

[There are] slum areas into which the working classes are packed . . . [T]he workers are segregated in separate districts where they struggle through life as best they can out of sight of the more fortunate classes of society. The slums of the English towns have much in common — the worst houses in a town being found in the worst districts. They are generally unplanned wildernesses of one or two-storied terrace houses built of brick. . . . The streets themselves are usually unpaved and full of holes. They are filthy and strewn with animal and vegetable refuse. Since they have neither gutters nor drains, the refuse accumulates in stagnant, stinking puddles. Ventilation in the slums is inadequate owing to the hopelessly unplanned nature of these areas. A great many people live huddled together in a very small area. . . .

Piles of refuse and ashes lie all over the place and the slops thrown out into the street collect in pools which emit a foul stench.

[A quote from a minister about the parish of Bethnal Green:] “It contains 1,400 houses, inhabited by 2,795 families, comprising a population of 12,000. . . . [I]t is no uncommon thing for a man and his wife, with four or five children, and sometimes the grandfather and grandmother, to be found living in a room from ten to twelve feet square, and which serves them for eating and working in.”

-Friedrich Engels, “The Condition of the Working Class in England” (Original written in 1845, translated 1958) excerpt