

**ENGLISH ECONOMIC  
HISTORY: SELECTED  
DOCUMENTS, PART I**

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English economic history: selected documents, Part I by A. E. Bland & P. A. Brown & R. H. Tawney

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ENGLISH ECONOMIC HISTORY  
SELECT DOCUMENTS

PART I: A.D. 1000-1485

ENGLISH  
ECONOMIC HISTORY  
SELECT DOCUMENTS

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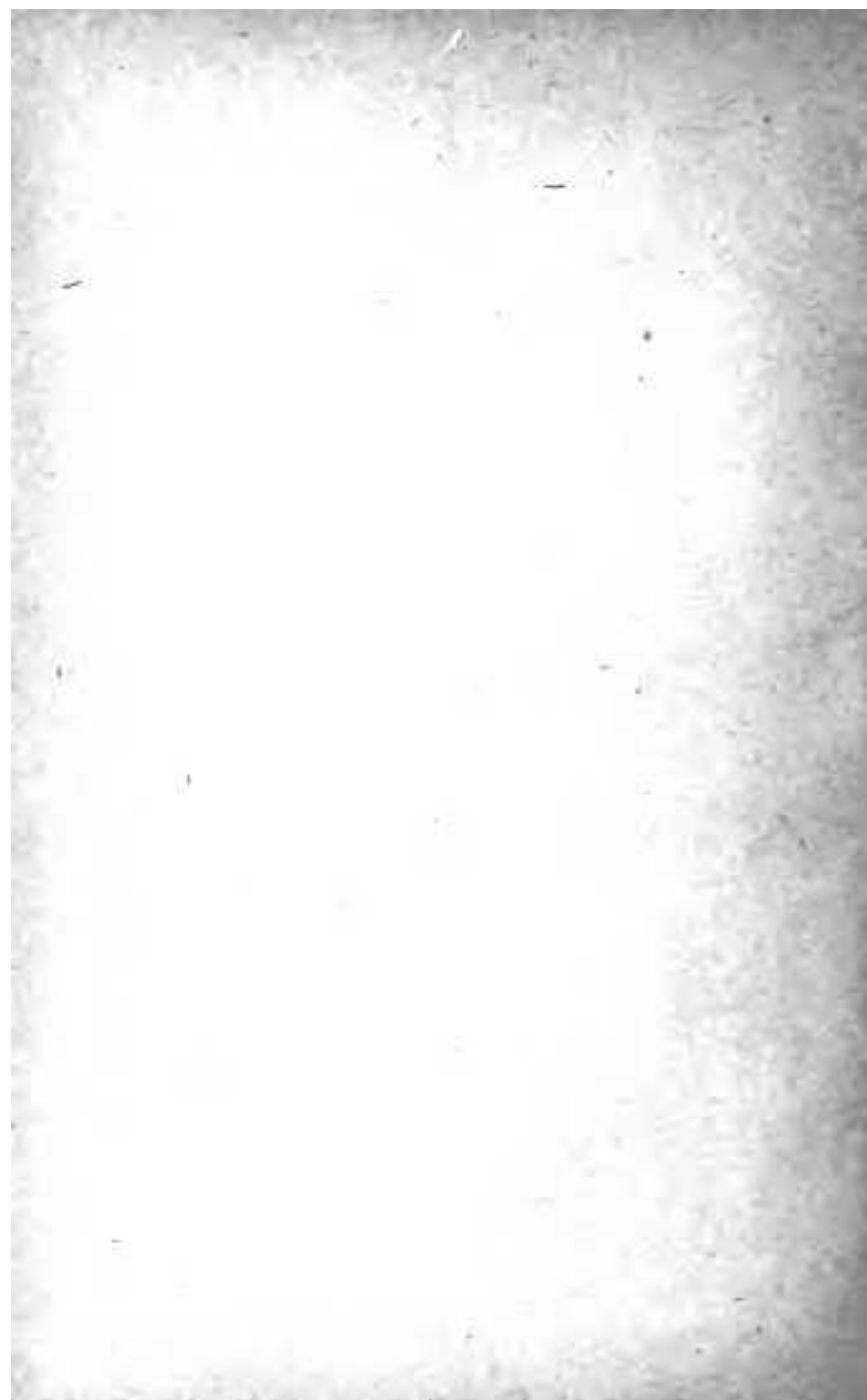
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PART I  
A.D. 1000-1485

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## INTRODUCTION

THE object of this book is to supply teachers and students of English Economic History with a selection of documents which may serve as illustrations of their subject. It should be read in conjunction with some work containing a broad survey of English economic development, such as, to mention the latest and best example, Professor W. J. Ashley's "The Economic Organization of England."<sup>1</sup> The number of historical "source books" has been multiplied so rapidly in recent years that we ought, perhaps, to apologise for adding one to their number. We ventured to do so because in the course of our work as teachers of Economic History in the University Tutorial Classes organised by the Workers' Educational Association, we found it difficult to refer our students to any single book containing the principal documents with which they ought to be acquainted. That Economic History cannot be studied apart from Constitutional and Political History is a commonplace to which we subscribe; and we are not so incautious as to be tempted into a discussion of what exactly Economic History means. It is sufficient for our purpose that a subject which is called by that name is being increasingly studied by University students, and that while the principal documents of English Constitutional History are available in the works of Stubbs, Prothero, Gardiner and Grant Robertson, there is no book, as far as we know—except Professor Pollard's "The Reign of Henry VII. from Contemporary Sources"—which illustrates English economic development in a similar way. We are far from comparing our own minnow with these Tritons. But it may perhaps do some service till more competent authors take the field. It is hardly necessary for us to apologise for translating our documents into English, and for modernizing

<sup>1</sup> Messrs. Longman Green & Co.



the spelling throughout. We are likely not to be alone in thinking that it would be a pity if a passing acquaintance with the materials of mediæval economic history were confined to those who can read Latin and Norman-French.

A word of explanation as to the selection and arrangement of our extracts may perhaps be excused. Our object was not to produce a work of original research, but to help students of economic history to see it more intelligently by seeing it through the eyes of contemporaries. Hence, though a considerable number of our documents are published here for the first time, we have not consciously followed the lure of the unprinted, and have chosen our extracts not because they were new, but because they seemed to illustrate some important aspect of our subject. For the same reason we have not confined ourselves entirely to "documents" in the strict acceptance of that term, but have included selections from such works as Roger of Hoveden, *The Liber of English Policy*, *The Commowal of this Realm of England*, Hakluyt's *Voyages*, and the *Tours of Defoe and Arthur Young*, when they seemed to throw light upon points which could not easily be illustrated otherwise. The arrangement of our selections caused us some trouble. It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to urge that a document must be studied with reference to its chronological setting; and the simplest plan, no doubt, would have been to print them in strict chronological order. We felt, however, that the work of all but the more expert readers would be lightened if we grouped them under definite, even if somewhat arbitrary, headings of period and subject, and added short bibliographies of the principal authorities. This seemed to involve the writing of short introductory notes to explain the contents of each section, which we have accordingly done. But no one need read them. No one but students beginning the subject will. If an excuse is needed for stopping with the year 1846, we must plead that to end earlier would have been to omit documents of the first importance for the study of modern economic history, and that to continue further would have caused our book to be even more overburdened than it is at present.

That the attempt to produce in one volume a satisfactory selection of documents to illustrate English Economic History from the Norman Conquest to the Repeal of the Corn Laws can hardly be successful, that we have neglected some subjects—taxation, colonization, and foreign trade—and paid excessive attention to others—social conditions, economic policy, and administration—that every reader will look for a particular document and fail to find it, of all this we are sadly conscious. We are conscious also of a more serious, because less obvious, defect. Partly through a pardonable reaction against the influence of economic theorists, partly because of the very nature of the agencies by which historical documents are compiled and preserved, the natural bias of economic historians is to lay a perhaps excessive stress on those aspects of economic development which come under the eyes of the State and are involved in its activity, and to neglect the humbler but often more significant movements which spring from below, to over-emphasize organisation and to under-estimate the initiative of individuals. If a reader of these selections exclaims on putting them down, "How much that is important is omitted!" we can only confess ourselves in mercy and express the hope that they may soon be superseded.

It remains for us to thank those who have helped us with suggestions and criticisms, or by permitting us to reprint extracts from documents already published. We have to acknowledge the kind permission to reprint documents given to us by the Clarendon Press, the Cambridge University Press, the London School of Economics, the Department of Economics of Harvard University, The Royal Historical Society, The Early English Text Society, the Co-operative Union, Ltd., the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office, the Corporation of Norwich, the Corporation of Nottingham, Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench and Trübner, Messrs. Duncker & Humblot, Dr. G. von Schanz, Professor G. Unwin, Professor F. J. C. Hearnshaw, The Rev. Canon Morris, Miss M. D. Harris, Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Hammond and Mr. F. W. Galton. Among those who have assisted us with suggestions or in other ways we must mention Mr. Hubert Hall, Mr. M. S. Giuseppe, Mr. S.

C. Ratcliff, all of the Public Record Office, The Ven. Archdeacon Cunningham, Mr. W. H. Stevenson, of St. John's College, Oxford, Mr. A. Ballard, Miss Putnam, Mr. R. V. Lennard, of Wadham College, Oxford, Mr. K. Bell, of All Souls' College, Oxford, Mr. H. Clay, Mr. F. W. Kolthammer, Miss O. J. Dunlop, Miss H. M. Stocks, and Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Hammond. For reading our proofs, or part of them, we are indebted to Mr. E. Barker, of New College, Oxford, Mr. C. G. Crump and Mr. C. H. Jenkinson, of the Public Record Office, Dr. Knowles, of the London School of Economics, and Professor G. Unwin, of the University of Manchester.

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