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[14] The horrors of England's industrial life in the last century furnish a standing brief for addicts of positive intervention. Child-labour and woman-labour in the mills and mines; Coketown and Mr. Bounderby; starvation wages; killing hours; vile and hazardous conditions of labour; coffin ships officered by ruffians – all these are glibly charged off by reformers and publicists to a régime of rugged individualism, unrestrained competition, and *laissez-faire*. This is an absurdity on its face, for no such régime ever existed in England. They were due to the State's primary intervention whereby the population of England was expropriated from the land; due to the State's removal of the land from competition with industry for labour. Nor did the factory system and the "industrial revolution" have the least thing to do with creating those hordes of miserable beings. When the factory system came in, those hordes were already there, expropriated, and they went into the mills for whatever Mr. Gradgrind and Mr. Plugson of Undershot would give them, because they had no choice but to beg, steal or starve. Their misery and degradation did not lie at the door of individualism; they lay nowhere but at the door of the State. Adam Smith's economics are not the economics of individualism; they are the economics of landowners and mill-owners. Our zealots of positive intervention would do well to read the history of the Enclosures Acts and the work of the Hammonds, and see what they can make of them.

[15] When Sir Robert Peel proposed to organize the police force of London, Englishmen said openly that half a dozen throats cut in Whitechapel every year would be a cheap price to pay for keeping such an instrument of tyranny out of the State's hands. We are all beginning to realize now that there is a great deal to be said for that view of the matter.