

Alan Ereira, *The People's England*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London/Boston/Henley 1981, pp. VIII, 285, clothbound, £ 9.50.

Mr Ereira explains in his introduction that in recent years »a new generation of historians has set out to explore the conscious participation of the poor in their own history«. He has attempted to summarise some of the conclusions of these writers in a series of essays on eight types of workers. Sometimes the author deals with topics on which a vast literature already exists. There is probably little new to discover concerning the lives of immigrants, miners, and textile workers in the nineteenth century. On the other hand a good many readers will find that the accounts of soldiers, seamen, shopkeepers, and labour battalions in the first world war cover less familiar ground.

At one time the attention of historians of the working class during and after the industrial revolution has been concentrated upon those employed in textile mills, ironworks, and engineering plants. Several of Ereira's chapters, however, deal with workers whose lives had been affected to only a very limited extent by the new power driven machines. Thus coalminers and navvies still used their picks and shovels while dockers relied upon muscle power rather than on mechanical aids. Many of those whose lives are described in this book were men, women, and children who worked at home or in small workshops.

As might be expected from an experienced producer of radio history programmes for schools, Ereira presents his material in a simple and attractive fashion. For each group of workers he selects one or two places or persons which are examined in some detail. Thus developments in two villages — Stanwell (Middlesex) and Tisbury (Wiltshire) — are selected to illustrate the transition on the land from the smallholder to the farm labourer while the history of the Lambton collieries in county Durham serves as an example of the hardships and dangers of the coalminer in the nineteenth century. The discussion on servants makes full use of the reminiscences of the valet John Macdonald and the domestic servants Rose Allen and Helen Forrester.

This approach, however, has its drawbacks as well as its advantages. One might ask whether what happened at Stanwell and Tisbury was typical of events in countless other English villages. And was the construction of the Watford tunnel on the London to Birmingham railway typical of the building of other tunnels elsewhere? But this is a minor reservation concerning a volume which can be recommended as an introduction to a study of the lives of important groups of English workers in the nineteenth century. It may be added that the book has over a hundred excellent illustrations.

W. O. Henderson

Henry Mayhew, *The Morning Chronicle Survey of Labour and the Poor: The Metropolitan Districts*, Vol. I, Introduction by Peter Razzell, Caliban Books, Fittlehampton, Sussex, 1980, pp. 276, clothbound, £ 20.00.

Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor*, first published in three volumes in 1851, has long been recognised as a standard work. An enlarged edition in four volumes, which appeared in 1861—62, was reprinted in 1967. Several selections from these volumes have been made — for example one edited by Peter Quennell in 1969. But before the publication of this book Mayhew had contributed a series of articles on the same subject to the *Morning Chronicle* in 1849—50. Only about one third of the material contained in these articles was included in the author's major work a year later. A selection of the newspaper articles (not included in *London Labour and the London Poor*) were printed by Razzell and Wainwright in 1973. Now it is proposed to publish all the *Morning Chronicle* articles in the order in which they originally appeared. The first of these volumes has been published. It includes a description of the cholera districts of Bermondsey (Jacob's Island) which was