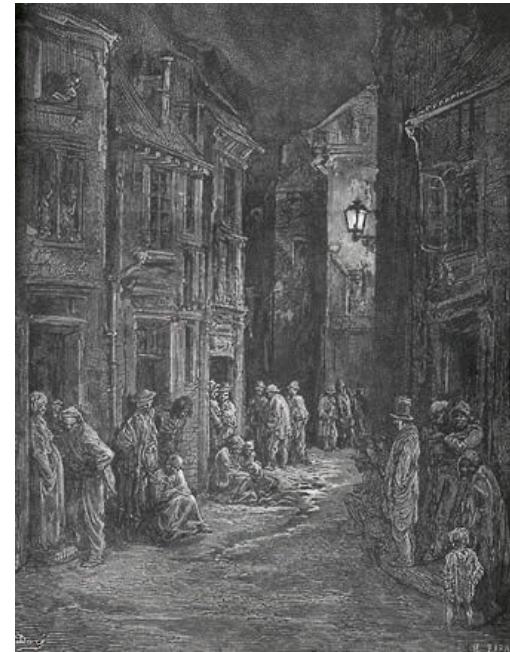


# 7. Negative aspects of the age

**Pollution** in towns due to factory activity.



Homeless Boys (1880)



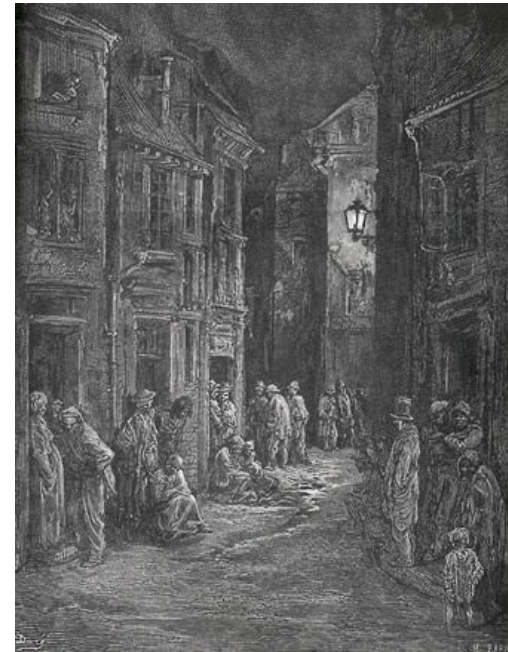
London in 1872

# 7. Negative aspects of the age

**Lack of hygienic conditions:** houses were overcrowded, most people lived in miserable conditions; poor houses shared water supplies.



Homeless Boys (1880)



London in 1872

# 8. The Victorian compromise

The Victorian ideal represented by such values as church, family, home and the sanctity of childhood, applied only to those who could afford them



imbalance in society: the urban workers continued to live in poverty while being exploited by their rich employers.



W. H. Hunt, *The Awakening Conscience*, 1853-4, London, Tate Britain.

# 9. The rise of the novel

- There was **a communion of interests and opinions** between the writers and their readers.
- The Victorians were **avid consumers of literature**. They borrowed books from circulating libraries and read various periodicals.

# 9. The rise of the novel

- Novels made their first appearance in **instalments in literary magazines and periodicals.**
- The voice of the **omniscient narrator** provided a comment on the plot and erected a rigid barrier between **«right»** and **«wrong»**, light and darkness.



# 9. The rise of the novel

- **Charles Dickens** is one of the most representative literary figures of the period.
- His characters give voice to the whole panorama of social classes which were emerging in the modern city.

