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of Science" or "The Religion of Humanity." By 1883, when Beatrice was 25, the sum total of influence acting upon her had led her to the conviction that she could best serve humanity by becoming a social investigator. Her sister Kate had for some time worked as a rent-collector in the dock area, and she herself had visited in the slums of Soho. But people made destitute by vice were not, she felt, typical members of the manual-working class. She determined to gain first-hand knowledge of how respectable workers lived, and so resorted to a ruse. Unknown, and posing as "Miss Jones" she went to stay among her mother's mill-working relatives in the town of Bacup. The visit was a revelation. She was delighted with the simplicity, sincerity, and genuine religious piety of the men and women of this classless society. Moreover, with the chapel as centre, it provided a small working model of democratic government. Here, too, she first observed the successful working of a co-operative store.

#### In London's Slums

She returned to a London seething with discussion about the burning question of the hour, the problem of the destitution in London's slums. Some blamed the shortcomings of individuals, some blamed the careless almsgiving of the rich; others, influenced by William Morris, Henry George and such writers, blamed the social system, and advocated Socialism. As with her cousin-by-marriage, Charles Booth, her convinced Conservatism was at this time still unshaken, but also like his, her reason demanded accurate facts that would show the real cause and extent of this destitution. She therefore gladly agreed to be one of the army of investigators for Charles Booth's monumental survey *Life and Labour of the People in London*. Using the census as basis, an area inhabited by a million families was examined, with the aid of school attendance inspectors, district visitors, sanitary inspectors, street by street and house by house. The results when scientifically analysed, proved that 30 per cent of people in the world's largest and richest city lived at or beneath the level of bare subsistence. Of how Beatrice worked as a rent-collector and later as an employee in sweaters' dens in order to obtain the desired first-hand knowledge it would take too long to tell, but to me the story is more interesting than any novel.

#### She Meets Sidney Webb

About this time, her father's illness tied her for long periods to his bedside at Bournemouth, where she missed her work, and was acutely depressed. "But how little do we mortals know what is good for us," she writes. A friend directed her to Sidney Webb for some historical data, and her diary relates her first impression of this tiny man with a huge head, who wore clothes that were shabby to shininess, and was completely innocent of vanity. Soon they had become partners, not only in an ideally happy marriage, but in a life-work of social investigation. She called it "a working comradeship founded in a common faith and made perfect by marriage; perhaps the most exquisite, certainly the most enduring of all the varieties of happiness." Death has destroyed the partnership, but its fruits will enrich mankind for ever.

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