

**A SOCIAL &
INDUSTRIAL HISTORY
OF ENGLAND, 1815-1918**

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A social & industrial history of England, 1815-1918 by J. F. Rees

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UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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**SOCIAL & INDUSTRIAL
HISTORY OF ENGLAND
1815-1918**

BY

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PREFACE

THE main purpose of this book is to provide, within as small a compass as possible, the historical background necessary for the study of modern industrial and social questions. An attempt has been made to show the interaction between political and economic development in the course of the nineteenth century by correlating the growth of democratic institutions with the progress of industry. The list of books in Appendix B. will serve as a guide to those who wish to follow up any particular question referred to in the text.

Since in dealing with recent history dates have a value for the general reader as a means of relating facts to others known to him, I have introduced them in the narrative and the index. I have also adopted the only consistent method of referring to persons—that is, to use their names without the conventional prefixes. Otherwise, I would have to take the responsibility of deciding every case on its merits.

J. F. R.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTORY

LIEUTENANT ICARUS B. WISE of the Royal Air Force was spending a few days' leave at his home, an old-fashioned farm-house in the heart of Berkshire. He had been telling the neighbours something about the exploits of airmen in France and Flanders. And after he had exhausted his experiences he found himself drawing upon his imagination for inventions which would have been resorted to had not the fighting come to a conclusion in November. These anticipations were received with much greater interest than his narrative of actual happenings. On the third evening of his stay he was sitting by himself before a cheerful fire, alternately thinking of his approaching return to civil life (in which he was a teacher of History) and dipping into an old favourite of his—Mr. H. G. Wells' *Time Machine*. In this romance, it will be remembered, a scientist designed a machine which could travel backwards and forwards through time, just as a ship, train, or aeroplane travels

through space. As he was pondering rather drowsily, Lieutenant Wise suddenly recalled an experience which he had apparently forgotten, though it was in many ways more amazing than any he had related. He had been experimenting with an apparatus which would enable an observer, when he had reached a sufficiently high altitude, to switch his machine from climbing through space to rushing through time. His superior officers had not regarded his experiments with any great favour, though one had admitted that he could imagine that there would be some tactical advantage in being able to survey the battle-front as it would be in the middle of next week. Lieutenant Wise felt that this was meant to be sarcasm. He persisted, however, in his experiments, and was eventually ready for a trial trip. He could now very vividly recall how he had gone up alone, and, after he had climbed to the required altitude, had pulled over the time lever. For some reason or other he began going backwards through the centuries at an incredibly rapid rate. At first he was a little nervous and inclined to stop the time apparatus. But a glance at the country beneath him revealed such an extraordinary picture that he decided to go on. The whole of England and Wales was spread out under him like a map, and, in spite of the altitude, he could see the main details with remarkable clearness. He decided that he would observe every feature so minutely that his report on his return would convince the most sceptical of the success of his experiment. And so he travelled backwards until the indicator revealed that he was nearing the year 1350. At this point his eye caught the figure of a Franciscan friar walking across the fields from one village to another. It occurred to him at once that if he could effect a landing and