

The Industrial Revolution ^{FERRARIS}

In the second half of the 18th century a great economical and social change took place in Britain. Agricultural and home-based economy gradually turned into an industrial system based on factories with complex machinery. Britain turned from an agricultural country into a highly industrialized nation and became rich and powerful.

The basic reasons for the Industrial Revolution were: the invention of the steam engine and consequently of machines, the fact Britain was rich in coal and could easily provide energy for factories, and the possibility of having cheap raw materials coming from the colonies.

Industrial towns had grown because of the people leaving the country. But living and working conditions of the middle and working classes were not so good. The resources of the colonies helped the economy of the nation but did not give any prosperity to the greatest part of the population.

In the industrial towns women and children worked twelve-fourteen hours a day in factories.

As children were shorter and thinner than adults, they were used in the mining districts to push trucks in underground tunnels. There were orphans living in the streets, begging for a few pennies, or making poor work



for some food. Industrial areas were overpopulated and workers lived in unhealthy districts called "slums".

Even if it can sound ironical the reign of Queen Victoria was also a period of social and political reforms.

In 1844 an Act of Parliament limited the working hours of women and children stating that children under ten could not work.

The right to vote was extended to all men over 21 and in 1870 the Education Act introduced state schools.



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IL SISTEMA OPERATIVO

MODALITA' DI ESERCIZIO DEL DIRITTO DI ACCESSO

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