

The State of the Poor

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- Eden, Frederick Morton

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Abstract

Sir Frederick Morton Eden (1766–1809) was an English writer and a pioneer social researcher. Eden studied at Christ Church, Oxford, and subsequently worked in banking and insurance, inheriting a baronetcy from his father, who had been the governor of the American province of Maryland, in 1784. Arguing that poverty could not be tackled without knowing what it actually meant to be poor, this innovative three-volume work is an attempt to define what poverty meant in concrete terms. It is packed with data from across England, divided by county, and covering factors such as food prices, wages, diet and mortality rates. It begins with an explanation of the methods of data collection used, and outlines the various measures taken against poverty in different periods. Volume 2 presents the first set of reports on living conditions of the poor in the various English counties, sorted alphabetically, from Bedfordshire to Suffolk.

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