

**SOCIAL ENGLAND IN THE FIFTEENTH
CENTURY, A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF
ECONOMIC CONDITIONS,
THESIS APPROVAL FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF SCIENCE (ECONOMICS) IN
THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON**

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A. ABRAM

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FIFTEENTH CENTURY

A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS
OF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

*Thesis approved for the Degree of Doctor of Science (Economics)
in the University of London*

BY

A. ABRAM

B.A. CAMBRIDGE HIST. TRIPOS



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PREFACE

IN the following pages I have endeavoured to show the effects of the development of Industry and Commerce upon Social Life in England in the fifteenth century. So great an interest is now felt in Social questions, that there is no need to justify my choice of a subject. The fifteenth century is a particularly attractive period, not only because it witnessed very important Economic changes in this country, but also because it formed a prelude to the Age of the Renaissance and the Reformation.

I desire to express my thanks to Mr. Hubert Hall, of the Public Record Office, for much help given to me in the course of my work. I am especially indebted to him for advice as to the use of original sources; at his suggestion, I examined the *Early Chancery Proceedings* and found them full of information of all kinds. I have by no means exhausted them, and I hope they may be of use to other students of Social and Economic History.

I also wish to thank the London County Council for very kindly giving me copies of some of the entries in the *Court Rolls* of Tooting Bec Manor.

Miss E. M. Delf has made some valuable criticisms upon my work, and Miss E. Earle has read my proofs; to both of them I owe many thanks.

A. ABRAM.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE fifteenth century was not marked by an epoch-making catastrophe, like the one which preceded it, or glorified by an outburst of literary activity, like that which followed; but it was none the less a most critical period in the history of the nation. Momentous events took place in the spheres of industry and commerce, which shaped its destiny in future days. England had hitherto depended largely upon her neighbours in these matters, but at this time she began to be conscious of her own powers, and entered upon the career, which she has never since quitted. Industrial development caused great changes in social life; it introduced new ideas, trained new faculties, and brought into prominence men who had been of little account in the past, and thereby it overthrew old modes of thought and old institutions. A century is, however, an arbitrary division of time, and the origin of some of the changes which swept over England in the fifteenth century may be found in the fourteenth. Other changes were not fully accomplished until long after the fifteenth century had reached its close, and they, in their turn, exercised a great influence upon conditions of life in the sixteenth century.