

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF ALLOTMENTS

LORD HALSBURY divides allotments into five classes¹:

- (1) Poor Allotments (established under Poor Laws from 1819 onwards).
- (2) Fuel Allotments (established under Enclosure Awards, under the Private Enclosure Acts).
- (3) Field Gardens (established under Enclosure Awards since the General Enclosure Act of 1845).
- (4) Those established by Parochial Charities (under Allotments Extension Act, 1882).
- (5) Those established by Public Action (under the various Acts since 1887).

To these must be added:

- (6) Those established by private enterprise.
- (7) Those established by co-operative or mutual action on the part of labourers.

*Fuel Allotments.*² However much opinions may differ as to the nature and extent of the rights or privileges of the villagers, as distinct from the commoners, over the common arable fields, pastures, and wastes of the villages, nobody

¹ *Laws of England.*

² The word *allotment* in its general legal aspect means any parcel or plot of land allotted or given to a person on the division of an estate in lands, and it gathered special significance during the chief period of the enclosure of the common fields, 1760 to 1845. In the Enclosure Awards it is constantly used to designate the parcels of land given to individuals from the common estate of the common fields and pastures. In the latter half of this period the word was also given a more limited and specific meaning which is best conveyed in the phrase of the time, 'an allotment to the labouring poor'. The economic meaning of the term as used from 1820 to the present time is a small parcel or plot of land occupied by a working man and constituting a subsidiary source of income, in addition to his wages.