Victorian Britain
Part I
Professor Patrick N. Allitt
Patrick N. Allitt, Ph.D.
Professor of History, Emory University

Patrick Allitt is Professor of History at Emory University. He was born and raised in central England and attended schools near his home in Mickleover, Derbyshire. An undergraduate at Hertford College, Oxford, he graduated (1977) with honors in British and European History. After a year of travel, he studied for the history doctorate at the University of California, Berkeley. He was a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard in the mid-1980s and since 1988, has been on the faculty of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Professor Allitt is the author of three books, including *Catholic Converts: British and American Intellectuals Turn to Rome* (1997). He also writes frequent articles and reviews. In 1999, he won Emory’s Excellence in Teaching Award and, in 2000, was appointed to the N.E.H./Arthur Blank Professorship of Teaching in the Humanities. Professor Allitt keeps in touch with his homeland by spending about two months every year on a working holiday in Britain, teaching the history of Victorian England with Emory’s summer school, which is held at University College, Oxford. His wife, Toni, is American, a Michigan native, and they have a daughter, Frances, born in 1988.
Table of Contents

Victorian Britain
Part I

Professor Biography ................................................................. i
Course Scope ........................................................................... 1
Lecture One The Victorian Paradox ........................................ 3
Lecture Two Victoria's Early Reign: 1837–1861 ...................... 6
Lecture Three The Industrial Revolution: 1750–1830 .......... 8
Lecture Four Railways and Steamships ................................. 11
Lecture Five Parliamentary Reform and Chartism ............... 14
Lecture Six The Upper- and Middle-Class Woman ............. 17
Lecture Seven The Working-Class Woman ......................... 19
Lecture Eight The State Church and Evangelical Revival ...... 21
Lecture Nine The Oxford Movement and Catholicism ............ 23
Lecture Ten Work and Working-Class Life ......................... 26
Lecture Eleven Poverty and the “Hungry Forties” ................. 28
Lecture Twelve Ireland, Famine, and Robert Peel ............ 30
Quotations from Queen Victoria ............................................. 33
Map ...................................................................................... 36
Timeline ............................................................................... 37
Glossary ............................................................................... 39
Biographical Notes ................................................................. 41
Bibliography ........................................................................ 47
Victorian Britain

Scope:

Victorian Britain was a paradoxical society and one of extreme contrasts. On the one hand, it witnessed an unprecedented outpouring of inventions, scientific advances, and humanitarian reforms, backed by an array of outstanding literary and political figures. On the other hand, it practiced a harsh form of laissez-faire capitalism at home, which resulted in chronic poverty for most of the population, and harsh imperial policies abroad, which subordinated many of the peoples of Africa and Asia to British control. This course aims to explain how the Victorians lived with these contradictions and how Britain changed between the 1830s and 1900, perhaps more rapidly than any society in world history up to that time.

Queen Victoria reigned for sixty four years, longer than any other British monarch, and she stamped her vivid personality on the whole era, but she no longer enjoyed the sort of power that had been wielded by her ancestors. Instead, Britain moved cautiously toward a democratic political system. The oligarchy of 1830, in which only a small minority of men, and no women, enjoyed the vote and the right to sit in Parliament, was modified by Parliamentary Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, and 1884 so that by century’s end, most men at least were entitled to vote. Simultaneously, religious restrictions on political participation were lifted, enabling Methodists, Quakers, Catholics, and Jews, as well as members of diverse social classes, to take seats in Parliament. Despite these changes, however, the traditional land-based aristocracy retained immense political power and social influence; successful manufacturers often devoted their fortunes to buying their way into these ranks.

Rapid social change was facilitated by the Industrial Revolution, which had been gathering force in the decades before Victoria’s accession. The harnessing first of water power, then steam power, to the manufacture of cotton textiles in factories initiated the revolution. Developments in coal mining, iron and steel making, ceramics, and transportation accelerated it. First canals, then railways, which began to crisscross the land in the 1830s, speeded up the pace of economic life and increased its scale. The railway builders, particularly the father-and-son team George and Robert Stephenson, along with Isambard Kingdom Brunel, featured largely in this transformation; Brunel’s visionary genius was further shown in his construction of the world’s first oceangoing steamships.

Along with industrialization came urbanization. Such industrial cities as Manchester, Liverpool, and Sheffield grew so fast that infrastructure development could not keep pace. In consequence, tens of thousands of industrial workers and their families found themselves living in squalid, hastily built houses, severely overcrowded, and without access to safe drinking water supplies or proper sanitation. These factors, along with overwork, poor nutrition, a smoke-filled environment, and dangerous working conditions, contributed to regular epidemics and a low life expectancy for most working-class communities. Death at any age was common and child mortality, high. Many occupations, moreover, had characteristic illnesses of their own, such as the lung diseases suffered by Britain’s hundreds of thousands of coal miners. A few impoverished areas in every city, such as London’s squalid “rookeries,” became breeding grounds of violent crime. Middle- and upper-class people moved away from these dangerous areas whenever they could, furthering the class gulf between Britain’s haves and have-nots.

Britain’s technological superiority enabled its industries to dominate world markets for the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century, especially when the industrialists’ growing political influence had established a free-trade regime. British imperial development accelerated at the same time. British merchants forced opium, grown in India, onto a reluctant China in a series of “Opium Wars” that seem particularly disgraceful in retrospect. After the Indian Mutiny of 1857, the British government took over direct control of this most important colony from the Honorable East India Company, which had run it privately for the last century. In suppressing the mutiny, in which atrocities had been committed against some of their civilians, the British demonstrated a ruthless ferocity. In the same years, hardy explorers, such as Richard Burton and David Livingstone, were charting the still-unknown interior of Africa, soon to be followed by trade, missionaries, and the Union Jack. In the last years of the nineteenth century, Britain’s European rivals joined her in an undignified “scramble for Africa” and its potential sources of wealth.

Historians often treat the Great Exhibition of 1851 as a symbol of mid-Victorian prosperity and self-confidence. The exhibition was held in the Crystal Palace, a prefabricated structure of iron and glass that was quickly erected in Hyde Park; the structure was elegant, sturdy, and light and delighted visitors from all over Britain and abroad. Built by Joseph Paxton, its ultra-modern style, echoed in the glass arches of Paddington and St. Pancras railway stations, stands in strong juxtaposition to the other great public building style of Victorian Britain, Gothic Revival. Gothic’s
champions included Charles Barry and Augustus Pugin, the architects of the new Houses of Parliament (which are now probably the most well known buildings in Britain), and George Gilbert Scott. Britain’s wealth created a growing market for innovative architects, just as the growing middle class created a market for paintings and literature. The Pre-Raphaelite movement in art and the dramatic, serialized literature of Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, and George Eliot remain as yardsticks of the Victorians’ creativity and inventiveness.

The later portions of the course will show how Britain began to lose its supremacy. The death of Prince Albert, Queen Victoria’s husband, in 1861, cast a shadow of grief over the monarch herself from which she never fully emerged. Meanwhile Union victory in the American Civil War and the unification of Germany in 1870 gave notice that two great industrial rivals were about to challenge Britain’s supremacy. Despite the advantages of her early lead, Britain was unable to keep pace with German and American industrial innovations and gradually retreated to a policy of trading in the protected area of its worldwide empire. This strategy, successful in the short term, enabled Britain to postpone the day of reckoning. Paradoxically, however, it turned the appearance of immense world-striding strength into a growing liability, which would ensure the rapid decline of British power in the twentieth century. The inner vulnerability of the empire could have been glimpsed earlier, not only with the Indian Mutiny but also in the catastrophic Irish famine of 1846–1850 and recurrent friction with South Africa’s Dutch-descended Boers between 1880 and 1898.

Despite ominous signs, however, Britain still seemed to be master of the world in the last decades of the nineteenth century, when it enjoyed the leadership of such brilliant prime ministers as Benjamin Disraeli (the man who adapted British Conservatism to a more democratic era) and the sternly moralistic Liberal William Gladstone. Queen Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee (sixty years on the throne) in 1897 with a triumphant parade, including soldiers from every corner of the empire. The mood of the time was captured by the poet Rudyard Kipling when he urged Britons (and Anglo-Saxon Americans) to “take up the white man’s burden” and bring the blessings of their Christian civilization to what he thought of as the less fortunate races of the world.

The growing strength of trade unions, and political recognition that they would become a permanent part of society, led to the rise, as the century turned, of the Labour Party, which was destined within twenty years to become and to remain one of the nation’s two major political forces. War against the Boers from 1898 suddenly showed that British redcoats, complacent after years of easy victory against primitive societies, were not assured of automatic victory when they faced well-armed, well-trained guerrillas defending their homelands. When Queen Victoria died in 1901, she left the nation in a world full of potential enemies, no longer so amenable to British direction as it had been in the years of her early reign. Twentieth-century Britain was indelibly marked by the Victorian legacy, for good and ill, and the course ends with a glimpse at some of these lasting effects.
Lecture One
The Victorian Paradox

Scope: This lecture outlines the main themes of the course: Victorian Britain was a paradoxical society and one of extreme contrasts between wealth and poverty, morality and cynicism, creativity and constriction, imperial grandeur and domestic squalor, and collectivity and individualism. It was a society committed to the ideals of material and moral progress, industrial and commercial expansion, and worldwide free trade. However, its vulnerability to fluctuations of the business cycle and to foreign competition entailed hardships for its majority, the poor and working classes, and severely unequal distribution of its benefits. It is a society still close enough to us to evoke our admiration in many ways, but also close enough to provoke our censure in many others. It is difficult not to admire many of its most brilliant characters but equally difficult not to condemn the moral narrowness and hard-heartedness they sometimes displayed.

Outline

I. Victorian Britain (1837–1901) was a paradoxical society and one of extreme contrasts.
   A. Very wealthy and very poor people lived side by side.
   B. The society was immensely creative but burdened with a stifling social-class system.
   C. Britain took pride in its worldwide empire but was unable to control its oldest and closest colony, Ireland.
   D. It believed in its racial, religious, and civilizational superiority but could be brutally destructive and cynical, even going to war in 1839 to force opium on the reluctant Chinese.
   E. Many of Britain’s most brilliant intellectuals were Victorians, but they lived in an under-educated and still largely illiterate society.

II. The Victorians believed, perhaps more strongly than any other British generation, in progress, in making the world better from year to year, both materially and morally. In many ways, they succeeded.
   A. They built up Britain’s worldwide empire.
      1. They ruled India with a small army and a talented group of administrators, first through the East India Company then, after 1857, directly.
      2. They turned Australia from a prison colony into a thriving colony of farmers and settlers.
      3. They provided a steady flow of settlers to Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa and invented creative ways for these colonies to be self-governing while still connected to Britain.
      4. They dominated strategically important places around the world, including Gibraltar, Suez, and Aden, which safeguarded their imperial routeways.
   B. The Victorians made Britain the world’s most powerful trading nation, building up the world’s largest merchant navy and protecting it with the largest military navy.
   C. Britain made immense strides in industrialization, immediately before and during Victoria’s reign.
      1. It was the first industrial capitalist nation, beginning with the mass production of cotton textiles, later industrializing mining, metallurgy, and other manufactures.
      2. It was the first country in the world to build a railway network, which speeded up the pace of economic life and made it possible for ordinary citizens to travel long distances for the first time.
      3. It pioneered in banking, insurance, and free-trade legislation.
   D. Victorian Britain moved toward a democratic political system but did not suffer the revolutionary upheavals that afflicted most of continental Europe in the same era.
      1. A series of Reform Acts, in 1832, 1867, and 1884, extended the vote to growing numbers of men (though not to women) in a variety of class positions.
      2. Victoria herself, and her husband, Prince Albert, restored the prestige of the monarchy, which had been damaged by her disreputable predecessors.
      3. Victorian politicians—including Peel, Palmerston, Gladstone, and Disraeli—were brilliant speakers and rank among the outstanding figures in the whole of British political history.
III. Along with its achievements, however, Victorian Britain had shortcomings and unsolvable problems.

A. Many Britons were very poor, and as growing numbers went to work in industry, they became vulnerable to periodic slumps, unemployment, and acute privation. Charity was insufficient to deal with the scale of British poverty. The alternative, the “workhouse,” was bitterly hated and resented.

B. A sharply defined class system closed off avenues of opportunity to most talented members of the lower classes. Snobbery and class distinction were sources of friction and discontent.
   1. Class antagonism fueled the growth of the trade union movement, which in turn, gave birth to the Labour Party in the 1890s.
   2. Members of the upper classes sought work in government, the army, the navy, and the church; “trade,” the basis of Britain’s power, was regarded as beneath their dignity.

C. British industrialists did not maintain their lead over their rivals, notably in America and Germany.
   1. They failed to modernize equipment.
   2. They trained their sons to be gentlemen rather than businessmen.
   3. They relied on the colonies as a protected market that permitted them to remain inefficient.

D. While taking pride in its far-flung empire, Britain was unable to deal satisfactorily with its closest colony, Ireland. The result was that the “Irish Question” hamstrung the work of British politicians, especially in the later Victorian era.
   1. Ireland was virtually an agricultural monoculture, the potato being its almost exclusive crop.
   2. Reliance on one crop led to disaster, when the potato blight struck Ireland in 1846, causing nationwide famine.
   4. Catholicism was also a stumbling block to Home Rule: Irish Protestants opposed Home Rule, fearing they would suffer under Catholic domination.
   5. Legislation for Irish Home Rule passed through the House of Commons in 1893 but failed in the House of Lords.

IV. Many colorful, larger-than-life figures lived and worked in Victorian Britain, and their work has resonance down to the present. Several of them will feature in this course.

A. Queen Victoria herself, a strong-willed, imperious figure, knew how to make the most of the monarch’s remaining prerogatives.

B. Florence Nightingale, an even more determined and skillful worker behind the scenes, transformed nursing and public health in British life.

C. Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the genius-engineer, built Britain’s most luxurious railway and the first steam-powered transatlantic ship.

D. Charles Darwin, the biologist, produced the great work *On the Origin of Species*, which revolutionized human understanding of the natural world.

E. Benjamin Disraeli was a Jewish outsider who became a Conservative Party prime minister, empowered the queen as empress of India, and learned to adapt conservatism to a mass electorate.

F. John Henry Newman, the brilliant Anglican churchman, shocked the nation by becoming a Roman Catholic in 1845 and went on to scandalize many of his new co-religionists by his intellectually adventurous ideas.

G. Charles Dickens, the novelist, serialized stories that enthralled readers in England, America, and later around the world and pointed out many of the worst injustices and follies of British life.

V. The Victorians’ reputation declined sharply in the early twentieth century but has subsequently revived, in part.

A. Lytton Strachey’s *Eminent Victorians* (1918) lampooned Victorian high-mindedness.

B. Post-World War I modernists in art and architecture reacted against Victorian decorative complexity in favor of austere simplicity.

C. Scattered champions of Victoriana, such as John Betjeman and L. S. Lowry, were the exception.

D. British political changes after 1980 contributed to a recovery of the Victorians’ better aspects.
VI. The course will follow a generally chronological pattern.
   A. We first glance back to earlier developments, particularly the Industrial Revolution.
   B. Lectures on such issues as the lives of women and servants, music, art, and architecture will be less rigorously chronological.

Essential Reading:
W. D. Rubinstein, *Britain’s Century: A Political and Social History, 1815–1905.*

Supplementary Reading:
Lytton Strachey, *Eminent Victorians.*
Llewelyn Woodward, *The Age of Reform, 1815–1870.*

Questions to Consider:
1. Does Victorian Britain continue to fascinate the world because of its achievements or because of its strange internal contradictions?
2. What were the characteristics of “Victorianism”?
Lecture Two

Victoria’s Early Reign: 1837–1861

Scope: Victoria came to the throne in 1837 at the age of eighteen. Her predecessors, George III, George IV, and William IV, had been unimpressive and had impaired the reputation of the monarchy. By her authority and example, she restored its reputation and dignity, embodying the era’s mood of moral improvement. Along with her husband, Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, whom she married in 1840, Victoria made the most of what limited political power and influence the monarchy still retained, communicating regularly with her prime ministers. She bore nine children and enjoyed many of the material advantages of the industrial age. Her husband’s death in 1861 was, to her, a shattering catastrophe.

Outline

I. Victoria became queen at the age of eighteen, succeeding her uncle, William IV.
   A. Born in 1819, Victoria did not seem likely, at first, to be heir to the throne. She was the daughter of George IV’s younger brother, the Duke of Kent.
      1. Her father died when she was less than a year old.
      2. Her mother, a minor German princess, was left with only a tiny allowance.
      3. When William IV’s legitimate children all died in infancy, the government realized that Victoria was the probable heir and gave her and her mother a much larger income.
      4. Victoria was fluent in German and French, written and spoken; understood Italian; was a regular diarist; and was familiar with many of England’s stately and aristocratic houses.
      5. Most of her childhood was lonely. She was close to her governess, Louise Lehzen, but had no friends of her own age.
      6. She resented her mother’s scheming with Sir John Conroy to make him regent in the event of her becoming queen when too young to rule.
   B. Victoria was notified of her accession early in the morning of June 20, 1837, in her dressing gown, by the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Coyningham, the Lord Chancellor.
   C. She relied on the advice of Whig Prime Minister Lord Melbourne in her first years as queen.
      1. He was a fifty-eight-year-old widower whose wife had been mentally unstable—she had been one of Lord Byron’s lovers.
      2. Victoria regarded him as a father figure (she had never known her own father) and they got on extremely well. He trained her to run affairs, and they met or wrote letters to each other every day.
      3. Her superiority over her three predecessors, whom Sir Sidney Lee described as “an imbecile, a profligate, and a buffoon,” soon made her popular among politicians and populace.
   D. Victoria was upset when Melbourne resigned in 1839 and furious when Sir Robert Peel, the Tory leader, asked to change her Ladies of the Bedchamber, removing Whigs and adding Tories.
      1. Throughout her reign, Victoria resented prime ministers at first but later came to value them—by 1846 she was a great admirer of Peel.
      2. The exception was the great Liberal leader Gladstone, whom she always disliked.
   E. Victoria found it difficult to accept that she was now only a constitutional monarch.
      1. In the late 1840s, she bitterly disliked Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston because of his opposition to some European monarchs, her relatives.
      2. In 1850, she tried to demand that the prime minister, Lord John Russell, dismiss Palmerston or subordinate him to her will, but was unable to prevail.
   F. She followed the progress of the Crimean War in 1854–1855 and created the Victoria Cross for gallantry, personally awarding it to common soldiers, as well as officers.

II. Victoria married Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, her cousin, in 1840, but showed her determination to be monarch as well as housewife.
   A. Albert was earnest and well educated, at the University of Bonn.
   B. Victoria’s uncle, King Leopold of the Belgians, had trained Albert for the role of Victoria’s husband.
C. Victoria disliked the idea of marrying Albert but thawed when he came to visit in 1839, because he was handsome, serious, and charming.

D. British dislike of foreigners meant that he was given no official title until 1857 (when he was named Prince-Consort) and was not allowed to have German friends and advisors in his household.
   1. At first, Victoria froze Albert out of her political affairs altogether.
   2. Albert showed his abilities, however, by rationalizing the chaotic conduct of the royal household.
   3. When Victoria was about to give birth for the first time, Albert was admitted to the Privy Council and named regent in the event of her death.

E. British politicians of both parties came to respect Albert, his hard work, active conscience, and high moral tone.

III. Victoria and Albert enjoyed many of the new amenities of industrial society.
   A. They bought and rebuilt two houses, Osborne House, on the Isle of Wight, and Balmoral, in the Scottish highlands, filling both with the most modern heating devices and using modern iron-frame technology.
      1. At Balmoral, Victoria sketched, painted, rode, and learned Scottish dances, while Albert tried to learn Gaelic and stalked deer.
   B. Victoria traveled by train in 1842 from London to Windsor—on Brunel's Great Western Railway.
      1. Later, she had a luxurious train built for her frequent travels to southern England and Scotland
      2. Her royal yacht, *Victoria and Albert* (1842), used brand-new propeller technology instead of paddles.
   C. Victoria accepted chloroform to help her in childbirth of Prince Leopold in 1853, the eighth of her nine children.
   D. She suffered acute postpartum depression and often flew into rages against Albert, feeling penitent later.
   E. She and Prince Albert opened the Great Exhibition, the first world’s fair, in 1851.

IV. Prince Albert’s death in 1861 sent Victoria into a profound depression and withdrawal from society.
   A. She continued to have his shaving gear brought to their rooms every morning and his side of their work desk prepared each day.
   B. She refused to attend public functions throughout the 1860s and made her prime minister, Lord Palmerston, fear that republicanism would gain ground.
   C. She wore mourning for the rest of her life.
   D. The Albert Hall, the Albert Memorial, and many other structures still visible today, were built and named in his memory in the 1860s and 1870s.

Essential Reading:
Christopher Hibbert, *Queen Victoria: A Personal History*.
Stanley Weintraub, *Albert, Uncrowned King*.

Supplementary Reading:
Lytton Strachey, *Queen Victoria*.
Juliet Gardiner, *Queen Victoria*.

Questions to Consider:
1. What qualities enabled Victoria to revive the popularity of the monarchy?
2. What were the benefits and drawbacks to Britain of maintaining a queen?
Lecture Three
The Industrial Revolution: 1750–1830

Scope: Britain was in the midst of a profound transformation when Victoria became queen. In the preceding fifty years, it had taken many of the steps necessary to become a primarily industrial nation. Agricultural enclosures and the beginning of scientific farming had raised crop yields. The nation had been politically stable since the Glorious Revolution of 1689, enabling it to develop a strong commercial infrastructure. The invention of cotton spinning machines and steam engines to drive them began the Industrial Revolution. Displaced farmers and a rising population provided the labor force and a growing demand for the goods factories could produce. Workers had to adapt to factory life and discipline rather than living according to daylight and the seasons. Transportation developments and pursuit of overseas markets accelerated the Industrial Revolution.

Outline

I. British farming was becoming more productive.
   A. British farming had historically been done on the open-field system.
      1. Each farmer had the right to plant crops on strips of land in the open fields.
      2. Each had the right to graze his animals on the village common and gather firewood in the local “waste.”
      3. The squire was usually also the local magistrate.
      4. The Church of England vicar, usually appointed by the squire, was often the only other literate person in the community.
   B. The enclosure movement transformed rural Britain, more rapidly after 1750.
      1. Ambitious landlords realized that farming could be more profitable if farms were consolidated and fenced.
      2. They took advantage of developments in scientific agriculture and early farm machinery.
      3. Poor cottagers and smallholders lacked the money to enclose or lacked legal proof of their rights to do so.
      4. Many became landless farm laborers or migrated to the growing industrial cities.

II. Historians debate the reasons for Britain’s industrialization, which began in the eighteenth century, but most agree on several main factors.
   A. Britain had enjoyed political stability since the Glorious Revolution of 1689; therefore, businessmen felt confident that their investments would be not be destroyed by revolutionary mobs or invaders.
   B. Britain’s commercial prosperity as a worldwide trader had led to the accumulation of capital that was available for investment.
   C. Britain had already developed sophisticated banking and insurance institutions to facilitate the high costs of industry.
   D. Britain’s growing population at home provided potential customers, as did its growing empire and its aggressively mercantile foreign policy. England’s population grew from about six million in 1750 to thirteen million in 1830; the rate of growth accelerated after 1800.
   E. Rural depopulation, because of enclosure, also provided a labor force.

III. A series of inventions made factory production possible.
   A. Richard Arkwright’s water frame, powered by the River Derwent at Cromford, enabled mass production of cotton thread in factories.
   B. Power looms after 1815 made machine weaving possible, too.
   C. The application of steam power to these textile processes meant that the makers would be less dependent on steady river levels.
IV. Steam power was crucial first in mining, later in textiles.
   A. Britain had been honeycombed with tin, iron, coal, clay, lead, and silver mines ever since the Roman era, but deep mines were chronically subject to flooding.
   B. The first steam engines, invented by Thomas Savery and Thomas Newcomen in the early eighteenth century, were building-sized machines whose job was to pump water out of flooded mines.
      1. They can still be seen in operation at the Live Steam Museum in Kew, London.
      2. James Watt made crucial improvements in their efficiency.
   C. Abundant coal supplies fueled the Industrial Revolution, already amounting to more than one million tons per year by 1800.

V. Iron and steel making were other key components of industrialization.
   A. The Darby family, father, son, and grandson, pioneered new iron founding and smelting techniques at Coalbrookdale, Shropshire.
      1. They learned how to replace limited charcoal resources with abundant hot-burning coke.
      2. They built the world’s first iron bridge at a town now named Ironbridge.
   B. Their rival, John “Mad Iron” Wilkinson, built the world’s first iron barge and proved that a metal vessel can float.

VI. The final component of early industrial improvements was the transportation revolution.
   A. Road transport was difficult before the mid-eighteenth century.
      1. Roads were often swampy and rutted.
      2. Wagons could not carry heavy loads, were very slow, and had to stop for bad weather.
      3. Overland haulage, especially in winter, was often restricted to packhorses, which were slow and made transport costs high.
   B. River trade was hampered by waterfalls, rapids, and seasonal low flows. Coastal trade (such as coal from Newcastle to London) was vulnerable to rough seas.
   C. A generation of canal and road builders vastly improved and cheapened the safe transportation of bulk goods.

VII. Early industrialists not only had to overcome technical and financial problems, but they also had to teach a new way of life to the workforce.
   A. Early factories often featured a clock tower (few workers owned clocks or watches), and employers taught their workers how to tell the time.
   B. Employers tried to convert erstwhile farm workers from living according to the daylight and seasons to an idea of punctuality based on clocks and factory whistles. Some religious, nonconformist employers tried to impose puritanical standards of sobriety on their workers.
   C. In textiles particularly, employers had more use for women than men as machine minders. The work was repetitive and monotonous rather than physically demanding.
   D. The low skill levels, along with the rapidly growing northern city populations, enabled manufacturers to pay meager wages.
      1. Their cold-hearted economic logic, parodied by Charles Dickens in *Hard Times* and elsewhere, ensured a hard life even for those who were in regular work.
      2. They were sowing the seeds for a later harvest of class bitterness and ugly industrial relations.

Essential Reading:
Eric Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire*.

Supplementary Reading:
Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*.
M. J. Daunton, *Progress and Poverty: An Economic and Social History of Britain: 1700–1850*.
Questions to Consider:
1. What changes in British life made the Industrial Revolution possible?
2. Did the benefits of industrialization outweigh the drawbacks?
Lecture Four
Railways and Steamships

Scope: Railways built on the early technological achievements of the Industrial Revolution and literally accelerated the nation’s economic life. The earliest railways were primitive horse-drawn systems at Northumberland collieries, and it is no coincidence that the first great railway builder, George Stephenson, was a mine technician. Taking advantage of the miniaturization of steam engines, Stephenson and his son Robert proved, with the Liverpool and Manchester Railway (completed in 1829), that the new device was profitable as a carrier of both goods and passengers. Their great rival, Isambard K. Brunel, built the Great Western Railway in the 1830s, and by 1850, every major town in Britain was connected by rail with its neighbors and with London. Legislation ensured public access to trains, and the system proved an immense stimulus to further economic growth. Brunel went on to pioneer the building of oceangoing steamships. His Great Western was the first to cross the Atlantic. It, and its successors, Great Britain and Great Eastern, made ocean crossings far faster, safer, and more predictable than had ever been the case with sailing ships.

Outline

I. Britain’s first railways predated steam locomotives.
   A. They were built in coal-mining areas, often with wooden rails and simple horse-drawn trucks, designed to take coal from the pithead to loading wharves.
   B. Miners were familiar with the fact that the reduced friction of a railway enabled horses to pull a greater weight than was possible on a road.

II. Cornish and Northumbrian mining engineers built steam engines that were small enough and powerful enough to create the first locomotives.
   A. Richard Trevethick, a Cornish mine-drainage engineer, experimented with the first locomotives.
      1. He built one on a bet, but its weight broke the Welsh colliery rails it ran on.
      2. In London in 1808, Trevethick ran another, Catch Me Who Can, on a circle of track—as an amusement.
   B. George Stephenson built the first viable steam-driven railway, the Stockton and Darlington, between 1821 and 1825, using iron rails.
      1. Wheezy early engines, such as Locomotion, had to pause sometimes to gather steam pressure but were far more powerful than horses.
      2. The coaches were simple open-air wagons—at first, passenger trains were drawn by horse and only coal trains, by locomotive.
      3. The track gauge was four feet, eight-and-a-half inches, because that was the standard prevailing in the northern collieries.
   C. Stephenson, learning from his experiences on the Stockton and Darlington and helped by his son Robert, built the superior Liverpool and Manchester Railway.
      1. At the Rainhill Trials in 1829, the Rocket proved the best locomotive. It could run at thirty miles per hour for long distances.
      2. The locomotive killed William Huskisson, President of the Board of Trade, at the grand opening, because he did not realize how quickly it was approaching him.
      3. The railway was an instant success, not only in goods, as the promoters had hoped, but as a passenger railway, carrying more than 1,000 people per day.

III. The Stephensons became northern Britain’s premier railroad builders. Their great southern challenger was Isambard Kingdom Brunel.
   A. Brunel was the son of a French immigrant, also an engineer and inventor, who tried to build the first tunnel under the River Thames.
      1. Isambard, chief engineer on the project before the age of twenty-one, was nearly drowned when the tunnel flooded and had to be abandoned.
1. He traveled around Britain in a custom-built stagecoach called a **britschka**, which included a bedroom and office, looking for work suitable to his talents.

2. He designed and built the Clifton suspension bridge in Bristol, which still stands.

B. Brunel competed for and won the contract to build the Great Western Railway, from Bristol to London.

1. The work was a battle against dubious directors, incompetent contractors, and a difficult landscape.

2. Land cost the railway nearly 7,000 pounds per mile.

3. Brunel believed that only he understood all the problems and how to solve them, sometimes cheated his contractors, and browbeat even his most loyal supporters, such as locomotive engineer Daniel Gooch.

4. Brunel built the railway to a seven-foot gauge after finding travel on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway uncomfortable. Stephenson and other rivals criticized this move as impractical, because it prevented exchanges onto other lines.

5. Nevertheless, the Great Western was the flattest, best engineered, and most comfortable railway in Britain when completed. It was capable of sustained high speeds and was eventually continued down to Exeter, Plymouth, and Cornwall, where it crossed Brunel’s spectacular Royal Albert Bridge at Saltash.

6. The rails remained broad-gauge until all Britain’s railways were standardized in 1892.

IV. The success of the main lines led to railway fever.

A. Each new railway needed its own act of Parliament, a time-consuming process but necessary to gain rights of eminent domain. The consent of some Members of Parliament (MPs) and lords could be gained only if they were assured of the lines’ invisibility from their estates.

B. The early lines had to overcome farmers’ fears that they would start neighborhood fires and frighten farm animals.

C. The success of the lines soon attracted speculators, and the belief that they were certain money-winners led to a speculative boom, “Railway Fever,” in the 1840s. Lines planned in minor districts often went bankrupt and never lived up to the speculators’ hopes.

D. The railroads had to overcome numerous critics.

1. Stagecoach owners and innkeepers foresaw ruin.

2. Canal companies also feared the competition and lobbied against the railways.

V. Government recognized that it should regulate railways but also that it could take advantage of their existence.

A. In 1838, the Royal Mail decided to use the railways.

B. In 1840, Rowland Hill invented the penny post, the world’s first cheap bulk-mail system, all dependent on railways.

C. In 1842, Parliament passed a law requiring the Board of Trade to certify railways before they could open, and in 1844, it required all railways to run daily passenger trains that working people could afford, costing no more than a penny a mile (the “Parliamentary Trains”).

D. By 1850, all the major British cities were linked, and the network was 6,500 miles long.

E. Collectively, the railways were an immense stimulus to the coal mining industry (for locomotive fuel) and to the iron industry.

VI. Experience gained in railway building was used in ships, too.

A. Brunel planned and built the Great Western steamer.

1. Admitting that he knew little about shipbuilding, he was willing to collaborate, and the project faced fewer problems than the Great Western Railway.

2. Brunel denied skeptics’ claims that an oceangoing steamship would have to devote all its cargo space to coal. Instead, he showed that the ship, by virtue of the fact that it was larger than any sailing vessel, would be faster and more capacious.

3. The steamer caught fire after installation of the engines, when felt insulation near the funnel overheated.

B. Modified, the ship sailed from Bristol to New York in 1838 and just beat a rival ship, the *Sirius*, which went aground on the approach to New York Harbor when its captain failed to take a pilot onboard.
C. Early steamers had numerous problems with failing paddle wheels and propellers and were equipped with masts and sails for insurance.

D. Because he was more interested in fame and progress than wealth, Brunel wanted to make further technical advances with his next ship, the Great Britain (1840–1845).
   1. It was the first liner with propellers.
   2. It had an iron hull of 3,000 tons, in an age when the biggest iron ships were just 600.
   3. It was almost too big to launch.
   4. Its maiden voyage to New York in 1845 broke the record, arriving in just fourteen days.
   5. Brunel salvaged the ship when it went severely aground in 1846.

E. His biggest ship of all, the Great Eastern, was designed to go directly from Britain to Australia without refueling.
   1. No other ship equaled it in size for the next forty years.
   2. Brunel feuded ceaselessly with the builder, John Scott Russell.
   3. A first attempt to launch the ship, sideways into the river, in November 1857, failed, killing one man, wounding several others.
   4. Brunel died in 1859 before the Eastern’s maiden voyage. He was fifty-three.

VII. Stephenson and Brunel were among the many larger-than-life engineers who left a vivid imprint on Victorian Britain, accomplishing massive technical advances through a combination of skill, daring, and personal force and taking full advantage of the maturing wealth and skills of an industrializing nation.

Essential Reading:
L. T. C. Rolt, Victorian Engineering.
Adrian Vaughan, Isambard Brunel: Engineering Knight-Errant.

Supplementary Reading:
Michael Freeman, Railways and the Victorian Imagination.

Questions to Consider:
1. Why were railways so important to Victorian Britain?
2. How convincing were the critics of steam technology?
Lecture Five
Parliamentary Reform and Chartism

Scope: Britain was not a democracy in the 1830s. Supreme power rested with the prime minister rather than the monarch, and he led a parliamentary majority. Only about five percent of the British people voted for Members of Parliament (MPs) and they did it in public rather than by secret ballot, which made intimidation and bribery a regular part of every election campaign. Constituencies no longer corresponded with actual population clusters, and the big, new, industrial cities had no representation at all. In 1832, the Whig government under Lord Grey introduced the Reform Act. In the face of bitter Tory opposition, it abolished many of the old constituencies, created new ones for new cities, and cautiously expanded the franchise. Working-class and propertyless men (not to mention all women) were still excluded. They became recruits for the Chartist movement. Led by Fergus O’Connor and William Lovett, Chartists campaigned for much broader and more democratic political rights. Their great rallies were unable to win the support of the establishment, which continued to believe that property ownership was a necessary condition for participation in politics.

Outline

I. The British Constitution has never been a written document but a system that has evolved over generations.
   A. Parliament began as a council of advisors to the medieval kings.
      1. At first, the House of Lords was its most important branch, because the lords were the king’s equals as landowners and warriors.
      2. The House of Commons became more important in the seventeenth century and tried to assure for itself a permanent role in government during the Civil Wars of the 1640s.
      3. The Glorious Revolution of 1688–1689 established the supremacy of the Commons and the subordination of the monarchy to Parliament.
   B. By the early 19th century, shifts in population and sources of national wealth meant that seats in Parliament did not represent the citizenry.
      1. “Rotten boroughs” were depopulated places that still had two seats in Parliament but few electors.
      2. “Pocket boroughs” were seats to which landowners could appoint their chosen candidates unopposed.
      3. The big new manufacturing towns had no MPs.
      4. No general franchise principle applied.
      5. There was no secret ballot.
   C. This eccentric system had defenders and detractors.
      2. Radicals, such as William Cobbett (1763–1835), condemned “Old Corruption.”
      3. The new manufacturers wanted political representation commensurate with their new wealth.

II. Lord Grey’s Ministry of 1830 recognized the need for reform.
   A. Grey was a Whig, a member of the political faction that combined wealthy aristocrats with the merchant elite.
   B. Their opponents, the Tories, represented the smaller aristocrats and landlords. The Duke of Wellington led them. (The future prime minister, Robert Peel, was also a Tory.)
   C. The governing classes feared that a revolution might sweep them away.
   D. A second French Revolution in 1830 revived fears that the common people might try to seize power if they were not mollified by judicious reforms.
   E. Grey persuaded King William IV that it was better to offer moderate reform first than be forced into violent reform later.

III. The attempt to pass the Reform Act in 1831–1832 witnessed chaotic scenes in Parliament.
   A. Tories jeered at the sixty rotten boroughs Grey proposed to abolish.
   B. Grey resigned and called for a general election when Parliament rejected the bill.
C. A pro-reform majority was elected.

D. The new Commons again passed the act, but the Lords still refused.
   1. News of the Lords’ refusal led to rioting.
   2. Grey asked the king to create new lords if necessary, to outnumber the current members.
   3. The king refused at first, but gave way when Grey threatened to resign.
   4. Grey and the Duke of Wellington persuaded the Anglican bishops to change their votes.
   5. The Duke of Wellington, a Tory leader, persuaded reluctant lords that defeat of reform would be dangerous.

IV. The reforms were relatively mild.
   A. Many rotten and pocket boroughs were abolished.
   B. Industrial cities got MPs for the first time. Northern industrialists with strong links to their constituencies replaced wealthy, absentee merchant MPs.
   C. Voting criteria were standardized throughout the nation, specifying ownership of property or tenancy that required 40 shillings of annual rent.
      1. The ballot was still not secret (until 1872).
      2. In Scotland, previously very unrepresentative, the electorate rose from 4,000 to 64,000.
   D. Landowners continued to dominate Parliament but with a larger mix of commercial MPs. Observers noticed a rise in the quality of debates and parliamentary reports on important issues (the “blue books”).
   E. The Reform Act established the principle that reform is possible and can be done without revolution. It paved the way for further reforms.

V. The limits to reform provoked the Chartist movement.
   A. Its manifesto, the People’s Charter, demanded six reforms, most of which already obtained in democratic America. The demands were for:
      1. Universal manhood suffrage
      2. Election by secret ballot
      3. Payment of MPs
      4. Annual parliaments
      5. Abolition of property qualifications for MPs
   B. Vast assemblies of Chartists, led by Fergus O’Connor and William Lovett, unsuccessfully petitioned Parliament in 1839 and again in 1842.
      1. Parliament refused to accept the charter as the basis of new legislation.
      2. A minority of Chartists advocated violence, and one, John Frost, led an uprising in Newport but was easily defeated.
      3. The government’s lack of violence is conspicuous, however, especially by comparison with contemporaneous events in Europe.
      4. The government seized railways and telegraph lines to coordinate its response to the threat of Chartist uprisings and denied these means of communication to the Chartists.
   C. Divided leadership and lack of an economic program (more important to most working-class people) contributed to the movement’s decline.
   D. Over the next century, however, five of the six points of the charter were achieved—but never annual parliaments.

VI. Further extensions of the vote did not come until 1867, and the secret ballot was not introduced until 1872. These reforms, and further electoral reform in 1884, laid the foundations for the rise of the Labour Party, which in the 20th century, would become one of the two permanent parties in the British system.

Essential Reading:
W. D. Rubinstein, Britain’s Century, chapter 3.
T. A. Jenkins, The Liberal Ascendancy, 1830–1864.
Supplementary Reading:
Michael Brock, *The Great Reform Act*.

Questions to Consider:
1. Was parliamentary reform really necessary to prevent revolution?
2. Why did the Lords finally accept the Reform Act of 1832?
Lecture Six
The Upper- and Middle-Class Woman

Scope: Today, we emphasize the similarities of men and women. The Victorians emphasized the differences between them and believed that they had distinct and complementary roles to play. Men, according to the Victorian ideal, were physical, rational, and sexually domineering, the opposite of emotional, spiritual, and sexually passive women. For upper- and middle-class women who did not work, courtship, marriage, and motherhood were the central issues of life. Marriage contracts, while not excluding love, often contained a distinct business element too, as families jockeyed for financially advantageous matches. The London “season” became highly formalized in the Victorian era, offering debutantes maximum opportunities to locate suitable husbands.

Once married, women faced the hazards of childbirth, which was often fatal. Middle- and upper-class women eager for careers found it difficult to overcome traditional rules of exclusion but those with sufficient determination showed the possibilities: Florence Nightingale in nursing, the Bronte sisters and George Eliot as novelists, Ada Lovelace as a mathematician.

Outline

I. Ideas about gender relations and the nature of women, published by men and women, emphasized women’s inferiority.
   A. Popular writers, male and female, emphasized women’s natural inferiority and submissiveness.
      1. They said that women were physically and mentally inferior.
      2. They added that the inferiority was biological.
      3. These writers asserted that women’s inferiority was underlined by biblical texts.
   B. They treated home as a sanctuary away from the rough world and woman as morally and religiously elevated.

II. The upper- and middle-class woman’s principal interests were courtship, marriage, and motherhood.
   A. Marriage contracts specified the details of the union, which was a business transaction, as well as a personal one.
      1. Dowries, allowances, and pin money ensured the financial security of the wife.
      2. The husband gained control of the wife’s property and legal interests.
      3. The “banns of marriage” and the request for “just cause or impediment” publicized forthcoming weddings in the Church of England.
      4. Dissenters, Catholics, and Jews needed a civil license for their weddings outside the state religion.
   B. A well-organized and closely policed marriage market was based on the London “season” and the debutante ritual. Debutantes, usually seventeen or eighteen years old, were officially presented at court to the queen and declared to be of marriageable age.
   C. Women were expected to be virgins at marriage and to have little knowledge of sex but to be sexually available at their husbands’ demand thereafter.
      1. Lack of knowledge about contraceptives meant that frequent pregnancies and regular childbearing were common.
      2. Death in childbirth was also common.
   D. Victorian writers attributed great moral and spiritual power to mothers and sanctified the role of motherhood.
   E. Women were more attentive to religion than men, despite their lack of leadership roles, and were expected to create a religious home atmosphere.
   F. Divorce was extremely rare and required an individual act of Parliament until 1857.

III. The designs of clothes for upper- and middle-class women emphasized the fact that they could not be worn without the help of servants and that their owners did not work.
   A. Elaborate dresses, crinolines, and bustles were deliberately impractical.
B. To keep out of the mud and horse manure in the streets, women wore “pattens,” miniature stilts attached to their shoes.

IV. Women with middle-class careers were exceptional but not unknown.
   A. The classic career for an educated but impoverished young woman was that of governess. Emily Bronte’s Jane Eyre is the most famous example.
   B. Several eminent Victorian writers were women.
      1. Mary Ann Evans wrote as George Eliot.
      2. The Bronte sisters also used male pen names
      3. Rachel Beer was editor of the Sunday Times and the Observer in the 1890s.
      4. Mary Somerville (after whom one of the first Oxford colleges for women was named) published a series of books on astronomy and the interconnections of the physical sciences.
      5. Ada Lovelace, Lord Byron’s daughter, was an outstanding theoretical mathematician.
   C. Women played an important role in reform projects.
      1. Florence Nightingale made nursing a respectable profession for young women.
      2. After the 1867 Second Reform Act expanded the vote for men, women began to campaign for the vote and for enhanced legal rights.
      3. Two widows, Millicent Fawcett and Emmeline Pankhurst, led the moderate and radical wings of the suffrage movement later in the century.
   D. An intellectually ambitious minority complained about the lack of better education and career opportunities for women. Harriet Martineau, Charlotte Bronte, and many others lamented their stifling upbringings and laid the foundations for feminist reform.

Essential Reading:
Joan Perkin, Victorian Women.
W. D. Rubinstein, Britain’s Century: A Political and Social History, chapter 19.

Supplementary Reading:
Gertrude Himmelfarb, Marriage and Morals among the Victorians.
Penny Kane, Victorian Families in Fact and Fiction.

Questions to Consider:
1. How did social and economic changes contribute to changing gender relations in Britain between 1830 and 1900?
2. How did ambitious women find ways to overcome restrictions to their careers?
Lecture Seven
The Working-Class Woman

Scope: The vast contrasts in Victorian life are apparent when we move from the privileged minority to consider the lives of working-class women, the majority. These women were often aware of the ideal woman’s existence, to which the middle and upper classes could aspire, but they were unable to live according to it, because they, and their families, lacked the money. Instead, they were forced to work from an early age, nearly always at the worst jobs. Pay for working-class women was always lower than men’s (even when the work was identical), and they suffered an array of diseases from overwork, malnutrition, too-frequent childbirth, and contaminated workplaces. Their home lives were usually scenes of hard domestic work, overcrowding, and poor diet. No wonder some working-class women joined the ranks of prostitutes, of whom there were thousands throughout the Victorian era. They could earn more money, more easily, than their laboring sisters. Some took to the life from choice; others, from economic necessity. Moral reformers, including Liberal Prime Minister William Gladstone, tried to “rescue” these “fallen women” and, by the end of the nineteenth century, purity crusaders, such as William Stead and Josephine Butler, had begun to drive the prostitutes’ world out of sight.

Outline

I. Economic necessity forced many working-class women to work outside the home; such work began when they were very young.
   A. Large numbers of women worked as domestic servants.
   B. Women and children comprised a large part of the landless agricultural work force.
   C. Girls and women worked hard in the “sweated trades” too, doing textile piecework at home.
   D. In the industrial cities, women were in high demand for factory work.
      1. The hours were long; the unskilled work, monotonous.
      2. Conditions were often unhealthy.
      3. Women would be paid less than men, even for identical work.
      4. Men often resented women working in factories, because it weakened their bargaining positions.
   E. Mid-century legislation prohibited women from working in coal mines and restricted their hours in some factories.
   F. Some working-class women became small-scale entrepreneurs.
   G. Work that is easy today, such as laundry, was then physically exhausting.
   H. In the later nineteenth century, many new job opportunities for upper working-class women developed.
      1. Florence Nightingale made nursing a respectable option.
      2. Growing numbers of unmarried women became schoolteachers when universal preliminary education was required after the 1870s.
      3. Shop assistants, secretaries, librarians, and typists were mainly women by 1900.

II. Working-class women faced challenges at each stage of the life cycle.
   A. Family poverty often made work a necessity.
   B. Overcrowding and dependency on parents made work or marriage seem attractive alternatives.
   C. Factory work sometimes provided young working women with comradeship and fun.
      1. They enjoyed practical jokes.
      2. They had a limited social life in pubs and clubs.
   D. Working-class marriages often followed, rather than preceded, pregnancy.
      1. Parish guardians sometimes forced reluctant swains to wed.
      2. Abandoned pregnant women often faced social censure and acute poverty.
      3. Infanticide was widespread.
   E. Combining motherhood with work created child-care challenges.
F. Poor and adulterated food added to working women’s difficulties.

III. Prostitution was common, as a job or as a supplement to low wages in other work.
   A. We know a great deal about Victorian prostitution from the anonymous *My Secret Life*.
   B. Some skillful young women chose the life as a route to riches.
      1. King William IV had ten children by his mistress.
      2. Catherine “Skittles” Walters was a famous and beautiful courtesan.
   C. Others were forced into the life if abandoned or widowed or if sickness prevented the family breadwinner from working.
      1. Prostitution paid better than any other working-class occupation.
      2. It was hazardous to women’s health and safety.
   D. Brothels were common, and many cafes and pubs provided beds. A survey from 1838 estimated that there were 5,000 brothels in London alone.
   E. The government experimented with legal regulation of prostitution, but a purity crusade tried to prevent it.
      1. In 1864, Parliament passed the Contagious Diseases Act, to ensure regular VD inspection of prostitutes in military towns.
      2. Josephine Butler led a protest campaign against the act.
      3. Parliament condemned brothels in 1885 and repealed the Contagious Diseases Act in 1886.
      4. The Salvation Army tried to rescue “fallen” women.
      5. Religiously motivated individuals, including William Gladstone, also sought to rescue “fallen” women; he flagellated himself when he realized that he enjoyed the work.

Essential Reading:
Joan Perkin, *Victorian Women*.

Supplementary Reading:
John Benson, *The Working Class in Britain*.
Stephen Marcus, *The Other Victorians*.

Questions to Consider:
1. What were the most difficult aspects of Victorian working-class women’s lives?
2. Why was prostitution so widespread in Victorian Britain?
Lecture Eight

The State Church and Evangelical Revival

Scope: Britain had an established church, the Anglican Church or Church of England, to which the majority of the population nominally belonged. The church ministered to the respectable every Sunday and to nearly everyone during such rites of passage as christening, marriage, and burial. It was run by a hierarchy of officials, stretching from the archbishops and bishops at the top, appointed by the prime minister, down to the vicars and curates at the bottom. The right to appoint vicars often lay in the hands of landlords, who usually favored their younger sons. The early Victorian era witnessed the reform of many old church abuses, including plural livings and inequalities of church incomes. Meanwhile, an evangelical revival, gathering force from the late eighteenth century, created a new mood of zeal and moral Puritanism. Its advocates worked to abolish slavery and brutal working conditions in factories, but they also tried to stamp out all forms of nonreligious Sunday entertainment. The working classes stayed away from church in growing numbers until such groups as the Salvation Army set out to “rescue” them for Christianity.

Outline

I. Most British people were Christians, at least nominally, and most belonged to the Church of England, a branch of the state.
   A. They assumed that the Bible contained God’s revealed truth and that by living virtuous lives, they would eventually go to heaven.
      1. The Book of Common Prayer ensured a standard liturgy over the whole country.
      2. The Church of England subscribed to the “Thirty-Nine Articles.”
   B. Bishops were appointed by the prime minister and governed a hierarchy of lesser clergy in their dioceses.
   C. Tithe exactions made the church wealthy but unpopular.
   D. Twenty-four bishops and the two archbishops (of Canterbury and York) were members of the House of Lords.
   E. The ministry was a highly respectable profession.
      1. It was an avenue of upward mobility for middle-class men, giving them leisure and time for intellectual interests.
      2. It provided places for younger sons of the gentry and aristocracy.
   F. Landowners often had the right of appointment to “livings.”
      1. They could sell livings, too, and sometimes advertised them in the Times.
      2. A new rector or curate would “read himself in” to his living by reciting the Thirty-Nine Articles from the pulpit.
      3. The holding of plural livings was still common in the early nineteenth century.
   G. Cathedral chapters were often rich from ancient bequests.
   H. Reform of obvious inequalities and abuses began in the 1830s by the creation of a permanent Ecclesiastical Commission.
      1. Bishops’ incomes were standardized at 4,000 pounds.
      2. Plural livings were abolished by Parliament in 1838.

II. The evangelical movement in the established church emphasized personal conversion, emotional commitment to Jesus, exacting moral standards, and Biblical literalism.
   A. It originated largely with John Wesley and the Methodists.
   B. George Whitefield, who was known for his unusual practice of preaching outdoors, advocated a religion of personal transformation.
   C. Evangelicalism became socially influential inside the Church of England through the Clapham sect.
      1. William Wilberforce led the campaign for abolishing the slave trade (1807) and slavery (1833) in the British Empire, against the West India lobby’s opposition.
      2. Lord Shaftesbury campaigned for improved conditions in factories and mines.
D. Evangelicals campaigned for sabbatarianism and temperance.
   1. John Henderson, a Scottish evangelical, bought the Glasgow and Edinburgh railway to prevent it from running trains on the Sabbath.
   2. The high level of consumption of alcoholic beverages was partly attributable to the fact that urban water supplies were not safe to drink.

E. Evangelicals were willing to cooperate with Dissenters to spread Bible-reading and Sunday schools.

F. Evangelicals encouraged a religious seriousness that became popular among Victorian artists, even those who were not themselves evangelicals.
   1. Pre-Raphaelites took up religious themes, as we see in Holman Hunt’s *The Light of the World* and Rossetti’s *The Annunciation*.
   2. Henry Alexander Bowler’s *The Doubt: Can These Dry Bones Live?* shows a young woman meditating by a grave.

G. Evangelicals were often satirized and parodied by Victorian novelists for their zeal and intolerance. Reverend Obadiah Slope in Trollope’s *Barchester Towers* is the classic example.

III. The working classes were increasingly alienated from organized religion, especially working-class men.
   A. Many felt that the church represented forces of surveillance and repression.
   B. They had distinctive religious ideas of their own.
      1. They thought that christening, marriage, and burial services were essential.
      2. Otherwise, they believed more in good works than in justification by faith.
   C. William Booth founded the Salvation Army in 1878 in an attempt to regain working-class people to Christianity through clever use of popular idioms.

Essential Reading:
Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church: 1829–1901*.

Supplementary Reading:
David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*.
Alec Vidler, *The Church in an Age of Revolution*.

Questions to Consider:
1. Why was the Church of England vulnerable to criticism in the Victorian era?
2. What were the attractions of evangelicalism?
Lecture Nine
The Oxford Movement and Catholicism

Scope: The Oxford movement of the 1830s and 1840s tried to emphasize the supernatural as opposed to the political character of the Church of England. The defection of two of its most luminous members, Newman and Manning, to Roman Catholicism, damaged its reputation in the 1840s; however, the Oxford movement, like the evangelical revival, animated Christianity in many parts of Britain. Meanwhile, the Roman Catholic Church, made up mainly of Irish immigrants and old “recusants,” newly leavened with a group of energetic converts, weathered a storm of prejudice and criticism as it created its own diocesan structure. British Christianity was also under intellectual pressure from scientific developments, especially Darwinian evolution, and from German methods of biblical criticism. Successive controversies in the mid-Victorian era indicated anxiety and doubt on the part of influential men; Thomas Huxley, a leading scientist, invented the term “agnosticism” to describe his own religious situation between faith and doubt.

Outline

I. The Oxford movement emphasized the catholic and supernatural aspects of Anglicanism.
   A. Like the evangelical movement, with which it was contemporaneous, the Oxford movement focused on the importance of warmth and vitality in the individual’s relationship with God and Jesus.
   B. It was culturally richer and less puritanical than the evangelical movement.
   C. One of its hallmarks was an emphasis on the “beauty of holiness”—the idea that religious life should be beautified and that worship should take place in glorious surroundings.
   D. While the evangelical movement preached the importance of the individual’s direct encounter with God, the Oxford movement saw the church itself as a crucial institution, responsible for mediating the relationship between God and the individual.

   A. They opposed the Irish Church Temporalities Bill (1833) and the Catholic Emancipation legislation of 1829, whereby Catholics were permitted to sit in Parliament, because it meant that political expediency, rather than divine truth, would affect the governance of the Church of England.
   B. They emphasized the concept of apostolic succession.
      1. Jesus had entrusted Saint Peter with the keys of the faith and charged him to create the church.
      2. Saint Peter had created bishops, and each new generation of bishops had passed on the succession from Jesus’s apostles.
   C. John Henry Newman’s respect for the sixteenth-century Protestant reformers declined, while his appreciation for the early Church fathers (such as St. Augustine and St. Ambrose) increased.
   D. Of the “Tracts for the Times,” Tract 90 was the most controversial; in it, Newman argued for the compatibility of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England with Catholic doctrine, despite their original anti-Catholic animus.
   E. Newman tried to argue for Anglicanism as the via media, the middle way, between Catholic and Protestant errors.

III. Newman’s intensive study of the Church fathers—he strongly believed that it was crucial to get the doctrines right to be a good Christian—led him toward Catholicism, and he converted in 1845. The Oxford movement then fell under a cloud.
   A. Henry Manning also became a Roman Catholic in 1851 after the Gorham Decision emphasized the Erastianism of the Anglican Church.
   B. Some Anglicans were horrified by Catholic (and later, Jewish) emancipation because it meant that, conceivably, a Roman Catholic could become prime minister and would have the responsibility for appointing the Anglican bishops.

©2002 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership
IV. The other leaders of the Oxford movement remained ostentatiously loyal to the state church; Anglo-Catholicism—or “High Church,” as the Oxford movement came to be known—began to reach out to urban slum dwellers, with growing success toward 1900.

A. The mid-Victorian era saw vigorous restoration of old churches and the building of many new ones.
   1. Between 1840 and 1876, the Anglicans built 1,700 new churches, mainly in the industrial towns, and restored about 7,000 more.
   2. Some of these churches were beautiful, in the neo-Gothic style.

B. The High Church emphasized display: elaborate decoration, sumptuous vestments, and ritual embellishments, such as choral music, candles, bells, and incense.

C. It de-emphasized preaching (which was so essential to the evangelical movement).

V. The Roman Catholic Church in Britain gained recruits from Ireland and by conversion.

A. Anti-Catholicism had a long post-Reformation history.
   1. To many Britons, Catholicism was synonymous with treason.
   2. The Catholicism of Queen Mary I and Guy Fawkes was remembered as cruel and repressive.
   3. Foxe’s Book of Martyrs (1559) was staple fare for Protestant children.
   4. Many Protestants believed that to be Roman Catholic implied allegiance to a foreign monarch.

B. Recusant families (those not attending Church of England services) included the Earls of Shrewsbury and the Dukes of Norfolk.

C. The Catholic population of Britain swelled rapidly after the Irish famine. East London, Glasgow, and the Lancashire textile towns developed Catholic ghettos.

D. Converts were a source of pleasure and concern to the Catholic bishops.
   1. Their intellectual adventurousness dismayed Cardinal Wiseman.
   2. St. George Mivart and George Tyrrell were both censured by the hierarchy.
   3. Newman’s Apologia Pro Vita Sua, written in answer to Charles Kingsley, who did not believe Newman had converted in good faith, was recognized as a masterpiece by Anglicans and Catholics alike.

E. The re-establishment of the Catholic hierarchy in 1850 led to an outburst of anti-popery.
   1. Prime Minister Lord John Russell protested against “papal aggression.”
   2. Parliament legislated against Catholic use of Anglican titles.

F. Henry Manning succeeded Nicholas Wiseman as Archbishop of Westminster and became a hero to working-class people in London.
   1. He arbitrated the dockers’ strike of 1889.
   2. Londoners lined the streets for his funeral in 1892.

VI. New intellectual trends disturbed the Christian sense of assurance.

A. Darwinian evolution challenged the biblical creation story and the uniqueness of humanity.

B. Critical methods of biblical study led to new ideas about the nature of Christianity; publication of Essays and Reviews set off a furor in 1861, including some heresy trials.

C. Thomas Huxley, a champion of Darwin, gave a name to agnosticism.

D. Growing numbers of Victorians (including George Elliot and Thomas Huxley) had become doubtful about Christianity, not only because of the Darwinian revolution and the new critical revelations about the Bible, but also for ethical reasons: When they reread the Old Testament, they were horrified by accounts of God’s brutality.

E. As the British Empire increased its reach throughout the world, small numbers of Britons began to adapt to exotic religions.

VII. The Church of England was shocked by the results of a survey in 1851 that tried to record who actually went to church and to which one.

A. The church discovered that only about a quarter of the population went to its services, another quarter attended nonconformist or Catholic services, and half the people attended no services at all.
B. The church worked through the second half of the century to build new churches, train more ministers, and regain its central role in national life. Membership figures did rise, but intellectual challenges, particularly Darwinian biology and historical-critical methods, created new problems.

Essential Reading:
E. Norman, *The English Catholic Church in the Nineteenth Century.*

Supplementary Reading:
Patrick Allitt, *Catholic Converts: British and American Intellectuals Turn to Rome.*
M. A. Crowther, *Church Embattled: Religious Controversy in Mid-Victorian England.*

Questions to Consider:
1. Why did comparatively few Oxford movement Anglicans follow Newman when he converted to Catholicism?
2. How severe were the new intellectual challenges to conventional Christian belief in the mid-nineteenth century?
Lecture Ten
Work and Working-Class Life

Scope: The Industrial Revolution accelerated through the Victorian period but not everywhere and not all at once. Big regional variations in the type of work done meant that many people continued with non-mechanized, non-factory work far into the nineteenth century. Pre-industrial work was irregular, contrasting intense work with periods of idleness. Gradually, capitalist ideas about value and pay replaced older ideas of the “just price” and “just wage.” Industrial methods also forced working people to learn a new approach to work and to the organization of time. Every industrial occupation had its own characteristic hazards and illnesses, but the workers struggled, where possible, to retain a sense of dignified autonomy. Meanwhile, those who could afford it went into business for themselves or resorted to informal methods of raising their incomes. Alcohol, as much as unemployment, threatened working-class home life.

Outline

I. Pre-industrial working conditions in the trades were highly varied.
   A. Working hours were long but irregular.
   B. Pre-industrial workers had unofficial holidays, including, for example, patron saints’ days and the monarch’s birthday.
   C. Work in many jobs was irregular.
      1. Dockyard workers depended on the wind to bring in ships.
      2. Farm labor was highly seasonal and was paid by the day.
      3. Shipbuilders were often idle between contracts.
      4. Cornish lead miners had regular work but not regular pay.
   D. Payment was often not in money but in kind.
      1. Dorset quarrymen were paid in stone or bread.
      2. Fishermen often went shares in the fish from their voyages.
   E. Sharp status differences existed in most trades.
   F. Payment was often based on tradition and the notion of the “just price,” rather than capitalist ideas of shifting value.
      1. Pay scales often remained fixed for decades.
      2. The notion of a wage rate commensurate with hours of labor developed gradually.
   G. Each occupation had its own characteristic dress.
      1. Shepherds wore a distinctive smock.
      2. Fishermen wore hard-weather gear.
      3. Characteristically, working people wore the same clothes for days, and even nights, at a time.

II. Entry into mechanized factories and subdivision of labor made the old ways impossible.
   A. Workmen were unaccustomed to toiling the same number of hours every day; factory owners imposed heavy fines for lateness to try to create a new discipline suitable to the factory.
   B. Pay was low.
      1. Workers were generally paid piece rates (i.e., per completed piece or product).
      2. The rate of production was standardized by the workers: A low rate of production was common so that workers could leverage a higher rate per piece.
   C. Every occupation had its own characteristic illness.
      1. The phrase “mad as a hatter” came from the experience of hat workers poisoned by mercury.
      2. Miners suffered from silicosis and lung cancer.
      3. Sweeps’ boys often failed to develop and had high cancer rates because they were subject to severe mistreatment. (Charles Kingsley’s novel The Water-Babies was written in response to the particularly horrific working conditions of the sweeps’ boys.)
   D. The working environment was polluted and dangerous.
1. There were no safety regulations.
2. There were no regulations against the use of child labor.
3. Sickness and accidents were common.
4. The consensus was that safety should not be the concern of government.

E. Surveillance was tight.

III. Workers found ways to maintain some control over their working conditions even when they had no unions.
   A. Durham miners used a daily lottery to allocate workplaces.
   B. Skilled craftsmen in the factory system kept St. Monday where possible.

IV. Many working-class people struggled to move into “penny capitalism.”
   A. Some became corner shopkeepers or street peddlers.
   B. Others ran cabs or bought shares in fishing boats.

V. Informal forms of economic activity were widespread.
   A. Thousands of people resorted at times to begging, poaching, shoplifting, pilfering from work, and prostitution.
   B. In coal-mining districts, “picking” was often the children’s responsibility; in the countryside, children were sent out to steal fruit.

VI. Working-class neighborhoods were densely populated, smoky, neighborly, and gossipy.
   A. At times, they could be amicable and open.
   B. Husbands’ drinking and economic stress were prime sources of social tension.
      1. Drink was closely connected to wife beating.
      2. Elite working men who joined the Methodists sometimes reformed their own trades.

Essential Reading:
John Benson, *The Working Class in Britain*.
John Rule, *The Labouring Classes in Early Industrial Britain*.

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. Why were pre-industrial work habits so irregular?
2. Did industrialization improve or worsen working peoples’ lives?
Lecture Eleven
Poverty and the “Hungry Forties”

Scope: Poverty was common throughout British history and could be just as acute in the countryside as in towns. Urbanization and industrialization made poverty more visible and its effects, more shocking. The new spirit of utilitarianism on one side, coupled with an evangelical reform impulse on the other, combined to make poverty seem more scandalous to the Victorians than it had to their predecessors. Underemployment and sickness often pushed working people into poverty; public health conditions were so bad that epidemics of cholera, typhus, and typhoid were common. Novelists, journalists, and radicals all studied and condemned poverty; the New Poor Law created the workhouse system in an attempt to alleviate the condition economically. The law’s inadequacies, however, made philanthropy a necessary supplement.

Outline

I. Rural poverty was still common in Victorian England.
   A. The enclosure movement had created a class of landless laborers, many of whom were paid wages at or below starvation level.
   B. Benjamin Disraeli’s novel Sybil, subtitled The Two Nations (1845), describes scenes of horrible rural poverty behind an apparently idyllic landscape.

II. Urban poverty was caused by numerous factors.
   A. Fluctuations in the business cycle and seasonal patterns of work led to periodic declines in the demand for labor.
      1. City dwellers were completely dependent on money for food but lacked money when out of work.
      2. There was no welfare state or unemployment benefit to compensate the unemployed.
      3. Mining needed more men in winter.
   B. Businessmen’s belief in laissez-faire policies was mixed with their belief that they could remain competitive only by paying the lowest possible wages.
   C. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the Combination Acts made the creation of trade unions illegal for fear that they would lead to revolutionary activity.
   D. Sickness was often the push that sent a family over the edge from working poverty to starvation or crime. Unsanitary living conditions and overcrowding made epidemics common, and the cities were swept by periodic outbreaks of cholera, typhus, and typhoid.
   E. The working poor found various ways to cope.
      1. If they were “known” they could get credit at local shops, buying “on tick.”
      2. Pawnbrokers were universal in working-class districts, because families regularly had to raise a little money from their scanty possessions.
      3. The poorest people also moved often and were most likely to become criminals.

III. The persistence of poverty was studied and condemned by numerous groups.
   A. Novelists used poverty as a backdrop for their stories; Mrs. Gaskell in Mary Barton (1848) described how members of the Davenport family were laid off, then became sick with typhoid fever.
   B. Journalists, such as Henry Mayhew, were fascinated with the variety of ways poor Londoners found for making some sort of income and staying alive.
      2. He was fascinated by the orphaned children of London, including the “mudlarks,” who waded out into the river estuary at low tide to scavenge for anything of value that had dropped off boats into the muddy river bed.
   C. Radical observers, notably Friedrich Engels and later Karl Marx, described these conditions as part of their indictment of capitalism.
      1. Engels, a German, was sent by his father to manage his textile factories in Manchester and was appalled by urban slums there.

IV. The political response to poverty was never adequate in the Victorian era.
   A. The New Poor Law, introduced in 1834, created workhouses.
      1. The aim was to be economical and to deter potential inmates.
      2. Dickens made them a byword for misery and privation.
      3. The sick, mentally ill, and the aged were often forced to go there.
      4. Historians have shown that some workhouses were well run and humane.
   B. The prevailing mood of laissez-faire among the business classes discouraged state intervention, especially if financed through taxation.
   C. Civic reformers inside the British political system proposed public health and sanitation legislation.
      1. One of the most influential of these reformers was Edwin Chadwick, who belonged to the first generation of professional civil servants.
      2. He was a great collector of statistics and advocated the systematic application of efficient principles to the regulation of poverty.
      3. He encouraged cleanliness but was bitterly hated for it.
   D. A general rise in real wages after the 1850s made downright starvation less common, but aggravated poverty remained widespread.

V. Philanthropy sometimes alleviated the worst suffering but was often accompanied by preaching and moralizing that the poor resented.
   A. Middle-class Victorians widely believed that they were prosperous because they were more virtuous than the poor and that the poor were subject to that condition because they were less virtuous.
   B. In *Bleak House*, Dickens demonstrates his acute eye for charity recipients’ resentment.
   C. Seebohm Rowntree recognized poverty periods in the working-class life cycle.
      1. Poverty was likely during early childhood.
      2. It abated when a child could earn, increasing family funds.
      3. It recurred when a worker had to support his own children.
      4. It lessened when the worker’s children joined the workforce.
      5. It recurred again in old age when he was unable to work.
   D. William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, estimated in the 1880s that as many as three million people, “the submerged tenth,” lived in permanent poverty. (See Booth’s book on poverty, *In Darkest England* [1890].)

VI. As a percentage, the number of very poor was declining, but as a total, it remained very high. In general, the standard of living, at least for people who could get regular work, did rise in the Victorian era.

**Essential Reading:**
W. D. Rubinstein, *Britain’s Century: A Political and Social History, 1815–1905*.

**Supplementary Reading:**
Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*.

**Questions to Consider:**
1. What factors made the urban working class especially vulnerable to poverty?
2. How effective were Victorian efforts to remedy poverty?
Scope: Britain's oldest colony, Ireland, always resented English domination and by the 1840s, centuries-old resentments, political and religious, embittered relations between the two countries. A Protestant minority of landowners, the “ascendancy,” enjoyed the profits of a system in which the Catholic peasant majority lived in severe and often degraded poverty. The peasants’ dependence on potatoes (originally introduced from America) had led to steady population growth, but in 1846, a potato blight devastated the crop and threw millions into a condition of near or absolute starvation. The British government, hamstrung by its faith in laissez-faire and its penny-pinching traditions where Ireland was concerned, took inadequate steps to alleviate the crisis. A large migration from Ireland to England, Canada, and the United States ensued, often aggravated by epidemics. At the same time, the Tory government of Prime Minister Robert Peel, already under pressure to dismantle protectionist trade policies, abolished the Corn Laws that had protected the interest of British landlords by keeping the price of imported food artificially high. This decision shattered the Tory Party, whose elements were unable to reunify for the next twenty-five years. Neither did it benefit the starving Irish, many of whom rarely or never ate bread.

Outline

I. British involvement in Ireland had always been a source of friction.
   A. The involvement began in the reign of Henry II in the twelfth century.
   B. It intensified during the reign of Elizabeth I, when expeditions under Sir Walter Raleigh and others tried to bring more of the island under direct British control.
      1. Until then, the city of Dublin and the area immediately surrounding it was called “the Pale”—the area that England administered.
      2. Going “beyond the pale” originally meant going beyond the place where British rule in Ireland operated effectively.
   C. Oliver Cromwell, leader of the parliamentary armies in the British Civil Wars of the 1640s, suppressed an Irish rebellion in 1649–1651.
      1. He massacred the inhabitants of Drogheda when they refused to surrender.
      2. He was unable to pay the members of his New Model Army in money but paid many of them in Irish lands instead.
   D. Ireland had remained Catholic during the Reformation and supported the Catholic King James II in the Glorious Revolution of 1688–1689.
      1. Irish Protestants treasured the memory of James’s defeat at the Battle of the Boyne (1690) by Protestant William III.
      2. The Ulster Protestant “Orange Parades” to this day commemorate that battle and continue to produce community friction.
   E. In the early nineteenth century, the Catholic majority, mostly very poor, lived on lands owned by Protestants, many of whom were absentee.
      1. Local agents ran the estates and profited by multiple subdivision of plots.
      2. Owners often did not even know how many tenants lived and worked on their estates.
      3. Tenants were constantly liable to eviction without legal recourse and with no compensation for improvements.
      4. Secret societies, such as the White Boys and the Ribbon Men, avenged evicted tenants.
   F. The Protestant Church of Ireland was a standing grievance to the Catholic people, who had to pay for its upkeep.
      2. Catholic emancipation in 1829 gave Catholic property owners the right to vote and become Members of Parliament, ensuring that Irish Catholics would become an important (sometimes decisive) part of British political life for the rest of the century.
II. Population growth in Ireland was not matched by industrialization or agricultural diversification.

A. By the early 1840s, the population was eight million.

B. Most cotters lived on small rented plots, often housed with their farm animals in mud huts.

C. Potatoes, introduced into Europe from America by Columbus, were the staple food of the rural poor; monocultures are unstable, because they offer the ideal conditions for the one crop’s predators.

D. Potato blight, beginning in late 1845, catastrophic in 1846, and again in 1848, denied millions their only supply of food.

III. Irish suffering in 1846–1849 intensified Anglo-Irish bitterness and has never been forgotten.

A. Visitors were horrified by scenes of death by starvation and cholera, beginning in December 1846, that preyed on weakened survivors.

B. Emigrant ships, often overcrowded and vulnerable to epidemics, sailed to America and England.

C. A total of 1.5 million Irish went to America in 1845–1855, 300,000 to England, and another 300,000 to Canada.

D. The British government, first under Tory Robert Peel, then under Whig John Russell, escalated public relief efforts.
   1. Unsympathetic bureaucrats in England, obedient to the prevailing market theory, prevented fast plentiful aid from being sent.
   2. Instead, they set up public works schemes that were not properly planned and that most Irish were too sick and weak to take advantage of.
   3. By early 1847, three million Irish people were on direct relief, being given food from local soup kitchens.
   4. The recurrence of crop failure in 1848 worsened an already desperate situation.

E. Some Irish nationalists denounced the British response as callously indifferent.

F. Historians debate the issue; some believe that the English did a great deal, considering that they had never encountered a similar situation before.

G. Irish-Americans continue to recall the famine in their indictment of Britain.

IV. The Irish famine coincided with a debate in Britain over free trade or protectionism.

A. The Corn Laws protected British landowners against imports of cheap grain unless the domestic price was high. The policy favored landowners and support for it was central to Tory orthodoxy.

B. Manufacturers, whose growing influence had been demonstrated in the Great Reform Act, favored low tariff barriers and a free-trade policy.
   1. They believed, correctly, that free trade would give them a competitive advantage in foreign markets.
   2. Working-class people would benefit from free trade by enjoying cheaper food and abundant work.

C. Tory Prime Minister Robert Peel was the son of a Lancashire textile manufacturer and understood the appeal of the free traders’ arguments.
   1. The Anti-Corn-Law League, led by Richard Cobden (1804–1865) and John Bright (1811–1889), pressured Peel’s government in the early 1840s to repeal the laws.
   2. Bright believed that strong trade links (assisted by the absence of tariffs) would lessen the likelihood of wars between nations.
   3. The Irish crisis convinced Peel that the Corn Laws were indefensible.

D. He finally achieved passage of the repeal, with the help of Whig and Radical votes.
   1. Within the Tory Party, Benjamin Disraeli led Peel’s opponents, in speeches of venomous brilliance.
   2. The Lords also passed the repeal, led by the Duke of Wellington, but almost at once voted no confidence in Peel.
   3. The repeal of the Corn Laws represents one of the great turning points in mid-nineteenth-century British politics. It shattered the Tory Party.
   4. The Tory (Conservative) Party remained split for much of the next twenty years between a free-trade Peelite faction and a protectionist faction.

E. Ireland felt little immediate benefit from repeal because the Irish did not eat bread.
V. Throughout the nineteenth century, the British population rose rapidly, but that of Ireland never recovered from the famine. Eight million in 1841, it had fallen to six-and-a-half million by 1851 and continued to decline through successive censuses, because reduced fertility and high emigration forestalled population recovery.

Essential Reading:
Mary Daly, Social and Economic History of Ireland Since 1800.

Supplementary Reading:
Joel Mokyr, Why Ireland Starved.

Questions to Consider:
1. Who supported the Corn Laws, who opposed them, and why?
2. Why was the English response to the Irish famine so feeble?
Quotations from Queen Victoria

From Lecture Two

Journal comments after being notified of her accession:

“Since it has pleased providence to place me in this station, I shall do my utmost to fulfill my duty towards my country; I am very young and perhaps in many, though not in all things, inexperienced, but I am sure that very few have more real good will and more real desire to do what is right than I have.”


Letter to her uncle, King Leopold of Belgium, regarding Lord Melbourne:

“Let me pause to tell you how fortunate I am to have at the head of the Government a man like Lord Melbourne. I have seen him now every day, with the exception of Friday, and the more I see him, the more confidence I have in him; he is not only a clever statesman and an honest man, but a good and kind hearted man, whose aim is to do his duty for his country and not for a party. He is of the greatest use to me both politically and privately …It is to me the greatest pleasure to do my duty for my country and my people, and no fatigue, however great, will be burdensome to me if it is for the welfare of the nation.”


Journal comments regarding her proposal of marriage to Prince Albert:

“I said to him …that it would make me too happy if he would consent to what I wished …we embraced each other over and over again, and he was so kind, so affectionate. Oh! To feel I was, and am, loved by such an Angel as Albert was too great delight to describe. He is perfection; perfection in every way, in beauty, in everything. …I felt it was the happiest moment in my life.”

15 October 1839, ibid., p. 57.

Journal comments, a few days later:

“I signed some papers and warrants, etc. and he was so kind as to dry them with blotting paper for me. We talked a good deal together and he clasped me so tenderly in his arms and kissed me again and again.”

27 October 1839, ibid., p. 58.

Comment on babies:

“An ugly baby is a very nasty object, and the prettiest is frightful when undressed, till about four months; in short, as long as they have their big body and little limbs and that terrible frog-like action.”

From a letter to her daughter, Princess Frederick William of Prussia (i.e., Princess Victoria who had married the German Prince), 2 May 1859, ibid., p. 112.

Letter to her uncle King Leopold regarding the Great Exhibition of 1851:

“I wish you could have witnessed the 1st May 1851, the greatest day in our history, the most beautiful and imposing and touching spectacle ever seen, and the triumph of my beloved Albert. Truly it was astonishing, a fair scene. Many cried, and all felt touched and impressed with devotional feelings. It was the happiest, proudest day of my life and I can think of nothing else. Albert’s dear name is immortalized with the great conception, his own, and my own dear country showed she was worthy of it.”

Journal comments on Albert’s death:
“I took his dear left hand which was already cold …and knelt down by him …All, all was over …I stood up and kissed his dear heavenly forehead and called out in a bitter and agonizing cry ‘Oh my dear darling’ and then dropped on my knees in mute distracted despair, unable to utter a word or shed a tear …Then I laid down on the sofa in the red room and all the gentlemen came in and knelt down and kissed my hand, and I said a word to each.”
Journal, 14 December 1861, Letters and Journals, p. 156.

From Lecture Three
Comments from Victoria’s journal, when she was thirteen, on her travel through “the black country”:
“We just passed through a town where all coal mines are and you see the fire glimmer at a distance in the engines in many places. The men, women, children, country and houses are all black. But I can not by any description give an idea of its strange and extraordinary appearance. The country is very desolate everywhere; there are coals about, and the grass is quite blasted and black. I just now see an extraordinary building flaming with fire. The country continues black, engines flaming, coals, in abundance, everywhere, smoking and burning coal heaps, intermingled with wretched huts and carts and little ragged children.”
Journal, 2 August 1833, ibid., p. 11.

From Lecture Six
Comments on the women’s rights movement:
“The Queen is anxious to enlist everyone who can speak or write to join in checking this mad, wicked folly of women’s rights with all its attendant horrors, on which her poor feeble sex is bent, forgetting every sense of womanly feeling and propriety. Lady Amberley ought to get a good whipping.”

From Lecture Eight
Journal comments on evangelical Sundays:
“I am not at all an admirer or approver of our very dull Sundays for I think the absence of innocent amusements for the poor people a misfortune and an encouragement of vice.”

From Lecture Fourteen
Comments on the Great Exhibition:
“Some of the inventions were very ingenious, many of them quite Utopian. It has taught me so much I never knew before and has brought me in contact with so many clever people I should never have known otherwise, and with so many manufacturers whom I would scarcely have met unless I travelled all over the country and visited every individual manufacture, which I could never have done.”

From Lecture Sixteen
Journal comments on the death of Charles Dickens:
“He had a large, loving mind and the strongest sympathy with the poorer classes. He felt sure that a better feeling, and much greater union of classes, would take place in time. And I pray earnestly it may.”
In Hibbert, Queen Victoria, p. 396.
From Lecture Seventeen

From a letter to Lord Canning, Governor-General of India, after the Indian Mutiny, in 1858:

“…[show] the greatest kindness [to the many] ‘kind and friendly natives’ who had helped restore order. They should know that there is no hatred to a brown-skin tone; but the greatest wish on the Queen’s part to see them happy, contented, and flourishing.”

Ibid, p. 250.

From Lecture Eighteen

Letter to Mrs. Lincoln after the U.S. president’s assassination:

“Though a stranger to you, I cannot remain silent when so terrible a calamity has fallen upon you and your country, and must express personally my deep and heartfelt sympathy with you under the shocking circumstances of your present dreadful misfortune. No one can better appreciate than I can, who am myself utterly broken-hearted by the loss of my own beloved husband, who was the light of my life, my stay, my all, what your sufferings must be; and I earnestly pray that you may be supported by Him to Whom alone the sorely stricken can look for comfort, in this hour of heavy affliction!”

29 April 1865, in Letters and Journals, p. 189.

From Lecture Thirty-One

Remark made after early defeats in the Boer War:

“We are not interested in the possibilities of defeat: they do not exist.”


From Lecture Thirty-Five

Letter to Prime Minister Lord Russell, explaining her reluctance to open Parliament in 1866:

“The Queen must say that she does feel very bitterly the want of feeling of those who ask the Queen to go to open parliament. …Why this wish should be of so unreasonable and unfeeling a nature, as to long to witness the spectacle of a poor, broken-hearted widow, nervous and shrinking, dragged in deep mourning, alone in State as a Show, where she used to go supported by her husband, is a thing she cannot understand. …she resent s the unfeelingness of those who have clamoured for it.”


Letter to Vicky after Albert’s death:

“I feel so stunned and bewildered. He protected me so that I felt safe! And now all, all is gone in this world, and all seems unhinged again in thousands of ways…The shock, the blow, the blank, the constant missing at every turn of the one strong, powerful arm and head…This anguish that comes over me like a wave…is terrible. God’s will be done, but I shall never be the same again.”

Cited in Hibbert, Queen Victoria, p. 441.

Journal comments on her Diamond Jubilee of 1897:

“a never to be forgotten day. No one ever, I believe, has met with such an ovation as was given to me, passing through those six miles of streets…The crowds were indescribable…the cheering was quite deafening and every face seemed to be filled with real joy.”

Telegraph message to British Empire after her Diamond Jubilee celebration:

“From my heart I thank my beloved people. May God bless them.”

22 June 1897, Letters and Journals, p. 335.
Timeline

1819.............................. Birth of Princess Victoria.
1829............................... Catholic Emancipation (permitting Catholics to vote and sit in Parliament).
1829............................... Opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway.
1831............................... Cholera epidemic.
1832............................... Great Reform Act.
1832 Abolition of slavery in the British Empire (Caribbean Islands).
1834............................... New Poor Law establishes the workhouse system.
1834............................... The Tolpuddle Martyrs, early trade unionists, convicted and transported for conspiracy.
1837............................... Death of King William IV; Victoria becomes queen.
1838............................... I. K. Brunel’s steamship Great Western crosses the Atlantic.
1838............................... Parliament rejects the Chartists’ first petition.
1839............................... British colonial army defeated in Afghanistan.
1839 Foundation of the Anti-Corn-Law League by Cobden and Bright.
1840............................... Queen Victoria marries Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.
1840............................... Rowland Hill introduces the “penny post” cheap mail.
1842............................... The queen travels by train from Slough to London Paddington.
1844............................... Chancellor Gladstone specifies cheap “parliamentary trains” with fares pegged at one penny per mile.
1846............................... Irish famine; abolition of the Corn Laws by Parliament.
1848............................... A wave of revolutions in Europe—Marx and Engels write Communist Manifesto. Third great Chartist petition.
1850............................... Titus Salt founds model industrial community of Saltaire.
1850............................... An outburst of anti-Catholic prejudice when the Pope declares the re-creation of Catholic dioceses in Britain.
1854–1856........................... Crimean War (France, Britain, and Turkey fighting against Russia).
1857............................... The Indian Mutiny.
1858............................... British government takes over direct rule of India from the Honorable East India Company.
1858............................... Publication of Self-Help by Samuel Smiles.
1859............................... Charles Darwin’s On the Origin of Species.
1861............................... Death of Prince Albert.
1861–1865........................ American Civil War creates crisis in British cotton textile industry.
1863................................. Opening of the world’s first underground railway (London).
1866................................. The “Sheffield Outrages,” in which union cutlers intimidate non-union men.
1867................................. Disraeli as prime minister; the Second Reform Act extends franchise.
1868................................. Founding of the Trades Union Congress.
1869................................. Completion of the Suez Canal transforms strategic route to India.
1871................................. Abolition of the purchase of army commissions.
1872................................. The secret ballot.
1874................................. British victory in the Ashanti War.
1875................................. Disraeli buys a share in Suez Canal.
1876................................. Disraeli makes Victoria empress of India.
1879................................. The Zulu War; defeat at Isandhlwana, heroic British defense at Rorke’s Drift, and victory at Ulundi.
1882................................. Legal reform permits women to maintain control of their own property after marriage.
1884................................. Third Reform Act further extends the franchise.
1884–1885....................... Expedition fails to rescue General Gordon in Khartoum.
1886................................. Liberal Party splits over Gladstone’s proposal to grant Irish Home Rule.
1888................................. Jack the Ripper kills eight prostitutes in Whitchapel, London.
1888................................. Annie Besant leads the London match factory girls on strike.
1889................................. London dockyard workers’ strike, arbitrated in the workers’ favor by the popular Cardinal Henry Manning (another Catholic convert).
1892................................. Keir Hardie, first independent Labour Member of Parliament, takes his seat.
1896................................. Failure of the Jameson Raid provokes a crisis in South Africa.
1897................................. Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee celebrations.
1899................................. Beginning of Boer War with humiliating British defeats.
1901................................. The Taff Vale Case stimulates TUC to create the Labour Party.
1901................................. Death of Queen Victoria.
Glossary

**Anti-Corn-Law League**: Richard Cobden and John Bright’s pro-free trade, anti-protectionist lobby (founded 1839) whose objective was achieved in 1846 when Peel’s Tory government defied much of its core constituency and repealed the laws.

**Celtic fringe**: An English politician’s name for Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and (sometimes) the southwestern counties of England.

**Chartism**: The popular movement of the 1830s and 1840s, in the wake of the First Reform Act (1832), to achieve further reforms of Parliament, including universal manhood suffrage, secret ballot, equal electoral districts, payment of MPs, annual parliament, and abolition of property qualifications for MPs. Led by Fergus O’Connor, it presented petitions to Parliament in 1838, 1842, and 1848 but achieved no effective reforms.

**Dissenter**: A person who did not belong to the established Church of England. The word (and the word “nonconformist”) was usually used of members of the Protestant sects, including Quakers, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Seventh Day Adventists, and Baptists.

**Establishment**: The state-run Church of England was the established church. In the nineteenth century, however, “establishment” also came to mean the central elements of the government and the state and the institutions that supported them.

**Evangelical**: A member of the Church of England or one of the Protestant sects who had adopted the emotional idiom of a personal relationship with Christ and was involved in the attempt at national moral regeneration.

**Evolution**: The theory that human beings had developed from simpler organisms over an immense period of time. Charles Darwin’s influential *On the Origin of Species by Natural Selection* (1859) codified evolutionary ideas and their compatibility with biological and geological evidence.

**Free trade**: Trade between nations unhampered by import and export duties. Britain, the world’s first industrial nation, believed it would benefit from free trade and abolished most of its duties in the 1840s and 1850s, despite opposition from the landed gentry in the Tory Party.

**Gothic**: One of the architectural styles favored by many Victorians and exhibited in Parliament and many Victorian churches and civic buildings. It aimed at reviving the glories of medieval cathedral architecture.

**Home Rule**: The aim of the Irish Nationalist Party in the 1870s and 1880s was an Irish government but still inside the British Empire. Gladstone’s decision to support it in 1886 broke the Liberal party into Home Rule and Unionist factions.

**Imperialist**: A supporter of an enlarged empire-building mission for Britain. Disraeli tried to make the Conservative Party self-consciously imperialist in the 1870s.

**Industrialization**: The process of concentrating and mechanizing manufacture on a large scale. In Britain, it was accompanied by the use of water and steam power and intense urbanization.

**Mudlark**: A London child who made a living by dredging metal, glass, and pottery scraps out of the Thames at low tide.

**New Poor Law**: The legislation of 1834 that created the workhouses. It was intended to be uniform throughout the country, to be economical for taxpayers, and to have a deterrent effect so that poor people would avoid appealing for help unless they were absolutely destitute. It was widely hated and feared by the English poor and satirized by Dickens and other writers.

**Oxford movement**: The attempt in the 1830s and 1840s by a group of Oxford dons to reinvigorate the Church of England, emphasizing its supernatural origins rather than its role as a department of state. Led by John Keble, Hurrell Froude, and John Newman, the movement scandalized “broad church” Anglicans when, in 1844, Newman (and others under his influence) became Roman Catholic.

**Pre-Raphaelite**: The artistic movement of the 1840s and 1850s that aimed to recapture the purity of early Renaissance art (i.e., before the era of Raphael). Artists in the movement included Millais, Rossetti, Holman Hunt, and Burne-Jones.
Radical: In the early Victorian era, supporters of free trade and political reform in a democratic direction. In the late Victorian era, the word began to carry connotations of socialism.

Rotten borough: A Parliamentary constituency with few or no electors and effectively in the hands of a landowning patron, who could appoint his client. The Reform Act of 1832 abolished more than sixty of them.

Sepoy: An Indian soldier in the service of the Honorable East India Company.

Thirty-Nine Articles: The list of doctrinal Christian principles drawn up under Queen Elizabeth I to which all clergy in the Church of England were required (by an act of Parliament, 1571) to subscribe. Designed to exclude Roman Catholics on the “right” and radical Protestants on the “left,” the articles were intended to define a broad middle ground of Anglicanism and be as inclusive as possible.

Tory: A member of one of the two main political parties. Tories were mainly country gentlemen whose income came from rents and the sale of grain. They generally supported the Corn Laws and opposed Peel’s repeal of them in 1846, which temporarily shattered the party. By the late nineteenth century, under Disraeli, the party had adopted the name “Conservative” instead, but Tory remained (and remains today) a widely used nickname.

Trade union: An organization of working people whose collective strength enables them to bargain effectively over wages, hours, and working conditions with their employers.

Uitlander: The Boer name for a non-Boer living and working in the Transvaal or the Orange Free State in the years before the Boer War. British dissatisfaction with the Boers’ treatment of Uitlanders sparked the bloody Boer War (1899–1902).

Unionist: A supporter of the union between Britain and Ireland. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Conservatives used “Unionist” as an alternative title. Unionism of this sort is unconnected with trade unionism.

Utilitarianism: The philosophical position associated with Jeremy Bentham and John Mill, which argues that a society should aim to achieve the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Highly influential among the early Victorians, it was criticized by evangelical Christians for its down-to-earth approach and by Mill’s son John Stuart Mill for its neglect of minority rights.
Isambard K. Brunel (1806–1859). Premier Victorian engineer and railway and ship builder. Brunel, son of an emigre French inventor, grew up surrounded by engineering projects. His father, Marc, struggled to build the first tunnel beneath the River Thames, with his son as project manager. The young Brunel himself designed the Clifton Suspension Bridge, still standing across the Clifton gorge in Bristol, and in 1833, won the contract to design and build the 118-mile Great Western Railway from London to Bristol. Parliament passed the necessary legislation in 1835, and Brunel finished the project in another six years, building, among many other innovative structures, the longest tunnel in the country at Box, between Bath and Chippenham. This railway’s seven-foot gauge deviated from the standard four feet, eight-and-a-half inches of other British railways, but its trains were more comfortable. Brunel was also an innovative shipbuilder and his paddle-wheeler Great Western (1838) was the first steamship to cross the Atlantic Ocean. Each of its two successors, the propellor-driven Great Britain (1845) and the Great Eastern (1858) marked a quantum leap in size and sophistication over all predecessors. The 700-foot-long Great Eastern could sail from Britain to Australia without refueling. Brunel, always a ruthless, tactless, work-obsessed overachiever, died just after its launch.

Edwin Chadwick (1800–1890). Civil servant, utilitarian, and poverty reformer who can be seen as a great benefactor of the poor but was hated by them in his own lifetime. Born and raised in the new industrial city of Manchester, Chadwick studied law in London and befriended the leading utilitarian philosophers Bentham and Mill. He became a member of a royal commission on poverty in 1832 and ultimately wrote a large part of its report, on which the New Poor Law was based. Working-class people loathed him for organizing the harsh workhouses on which the law depended and his fanatical and inflexible personality made him an easy target for satirists and critics. His next report (1842), written after he had discovered how high was the demand for workhouse places, showed that the nation’s public health and wealth were menaced by poor sanitation. The Whig government of Lord John Russell responded to it with passage of a Public Health Act six years later and appointed Chadwick Commissioner of the Board of Health. He lost the job in 1854 when Home Secretary Lord Palmerston recognized that he was the focus of too much dislike to remain viable in office. Even in his retirement, Chadwick remained an immensely influential figure and advisor on projects of urban and civil service reform.

Richard Cobden (1804–1865). Reformer and free-trade advocate who led the Anti-Corn-Law League. Cobden, the son of a poor Sussex farmer, was raised by unkind Yorkshire relatives and went to work as a teenager in the textile business. His hard work and skill enabled him to start his own company at age twenty-four, selling fabrics in London. Its rapid success made him wealthy. Cobden devoted his fortune to traveling throughout the world, then to campaigning successfully for a seat in Parliament, which he entered in 1841. An admirer of the United States, he believed Britain should become a democracy, too, and advocated the principle of universal manhood suffrage. He also believed that flourishing trade between nations helped to create wealth and prevent war.

The Corn Laws then in effect were designed to exclude foreign food from coming in to Britain, which gave a large economic advantage to British farmers. These laws, however, made it more difficult for British companies to export their manufactured wares, while forcing working-class people to pay more for their food than they would have had to under free-trade conditions. By 1845, the Anti-Corn-Law League, of which Cobden and his fellow orator John Bright were the leaders, was the most well organized lobby in Britain.

Parliament seemed unlikely to repeal the laws because most of its members represented landowners. However, the catastrophic Irish famine of 1846 forced Tory Prime Minister Robert Peel to recognize that Britain must have access to cheap and plentiful foreign food supplies at once. He defied many of his own party’s members to repeal the Corn Laws, crowning Cobden’s campaign with success. In later years, Cobden campaigned against British intervention in the Crimean War and continued to advocate free-trade policies.

Charles Darwin (1809–1882). Biologist and evolutionary theorist whose On the Origin of Species (1859) was one of the most important books of the nineteenth century. Born in Shropshire, Darwin was raised by a sister after his mother’s death when he was eight. He would not devote himself to formal studies of medicine or theology but loved to collect plants and animals. His skills as a biologist led to his appointment on a navy expedition to South America on HMS Beagle from 1831–1836. There, he collected and studied exhaustively, notably on the Galapagos Islands, where he noticed small variations in species from one island to the next. His discoveries, when coupled with his reading of Lyell’s geology and Malthus on population, helped him develop the theory of evolution by natural selection. Scattered theorists before Darwin had proposed the idea of evolution, but he was the first to find a viable
Charles George Gordon (1833–1885). Soldier, imperial administrator, and evangelical Christian, who became the focus of world attention during the siege of Khartoum in 1885. While still a junior army officer in his early twenties, Gordon served with distinction in the Crimean War (where Britain’s French allies awarded him the Legion of Honour). He moved to China and took command of the “Ever-Victorious Army” in the Taiping Rebellion and wars between 1860 and 1864. Fearless and always willing to lead his soldiers in person, Gordon became a respected commander of native troops in different parts of (and beyond) the British Empire. In 1873, seconded to the Khedive
of Egypt, he worked as governor of the Sudan, where he struggled to impose elementary order and stamp out the Arab-African slave trade, policies that had largely succeeded by 1880.

At odds with the British government, which took direct control of Egypt in the early 1880s, Gordon resigned. However, the uprising of Mohamma Ahmed, a Dervish who was acclaimed in Sudan as a messiah, or “Mahdi,” threatened Egypt’s southern border. The failure of two Egyptian campaigns to suppress Ahmed led to Prime Minister Gladstone’s decision to send Gordon, who knew the area better than any other Briton, to evacuate the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, in January 1884. On his arrival, however, Gordon fortified the city instead and tried to inspire its garrison to hold out against the Mahdi. Pressure of public opinion in Britain, which regarded Gordon as a Christian hero, forced the reluctant Gladstone to send a relief column under General Garnet Wolseley to his rescue. This slow-moving army arrived just too late to prevent the Mahdi’s force from overrunning Khartoum. Gordon’s death there, about which heroic legends soon grew up, made him a martyr to Christian imperial idealists.

James Keir Hardie (1856–1915). The first independent Labour Party MP. Born illegitimately in Scotland, Hardie grew up in desperate poverty and was forced to become a coal miner at the age of eleven. Self-educated as a teenager, he began organizing a trade union in his early twenties and led a strike in 1880. As ringleader, he was fired, but he became an organizer of the Ayrshire Miners’ Union and, from there, rose rapidly to leadership of the Scottish Miners’ Federation. Hardie’s political beliefs were a mixture of socialism, pacifism, and Christianity; he became convinced that the ill-treated working men of Britain could not rely on Gladstone’s Liberal Party but should form an independent political party of their own. Elected to Parliament in 1892, Hardie caused a sensation by arriving at Parliament in a tweed suit and cloth cap rather than the traditional morning dress. He formed the Independent Labour Party the next year and advocated a succession of controversial workers’ issues in Parliament. Defeated in 1895, he remained a popular and charismatic speaker and played a key role in convening the Labour Representation Committee (1900), which developed into the modern Labour Party. He returned to Parliament that year as one of two MPs and witnessed the party’s power jump to twenty-nine seats, then forty, in the next two elections. He was not a particularly talented party manager, however, and many of his fellow MPs disagreed with his belief that women should be allowed to vote and that Britain ought not to take part in the First World War.

Charles Lyell (1797–1875). Leading Victorian geologist, whose work on the antiquity of the earth and the gradual nature of change over long periods of time was adopted by Darwin in his development of evolutionary theory. Lyell, the eldest of ten children born to an enthusiastic naturalist, was raised in comfortable circumstances, half in Scotland, half in England, and studied at Oxford to become a lawyer. His hobby, geology, became an obsession, however, and he devoted most of his adult life to geological fieldwork, coupled with extensive writings. The orthodox geological opinion in Lyell’s youth was that the earth was a few thousand years old (as biblical chronologies suggested) and that its distinctive valleys, caves, cliffs, and mountains had been formed by catastrophic events, such as Noah’s flood. Lyell theorized, to the contrary, that the same forces acting gradually in his own day, such as deposition and erosion, had always acted, transforming the world slowly and almost imperceptibly over tens of millions of years. His close study of exposed rock strata in cliffs, and the different fossils they contained, led Lyell to argue that extinction was a natural and continuing process. He traveled widely through Europe and North America, finally explaining his findings according to his new “uniformitarian” theory in Principles of Geology (1830–1833), part of which Darwin read en route to the Galapagos Islands. Widely admired in his own day, Lyell was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1848. Despite the importance of his work to Darwin, with whom he was on friendly terms, Lyell himself was distressed by the challenge that evolutionary theory presented to his Christian faith.

John Stuart Mill (1806–1873). Child prodigy, utilitarian philosopher, and advocate of women’s rights. The son of a distinguished philosopher, Mill was educated by his father to an incredible standard at an early age, mastering Greek, Latin, and mathematics before the age of ten—an education brilliantly evoked in his autobiography. An influential journalist among the London radicals, Mill supported all the advanced causes of the early Victorian age: parliamentary reform, the abolition of slavery, women’s rights, and justice for Irish farmers. However, he went through a crisis of confidence when he recognized that if all these hoped-for reforms were accomplished, he would not be made perfectly happy. He also worked for the East India Company, rising to the post of Chief Examiner, and later represented Westminster as a Member of Parliament. He conducted a long, intense, but possibly platonic love affair with his neighbor Harriet Taylor, whom he regarded as his intellectual superior, marrying her when her husband died in 1851. Among his most popular works, still widely read today, are On Liberty, The Subjection of Women, and Principles of Political Economy.
John Everett Millais (1829–1896). Pre-Raphaelite artist and portraitist. An artistic child prodigy, Millais entered London’s Royal Academy school when only eleven. As a seventeen-year-old student, one of his paintings (based on an incident in Pizarro’s conquest of Peru) was acclaimed at the Royal Academy exhibition. With two fellow students, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Holman Hunt, Millais created the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, a club that declared its intention of recapturing the artistic purity of the early Renaissance, before Raphael. The brotherhood was supposed to be secret, but when news of its members’ identity and pretensions leaked in 1850, a critical backlash made him the center of unfavorable publicity—Charles Dickens denounced his painting Christ in the House of His Parents. Millais reacted by asking John Ruskin, the era’s most prominent critic, to support him, which Ruskin did in letters to the London Times. Later, however, he met and fell in love with Ruskin’s wife, marrying her after she had won an annulment. Despite the claim of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood to challenge accepted standards, the members soon proved amenable to assimilation, and Millais became an Academy member in 1853. He was one of the two or three leading portraitists in London during the 1860s and 1870s and grew rich from commissions. In later years, his style became sentimental, as can be seen from his painting Bubbles, which a soap-company adopted for its advertisements.

John Henry Newman (1801–1890). Anglican preacher who became a Catholic cardinal. As a young Oxford don in 1833, Newman joined Hurrell Froude and John Keble to create the Oxford movement, whose pamphlet series, “Tracts for the Times,” argued the supernatural origins of the Church of England and tried to downplay its role as a branch of the state. By 1840, Newman had become convinced that Anglicanism was compatible in almost every way with Roman Catholicism, a view outlined in Tract 90, and he shocked many of his admirers by converting to Catholicism in 1845. He became an influential theologian and philosopher in the Catholic Church but often came into conflict with the Church hierarchy. His intellectual adventurousness clashed with the pope’s and bishops’ belief in the need to preserve and protect their faith from the powerful new intellectual currents of the nineteenth century. Newman lived in a community of Oratorian priests in Birmingham while his fellow convert, Henry Manning, went on to become the head of the Catholic Church in England. Newman’s reputation as one of the greatest Victorian writers was assured by his Apologia pro Vita Sua (1864), a spiritual autobiography in which he denied Charles Kingsley’s claim of religious insincerity and explained the tortuous mental path that had led to his conversion. In his old age, he was appointed cardinal by Pope Leo XIII and has remained one of the most influential English-language Catholic writers up to the present, inspiring generations of later converts.

Florence Nightingale (1890–1910). Pioneer nurse who made the job respectable for middle-class women and worked heroically for wounded British soldiers in the Crimean War. Born in Italy and named after a city her parents loved, Nightingale belonged to an upper-class family and was expected to cultivate the domestic, ladylike arts and find a suitable husband. She rebelled against this prospect and, despite parental opposition, visited Germany to study nursing. The outbreak of the Crimean War gave her a golden opportunity. By lobbying Sidney Herbert, a friend and government minister, she got permission to take thirty-eight nurses to the temporary British military hospital at Scutari, Turkey. There, she discovered horrible conditions of neglect and set out to improve the food, laundry, and sanitation arrangements and to give proper care to the wounded. Nicknamed “Lady of the Lamp” by the grateful convalescent soldiers, whose death rate fell sharply under her supervision, Nightingale returned home a national hero, receiving a medal from Queen Victoria. She devoted the rest of her life to lobbying for improved hospitals, proper medical care for soldiers, and formal training for nurses. Her gender—and her later invalidism—prevented her from playing as active a role in politics as she would have liked, but her many loyal male supporters brought her ideas into public circulation throughout the later Victorian era.

Charles Stewart Parnell (1846–1891). Irish nationalist leader in the 1880s. A Protestant squire from County Wicklow who entered Parliament in 1875, Parnell was an unlikely candidate to lead the Irish Home Rule movement. However, his parliamentary and oratorical skill enabled him to displace the Nationalist Party’s original leader, Isaac Butt. Under Parnell’s guidance, Irish MPs filibustered endlessly in Parliament, trying to prevent any other business from moving forward; Parnell hoped that the English would grant Irish Home Rule as a way of ridding Westminster of their obstruction. He kept abreast of developments among Irishmen in America and in the Irish Land War of the early 1880s (he was president of the National Land League). He served a spell in prison in 1881 under a new Coercion Act but, by 1886, had convinced Prime Minister Gladstone that Irish Home Rule was necessary. Gladstone’s Home Rule legislation failed to pass and split the Liberal Party. In 1887, parts of the British press insinuated that Parnell had been involved in the Phoenix Park murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish in 1881. He was exonerated in a sensational trial and resumed work for the Home Rule cause. His career in public life was...
ruined in 1889 when news spread that he had been having a long-running love affair with Katharine O’Shea and had fathered at least three children with her.

**Robert Peel** (1788–1850). Tory prime minister whose decision to repeal the Corn Laws in 1846 split and temporarily wrecked his party. The son of a wealthy cotton manufacturer in Lancashire, Peel was educated at Harrow and Oxford and entered Parliament in a “rotten borough” at the age of twenty-one. He was Home Secretary in the government of the Duke of Wellington and, in 1829, created the London police force, whose early nickname was the “Peelers.” He also changed his mind that year over Catholic emancipation, introducing legislation for this reform that he had long opposed. Peel fought to prevent the Reform Act of 1832 on the grounds that the rotten boroughs enabled distinguished men to enter Parliament without having to fight wasteful election campaigns. After the act passed, he reconciled himself and his party to reform in the “Tamworth Manifesto” of 1834 (the year in which he first, briefly, became prime minister). Peel returned to power in 1841 and faced the great crisis of his life when the Irish potato blight caused widespread famine in 1846. Partly to alleviate the famine and partly in response to changing conditions of trade, Peel now promoted the repeal of the Corn Laws, enabling cheap food to flow into Britain from abroad and giving a corresponding boost to cheap British exports. Half his own party supported the repeal, but half, including Disraeli and many of the country gentlemen who had benefited from the law, opposed him fiercely, forcing his resignation. He remained influential among many Tories but died following a riding accident in 1850.

**Cecil Rhodes** (1853–1901). The leading figure in British South African expansion. Son of a Hertfordshire clergyman, Rhodes went to South Africa as a seventeen-year-old, planning to farm cotton with his brothers. Within a year, he had moved to the new diamond fields of Kimberley. He made an immense fortune there but spent parts of the 1870s back in Britain, at Oxford, where he finally finished his degree in 1881. Meanwhile, he created the DeBeers Consolidated Mining Company, which came to dominate the world’s diamond trade, and invested in new gold discoveries around Johannesburg. An ardent supporter of expanding the British Empire during the “scramble for Africa” era, Rhodes dreamed of building a continuous British presence and a railway from “the Cape [of Good Hope] to Cairo.” His supporters fought off foreign and Boer rivals to develop the lands that were later named “Rhodesia” (now Zimbabwe) in his honor. He tried to force Britain to annex the Boer republic of the Transvaal in 1895 by launching the Jameson Raid. It failed in the short term and obliged him to resign as prime minister of the Cape Colony in 1896. The action prepared the way for the Boer War (1899–1902), however, which ended in a British takeover. Most of the six million pounds he left after his death from heart disease in 1901 was devoted to the Rhodes scholarships for study at Oxford. He imagined the holders as an idealistic society of Anglo-Saxon men who would build international links and rule the world according to benevolent imperial ideas.

**Lord Shaftesbury** (1801–1885). Pioneer of social reform and factory legislation. Anthony Ashley Cooper, who inherited the family title of Lord Shaftesbury in 1851 on the death of his father, was an earnest evangelical Christian and an opponent of child labor. Entering Parliament in 1826, he soon took over leadership of the movement to prevent children from being put to work in mines and factories. He supervised passage of legislation in 1833 and 1842 designed to exclude children from textile factories and coal mines. Because too few inspectors were appointed to make the laws effective, he continued in later years to campaign against the horrifying exploitation of child labor throughout the workforce. Shaftesbury also promoted “ragged schools” for children who would otherwise have received no education and was president of the Ragged Schools’ Union for forty years. Only in the last years of his life did universal primary education become compulsory.

Shaftesbury’s political skills and aristocratic position entitled him to high government office. Although he was on good terms with most of the Victorian prime ministers (and was related to Palmerstone through his wife), he declined high office to dedicate his time to social and philanthropic reforms. Among his other achievements was legislation to improve the care of the mentally ill, many of whom he found to be cruelly neglected and abused; advocacy of Florence Nightingale’s proposed army and nursing reforms in Parliament; and legislation to prevent the building of unsanitary and overcrowded lodging houses. For his own tenants in Wimborne St. Giles, Dorset, he built a model village and subsidized a large London housing estate, the Shaftesbury Park Estate, to demonstrate the viability of safe, decent working-class housing. In all these reform efforts, he was sustained by an intense evangelical piety.

**George Stephenson** (1781–1848). Pioneer of railway building and locomotive engineering. Stephenson was the son of a Northumberland mine engineer and, at the age of twenty-one, became the engineman at Dewley Colliery (coal mine) near Newcastle on Tyne. Steam engines there, based on designs by Thomas Newcomen and James Watt, were
large, aboveground devices used for pumping floodwater out of the mines. Stephenson overcame the technical obstacles to building a self-moving steam locomotive, which could pull wagons loaded with coal along a metal track. Primitive horse-drawn railways already existed in the area, but the steam locomotive represented a massive increase in power.

Stephenson was appointed chief engineer of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (1825), which is regarded by most historians as the world’s first commercial steam railway. It prospered, taking advantage of Stephenson’s many improvements in flat track-bed design, iron rail construction, and an improved engine, *Locomotion*. In 1829, now with the help of his equally gifted son Robert, Stephenson also designed and built the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, taking the line across the swampland of Chat Moss, a nine-arched viaduct, a two-mile-long cutting, and other obstacles. The father and son also built a locomotive, the *Rocket*, which won a competition for the fastest and most reliable source of steam power on the line (it traveled at the then-incredible speed of thirty-six miles per hour).

In later life, Stephenson continued to prosper as a railway engineer but also worked to improve coal miners’ safety and experimented in the cross-breeding of farm animals.

**Queen Victoria** (1819–1901). Queen of England for sixty-four years, between 1837 and 1901. Daughter of the Duke of Kent and a minor German princess, Victoria’s gender and her place in the line of succession made her unlikely to succeed. But the death of the male children before her in line led to her accession on the death of William IV in 1837. Dependent at first on the advice and guidance of Prime Minister Lord Melbourne, Victoria later became a capable supervisor of her government and knew how to maximize her influence even though she, as monarch, no longer wielded actual political power. She married Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha in 1840, the man whom some of her relatives had groomed for exactly this role. Albert brought a Germanic seriousness and moral high-mindedness to court and soon won his wife’s ardent affection and admiration. He was also able to impress senior figures in public life, overcoming their traditional xenophobia. His sudden death in 1861 plunged Victoria into a prolonged depression, and she wore black for the rest of her life. Among her later prime ministers, only Disraeli enjoyed her confidence and esteem—she disliked Gladstone. She also put great faith in a Scottish servant, John Brown, and later an Indian servant, “the Munshi.” By the time of her death, her many children and grandchildren linked Britain to every royal family in Europe.

**Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington** (1769–1852). Britain’s premier hero of the Napoleonic Wars, prime minister, and grand old man of British politics in Victoria’s early years. Wellesley, coming from an aristocratic family, mixed the advantages of rank with outstanding personal abilities as a soldier and statesman. After distinguished service in India in the 1790s, he returned to Britain, won a parliamentary seat, and accepted command of an expedition to Spain and Portugal against Napoleon. His victories in the Peninsula Campaign (1808–1812) made him a national hero, a position he consolidated by leading the victorious allied armies against Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815. He was granted a large Hampshire estate and the dukedom in 1814.

A strong conservative in politics, Wellington was also a political realist. He became Tory prime minister in 1828 and accepted the need for Catholic emancipation to forestall an Irish rebellion, even managing to persuade the king, George IV, of its necessity. He refused to lead the movement to reform Parliament (he considered the constitution virtually perfect as it was in 1830, his last year as prime minister) but acquiesced when Lord Grey’s government carried out the Great Reform Act of 1832. Skeptical of railways at first, especially after being booed at the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, Wellington gradually realized their significance to the nation and made a good deal of money in successful railway speculation after his retirement from Parliament in 1846.
Bibliography

General Works
Asa Briggs, The Age of Improvement, 1783–1867 (New York: Longman’s Green, 1979). Briggs is a skillful writer and draws the reader into his own fascination with British history in this and many other books on Victoriana.
James Morris, Heaven’s Command: An Imperial Progress (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1973). The best history of the empire in Victoria’s day, by an author (now Jan Morris) who is also famous for her sex change operation.

Specialized Works
David Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989). How Wesley and his descendants transformed and “moralized” Britain.
Kenneth Bendiner, An Introduction to Victorian Painting (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985). What the artists painted, who bought the pictures, how they were displayed and sold, and how the artists understood their world.
John Benson, *The Working Class in Britain, 1850–1939* (New York: Longman, 1989). A powerful reminder that the least articulate were the most numerous.


David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990). One of the superstars of contemporary historical writing explains the aristocracy’s long rearguard. All his other books are good, too.

Hugh Casson, *An Introduction to Victorian Architecture* (London: Art and Technics, 1948). Written at a time when Victorian architecture was totally out of fashion, it gives a hard look at what they built but ably explains the many styles, disputes, and debates.


B. Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971). Britain never had Prohibition, but its Victorian temperance movement was keen to try the experiment if possible.


Philip Mason, *The Men Who Ruled India* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1985). The airs and graces of men who were ordinary in Britain but magnificent in remote imperial India.


Mark Ridley, ed., *The Darwin Reader* (New York: Norton, 1996). Selections from the great scientist’s works that give a sense of his life and literary idiom, as well as his ideas.


Hugh Small, *Florence Nightingale: Avenging Angel* (London: Constable, 1999). As the subtitle suggests, the ultimate Victorian heroine had a tough and rather unlikable side!


Peter Stansky, *Gladstone: A Progress in Politics* (Boston: Little Brown, 1979). One of the good shorter biographies of the Liberal giant—there are hundreds of long biographies of Gladstone, too!
Lytton Strachey, *Eminent Victorians* (New York: Putnam, 1918). A famous book by a leading member of the Bloomsbury Group, deflating and making ruthless fun of four famous Victorians. Still wonderful despite its biases; Strachey wrote a good biography of Queen Victoria, too.

E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Gollancz, 1963). Half the professional historians in the world cite this as the most influential and inspirational book they ever read—vital for everyone really getting deeply into the subject.


**Internet Resources**

Victorian Art in Britain, [http://www.victorianartinbritain.co.uk](http://www.victorianartinbritain.co.uk)

Victorian Costume, [http://www.victoriancostume.org.uk](http://www.victoriancostume.org.uk)

The Victorian Web: Literature, History and Culture in the Age of Victoria, [http://65.107.211.206](http://65.107.211.206)
Victorian Britain
Part II
Professor Patrick N. Allitt

THE TEACHING COMPANY ®
Patrick Allitt is Professor of History at Emory University. He was born and raised in central England and attended schools near his home in Mickleover, Derbyshire. An undergraduate at Hertford College, Oxford, he graduated (1977) with honors in British and European History. After a year of travel, he studied for the history doctorate at the University of California, Berkeley. He was a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard in the mid-1980s and since 1988, has been on the faculty of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Professor Allitt is the author of three books, including Catholic Converts: British and American Intellectuals Turn to Rome (1997). He also writes frequent articles and reviews. In 1999, he won Emory’s Excellence in Teaching Award and, in 2000, was appointed to the N.E.H./Arthur Blank Professorship of Teaching in the Humanities. Professor Allitt keeps in touch with his homeland by spending about two months every year on a working holiday in Britain, teaching the history of Victorian England with Emory’s summer school, which is held at University College, Oxford. His wife, Toni, is American, a Michigan native, and they have a daughter, Frances, born in 1988.
# Table of Contents

**Victorian Britain**  
**Part II**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor Biography</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Scope</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Thirteen</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland and Wales</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Fourteen</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress and Optimism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Fifteen</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China and the Opium War</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Sixteen</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Crimean War: 1854–1856</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Seventeen</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Indian Mutiny: 1857</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Eighteen</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victorian Britain and the American Civil War</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Nineteen</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The British in Africa: 1840–1880</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Twenty</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victorian Literature I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Twenty-One</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art and Music</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Twenty-Two</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Twenty-Three</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine and Public Health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Twenty-Four</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations from Queen Victoria</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biographical Notes</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Victorian Britain

Scope:

Victorian Britain was a paradoxical society and one of extreme contrasts. On the one hand, it witnessed an unprecedented outpouring of inventions, scientific advances, and humanitarian reforms, backed by an array of outstanding literary and political figures. On the other hand, it practiced a harsh form of laissez-faire capitalism at home, which resulted in chronic poverty for most of the population, and harsh imperial policies abroad, which subordinated many of the peoples of Africa and Asia to British control. This course aims to explain how the Victorians lived with these contradictions and how Britain changed between the 1830s and 1900, perhaps more rapidly than any society in world history up to that time.

Queen Victoria reigned for sixty four years, longer than any other British monarch, and she stamped her vivid personality on the whole era, but she no longer enjoyed the sort of power that had been wielded by her ancestors. Instead, Britain moved cautiously toward a democratic political system. The oligarchy of 1830, in which only a small minority of men, and no women, enjoyed the vote and the right to sit in Parliament, was modified by Parliamentary Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, and 1884 so that by century’s end, most men at least were entitled to vote. Simultaneously, religious restrictions on political participation were lifted, enabling Methodists, Quakers, Catholics, and Jews, as well as members of diverse social classes, to take seats in Parliament. Despite these changes, however, the traditional land-based aristocracy retained immense political power and social influence; successful manufacturers often devoted their fortunes to buying their way into these ranks.

Rapid social change was facilitated by the Industrial Revolution, which had been gathering force in the decades before Victoria’s accession. The harnessing first of water power, then steam power, to the manufacture of cotton textiles in factories initiated the revolution. Developments in coal mining, iron and steel making, ceramics, and transportation accelerated it. First canals, then railways, which began to crisscross the land in the 1830s, speeded up the pace of economic life and increased its scale. The railway builders, particularly the father-and-son team George and Robert Stephenson, along with Isambard Kingdom Brunel, featured largely in this transformation; Brunel’s visionary genius was further shown in his construction of the world’s first oceangoing steamships.

Along with industrialization came urbanization. Such industrial cities as Manchester, Liverpool, and Sheffield grew so fast that infrastructure development could not keep pace. In consequence, tens of thousands of industrial workers and their families found themselves living in squalid, hastily built houses, severely overcrowded, and without access to safe drinking water supplies or proper sanitation. These factors, along with overwork, poor nutrition, a smoke-filled environment, and dangerous working conditions, contributed to regular epidemics and a low life expectancy for most working-class communities. Death at any age was common and child mortality, high. Many occupations, moreover, had characteristic illnesses of their own, such as the lung diseases suffered by Britain’s hundreds of thousands of coal miners. A few impoverished areas in every city, such as London’s squalid “rookeries,” became breeding grounds of violent crime. Middle- and upper-class people moved away from these dangerous areas whenever they could, furthering the class gulf between Britain’s haves and have-nots.

Britain’s technological superiority enabled its industries to dominate world markets for the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century, especially when the industrialists’ growing political influence had established a free-trade regime. British imperial development accelerated at the same time. British merchants forced opium, grown in India, onto a reluctant China in a series of “Opium Wars” that seem particularly disgraceful in retrospect. After the Indian Mutiny of 1857, the British government took over direct control of this most important colony from the Honorable East India Company, which had run it privately for the last century. In suppressing the mutiny, in which atrocities had been committed against some of their civilians, the British demonstrated a ruthless ferocity. In the same years, hardy explorers, such as Richard Burton and David Livingstone, were charting the still-unknown interior of Africa, soon to be followed by trade, missionaries, and the Union Jack. In the last years of the nineteenth century, Britain’s European rivals joined her in an undignified “scramble for Africa” and its potential sources of wealth.

Historians often treat the Great Exhibition of 1851 as a symbol of mid-Victorian prosperity and self-confidence. The exhibition was held in the Crystal Palace, a prefabricated structure of iron and glass that was quickly erected in Hyde Park; the structure was elegant, sturdy, and light and delighted visitors from all over Britain and abroad. Built by Joseph Paxton, its ultra-modern style, echoed in the glass arches of Paddington and St. Pancras railway stations, stands in strong juxtaposition to the other great public building style of Victorian Britain, Gothic Revival. Gothic’s
champions included Charles Barry and Augustus Pugin, the architects of the new Houses of Parliament (which are now probably the most well known buildings in Britain), and George Gilbert Scott. Britain’s wealth created a growing market for innovative architects, just as the growing middle class created a market for paintings and literature. The Pre-Raphaelite movement in art and the dramatic, serialized literature of Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, and George Eliot remain as yardsticks of the Victorians’ creativity and inventiveness.

The later portions of the course will show how Britain began to lose its supremacy. The death of Prince Albert, Queen Victoria’s husband, in 1861, cast a shadow of grief over the monarch herself from which she never fully emerged. Meanwhile Union victory in the American Civil War and the unification of Germany in 1870 gave notice that two great industrial rivals were about to challenge Britain’s supremacy. Despite the advantages of her early lead, Britain was unable to keep pace with German and American industrial innovations and gradually retreated to a policy of trading in the protected area of its worldwide empire. This strategy, successful in the short term, enabled Britain to postpone the day of reckoning. Paradoxically, however, it turned the appearance of immense world-striding strength into a growing liability, which would ensure the rapid decline of British power in the twentieth century. The inner vulnerability of the empire could have been glimpsed earlier, not only with the Indian Mutiny but also in the catastrophic Irish famine of 1846–1850 and recurrent friction with South Africa’s Dutch-descended Boers between 1880 and 1898.

Despite ominous signs, however, Britain still seemed to be master of the world in the last decades of the nineteenth century, when it enjoyed the leadership of such brilliant prime ministers as Benjamin Disraeli (the man who adapted British Conservatism to a more democratic era) and the sternly moralistic Liberal William Gladstone. Queen Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee (sixty years on the throne) in 1897 with a triumphant parade, including soldiers from every corner of the empire. The mood of the time was captured by the poet Rudyard Kipling when he urged Britons (and Anglo-Saxon Americans) to “take up the white man’s burden” and bring the blessings of their Christian civilization to what he thought of as the less fortunate races of the world.

The growing strength of trade unions, and political recognition that they would become a permanent part of society, led to the rise, as the century turned, of the Labour Party, which was destined within twenty years to become and to remain one of the nation’s two major political forces. War against the Boers from 1898 suddenly showed that British redcoats, complacent after years of easy victory against primitive societies, were not assured of automatic victory when they faced well-armed, well-trained guerrillas defending their homelands. When Queen Victoria died in 1901, she left the nation in a world full of potential enemies, no longer so amenable to British direction as it had been in the years of her early reign. Twentieth-century Britain was indelibly marked by the Victorian legacy, for good and ill, and the course ends with a glimpse at some of these lasting effects.
Lecture Thirteen
Scotland and Wales

Scope: The English Victorians tended to minimize the significance of Scotland and Wales, the nation’s “Celtic fringes,” whereas the Scots and Welsh tended to overemphasize their importance. In many practical ways, both followed the same development as England, witnessing the growth of urban, industrialized areas and a steady rural depopulation. Clydeside shipbuilding and engineering in Scotland and South Welsh coal mining were integral elements of industrial Britain. Such Scotsmen as David Livingstone and such Welshmen as David Lloyd-George played a vivid role in British national life. At the same time, however, the two countries invented elaborate, and sometimes bogus, histories and traditions to nurture their own peoples’ pride and to pique the interest of English (and other foreign) visitors. Among these new traditions were the tartan kilts and bagpipes of Scotland and the Welsh cultural festival, or Eisteddfod. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert at Balmoral enjoyed the distinctive Scottish culture, scarcely realizing how recently it had acquired its ostensibly ancient character. Both countries had indigenous languages remote from English, and although Scottish Gaelic declined, the Welsh language staged a comeback and remains in wide use up to the present.

Outline

I. Scotland and Wales were both vital parts of the British industrial economy.
   A. Scotland was a shipbuilding center.
      1. Clydeside pioneered the building of steamships.
      2. Shipyards relied partly on child labor.
      3. Demarcation of labor (agreements about which workmen would perform which shipbuilding tasks) improved production at this time but would cause problems in the twentieth century as the shipyards became increasingly inefficient.
      4. From being economically backward, Scotland quickly achieved world dominance in shipbuilding and engineering.
      5. By 1900, three-quarters of all ships built in Britain were built in Scottish yards—more than half a million tons per year.
      6. Railways came later to Scotland than to England but then gave rise to the Forth Bridge, the single most interesting structure in Britain.
   B. Scotland and Wales were both coal-mining districts.
      1. New mining towns were formed in the south Wales valleys.
      2. Anthracite coal was produced so efficiently that it could be exported profitably from Cardiff (the Welsh capital) to countries as far away as Argentina and Egypt.
      3. The Marquis of Bute’s magnificent home, Cardiff Castle, demonstrates the enormous disparity between the wealth of the mine owners and the poverty of the miners.
      4. Internal migration concentrated large populations in Glamorgan and Monmouthshire; by the end of the Victorian era, sixty-three percent of the Welsh population lived in these two counties.
   C. Rural districts of both countries were depopulated.
      1. The Scottish Highland “clearances” expelled cotters and crofters to make way for sheep runs and deer preserves.
      2. Hunting, shooting, and fishing in the Scottish highlands became fashionable among the British gentry.
      3. Large numbers of poor Scotsmen emigrated to Canada, Australia, and the United States in search of new opportunities.
   D. Cities, especially in Scotland, received a large Irish immigration, particularly after 1846.
      1. Most Scots were zealous Presbyterians, and they often clashed with the Catholic Irish.
      2. Ethnic and religious tensions were ritualized around soccer teams.

II. Each country created an idealized, romantic image of itself and projected new “traditions” backward in time.
   A. Scotland associated itself with tartan dress, haggis, and the bagpipes.
      1. The fiction of Walter Scott romanticized the Scottish past.
2. Tartan kilts originated in the 1720s, explicitly as the dress of working-class highlanders; they were, moreover, an innovation developed by an English businessman who ran a charcoal works. He invented the kilt as a practical form of dress for his workers.

3. Clan tartans were an even later invention, again, introduced by two Englishmen.

4. The English outlawed kilts between 1746–1782, because they symbolized rebellion after they were worn by highlanders supporting the uprising of Bonnie Prince Charlie.

5. By the nineteenth century, kilts had become romanticized, and Bonnie Prince Charlie himself was retrospectively sentimentalized as a national Scottish hero.

6. Queen Victoria’s Balmoral was an idealized, romantic version of medieval Scotland.

7. Claims of an ancient bagpiping tradition were also false.

B. Scottish nationalists elevated the memory of old Scots heroes, including Robert the Bruce.

1. The William Wallace Monument in Stirling romanticized a brigand into a national hero.

2. Nevertheless, the highland Scots language, Gaelic, was falling into disuse.

3. Ironically, the Scottish upper and middle classes were Anglicizing their own speech patterns.

C. The Welsh Eisteddfod was also an invention of the early nineteenth century.

D. The Welsh language continued to flourish, though mainly among the lower classes.

1. An English educational commissioners’ report in 1847 criticized Welsh and led to a local outcry.

2. Some Welsh schoolchildren were beaten if they spoke Welsh.

3. However, within twenty-five years, the British government had reversed itself; Prime Minister Gladstone spoke respectfully of Welsh at an Eisteddfod (1873) and approved its use in schools.

4. The first college-level education in Welsh became available with the founding of University College, Aberystwyth, in 1872, and the language was officially written into the school curriculum in 1907.

5. In 1900, half the Welsh people spoke Welsh, while only about five percent of the Scots spoke Gaelic.

E. Broadening of the franchise in 1867 brought Welsh-speaking lower-class men into Parliament for the first time in the election of 1868.

1. Henry Richard of Merthyr Tydfil was one of the first.

2. David Lloyd-George, elected in 1890 as MP for Caernarvon, became the most famous.

III. Wales and Scotland remained religiously distinct from England.

A. Most Scots were Presbyterians, as was the Church of Scotland.

1. John Knox had led the Scottish Reformation.

2. In the 1830s, “voluntaries” favored disestablishment.

3. The Great Disruption of 1843 split the established Church of Scotland down the middle.

B. Most Welsh were Methodists.

1. The Methodists and other dissenters responded to industrialization more quickly and creatively than the establishment did.

2. They tried to make their belief in temperance more appealing by inventing a new tradition of Welsh male voice choirs.

C. By the mid-Victorian period, large numbers of Welsh and Scots were living side-by-side in England. There was an intense regional rivalry between the two groups, which frequently manifested itself in fights at sporting events and continues to do so, to a lesser extent, even today.

Essential Reading:
Tom Steel, *Scotland’s Story*, chapters 14–19.

Supplementary Reading:
E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*.
Questions to Consider:
1. Is there a connection between linguistic and cultural revivals and nationalism?
2. Are England’s similarities to Scotland and Wales more significant than its differences from them?
Scope: In dramatic contrast to the poverty and misery of working-class England stood the mid-Victorian faith in science, technology, and progress. The Great Exhibition of 1851 symbolized this faith. Joseph Paxton’s daring design of the prefabricated iron and glass building in the center of Hyde Park set the tone, which was elevated even more by the royal opening ceremonies and the thousands of technically advanced exhibits. The exhibition’s six million visitors, including many from the lower classes, were well behaved; they silenced conservative mutterings that the event would be the focus of Chartist or revolutionary unrest. By the 1850s, at least some Victorians of all classes had been bitten by the self-improvement bug; their aspirations were embodied in Samuel Smiles’s influential book *Self-Help*, which outsold even Dickens. William Lovett, former Chartist leader, spent the later years of his life not in political agitation but in promoting education, sobriety, and thrift in working men. At the same time, Titus Salt, an enlightened Yorkshire entrepreneur, opened his model industrial community, Saltaire, offering a salubrious, alcohol-free setting; the newest in design and mechanization; and model houses for his workers.

Outline

I. The Great Exhibition of Science and Industry (1851) was designed as a showpiece of British industrial progress.
   A. A committee established by Prince Albert in 1849 reviewed 245 possible designs for the building and rejected all of them.
   B. Joseph Paxton, Chatsworth estate manager, then sketched a magnified greenhouse design that the committee accepted.
      1. Brunel’s design for the Paddington Station glass arches, 1849, had shown that big structures in these materials were viable.
      2. The exhibition space enclosed a million square feet and was nearly 2,000 feet long.
   C. Prefabrication, simple design concepts, and plate glass enabled the exhibition building, known as “The Crystal Palace,” to be erected in only six months by a crew of 2,600 men, enclosing several fully grown trees.
      1. The abundance of interior light, made possible by improvements in glass technology, was revolutionary.
      2. There were 14,000 exhibits, half of them British.
      3. These included engineering innovations, such as steam locomotives and designs for new bridges; photographic equipment; early experiments in electricity; and arts and domestic inventions, both serious and whimsical (such as a collapsible piano).
   D. Thousands of sparrows were attracted to the warm interior and threatened to spatter the exhibits.
   E. The exhibition exceeded its promoters’ hopes, ultimately bringing six million visitors, including working people, who paid only one shilling on special days.
      1. Tory fears that the exhibition would be the focus of anti-government unrest were quieted.
      2. The exhibition embodied the gospel of peace and the gospel of work, two pillars of mid-Victorian respectability.
   F. The building was later dismantled and shipped in sections to Sydenham in south London, where it stood until destroyed by fire in 1936.
   G. Profits (nearly 200,000 pounds) from the exhibition and sale of the Crystal Palace were used to build the museum and university section of Kensington. Other cities emulated London’s Great Exhibition, including Chicago in 1893.

II. Mid-Victorian writers and manufacturers anticipated a steadily improving future and espoused theories of progress.
   A. Samuel Smiles eulogized the hard-working, self-helping man.
1. First as a lecturer to working men in Leeds, then as an author, Smiles celebrated the achievements of Wedgewood, Stephenson, and other inventors.
2. In *Self-Help* (1858), he argued for the supremacy of hard work and thrift.
3. An immense bestseller, *Self-Help* was more popular than the great Victorian novels.
4. Unlike Horatio Alger or Charles Dickens in their stories, Smiles offered no astonishing coincidences to bring wealth and fortune.
5. The book even sold well in translation around the world, and the Khedive of Egypt had inscriptions from it, in Arabic, around the walls of his Cairo palace.

B. Titus Salt (1803–1876) created a practical community.
1. His development of alpaca worsted in 1834, an inexpensive silk-like fabric, gave him a secure place in the textile business.
2. Saltaire, founded in 1850 away from the unhealthy Bradford climate, aimed to give a healthy, godly, alcohol-free life to its workers.
3. It was the world’s first fully integrated cotton mill, concentrating all aspects of the work in one place.
4. Like Smiles, Salt believed in hard work, sobriety, punctuality, and thrift and continued to work long hours, even when he became rich.
5. As Mayor of Bradford, Salt created a drainage scheme to discourage cholera in 1848 and helped destitute families emigrate to America.
6. He won a seat in Parliament in 1859 but decided that life away from the factory didn’t suit him and resigned the seat two years later.
7. He believed in a harmony of interests between workers and owners and was sharply opposed to trade unions.

C. William Lovett (1800–1877) abandoned Chartism in favor of promoting working men’s education and self-improvement.
1. A flaming radical in early life, he led the London Working Men’s Association and was imprisoned for his Chartist activities in 1840.
2. His humane educational ideas were far ahead of their times.
3. He hated complexity, “the gothic,” and what he saw as the church’s role in advancing superstition and obfuscation.
4. Unlike his contemporary, Karl Marx, however, Lovett did not believe in class conflict.

D. Numerous other Victorian writers expressed utopian hopes for the progress of science and technology.
1. Winwood Reade’s *The Martyrdom of Man* (1872) foresaw the scientific conquest of suffering in terms of the religious millennium.
2. George Henry Lewes believed science was replacing philosophy.

Essential Reading:
Gordon Marsden, *Victorian Values*.
J. B. Priestley, *Victoria’s Heyday*.

Supplementary Reading:
Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help*.

Questions to Consider:
1. How did the project of the Great Exhibition overcome technical and political obstacles?
2. Was the theory of progress compatible with a belief in human inequality?
Lecture Fifteen
China and the Opium War

Scope: The Chinese Empire under the Manchus was xenophobic, despising all foreigners as barbarians. Nevertheless, it began to trade tea, silks, and other fabrics with British merchants, at first confining them solely to the port of Canton. The British also smuggled Indian-grown opium into China, despite its illegality there, by bribing local officials and taking advantage of widespread Chinese addiction. A Chinese government attempt to eliminate the trade enraged British merchants, who regarded the action as hypocritical. Between 1839 and 1842, they enlisted British military power to force further trade concessions from China. Western military and technological superiority ensured the victory of the British campaign, and the unequal terms of the fighting cost thousands of Chinese lives. Between then and the end of the nineteenth century, Britain blended trade with force in subjecting China to its will.

Outline

I. The British Empire in the early Victorian era was a practical affair, dedicated to trade, rather than the bombastic, nationalistic enterprise it had become by 1900.
   A. The British coastal trading stations or “factories” in China submitted to elaborate regulation.
      1. The factories were officially confined to one site outside the port of Canton on the Pearl River.
      2. British traders paid immense bribes to the local merchants and the emperor’s viceroy.
   B. Opium from India became increasingly popular among the Chinese in the early nineteenth century, even though it was outlawed.
      1. Opium poppies grew in Bengal, and the East India Company shipped them to Lintin Island, near Canton, where they were refined into the drug.
      2. By bribing officials, the British merchants were able to sell opium through local mandarins.
      3. One company, Jardine and Matheson, grew rich from the trade.
      4. A German missionary, Karl Gutzlaff, served as Jardine and Matheson’s interpreter in return for a share of the profits, which he used to print and distribute Christian literature.
   C. A British attempt in 1834 to win concessions from the Chinese failed.
      1. Lord Napier, a Scottish aristocrat, went to Canton as Chief Superintendent of Trade.
      2. Jardine, the leading opium merchant, urged him to be confrontational.
      3. He ignored all elements of protocol at a diplomatic meeting.
      4. The Chinese suspended trade; Napier retaliated by sending gunboats up the Pearl River.
      5. Napier died of fever before his challenge could reach the crisis point, after which the British conciliated the Canton authorities.

II. The Chinese decision in 1838 to cut off the opium supply provoked a crisis.
   A. Emperor Tao-kuang tried to stamp out the use of opium in China, with the help of an ambitious administrator, Lin-Tse-hsü.
      1. Wholesalers were beheaded.
      2. Officials who accepted bribes from traders were strangled.
      3. Addicts were given 18 months to break the habit, or be strangled.
   B. Chinese soldiers besieged the British merchants until, under instructions from their commissioner, Charles Elliott, the merchants handed over all their opium supplies for destruction.
   C. When the trade persisted, Lin pursued the traders to Macao and forced them to seek shelter on board merchant ships.
   D. Drunken British sailors killed a Chinese peasant and further aggravated Lin, whose demand to try the killer in a Chinese court was rejected.
   E. A Royal Navy ship, HMS Volage, fired on a line of Chinese war-junks when they refused to let him land for food and water supplies and shattered them in less than an hour, sinking four.
III. Britain debated the rights and wrongs of the drug itself and the morality of fighting to force it on the Chinese.
   A. Some prominent figures disapproved of it.
      1. Gladstone called the opium business “a most infamous and atrocious trade.”
      2. Sidney Herbert MP called the conflict “a war without just cause…a disgrace to the British flag.”
   B. Others tried to justify it.
      1. Opium was legally on sale in Britain as the medicine laudanum.
      2. Taken occasionally and in small doses, it was a pleasant relaxant.
      3. It was less obviously harmful and socially destructive than gin.
      4. Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston believed the revenue it generated was too important to lose.
   C. Thomas de Quincey’s *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821) had made him famous.

IV. British technological superiority ensured victory in the ensuing war.
   A. Fifteen British ships bombarded Tinghai on Chusan Island in July 1840 for ten minutes, with shattering effect.
   B. To gain access to other ports and compensation for the confiscated opium, the Navy bombarded Canton in January 1841, killing 500 Chinese and suffering no losses.
   C. A treaty, the Convention of Chuenpi, temporarily ended the fighting.
      1. It gave Hong Kong to Britain.
      2. It paid an indemnity of $6 million for the opium.
   D. Both governments rejected the treaty; the Chinese, because the terms were too harsh and the British, because they were too lenient.
   E. British troops at Ningpo shattered a relieving Chinese army under the emperor’s cousin in March 1841.
   F. The Treaty of Nanking, August 1842, imposed much harsher terms on the Chinese, including the following conditions:
      1. Four treaty ports in addition to Canton: Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo, and Shanghai
      2. British annexation of Hong Kong
      3. An indemnity of $21 million
      4. No mention of opium—the trade resumed on easier terms for the British merchants
      5. British subjects were exempt from Chinese laws.

V. China’s technological inferiority to the West made it vulnerable to further exploitation in the later nineteenth century.
   A. Western powers exploited the Taiping rebellion in the 1850s.
   B. Recurrent outbreaks of anti-British hostility led to further bombardment of Chinese ports.
   C. By the Treaty of Tientsin (1858), China was forced to legalize the opium trade.

Essential Reading:
Christopher Hibbert, *The Dragon Wakes: China and the West, 1793–1911.*
Jack Beeching, *The Chinese Opium Wars.*

Supplementary Reading:
Sheng Hu, *From the Opium War to the May Fourth Movement*, trans. by Dun J. Li.
Hunt Janin, *The India-China Opium Trade in the Nineteenth Century.*

Questions to Consider:
1. How did the British reconcile their consciences about forcing opium into China?
2. Why were the Chinese so vulnerable to British aggression in the mid-nineteenth century?
Lecture Sixteen
The Crimean War: 1854–1856

Scope: In 1854, Britain went to war against a European power for the first time since Waterloo (1815). In alliance with France and Turkey, it fought against Russia on the coast of Black Sea, afraid that Russia might profit from the declining strength of the Turks and threaten Britain’s Indian empire. The British campaign was mishandled by an army riddled with inefficiency, nepotism, and corruption, but ultimately prevailed, because the enemy was even more poorly organized. The Charge of the Light Brigade, one of the most famous incidents of this war and the one that occasioned Lord Tennyson’s poem, demonstrated many of the faults of the British army in concentrated form. Two new developments made the war memorable: the nursing achievements of Florence Nightingale, whose hospital work at Scutari showed that recovery rates among wounded soldiers could be much higher than they had been traditionally, and the investigative reporting of Times correspondent William Howard Russell. His stories, arriving in Britain almost instantly because of the new telegraph, aroused public opinion, led to political investigations, and contributed to the resignation of Prime Minister Lord Aberdeen.

Outline

I. Fear of Russian power was a steady undercurrent of nineteenth-century British politics.
   A. Liberals thought of the Czars as the epitome of cruel, arbitrary, and backward rule.
   B. Conservatives feared Russian designs on the Eastern Mediterranean and the British Empire in India.
   C. Both anticipated that the declining Turkish Empire would be displaced by Russia.
   D. Russia occupied the area west of the Black Sea that is today Rumania, triggering war with Turkey, which also claimed the area.
   E. After a long period of diplomatic maneuvering, Britain and France declared war against Russia in alliance with Turkey in March 1854.

II. The British army was mismanaged.
   A. Officers gained their positions through social and political influence, not military skill.
      1. Commissions could be bought and sold, and regimental commanders were entitled to dress their soldiers in uniforms of their own design.
      2. High-level commands usually came through seniority, and all the British commanders in the Crimean War were over age sixty-five.
   B. Rankers were drawn from the poor and unemployed and were forced to submit to severe discipline.
   C. The army was not suitably equipped for the climatic extremes of the Crimea.
      1. The first campaign, at Varna on the western shore of the Black Sea, took place in blistering heat. Outbreaks of cholera and dysentery soon weakened the army.
      2. Later, in the Crimea, after the Russians had retreated, the army suffered from the same deadly winter that had defeated Napoleon in 1812.
      3. Supplies arrived too slowly and were often inappropriate to conditions.
   D. The Anglo-French forces (about 25,000 from each country) won a series of victories at Alma, Balaclava, and Inkerman in the fall of 1854, then besieged the fortress of Sevastopol.
      1. They could have seized Sevastopol at once, but because of a lack of information, they delayed.
      2. This delay afforded the Russians the opportunity to fortify Sevastopol, resulting in a year-long siege.
   E. The Charge of the Light Brigade was launched in error during the Battle of Balaclava.
      1. From a hilltop, Lord Raglan watched captured British guns being removed and sent a message to Lord Cardigan to retake them.
      2. From his position in the valley, Lord Cardigan could not see these guns.
      3. Rather than question orders, he attacked the entrenched batteries he could see, which fired on his men throughout their charge.
      4. They overran the battery but were unable to hold it.
      5. The event occasioned the work of poet-laureate Tennyson.
F. Queen Victoria followed the course of the war closely.
   1. She created a decoration, the Victoria Cross, for officers and ranks alike.
   2. She followed the news of the campaigns closely.
   3. She resented the fact that the war was accompanied by an outbreak of anti-foreign feeling that was turned against Prince Albert.
   4. She invited Lord Cardigan to describe the Charge of the Light Brigade to her in person.

III. William Howard Russell’s journalism criticized the British army’s conduct.
   A. Telegraph lines to London meant that news arrived in Britain the same day rather than weeks later, as it had in previous wars; press dispatches regularly arrived more quickly than commanders’ reports got to the cabinet.
   B. William Howard Russell, a journalist for the London Times, wrote in a style that stripped the romance from war, describing the suffering of the soldiers.
   C. Russell established the press as a potentially powerful political force.
      1. The stories prompted a radical MP, John Roebuck, to demand a committee of inquiry into the government’s conduct of the war.
      2. The vote in favor of this committee was so strong that the prime minister, Lord Aberdeen, resigned.
      3. Lord Palmerston replaced him and began to rectify the chaos.
      4. The commission’s report concluded that the antiquated system, rather than individual mendacity, had caused the early disasters.
   D. Roger Fenton, a pioneering photographer, made 360 photographs in the Crimea; the Crimean War was the first war in history of which we have photographs.
   E. It substantiated a small anti-war movement in Parliament; Cobden and Bright, former leaders of the Anti-Corn-Law League, led it.

IV. Florence Nightingale (nicknamed by soldiers “the Lady with the Lamp”) improved medical care for the wounded soldiers.
   A. She had sought a nursing career at a time when such work was considered inappropriate for genteel women.
      1. She rejected suitors.
      2. She studied nursing in Germany.
   B. News of the war led her to lobby Sidney Herbert, a politically well-placed friend, to let her lead a nurses’ expedition.
   C. She took thirty-eight volunteer nurses and a shipload of equipment to Scutari (near Istambul, several hundred miles from the actual battles).
   D. Nightingale dramatically improved conditions at Scutari.
      1. Nightingale feuded with Sir John Hall.
      2. She cleaned filthy wards and provided beds, linen, and regular laundry. (Five times as many soldiers died of disease as of battle wounds.)
      3. Publicity for her work brought voluntary and official help and money from England.
      4. Queen Victoria publicly honored her when she returned at war’s end.
   E. Nightingale became an effective behind-the-scenes lobbyist for hospital building and sanitation.
      1. Her pose as an invalid was belied by her prolific writings.
      2. At a time when women had no public political role, Nightingale was not allowed to give testimony to parliamentary commissions. Instead, Sidney Herbert and other male political friends worked at her bidding.
      3. She established St. Thomas’s Hospital, London, opposite Parliament, Britain’s first school of nursing.
      4. Her work dignified nursing as a job for ladies.

V. The Crimean War ended in 1856 with the Peace of Paris.
   A. The treaty compelled the new Russian czar, Alexander II, to relinquish Russia’s territorial claims in the eastern Danube area and to demolish its Black Sea naval bases.
B. In Britain, the war led to a round of rationalization, civil service reform, and the abolition of purchase for army commissions (1871).

Essential Reading:
Winifred Baumgart, *The Crimean War, 1853–1856*.
Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The Reason Why*.

Supplementary Reading:
Trevor Royle, *Crimea: The Great Crimean War*.
Hugh Small, *Florence Nightingale: Avenging Angel*.

Questions to Consider:
1. Why did Britain fight on behalf of the Turkish Empire?
2. What role did British public opinion play in the Crimean War?
Lecture Seventeen
The Indian Mutiny: 1857

Scope: Britain had gradually extended its influence over India since the 1600s. At first no more than a trading company, the East India Company had intervened in the politics of India’s many states until, by the late 1700s, it was the dominant power on the subcontinent, having eclipsed the Mughal emperors and banished all European rivals. The intrusive policies of evangelical and humanitarian governors in the early Victorian era, who tried to end *suttee* (widow burning) and convert Hindus and Muslims to Christianity, caused unrest. In 1856 and 1857, rumors spread among *sepoys* (Indian soldiers in company service) that they were being forced to break their religious taboos and at Meerut and they rebelled. The rebels’ (or mutineers’) brutality to prisoners, especially in Lucknow and Cawnpore, led to a campaign of merciless reprisals by British forces under General Colin Campbell. An aroused British public opinion demanded the harshest measures. After the mutiny, the British government took over direct control of India from the East India Company. Its modernization policies continued but now emphasizing technology more than religious conversion.

Outline

I. The empire in India began as a trading venture.
   A. Spices from the East Indies were necessary preservatives in pre-refrigeration days. Captains able to bring shiploads of spices back to Britain would become rich overnight.
   B. The Honourable East India Company, founded in 1600, was granted a monopoly of Anglo-Indian trade by Queen Elizabeth I.
      1. It built and fortified coastal “factories” for storage of produce between voyages.
      2. Britain, France, Portugal, and Holland competed for Indies trade.
   C. Between 1740 and 1760, Britain had ousted the other European powers and made itself the dominant power in India.
      1. The Moslem Mughal Empire had earlier unified much of northern India.
      2. Among its vestiges were the Taj Mahal in Agra.
      3. Otherwise, India was still made up of hundreds of princedoms, divided by language, religion, caste, traditions, and climate (from jungle to desert to mountains).
      4. Rival princes drew the British into their conflicts.
      5. The Britons’ superior weapons and discipline made them decisive.
      6. In 1757, following a decisive British victory at Plassey, most Indians princes submitted to British rule.

II. A succession of ambitious governors brought more of India under direct British control.
   A. The eighteenth-century soldiers, traders, and adventurers, the *nabobs*, notably Warren Hastings, were famous for enriching themselves at the Indians’ expense.
   B. The best of the Honourable East India Company’s nineteenth-century servants were determined to impose impartial government and an equitable tax and land-tenure system.
      1. Among them were Sir Thomas Munro, Sir John Malcolm, and Montstuart Elphinstone, who learned the native languages, tried to reform the laws, and stabilized British rule.
      2. Following the Roman principle of “divide and conquer,” the British used native soldiers, *sepoys*, under British officers, in most of their campaigns.
   C. By 1857, Britain ruled over half of India directly; the other half, through native princes allied to Britain.
   D. Governor General Lord Dalhousie (1848–1856) absorbed native states directly into the empire when their princes died without heirs or when they were not governed in accordance with British interests.

III. Unrest and dissatisfaction preceded the mutiny.
   A. The British soldiers’ reputation for invincibility was dented by defeat in Afghanistan in 1838–1841, reversals in the Sikh Wars of the 1840s, and rumors of defeat in the Crimean War.
B. Evangelical missionaries began proselytizing for converts, whereas earlier generations of British administrators had made no effort to convert the natives.
   1. Some officers had participated in Hindu ceremonies for the sake of good relations with their troops.
   2. Colonel S. G. Wheeler of the 34th Native Infantry, by contrast, preached evangelical sermons to his native soldiers.
   3. Herbert Edwardes, a British official in the Punjab, wrote that God had given India to the English so that they could convert the people to Christianity.
   4. The development of steamships had made the arrival of women and other civilians safer and easier.

C. In the 1830s, the British had begun a campaign to prevent suttee, widow burning; a prince who had numerous wives would require all of them to follow him in death.

D. Britain also suppressed the cult of the thugs in the 1830s, which practiced ritual murder as sacrifice to the goddess Kali.

E. New cartridges for the Enfield rifle that had to be bitten to activate were rumored to be smeared with beef grease (taboo to Hindus) or pork fat (taboo to Muslims).

F. Further rumors alleged that ground-up animal bones were mixed in the flour and cows’ blood, in the salt; that all the soldiers were to be converted to Christianity; and that the caste system was to be abolished.

IV. The mutiny began in 1857 in the Bengal Presidency and spread to Delhi.
   A. Sepoys refused to use the cartridges.
   B. They were humiliated on parade and sentenced to ten years’ imprisonment, stripped of their uniforms, and put in leg irons.
   C. Their comrades burst open the jail, liberated them, and killed the local British officers, along with their wives and children.
   D. They marched on Delhi, then almost empty of British troops, and seized the city, declaring the eighty-two-year-old Prince Bahadur Shah the restored Mughal emperor.
   E. News of the uprising led to similar outbreaks but not under a unified command.
   F. The Nana Sahib massacred the British at Cawnpore after promising them safe passage.

V. Britain put down the rebellion by military force, under the leadership of General Colin Campbell, a Napoleonic and Crimean veteran.
   A. Atrocity stories, circulated widely in Britain, provoked calls for merciless vengeance.
      1. The Victorian ideal of defenseless womanhood made the killings seem particularly horrible.
      2. The sense of betrayal by native troops whose loyalty had always seemed certain intensified the British troops’ righteous anger.
   B. When British troops recaptured Delhi, Cawnpore, and Lucknow, they killed all the defenders, and looted everything they could move.
      1. Suspected rebels rounded up later were often killed without trial.
      2. Condemned men in Cawnpore were forced to clean up the blood of the women and children before being killed themselves.
   C. Some were hanged and shot; others, blown from cannons.
   D. When the governor-general, Lord Canning, issued an order urging restraint to prevent indiscriminate retaliation, he was bitterly criticized in Britain and given the derisive nickname “Clemency Canning” by citizens out for blood.
   E. William Howard Russell, the journalist who had played an important part in publicizing bad conditions in the Crimea, supported Canning.
   F. Another British commander, Sir Hugh Rose, led a successful campaign further south, defeating the Ranee of Jhansi, a female rebel.
   G. The rebels had not managed effective guerrilla warfare nor won over the wavering population permanently to their side.
VI. After the mutiny, the Crown took direct control over India.
   A. Prime Minister Lord Palmerston abolished the Honourable East India Company in 1858 and India became
      the direct responsibility of the Crown.
   B. Modernization, railroad building, and army centralization intensified.
   C. Westernization policies for the Indian people themselves were largely abandoned.
      1. Many historians see the aftermath of the mutiny as a period of increased mutual suspicion and racism.
      2. An elite minority were given Western education.
   D. Liberals, such as Gladstone, looked forward to the eventual self-government of India.
   E. Conservatives, such as Disraeli, who later made Queen Victoria empress of India, anticipated a sustained
      British presence.
   F. Most Britons continued to feel that their presence was justified.
      1. Britons believed their presence in India to be a duty.
      2. It was a duty—later described as “the white man’s burden” in Rudyard Kipling’s poem of the same
         name—to bring to the Indians all the benefits that Victorian Britons felt their way of life could bestow
         on cultures they believed to be inferior to their own.

VII. Indian historians regard the mutiny, or rebellion, as the first moment of Indian national assertion, which
     culminated in Indian independence in 1947.

Essential Reading:
Philip Mason, *The Men Who Ruled India*, parts 2 and 3.

Supplementary Reading:
Bruce Watson, *The Great Indian Mutiny: Colin Campbell and the Campaign at Lucknow*.

Questions to Consider:
1. Why was it so difficult for the British to transform elements of Indian culture?
2. What factors prevented the idea of Indian nationalism from uniting the mutineers of 1857?
Lecture Eighteen
Victorian Britain and the American Civil War

Scope: British attitudes toward America varied in the Victorian era depending on the class, interests, and beliefs of the observer. British supporters of democracy were generally pro-American, whereas defenders of hierarchy tended to be anti-American. The American Civil War created difficulties for British politicians. Economic and diplomatic interests both suggested the benefits of an alliance with the Confederacy, but religious and humanitarian sentiment supported the Union. Britain’s equivocal policy toward America caused a diplomatic crisis, but the rift healed soon after the war, while cultural links continued to strengthen. At the same time, a steady stream of Britons emigrated to the United States, as farmers, industrial workers, entrepreneurs, and even utopian colonizers.

Outline

I. British attitudes toward America depended on the individual’s beliefs.
   A. America represented an inspiring future to believers in democracy.
   B. It represented a dismaying future to supporters of hierarchy. Mrs. Trollope, for example, was appalled by Cincinnati egalitarianism.
   C. America and Britain shared literary tastes.
      1. First Walter Scott, then Charles Dickens, reigned supreme in both countries.
      2. American writers, including Longfellow, Emerson, and Washington Irving, became famous in Britain first.
      3. The Smithsonian Institution was funded by, and named after, a British scientist, James Smithson (1765–1829).

II. The American Civil War posed a dilemma to British politicians.
   A. Cotton from the slave south fed the industrial factories of Lancashire and Yorkshire. The trade had boomed ever since the invention of the cotton gin.
   B. Political reasons existed to justify supporting the Confederacy.
      1. From a geopolitical view, two small Americas were better than one big one.
      2. Victorians sympathized with “independence” movements in Italy, Hungary, Poland, and potentially the Confederacy, too.
   C. Political, religious, and humane reasons existed to justify supporting the Union.
      1. Frederick Douglass and Harriet Beecher-Stowe were popular in Britain.
      2. Britain had abolished slavery in its own plantation colonies in 1833.
      3. John Bright helped persuade northern mill workers to support the Union.
      4. Karl Marx praised British workers’ pro-Union sentiment.
   D. A series of diplomatic incidents during the American Civil War affected Anglo-American relations, including the “Trent” incident.
      1. Confederate diplomats James Mason and John Slidell were sailing to Britain under the protection of the British flag to argue the case for official British recognition of the Confederate States of America.
      2. They were captured by the U.S. Navy, but Abraham Lincoln ordered their release to Britain after Lord Palmerston sent him a letter threatening war.
   E. The Union sent talented diplomats of its own to prevent an Anglo-Confederate alliance.
      1. Charles Francis Adams was ambassador.
      2. His son and private secretary Henry was also a secret journalist.
      3. Their skillful negotiations in Whitehall helped prevent British recognition of the Confederacy.
   F. Lincoln’s leadership was widely admired in Britain; Queen Victoria mourned his death.
   G. The Alabama and other gunboats built in Britain aided the Confederacy and continued to cause ill feelings after the war.
      1. As a neutral country in the American Civil War, Britain had no right to supply warships to either side.
2. The *Alabama*, built in Britain and armed in the Azores, was used by the Confederates to sink many Union ships.
3. This violated the spirit, if not the letter, of the neutrality rules.
4. The postwar “*Alabama* claims” (1872) settled the issue.

**III.** Emigration from Britain to America accelerated after the Civil War.

**A.** A steady stream of British emigrants moved to America.
1. British farmers were subsidized by American railroad companies, which gave them land and supplies to establish farms on the Great Plains.
2. Industrial workers and miners brought expertise to America.

**B.** A few of them played an important role in American history.
1. Andrew Carnegie (1835–1919), steel manufacturer, became one of the richest men in the world.
2. Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone and played a central role in the education of the deaf.

**IV.** In the later nineteenth century, the idea of Anglo-Saxon supremacy and the common missionary impulse drew the two nations together.

**A.** Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson both admired British institutions and the British Empire.

**B.** Winston Churchill was the most famous child of an Anglo-American dynastic marriage.

**Essential Reading:**

**Supplementary Reading:**

**Questions to Consider:**
1. How did American and British histories interact in the Victorian era?
2. Would Britain have benefited from supporting the Confederate States of America?
Lecture Nineteen
The British in Africa: 1840–1880

Scope: The African coastline had been explored by the time of Victoria’s reign, but much of the interior was unknown to Europeans. British explorers crisscrossed Africa and traced the course of the major rivers in the mid-Victorian period. Among their motives were a desire for scientific and geographical knowledge and eagerness to spread the Christian gospel, suppress the Arab slave trade, and develop economic opportunities. Among the most famous explorers were Richard Burton, James Speke, David Livingstone, and Henry Stanley. In their conflicts with the Arabs and Africans, the British were usually successful because of their technological superiority, but many paid with their lives in the unhealthy climate. The British public followed their exploits enthusiastically and supported colonization schemes. Disraeli’s Conservatives in the 1870s expanded the British Empire in Africa; Gladstone’s Liberals were less enthusiastic.

Outline

I. The British search for the source of the Nile was funded by the Royal Geographical Society (founded in 1830).
   A. The expedition of Richard Burton and John Henning Speke located Lake Victoria in 1858.
      1. Burton was among the most intellectually adventurous men of the age, a brilliant linguist (he reputedly mastered twenty-six languages), and a prolific writer. He was the first Englishman to visit Mecca (in disguise). He was a great collector of pornography, the first translator of the *Arabian Nights*, and a good amateur anthropologist.
      2. Speke was a big game hunter, poor at languages, and less naturally curious about different cultures than Burton. He was a teetotaler, who resented Burton’s predilection for alcohol, experimentation with local drugs, and womanizing. (Burton resented Speke’s desire to stop to hunt big game along the way.)
      3. Burton and Speke were very heavily laden and found their native bearers unreliable. They lost supplies and many of their bearers on the journey.
      4. When Burton was too sick with malaria to travel, Speke discovered a lake, which he named Victoria, that he claimed was the source of the Nile.
      5. Speke was not able to prove his claim at the time, although it was later found to be true; sickness prevented him from seeking the river’s outlet from the lake.
   B. The differences in Burton’s and Speke’s personalities caused severe tensions in their relationship.
      1. Speke returned to Britain, leaving Burton behind in Africa after their expedition in 1858.
      2. Burton asked Speke not to publicize his discovery of Lake Victoria until all doubts could be dispelled.
      3. Speke, however, went to the Royal Geographical Society with their findings.
      5. Burton disputed the significance of Speke’s discovery of Lake Victoria.
      6. Burton wrote that Speke was not a qualified scientist and that although Speke had received all the glory, it was he, Burton, who had done the expedition’s important work.
      7. In 1864, the Royal Geographical Society arranged for the two men to debate the issue.
      8. Speke died in a shooting accident the day before he and Burton were scheduled to confront each other in the debate.
   C. Speke and James Grant, on a second expedition (1859) that involved even more colorful adventures, confirmed that the river Nile originated in Lake Victoria.

II. David Livingstone blended idealistic mission work with exploration and became a national hero.
   A. He trained as a doctor and intended to be a medical missionary in China, but warfare prevented him from entering the country.
   B. His lack of success in converting Africans drew him, instead, to exploration.
      1. He was the first European to cross the Kalahari Desert (1849).
      2. He explored and charted the Zambesi River (1853–1855) and discovered what he named the Victoria Falls.
      3. He took pride in traveling light and withstanding fearsome hardships.
4. Africans and Europeans alike were impressed by his charisma.

C. He carried on the search for the Nile’s source after Burton, Speke, and Grant.
   1. The Royal Geographical Society funded his 1866 expedition.
   2. Livingstone detested Burton for his “bestial immorality.”
   3. He was also contemptuous of Grant, Speke, and other explorers.
   4. He lost contact with the outside world on his 1866 expedition and it was rumored that he had died.
   5. After four years of no news from Livingstone, James Gordon Bennett of the *New York Herald* asked one of his journalists, Henry Stanley, to go and search for Livingstone.

D. Henry Stanley was a Welsh immigrant to the United States, who had fought on both sides in the American Civil War.
   1. With the backing of the *New York Herald*, he undertook one of the most imperious of all expeditions into “darkest Africa.”
   2. In 1871, Stanley “found” Livingstone at Ujiji and gave the immortal greeting “Dr. Livingstone, I presume?”
   3. With Stanley’s help, Livingstone pursued an alternative theory—that the Lualaba River was the Nile—but Livingstone died in 1873.
   4. Livingstone’s faithful African servant, Susi, brought his body back to the coast.

E. Henry Stanley resolved any remaining uncertainties between 1874 and 1877; he proved that the Lualaba was the Congo.

F. African adventurers’ tales continued to delight the British public.
   1. Mary Kingsley showed the same daring as her male counterparts.
   2. African adventure fiction, such as Rider-Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines*, was popular.

III. British empire-builders wanted to dominate not merely the African coast, as in earlier generations, but all potentially useful interior parts of the continent.
   A. The completion of the Suez Canal in 1869 created a new route to India, of great strategic significance.
   B. The Ashanti War of 1874 demonstrated Britain’s determination to annihilate indigenous rivals.
      1. Rival empires confronted each other, but Britain enjoyed overwhelming technological superiority.
      2. The natives’ numerical superiority, greater immunity to disease, and knowledge of the terrain were still no match for British firepower.

IV. Britain extended its reach into the interior of southern Africa.
   A. Boer dissatisfaction at British governance (the Boers resented the British authorities’ request to free their slaves) had provoked the “Great Trek” of the 1830s and the foundation of the Boer Republics, Orange Free State, and Transvaal.
   B. The discovery of diamonds led the British to annex Transvaal in 1877.
   C. The Boers at first tolerated this, because they benefited from British efforts to neutralize Zulu power.
      1. A British army suffered an unexpected defeat (at Isandhlwana) at the hands of the Zulu in 1879.
      2. British military pride was salvaged at Rorke’s Drift (the subject of the classic British movie *Zulu*) and Ulundi.
   D. With the Zulus defeated, the Boers became eager to throw off the British, whose protection they no longer needed.
      1. The Boers had been led to expect that Gladstone would revoke Disraeli’s annexation of Transvaal. He did not.
      2. Paul Kruger’s coup against Britain succeeded at Majuba Hill (1881).
      3. Prime Minister Gladstone then reversed himself, rather than launch a big campaign, and Transvaal regained its independence.
      4. The British claimed suzerainty over Transvaal, which would become politically volatile in the next twenty years with the discovery of massive gold reserves in the Johannesburg area.
      5. These tensions prefigured the Boer War (1899–1902).
Essential Reading:
Roger Beck, *The History of South Africa*.

Supplementary Reading:
James Morris, *Heaven’s Command: An Imperial Progress*.

Questions to Consider:
1. What motives led to British exploitation of Africa?
2. Why did the explorers’ and soldiers’ activities generate enthusiasm in Britain itself?
Lecture Twenty
Victorian Literature I

Scope: Several of the greatest British writers in history lived in the Victorian era and remain popular to the present, including Charles Dickens; George Eliot; Anthony Trollope; Charlotte, Emily, and Ann Bronte; and Thomas Carlyle. They lived in an age of growing literacy when greater numbers of people could make writing a livelihood, though it was still precarious for most. Their work gives us a vivid picture of Victorian life, showing us not only what the world looked like but also people’s hopes, dreams, and fears and their ideas about the past and the future. These writers were sometimes melodramatic; at other times, sharply realistic in their description of a world that was changing rapidly around them. Many of them were keen social critics, with Dickens leading the way in condemnation of corruption, hypocrisy, official folly, and the misunderstanding of children. They were moralists, too, generally arguing the superiority of middle-class values as opposed to those of the aristocracy and the working class. Their work was worldly—concerned more with happiness than with Christian doctrine.

Outline

I. In the Victorian era, writing became a profession—patronage or independent wealth were no long vital.
   A. Several thousand people made a living as writers of various kinds (though most were poor and depended on hack work, penny dreadfuls, or basic journalism to survive).
   B. The novelists Charles Dickens (1812–1870), George Eliot (1819–1890), and Anthony Trollope (1815–1882) made the most money, and all three authors were shrewd in business.
   C. Serialization and “triple-decker” novels were business propositions.
   D. Less successful writers worked very hard for smaller returns.
      1. James Payn wrote 160 books, including 46 novels, but never earned as much as an ordinary lawyer.
      2. Mrs. Oliphant produced 100 novels, at least 100 other books, and more than 1,000 articles in 50 years but never prospered.
   E. Many writers relied on other jobs for income.
      1. Trollope was a post office inspector (until he had published nineteen novels).
      2. Matthew Arnold and Thomas Macaulay were government officials; Charles Kingsley and John Henry Newman were churchmen.
   F. Fiction gradually became more important and novelists were more venerated than before, partially displacing poets; Dickens and Eliot were lionized as guardians of the middle-class conscience.
   G. Authors enjoyed few of the conveniences of their modern counterparts; work had to be handwritten and hand copied.

II. Although they often posed as guardians of moral conventions, some writers’ lives were unconventional.
   A. Dickens drew on the events of his own life for his fiction.
      1. His childhood included debtor’s prison and factory work.
      2. He became a court and parliamentary reporter, then enjoyed instant success with his first novel, Pickwick Papers (1837).
      3. One of the most striking features of Dickens’s writing is his power to depict life from a child’s viewpoint.
      4. Queen Victoria read and admired most of Dickens’s books during her reign.
      5. People unknown to him solicited his advice.
      6. Dickens deserted his wife, Catherine, after the birth of their ten children in favor of actress Ellen Ternan.
      7. He tried to explain and justify himself to his wide reading public in Household Words, a journal that he edited.
      8. He kept Ellen, twenty-seven years his junior, as his secret mistress, never acknowledging her in public.
   B. George Eliot lived with George Henry Lewes from 1854–1879, although he was married to another woman; after Lewes’s death, Eliot married the much younger John Walter Cross.
III. Victorian fiction is brilliantly inventive and imaginative.
   A. Many novelists aimed for larger-than-life effects.
      1. Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre* is based entirely on impossible events and exaggerated characters.
      2. Dickens and Thackeray specialized in caricatured characters, not least by giving them such names as Pecksniff, Pumblechook, Micawber, and “Waterloo” Sedley.
      3. These writers had a gift for depicting such faults as complacency and hypocrisy.
   B. They portrayed the changes brought about by Britain’s shift from a chiefly agricultural society to a mainly industrial one.
      1. Dickens, in *Hard Times* (1854), drew a vivid picture of the northern industrial towns and the struggle of working people for living wages and self-respect.
      2. Mrs. Gaskell also contrasted the genteel country life of *Cranford* (1851–1853) with the harsh new industrial world of *Mary Barton* (1848).
   C. They, and their poet-contemporaries, sentimentalized home life as a haven from the rushing commercial world.
      1. Coventry Patmore’s *The Angel in the House* (1854–1861) personified the mood.
      2. A domestic Christmas is sentimentalized in the description of Bob Cratchit’s household in Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol* (1843).

IV. Victorian novels are nearly all preoccupied with social class and marriage.
   A. They warn against the assumption that it is always good to marry a wealthy spouse; in George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* (1871–1872), Fred Vincy is not morally worthy of Mary Garth, despite his greater wealth and social position.
   B. Victorian novels appear satisfied with the paradox that marriage creates a happy ending, whereas characters who are already married are often at odds.
      1. The Bishop and Mrs. Proudie in *Barchester Towers* (1857) are always at odds, with Mrs. Proudie nearly always victorious.
      2. The fact that David Copperfield’s marriage to Dora Spenlow (in Dickens’s novel *David Copperfield*) and Dorothea Brooke’s marriage to Mr. Casaubon (in Eliot’s *Middlemarch*) come before the end shows at once that the marriages are a mistake.

V. Many novelists contributed to the humanitarian protest against social cruelty.
   A. Child labor was one of the great reform issues of the era.
      1. Charles Kingsley’s *The Water Babies* (1862–1863) forced the middle-class public to consider the plight of chimney sweeps’ boys.
      2. Dickens’s *Oliver Twist* (1837–1839) protests against the workhouse system and the exploitation of children.
   B. Disraeli’s *Sybil* (1845) was subtitled *The Two Nations* and describes Victorian Britain as a society polarized between rich and poor.

VI. A great deal of Victorian literature was about or for children.
   A. Children often appear as morally superior to their elders.
      1. Little Nell in Dickens’s *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840–1841) is too good to live.
      2. The foundling child Eppy, in Eliot’s *Silas Marner* (1861), transforms the miserly old handloom weaver.
   B. The *Alice* books of Lewis Carroll (Charles Dodson), published in 1865 and 1871, subverted the Victorian “improving” tone.
   C. Victorian children’s literature also saw a trend to anthropomorphize animals, as in the tales of Beatrix Potter, Rudyard Kipling’s *Jungle Books* (1894, 1895), and Lewis Carroll’s *Alice* books.

**Essential Reading:**
Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*.
Supplementary Reading:
Herbert H. Tucker, ed., *A Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture*.
Anthony Trollope, *The Warden*.

Questions to Consider:
1. How was Victorian fiction dependent on commercial and industrial developments of its era?
2. In what ways were the Victorian novelists inconsistent in their moral messages?
Lecture Twenty-One
Art and Music

Scope: Admiration for the work of Victorian artists, especially the Pre-Raphaelites, revived in the late twentieth century. Victorian painters, like writers, could live independent of aristocratic patrons and depend on a rapidly growing middle-class audience that was sometimes in a position to dictate the subject matter. Victorian art criticism, led by the towering figure of John Ruskin, argued for a close connection between art and morality, and he approved of the Pre-Raphaelites’ didactic style. Late in the century, Walter Pater led a reaction against this emphasis and in favor of “art for art’s sake”; he preferred the work of Whistler. Meanwhile, a British musical revival was taking place, especially in the Church of England. Gilbert and Sullivan, with their partner D’Oyly Carte, made light opera respectable for British middle-class families, draining away the sensuality it exhibited in France and Italy, while gently satirizing elements of the British way of life.

Outline

I. Artists, previously dependent on aristocratic patrons, now enjoyed the patronage of a mercantile and industrial elite.
   A. Businessmen, especially in the north and midlands, preferred scenes from contemporary life or narratives to obscure 18th-century allegories.
      1. These patrons enjoyed scenes glorifying family life and hard work.
      2. They also valued accurate representation of detail and storytelling.
   B. The Royal Academy, hitherto the national arbiter of taste, was supplemented by an array of artists’ societies, dealers’ galleries, and regional exhibition societies.
   C. The leading early Victorian critic, John Ruskin, believed that the quality of art depended on its embodiment of ideas.
      1. We share the five senses with the beasts, but we share ideas with God.
      2. He championed the innovative work of Joseph Turner, whose pictures had been ridiculed by other critics.

II. The Pre-Raphaelites challenged the Royal Academy and began a movement of long-lasting significance.
   A. Holman Hunt, John Millais, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, young art students, met in 1848 and created the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.
      1. Their first exhibited work carried their signatures and the unexplained initials “PRB.”
      2. They aimed for a style comparable to that of Italian religious painting of the early Renaissance.
   B. They were attentive to exact depiction of the natural world and to matters of historical and scientific fact; every leaf and flower, bird and butterfly was painted in absolutely sharp focus, even if far away.
      1. They also published four issues of a journal, The Germ.
      2. They were often influenced by literature, especially Shakespeare, Dante, and the legends of King Arthur.
   C. The “PRB” secret leaked out in 1850, and many reviewers denounced the group’s presumptuousness.
      1. The Times and Charles Dickens both criticized Millais’s Christ in the House of His Parents.
      2. Millais reacted by befriending Ruskin and winning his endorsement.
   D. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood’s colorful personalities provide a rich fund of anecdotes and insights into the Victorian art world.
      1. Holman Hunt painted a series of evocative religious works but found it hard to finish paintings, including the famous The Light of the World.
      2. Rossetti had passionate affairs with Elizabeth Siddall, who became a model for many of his paintings and eventually married him, and Jane Morris.
      3. Ruskin’s marriage to Effie Gray was never consummated, and she transferred her affections to Millais during an intense portrait-painting expedition in Scotland.
   E. By 1853, the group was already breaking up, but its influence persisted through the ensuing decades.
1. Millais was admitted to the Royal Academy and, at the end of his life, became its president.
2. Millais’s most famous later painting was *Bubbles*.
3. In his day, Millais’s paintings sold for four to five times as much as those of old masters.
4. Ford Madox Brown, who was older than the founders of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, was an influence on them and was influenced in his own work.
5. Edward Burne-Jones adapted many characteristics of the Pre-Raphaelite style and subjects.

F. The aesthetic movement dominated the later Victorian era.
1. Walter Pater was its spokesman; he denied Ruskin’s emphasis on the centrality of morality in art.
2. Ruskin’s insulting comment about a Whistler painting led to a celebrated lawsuit in 1877.

III. Victorian Britain enjoyed a music-making revival, though its composers were not the equal of their continental counterparts.

A. The Church of England’s rich musical tradition was strengthened in the mid-Victorian era.
1. The cathedral choir schools began to raise effective choristers.
2. Miscellaneous village bands in the church loft gave way to trained choirs and church organs. (This was a period of intensive organ building.)
4. Anglican services became, musically, quite elaborate.

B. Members of the upper and middle classes patronized the opera and favored Gilbert and Sullivan.
1. Richard D’Oyly Carte created their successful partnership in 1875 and kept it going until 1896.
2. The operas were socially respectable and carried none of the immoral taint of French and Italian opera.
3. The partners satirized contemporary affairs and such characters as W. H. Smith, First Lord of the Admiralty.

C. Piano ownership and performance were increasingly popular: 23,000 pianos were manufactured in 1850; 75,000, by 1910.

D. The social status of musicians, and their income, was low.
1. Edward Elgar (Britain’s leading composer by 1900) was bandmaster in a lunatic asylum through most of his twenties.
2. The era did not see a great revival of compositional talent, but rather, a democratization of music making.

E. Temperance and evangelical organizations, such as the Salvation Army, emphasized band music to counter their reputation for joylessness.

Essential Reading:
Helen Valentine, ed., *Art in the Age of Queen Victoria*.
Michael Ffinch, *Gilbert and Sullivan*.

Supplementary Reading:
Christopher Wood, *The Pre-Raphaelites*.

Questions to Consider:
1. How did changes in the British middle class change artistic and musical life?
2. Why were Gilbert and Sullivan so popular?
Lecture Twenty-Two

Science

Scope: Middle-class Victorians placed great faith in science, linking it directly to the practical and technological advances they were making. Eventually, however, science began to alarm some Victorians by challenging their general conception of the world itself and God’s place in it. Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859), the book that outlined evolutionary theory, had an immense impact equally on science and religion. Darwin himself drew heavily on the geological work of Charles Lyell, which had shown in the 1830s that the earth was vastly more ancient than most people then believed and that it changed gradually over the eons rather than by sudden upheavals. Darwin drew, too, on the work of Thomas Malthus, an early scientific demographer and economist, who had theorized on the relationship among food, population, and survival. Some Victorian intellectuals lionized Darwin and recognized the power and persuasiveness of his new synthesis. Others, including many prominent Christians, rejected his view of the world, because it contradicted the creation story in the book of Genesis. They were further dismayed by Darwin’s application of the theory to humanity, not just the lower species, in *The Descent of Man* (1871). Herbert Spencer, Darwin’s contemporary, pioneered “social Darwinism” and coined the phrase “survival of the fittest.”

Outline

I. The idea of science gained prestige rapidly in nineteenth-century Britain.
   A. Industrialization required scientific knowledge.
      1. Early reliance on ad hoc methods had to give way to scientific education in physics, chemistry, and technology.
      2. The era witnessed a long succession of inventions, many based on better scientific awareness.
   B. Discoveries throughout the world, and exploration of uncharted places, led to new animal and plant discoveries and classifications. For example, the exploration of Africa, the interior of South America, and Asia led to discoveries of hundreds more plants, animals, and insects.

II. Lamarck, Lyell, and Malthus established the foundations on which Darwin built.
   A. Lamarck, a French biologist, believed that evolution happened quickly, in the space of a few generations, through the inheritance of acquired characteristics; Lamarck recognized that all species were interconnected parts of a continuous process and that species names were arbitrary designations.
   B. Malthus, one of the first scientific demographers, established the relationship between food supplies and population; he argued that populations can double every twenty-five years unless checked by starvation or disease.
   C. Lyell argued that the earth was far older than scientists hitherto had realized and that it developed by slow, uniform processes.
      1. When Lyell began his work, Georges Cuvier was the reigning expert on geology.
      2. Cuvier believed that geological changes were caused by catastrophic events.
      3. Cuvier was also a paleontologist who understood the relationship between form and function in living creatures.
      4. The accumulated evidence from contemporaneous discoveries of dinosaur skeletons began to force scientists to accept the concept of extinction.
      5. Unlike Cuvier, Lyell claimed that geological change happens over vast expanses of time.
      7. It argued that rock strata each represented millions of years in the earth’s history. By studying the fossils embedded in these rocks, one could gain information about the different types of creatures that had lived during the various historical ages revealed by the rocks, each species becoming extinct in its turn. Extinction was, for Lyell, central to the development of life on earth.
      8. Naturalistic forces, rather than divine intervention, were the key to understanding the development of the species.
      9. Lyell was appointed professor of geology at King’s College, London.
III. Darwin’s own experiences and wide reading enabled him to compose the entire theory.

A. His grandfather was Erasmus Darwin, a scientific writer; his father, Robert Darwin, was a successful doctor; and his mother was the daughter of the Wedgewood china entrepreneur.
   1. The study of medicine at Edinburgh bored Darwin.
   2. He went to Cambridge in 1828 to study for the church but devoted more time to scientific collecting and research.

B. He joined the expedition of HMS Beagle to study the flora and fauna of South America, South Africa, and the Galapagos Archipelago, between 1831 and 1836.
   1. He read Lyell en route and did extensive geological studies of his own, on earthquakes, coral, and rock stratification.
   2. He noted the similarity, yet distinctiveness, of the finches in the Galapagos Islands and theorized that they shared a common ancestor.
   3. Back in England in 1838, he read Malthus and realized that competition within populations led stronger variations of a species to survive.
   4. Different environments favored different variations so that after several generations, species could become distinct.
   5. He had witnessed selective breeding of British farm animals and knew that species variation was possible.
   6. “Natural selection” of favored variants was the key to evolutionary changes.
   7. Mendel’s genetics later provided the mechanism for the variations.

C. Darwin summarized his research in On the Origin of Species (1859), bringing together evidence from diverse sciences to make a comprehensive case for his revised view of the natural world.
   1. The historian of science Thomas Kuhn calls such rare events “paradigm shifts.”
   3. Darwin had avoided the question of human origins in the first book but elaborated on that issue in The Descent of Man (1871).
   4. Religious opponents of his ideas, including the biologist Philip Gosse, faced a daunting accumulation of scientific evidence.

IV. Evolutionary ideas were applied widely to society, often yoked to the idea of progress.

A. Herbert Spencer tried to use evolution to explain phenomena in every realm of life.
   1. He coined the phrase “survival of the fittest” but fitted it into an optimistic view of inevitable progress.
   2. He saw individualism as the law of all life; therefore, he supported economic laissez-faire policies, while opposing trade unions and all other collective human endeavors.
   3. He warned that “dissolution” or “regression” were also possible, obstacles on the evolutionary highway.
   4. Evolutionary ideas encouraged scientific racism, eugenics, and the idea of criminals as “evolutionary throwbacks.”

B. Evolutionary ideas could also stimulate acute anxiety.
   1. This is evident in a famous passage of Tennyson’s “In Memoriam.”
   2. Even Huxley admitted that materialist science had frightening implications.

Essential Reading:
Mark Ridley, The Darwin Reader.
Janet Browne, Charles Darwin: A Biography.

Supplementary Reading:
L. Pearce Williams, Album of Science: The Nineteenth Century.
Charles Darwin, On the Origin of Species by Natural Selection.
Questions to Consider:
1. Why was Darwin’s work so troubling to many Victorian Christians?
2. Why did the prestige of science rise so sharply in nineteenth-century Britain?
Scope:  Medicine became a profession in the Victorian era, an era in which death at any age was common. In the 1830s, a three-tier medical system existed, divided among classically trained physicians at the top and, beneath them, surgeons and apothecaries, who took care of practical aspects of medical care and learned through apprenticeships. To learn their trade, doctors needed to dissect corpses. Their official source was the gallows, but grave robbers provided the necessary additional bodies, despite bitter popular opposition to the practice. Medical advances in the Victorian era included the application of anesthetics and antiseptics by Lister and others and the unification of the medical profession by legislation of 1858. More important in reducing the death rate, however, were the elementary steps taken in public health and sanitation. John Snow performed the classic public health experiment in 1854 by removing the handle of a pump that he had identified as the focus of a cholera outbreak; cities began to keep health statistics and find ways to provide fresh water supplies. Meanwhile, women struggled for admission to the profession, though male doctors discouraged them for fear that practicing as doctors would upset their delicate reproductive systems.

Outline

I. Sickness and death were constant companions in Victorian Britain.
   A. Death came at any age, often suddenly.
   B. Dying was a public event, and deathbed scenes were solemn social occasions.

II. In the early nineteenth century, medical men were divided into three categories, each with its own role and social rank.
   A. Physicians were the most eminent.
      1. They were graduates of Oxford or Cambridge.
      2. They studied largely in the classics and mathematics.
      3. They were licensed by the Royal College of Physicians.
   B. Surgeons were of intermediate rank.
      1. They had the status of skilled technicians.
      2. They needed to be physically robust and not squeamish.
      3. They were licensed by the Royal College of Surgeons.
   C. Apothecaries were the lowliest medical men.
      1. Provincial surgeons were often apothecaries, also.
      2. Many medicines were poisons, including mercury.
      3. It was widely believed that all ailments were related to bad blood, thus many medicines claimed to cure all ailments.
   D. Numerous unlicensed healers also plied their trade.

III. Parliament reformed Britain’s medical system and created a situation of greater legal uniformity.
   A. By act of Parliament in 1858, all doctors were included on a centralized list of practitioners, the Medical Register.
      1. The Colleges, which had lobbied against the act, were retained but lost most of their earlier power
      2. Inclusion on, or exclusion from, the Medical Register now marked a sharp professional divide.
   B. The Anatomy Act of 1832 helped curb the problem of body snatching.
      1. “Resurrection men” had earlier provided anatomy schools with the necessary bodies, because the gallows alone were insufficient.
      2. Fear of postmortem dissection compounded poor people’s dread of the workhouse.
      3. The fear of dissection was partly attributable to the fact that many people believed in resurrection of the earthly body—an intact earthly body—at the “Second Coming.”
   C. The economic and social status of doctors continued to vary.
1. A minority became rich—the Harley Street consultants.
2. For most, practicing medicine remained a marginal business.
3. Doctors began to appear as heroic figures in literature—a phenomenon previously unknown.

IV. Medicine and science combined to create genuine improvements in the mid- and late nineteenth century, though they disagreed over the best methods.

A. One group of doctors emphasized surgical improvements.
   1. Joseph Lister helped spread the use of antiseptics to prevent infection of wounds.
   2. Anesthetics, along with antiseptics, made surgery far more endurable and reduced shock. (James Simpson pioneered the use of chloroform.)

B. A second group believed that sanitation was more important than surgery in saving lives. The great London sanitary reformers, including Edwin Chadwick, John Simon, Edwin Lankester, and Florence Nightingale, led them.

C. Cholera epidemics after 1831 added urgency to the sanitationists’ work.
   1. Doctors John Snow and William Budd had identified living organisms in water as the cause of the outbreaks.
   2. Snow identified a pump as a cholera source in an 1854 epidemic and removed the pump handle—an emblematic moment in the history of public health.

D. The logic of preventive public health spread gradually and always in the face of popular opposition. Smallpox vaccinations were made compulsory in 1853.

V. Victorian doctors theorized about the nature of sex.

A. They warned young men that masturbation would lead to blindness and dementia.

B. They helped popularize the view that women were naturally frail and at the mercy of their reproductive systems.
   1. They treated menstruation and pregnancy as forms of sickness.
   2. Many male doctors campaigned passionately against women being permitted to become doctors.
   3. Nevertheless, hardy pioneering women doctors did appear, beginning in the late 1870s.

Essential Reading:
Roy Porter, *Bodies Politic: Disease, Death, and Doctors in Britain, 1650–1900.*

Supplementary Reading:
Anne Hardy, *Health and Medicine in Britain Since 1860.*
Mary P. English, *Victorian Values: The Life and Times of Dr. Edwin Lankester.*

Questions to Consider:
1. What was the connection between medicine and social status in Victorian Britain?
2. Why was health so precarious in nineteenth-century Britain?
Lecture Twenty-Four

Architecture

Scope: Victorian architecture, like so many other aspects of British life, was paradoxical. On the one hand, it made great leaps forward in its professional social organization and its use of new materials. On the other hand, it became enamoured of much older styles, Italianate, classical, Egyptian, and above all, pre-Reformation Gothic. In the hands of Augustus Pugin, Gothic architecture was linked to the revival of the Catholic faith. In the hands of Ruskin and Gilbert Scott, however, it was domesticated to Anglican tastes and to the needs of a bustling industrial society: Its greatest achievements were designs for factories and railway stations. Many of the era’s greatest public buildings were designed and built by the winners of architectural competitions; among them, the new Houses of Parliament, St. Pancras Station, and the Museum of Science in Oxford. Victorian architecture was strongly out of fashion in the early and mid-twentieth century but has now staged a revival and once more has its defenders.

Outline

I. Architecture became a middle-class profession in the Victorian era.
   A. The demand for buildings was great, and the field drew imaginative figures.
      1. In addition to a surge in church building, several new types of buildings were needed, including factories, department stores, railway buildings, hotels, libraries, banks, and hospitals.
      2. Working- and middle-class housing, and the beginning of suburbanization, stimulated demand for a large second rank of architects.
      3. A professional association, the Institute of British Architects, was founded in 1834 and given royal endorsement in 1866.
   B. The frequency of anonymous architectural competitions for big contracts was compatible with the spirit of laissez-faire and encouraged stylistic distinctiveness.
      1. The competitions for the new Houses of Parliament in 1835 and for the Great Exhibition in 1850 were the most famous.
      2. Architects’ understanding that the judges were not always knowledgeable tended to encourage overstatement and staginess.
      3. The risk of devoting a lot of energy to an unsuccessful bid and fear of “fixed” judges made most architects deplore competitions.
   C. The abundance of new materials, including steel, plate glass, and elevators, encouraged experimentation.
   D. The nineteenth century witnessed a switch from aristocrats as architects’ chief patrons to manufacturers and municipalities.
      1. Patronizing an architect and having an Italianate or French chateau-style factory gained a manufacturer prestige and respectability.
      2. Midland and northern cities competed for the most magnificent town halls.

II. Gothic Revival architecture looked back to the Middle Ages, but paradoxically, its great achievements in civic and railway architecture were state-of-the-art.
   A. Augustus Welby Pugin (1812–1852) was Gothic Revival’s first great spokesman.
      1. He romanticized the Catholic Middle Ages and became a Roman Catholic.
      2. He criticized the shallow, commercial modern world.
      3. He believed in a unity of function and design and hated gratuitous decoration.
   B. Charles Barry’s Parliament reconciled the British establishment to Gothic.
      1. The old Houses of Parliament burned down in 1834.
      2. Parliament debated where and how the new buildings should be raised.
      3. Barry won the design competition for the new Houses and worked on them from 1837 until their completion thirty years later.
      4. Pugin, then twenty-two, worked on decorative elements.
5. Prince Albert encouraged the decoration of the interior with paintings of heroic scenes from British history.

6. Overwork drove Pugin to an early grave.

C. John Ruskin condemned Pugin but praised Gothic style and, in effect, made it safe for Anglicans.
   2. The Oxford Science Museum, built in the 1850s with Ruskin’s encouragement, blended a Gothic design with iron arches and tracery and a glass roof.

D. George Gilbert Scott was the outstanding architect of the high Gothic Revival.
   2. The train shed, built by engineer W. H. Barlow, is spanned by an immense glass and iron arch, then the world’s biggest, 240 feet wide.
   3. Scott’s hotel, in red brick, summons up the memory of Gothic cathedrals. In total contrast with the shed, it is lavishly ornate and soars up over all the surroundings, with a clock tower like that of Big Ben.

E. Ruskin regretted the industrial and railroad appropriation of his ideals.

III. The reputation of Victorian architecture has gone through several cycles in the last hundred years. Historian G. M. Trevelyan condemned it as “deplorable” in 1942.

Essential Reading:
Hugh Casson, *An Introduction to Victorian Architecture*.
Hubert Pragnell, *Industrial Britain: An Architectural History*.

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. How did changes in patronage enlarge the scope of Victorian art and architecture?
2. Why was the critic John Ruskin so influential?
Quotations from Queen Victoria

From Lecture Two

Journal comments after being notified of her accession:

“Since it has pleased providence to place me in this station, I shall do my utmost to fulfill my duty towards my country; I am very young and perhaps in many, though not in all things, inexperienced, but I am sure that very few have more real good will and more real desire to do what is right than I have.”


Letter to her uncle, King Leopold of Belgium, regarding Lord Melbourne:

“Let me pause to tell you how fortunate I am to have at the head of the Government a man like Lord Melbourne. I have seen him now every day, with the exception of Friday, and the more I see him, the more confidence I have in him; he is not only a clever statesman and an honest man, but a good and kind hearted man, whose aim is to do his duty for his country and not for a party. He is of the greatest use to me both politically and privately …It is to me the greatest pleasure to do my duty for my country and my people, and no fatigue, however great, will be burdensome to me if it is for the welfare of the nation.”


Journal comments regarding her proposal of marriage to Prince Albert:

“I said to him …that it would make me too happy if he would consent to what I wished …we embraced each other over and over again, and he was so kind, so affectionate. Oh! To feel I was, and am, loved by such an Angel as Albert was too great delight to describe. He is perfection; perfection in every way, in beauty, in everything. …I felt it was the happiest moment in my life.”

15 October 1839, ibid., p. 57.

Journal comments, a few days later:

“I signed some papers and warrants, etc. and he was so kind as to dry them with blotting paper for me. We talked a good deal together and he clasped me so tenderly in his arms and kissed me again and again.”

27 October 1839, ibid., p. 58.

Comment on babies:

“An ugly baby is a very nasty object, and the prettiest is frightful when undressed, till about four months; in short, as long as they have their big body and little limbs and that terrible frog-like action.”

From a letter to her daughter, Princess Frederick William of Prussia (i.e., Princess Victoria who had married the German Prince), 2 May 1859, ibid., p. 112.

Letter to her uncle King Leopold regarding the Great Exhibition of 1851:

“I wish you could have witnessed the 1st May 1851, the greatest day in our history, the most beautiful and imposing and touching spectacle ever seen, and the triumph of my beloved Albert. Truly it was astonishing, a fair scene. Many cried, and all felt touched and impressed with devotional feelings. It was the happiest, proudest day of my life and I can think of nothing else. Albert’s dear name is immortalized with the great conception, his own, and my own dear country showed she was worthy of it.”

Journal comments on Albert’s death:

“I took his dear left hand which was already cold …and knelt down by him …All, all was over …I stood up and kissed his dear heavenly forehead and called out in a bitter and agonizing cry ‘Oh my dear darling’ and then dropped on my knees in mute distracted despair, unable to utter a word or shed a tear …Then I laid down on the sofa in the red room and all the gentlemen came in and knelt down and kissed my hand, and I said a word to each.”

Journal, 14 December 1861, Letters and Journals, p. 156.

From Lecture Three

Comments from Victoria’s journal, when she was thirteen, on her travel through “the black country”:

“We just passed through a town where all coal mines are and you see the fire glimmer at a distance in the engines in many places. The men, women, children, country and houses are all black. But I can not by any description give an idea of its strange and extraordinary appearance. The country is very desolate everywhere; there are coals about, and the grass is quite blasted and black. I just now see an extraordinary building flaming with fire. The country continues black, engines flaming, coals, in abundance, everywhere, smoking and burning coal heaps, intermingled with wretched huts and carts and little ragged children.”

Journal, 2 August 1833, ibid., p. 11.

From Lecture Six

Comments on the women’s rights movement:

“The Queen is anxious to enlist everyone who can speak or write to join in checking this mad, wicked folly of women’s rights with all its attendant horrors, on which her poor feeble sex is bent, forgetting every sense of womanly feeling and propriety. Lady Amberley ought to get a good whipping.”


From Lecture Eight

Journal comments on evangelical Sundays:

“I am not at all an admirer or approver of our very dull Sundays for I think the absence of innocent amusements for the poor people a misfortune and an encouragement of vice.”


From Lecture Fourteen

Comments on the Great Exhibition:

“Some of the inventions were very ingenious, many of them quite Utopian. It has taught me so much I never knew before and has brought me in contact with so many clever people I should never have known otherwise, and with so many manufacturers whom I would scarcely have met unless I travelled all over the country and visited every individual manufactory, which I could never have done.”


From Lecture Sixteen

Journal comments on the death of Charles Dickens:

“He had a large, loving mind and the strongest sympathy with the poorer classes. He felt sure that a better feeling, and much greater union of classes, would take place in time. And I pray earnestly it may.”

In Hibbert, Queen Victoria, p. 396.
From Lecture Seventeen

From a letter to Lord Canning, Governor-General of India, after the Indian Mutiny, in 1858:

“…[show] the greatest kindness [to the many] ‘kind and friendly natives’ who had helped restore order. They should know that there is no hatred to a brown-skin tone; but the greatest wish on the Queen’s part to see them happy, contented, and flourishing.”

Ibid, p. 250.

From Lecture Eighteen

Letter to Mrs. Lincoln after the U.S. president’s assassination:

“Though a stranger to you, I cannot remain silent when so terrible a calamity has fallen upon you and your country, and must express personally my deep and heartfelt sympathy with you under the shocking circumstances of your present dreadful misfortune. No one can better appreciate than I can, who am myself utterly broken-hearted by the loss of my own beloved husband, who was the light of my life, my stay, my all, what your sufferings must be; and I earnestly pray that you may be supported by Him to Whom alone the sorely stricken can look for comfort, in this hour of heavy affliction!”

29 April 1865, in Letters and Journals, p. 189.

From Lecture Thirty-One

Remark made after early defeats in the Boer War:

“We are not interested in the possibilities of defeat: they do not exist.”


From Lecture Thirty-Five

Letter to Prime Minister Lord Russell, explaining her reluctance to open Parliament in 1866:

“The Queen must say that she does feel very bitterly the want of feeling of those who ask the Queen to go to open parliament. …Why this wish should be of so unreasonable and unfeeling a nature, as to long to witness the spectacle of a poor, broken-hearted widow, nervous and shrinking, dragged in deep mourning, alone in State as a Show, where she used to go supported by her husband, is a thing she cannot understand. …she resents the unfeelingness of those who have clamoured for it.”


Letter to Vicky after Albert’s death:

“I feel so stunned and bewildered. He protected me so that I felt safe! And now all, all is gone in this world, and all seems unhinged again in thousands of ways…The shock, the blow, the blank, the constant missing at every turn of the one strong, powerful arm and head…This anguish that comes over me like a wave…is terrible. God’s will be done, but I shall never be the same again.”

Cited in Hibbert, Queen Victoria, p. 441.

Journal comments on her Diamond Jubilee of 1897:

“a never to be forgotten day. No one ever, I believe, has met with such an ovation as was given to me, passing through those six miles of streets…The crowds were indescribable…the cheering was quite deafening and every face seemed to be filled with real joy.”

Telegraph message to British Empire after her Diamond Jubilee celebration:

“From my heart I thank my beloved people. May God bless them.”

22 June 1897, Letters and Journals, p. 335.
Timeline

1819................................................ Birth of Princess Victoria.
1829................................................ Catholic Emancipation (permitting Catholics to vote and sit in Parliament).
1829 ............................................... Opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway.
1831................................................ Cholera epidemic.
1832................................................ Great Reform Act.
1833 ............................................... Abolition of slavery in the British Empire (Caribbean Islands).
1834 ............................................... The Tolpuddle Martyrs, early trade unionists, convicted and transported for conspiracy.
1837 ............................................... Death of King William IV; Victoria becomes queen.
1838 ............................................... I. K. Brunel’s steamship Great Western crosses the Atlantic.
1839 ............................................... Parliament rejects the Chartists’ first petition.
1839 ............................................... British colonial army defeated in Afghanistan.
1839 ............................................... Foundation of the Anti-Corn-Law League by Cobden and Bright.
1840 ............................................... Queen Victoria marries Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.
1840 ............................................... Rowland Hill introduces the “penny post” cheap mail.
1842 ............................................... The queen travels by train from Slough to London Paddington.
1844 ............................................... Chancellor Gladstone specifies cheap “parliamentary trains” with fares pegged at one penny per mile.
1846 ............................................... Irish famine; abolition of the Corn Laws by Parliament.
1848 ............................................... A wave of revolutions in Europe—Marx and Engels write Communist Manifesto. Third great Chartist petition.
1850 ............................................... Titus Salt founds model industrial community of Saltaire.
1850 ............................................... An outburst of anti-Catholic prejudice when the Pope declares the re-creation of Catholic dioceses in Britain.
1851 ............................................... The Great Exhibition in Joseph Paxton’s Crystal Palace, Hyde Park.
1854–1856 ......................................... Crimean War (France, Britain, and Turkey fighting against Russia).
1857 ............................................... The Indian Mutiny.
1858 ............................................... British government takes over direct rule of India from the Honorable East India Company.
1858 ............................................... Publication of Self-Help by Samuel Smiles.
1859 ............................................... Charles Darwin’s On the Origin of Species.
1861 ........................................ Death of Prince Albert.
1861–1865 ....................................... American Civil War creates crisis in British cotton textile industry.
1863 ............................................... Opening of the world’s first underground railway (London).
1866 ............................................... The “Sheffield Outrages,” in which union cutlers intimidate non-union men.
1867 ............................................... Disraeli as prime minister; the Second Reform Act extends franchise.
1868 ............................................... Founding of the Trades Union Congress.
1869 ............................................... Completion of the Suez Canal transforms strategic route to India.
1871 ............................................... Parliament legislates for universal education of children.
1871 ............................................... Abolition of the purchase of army commissions.
1872 ............................................... The secret ballot.
1874 ............................................... British victory in the Ashanti War.
1875 ............................................... Disraeli buys a share in Suez Canal.
1876 ............................................... Disraeli makes Victoria empress of India.
1879 ............................................... The Zulu War; defeat at Isandhlwana, heroic British defense at Rorke’s Drift, and victory at Ulundi.
1882 ............................................... Legal reform permits women to maintain control of their own property after marriage.
1884 ............................................... Third Reform Act further extends the franchise.
1884–1885 ........................................ Expedition fails to rescue General Gordon in Khartoum.
1886 ............................................... Liberal Party splits over Gladstone’s proposal to grant Irish Home Rule.
1888 ............................................... Jack the Ripper kills eight prostitutes in Whitechapel, London.
1888 ............................................... Annie Besant leads the London match factory girls on strike.
1889 ............................................... London dockyard workers’ strike, arbitrated in the workers’ favor by the popular Cardinal Henry Manning (another Catholic convert).
1892 ............................................... Keir Hardie, first independent Labour Member of Parliament, takes his seat.
1896 ............................................... Failure of the Jameson Raid provokes a crisis in South Africa.
1897 ............................................... Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee celebrations.
1899 ............................................... Beginning of Boer War with humiliating British defeats.
1901 ............................................... The Taff Vale Case stimulates TUC to create the Labour Party.
1901 ............................................... Death of Queen Victoria.
Glossary

**Anti-Corn-Law League**: Richard Cobden and John Bright’s pro-free trade, anti-protectionist lobby (founded 1839) whose objective was achieved in 1846 when Peel’s Tory government defied much of its core constituency and repealed the laws.

**Celtic fringe**: An English politician’s name for Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and (sometimes) the southwestern counties of England.

**Chartism**: The popular movement of the 1830s and 1840s, in the wake of the First Reform Act (1832), to achieve further reforms of Parliament, including universal manhood suffrage, secret ballot, equal electoral districts, payment of MPs, annual parliament, and abolition of property qualifications for MP. Led by Fergus O’Connor, it presented petitions to Parliament in 1838, 1842, and 1848 but achieved no effective reforms.

**Dissent**: A person who did not belong to the established Church of England. The word (and the word “nonconformist”) was usually used of members of the Protestant sects, including Quakers, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Seventh Day Adventists, and Baptists.

**Establishment**: The state-run Church of England was the established church. In the nineteenth century, however, “establishment” also came to mean the central elements of the government and the state and the institutions that supported them.

**Evangelical**: A member of the Church of England or one of the Protestant sects who had adopted the emotional idiom of a personal relationship with Christ and was involved in the attempt at national moral regeneration.

**Evolution**: The theory that human beings had developed from simpler organisms over an immense period of time. Charles Darwin’s influential *On the Origin of Species by Natural Selection* (1859) codified evolutionary ideas and their compatibility with biological and geological evidence.

**Free trade**: Trade between nations unhampered by import and export duties. Britain, the world’s first industrial nation, believed it would benefit from free trade and abolished most of its duties in the 1840s and 1850s, despite opposition from the landed gentry in the Tory Party.

**Gothic**: One of the architectural styles favored by many Victorians and exhibited in Parliament and many Victorian churches and civic buildings. It aimed at reviving the glories of medieval cathedral architecture.

**Home Rule**: The aim of the Irish Nationalist Party in the 1870s and 1880s was an Irish government but still inside the British Empire. Gladstone’s decision to support it in 1886 broke the Liberal party into Home Rule and Unionist factions.

**Imperialist**: A supporter of an enlarged empire-building mission for Britain. Disraeli tried to make the Conservative Party self-consciously imperialist in the 1870s.

**Industrialization**: The process of concentrating and mechanizing manufacture on a large scale. In Britain, it was accompanied by the use of water and steam power and intense urbanization.

**Mudlark**: A London child who made a living by dredging metal, glass, and pottery scraps out of the Thames at low tide.

**New Poor Law**: The legislation of 1834 that created the workhouses. It was intended to be uniform throughout the country, to be economical for taxpayers, and to have a deterrent effect so that poor people would avoid appealing for help unless they were absolutely destitute. It was widely hated and feared by the English poor and satirized by Dickens and other writers.

**Oxford movement**: The attempt in the 1830s and 1840s by a group of Oxford dons to reinvigorate the Church of England, emphasizing its supernatural origins rather than its role as a department of state. Led by John Keble, Hurrell Froude, and John Newman, the movement scandalized “broad church” Anglicans when, in 1844, Newman (and others under his influence) became Roman Catholic.

**Pre-Raphaelite**: The artistic movement of the 1840s and 1850s that aimed to recapture the purity of early Renaissance art (i.e., before the era of Raphael). Artists in the movement included Millais, Rossetti, Holman Hunt, and Burne-Jones.
**Radical:** In the early Victorian era, supporters of free trade and political reform in a democratic direction. In the late Victorian era, the word began to carry connotations of socialism.

**Rotten borough:** A Parliamentary constituency with few or no electors and effectively in the hands of a landowning patron, who could appoint his client. The Reform Act of 1832 abolished more than sixty of them.

**Sepoy:** An Indian soldier in the service of the Honorable East India Company.

**Thirty-Nine Articles:** The list of doctrinal Christian principles drawn up under Queen Elizabeth I to which all clergy in the Church of England were required (by an act of Parliament, 1571) to subscribe. Designed to exclude Roman Catholics on the “right” and radical Protestants on the “left,” the articles were intended to define a broad middle ground of Anglicanism and be as inclusive as possible.

**Tory:** A member of one of the two main political parties. Tories were mainly country gentlemen whose income came from rents and the sale of grain. They generally supported the Corn Laws and opposed Peel’s repeal of them in 1846, which temporarily shattered the party. By the late nineteenth century, under Disraeli, the party had adopted the name “Conservative” instead, but Tory remained (and remains today) a widely used nickname.

**Trade union:** An organization of working people whose collective strength enables them to bargain effectively over wages, hours, and working conditions with their employers.

**Uitlander:** The Boer name for a non-Boer living and working in the Transvaal or the Orange Free State in the years before the Boer War. British dissatisfaction with the Boers’ treatment of Uitlanders sparked the bloody Boer War (1899–1902).

**Unionist:** A supporter of the union between Britain and Ireland. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Conservatives used “Unionist” as an alternative title. Unionism of this sort is unconnected with trade unionism.

**Utilitarianism:** The philosophical position associated with Jeremy Bentham and John Mill, which argues that a society should aim to achieve the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Highly influential among the early Victorians, it was criticized by evangelical Christians for its down-to-earth approach and by Mill’s son John Stuart Mill for its neglect of minority rights.
Biographical Notes

Isambard K. Brunel (1806–1859). Premier Victorian engineer and railway and ship builder. Brunel, son of an emigre French inventor, grew up surrounded by engineering projects. His father, Marc, struggled to build the first tunnel beneath the River Thames, with his son as project manager. The young Brunel himself designed the Clifton Suspension Bridge, still standing across the Clifton gorge in Bristol, and in 1833, won the contract to design and build the 118-mile Great Western Railway from London to Bristol. Parliament passed the necessary legislation in 1835, and Brunel finished the project in another six years, building, among many other innovative structures, the longest tunnel in the country at Box, between Bath and Chippenham. This railway’s seven-foot gauge deviated from the standard four feet, eight-and-a-half inches of other British railways, but its trains were more comfortable. Brunel was also an innovative shipbuilder and his paddle-wheeler Great Western (1838) was the first steamship to cross the Atlantic Ocean. Each of its two successors, the propeller-driven Great Britain (1845) and the Great Eastern (1858) marked a quantum leap in size and sophistication over all predecessors. The 700-foot-long Great Eastern could sail from Britain to Australia without refueling. Brunel, always a ruthless, tactless, work-obsessed overachiever, died just after its launch.

Edwin Chadwick (1800–1890). Civil servant, utilitarian, and poverty reformer who can be seen as a great benefactor of the poor but was hated by them in his own lifetime. Born and raised in the new industrial city of Manchester, Chadwick studied law in London and befriended the leading utilitarian philosophers Bentham and Mill. He became a member of a Royal Commission on poverty in 1832 and ultimately wrote a large part of its report, on which the New Poor Law was based. Working-class people loathed him for organizing the harsh workhouses on which the law depended and his fanatical and inflexible personality made him an easy target for satirists and critics. His next report (1842), written after he had discovered how high was the demand for workhouse places, showed that the nation’s public health and wealth were menaced by poor sanitation. The Whig government of Lord John Russell responded to it with passage of a Public Health Act six years later and appointed Chadwick Commissioner of the Board of Health. He lost the job in 1854 when Home Secretary Lord Palmerston recognized that he was the focus of too much dislike to remain viable in office. Even in his retirement, Chadwick remained an immensely influential figure and advisor on projects of urban and civil service reform.

Richard Cobden (1804–1865). Reformer and free-trade advocate who led the Anti-Corn-Law League. Cobden, the son of a poor Sussex farmer, was raised by unkind Yorkshire relatives and went to work as a teenager in the textile business. His hard work and skill enabled him to start his own company at age twenty-four, selling fabrics in London. Its rapid success made him wealthy. Cobden devoted his fortune to traveling throughout the world, then to campaigning successfully for a seat in Parliament, which he entered in 1841. An admirer of the United States, he believed Britain should become a democracy, too, and advocated the principle of universal manhood suffrage. He also believed that flourishing trade between nations helped to create wealth and prevent war.

The Corn Laws then in effect were designed to exclude foreign food from coming in to Britain, which gave a large economic advantage to British farmers. These laws, however, made it more difficult for British companies to export their manufactured wares, while forcing working-class people to pay more for their food than they would have had to under free-trade conditions. By 1845, the Anti-Corn-Law League, of which Cobden and his fellow orator John Bright were the leaders, was the most well organized lobby in Britain. Parliament seemed unlikely to repeal the laws because most of its members represented landowners. However, the catastrophic Irish famine of 1846 forced Tory Prime Minister Robert Peel to recognize that Britain must have access to cheap and plentiful foreign food supplies at once. He defied many of his own party’s members to repeal the Corn Laws, crowning Cobden’s campaign with success. In later years, Cobden campaigned against British intervention in the Crimean War and continued to advocate free-trade policies.

Charles Darwin (1809–1882). Biologist and evolutionary theorist whose On the Origin of Species (1859) was one of the most important books of the nineteenth century. Born in Shropshire, Darwin was raised by a sister after his mother’s death when he was eight. He would not devote himself to formal studies of medicine or theology but loved to collect plants and animals. His skills as a biologist led to his appointment on a navy expedition to South America on HMS Beagle from 1831–1836. There, he collected and studied exhaustively, notably on the Galapagos Islands, where he noticed small variations in species from one island to the next. His discoveries, when coupled with his reading of Lyell’s geology and Malthus on population, helped him develop the theory of evolution by natural selection. Scattered theorists before Darwin had proposed the idea of evolution, but he was the first to find a viable
mechanism that could explain the intricacy of the natural world. Knowing that a fellow biologist, Alfred Russell Wallace, was developing similar ideas, Darwin published his *Origin* in 1859, and it quickly became the center of an intense debate, both among biologists and among theologians, who recognized (and sometimes feared) its challenge to the creation story in Genesis. His later book, *The Descent of Man* (1871), specified what the first had left implicit: Mankind, too, was part of the evolutionary process. Darwin, despite suffering most of his life from Chagas’s disease, first acquired in South America, wrote copiously on corals, orchids, insects, worms, plant breeding, and other biological issues.

**Charles Dickens** (1812–1870). Premier novelist of Victorian Britain. Born in Portsmouth and raised in London and Kent, Dickens’s schooling was incomplete, because he was forced to go to work at a shoe-polish factory when his father was imprisoned for debt. Later, he became a court and parliamentary reporter and mastered high-speed shorthand. His first fiction, *Pickwick Papers*, serialized in 1836, was an instant success and made him famous throughout the English-speaking world. He went on to edit *Bentley’s Miscellany* and, later, *Household Words*, monthly journals in which most of his subsequent eighteen novels were serialized. Among his most famous books are the semi-autobiographical *David Copperfield* (1850); *Oliver Twist* (1839), with its attack on the New Poor Law and its picture of the London underworld; and the historical *Tale of Two Cities* (1859), set in the era of the French Revolution. Dickens toured the United States in 1842, speaking on behalf of an international copyright law and reading from his novels. His marriage to Catherine Hogarth produced ten children, but he abandoned her in 1858 in favor of Ellen Ternan, an actress from the traveling theater company he had founded ten years before. His fiction is high-spirited, melodramatic, sentimental, and often highly satirical, providing a superb window onto many facets of Victorian life.

**Benjamin Disraeli** (1804–1881). Prime minister and founder of the modern Conservative Party. Disraeli, son of a Jewish convert to Anglicanism, was an unlikely man to succeed in British politics; it was even more surprising that he should rise to the leadership of the Conservatives, the party of the old landowning gentlemen. He did not go to one of the venerable public schools, nor to college. Instead, he traveled around Europe as a young dandy, ran up debts, enjoyed love affairs, and wrote a succession of novels that won him sympathetic notice among the upper classes. Entering Parliament as a Tory in 1837 after four unsuccessful attempts, Disraeli broke with his party leader, Sir Robert Peel, over the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. By the late 1840s, his organizational, oratorical, and parliamentary skills had pitched him into leadership of the protectionist Tory remnant in the House of Commons; he remained the leader of this minority throughout most of the 1850s and 1860s. Disraeli also made the most of brief intervals in office, as chancellor in 1852 and, finally, prime minister (briefly) in 1867, during which time he supervised the broadening of the electorate in the Second Reform Act. His victory in the 1874 election finally enabled him to dominate national affairs, which he did until 1880. His administration created a new mood of imperial pride, symbolized by his creation of Queen Victoria as empress of India, aggressive colonial expansion in Africa, and his purchase of a share in the Suez Canal.

**William Gladstone** (1809–1898). Liberal Party leader and four-time prime minister in the late Victorian era. Born to a wealthy Liverpool merchant, Gladstone was educated at Eton and Oxford and began his parliamentary career as an ardent Tory. He supported Peel on Corn-Law reform in 1846, an event that split the Tories, and in the late 1840s and 1850s, joined coalition governments under Whig leadership. Gladstone’s skill as a parliamentary manager and orator led to his appointment as Whig (or Liberal) leader in the House of Commons in 1865, and by 1868, he was undisputed party leader, taking over the premiership when his party won that year’s election. His administration introduced the secret ballot in 1871 and a national education act. Defeated by Disraeli’s Conservatives in 1874, Gladstone spent his spare time writing books on religion and the classics and tried to “rescue” prostitutes from the London streets. He returned to national leadership in 1880, having demonstrated that he was skilled at appealing to the newly expanded electorate. His government extended votes to most working-class men by the Third Reform Act of 1884 and shocked conventional English opinion in 1886 by supporting the idea of Home Rule for Ireland. He lost an election fought largely over this issue but became prime minister yet again, at the age of eighty-two, in 1892. His renewed attempt to introduce Irish Home Rule was defeated in the House of Lords, and he resigned in 1894.

**Charles George Gordon** (1833–1885). Soldier, imperial administrator, and evangelical Christian, who became the focus of world attention during the siege of Khartoum in 1885. While still a junior army officer in his early twenties, Gordon served with distinction in the Crimean War (where Britain’s French allies awarded him the Legion of Honour). He moved to China and took command of the “Ever-Victorious Army” in the Taiping Rebellion and wars between 1860 and 1864. Fearless and always willing to lead his soldiers in person, Gordon became a respected commander of native troops in different parts of (and beyond) the British Empire. In 1873, seconded to the Khedive
of Egypt, he worked as governor of the Sudan, where he struggled to impose elementary order and stamp out the Arab-African slave trade, policies that had largely succeeded by 1880.

At odds with the British government, which took direct control of Egypt in the early 1880s, Gordon resigned. However, the uprising of Mohamma Ahmed, a Dervish who was acclaimed in Sudan as a messiah, or “Mahdi,” threatened Egypt’s southern border. The failure of two Egyptian campaigns to suppress Ahmed led to Prime Minister Gladstone’s decision to send Gordon, who knew the area better than any other Briton, to evacuate the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, in January 1884. On his arrival, however, Gordon fortified the city instead and tried to inspire its garrison to hold out against the Mahdi. Pressure of public opinion in Britain, which regarded Gordon as a Christian hero, forced the reluctant Gladstone to send a relief column under General Garnet Wolseley to his rescue. This slow-moving army arrived just too late to prevent the Mahdi’s force from overrunning Khartoum. Gordon’s death there, about which heroic legends soon grew up, made him a martyr to Christian imperial idealists.

James Keir Hardie (1856–1915). The first independent Labour Party MP. Born illegitimately in Scotland, Hardie grew up in desperate poverty and was forced to become a coal miner at the age of eleven. Self-educated as a teenager, he began organizing a trade union in his early twenties and led a strike in 1880. As ringleader, he was fired, but he became an organizer of the Ayrshire Miners’ Union and, from there, rose rapidly to leadership of the Scottish Miners’ Federation. Hardie’s political beliefs were a mixture of socialism, pacifism, and Christianity; he became convinced that the ill-treated working men of Britain could not rely on Gladstone’s Liberal Party but should form an independent political party of their own. Elected to Parliament in 1892, Hardie caused a sensation by arriving at Parliament in a tweed suit and cloth cap rather than the traditional morning dress. He formed the Independent Labour Party the next year and advocated a succession of controversial workers’ issues in Parliament. Defeated in 1895, he remained a popular and charismatic speaker and played a key role in convening the Labour Representation Committee (1900), which developed into the modern Labour Party. He returned to Parliament that year as one of two MPs and witnessed the party’s power jump to twenty-nine seats, then forty, in the next two elections. He was not a particularly talented party manager, however, and many of his fellow MPs disagreed with his belief that women should be allowed to vote and that Britain ought not to take part in the First World War.

Charles Lyell (1797–1875). Leading Victorian geologist, whose work on the antiquity of the earth and the gradual nature of change over long periods of time was adopted by Darwin in his development of evolutionary theory. Lyell, the eldest of ten children born to an enthusiastic naturalist, was raised in comfortable circumstances, half in Scotland, half in England, and studied at Oxford to become a lawyer. His hobby, geology, became an obsession, however, and he devoted most of his adult life to geological fieldwork, coupled with extensive writings. The orthodox geological opinion in Lyell’s youth was that the earth was a few thousand years old (as biblical chronologies suggested) and that its distinctive valleys, caves, cliffs, and mountains had been formed by catastrophic events, such as Noah’s flood. Lyell theorized, to the contrary, that the same forces acting gradually in his own day, such as deposition and erosion, had always acted, transforming the world slowly and almost imperceptibly over tens of millions of years. His close study of exposed rock strata in cliffs, and the different fossils they contained, led Lyell to argue that extinction was a natural and continuing process. He traveled widely through Europe and North America, finally explaining his findings according to his new “uniformitarian” theory in Principles of Geology (1830–1833), part of which Darwin read en route to the Galapagos Islands. Widely admired in his own day, Lyell was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1848. Despite the importance of his work to Darwin, with whom he was on friendly terms, Lyell himself was distressed by the challenge that evolutionary theory presented to his Christian faith.

John Stuart Mill (1806–1873). Child prodigy, utilitarian philosopher, and advocate of women’s rights. The son of a distinguished philosopher, Mill was educated by his father to an incredible standard at an early age, mastering Greek, Latin, and mathematics before the age of ten—an education brilliantly evoked in his autobiography. An influential journalist among the London radicals, Mill supported all the advanced causes of the early Victorian age: parliamentary reform, the abolition of slavery, women’s rights, and justice for Irish farmers. However, he went through a crisis of confidence when he recognized that if all these hoped-for reforms were accomplished, he would not be made perfectly happy. He also worked for the East India Company, rising to the post of Chief Examiner, and later represented Westminster as a Member of Parliament. He conducted a long, intense, but possibly platonic love affair with his neighbor Harriet Taylor, whom he regarded as his intellectual superior, marrying her when her husband died in 1851. Among his most popular works, still widely read today, are On Liberty, The Subjection of Women, and Principles of Political Economy.
John Everett Millais (1829–1896). Pre-Raphaelite artist and portraitist. An artistic child prodigy, Millais entered London’s Royal Academy school when only eleven. As a seventeen-year-old student, one of his paintings (based on an incident in Pizarro’s conquest of Peru) was acclaimed at the Royal Academy exhibition. With two fellow students, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Holman Hunt, Millais created the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, a club that declared its intention of recapturing the artistic purity of the early Renaissance, before Raphael. The brotherhood was supposed to be secret, but when news of its members’ identity and pretensions leaked in 1850, a critical backlash made him the center of unfavorable publicity—Charles Dickens denounced his painting Christ in the House of His Parents. Millais reacted by asking John Ruskin, the era’s most prominent critic, to support him, which Ruskin did in letters to the London Times. Later, however, he met and fell in love with Ruskin’s wife, marrying her after she had won an annulment. Despite the claim of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood to challenge accepted standards, the members soon proved amenable to assimilation, and Millais became an Academy member in 1853. He was one of the two or three leading portraitists in London during the 1860s and 1870s and grew rich from commissions. In later years, his style became sentimental, as can be seen from his painting Bubbles, which a soap-company adopted for its advertisements.

John Henry Newman (1801–1890). Anglican preacher who became a Catholic cardinal. As a young Oxford don in 1833, Newman joined Hurrell Froude and John Keble to create the Oxford movement, whose pamphlet series, “Tracts for the Times,” argued the supernatural origins of the Church of England and tried to downplay its role as a branch of the state. By 1840, Newman had become convinced that Anglicanism was compatible in almost every way with Roman Catholicism, a view outlined in Tract 90, and he shocked many of his admirers by converting to Catholicism in 1845. He became an influential theologian and philosopher in the Catholic Church but often came into conflict with the Church hierarchy. His intellectual adventurousness clashed with the pope’s and bishops’ belief in the need to preserve and protect their faith from the powerful new intellectual currents of the nineteenth century. Newman lived in a community of Oratorian priests in Birmingham while his fellow convert, Henry Manning, went on to become the head of the Catholic Church in England. Newman’s reputation as one of the greatest Victorian writers was assured by his Apologia pro Vita Sua (1864), a spiritual autobiography in which he denied Charles Kingsley’s claim of religious insincerity and explained the tortuous mental path that had led to his conversion. In his old age, he was appointed cardinal by Pope Leo XIII and has remained one of the most influential English-language Catholic writers up to the present, inspiring generations of later converts.

Florence Nightingale (1890–1910). Pioneer nurse who made the job respectable for middle-class women and worked heroically for wounded British soldiers in the Crimean War. Born in Italy and named after a city her parents loved, Nightingale belonged to an upper-class family and was expected to cultivate the domestic, ladylike arts and find a suitable husband. She rebelled against this prospect and, despite parental opposition, visited Germany to study nursing. The outbreak of the Crimean War gave her a golden opportunity. By lobbying Sidney Herbert, a friend and government minister, she got permission to take thirty-eight nurses to the temporary British military hospital at Scutari, Turkey. There, she discovered horrible conditions of neglect and set out to improve the food, laundry, and sanitation arrangements and to give proper care to the wounded. Nicknamed “Lady of the Lamp” by the grateful convalescent soldiers, whose death rate fell sharply under her supervision, Nightingale returned home a national hero, receiving a medal from Queen Victoria. She devoted the rest of her life to lobbying for improved hospitals, proper medical care for soldiers, and formal training for nurses. Her gender—and her later invalidism—prevented her from playing as active a role in politics as she would have liked, but her many loyal male supporters brought her ideas into public circulation throughout the later Victorian era.

Charles Stewart Parnell (1846–1891). Irish nationalist leader in the 1880s. A Protestant squire from County Wicklow who entered Parliament in 1875, Parnell was an unlikely candidate to lead the Irish Home Rule movement. However, his parliamentary and oratorical skill enabled him to displace the Nationalist Party’s original leader, Isaac Butt. Under Parnell’s guidance, Irish MPs filibustered endlessly in Parliament, trying to prevent any other business from moving forward; Parnell hoped that the English would grant Irish Home Rule as a way of ridding Westminster of their obstruction. He kept abreast of developments among Irishmen in America and in the Irish Land War of the early 1880s (he was president of the National Land League). He served a spell in prison in 1881 under a new Coercion Act but, by 1886, had convinced Prime Minister Gladstone that Irish Home Rule was necessary. Gladstone’s Home Rule legislation failed to pass and split the Liberal Party. In 1887, parts of the British press insinuated that Parnell had been involved in the Phoenix Park murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish in 1881. He was exonerated in a sensational trial and resumed work for the Home Rule cause. His career in public life was
ruined in 1889 when news spread that he had been having a long-running love affair with Katharine O’Shea and had fathered at least three children with her.

Robert Peel (1788–1850). Tory prime minister whose decision to repeal the Corn Laws in 1846 split and temporarily wrecked his party. The son of a wealthy cotton manufacturer in Lancashire, Peel was educated at Harrow and Oxford and entered Parliament in a “rotten borough” at the age of twenty-one. He was Home Secretary in the government of the Duke of Wellington and, in 1829, created the London police force, whose early nickname was the “Peelers.” He also changed his mind that year over Catholic emancipation, introducing legislation for this reform that he had long opposed. Peel fought to prevent the Reform Act of 1832 on the grounds that the rotten boroughs enabled distinguished men to enter Parliament without having to fight wasteful election campaigns. After the act passed, he reconciled himself and his party to reform in the “Tamworth Manifesto” of 1834 (the year in which he first, briefly, became prime minister). Peel returned to power in 1841 and faced the great crisis of his life when the Irish potato blight caused widespread famine in 1846. Partly to alleviate the famine and partly in response to changing conditions of trade, Peel now promoted the repeal of the Corn Laws, enabling cheap food to flow into Britain from abroad and giving a corresponding boost to cheap British exports. Half his own party supported the repeal, but half, including Disraeli and many of the country gentlemen who had benefited from the law, opposed him fiercely, forcing his resignation. He remained influential among many Tories but died following a riding accident in 1850.

Cecil Rhodes (1853–1901). The leading figure in British South African expansion. Son of a Hertfordshire clergyman, Rhodes went to South Africa as a seventeen-year-old, planning to farm cotton with his brothers. Within a year, he had moved to the new diamond fields of Kimberley. He made an immense fortune there but spent parts of the 1870s back in Britain, at Oxford, where he finally finished his degree in 1881. Meanwhile, he created the DeBeers Consolidated Mining Company, which came to dominate the world’s diamond trade, and invested in new gold discoveries around Johannesburg. An ardent supporter of expanding the British Empire during the “scramble for Africa” era, Rhodes dreamed of building a continuous British presence and a railway from “the Cape [of Good Hope] to Cairo.” His supporters fought off foreign and Boer rivals to develop the lands that were later named “Rhodesia” (now Zimbabwe) in his honor. He tried to force Britain to annex the Boer republic of the Transvaal in 1895 by launching the Jameson Raid. It failed in the short term and obliged him to resign as prime minister of the Cape Colony in 1896. The action prepared the way for the Boer War (1899–1902), however, which ended in a British takeover. Most of the six million pounds he left after his death from heart disease in 1901 was devoted to the Rhodes scholarships for study at Oxford. He imagined the holders as an idealistic society of Anglo-Saxon men who would build international links and rule the world according to benevolent imperial ideas.

Lord Shaftesbury (1801–1885). Pioneer of social reform and factory legislation. Anthony Ashley Cooper, who inherited the family title of Lord Shaftesbury in 1851 on the death of his father, was an earnest evangelical Christian and an opponent of child labor. Entering Parliament in 1826, he soon took over leadership of the movement to prevent children from being put to work in mines and factories. He supervised passage of legislation in 1833 and 1842 designed to exclude children from textile factories and coal mines. Because too few inspectors were appointed to make the laws effective, he continued in later years to campaign against the horrifying exploitation of child labor throughout the workforce. Shaftesbury also promoted “ragged schools” for children who would otherwise have received no education and was president of the Ragged Schools’ Union for forty years. Only in the last years of his life did universal primary education become compulsory.

Shaftesbury’s political skills and aristocratic position entitled him to high government office. Although he was on good terms with most of the Victorian prime ministers (and was related to Palmerstone through his wife), he declined high office to dedicate his time to social and philanthropic reforms. Among his other achievements was legislation to improve the care of the mentally ill, many of whom he found to be cruelly neglected and abused; advocacy of Florence Nightingale’s proposed army and nursing reforms in Parliament; and legislation to prevent the building of unsanitary and overcrowded lodging houses. For his own tenants in Wimborne St. Giles, Dorset, he built a model village and subsidized a large London housing estate, the Shaftesbury Park Estate, to demonstrate the viability of safe, decent working-class housing. In all these reform efforts, he was sustained by an intense evangelical piety.

George Stephenson (1781–1848). Pioneer of railway building and locomotive engineering. Stephenson was the son of a Northumberland mine engineer and, at the age of twenty-one, became the engineman at Dewley Colliery (coal mine) near Newcastle on Tyne. Steam engines there, based on designs by Thomas Newcomen and James Watt, were
large, aboveground devices used for pumping floodwater out of the mines. Stephenson overcame the technical obstacles to building a self-moving steam locomotive, which could pull wagons loaded with coal along a metal track. Primitive horse-drawn railways already existed in the area, but the steam locomotive represented a massive increase in power.

Stephenson was appointed chief engineer of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (1825), which is regarded by most historians as the world’s first commercial steam railway. It prospered, taking advantage of Stephenson’s many improvements in flat track-bed design, iron rail construction, and an improved engine, Locomotion. In 1829, now with the help of his equally gifted son Robert, Stephenson also designed and built the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, taking the line across the swampland of Chat Moss, a nine-arched viaduct, a two-mile-long cutting, and other obstacles. The father and son also built a locomotive, the Rocket, which won a competition for the fastest and most reliable source of steam power on the line (it traveled at the then-incredible speed of thirty-six miles per hour). In later life, Stephenson continued to prosper as a railway engineer but also worked to improve coal miners’ safety and experimented in the cross-breeding of farm animals.

**Queen Victoria** (1819–1901). Queen of England for sixty-four years, between 1837 and 1901. Daughter of the Duke of Kent and a minor German princess, Victoria’s gender and her place in the line of succession made her unlikely to succeed. But the death of the male children before her in line led to her accession on the death of William IV in 1837. Dependent at first on the advice and guidance of Prime Minister Lord Melbourne, Victoria later became a capable supervisor of her government and knew how to maximize her influence even though she, as monarch, no longer wielded actual political power. She married Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha in 1840, the man whom some of her relatives had groomed for exactly this role. Albert brought a Germanic seriousness and moral high-mindedness to court and soon won his wife’s ardent affection and admiration. He was also able to impress senior figures in public life, overcoming their traditional xenophobia. His sudden death in 1861 plunged Victoria into a prolonged depression, and she wore black for the rest of her life. Among her later prime ministers, only Disraeli enjoyed her confidence and esteem—she disliked Gladstone. She also put great faith in a Scottish servant, John Brown, and later an Indian servant, “the Munshi.” By the time of her death, her many children and grandchildren linked Britain to every royal family in Europe.

**Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington** (1769–1852). Britain’s premier hero of the Napoleonic Wars, prime minister, and grand old man of British politics in Victoria’s early years. Wellesley, coming from an aristocratic family, mixed the advantages of rank with outstanding personal abilities as a soldier and statesman. After distinguished service in India in the 1790s, he returned to Britain, won a parliamentary seat, and accepted command of an expedition to Spain and Portugal against Napoleon. His victories in the Peninsula Campaign (1808–1812) made him a national hero, a position he consolidated by leading the victorious allied armies against Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815. He was granted a large Hampshire estate and the dukedom in 1814.

A strong conservative in politics, Wellington was also a political realist. He became Tory prime minister in 1828 and accepted the need for Catholic emancipation to forestall an Irish rebellion, even managing to persuade the king, George IV, of its necessity. He refused to lead the movement to reform Parliament (he considered the constitution virtually perfect as it was in 1830, his last year as prime minister) but acquiesced when Lord Grey’s government carried out the Great Reform Act of 1832. Skeptical of railways at first, especially after being booed at the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, Wellington gradually realized their significance to the nation and made a good deal of money in successful railway speculation after his retirement from Parliament in 1846.
Bibliography

General Works
Asa Briggs, *The Age of Improvement, 1783–1867* (New York: Longman’s Green, 1979). Briggs is a skillful writer and draws the reader into his own fascination with British history in this and many other books on Victoriana.

Specialized Works


Kenneth Bendiner, *An Introduction to Victorian Painting* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985). What the artists painted, who bought the pictures, how they were displayed and sold, and how the artists understood their world.

John Benson, *The Working Class in Britain, 1850–1939* (New York: Longman, 1989). A powerful reminder that the least articulate were the most numerous.


David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990). One of the superstars of contemporary historical writing explains the aristocracy’s long rearguard. All his other books are good, too.

Hugh Casson, *An Introduction to Victorian Architecture* (London: Art and Technics, 1948). Written at a time when Victorian architecture was totally out of fashion, it gives a hard look at what they built but ably explains the many styles, disputes, and debates.


Alan Haig, *The Victorian Clergy* (London: Croom, Helm, 1984). Who they were, why they became clergymen, what they did, and how they reacted to their age.

B. Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971). Britain never had Prohibition, but its Victorian temperance movement was keen to try the experiment if possible.


Philip Mason, *The Men Who Ruled India* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1985). The airs and graces of men who were ordinary in Britain but magnificent in remote imperial India.


Mark Ridley, ed., *The Darwin Reader* (New York: Norton, 1996). Selections from the great scientist’s works that give a sense of his life and literary idiom, as well as his ideas.


Hugh Small, *Florence Nightingale: Avenging Angel* (London: Constable, 1999). As the subtitle suggests, the ultimate Victorian heroine had a tough and rather unlikable side!


Peter Stansky, *Gladstone: A Progress in Politics* (Boston: Little Brown, 1979). One of the good shorter biographies of the Liberal giant—there are hundreds of long biographies of Gladstone, too!
Lytton Strachey, *Eminent Victorians* (New York: Putnam, 1918). A famous book by a leading member of the Bloomsbury Group, deflating and making ruthless fun of four famous Victorians. Still wonderful despite its biases; Strachey wrote a good biography of Queen Victoria, too.

E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Gollancz, 1963). Half the professional historians in the world cite this as the most influential and inspirational book they ever read—vital for everyone really getting deeply into the subject.


**Internet Resources**

Victorian Art in Britain, http://www.victorianartinbritain.co.uk

Victorian Costume, http://www.victoriancostume.org.uk

The Victorian Web: Literature, History and Culture in the Age of Victoria, http://65.107.211.206
Patrick Allitt is Professor of History at Emory University. He was born and raised in central England and attended schools near his home in Mickleover, Derbyshire. An undergraduate at Hertford College, Oxford, he graduated (1977) with honors in British and European History. After a year of travel, he studied for the history doctorate at the University of California, Berkeley. He was a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard in the mid-1980s and since 1988, has been on the faculty of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Professor Allitt is the author of three books, including *Catholic Converts: British and American Intellectuals Turn to Rome* (1997). He also writes frequent articles and reviews. In 1999, he won Emory’s Excellence in Teaching Award and, in 2000, was appointed to the N.E.H./Arthur Blank Professorship of Teaching in the Humanities. Professor Allitt keeps in touch with his homeland by spending about two months every year on a working holiday in Britain, teaching the history of Victorian England with Emory’s summer school, which is held at University College, Oxford. His wife, Toni, is American, a Michigan native, and they have a daughter, Frances, born in 1988.
# Table of Contents

## Victorian Britain

### Part III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor Biography</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Scope</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Twenty-Five</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Twenty-Six</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Twenty-Seven</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Twenty-Eight</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Twenty-Nine</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Thirty</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Thirty-One</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Thirty-Two</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Thirty-Three</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Thirty-Four</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Thirty-Five</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Thirty-Six</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations from Queen Victoria</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biographical Notes</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Victorian Britain

**Scope:**

Victorian Britain was a paradoxical society and one of extreme contrasts. On the one hand, it witnessed an unprecedented outpouring of inventions, scientific advances, and humanitarian reforms, backed by an array of outstanding literary and political figures. On the other hand, it practiced a harsh form of laissez-faire capitalism at home, which resulted in chronic poverty for most of the population, and harsh imperial policies abroad, which subordinated many of the peoples of Africa and Asia to British control. This course aims to explain how the Victorians lived with these contradictions and how Britain changed between the 1830s and 1900, perhaps more rapidly than any society in world history up to that time.

Queen Victoria reigned for sixty four years, longer than any other British monarch, and she stamped her vivid personality on the whole era, but she no longer enjoyed the sort of power that had been wielded by her ancestors. Instead, Britain moved cautiously toward a democratic political system. The oligarchy of 1830, in which only a small minority of men, and no women, enjoyed the vote and the right to sit in Parliament, was modified by Parliamentary Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, and 1884 so that by century’s end, most men at least were entitled to vote. Simultaneously, religious restrictions on political participation were lifted, enabling Methodists, Quakers, Catholics, and Jews, as well as members of diverse social classes, to take seats in Parliament. Despite these changes, however, the traditional land-based aristocracy retained immense political power and social influence; successful manufacturers often devoted their fortunes to buying their way into these ranks.

Rapid social change was facilitated by the Industrial Revolution, which had been gathering force in the decades before Victoria’s accession. The harnessing first of water power, then steam power, to the manufacture of cotton textiles in factories initiated the revolution. Developments in coal mining, iron and steel making, ceramics, and transportation accelerated it. First canals, then railways, which began to crisscross the land in the 1830s, speeded up the pace of economic life and increased its scale. The railway builders, particularly the father-and-son team George and Robert Stephenson, along with Isambard Kingdom Brunel, featured largely in this transformation; Brunel’s visionary genius was further shown in his construction of the world’s first oceangoing steamships.

Along with industrialization came urbanization. Such industrial cities as Manchester, Liverpool, and Sheffield grew so fast that infrastructure development could not keep pace. In consequence, tens of thousands of industrial workers and their families found themselves living in squalid, hastily built houses, severely overcrowded, and without access to safe drinking water supplies or proper sanitation. These factors, along with overwork, poor nutrition, a smoke-filled environment, and dangerous working conditions, contributed to regular epidemics and a low life expectancy for most working-class communities. Death at any age was common and child mortality, high. Many occupations, moreover, had characteristic illnesses of their own, such as the lung diseases suffered by Britain’s hundreds of thousands of coal miners. A few impoverished areas in every city, such as London’s squalid “rookeries,” became breeding grounds of violent crime. Middle- and upper-class people moved away from these dangerous areas whenever they could, furthering the class gulf between Britain’s haves and have-nots.

Britain’s technological superiority enabled its industries to dominate world markets for the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century, especially when the industrialists’ growing political influence had established a free-trade regime. British imperial development accelerated at the same time. British merchants forced opium, grown in India, onto a reluctant China in a series of “Opium Wars” that seem particularly disgraceful in retrospect. After the Indian Mutiny of 1857, the British government took over direct control of this most important colony from the Honorable East India Company, which had run it privately for the last century. In suppressing the mutiny, in which atrocities had been committed against some of their civilians, the British demonstrated a ruthless ferocity. In the same years, hardy explorers, such as Richard Burton and David Livingstone, were charting the still-unknown interior of Africa, soon to be followed by trade, missionaries, and the Union Jack. In the last years of the nineteenth century, Britain’s European rivals joined her in an undignified “scramble for Africa” and its potential sources of wealth.

Historians often treat the Great Exhibition of 1851 as a symbol of mid-Victorian prosperity and self-confidence. The exhibition was held in the Crystal Palace, a prefabricated structure of iron and glass that was quickly erected in Hyde Park; the structure was elegant, sturdy, and light and delighted visitors from all over Britain and abroad. Built by Joseph Paxton, its ultra-modern style, echoed in the glass arches of Paddington and St. Pancras railway stations, stands in strong juxtaposition to the other great public building style of Victorian Britain, Gothic Revival. Gothic’s
champions included Charles Barry and Augustus Pugin, the architects of the new Houses of Parliament (which are now probably the most well known buildings in Britain), and George Gilbert Scott. Britain’s wealth created a growing market for innovative architects, just as the growing middle class created a market for paintings and literature. The Pre-Raphaelite movement in art and the dramatic, serialized literature of Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, and George Eliot remain as yardsticks of the Victorians’ creativity and inventiveness.

The later portions of the course will show how Britain began to lose its supremacy. The death of Prince Albert, Queen Victoria’s husband, in 1861, cast a shadow of grief over the monarch herself from which she never fully emerged. Meanwhile Union victory in the American Civil War and the unification of Germany in 1870 gave notice that two great industrial rivals were about to challenge Britain’s supremacy. Despite the advantages of her early lead, Britain was unable to keep pace with German and American industrial innovations and gradually retreated to a policy of trading in the protected area of its worldwide empire. This strategy, successful in the short term, enabled Britain to postpone the day of reckoning. Paradoxically, however, it turned the appearance of immense world-striding strength into a growing liability, which would ensure the rapid decline of British power in the twentieth century. The inner vulnerability of the empire could have been glimpsed earlier, not only with the Indian Mutiny but also in the catastrophic Irish famine of 1846–1850 and recurrent friction with South Africa’s Dutch-descended Boers between 1880 and 1898.

Despite ominous signs, however, Britain still seemed to be master of the world in the last decades of the nineteenth century, when it enjoyed the leadership of such brilliant prime ministers as Benjamin Disraeli (the man who adapted British Conservatism to a more democratic era) and the sternly moralistic Liberal William Gladstone. Queen Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee (sixty years on the throne) in 1897 with a triumphant parade, including soldiers from every corner of the empire. The mood of the time was captured by the poet Rudyard Kipling when he urged Britons (and Anglo-Saxon Americans) to “take up the white man’s burden” and bring the blessings of their Christian civilization to what he thought of as the less fortunate races of the world.

The growing strength of trade unions, and political recognition that they would become a permanent part of society, led to the rise, as the century turned, of the Labour Party, which was destined within twenty years to become and to remain one of the nation’s two major political forces. War against the Boers from 1898 suddenly showed that British redcoats, complacent after years of easy victory against primitive societies, were not assured of automatic victory when they faced well-armed, well-trained guerrillas defending their homelands. When Queen Victoria died in 1901, she left the nation in a world full of potential enemies, no longer so amenable to British direction as it had been in the years of her early reign. Twentieth-century Britain was indelibly marked by the Victorian legacy, for good and ill, and the course ends with a glimpse at some of these lasting effects.
Lecture Twenty-Five

Education

Scope: At the beginning of the Victorian era, more than half the British population could not read or write. By the end of it, nearly everyone had some elementary literacy. The spread of the vote (in the Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884) underlined the need for an educated electorate. Parliament legislated to promote elementary schooling for all in 1871 and made it compulsory in 1880. Until then, a wide variety of educational practices had prevailed in a highly decentralized environment, from the simple rural dame school at one extreme, to the famous “public” (i.e., private) schools, Eton and Harrow, at the other. Corporal punishment was integral to education at all levels and some of the public schools followed what now look like sadomasochistic practices. The high-minded reform of the public schools was led by Dr. Thomas Arnold at Rugby and fondly commemorated by his pupil Thomas Hughes in *Tom Brown’s Schooldays* (1857). By the late Victorian era, sports, especially cricket, were emphasized more highly than the academic curriculum was. By 1900, most of the elite schools regarded their principal role not as an intellectual one but as the producers of Christian gentlemen. University education broadened in the Victorian era from the training of clergymen to a cautious embrace of the new sciences and humanities. The first colleges for women appeared at Oxford and Cambridge, but the students were subjected to strict chaperonage.

Outline

I. Education was highly localized and varied in quality depending on location.
   A. Dame schools gave rural children the elements of an education.
      1. Learning was almost entirely by memorization and recitation.
      2. Masters and mistresses enforced discipline with a cane.
   B. The Education Act of 1870 introduced universal education for children up to the age of thirteen.
      1. Recent wars in America and Germany appeared to give the advantage to the more educated population.
      2. Extension of the franchise (1867) made the need for wider education urgent.
      3. The government hoped to economize and maintain local initiatives but found religious obstacles difficult to circumvent.
      4. Further legislation of 1880 made attendance compulsory and cost-free.

II. The famous British public schools were transformed in the Victorian era.
   A. They were not public in the American sense, but private boarding schools.
      1. Eton and Harrow were the most distinguished.
      2. Keate and other headmasters practiced brutal flogging, but punishment was theatrical and ritualized.
      3. Other public schools were scandalously brutal and negligent.
   B. These schools experienced an era of reform following Thomas Arnold’s transformation of Rugby from 1827.
      1. Arnold wanted to help boys conquer the evil in their nature and become Christian gentlemen.
      2. Thomas Hughes’s *Tom Brown’s Schooldays* (1857) is a thinly fictionalized account of Arnold’s Rugby.
   C. The cult of sports, especially rugby and cricket, was emphasized more strongly than the academic curriculum.

III. Britain gradually recognized the need for an improved higher educational system.
   A. The Anglican monopoly of Oxford and Cambridge students ended in the 1850s.
   B. Non-Anglican fellows (teachers) were also permitted after 1871.
   C. Outstanding teachers, such as Benjamin Jowett, Master of Balliol College, Oxford, began to seek out brilliant but poor students.
D. New universities began to teach science, which Oxford and Cambridge had neglected.

IV. A few Victorian women also began to seek educational opportunities.
   A. London University admitted women in 1848.
   B. The first women’s colleges at Oxford and Cambridge were founded in 1868 (Oxford) and 1869 (Cambridge). Women were excluded from degrees until 1920.

V. Education at home remained a popular alternative to schooling.
   A. John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) was educated at home by his father, James Mill, beginning at the age of three.
      1. Mill’s father was incredibly attentive to his son’s progress and held him to the highest standards.
      2. Mill undertook very difficult work from the earliest age and claimed anyone else could do it, too.
      3. As an eight-year-old, he was also required to tutor his younger brothers and sisters in Latin.
      4. He believed that the education he had experienced could have been enjoyed, with profit, by any child.
   B. Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) was educated first by his brother, then by tutors, and finally, at Cambridge University.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
Bertrand Russell, Autobiography, Volume I.

Questions to Consider:
1. Why did the Victorians acquiesce to so much physical punishment of children?
2. What was the motive behind Victorian educational reforms and improvements?
Lecture Twenty-Six

Trade Unions and the Labour Party

Scope: British working-class people assumed that they and their children would remain members of the working class, and they often took pride in their way of life. This attitude of class solidarity facilitated the growth of strong trade unions and, later, the birth and development of the Labour Party. The Combination Acts, designed to prevent British workers from overthrowing their “betters,” as the French Jacobins had done, put a brake on unions at first, but after the repeal of these acts, unions spread quickly, especially among skilled workers. The Sheffield Outrages of 1866 showed that unions would sometimes intimidate men who were reluctant to join, but the Trades Union Congress (TUC), founded in 1868, tried to emphasize the moderation and responsibility of most union members. A wave of strikes by unskilled workers in the 1880s (match girls and dockers) increased the ranks of organized labor influence, as did the victory of Keir Hardie, who became the first independent working-class member of Parliament in 1892. After years of hesitation, the TUC created the Labour Party in 1900. The Taff Vale Case of 1901 appeared to threaten the very existence of unions and led to Labour’s rapid growth and huge gains in the election of 1906.

Outline

I. Unionization was hampered at first by a hostile legal environment.
   A. The Combination Acts of 1799 were designed to prevent revolutionary, or “Jacobin,” activities in Britain.
      1. Friendly societies were permitted, for workers to gather funds against accident and to pay for funerals and widows’ pensions.
      2. They were often drinking clubs, too, meeting at pubs.
   B. Some early nineteenth-century workers practiced Luddism, breaking machines.
   C. The Combination Acts were repealed in 1824, but the law against conspiracy remained restrictive.
   D. In 1834, a number of Dorset farm workers who were trying to unionize were convicted and transported to Australia for seven years; the group was known as the “Tolpuddle Martyrs.”
   E. Unions created elaborate rituals, decorative banners, marching bands, and other signs of dignity and pride.
   F. The Grand National Union of 1834 proved too unwieldy to succeed; it failed when it was unable to coordinate strikes and when its first national treasurer ran away with the union’s funds.

II. Large-scale unions organized effectively after 1850, taking advantage of the nationwide railway network and an improving legal situation.
   A. The “junta” of skilled union leaders from the “aristocracy of labour” favored a cautious approach to employers and strong internal discipline.
      1. They advocated temperance and Victorian family values.
      2. Strikes succeeded through community cooperation and solidarity.
   B. The “aristocracy of labour” disliked the Sheffield Outrages of 1866 (which gave trade unions a bad name because of their intimidation tactics) and joined the appeal for a royal commission of inquiry.
   C. The Trades Union Congress (TUC) was created in 1868.
      1. Its first meeting, at Manchester, brought together 34 delegates representing about 120,000 workers.
      2. Six years later, 169 delegates appeared, representing more than a million members.
      1. Because the 1867 Second Reform Act gave many workers the vote, members of Parliament realized that they had to show sympathy for the needs of workers.
      2. In 1875, Parliament decriminalized striking.
   E. Unskilled workers managed to unionize in the late 1880s, swelling union ranks.
      1. Annie Besant led the match girls to victory in 1888.
      2. John Burns and Tom Mann led the dockyard workers in 1889 for the “dockers’ tanner.”
III. The TUC gradually became convinced in the 1890s that direct political action was necessary.

A. A minority of socialists advocated revolutionary activity
   1. Among them were Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.
   2. H. M. Hyndman ran a tiny Social Democratic Federation that was committed to revolutionary socialism.
   3. Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, and William Morris were more often sources of British recruits to socialism than Marx was.

B. Gradual socialists were more common, especially the influential Fabians (founded in 1884), led by Beatrice and Sidney Webb. They supported the Second International, founded in 1889.

C. The first “Lib-Lab” politicians, two miners, entered Parliament in 1874.

D. A Scottish coal miner, Keir Hardie, entered Parliament in 1892 as an independent Labour politician.
   1. Hardie urged the TUC to create a party of its own.
   2. He presided over the creation of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) in 1893.

E. Employers began to unite against a perceived socialist threat; they created a lobby in 1898, the Employers’ Parliamentary Council.

F. The unions, in turn, accepted the need for political action and created the Labour Representation Committee in 1900.

G. The Taff Vale Case of 1901, decided in the House of Lords, made a union liable for employers’ losses during a strike.
   1. The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants lost £32,000 in damages and costs.
   2. Every union realized it could at once face ruin.

H. This case galvanized the TUC into supporting the Labour Representation Committee.

I. In the election of 1906, the Labour Representation Committee won fifty-four seats and at once became a major participant in national politics by insisting on passage of a Trades Disputes Act to repeal the Taff Vale verdict.

IV. The legacy of trade union developments, good and bad, would be felt throughout the twentieth century, contributing both to the improvement of workers’ pay and conditions and to Britain’s loss of industrial supremacy.

Essential Reading:
John Benson, *The Working Class in Britain*.

Supplementary Reading:
K. D. Brown, *The English Labour Movement*.

Questions to Consider:
1. Why did British workers create an independent political party while the Americans did not?
2. Why was it difficult for strikes to succeed?
Scope: Crime was widespread in Victorian Britain, sometimes having political overtones, as when citizens rioted on behalf of their ideals of justice. Much more crime was practiced by the poor, out of need or out of desire. The “rookeries” in which many of the poor lived were regarded by middle-class observers as strongholds of a “criminal class,” and there was some truth to this belief. The police, founded in London in 1829 and elsewhere in the 1830s, got to know the practitioners of the many varieties of urban crime and used networks of informers to solve crimes. Methods of punishment changed with changing ideas about criminality; the death penalty was imposed less often, and public executions—a great entertainment and public spectacle—were discontinued in 1868. Experiments in prison reform bore witness to changing sociological theories, often imposing unexpected hardships on condemned men. The maturing of commercial society led to the abolition of debtors’ prisons in 1869.

Outline

I. Crime was widespread in Victorian Britain.
   A. Sometimes it had political overtones.
      1. Popular desire to uphold moral norms provoked rioting.
      2. Welsh protests against toll roads took the form of “Rebecca riots” led by men disguised as women.
      3. Attacks on strike-breakers in Welsh collieries were made by “Scotch cattle,” men in black face.
   B. Crime could be correlated with economic conditions and was scarcer in wartime, more common in peace.
   C. Middle-class observers regarded large groups of the urban poor as “the criminal classes.”
      1. Dwellers in overcrowded urban “rookeries” were often involved in criminal activity and protected one another.
      2. “The Holy Land” area of London had a system of built-in defenses to protect the hundreds of thieves who lived there.

II. Urban criminals had numerous specialties.
      3. Children played a large role in pickpocketing—Dickens’s Oliver Twist was based on real examples of pickpocket “families.”
      4. The “swell mob” posed as gentry and targeted the richest victims at such social events as Royal Ascot.
   B. A “kinchin lay” was a theft from children; “skinning” involved stealing children’s clothes.
   C. “Snowing” was stealing laundry from lines or from laundresses carrying hampers from their sources to the laundries.
   D. “Divers” and “cracksmen” were housebreakers and burglars; the presence of servants was both an obstacle to, and an opportunity for, burglars.
   E. “Rampsmen” were Victorian muggers.
      1. Fear of garroting became a national obsession in 1862.
      2. Footpads sometimes worked with women who lured men into alleys or arches; this method was called “bearing up.”
   F. “Baby farmers,” usually women, disposed of unwanted children; Mary Hall and Margaret Walters were both convicted of murdering children in their care.

III. The police became adept at opposing known criminals.
   A. Home Secretary Robert Peel founded the Metropolitan Police in 1829.
   B. They monitored the “rookeries” and employed informants.
   C. Legislation of the 1830s introduced police forces to other towns.
D. In 1842, the detective force was founded.

IV. Ideas about punishment changed during the Victorian era.
   A. In the 1830s, the death penalty was less frequently imposed.
   B. In 1837, the number of capital offences was reduced from more than two hundred to fifteen and further reduced in 1861 to just four.
   C. Executions were great public spectacles and entertainments.
      1. Dickens and others protested against them.
      2. In 1868, public executions ended.
   D. Sentences were more severe for crimes against property than for crimes against people.
   E. Transportation to Australia ended in 1853.
   F. Prison design responded to new sociological theories.
      1. The hulks were gradually phased out.
      2. Prisoners in Coldbath Fields, “the Steel,” and other tough prisons worked on the treadmill, the shot drill, or the crank.
      3. Pentonville, a model prison, used solitary confinement.
      4. Imprisonment for debt ended in 1869.
   G. In the 1870s, the “rookeries” were gradually broken up.

Essential Reading:
Kellow Chesney, *The Victorian Underworld.*

Supplementary Reading:
Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist.*

Questions to Consider:
1. Why was crime so widespread in Victorian cities?
2. Why did styles of punishment change?
Lecture Twenty-Eight
Gladstone and Disraeli: 1865–1881

Scope: William Gladstone and Benjamin Disraeli were the two towering political leaders of mid- and late Victorian Britain. They were both prime ministers and larger-than-life figures, whose brilliant political abilities enabled them to adjust to the nation’s rapidly changing character. Gladstone’s origins in a wealthy Liverpool merchant family and his aristocratic marriage made him a political “insider” of the first rank. As he aged, however, he became progressively more radical, abandoning his early Tory principles and emerging as a pro-democratic Liberal leader in the mid-1860s. Disraeli, Jewish by birth, was an absolute outsider, but after an exuberant youth, he settled to the task of climbing through the ranks of, then running, the Tory party. Between 1867 and 1881, the two men alternated in the premiership, each building a party organization and trying to create a new and more democratic political style. Their conflict over the morality of foreign policy in the years 1876–1880 marked their final great confrontation.

Outline

I. Gladstone (1809–1898) embodied many of the classic Victorian characteristics.
   A. He was the son of an immensely wealthy businessman.
      1. His father, a Liverpool merchant, had made his fortune in the West Indies slave and sugar trade.
      2. He went to Eton and Oxford (scoring a double first in mathematics and classics) and married into the Whig aristocracy, which gave him great political advantages.
   B. Gladstone was a devoutly religious man.
      1. His first book was a three-volume study of Homer, in which he claimed the Greek poet foresaw the doctrine of the Trinity.
      2. He feared and despised Catholicism.
      3. A strong believer in church-state union, he eventually realized that he would have to abandon it in practical politics.
   C. He was a puritanical moralist.
      1. He tried to “rescue” prostitutes from the London streets.
      2. He sternly regulated his own moral conduct.
   D. He was an expert on efficiency and economy and loved the details of political life.
      1. His annual budget speeches of 1852–1855 and 1859–1866 were dramatic occasions.
      2. He established the tradition that the British Chancellor of the Exchequer is the second most important politician—after the prime minister—in the country.
   E. Gladstone began his political life as a Tory, followed Peel over corn law repeal, and became a leading Liberal in the 1860s.
   F. Unlike most people then and now, his political ideas became steadily more radical as he grew older.

II. Disraeli (1804–1881) was an unlikely outsider, whose rise to power contradicts the Victorian stereotype.
   A. He was Jewish, became a nominal Anglican, but showed no interest in religion.
      1. His father converted the family to Anglicanism in 1817.
      2. His love of Jewish antiquity merged with his admiration for the ancient aristocratic traditions of Britain.
      3. He risked the wrath of the Tory gentlemen in 1848 to vote for Jewish emancipation.
   B. Disraeli misspent his youth, incurred large debts, and indulged in notorious love affairs.
      1. He did not go to public school or university
      2. He did not have a profession.
      3. He did not make a politically advantageous marriage.
      4. He was not a landowner until some political friends bought him an estate when he was already in his forties.
   C. He wrote a series of novels about high society but also about Britain’s changing social conditions.
D. He was a brilliant parliamentarian.
   1. Denied cabinet office by Robert Peel, Disraeli split with Peel in 1846 over repeal of the Corn Laws.
   2. The Tory Protectionists witnessed the dismantling of nearly all British tariffs in the late 1840s, despite Disraeli’s vigorous opposition.
   3. He was undisputed Tory Commons leader from 1852 but nearly always in opposition until 1867.

III. Both Disraeli and Gladstone contributed to the democratization of Britain and the creation of modern political parties.
   A. Gladstone was impressed by the hard work and sobriety shown by much of the working class and believed that its enfranchisement would not be politically destabilizing.
      1. He lost his Oxford University seat (the university then had its own seats, separate from those of the City of Oxford) in the 1865 election after speaking up for franchise extension.
      2. He supported electoral reform in 1866 and 1867, but his cautious franchise reform bill was defeated by a combination of Conservatives and moderate Liberals.
   B. Disraeli, becoming prime minister in 1867, carried the Second Reform Act through Parliament.
      1. The Second Reform Act is an outstanding example of Disraeli’s ability to shift with the wind in his political views. It was far more sweeping than Gladstone’s act had been and gave the vote to all householding males.
      2. Disraeli was confident that a significant part of the working class could be persuaded to vote Conservative, and he was right.
   C. Through the rest of the nineteenth and all of the twentieth centuries, Conservatives relied on working-class votes, as well as those of the middle and upper classes.
      1. The Labour Party was never able to monopolize the working-class vote.
      2. The tradition of social deference was so strong in England that many working-class people believed that everyone had a station in life and that workers should support their “betters.”
   D. Disraeli lost the election of 1868; in the short run, his gamble had failed.
      1. For the next several years, he focused on building up the party throughout the provinces and establishing the general principles of “Tory democracy.”
      2. His political agent, Sir John Gorst, suggested an annual Conservative Party conference, which has taken place ever since.
   E. Gladstone regained the premiership in 1868 and continued the process of democratization.
      1. In 1872, his government introduced the secret ballot, which effectively reduced the incidence of bribery and corruption that had marked earlier elections.
      2. He introduced mandatory education for all children.
   F. The electoral pendulum swung back to Disraeli’s Conservatives in 1874.
      1. Disraeli advanced social legislation against laissez-faire Liberal opposition.
      2. He encouraged sanitary reform and passed the Public Health Act in 1875 and the Sale of Food and Drugs Act.
      3. He supervised legislation to strengthen trade unionists’ security and picketing rights.
      4. Disraeli never believed in social equality, but he was a realistic politician who could pragmatically adapt to new circumstances and make the best of situations that he would not, himself, have chosen.

IV. The two leaders’ foreign policy ideas clashed.
   A. Disraeli was guided by considerations of national interest, not morality, which appeared patriotic to his admirers but Machiavellian to his adversaries.
      1. He made Queen Victoria empress of India.
      2. He bought a half share in the Suez Canal in 1875.
      3. He understood the emotional power of “jingoism” and used it on behalf of his anti-Russian Eastern European policy in the late 1870s. (The Russians were threatening to dominate Eastern Europe under the pretext of protecting Bulgarian Christians, who had been attacked by the Turks.)
      4. Disraeli mobilized Britain’s armed forces as a deterrent to the Russians, who Disraeli claimed, could pose a threat to British interest in the Suez Canal.
      5. The Congress of Berlin (1878) forestalled open war and marked Disraeli’s greatest diplomatic coup.
B. Gladstone detested Disraeli’s use of jingoism and came out of retirement to oppose it.
   1. He considered Disraeli’s Balkan policy disgracefully immoral.
   2. He reentered Parliament in 1880 as an MP for Midlothian (Edinburgh) after a stirring series of campaign speeches.

C. The Liberal Party won the 1880 election. Gladstone resumed the premiership and tried to apply universal and Christian moral principles to foreign policy.

D. Disraeli’s death in 1881 brought the long rivalry to an end.

**Essential Reading:**
Paul Smith, *Disraeli: A Brief Life.*
Peter Stansky, *Gladstone: A Progress in Politics.*

**Supplementary Reading:**
Roy Jenkins, *Gladstone.*
S. Weintraub, *Disraeli.*

**Questions to Consider:**
1. How successfully did Gladstone and Disraeli adapt to the wider electoral situation?
2. In Britain’s foreign policy of the late 1870s, which should have taken precedence: morality or national interest?
Lecture Twenty-Nine
Ireland and Home Rule

Scope:
As Britain became more democratic, especially after the introduction of the secret ballot, Ireland began to elect Catholic MPs, most of whom belonged to the Home Rule Party. Irish poverty was increasing in the unfavorable world trade climate of the late 1870s and early 1880s, and Irish tenant farmers were being evicted from their land. A charismatic leader, Charles Stewart Parnell, became their head, winning the support of Ireland’s farmers, Irish-Americans, and the Home Rule MPs. He organized boycotts of Irish landlords and tried to disrupt the ordinary operations of political life in Britain with parliamentary filibusters. In 1885–1886, the issue of Home Rule convulsed Parliament, and Gladstone astonished friends and foes alike by declaring his support for Home Rule. His legislation failed and the Liberal Party broke up, with important sections defecting to the Conservatives, who opposed Home Rule and supported Ulster’s Protestant Unionists. Parnell himself carried on the struggle, was exonerated from charges of supporting terrorism, but was fatally compromised by a divorce scandal in 1890.

Outline

I. Post-famine Ireland remained poor and much of it was bitterly anti-English.
   A. The Fenians, a revolutionary group, drew on Irish-Americans’ support for independence. American Fenians launched an invasion of Canada in 1866 and another in 1870.
   B. The predominantly Catholic Home Rule Party under Isaac Butt, a Protestant lawyer, tried to secure Irish independence within a British federation.
   C. Gladstone had disestablished the Irish church in 1869.
   D. An agricultural depression in the late 1870s led to a new wave of hunger and evictions.
      1. Most landlords were themselves in debt and regarded steady payment of their tenants’ rent as vital to their solvency.
      2. Farming in Britain and Ireland was becoming vulnerable to American competition as the Great Plains were opened up.
   E. The Land League opposed evictions by threats and intimidation. Beginning in County Mayo in the west, it was led by Charles Stewart Parnell.

II. Parnell led the Home Rule Party in Parliament after 1880, as well as the Land League, and his personality dominated Anglo-Irish politics for the next decade.
   A. He came from an Anglo-Irish Protestant “ascendancy” family in County Wicklow and was educated at Cambridge.
      1. He had the confidence and leadership of a born aristocrat.
      2. His mother was American.
      3. He went to Parliament in 1875 and became Home Rule Party leader in 1880.
   B. His Home Rule MPs disrupted parliamentary business with filibusters.
      1. They forced a continuous forty-one-hour session of Parliament in early 1881.
      2. Parnell consolidated his position with a spellbinding speaking tour of America in 1880.
   C. Parnell became a folk hero among the Irish poor for his outspoken opposition to evictions.
      1. The year 1880 alone saw 10,000 evictions for nonpayment of rent.
      2. “Captain Midnight” was a mythical rebel and rick-burner.
      3. Lord Mountmorres, a severe landlord, was murdered in 1880.
      4. Parnell organized the campaign against Captain Boycott.
   D. Prime Minister Gladstone imprisoned Parnell under his Coercion Act in 1881, but then negotiated the “Kilmainham Treaty.”
      1. Gladstone offered to release Parnell and other Home Rule leaders and to give increased security of tenure to poor farmers with a Land Reform Act.
      2. In return, they promised to pacify Ireland.
A few days later, the “Invincibles” assassinated Gladstone’s Chief Secretary for Ireland, Lord Frederick Cavendish, in Phoenix Park, Dublin.

III. Gladstone introduced Home Rule legislation for Ireland in 1886.
   A. The Liberal party split into a pro-Home Rule branch and a Unionist branch.
      1. The legislation did not pass the House of Commons and certainly would not have passed the Lords.
      2. Joseph Chamberlain and other prominent members of the government resigned.
   B. The six Ulster counties, with a majority Protestant population, reacted with displays of fierce pro-Unionism.
      1. These counties also made up the one industrialized area, including Belfast and the Harland and Wolff shipyards.
      2. Many Conservative MPs became staunch Unionists.

IV. A press campaign could not destroy Parnell, but he was ruined by a divorce scandal.
   A. The Times ran a series of articles alleging that Parnell had ordered the Phoenix Park murders of 1881.
      1. Richard Piggott, an Irish journalist, had forged letters to make this connection.
      2. The Times series was entitled “Parnellism and Crime” and carried the paper’s first ever double-column headline.
      3. An official commission of inquiry exonerated Parnell.
   B. The O’Shea divorce case ruined his reputation.
      1. Katherine O’Shea, a married woman, had been his mistress for the previous ten years.
      2. Her husband sued for divorce in 1889, brought the affair into the open, and forced Gladstone to disavow alliance with Parnell.
      3. Parnell married Kitty but lost the support of two-thirds of the parliamentary Home Rule Party. He died suddenly in 1891 at age forty-five.

V. In 1892, Gladstone became prime minister again.
   A. Again, he introduced Home Rule legislation, which was passed in the House of Commons but defeated in the House of Lords.
   B. The failure of Home Rule set the stage for much worse upheavals, including the 1916 Easter uprising and the revolution and civil war of the early post-World War I period.

Essential Reading:
F. S. L. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine.

Supplementary Reading:
Alan O’Day, Parnell and the First Home Rule Episode.
R. F. Foster, Charles Stewart Parnell: The Man and His Family.

Questions to Consider:
1. Why did so many influential Britons regard the idea of Irish Independence with horror?
2. What mix of personal and political factors made Parnell so successful in the 1880s?
Lecture Thirty
Democracy and Its Discontents

Scope: The nature of British political life changed in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. With the exception of Gladstone, all the great figures of mid-Victorian political life had retired or died. Gladstone became increasingly radical in his old age, as could be seen in his denunciations of the Lords, his support for Home Rule, and his support for the rights of an atheist member of Parliament. Disraeli’s successor as Tory leader, Lord Salisbury, was opposed to the democratization of Britain but in practice, handled its consequences shrewdly and showed, by his appointments and political style, that Britain was still, in many respects, dominated by its aristocracy. Both prime ministers were affected by the rising national enthusiasm for the empire, which grew dramatically after 1880. Superficially a sign of Britain’s ever-growing strength, this growth actually disguised crucial underlying weaknesses, especially in the economy, which augured Britain’s eventual decline. For the moment, however, the empire seemed impressive and enjoyed the talented leadership of Joseph Chamberlain.

Outline

I. Political leadership passed to a new generation in the 1880s, with only Gladstone remaining a dominant figure from the earlier era.
   A. Gladstone was nicknamed the Grand Old Man in 1881 and seemed, to younger politicians, almost a living legend.
   B. He introduced two important acts to extend the democratization of politics.
      1. The Corrupt Practices Act (1883) prevented election bribery.
      2. The Third Reform Act (1884) extended the vote to rural working-class men.
      3. Gladstone became increasingly mistrustful of the elite, whom he nicknamed “the Ten Thousand,” or “the West End of London.”
   C. He supported the right of an atheist, Charles Bradlaugh, to sit in Parliament.
      1. Bradlaugh opposed monarchy, believed in birth control, and denied the existence of God.
      2. Northampton elected him in 1880, and he asked to affirm rather than swear the usual MP’s oath.
      3. Gladstone described his opinions as “loathsome and revolting” but spoke on behalf of admitting him in a long speech of 1883.
   D. Gladstone’s final ministry (1892–1894) again foundered on Home Rule.

II. Lord Salisbury, Conservative leader, dominated British politics between 1886 and Victoria’s death in 1901.
   A. He came from one of Britain’s oldest and most distinguished political families and was educated at Eton and Oxford.
      1. He saw democracy as dangerous, too subject to the sway of sudden passion and demagoguery.
      2. He preferred a Conservative alliance with the middle classes to Disraeli’s idea of a “Tory democracy” alliance with the working class.
      1. The Primrose League, founded in 1883, invoked the memory of Disraeli and involved more than a million members in its local branches.
      2. Many old Whigs joined the Conservative Party after 1886.
      3. Salisbury’s cabinets consisted mainly of landowning aristocrats, many of them interrelated.

III. New world conditions in the 1880s and 1890s prompted a new approach to British foreign policy.
   A. British economic dominance was declining in the face of serious challenges from Germany and America.
      1. American food supplies created a widespread agricultural depression in Britain.
      2. British manufacturers were no longer competitive.
      3. British firms neglected mechanization, research and development, and technical education.
   B. Unionization often led to the deterioration of relations between workers and managers, and management was not adventurous.
1. Unions often introduced rigid demarcation principles, which left no latitude for workers to do new kinds of work as conditions developed.
2. Some unions were strong enough to introduce the principle that there should be no technological redundancies—technology should not replace workers.
3. These union rules discouraged management from introducing new machinery, which made manufacturers less efficient than their foreign competitors.
4. Businesses neglected salesmanship. They printed literature for foreign sales only in English, neglected to teach sales staff foreign languages, and neglected to convert British weights and measures into European units.
5. Britain neglected technical education. Almost no members of Parliament had any education in applied science or technology.

C. Majorities in both major parties began to support imperialism.
   1. The empire provided a sheltered zone to protect inefficiency.
   2. It created the illusion of growing national power.

D. The career of Joseph Chamberlain reflects the changes of these decades.
   1. He inherited and ran a Birmingham screw factory and entered politics as a Gladstonian Liberal-radical.
   2. He left the Liberal party over Irish Home Rule, because he thought it would destroy the empire.
   3. In 1895, he became colonial minister in Salisbury's third administration.
   4. He dreamed of an imperial parliament and convened the leaders of eleven self-governing colonies in 1897.

**Essential Reading:**
Roy Jenkins, *Gladstone*.
E. H. H. Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

**Questions to Consider:**
1. What were the advantages and drawbacks of democracy to late Victorian Britain?
2. Why did Britain lose its world industrial leadership in the late nineteenth century?
Lecture Thirty-One
The British in Africa: 1880–1901

Scope: Britain became ever more deeply involved in African affairs in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. It entered Egyptian politics first to ensure the stability of the Suez Canal route to India. Having taken over in Egypt, Britain was drawn, despite Gladstone’s reluctance, into pacifying the Sudan, further up the Nile River. As the other European powers became enthusiastic about the economic and strategic advantages of African colonies, Britain annexed further lands to forestall its rivals, often with undignified haste and no higher purpose. The most dramatic African conflict came as the century ended, not against native Africans but against the Boers, white settlers of Dutch and French Protestant descent. Their occupation of the gold-rich Transvaal and an escalating series of confrontations over foreigners’ rights in Johannesburg finally led to a declaration of war in 1899. The British armies, soundly beaten at first, eventually recovered the initiative but entered the twentieth century sobered and chastened by the costs of the war.

Outline

I. Defending the British route to India obsessed the late Victorian imperialists and drew them into Egyptian affairs.
   A. The Suez Canal was completed in 1869 by the French engineer DeLesseps, offering steamships a quicker and safer route to India than the Cape of Good Hope.
      1. Disraeli bought a large share in the canal in 1875 from the bankrupt Khedive of Egypt.
      2. Britons who could afford cabins on the shady side of the ship sailed to India “port out, starboard home” (Posh).
   B. The Khedive of Egypt was nominally a vassal of the Turkish Empire but really more like an independent king.
      1. His immense national debt was owed mostly to British investors (including Gladstone).
      2. Britain and France overthrew him in 1879, provoking a nationalist uprising under Arabi Pasha.
      3. Arabi instigated rioting in Alexandria that killed fifty Europeans.
      4. Gladstone, despite taking an anti-imperial position in his recent electoral campaign against Disraeli, ordered British forces to retaliate.
   C. A British military campaign seized Egypt in 1882 under the leadership of Sir Garnet Wolseley and won a decisive victory at Tel-el-Kebir. Egypt enjoyed British “protection” between then and 1952, ensuring continuous operation of the Suez Canal.

II. Britain next became involved in Egypt’s Sudanese hinterland, further up the Nile, to safeguard Egypt, despite Gladstone’s reluctance.
   A. Muhammad Ahmad al-Mahdi, “the Mahdi,” a charismatic Moslem holy warrior, dominated the Sudan.
      1. The Mahdi saw himself as the reincarnation of the prophet, leader of a jihad.
      2. After two military disasters in the area, Gladstone submitted to political pressure to intervene.
   B. His envoy, Charles “Chinese” Gordon, was a popular figure in Britain, especially among evangelical Christians and imperialists.
      1. Gordon was a biblical fundamentalist who believed that God was guiding him.
      2. He had served effectively in China and earlier in the Sudan.
      3. He fortified Khartoum against the Mahdi’s siege instead of withdrawing.
      4. Gordon’s refusal to leave, combined with imperialist pressure at home, obliged Gladstone to launch a rescue mission under Garnet Wolseley.
      5. Gordon’s death, two days before Wolseley’s arrival, made him an imperial martyr.
   C. Continuing turbulence in the Sudan led to a second expedition in 1898 against the Mahdi’s successor, the Khalifa-Abdullahi.
      1. Led by Lord Kitchener, this expedition won the Battle of Omdurman and, in effect, made the Sudan another British colony.
2. The battle featured Britain’s last set-piece cavalry charge, in which the young Winston Churchill was a participant.

III. The European powers’ “scramble for Africa” accelerated through the 1890s.
   A. Bismarck, the German chancellor, convened a conference at Berlin in 1884 to create ground rules and diminish conflict among Europe’s colonial powers. No Africans were invited.
   B. Some European powers campaigning in Africa met unexpectedly fierce resistance, including the Italians in Ethiopia.
      1. The Belgian Congo became a byword for the brutal exploitation of native people.
      2. Britain carved out more African colonies than any other power.
      3. It reasserted its claim to the Transvaal.

IV. Diamond and gold discoveries in southern Africa made it the wealthiest and the most sharply disputed area.
   A. Cecil Rhodes achieved fabulous wealth and power from his Kimberley diamond mines.
      1. Rhodes planned a railway from the Cape of Good Hope to Cairo, to run entirely through British-held territory, but it was never finished.
      2. His British South Africa Company had its own army.
      3. He founded the Rhodes scholarships.
   B. Gold was discovered in 1886 in the Transvaal.
      1. *Uitlanders* (foreigners) brought capital and technical expertise to the Rand.
      2. Paul Kruger’s Boer Republic taxed them but denied them all political rights.
      3. The Boers built a railway to Delagoa Bay in Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) to sidestep British commercial control.
   C. The Jameson Raid (1895–1896) failed to stimulate an *Uitlander* coup.
      1. Rhodes’s assistant, Dr. Leander Starr Jameson, led a group of British cavalry over the border into Transvaal in the expectation that the outlanders would rebel and overthrow the Boer republic, or at least extort concessions from Kruger.
      2. The raiders failed to inspire an uprising.
      3. The Boers, and British critics, believed that Rhodes and British Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain had authorized the raid.
      4. Rhodes was forced to resign his post as prime minister of the Cape colony; Jameson was tried for treason and imprisoned.
      5. Britain paid reparations for the raid, which Transvaal’s President Kruger used to buy modern weapons.
      6. Between 1896 and 1899, the British and the Boers continued to negotiate over the rights of the outlanders and Anglo-Boer friction increased.
      7. The German kaiser’s support of Boer independence and British fears of the rise of German power intensified the standoff.

V. The Boer War was fought between 1899 and 1902 and demonstrated British vulnerability.
   A. After a series of ultimatums, Britain declared war on the Boer Republics in October 1899.
      1. Britain claimed suzerainty over the Boer Republics.
      2. The outbreak of war was greeted enthusiastically in Britain.
   B. The British endured a series of jarring reversals in the early months of the war, which nullified their earlier confidence.
      1. Britain lost three battles in “Black Week” of December 1899.
      2. Winston Churchill and other observers realized that Britain had underestimated the Boers’ military prowess.
   C. A new British commander, Lord Roberts, recovered the military initiative in 1900.
      1. He borrowed from the Boers’ methods and used high-speed cavalry, outflanking the besiegers to relieve Kimberley, Ladysmith, and Mafeking.
      2. The relief of Mafeking in May 1900 led to wild rejoicing in Britain.
   D. The conventional warfare phase ended, but a Boer guerrilla campaign persisted for two more years.
      1. Britain responded with a scorched-earth policy in the Boer countryside.
2. Civilians were placed in concentration camps.
3. The camps, like the armies, were swept by lethal infectious diseases.

E. The Treaty of Vereeniging ended the war in 1902.
1. Britain by then had 300,000 troops in South Africa.
2. Both sides agreed to maintain white supremacy.
3. The war had chastened British imperial self-confidence.

Essential Reading:
Lawrence James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*.
Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War*.

Supplementary Reading:
Denys Reitz, *Commando*.
Frank Emery, *Marching over Africa*.

Questions to Consider:
1. What caused the scramble for Africa?
2. Why did Britain find it so difficult to prevail in the Boer War?
Scope: The late Victorian years witnessed an immense concentration of literary talent and a series of controversies and about the nature and morality of literature. Authors and critics debated bitterly whether sexuality and the inner workings of unhappy marriages should be depicted in literature and on the stage. Hendrik Ibsen and Thomas Hardy each found savage detractors and eager champions. The aesthetic movement of the 1890s sidestepped the dispute by denying that art had anything to do with morality at all. However, its most well known British exponent, Oscar Wilde, found that lack of discretion about his own homosexuality could bring severe punishment. The British Empire found a brilliant literary champion in Rudyard Kipling in the 1880s and 1890s, but the nation as a whole got a second-rate mediocrity, Alfred Austin, as poet-laureate. Ironically, the most durable literary figure of the late Victorian era, Sherlock Holmes, was created simply for passing entertainment and to raise some ready money for a struggling doctor, Arthur Conan Doyle.

Outline

I. Influential writers believed that more elements of human life should be portrayed in fiction and drama.
   A. Hendrik Ibsen’s plays stirred controversy.
      1. Conventional critics condemned these works, for example, A Doll’s House (1879) and Ghosts (1891).
      2. Early feminists and such critics as George Bernard Shaw defended Ibsen’s plays.
   B. Thomas Hardy sympathized with “fallen” women.
      1. His novels evoked a rural England in the midst of radical social change.
      2. Tess of the D’Urbervilles (1891) and Jude the Obscure (1896) endured savage criticism on the grounds that they were immoral and excessively frank about sex.
      3. In spite of their critics, the novels enjoyed enormous popularity.
      4. In later life, Hardy turned exclusively to writing poetry.

II. The aesthetic movement denied that art and literature had a moral purpose at all—it spoke on behalf of “art for art’s sake.”
   A. Walter Pater in England and Theophile Gautier in France influenced the movement.
   B. Oscar Wilde defied or contradicted all the conventions.
      1. Wilde was born in Dublin in 1854 and studied classics at Oxford University.
      2. His exotic dress, quick wit, and dandyism made him a celebrity.
      3. He appears in Gilbert and Sullivan’s operetta Patience (1881) as the character Bunthorne.
      4. His novel The Picture of Dorian Gray (1890) and his essay “The Decay of Lying” contradicted familiar verities.
      5. His plays, above all The Importance of Being Earnest, demonstrated his mastery of the stage.
      6. He brought disaster on himself by suing the Marquis of Queensberry, with whose son he was having a homosexual affair.
      7. Wilde sued the marquis for libeling him as a “posing sodomite,” but lost.
      8. Wilde refused to go voluntarily into exile to avoid prosecution for “Acts of Gross Indecency between Males.”
      9. He was convicted and sent to prison for two years.
     10. After prison, he spent the rest of his life in exile in France and died prematurely in 1900.

III. Literary and political interests often overlapped.
   A. Rudyard Kipling championed the imperial mission.
      1. Kipling, born in India in 1865, was sent to England for his schooling, which he hated.
      2. At the age of sixteen, he returned to India, where he went to work for an English-language newspaper.
      3. He urged British and American Anglo-Saxons to take up the “white man’s burden” of colonialism; he believed that Britain had a God-given duty to bring civilization and Christianity to colonial subjects.
4. *Recessional* (1897) warned that only trust in God could preserve the British Empire from ultimate failure.

5. Kipling was the first British writer to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, which he did in 1907, when he was only forty-one.

B. The poet-laureate controversy of 1892–1895 came to a farcical conclusion.
   1. Tennyson’s death in 1892 led to a prolonged debate over possible candidates.
   2. Most of the best poets were unsuitable because of their sexual or political orientation.
   3. Algernon Swinburne and Oscar Wilde were homosexuals.
   4. Kipling was too young.
   5. William Morris was an outspoken socialist.
   6. Coventry Patmore, Francis Thompson, and Gerard Manley Hopkins were Roman Catholics.
   7. Lord Salisbury appointed Alfred Austin.
   8. Austin churned out patriotic verses by the yard.

IV. Growth in the ranks of the reading public created more niches for authors.
   A. Arthur Conan Doyle, a Scottish doctor living in London, created the Sherlock Holmes phenomenon.
   B. The character of Holmes was inspired by Dr. Joseph Bell, one of Doyle’s professors at medical school.
   C. Holmes represented the triumph of scientific method and close observation over ad hoc police methods.
   D. For example, Holmes is a great advocate of fingerprinting, which was being introduced at the time.
   E. Conan Doyle tired of Holmes, but the character’s popularity and financial incentives—an American magazine offered Doyle £5,000 per story—brought him back from the dead.
   F. Doyle himself was consulted in criminal controversies, and he championed prisoners he felt had been wrongly convicted.

Essential Reading:
Julian Symons, *Conan Doyle: Portrait of an Artist*.

Supplementary Reading:
G. K. Chesterton, *The Victorian Age in Literature*.
Margaret Drabble, ed., *The Genius of Thomas Hardy*.

Questions to Consider:
1. What were the arguments for censorship of sexual and marriage-related issues in literature?
2. How, and with what consequences, do politics and literature interact?
Lecture Thirty-Three
Leisure

Scope: The rich had more leisure than the poor in Victorian Britain, but members of every class found ways to enjoy themselves. Old rural forms of relaxation—including the Maypole tradition, saints’ day fairs, and mass football matches—were often rough, lewd, and alcoholic. Some of these recreations migrated into the new industrial cities, but the era’s evangelical reformers tried either to suppress the worst of them, such as cock-fighting and bear-baiting, or transform them into genteel and honorable pastimes. Cricket, an ancient game and an occasion for big bets and unscrupulous play in early Victorian times, had become an exercise for Christian gentlemen by the end of the era. It was played throughout the British Empire and by members of every social class in Britain and had a highly ritualized code of etiquette, as well as formal rules. The existence of a nationwide railway network made professional football (soccer) possible, too (a strongly working-class affair), while new middle-class activities, including tennis and golf, ensured the preservation of class lines in most areas of sport. Thomas Cook was the first entrepreneur of cheap package holidays for the masses as well as the classes, and by the end of the Victorian age, even the humblest people could aspire to brief annual seaside holidays.

Outline

I. Traditional leisure activities thrived, especially in the countryside.
   A. Many of these were seasonal, marking events in the Christian calendar or the agricultural year.
   B. Every parish also had a fair on its saint’s day.
   C. Many of these village traditions survived into the urban setting.

II. Barbaric pastimes declined or were transformed by Victorian reformers.
   A. Bull- and bear-baiting and cock-fighting were suppressed by evangelical reformers and Parliament in the 1830s.
   B. Evangelical reformers transformed the Whitsun festival; in Lancashire and Yorkshire, it became a Sunday school religious parade instead of a drinking festival.
   C. Self-improving working men began to advocate temperance and workers’ education.
   D. Association football (soccer) was subjected to rules and discipline in the industrial cities.
      1. A more orderly form of soccer became popular at the public (private) schools.
      2. In the early nineteenth century, sabbatarian evangelicals had opposed Sunday sports, but by the 1870s, the YMCA and other groups were promoting workmen’s Sunday soccer clubs.
      3. The Football Association, founded in 1863, began professional soccer in 1889, once Saturday afternoons had also become leisure time for many working men.
   E. Cricket was one of the only leisure activities that spanned the social classes.
      1. In the Regency era, it was the focus of large-scale betting.
      2. Thomas Arnold tried to suppress it at Rugby, then transformed it into an occasion for gentlemanliness.
      3. By the late nineteenth century, cricket was undertaken with great earnestness in most public schools.
      4. High status attached to the best players, who were not paid.
      5. Cricket was taken to Britain’s colonies, many of which eventually exceeded the mother country in their dedication to the game.
   F. New sports became popular among the middle classes.
      1. Hunting retained very high status, and joining a hunt was a sign of upward mobility.
      2. Golf was a traditional Scottish game, but the first English golf club was founded in 1864.
      3. Major Walter Wingfield patented “Sphairistike” in 1874 and later renamed it “lawn tennis.”

III. Sunday special tours led to the growth of Britain’s seaside holiday towns, including Blackpool, Brighton, Southend, Skegness, and Torquay.
   A. Day trips by special trains began in the 1840s; the 1844 Railway Act guaranteed low fares.
B. Thomas Cook’s first tour was from Leicester to Loughborough to enable visitors to reach a Loughborough temperance meeting.
   1. Cook created “package” tours; one price included travel by train and steamer, hotel accommodation, and meals.
   2. Cook specialized in creating holidays to suit every income level.
C. The funfairs at beaches and piers were descendants of country village fairs, now permanent, but at places most workers visited for just a few days in the year.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
B. Harrison, Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question.
D. C. Richter, Riotous Victorians.

Questions to Consider:
1. Why did leisure activities become more orderly and less chaotic?
2. Why were issues of class so prominent in leisure activities?
Lecture Thirty-Four
Domestic Servants

Scope: More women worked as domestic servants than in any other job in Victorian Britain. In an age before electricity and labor-saving devices, servants were essential to anyone who wanted to be well dressed, live in clean surroundings, and enjoy their luxuries. A family’s first claim to middle-class (or even upper-working-class) status was its ability to employ a maid. A handful of wealthy and aristocratic families employed dozens of male and female servants, within whose ranks a strict status hierarchy prevailed. The vast majority of domestics, however, were employed in ones, twos, and threes, often beginning between the ages of ten and thirteen as a “tweeny.” Employers expected domestics to live in their homes, which were commonly designed with servants’ working areas in the basement and their sleeping areas in the attic. Potential benefits of being a domestic included living in grander conditions than would otherwise have been possible and gaining the help and patronage of sympathetic employers. Disadvantages included a total lack of privacy, employers’ discouragement of “followers” (boyfriends and suitors), extremely long working hours and arduous labor, and the hazard of sexual exploitation by male members of the household. By the end of the Victorian era, the opening up to women of such jobs as secretary and shop assistant had led to the familiar employer’s lament: “Good servants are so hard to find nowadays.”

Outline
I. Service was one of the relatively few employment options available to working-class women.
   A. Women and girls worked in textile factories, dressmakers’ and milliners’ shops, or as servants.
      1. Mid-Victorian reformers tried to get women out of factory and mine work.
      2. As standards of social decorum rose in the later Victorian era, the need for servants increased, as well.
   B. Girls were usually recruited between the ages of ten and thirteen after elementary schooling.
      1. In working- and lower-class districts, most would live at home but work six-day weeks for their employers.
      2. They were expected to be able to read, write, and count money.
   C. Hours of work were long and leisure was limited.
   D. Pay was low. Most servants were given board and lodging and a small money allowance.
   E. The job had many disadvantages.
      1. Servants were under constant scrutiny, yet subject to a rigid form of apartheid.
      2. Some had to rebuff (or accept) the sexual advances of their employers.
      3. In families only just able to afford a servant, the domestic help was likely to be underfed.
      4. Living-in made social lives difficult and kept servants remote from family and friends.
   F. The job could have advantages, including:
      1. The chance to live in grand surroundings
      2. A sense of membership in the family
      3. Patronage and protection from the employer.

II. Servants were required to undertake many jobs.
   A. Food shopping and preparation was helped by the fact that many bakers, grocers, and butchers delivered food to the door.
   B. Laundry work all had to be done by hand.
   C. Fires had to be laid and grates had to be cleaned and blacked, usually before dawn.
   D. Servants were required to sweep, clean, and polish regularly.
   E. Nursery maids’ principal job was childcare.

III. Large households had a strict hierarchy of servants.
   A. The butler and housekeeper, in tailcoat and black silk dress, respectively, were the principal servants.
      1. Variations in lower servants’ uniforms denoted their ranks.
2. Ladies’ maids often trained first as milliners’ apprentices.
3. Lowest were the scullery maids, who had to scrub floors, wash dishes, and black the grates.

B. Indoor male servants were more expensive than women and confined mostly to elite households.
   1. They were less tractable.
   2. They flirted with the female servants.
   3. Male gardeners and stable boys were more common.

IV. Middle- and upper-class Britons struggled with unsatisfactory servants.
   A. Most required a “character,” or reference, from new servants.
   B. Dishonest servants had opportunities to steal from their employers or let thieves enter their houses.
   C. Philanthropists tried to help friendless servants who had come from workhouses.
      1. The Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants (Mabys) was founded in the 1870s.
      2. Mrs. Townsend created the Girls’ Friendly Society.
      3. Arthur Munby, a barrister, took photographs of servants at work, interviewed them, and secretly married his own servant, Hannah, after an eighteen-year courtship.

Essential Reading:
Frank V. Dawes, Not in Front of the Servants: A True Portrait of Upstairs-Downstairs Life.
E. S. Turner, What the Butler Saw: 250 Years of the Servant Problem.

Supplementary Reading:
Derek Hudson, Arthur Munby, Man of Two Worlds.
Nigel Temple, Seen and Not Heard.

Questions to Consider:
1. What were the benefits and drawbacks of life as a servant for working-class women?
2. Why were so many servants needed by the Victorian upper and middle classes?
Lecture Thirty-Five

Victoria After Albert: 1861–1901

Scope: Queen Victoria never fully recovered from the shock of Prince Albert’s death, after which she always wore mourning. Throughout the 1860s, she refused to do her public duties, always complaining of illness and depression, until the popularity of the monarchy itself began to decline. Recovering some composure in the 1870s, Victoria found solace in the help of a loyal Scottish servant, John Brown, and in the flattering attentions of her favorite prime minister, Benjamin Disraeli. After Brown’s death in 1883, another devastating blow, she was served by “the Munshi,” a young Indian Moslem who was widely disliked and resented by other members of her court but retained her devotion. By then, Victoria’s nine children and their families were connected to every royal court in Europe. Her Golden and Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 1887 and 1897 occasioned great public celebrations and a festive, imperial mood in London. Victoria herself survived the worst shocks of the Boer War, dying in 1901 at the age of eighty-one.

Outline

I. After the death of Prince Albert, Queen Victoria became reclusive.
   A. She refused to attend official functions and dressed in black mourning for the rest of her life.
   B. She complained of being too miserable or too ill to appear in public.
      1. She fully expected to die very soon, though she was only forty-two.
      2. She bullied her doctor, William Jenner, to confirm her belief that she was failing.
   C. Her popularity declined as she became reclusive; Charles Dilke criticized her in Parliament and was cheered.

II. In later life, Victoria relied heavily on a small group of friends and helpers.
   A. Among her prime ministers, she loved Disraeli but disliked Gladstone.
      1. Disraeli flattered her, was obsequious, and enjoyed her company.
      2. He appointed her empress of India in 1876 (her European relatives were emperors of Austria, Germany, and Russia).
      3. He trusted her instinct for public opinion.
      4. Gladstone was respectful but did not pretend to take her advice in policy issues.
   B. John Brown, Victoria’s Scottish servant, became her favorite companion.
      1. He was her riding companion at Balmoral and saved her from a riding accident.
      2. Victoria’s doctor brought Brown to Windsor after Prince Albert’s death in the hope of persuading her to resume riding, which she did.
      3. Brown became high-handed among servants and even members of the royal family, confident of the queen’s unswerving loyalty.
      4. He was rumored (then and since) to be her lover or even her secret husband.
      5. He seized a young man who fired a pistol at the queen in 1872, further winning her favor.
   C. Abdul Karim, “the Munshi,” replaced John Brown in Victoria’s affections. He became her servant in her old age.
      1. The Munshi was a widely hated figure at court, where he was suspected of passing on state secrets to an Islamic fundamentalist group in India.
      2. Courtiers also suspected him of biasing the queen in favor of the Muslim side in Indian affairs.
      3. Victoria flew into a great rage when her household rebelled against him, largely because of their racial prejudice.
      4. After Victoria’s death, the Munshi was pensioned off and retired to India.
   D. Victoria disliked any member of the household leaving it; many of her servants continued into old age in her service.
   E. Her private secretary, Henry Ponsonby, recounted her imperiousness and her dislike of contradiction.
III. Victoria’s family connections linked up the monarchies of all Europe.
   A. Her nine children all married and all had children of their own.
      1. Her thirty-eight grandchildren included the monarchs of much of Europe.
      2. Her eighth child, Prince Leopold, suffered from hemophilia and died prematurely.
      3. She now has hundreds of living descendants.
   B. Relations with her eldest son and heir, Edward (nicknamed Bertie), remained strained.
      2. Edward never lived up to Victoria’s moral expectations; he was a philanderer and gambler.
      3. Victoria accused him of setting a bad example for the lower classes.
   C. Victoria had ambivalent feelings about Germany.
      1. She was half-German and had married a German; her favorite daughter had married the kaiser.
      2. She hated Bismark, who was chiefly responsible for achieving German unity in 1870, because she saw
         the resulting growth in German power as a threat to Britain’s supremacy in the world.

IV. Victoria’s visibility and popularity revived late in life.
   A. The Golden Jubilee of 1887 marked her fiftieth year as queen; she attended a service at Westminster
      Abbey but refused to wear robes of state.
   B. The Diamond Jubilee of 1897 is seen by many historians as the high watermark of the British Empire.

V. Victoria never grasped the extent or severity of British poverty.
   A. E. F. Benson, a popular writer and son of the Archbishop of Canterbury, said that Victoria was unaware of
      the sufferings of the poverty stricken and viewed protesters and social activists as mere troublemakers.
   B. As Benson put it, Victoria knew of only three social classes: the monarchy, the aristocracy, and the middle
      class, “which she could see was becoming the governing power.”
   C. She visited Scottish crofters when she was staying at Balmoral, but those crofters were relatively privileged
      and in no way representative of the working class as a whole.
   D. She never visited industrial cities or urban “rookeries.”

VI. Victoria died in January 1901, aged eighty-one, at Osborne, her residence on the Isle of Wight, in the arms of
    her grandson, the kaiser of Germany.
   A. Only subjects over age sixty-five could remember anyone else being monarch.
   B. She was buried beside Prince Albert, after forty years as a widow, at their mausoleum in Frogmore.
   C. Her son (Bertie) became King Edward VII at the age of sixty.

VII. Victoria had always feared that she might go mad, as her grandfather George III had, but in fact, despite
     periodic rages, she had remained psychologically very stable.

Essential Reading:
Christopher Hibbert, *Queen Victoria: A Personal History*.
Lytton Strachey, *Queen Victoria*.

Supplementary Reading:
Christopher Hibbert, ed., *Queen Victoria in Her Letters and Journals: A Selection*.
Adrienne Munich, *Queen Victoria’s Secrets*.

Questions to Consider:
1. Did Britain get any real benefit from the preservation of its monarchy?
2. How did personal and political issues overlap in Victoria’s later reign?
Lecture Thirty-Six
The Victorian Legacy

Scope: This course has moved chronologically through the reign of Queen Victoria, pausing frequently to study such themes as ideas about men and women, servants, leisure, music, art, and architecture. In this final lecture, I will offer a quick overview of the whole period; single out some of its most striking, contradictory, and paradoxical elements; and end with a few general conclusions about the nature of historical study in general and the study of Victorian Britain in particular.

Britain gradually became more of a democracy as it extended the franchise to previously excluded groups by a succession of acts of Parliament. In doing so, it retained its monarchy, whose reputation Queen Victoria herself did much to restore. More striking, Britain managed to forestall revolutionary upheavals, which were common throughout the rest of the developing world. Women were still excluded from the political nation at the century’s end, but the working class’s own party, Labour, had laid the foundations of its massive role in twentieth-century Britain. The empire grew throughout the Victorian era, especially in the 1880s and 1890s. It was widely admired from abroad and gave Britain the appearance of ever-greater power but actually disguised several crucial weaknesses. The worst of these weaknesses, never adequately corrected, was the fact that industry and commerce were low-status occupations compared to the leisured life of the aristocracy. Britain, accordingly, lost its industrial lead to Germany and America and failed to keep pace with accelerating technical changes. As Victoria’s reign ended, Britain faced an unstable world and the prospect of decline.

Outline

I. Britain gradually moved toward political democracy.
   A. Impediments to voting and sitting in Parliament were removed piecemeal.
      1. The three Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, and 1884 expanded the franchise.
      2. The secret ballot (1872) and the Corrupt Practices Act (1883) diminished opportunities for bribery and intimidation.
      3. The political rights gained by Catholics after 1829 and Jews after 1858 ended the principle of religious exclusion.
      4. After 1888, atheists were also included.
      5. Thus, the special privileges attaching to members of the Church of England were gradually dismantled.
   B. Democracy faced serious critics, who claimed that popularly elected politicians must pander to their constituencies and are often mediocrities and demagogues.
      1. In practice, political life was not debased.
      2. Parliament continued to be an arena in which exceptional politicians were far more common than mediocrities.
      3. Politicians of lower social origins, now able to sit in Parliament, proved to have minds every bit as brilliant as those of their aristocratic colleagues.
   C. Britain, unlike most of the European nations, did not undergo a nineteenth-century revolution or civil war.
   D. Queen Victoria restored the monarchy’s reputation and assured it a continued role in the constitution in an age when many European monarchies were coming to an end.
   E. By 1901, the Labour Party was joining the political nation, but in a non-revolutionary way.
      1. It, too, was, in many respects, conservative; Labour MPs respected the monarchy as much as anyone else and continued to do so through the twentieth century.
      2. Throughout the twentieth century, the Labour Party was ambivalent about its own commitment to socialism; the Trades Union Congress and many Labour MPs had less interest in overthrowing capitalism than in getting a better deal out of it.
   F. Politics remained a prestigious and honorable career.

©2002 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership 27
II. The British Empire grew throughout the Victorian era.
   A. It was the model for other ambitious nations’ empires.
   B. It was comparatively well governed.
      1. Despite some brutal military actions, the British colonial administration, once having established power, was relatively fair-minded and humane.
      2. Victorian British idealism was more than just a cover for commercial rapacity.
      3. The British ended slavery and provided education, sanitation, medicine, and other public health benefits for their colonies.
      4. The Indian Congress Party itself depended on Victorian values.
   C. The British Empire disguised Britain’s gradual loss of economic leadership.

III. Victorian Britain never overcame crucial weaknesses.
   A. It did not sufficiently honor the businessmen on whose work British greatness was founded.
      1. High status required family pedigree and leisure.
      2. Social snobbery was persistent and disabling, a recurrent theme in Victorian literature throughout the period.
   B. Most people in Britain were poor.
      1. Living standards rose very slowly, but from an extremely low starting point.
      2. For most people throughout the Victorian period, life was a matter of chronic anxiety.
      3. There was no “rags to riches” mythology—no idealism about class mobility; the poor had no idea that they might aspire to a better life.
      4. Trade unions were designed to make the best of the economic status quo by fighting for their working-class members’ pensions, job security, and job safety.
      5. Trade unions also impaired British competitiveness by designing rigid demarcation rules and fostering an environment of mutual distrust between workers and management.
   C. Britain was unable to use its influence to create international stability; late Victorian rivalry with Germany was an early portent of the First World War.

IV. History in general, and Victorian history in particular, presents great opportunities and challenges.
   A. History requires an imaginative engagement with people whose ideas are distinct from our own.
   B. History ought not to be a mere recital of facts.
   C. Victorian Britain did, in fact, produce many superb and imaginative historians, such as Thomas Carlyle and Thomas Macaulay.
   D. The abundance of materials from the Victorian era is an asset to historians but can also be a problem.
   E. Victorian vestiges, literary and material, give everyone the opportunity to delve more deeply into this subject.

Essential Reading:
Lytton Strachey, *Queen Victoria* and *Eminent Victorians*.
Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, the Heroic, and Hero-Worship*.

Supplementary Reading:
Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*.
Henry James, *The Princess Casamassima*.

Questions to Consider:
1. Could Britain have acted more wisely to protect its best interests in the nineteenth century?
2. Which of Britain’s many achievements in the Victorian era was the most remarkable?
Quotations from Queen Victoria

From Lecture Two

Journal comments after being notified of her accession:

“Since it has pleased providence to place me in this station, I shall do my utmost to fulfill my duty towards my country; I am very young and perhaps in many, though not in all things, inexperienced, but I am sure that very few have more real good will and more real desire to do what is right than I have.”


Letter to her uncle, King Leopold of Belgium, regarding Lord Melbourne:

“Let me pause to tell you how fortunate I am to have at the head of the Government a man like Lord Melbourne. I have seen him now every day, with the exception of Friday, and the more I see him, the more confidence I have in him; he is not only a clever statesman and an honest man, but a good and kind hearted man, whose aim is to do his duty for his country and not for a party. He is of the greatest use to me both politically and privately …It is to me the greatest pleasure to do my duty for my country and my people, and no fatigue, however great, will be burdensome to me if it is for the welfare of the nation.”


Journal comments regarding her proposal of marriage to Prince Albert:

“I said to him …that it would make me too happy if he would consent to what I wished …we embraced each other over and over again, and he was so kind, so affectionate. Oh! To feel I was, and am, loved by such an Angel as Albert was too great delight to describe. He is perfection; perfection in every way, in beauty, in everything. …I felt it was the happiest moment in my life.”

15 October 1839, ibid., p. 57.

Journal comments, a few days later:

“I signed some papers and warrants, etc. and he was so kind as to dry them with blotting paper for me. We talked a good deal together and he clasped me so tenderly in his arms and kissed me again and again.”

27 October 1839, ibid., p. 58.

Comment on babies:

“An ugly baby is a very nasty object, and the prettiest is frightful when undressed, till about four months; in short, as long as they have their big body and little limbs and that terrible frog-like action.”

From a letter to her daughter, Princess Frederick William of Prussia (i.e., Princess Victoria who had married the German Prince), 2 May 1859, ibid., p. 112.

Letter to her uncle King Leopold regarding the Great Exhibition of 1851:

“I wish you could have witnessed the 1st May 1851, the greatest day in our history, the most beautiful and imposing and touching spectacle ever seen, and the triumph of my beloved Albert. Truly it was astonishing, a fair scene. Many cried, and all felt touched and impressed with devotional feelings. It was the happiest, proudest day of my life and I can think of nothing else. Albert’s dear name is immortalized with the great conception, his own, and my own dear country showed she was worthy of it.”

Journal comments on Albert’s death:
“I took his dear left hand which was already cold …and knelt down by him …All, all was over …I stood up and kissed his dear heavenly forehead and called out in a bitter and agonizing cry ‘Oh my dear darling’ and then dropped on my knees in mute distracted despair, unable to utter a word or shed a tear …Then I laid down on the sofa in the red room and all the gentlemen came in and knelt down and kissed my hand, and I said a word to each.”
Journal, 14 December 1861, Letters and Journals, p. 156.

From Lecture Three
Comments from Victoria’s journal, when she was thirteen, on her travel through “the black country”:
“We just passed through a town where all coal mines are and you see the fire glimmer at a distance in the engines in many places. The men, women, children, country and houses are all black. But I can not by any description give an idea of its strange and extraordinary appearance. The country is very desolate everywhere; there are coals about, and the grass is quite blasted and black. I just now see an extraordinary building flaming with fire. The country continues black, engines flaming, coals, in abundance, everywhere, smoking and burning coal heaps, intermingled with wretched huts and carts and little ragged children.”
Journal, 2 August 1833, ibid., p. 11.

From Lecture Six
Comments on the women’s rights movement:
“The Queen is anxious to enlist everyone who can speak or write to join in checking this mad, wicked folly of women’s rights with all its attendant horrors, on which her poor feeble sex is bent, forgetting every sense of womanly feeling and propriety. Lady Amberley ought to get a good whipping.”

From Lecture Eight
Journal comments on evangelical Sundays:
“I am not at all an admirer or approver of our very dull Sundays for I think the absence of innocent amusements for the poor people a misfortune and an encouragement of vice.”

From Lecture Fourteen
Comments on the Great Exhibition:
“Some of the inventions were very ingenious, many of them quite Utopian. It has taught me so much I never knew before and has brought me in contact with so many clever people I should never have known otherwise, and with so many manufacturers whom I would scarcely have met unless I travelled all over the country and visited every individual manufactory, which I could never have done.”

From Lecture Sixteen
Journal comments on the death of Charles Dickens:
“He had a large, loving mind and the strongest sympathy with the poorer classes. He felt sure that a better feeling, and much greater union of classes, would take place in time. And I pray earnestly it may.”
In Hibbert, Queen Victoria, p. 396.
From Lecture Seventeen
From a letter to Lord Canning, Governor-General of India, after the Indian Mutiny, in 1858:

“…[show] the greatest kindness [to the many] ‘kind and friendly natives’ who had helped restore order. They should know that there is no hatred to a brown-skin tone; but the greatest wish on the Queen’s part to see them happy, contented, and flourishing.”

Ibid, p. 250.

From Lecture Eighteen
Letter to Mrs. Lincoln after the U.S. president’s assassination:

“Though a stranger to you, I cannot remain silent when so terrible a calamity has fallen upon you and your country, and must express personally my deep and heartfelt sympathy with you under the shocking circumstances of your present dreadful misfortune. No one can better appreciate than I can, who am myself utterly broken-hearted by the loss of my own beloved husband, who was the light of my life, my stay, my all, what your sufferings must be; and I earnestly pray that you may be supported by Him to Whom alone the sorely stricken can look for comfort, in this hour of heavy affliction!”

29 April 1865, in Letters and Journals, p. 189.

From Lecture Thirty-One
Remark made after early defeats in the Boer War:

“We are not interested in the possibilities of defeat: they do not exist.”


From Lecture Thirty-Five
Letter to Prime Minister Lord Russell, explaining her reluctance to open Parliament in 1866:

“The Queen must say that she does feel very bitterly the want of feeling of those who ask the Queen to go to open parliament. …Why this wish should be of so unreasonable and unfeeling a nature, as to long to witness the spectacle of a poor, broken-hearted widow, nervous and shrinking, dragged in deep mourning, alone in State as a Show, where she used to go supported by her husband, is a thing she cannot understand. …she resents the unfeelingness of those who have clamoured for it.”


Letter to Vicky after Albert’s death:

“I feel so stunned and bewildered. He protected me so that I felt safe! And now all, all is gone in this world, and all seems unhinged again in thousands of ways…The shock, the blow, the blank, the constant missing at every turn of the one strong, powerful arm and head…This anguish that comes over me like a wave…is terrible. God’s will be done, but I shall never be the same again.”

Cited in Hibbert, Queen Victoria, p. 441.

Journal comments on her Diamond Jubilee of 1897:

“a never to be forgotten day. No one ever, I believe, has met with such an ovation as was given to me, passing through those six miles of streets…The crowds were indescribable…the cheering was quite deafening and every face seemed to be filled with real joy.”

Telegraph message to British Empire after her Diamond Jubilee celebration:

“From my heart I thank my beloved people. May God bless them.”

22 June 1897, Letters and Journals, p. 335.
Timeline

1819................................................ Birth of Princess Victoria.
1829................................................ Catholic Emancipation (permitting Catholics to vote and sit in Parliament).
1829 ............................................... Opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway.
1831................................................ Cholera epidemic.
1832................................................ Great Reform Act.
1833 ............................................... Abolition of slavery in the British Empire (Caribbean Islands).
1834 ............................................... The Tolpuddle Martyrs, early trade unionists, convicted and transported for conspiracy.
1837 ............................................... Death of King William IV; Victoria becomes queen.
1838................................................ I. K. Brunel’s steamship Great Western crosses the Atlantic.
1839................................................ Parliament rejects the Chartists’ first petition.
1839 ............................................... British colonial army defeated in Afghanistan.
1839 ............................................... Foundation of the Anti-Corn-Law League by Cobden and Bright.
1840................................................ Queen Victoria marries Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.
1840................................................ Rowland Hill introduces the “penny post” cheap mail.
1842................................................ The queen travels by train from Slough to London Paddington.
1844................................................ Chancellor Gladstone specifies cheap “parliamentary trains” with fares pegged at one penny per mile.
1846 ............................................... Irish famine; abolition of the Corn Laws by Parliament.
1848 ............................................... A wave of revolutions in Europe—Marx and Engels write Communist Manifesto. Third great Chartist petition.
1850................................................ Titus Salt founds model industrial community of Saltaire.
1850................................................ An outburst of anti-Catholic prejudice when the Pope declares the re-creation of Catholic dioceses in Britain.
1851 ............................................... The Great Exhibition in Joseph Paxton’s Crystal Palace, Hyde Park.
1854–1856……………………………. Crimean War (France, Britain, and Turkey fighting against Russia).
1857................................................ The Indian Mutiny.
1858................................................ British government takes over direct rule of India from the Honorable East India Company.
1858................................................ Publication of Self-Help by Samuel Smiles.
1859................................................ Charles Darwin’s On the Origin of Species.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Death of Prince Albert.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861–1865</td>
<td>American Civil War creates crisis in British cotton textile industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>Opening of the world’s first underground railway (London).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>The “Sheffield Outrages,” in which union cutlers intimidate non-union men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Disraeli as prime minister; the Second Reform Act extends franchise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>Founding of the Trades Union Congress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Completion of the Suez Canal transforms strategic route to India.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Abolition of the purchase of army commissions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>The secret ballot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>British victory in the Ashanti War.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>Disraeli buys a share in Suez Canal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>Disraeli makes Victoria empress of India.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>The Zulu War; defeat at Isandhlwana, heroic British defense at Rorke’s Drift, and victory at Ulundi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>Legal reform permits women to maintain control of their own property after marriage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Third Reform Act further extends the franchise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884–1885</td>
<td>Expedition fails to rescue General Gordon in Khartoum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>Liberal Party splits over Gladstone’s proposal to grant Irish Home Rule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Jack the Ripper kills eight prostitutes in Whitchapel, London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Annie Besant leads the London match factory girls on strike.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>London dockyard workers’ strike, arbitrated in the workers’ favor by the popular Cardinal Henry Manning (another Catholic convert).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Keir Hardie, first independent Labour Member of Parliament, takes his seat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>Failure of the Jameson Raid provokes a crisis in South Africa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee celebrations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Beginning of Boer War with humiliating British defeats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>The Taff Vale Case stimulates TUC to create the Labour Party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Death of Queen Victoria.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Glossary

**Anti-Corn-Law League**: Richard Cobden and John Bright’s pro-free trade, anti-protectionist lobby (founded 1839) whose objective was achieved in 1846 when Peel’s Tory government defied much of its core constituency and repealed the laws.

**Celtic fringe**: An English politician’s name for Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and (sometimes) the southwestern counties of England.

**Chartism**: The popular movement of the 1830s and 1840s, in the wake of the First Reform Act (1832), to achieve further reforms of Parliament, including universal manhood suffrage, secret ballot, equal electoral districts, payment of MPs, annual parliament, and abolition of property qualifications for MPs. Led by Fergus O’Connor, it presented petitions to Parliament in 1838, 1842, and 1848 but achieved no effective reforms.

**Dissenter**: A person who did not belong to the established Church of England. The word (and the word “nonconformist”) was usually used of members of the Protestant sects, including Quakers, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Seventh Day Adventists, and Baptists.

**Establishment**: The state-run Church of England was the established church. In the nineteenth century, however, “establishment” also came to mean the central elements of the government and the state and the institutions that supported them.

**Evangelical**: A member of the Church of England or one of the Protestant sects who had adopted the emotional idiom of a personal relationship with Christ and was involved in the attempt at national moral regeneration.

**Evolution**: The theory that human beings had developed from simpler organisms over an immense period of time. Charles Darwin’s influential *On the Origin of Species by Natural Selection* (1859) codified evolutionary ideas and their compatibility with biological and geological evidence.

**Free trade**: Trade between nations unhampered by import and export duties. Britain, the world’s first industrial nation, believed it would benefit from free trade and abolished most of its duties in the 1840s and 1850s, despite opposition from the landed gentry in the Tory Party.

**Gothic**: One of the architectural styles favored by many Victorians and exhibited in Parliament and many Victorian churches and civic buildings. It aimed at reviving the glories of medieval cathedral architecture.

**Home Rule**: The aim of the Irish Nationalist Party in the 1870s and 1880s was an Irish government but still inside the British Empire. Gladstone’s decision to support it in 1886 broke the Liberal party into Home Rule and Unionist factions.

**Imperialist**: A supporter of an enlarged empire-building mission for Britain. Disraeli tried to make the Conservative Party self-consciously imperialist in the 1870s.

**Industrialization**: The process of concentrating and mechanizing manufacture on a large scale. In Britain, it was accompanied by the use of water and steam power and intense urbanization.

**Mudlark**: A London child who made a living by dredging metal, glass, and pottery scraps out of the Thames at low tide.

**New Poor Law**: The legislation of 1834 that created the workhouses. It was intended to be uniform throughout the country, to be economical for taxpayers, and to have a deterrent effect so that poor people would avoid appealing for help unless they were absolutely destitute. It was widely hated and feared by the English poor and satirized by Dickens and other writers.

**Oxford movement**: The attempt in the 1830s and 1840s by a group of Oxford dons to reinvigorate the Church of England, emphasizing its supernatural origins rather than its role as a department of state. Led by John Keble, Hurrell Froude, and John Newman, the movement scandalized “broad church” Anglicans when, in 1844, Newman (and others under his influence) became Roman Catholic.

**Pre-Raphaelite**: The artistic movement of the 1840s and 1850s that aimed to recapture the purity of early Renaissance art (i.e., before the era of Raphael). Artists in the movement included Millais, Rossetti, Holman Hunt, and Burne-Jones.
**Radical:** In the early Victorian era, supporters of free trade and political reform in a democratic direction. In the late Victorian era, the word began to carry connotations of socialism.

**Rotten borough:** A Parliamentary constituency with few or no electors and effectively in the hands of a landowning patron, who could appoint his client. The Reform Act of 1832 abolished more than sixty of them.

**Sepoy:** An Indian soldier in the service of the Honorable East India Company.

**Thirty-Nine Articles:** The list of doctrinal Christian principles drawn up under Queen Elizabeth I to which all clergy in the Church of England were required (by an act of Parliament, 1571) to subscribe. Designed to exclude Roman Catholics on the “right” and radical Protestants on the “left,” the articles were intended to define a broad middle ground of Anglicanism and be as inclusive as possible.

**Tory:** A member of one of the two main political parties. Tories were mainly country gentlemen whose income came from rents and the sale of grain. They generally supported the Corn Laws and opposed Peel’s repeal of them in 1846, which temporarily shattered the party. By the late nineteenth century, under Disraeli, the party had adopted the name “Conservative” instead, but Tory remained (and remains today) a widely used nickname.

**Trade union:** An organization of working people whose collective strength enables them to bargain effectively over wages, hours, and working conditions with their employers.

**Uitlander:** The Boer name for a non-Boer living and working in the Transvaal or the Orange Free State in the years before the Boer War. British dissatisfaction with the Boers’ treatment of Uitlanders sparked the bloody Boer War (1899–1902).

**Unionist:** A supporter of the union between Britain and Ireland. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Conservatives used “Unionist” as an alternative title. Unionism of this sort is unconnected with trade unionism.

**Utilitarianism:** The philosophical position associated with Jeremy Bentham and John Mill, which argues that a society should aim to achieve the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Highly influential among the early Victorians, it was criticized by evangelical Christians for its down-to-earth approach and by Mill’s son John Stuart Mill for its neglect of minority rights.
Isambard K. Brunel (1806–1859). Premier Victorian engineer and railway and ship builder. Brunel, son of an emigre French inventor, grew up surrounded by engineering projects. His father, Marc, struggled to build the first tunnel beneath the River Thames, with his son as project manager. The young Brunel himself designed the Clifton Suspension Bridge, still standing across the Clifton gorge in Bristol, and in 1833, won the contract to design and build the 118-mile Great Western Railway from London to Bristol. Parliament passed the necessary legislation in 1835, and Brunel finished the project in another six years, building, among many other innovative structures, the longest tunnel in the country at Box, between Bath and Chippenham. This railway’s seven-foot gauge deviated from the standard four feet, eight-and-a-half inches of other British railways, but its trains were more comfortable. Brunel was also an innovative shipbuilder and his paddle-wheeler Great Western (1838) was the first steamship to cross the Atlantic Ocean. Each of its two successors, the propellor-driven Great Britain (1845) and the Great Eastern (1858) marked a quantum leap in size and sophistication over all predecessors. The 700-foot-long Great Eastern could sail from Britain to Australia without refueling. Brunel, always a ruthless, tactless, work-obsessed overachiever, died just after its launch.

Edwin Chadwick (1800–1890). Civil servant, utilitarian, and poverty reformer who can be seen as a great benefactor of the poor but was hated by them in his own lifetime. Born and raised in the new industrial city of Manchester, Chadwick studied law in London and befriended the leading utilitarian philosophers Bentham and Mill. He became a member of a Royal Commission on poverty in 1832 and ultimately wrote a large part of its report, on which the New Poor Law was based. Working-class people loathed him for organizing the harsh workhouses on which the law depended and his fanatical and inflexible personality made him an easy target for satirists and critics. His next report (1842), written after he had discovered how high was the demand for workhouse places, showed that the nation’s public health and wealth were menaced by poor sanitation. The Whig government of Lord John Russell responded to it with passage of a Public Health Act six years later and appointed Chadwick Commissioner of the Board of Health. He lost the job in 1854 when Home Secretary Lord Palmerston recognized that he was the focus of too much dislike to remain viable in office. Even in his retirement, Chadwick remained an immensely influential figure and advisor on projects of urban and civil service reform.

Richard Cobden (1804–1865). Reformer and free-trade advocate who led the Anti-Corn-Law League. Cobden, the son of a poor Sussex farmer, was raised by unkind Yorkshire relatives and went to work as a teenager in the textile business. His hard work and skill enabled him to start his own company at age twenty-four, selling fabrics in London. Its rapid success made him wealthy. Cobden devoted his fortune to traveling throughout the world, then to campaigning successfully for a seat in Parliament, which he entered in 1841. An admirer of the United States, he believed Britain should become a democracy, too, and advocated the principle of universal manhood suffrage. He also believed that flourishing trade between nations helped to create wealth and prevent war.

The Corn Laws then in effect were designed to exclude foreign food from coming in to Britain, which gave a large economic advantage to British farmers. These laws, however, made it more difficult for British companies to export their manufactured wares, while forcing working-class people to pay more for their food than they would have had to under free-trade conditions. By 1845, the Anti-Corn-Law League, of which Cobden and his fellow orator John Bright were the leaders, was the most well organized lobby in Britain. Parliament seemed unlikely to repeal the laws because most of its members represented landowners. However, the catastrophic Irish famine of 1846 forced Tory Prime Minister Robert Peel to recognize that Britain must have access to cheap and plentiful foreign food supplies at once. He defied many of his own party’s members to repeal the Corn Laws, crowning Cobden’s campaign with success. In later years, Cobden campaigned against British intervention in the Crimean War and continued to advocate free-trade policies.

Charles Darwin (1809–1882). Biologist and evolutionary theorist whose On the Origin of Species (1859) was one of the most important books of the nineteenth century. Born in Shropshire, Darwin was raised by a sister after his mother’s death when he was eight. He would not devote himself to formal studies of medicine or theology but loved to collect plants and animals. His skills as a biologist led to his appointment on a navy expedition to South America on HMS Beagle from 1831–1836. There, he collected and studied exhaustively, notably on the Galapagos Islands, where he noticed small variations in species from one island to the next. His discoveries, when coupled with his reading of Lyell’s geology and Malthus on population, helped him develop the theory of evolution by natural selection. Scattered theorists before Darwin had proposed the idea of evolution, but he was the first to find a viable selection.
mechanism that could explain the intricacy of the natural world. Knowing that a fellow biologist, Alfred Russell Wallace, was developing similar ideas, Darwin published his *Origin* in 1859, and it quickly became the center of an intense debate, both among biologists and among theologians, who recognized (and sometimes feared) its challenge to the creation story in Genesis. His later book, *The Descent of Man* (1871), specified what the first had left implicit: Mankind, too, was part of the evolutionary process. Darwin, despite suffering most of his life from Chagas’s disease, first acquired in South America, wrote copiously on corals, orchids, insects, worms, plant breeding, and other biological issues.

**Charles Dickens** (1812–1870). Premier novelist of Victorian Britain. Born in Portsmouth and raised in London and Kent, Dickens’s schooling was incomplete, because he was forced to go to work at a shoe-polish factory when his father was imprisoned for debt. Later, he became a court and parliamentary reporter and mastered high-speed shorthand. His first fiction, *Pickwick Papers*, serialized in 1836, was an instant success and made him famous throughout the English-speaking world. He went on to edit *Bentley’s Miscellany* and, later, *Household Words*, monthly journals in which most of his subsequent eighteen novels were serialized. Among his most famous books are the semi-autobiographical *David Copperfield* (1850); *Oliver Twist* (1839), with its attack on the New Poor Law and its picture of the London underworld; and the historical *Tale of Two Cities* (1859), set in the era of the French Revolution. Dickens toured the United States in 1842, speaking on behalf of an international copyright law and reading from his novels. His marriage to Catherine Hogarth produced ten children, but he abandoned her in 1858 in favor of Ellen Ternan, an actress from the traveling theater company he had founded ten years before. His fiction is high-spirited, melodramatic, sentimental, and often highly satirical, providing a superb window onto many facets of Victorian life.

**Benjamin Disraeli** (1804–1881). Prime minister and founder of the modern Conservative Party. Disraeli, son of a Jewish convert to Anglicanism, was an unlikely man to succeed in British politics; it was even more surprising that he should rise to the leadership of the Conservatives, the party of the old landowning gentlemen. He did not go to one of the venerable public schools, nor to college. Instead, he traveled around Europe as a young dandy, ran up debts, enjoyed love affairs, and wrote a succession of novels that won him sympathetic notice among the upper classes. Entering Parliament as a Tory in 1837 after four unsuccessful attempts, Disraeli broke with his party leader, Sir Robert Peel, over the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. By the late 1840s, his organizational, oratorical, and parliamentary skills had pitched him into leadership of the protectionist Tory remnant in the House of Commons; he remained the leader of this minority throughout most of the 1850s and 1860s. Disraeli also made the most of brief intervals in office, as chancellor in 1852 and, finally, prime minister (briefly) in 1867, during which time he supervised the broadening of the electorate in the Second Reform Act. His victory in the 1874 election finally enabled him to dominate national affairs, which he did until 1880. His administration created a new mood of imperial pride, symbolized by his creation of Queen Victoria as empress of India, aggressive colonial expansion in Africa, and his purchase of a share in the Suez Canal.

**William Gladstone** (1809–1898). Liberal Party leader and four-time prime minister in the late Victorian era. Born to a wealthy Liverpool merchant, Gladstone was educated at Eton and Oxford and began his parliamentary career as an ardent Tory. He supported Peel on Corn-Law reform in 1846, an event that split the Tories, and in the late 1840s and 1850s, joined coalition governments under Whig leadership. Gladstone’s skill as a parliamentary manager and orator led to his appointment as Whig (or Liberal) leader in the House of Commons in 1865, and by 1868, he was undisputed party leader, taking over the premiership when his party won that year’s election. His administration introduced the secret ballot in 1871 and a national education act. Defeated by Disraeli’s Conservatives in 1874, Gladstone spent his spare time writing books on religion and the classics and tried to “rescue” prostitutes from the London streets. He returned to national leadership in 1880, having demonstrated that he was skilled at appealing to the newly expanded electorate. His government extended votes to most working-class men by the Third Reform Act of 1884 and shocked conventional English opinion in 1886 by supporting the idea of Home Rule for Ireland. He lost an election fought largely over this issue but became prime minister yet again, at the age of eighty-two, in 1892. His renewed attempt to introduce Irish Home Rule was defeated in the House of Lords, and he resigned in 1894.

**Charles George Gordon** (1833–1885). Soldier, imperial administrator, and evangelical Christian, who became the focus of world attention during the siege of Khartoum in 1885. While still a junior military officer in his early twenties, Gordon served with distinction in the Crimean War (where Britain’s French allies awarded him the Legion of Honour). He moved to China and took command of the “Ever-Victorious Army” in the Taiping Rebellion and wars between 1860 and 1864. Fearless and always willing to lead his soldiers in person, Gordon became a respected commander of native troops in different parts of (and beyond) the British Empire. In 1873, seconded to the Khedive.
of Egypt, he worked as governor of the Sudan, where he struggled to impose elementary order and stamp out the Arab-African slave trade, policies that had largely succeeded by 1880.

At odds with the British government, which took direct control of Egypt in the early 1880s, Gordon resigned. However, the uprising of Mohamma Ahmed, a Dervish who was acclaimed in Sudan as a messiah, or “Mahdi,” threatened Egypt’s southern border. The failure of two Egyptian campaigns to suppress Ahmed led to Prime Minister Gladstone’s decision to send Gordon, who knew the area better than any other Briton, to evacuate the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, in January 1884. On his arrival, however, Gordon fortified the city instead and tried to inspire its garrison to hold out against the Mahdi. Pressure of public opinion in Britain, which regarded Gordon as a Christian hero, forced the reluctant Gladstone to send a relief column under General Garnet Wolseley to his rescue. This slow-moving army arrived just too late to prevent the Mahdi’s force from overrunning Khartoum. Gordon’s death there, about which heroic legends soon grew up, made him a martyr to Christian imperial idealists.

**James Keir Hardie** (1856–1915). The first independent Labour Party MP. Born illegitimately in Scotland, Hardie grew up in desperate poverty and was forced to become a coal miner at the age of eleven. Self-educated as a teenager, he began organizing a trade union in his early twenties and led a strike in 1880. As ringleader, he was fired, but he became an organizer of the Ayrshire Miners’ Union and, from there, rose rapidly to leadership of the Scottish Miners’ Federation. Hardie’s political beliefs were a mixture of socialism, pacifism, and Christianity; he became convinced that the ill-treated working men of Britain could not rely on Gladstone’s Liberal Party but should form an independent political party of their own. Elected to Parliament in 1892, Hardie caused a sensation by arriving at Parliament in a tweed suit and cloth cap rather than the traditional morning dress. He formed the Independent Labour Party the next year and advocated a succession of controversial workers’ issues in Parliament. Defeated in 1895, he remained a popular and charismatic speaker and played a key role in convening the Labour Representation Committee (1900), which developed into the modern Labour Party. He returned to Parliament that year as one of two MPs and witnessed the party’s power jump to twenty-nine seats, then forty, in the next two elections. He was not a particularly talented party manager, however, and many of his fellow MPs disagreed with his belief that women should be allowed to vote and that Britain ought not to take part in the First World War.

**Charles Lyell** (1797–1875). Leading Victorian geologist, whose work on the antiquity of the earth and the gradual nature of change over long periods of time was adopted by Darwin in his development of evolutionary theory. Lyell, the eldest of ten children born to an enthusiastic naturalist, was raised in comfortable circumstances, half in Scotland, half in England, and studied at Oxford to become a lawyer. His hobby, geology, became an obsession, however, and he devoted most of his adult life to geological fieldwork, coupled with extensive writings. The orthodox geological opinion in Lyell’s youth was that the earth was a few thousand years old (as biblical chronologies suggested) and that its distinctive valleys, caves, cliffs, and mountains had been formed by catastrophic events, such as Noah’s flood. Lyell theorized, to the contrary, that the same forces acting gradually in his own day, such as deposition and erosion, had always acted, transforming the world slowly and almost imperceptibly over tens of millions of years. His close study of exposed rock strata in cliffs, and the different fossils they contained, led Lyell to argue that extinction was a natural and continuing process. He traveled widely through Europe and North America, finally explaining his findings according to his new “uniformitarian” theory in *Principles of Geology* (1830–1833), part of which Darwin read en route to the Galapagos Islands. Widely admired in his own day, Lyell was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1848. Despite the importance of his work to Darwin, with whom he was on friendly terms, Lyell himself was distressed by the challenge that evolutionary theory presented to his Christian faith.

**John Stuart Mill** (1806–1873). Child prodigy, utilitarian philosopher, and advocate of women’s rights. The son of a distinguished philosopher, Mill was educated by his father to an incredible standard at an early age, mastering Greek, Latin, and mathematics before the age of ten—an education brilliantly evoked in his autobiography. An influential journalist among the London radicals, Mill supported all the advanced causes of the early Victorian age: parliamentary reform, the abolition of slavery, women’s rights, and justice for Irish farmers. However, he went through a crisis of confidence when he recognized that if all these hoped-for reforms were accomplished, he would not be made perfectly happy. He also worked for the East India Company, rising to the post of Chief Examiner, and later represented Westminster as a Member of Parliament. He conducted a long, intense, but possibly platonic love affair with his neighbor Harriet Taylor, whom he regarded as his intellectual superior, marrying her when her husband died in 1851. Among his most popular works, still widely read today, are *On Liberty*, *The Subjection of Women*, and *Principles of Political Economy*. 
John Everett Millais (1829–1896). Pre-Raphaelite artist and portraitist. An artistic child prodigy, Millais entered London’s Royal Academy school when only eleven. As a seventeen-year-old student, one of his paintings (based on an incident in Pizarro’s conquest of Peru) was acclaimed at the Royal Academy exhibition. With two fellow students, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Holman Hunt, Millais created the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, a club that declared its intention of recapturing the artistic purity of the early Renaissance, before Raphael. The brotherhood was supposed to be secret, but when news of its members’ identity and pretensions leaked in 1850, a critical backlash made him the center of unfavorable publicity—Charles Dickens denounced his painting Christ in the House of His Parents. Millais reacted by asking John Ruskin, the era’s most prominent critic, to support him, which Ruskin did in letters to the London Times. Later, however, he met and fell in love with Ruskin’s wife, marrying her after she had won an annulment. Despite the claim of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood to challenge accepted standards, the members soon proved amenable to assimilation, and Millais became an Academy member in 1853. He was one of the two or three leading portraitists in London during the 1860s and 1870s and grew rich from commissions. In later years, his style became sentimental, as can be seen from his painting Bubbles, which a soap-company adopted for its advertisements.

John Henry Newman (1801–1890). Anglican preacher who became a Catholic cardinal. As a young Oxford don in 1833, Newman joined Hurrell Froude and John Keble to create the Oxford movement, whose pamphlet series, “Tracts for the Times,” argued the supernatural origins of the Church of England and tried to downplay its role as a branch of the state. By 1840, Newman had become convinced that Anglicanism was compatible in almost every way with Roman Catholicism, a view outlined in Tract 90, and he shocked many of his admirers by converting to Catholicism in 1845. He became an influential theologian and philosopher in the Catholic Church but often came into conflict with the Church hierarchy. His intellectual adventurousness clashed with the pope’s and bishops’ belief in the need to preserve and protect their faith from the powerful new intellectual currents of the nineteenth century. Newman lived in a community of Oratorian priests in Birmingham while his fellow convert, Henry Manning, went on to become the head of the Catholic Church in England. Newman’s reputation as one of the greatest Victorian writers was assured by his Apologia pro Vita Sua (1864), a spiritual autobiography in which he denied Charles Kingsley’s claim of religious insincerity and explained the tortuous mental path that had led to his conversion. In his old age, he was appointed cardinal by Pope Leo XIII and has remained one of the most influential English-language Catholic writers up to the present, inspiring generations of later converts.

Florence Nightingale (1890–1910). Pioneer nurse who made the job respectable for middle-class women and worked heroically for wounded British soldiers in the Crimean War. Born in Italy and named after a city her parents loved, Nightingale belonged to an upper-class family and was expected to cultivate the domestic, ladylike arts and find a suitable husband. She rebelled against this prospect and, despite parental opposition, visited Germany to study nursing. The outbreak of the Crimean War gave her a golden opportunity. By lobbying Sidney Herbert, a friend and government minister, she got permission to take thirty-eight nurses to the temporary British military hospital at Scutari, Turkey. There, she discovered horrible conditions of neglect and set out to improve the food, laundry, and sanitation arrangements and to give proper care to the wounded. Nicknamed “Lady of the Lamp” by the grateful convalescent soldiers, whose death rate fell sharply under her supervision, Nightingale returned home a national hero, receiving a medal from Queen Victoria. She devoted the rest of her life to lobbying for improved hospitals, proper medical care for soldiers, and formal training for nurses. Her gender—and her later invalidism—prevented her from playing as active a role in politics as she would have liked, but her many loyal male supporters brought her ideas into public circulation throughout the later Victorian era.

Charles Stewart Parnell (1846–1891). Irish nationalist leader in the 1880s. A Protestant squire from County Wicklow who entered Parliament in 1875, Parnell was an unlikely candidate to lead the Irish Home Rule movement. However, his parliamentary and oratorical skill enabled him to displace the Nationalist Party’s original leader, Isaac Butt. Under Parnell’s guidance, Irish MPs filibustered endlessly in Parliament, trying to prevent any other business from moving forward; Parnell hoped that the English would grant Irish Home Rule as a way of ridding Westminster of their obstruction. He kept abreast of developments among Irishmen in America and in the Irish Land War of the early 1880s (he was president of the National Land League). He served a spell in prison in 1881 under a new Coercion Act but, by 1886, had convinced Prime Minister Gladstone that Irish Home Rule was necessary. Gladstone’s Home Rule legislation failed to pass and split the Liberal Party. In 1887, parts of the British press insinuated that Parnell had been involved in the Phoenix Park murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish in 1881. He was exonerated in a sensational trial and resumed work for the Home Rule cause. His career in public life was
ruined in 1889 when news spread that he had been having a long-running love affair with Katharine O’Shea and had fathered at least three children with her.

Robert Peel (1788–1850). Tory prime minister whose decision to repeal the Corn Laws in 1846 split and temporarily wrecked his party. The son of a wealthy cotton manufacturer in Lancashire, Peel was educated at Harrow and Oxford and entered Parliament in a “rotten borough” at the age of twenty-one. He was Home Secretary in the government of the Duke of Wellington and, in 1829, created the London police force, whose early nickname was the “Peelers.” He also changed his mind that year over Catholic emancipation, introducing legislation for this reform that he had long opposed. Peel fought to prevent the Reform Act of 1832 on the grounds that the rotten boroughs enabled distinguished men to enter Parliament without having to fight wasteful election campaigns. After the act passed, he reconciled himself and his party to reform in the “Tamworth Manifesto” of 1834 (the year in which he first, briefly, became prime minister). Peel returned to power in 1841 and faced the great crisis of his life when the Irish potato blight caused widespread famine in 1846. Partly to alleviate the famine and partly in response to changing conditions of trade, Peel now promoted the repeal of the Corn Laws, enabling cheap food to flow into Britain from abroad and giving a corresponding boost to cheap British exports. Half his own party supported the repeal, but half, including Disraeli and many of the country gentlemen who had benefited from the law, opposed him fiercely, forcing his resignation. He remained influential among many Tories but died following a riding accident in 1850.

Cecil Rhodes (1853–1901). The leading figure in British South African expansion. Son of a Hertfordshire clergyman, Rhodes went to South Africa as a seventeen-year-old, planning to farm cotton with his brothers. Within a year, he had moved to the new diamond fields of Kimberley. He made an immense fortune there but spent parts of the 1870s back in Britain, at Oxford, where he finally finished his degree in 1881. Meanwhile, he created the DeBeers Consolidated Mining Company, which came to dominate the world’s diamond trade, and invested in new gold discoveries around Johannesburg. An ardent supporter of expanding the British Empire during the “scramble for Africa” era, Rhodes dreamed of building a continuous British presence and a railway from “the Cape [of Good Hope] to Cairo.” His supporters fought off foreign and Boer rivals to develop the lands that were later named “Rhodesia” (now Zimbabwe) in his honor. He tried to force Britain to annex the Boer republic of the Transvaal in 1895 by launching the Jameson Raid. It failed in the short term and obliged him to resign as prime minister of the Cape Colony in 1896. The action prepared the way for the Boer War (1899–1902), however, which ended in a British takeover. Most of the six million pounds he left after his death from heart disease in 1901 was devoted to the Rhodes scholarships for study at Oxford. He imagined the holders as an idealistic society of Anglo-Saxon men who would build international links and rule the world according to benevolent imperial ideas.

Lord Shaftesbury (1801–1885). Pioneer of social reform and factory legislation. Anthony Ashley Cooper, who inherited the family title of Lord Shaftesbury in 1851 on the death of his father, was an earnest evangelical Christian and an opponent of child labor. Entering Parliament in 1826, he soon took over leadership of the movement to prevent children from being put to work in mines and factories. He supervised passage of legislation in 1833 and 1842 designed to exclude children from textile factories and coal mines. Because too few inspectors were appointed to make the laws effective, he continued in later years to campaign against the horrifying exploitation of child labor throughout the workforce. Shaftesbury also promoted “ragged schools” for children who would otherwise have received no education and was president of the Ragged Schools’ Union for forty years. Only in the last years of his life did universal primary education become compulsory.

Shaftesbury’s political skills and aristocratic position entitled him to high government office. Although he was on good terms with most of the Victorian prime ministers (and was related to Palmerstone through his wife), he declined high office to dedicate his time to social and philanthropic reforms. Among his other achievements was legislation to improve the care of the mentally ill, many of whom he found to be cruelly neglected and abused; advocacy of Florence Nightingale’s proposed army and nursing reforms in Parliament; and legislation to prevent the building of unsanitary and overcrowded lodging houses. For his own tenants in Wimborne St. Giles, Dorset, he built a model village and subsidized a large London housing estate, the Shaftesbury Park Estate, to demonstrate the viability of safe, decent working-class housing. In all these reform efforts, he was sustained by an intense evangelical piety.

George Stephenson (1781–1848). Pioneer of railway building and locomotive engineering. Stephenson was the son of a Northumberland mine engineer and, at the age of twenty-one, became the engineman at Dewley Colliery (coal mine) near Newcastle on Tyne. Steam engines there, based on designs by Thomas Newcomen and James Watt, were
large, aboveground devices used for pumping floodwater out of the mines. Stephenson overcame the technical obstacles to building a self-moving steam locomotive, which could pull wagons loaded with coal along a metal track. Primitive horse-drawn railways already existed in the area, but the steam locomotive represented a massive increase in power.

Stephenson was appointed chief engineer of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (1825), which is regarded by most historians as the world’s first commercial steam railway. It prospered, taking advantage of Stephenson’s many improvements in flat track-bed design, iron rail construction, and an improved engine, *Locomotion*. In 1829, now with the help of his equally gifted son Robert, Stephenson also designed and built the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, taking the line across the swampland of Chat Moss, a nine-arched viaduct, a two-mile-long cutting, and other obstacles. The father and son also built a locomotive, the *Rocket*, which won a competition for the fastest and most reliable source of steam power on the line (it traveled at the then-incredible speed of thirty-six miles per hour). In later life, Stephenson continued to prosper as a railway engineer but also worked to improve coal miners’ safety and experimented in the cross-breeding of farm animals.

**Queen Victoria** (1819–1901). Queen of England for sixty-four years, between 1837 and 1901. Daughter of the Duke of Kent and a minor German princess, Victoria’s gender and her place in the line of succession made her unlikely to succeed. But the death of the male children before her in line led to her accession on the death of William IV in 1837. Dependent at first on the advice and guidance of Prime Minister Lord Melbourne, Victoria later became a capable supervisor of her government and knew how to maximize her influence even though she, as monarch, no longer wielded actual political power. She married Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha in 1840, the man whom some of her relatives had groomed for exactly this role. Albert brought a Germanic seriousness and moral high-mindedness to court and soon won his wife’s ardent affection and admiration. He was also able to impress senior figures in public life, overcoming their traditional xenophobia. His sudden death in 1861 plunged Victoria into a prolonged depression, and she wore black for the rest of her life. Among her later prime ministers, only Disraeli enjoyed her confidence and esteem—she disliked Gladstone. She also put great faith in a Scottish servant, John Brown, and later an Indian servant, “the Munshi.” By the time of her death, her many children and grandchildren linked Britain to every royal family in Europe.

**Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington** (1769–1852). Britain’s premier hero of the Napoleonic Wars, prime minister, and grand old man of British politics in Victoria’s early years. Wellesley, coming from an aristocratic family, mixed the advantages of rank with outstanding personal abilities as a soldier and statesman. After distinguished service in India in the 1790s, he returned to Britain, won a parliamentary seat, and accepted command of an expedition to Spain and Portugal against Napoleon. His victories in the Peninsula Campaign (1808–1812) made him a national hero, a position he consolidated by leading the victorious allied armies against Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815. He was granted a large Hampshire estate and the dukedom in 1814.

A strong conservative in politics, Wellington was also a political realist. He became Tory prime minister in 1828 and accepted the need for Catholic emancipation to forestall an Irish rebellion, even managing to persuade the king, George IV, of its necessity. He refused to lead the movement to reform Parliament (he considered the constitution virtually perfect as it was in 1830, his last year as prime minister) but acquiesced when Lord Grey’s government carried out the Great Reform Act of 1832. Skeptical of railways at first, especially after being booed at the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, Wellington gradually realized their significance to the nation and made a good deal of money in successful railway speculation after his retirement from Parliament in 1846.
Bibliography

General Works
Asa Briggs, The Age of Improvement, 1783–1867 (New York: Longman’s Green, 1979). Briggs is a skillful writer and draws the reader into his own fascination with British history in this and many other books on Victoriana.


James Morris, Heaven’s Command: An Imperial Progress (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1973). The best history of the empire in Victoria’s day, by an author (now Jan Morris) who is also famous for her sex change operation.


Specialized Works


David Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989). How Wesley and his descendants transformed and “moralized” Britain.


Kenneth Bendiner, An Introduction to Victorian Painting (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985). What the artists painted, who bought the pictures, how they were displayed and sold, and how the artists understood their world.

John Benson, *The Working Class in Britain, 1850–1939* (New York: Longman, 1989). A powerful reminder that the least articulate were the most numerous.


David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990). One of the superstars of contemporary historical writing explains the aristocracy’s long rearguard. All his other books are good, too.

Hugh Casson, *An Introduction to Victorian Architecture* (London: Art and Technics, 1948). Written at a time when Victorian architecture was totally out of fashion, it gives a hard look at what they built but ably explains the many styles, disputes, and debates.


B. Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971). Britain never had Prohibition, but its Victorian temperance movement was keen to try the experiment if possible.


Philip Mason, *The Men Who Ruled India* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1985). The airs and graces of men who were ordinary in Britain but magnificent in remote imperial India.


Mark Ridley, ed., *The Darwin Reader* (New York: Norton, 1996). Selections from the great scientist’s works that give a sense of his life and literary idiom, as well as his ideas.


Hugh Small, *Florence Nightingale: Avenging Angel* (London: Constable, 1999). As the subtitle suggests, the ultimate Victorian heroine had a tough and rather unlikable side!


Peter Stansky, *Gladstone: A Progress in Politics* (Boston: Little Brown, 1979). One of the good shorter biographies of the Liberal giant—there are hundreds of long biographies of Gladstone, too!
Lytton Strachey, *Eminent Victorians* (New York: Putnam, 1918). A famous book by a leading member of the Bloomsbury Group, deflating and making ruthless fun of four famous Victorians. Still wonderful despite its biases; Strachey wrote a good biography of Queen Victoria, too.

E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Gollancz, 1963). Half the professional historians in the world cite this as the most influential and inspirational book they ever read—vital for everyone really getting deeply into the subject.


**Internet Resources**

Victorian Art in Britain, http://www.victorianartinbritain.co.uk

Victorian Costume, http://www.victoriancostume.org.uk

The Victorian Web: Literature, History and Culture in the Age of Victoria, http://65.107.211.206