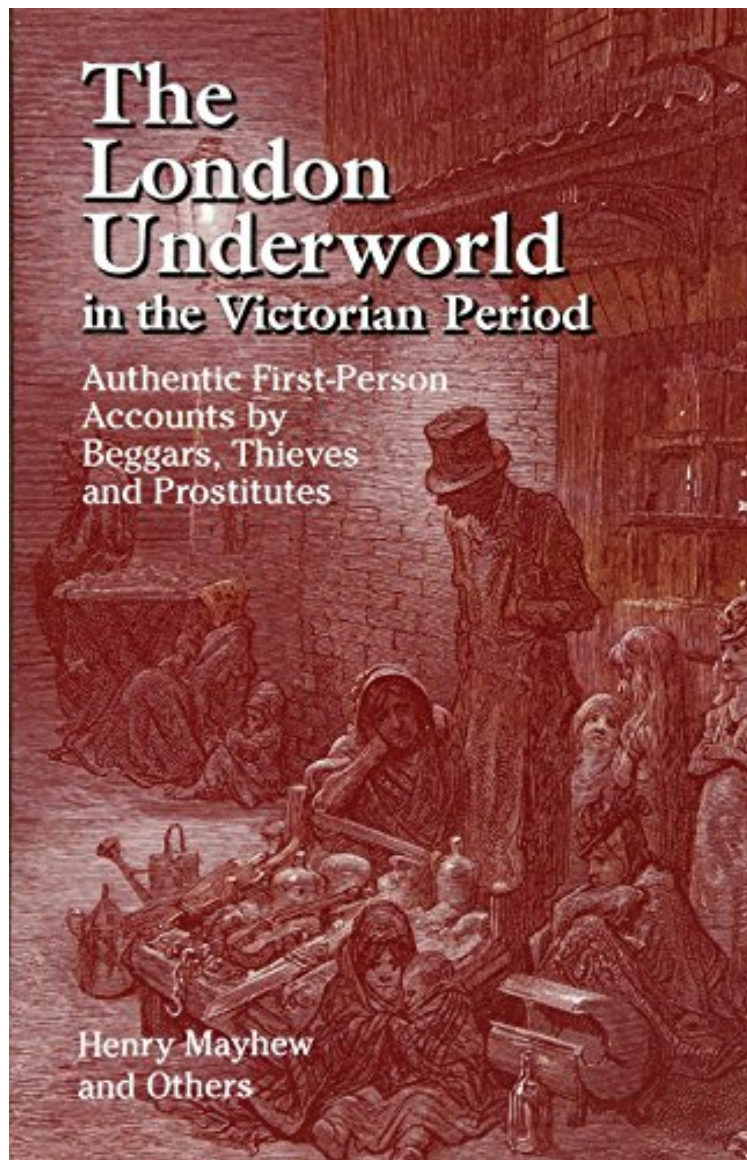


(Ebook free) The London Underworld in the Victorian Period: Authentic First-Person Accounts by Beggars, Thieves and Prostitutes (v. 1)

The London Underworld in the Victorian Period: Authentic First-Person Accounts by Beggars, Thieves and Prostitutes (v. 1)

Henry Mayhew

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Henry Mayhew : The London Underworld in the Victorian Period: Authentic First-Person Accounts by Beggars, Thieves and Prostitutes (v. 1) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The London Underworld in the Victorian Period: Authentic First-Person Accounts by Beggars, Thieves and Prostitutes (v. 1):

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Great historic language, depressing themes. By Sparky The language in this book is a lot like Charles Dickens - flowery and sophisticated, using archaic terminology and metaphors. It's fun and a challenge to read that kind of thing. I found myself looking up words as well as some history. It's amazing to read a woman's account of having a child out of wedlock and how she was relieved when the baby finally died of malnutrition because she really was never going to be able to raise him with any kind of life ahead of him. She just settled into a meager existence of making due and having "my gin." There's so much in that story that's different from now - she had no institutional options for help and was not held criminally responsible. Yet there's so much that's the same - the satisfaction with achieving nothing more than making it through one more day to get another drink. The thing that made me put down the book while reading only the first chapter was the misogyny and sexism. The author of that section, who's a doctor or some other academic examining the problem of prostitution in London, keeps saying that women have only one thing to offer in the world - their virginity - and that women are all basically whores. Those ideas are bad enough now but to see them in fuller force back then and imagining them slicing all the way through history was just a little too much to take. I might try again to push past it and think of the hope for the future. Maybe the part examining thievery would be interesting.

9 of 11 people found the following review helpful. not the easiest read

By frugal shopper This is great in theory, but if I'm honest, it is sometimes a bit like reading Shakespeare...very hard to understand. I wish I could understand the lingo a little better. I wanted to love this book, but it's taking me forever to get through it, due to the fact that I have to re-read most sentences a few times until I understand what the author is saying. It does have a lot of first-person accounts by people interviewed for the book, in the Victorian period, which is what attracted me to the book in the first place, and those are pretty easy to interpret, but the author himself speaks in what is also (obviously) Victorian period language...but I'm finding a lot of what he has written is lost in translation, at least it's lost on me! lol I could read books and watch television shows about Victorian England 24/7...but this is a tough read for me. It's actually making me feel a little stupid...but I'm not giving in yet!

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. underworld

By S M Senden Thick language, lots of judgement but excellent reference material for what I needed. A look back at another place and time, and from the bottom of the ladder. well worth plodding through.

The first and possibly the greatest sociological study of poverty in 19th-century London, this survey by a journalist invented the genre of oral history a century before the term was coined. Henry Mayhew vowed "to publish the history of a people, from the lips of the people themselves giving a literal description of their labour, their earnings, their trials and their sufferings, in their own 'unvarnished' language." With his collaborators, Mayhew explored hundreds of miles of London streets in the 1840s and 1850s, gathering thousands of pages of testimony from the city's humbler residents. Their stories revealed aspects of city life virtually unknown to literate society. A sprawling, four-volume history resulted from Mayhew's investigations. This extract focuses on the criminal class--pickpockets, prostitutes, rag pickers, and vagrants, whose true stories of degradation, horror, and desperation rival Dickensian fiction. A classic reference source for sociologists, historians, and criminologists, Mayhew's work is immensely readable. As Thackeray wrote, these urban vignettes conjure up "a picture of human life so wonderful, so awful, so piteous and pathetic, so exciting and terrible, that readers of romances own they never read anything like to it."