**Source A: London Labour and the London Poor – Henry Mayhew, 1851**

There are hundreds of stalls, and every stall has its one or two lights; either it is illuminated by the intense white light of the new self-generating gas-lamp, or else it is brightened up by the red smoky flame of the old-fashioned grease lamp. One man shows off his yellow haddock with a candle stuck in a bundle of firewood; his neighbour makes a candlestick of a huge turnip, and the tallow gutters over its sides; whilst the boy shouting "Eight a penny, stunning pears!" has rolled his dip\* in a thick coat of brown paper, that flares away with the candle. Some stalls are crimson with the fire shining through the holes beneath the baked chestnut stove; others have handsome octahedral\* lamps, while a few have a candle shining through a sieve: these, with the sparkling ground-glass globes of the tea-dealers' shops, and the butchers' gaslights streaming and fluttering in the wind, like flags of flame, pour forth such a flood of light, that at a distance the atmosphere immediately above the spot is as lurid as if the street were on fire.

The pavement and the road are crowded with purchasers and street-sellers. The housewife in her thick shawl, with the market-basket on her arm, walks slowly on, stopping now to look at the stall of caps, and now to cheapen a bunch of greens. Little boys, holding three or four onions in their hand, creep between the people, wriggling their way through every interstice, and asking for custom in whining tones, as if seeking charity. Then the tumult of the thousand different cries of the eager dealers, all shouting at the top of their voices, at one and the same time, is almost bewildering.

Each salesman tries his utmost to sell his wares, tempting the passers-by with his bargains. The boy with his stock of herbs offers "a double 'andful of fine parsley for a penny;" the man with the donkey-cart filled with turnips has three lads to shout for him to their utmost, with their "Ho! ho! hi-i-i! What do you think of this here? A penny a bunch – hurrah for free trade! Here's your turnips!" Until it is seen and heard, we have no sense of the scramble that is going on throughout London for a living. The same scene takes place at the Brill -- the same in Leather-lane -- the same in Tottenham-court-road -- the same in Whitecross-street; go to whatever corner of the metropolis you please, either on a Saturday night or a Sunday morning, and there is the same shouting and the same struggling to get the penny profit out of the poor man's Sunday's dinner.

\***dip** – candle made by repeatedly dipping in wax

\* **octahedral** – a solid shape with eight faces

**Source B: *Inside the supermarkets’ dark stores*, The Guardian**

As online shopping is growing, so are the supermarkets' giant warehouses – with their robots and "goods-to-person pickstations". Will all grocery shopping one day be done this way?

Do you remember what the future of shopping used to be? In place of a trundle round the high street every few days, we were going to make weekly trips to big-box supermarkets outside town, delight in the bright produce and the enticing smells and drive home happy, our cars low on their axles. Well, there's a new future now: the "dark store", the supermarket that we never see at all.

Don't be too alarmed by the name, or too excited. Desynchronise your watches. A dark store is just a warehouse full of groceries where staff called "pickers" select the goods that have been ordered by an online customer. Sometimes they look almost creepily similar to normal supermarkets. In Hanger Lane, west London, Waitrose operates a dark store in an old John Lewis carpet warehouse. Inside, professional pickers roll baskets around the aisles much like civilians, except they are wrapped up in coats and scarves against the refrigeration system.

Elsewhere, they look like nothing you've ever seen. At Tesco's sixth and newest dark store in Erith, south-east London, they operate what is basically a giant robot butler, although they call it a "goods-to-person pickstation" and a "dotcom centre" (the supermarkets themselves aren't keen on the term "dark store"). Instead of laying out the groceries in aisles, at Erith they store most of them more efficiently in towers of blue crates. The robot extracts whatever is needed and brings it to the picker, who stands still (until it's time to visit the freezer).

"It's a little bit like I imagine going into a Willy Wonka factory," says Jennifer Creevy, deputy editor of Retail Week. "It looks really whizzy and there's crates moving around. It's really impressive." Organising things this way saves space and time, and creates a safer workplace, according to Dematic, the company that built Tesco's robots. "With its ergonomic\* design, you get 100% golden zone single-level picking," they say. And who are we to argue?

No one knows how much of our grocery shopping will eventually be done online, but everyone agrees it will be a lot more than now. In 2013, the proportion was about 5.5%. This year it should be around 6%. Within five years the value of the market is expected to double in size. Much of the current online demand is met by simply sending pickers around conventional supermarkets, although as demand rises that becomes less efficient, in part because the physically present customers keep getting in the way. Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's and Waitrose all have plans to open new dark stores over the coming year or two. "It just makes sense," Creevy says. "Online is just showing huge, huge growth. Online and convenience stores."

So in future, when people are doing all their boring and heavy shopping through dark stores, and all their interesting and urgent shopping through convenience stores and local shops, what is going to become of the big boxes? Tesco has already turned one in Watford into something more like a shopping mall, with a cafe, a clothes shop, a restaurant and even a community centre. It's hard to imagine that strategy always working, however, since shopping malls already exist. And that may be no bad thing. Perhaps in 20 years you'll be out in the countryside and you'll be able to say to your bored grandchildren: "I remember when all this was car parks."

\***ergonomic** – efficient (describing a way of working)