**Victorian Society**

In *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde,* Robert Louis Stevenson describes life in London during the 1880s, the latter half of the Victorian period. During that time, society was sharply divided into distinct social classes and their corresponding communities. In *Forlorn Sunset* (1947), Michael Sadleir described the city as “three parts jungle” noting that very few districts were truly public in the sense that people could move in and out of them with ease. Generally, people were uncomfortable and often unwelcome in parts of town that were not inhabited by their own social group. To avoid wandering into an unknown area, most Londoners stayed in their own neighbourhoods. This geographical and social fragmentation is an essential part of the setting of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde.*

**Read the following passage and underline any arts that hint at a darker ‘underworld’ in London.**

**An Autumn Evening in Whitechapel**(Source: 3 November 1888, *Littell's Living Age*)

From the Daily News

Whitechapel and Spitalfields are always interesting neighbourhoods, and recent events have made them decidedly more interesting. They have afforded startling illustrations of the dreadful possibilities of life down in the unfathomable depths of these vast human warrens. At all times one who strolls through this quarter of town, especially by night, must feel that below his ken are the awful deeps of an ocean teeming with life, but enshrouded in impenetrable mystery. As he catches here and there a glimpse of a face under the flickering, uncertain light of a lamp - the face perhaps of some woman, bloated by drink and distorted by passion - he may get a momentary shuddering sense of what humanity may sink to when life is lived apart from the sweet, health-giving influences of fields and flowers, of art and music and books and travel, of the stimulus of interesting enterprise, the gentle amenities of happy hours and intercourse with the educated and the cultured.

A momentary sense of what human nature may become may here and there flash in upon one as he gazes out upon the dark waters, but it is only when the human monster actually rises for a moment to the surface and disappears again, leaving a victim dead, that one quite realizes that that momentary scene is a dread reality. Just for a few days the mass of the people of Spitalfields and Whitechapel themselves seemed to be realizing the awful possibilities of the nature that belonged to them. Thousands of them were really shocked and sobered, by the last tragedy especially. One could see in the people's faces, and could detect in their tones and answers, an indefinable something which told plainly that they had been horrified by a revelation.

Mr. George Holland, whose remarkable work has been going on for so very many years in premises occupying an obscure position in George Yard, Whitechapel - where it will be remembered one of these unfortunate women was found with thirty or forty stabs - says that the sensation has affected his institution very greatly. He has some hundreds of young women connected with his place, and many of them have been afraid to stir out after dark. He is under some anxiety, too, lest ladies who have been wont to come down there on winter evenings to teach and entertain his young people, should be deterred by this latest addition to the evil reputation of Whitechapel, and he is earnestly pushing on alterations in his premises which will give him a frontage out in the main road.

On the other hand, Mr. Charrington, whose great place stands out boldly on the Mile End highway a blaze of light and cheerfulness, thinks that people have more than ever thronged out of the dark and silent byways and back lanes into the broad pavement and into the glare of light thrown upon it by shops and public-houses and entertainments. Since these outrages the dark places of Whitechapel and Spitalfields have undoubtedly been a little darker and stiller, and more depressing. Some streets have presented, even to those familiar with them, quite a desolate and deserted appearance after nightfall.

But the nine-days’ wonder has passed, the effect of the shock has visibly subsided, and people are beginning to move freely again. Turn down this side street out of the main Whitechapel Road. It may be well to tuck out of view any bit of jewellery that may be glittering about; the sight of means to do ill-deeds makes ill-deeds done. The street is oppressively dark, though at present the gloom is relieved somewhat by feebly lighted shopfronts. Men are lounging at the doors of the shops, smoking evil-smelling pipes. Women with bare heads and with arms under their aprons are sauntering about in twos and threes, or are seated gossiping on steps leading into passages dark as Erebus.

Now round the corner into another still gloomier passage, for there are no shops here to speak of. This is the notorious Wentworth Street. The police used to make a point of going through this only in couples, and possibly may do so still when they go there at all. Just now there are none met with. It is getting on into the night, but gutters, and doorways, and passages, and staircases appear to be teeming with children. See there in that doorway of a house without a glimmer of light about it. It looks to be a baby in long clothes laid on the floor of the passage, and seemingly exhausted with crying. Listen for a moment at this next house. There is a scuffle going on upon the staircase - all in the densest darkness - and before you have passed a dozen yards there is a rush down-stairs and an outsurging into the street with fighting and screaming, and an outpouring of such horrible blackguardism that it makes you shudder as you look at those curly-headed preternaturally sharp-witted children who leave their play to gather around the *mêlée*.

God help the little mortals! How can they become anything but savages, “pests of society,” the “dangerous classes,” and so on? How black and unutterably gloomy all the houses look! How infinitely all the moral and physical wretchedness of such localities as these is intensified by the darkness of the streets and the houses.

It is a relief to get out of this vile little slum and to work one’s way back into the life and light of the great highway, with its flaunting shops, its piles of glowing fruit, its glittering jewellery, its steaming cook-shops, its flaring gin-palaces and noisy shows, and clubs and assembly rooms, and churches and mission halls, its cheap jacks and shooting galleries, its streaming naphtha lights and roar and rattle, and hurrying throngs and noisy groups, and little assemblies gathered together under the stars and the street-lamps to listen to some expounder of the mysteries of the universe or of the peculiar merits of a new patent pill.