

Baker Street Elementary

Presents
"The Life and Times in Victorian London"



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The Life and Times in Victorian London
AB016 - Poverty in Victorian Times - February, 2022



Welcome to topic # AB016... Today, we will be looking at conditions in the poorer parts of Victorian England... Thanks so much to AboutBritain.com for use of their summary text for this lesson...



In the 19th century, rapid changes in employment, housing and social welfare brought about a huge change in people's lives.



The period of adjustment led to many workers living in extreme poverty and even dying on city streets of starvation in Victorian times.



*The population of
Great Britain actually
trebled during the
19th century.*



*People were living longer,
having larger families,
infant mortality was down
and immigrants...*

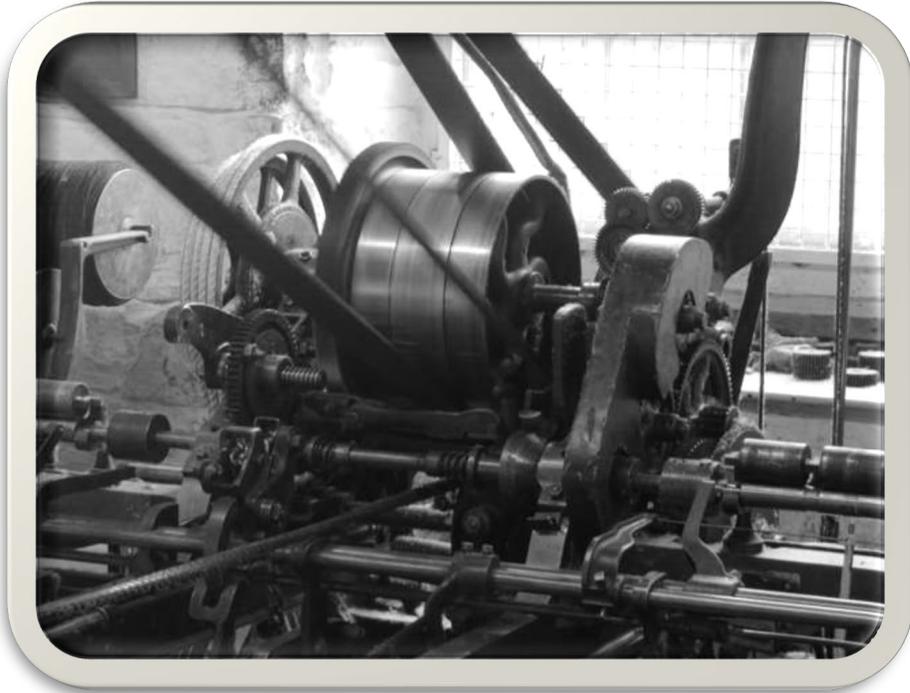




*...escaping from the potato
famine in Ireland all added
up to a huge population
explosion in Victorian times.*



Most employment was to be found in the newly industrialized cities, so many people abandoned their rural roots and converged on the urbanized areas to seek work.

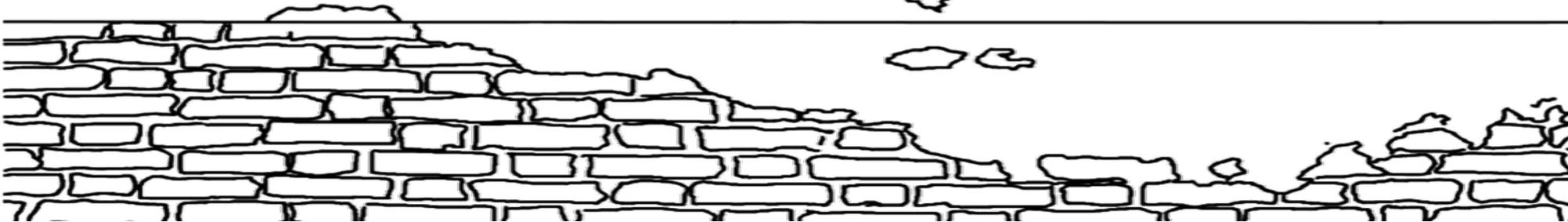




*Skilled and unskilled
workers alike were
paid subsistence-
level wages.*



If the work was seasonal or demand slumped, when they were laid off they had no savings to live on until the next job opportunity could be found.



Poor Victorians would put children to work at an early age, or even turn them out onto the streets to fend for themselves.

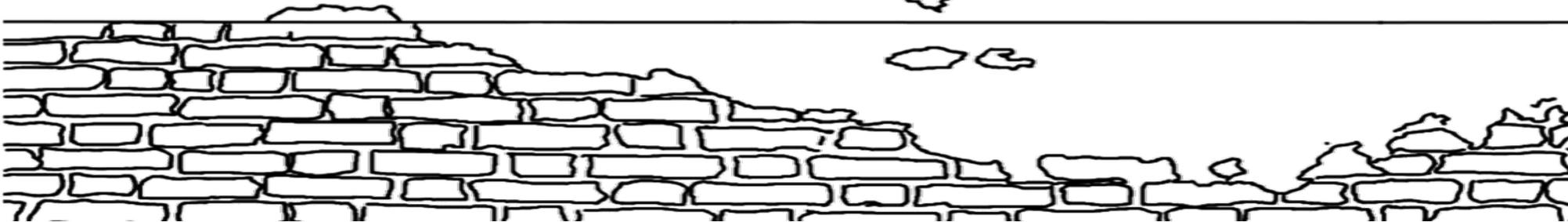


*In 1848 an estimated
30,000 homeless, filthy
children lived on the
streets of London.*



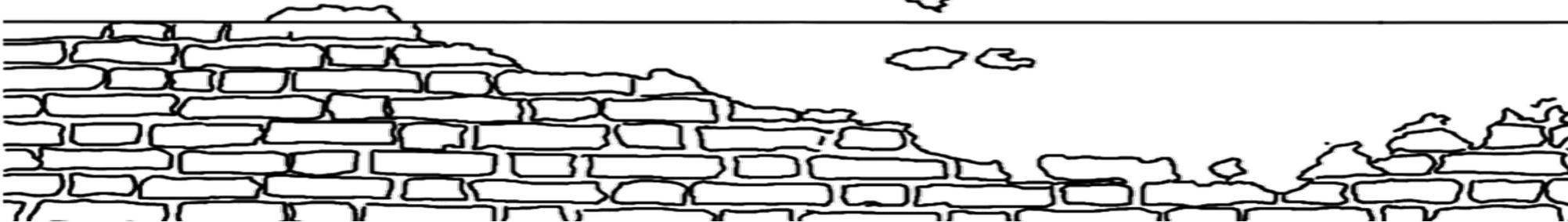


Boys became chimney sweeps, worked the narrow shafts in coal mines or were employed beneath noisy weaving looms retrieving cotton bobbins.





Others would shine shoes or sell matches to earn a crust.



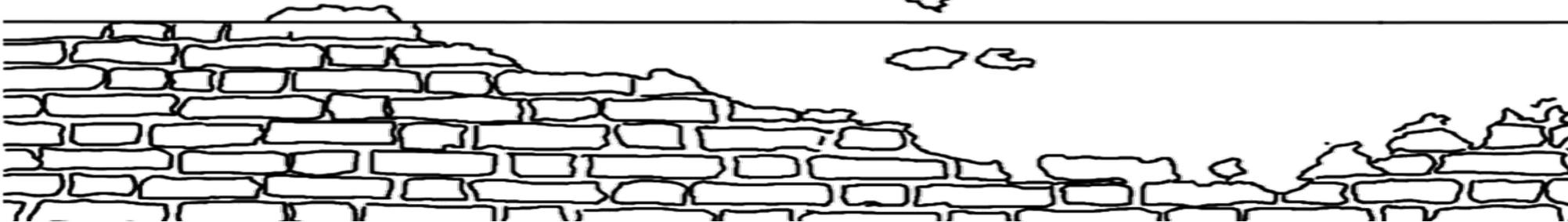
People working long hours in Victorian times had to live close to their employment and available housing became scarce and highly-priced.



*Tenants would themselves
let their rooms for 2d to
4d a day to other workers
to meet the rent.*



Hideously overcrowded, unsanitary slums developed, particularly in London. They were known as rookeries.



*Streets would have a
flowing foul-water ditch
into which the sewers and
drains emptied.*

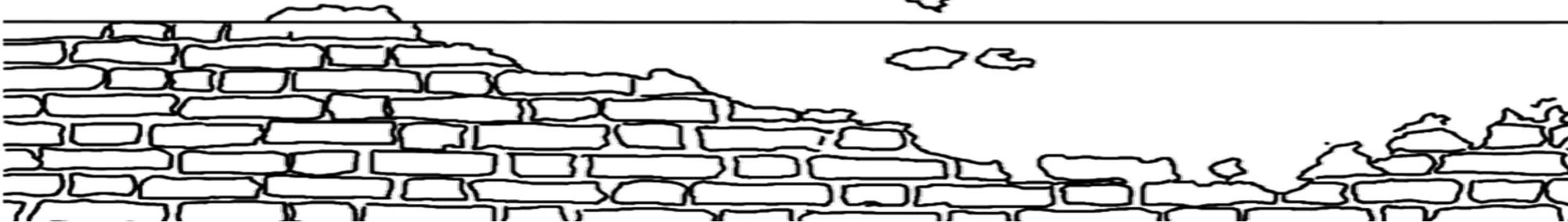


*In some cases, this
was the only source of
drinking water too.*





As well as disease, these miserable Victorian poor suffered starvation and destitution.





In many cases, their only choice was to turn to crime - another major problem in the cities.



It became clear to many that something had to be done about poverty in Victorian England, but there were opposing thoughts and opinions.



*The sheer scale of the problem
must have seemed
overwhelming to even the most
well-meaning benefactor.*



Some Victorians thought that education was the answer and ragged schools were set up to provide basic education.



Others argued that crime was not caused by illiteracy; it was just encouraging a more skillful set of criminals!

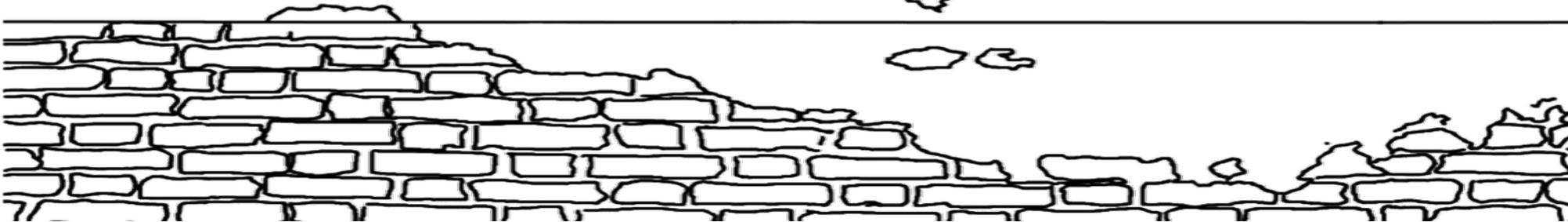


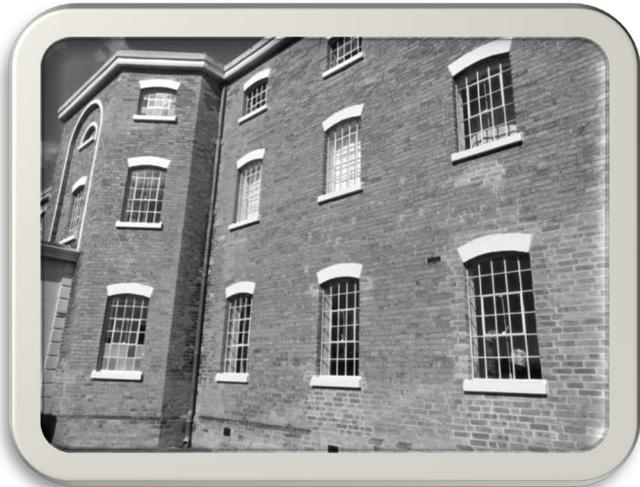
Others still thought that any money given to the poor was simply squandered on drink and gambling and did not solve the underlying social problems at all.





*Overall the Victorian times
produced one of the most
intense periods of
philanthropy and charity...*





*...to help the plight of the
poor, the destitute and
the street children.*



Many modern-day charities, such as the Children's Society, began their work combatting poverty in the Victorian era...



*...and continue to address
more modern concerns of
poverty even in the 21st
century*



*Again, thanks to
AboutBritain.com for their
help... So we have completed
topic # AB016 in our series...*

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





Original Source Material for this topic:

1) <https://www.aboutbritain.com/articles/poverty-in-victorian-times.asp>



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"The Life and Times in Victorian London"

IS CREATED THROUGH THE INGENUITY & HARD WORK OF:

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