



Wealth and Welfare: An Economic and Social History of Britain 1851-1951

Martin Daunton

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This collection of essays explores the questions of what counted as knowledge in Victorian Britain, who defined knowledge and the knowledgeable, by what means and by what criteria. During the Victorian period, the structure of knowledge took on a new and recognizably modern form, and the disciplines that we now take for granted took shape. The ways in which knowledge was tested also took on a new form, with oral examinations and personal contacts giving way to formal written tests. New institutions of knowledge were created: museums were important at the start of the period (knowledge often meant classifying and collecting) by the end, universities had taken on a new prominence. Knowledge expanded and Victorians needed to make sense of the sheer scale of information, to popularize it, and at the same time to exclude ignorance and error - a role carried out by encyclopedias and popular publications. The concept of knowledge is complex and much debated, with a multiplicity of meanings and troubling relationships. By studying the Victorian organization of knowledge in its institutional settings, these essays contribute to our consideration of these wider issues.

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