

assigned weight according to the proportion of expenditure on them by workingmen's families. The difficulties of this method are familiar. All items of expenditure in such budgets cannot be brought into line with the articles whose prices are ascertained,—in the present case, after more or less of manipulation and supposition, 68.6 per cent. of expenditure only could be so distributed. What is quite as important to note, retail prices and not wholesale are most significant in relation to the budgets. None the less, the index numbers derived by this method are of interest and value, if only as showing how far they agree with those derived by simple arithmetical mean. For convenience of comparison the last-named figures (simple average) are given again, side by side with those of the budget-weight method.

	<i>Simple average.</i>	<i>Weighted average (68.6% of expenditure being accounted for).</i>
January, 1890 . . . . .	102.0	100.2
1891 . . . . .	100.6	103.2
1892 . . . . .	96.5	100.1
1893 . . . . .	97.2	105.0
1894 . . . . .	89.6	96.4
1895 . . . . .	84.7	90.5
1896 . . . . .	85.2	89.5
1897 . . . . .	82.0	85.9
1898 . . . . .	83.3	86.8
1899 . . . . .	86.5	86.8

The differences in result are due mainly to the great proportion of expenditure on food in workingmen's budget; the striking discrepancy in 1893, for example, being accounted for at once by the high prices of food at that time.

The figures unmistakably show that a marked fall in prices took place during the decade, but show also the signs of the upward movement which began after 1897 (low-water mark in every column), and has continued with accelerated pace through 1900.

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THE formal opening by the Prince of Wales, on March 3, of the last of the buildings erected by the London County Council on what is known as "the Boundary-street area,"

marks the completion of the largest single operation in the nature of municipal housing hitherto undertaken by any public authority. The area in question—a rectangular block at the edge of the parish of Bethnal Green where it touches the parish of Shoreditch—is fifteen acres in extent. Prior to 1892 it was one of the worst of the slums, if not the worst, in London. It had been laid out, two centuries or more ago, in narrow streets of small houses, two or three stories high, with little yards at the back. For some time it probably furnished a fairly comfortable place of residence for decent artisans, among others for many of the Huguenot silk weavers who came to England after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. But the dwellings were poorly built, and on insecure foundations or none at all. The houses began to sink, so that many of the ground-floor rooms became cellars; and in some cases the yards were built upon. As the houses became less attractive, they were peopled by a lower class of tenants; so that more than half a century ago the district was already notorious for disease and crime. What it has been of late years may be seen at a glance by a reference to Mr. Charles Booth's map, where its dark blue of extreme poverty and its black of criminality catch the eye even in the midst of the sombre coloring of the East End. The reader who has the nerve for it and can allow for "the pathetic fallacy" may make acquaintance with the inner life of the district in Mr. Arthur Morrison's *Tales of Mean Streets* and *Child of the Jago*.

With the exception of two or three factories and warehouses, the whole area has been swept clear by the County Council. The new habitations do not even follow the lines of the old streets. The checker-board of narrow streets and alleys has been replaced by a central public garden, with wide, tree-planted avenues radiating from it, like the spokes of a wheel. This sacrifice of space for the sake of light and air has been made up for, so far as housing is concerned, by erecting buildings of five stories, so that the district now accommodates, under immeasurably superior sanitary conditions, almost as many persons as before its re-creation (5,380 as compared with 5,566).

But not the same persons or the same class of persons; and there's the rub! Even if the rents of the new tenements had been nominally the same per room as those of the old, the conditions imposed by the London County Council as to overcrowding and uncleanness would infallibly have driven away the more degraded part of the population. It is the universal experience in such circumstances. As it was, the cost of the improvement—about half a million pounds sterling for the acquisition of the site, and a like sum for the rehousing—has involved rentals of 6s. for two rooms per week and 8s. 6d. for three, which have put them beyond the means of casual laborers as well as, in many cases, of the workers in the "sweated" industries. A superior class of workmen has entered into this "model village," and the old inhabitants have crowded into the adjacent streets.

Opinions will differ as to the deductions to be drawn from this fact. There seems no reason to suppose that there was any unnecessary expenditure upon the buildings as planned by the architects. The "Works Department," which has caused so much discussion, constructed only a few of the blocks: the rest were put into the hands of well-known contractors. And both Department and contractors were stimulated by rivalry to do their best. It is argued by some that in future operations the Council should content itself with less road space, higher buildings, and smaller rooms; by others, that it could make a better financial showing if it were allowed to sell part of the cleared space for business purposes, and also to buy cheaper land in the neighborhood for the housing of the excess population; while others argue for the acquisition of land and the building of tenements outside municipal limits, in conjunction with a system of cheap rapid transit.

It is worth while adding that streets named after Calvin, Rochelle, and Palissy will henceforth remind the new inhabitants of some of the older and better associations of the district; while the Arnold circus in the centre may recall to the mind of a visitor one of the most beautiful of Matthew Arnold's poems,—that entitled "East London."

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