R. COLL. M. B 133

Interviews 1st book

see Life and labour ... 1902-3.
Second Series. Vol. III. Part II.
Chap. VI: Grocers [including greengrocers],
Oil and Colourmen.

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Grocers, Greengrocers etc.

June 26th.

2.

Note of Interview with Mr. R. R. Wilkinson of Joseph Evans and Sons:-

Mr Wilkinson is Manager of Joseph Evans which since the death of Mr Evans has been a limited company.

Mr Wilkinson tells me that the late Mr Evans was always very good to his men: at all events he gave them splendid premises to work in; the warehouse is a fine building with very large, light and well lighted rooms, so that the men certainly work under conditions unusually good ~~for th~~

Mr Wilkinson had already filled in the wages sheet. He tells me that overtime is paid for in proportion to the wages at from 5d to 8d per hour. Just before Christmas especially the men often work for from one to five hours overtime.

The hours are from 7.30 to 5.30 with half an hour for breakfast, and half an hour for dinner, both of which meals the men go out for.

The busy season is from October to January when they have to take on extra hands. The difficulty apprentices where these extra men come from; if they prove capable they often get a permanent job.

The silkmen state that there is less drinking in wholesale grocery houses than in drapery.

The general tendency in the trade is for the small houses to be driven out by the large ones. Both in wholesale and retail businesses the "cutting" is probably fiercer than in any other trade. Crossed houses, e.g. Lipton and International Tea Co. combine wholesale and retail business, which is looked upon by other houses as rather mean.

July 1st.

Note of Interview with Mr H. Cushen:-

Mr Cushen is the Chairman of the Metropolitan Grocers' and Provision Dealers' Assocn. He has lately retired from business after about three years. Previously he was for thirty years in a large way of business at Mile End.

Wages. Wages of messenger run from £2 to £2.9 with board and lodging. Assistants get from £1 to 25/ with board and lodging. Boys get from 3/ to 12/ with board and lodging. Men who board and lodge out get from 10/ to 12/ more.

Hours. Hours now are as a rule from 8 to 8. When Mr Cushen went into business 30 years ago they were from 7 to 10 or 10.30, and there was always work to be done after the shop closed. By shortening office hours throughout the trade has been greatly shortened, and no doubt this will go further in this way. As a rule the men who began to come into early closing movement are those who are doing badly

and many of them fail in spite of the long hours they keep open. Mr Cushen could here others disregard men of this sort: in the long run he believes they would lose nothing by doing so; but the masters are very much against legal interference with their hours.

Busy seasons. The two months before Christmas are peculiarly busy, and it is always necessary to take on extra hands; as a rule these are the oldest men who have fallen out of work through in the week before Christmas, when the ~~shutters~~ stress of the wholesale work is over, the retail grocers often borrow a man or two from the wholesale houses. Just before Christmas it is necessary sometimes to work very long hours.

Holidays. Thirty years ago no one in the trade ever had a holiday; it was strictly forbidden and had from one year end to another. Now in all except the very smallest shops they men take one or two holidays in the year.

The holiday is nearly always from Saturday night or Sunday morning to the following Saturday morning, as all the men must be there on Saturday.

Method of learning. There is now little apprenticing in London. Both master and men dislike the system, which they find irksome. Then is the usual result that men do not know their work so well as they used to; but this ~~does not~~ is not a matter of such importance as it used to be, as a young journeyman now commits so largely to the ~~the~~ selling proprietary articles. Indeed now the most successful men are those who are sippers of tea, coffee, liquor etc.

With the decay of apprenticing a lower class has come into the business. Formerly the sons of tradesmen in good position were constantly apprenticed. The young assistant now is nearly always the son of a working man, and comes in as an errand boy as soon as he leaves the board school. The sons of tradesmen now all want to

Lyon at a point in advance of that where their father left off. The Cachet was most anxious that his son should be apprenticed and carry on the business: however he refused to associate with persons dissidents - whom he characterised as 'Cads' - and was anxious to go into the army with a commission.

Habits of men. Though the men come from a lower class they are more sober and generally more moral than those of a previous generation. The Cachet lapse life in Paris in St Paul's Churchyard. Of Out of 100 men there not more than 10 had any idea of decency and morality. Women had repaired to wait for their comes out on Budgets Hill and they ask leave to public Room or Music Hall whatever night. They now behave much more respectably.

The practice of keeping it is much less common than it was, chiefly because the men get too high an opinion of their

rights and privileges and checked under the restrictions as to hours etc. which were necessary in the interests of discipline. The result is that the relations between masters and men are not nearly so cordial as they were. In the older days the men were always treated as members of the family; now they are little more than machines.

The grocers' trade is in the worst position of anybody's; more work for the bankruptcy officials than any other. This is owing to the fearful 'cutting' which is worse than in any other trade. No other trade has suffered so much from the competition of Stores, which sell many proprietary articles at cost price.

There is no association among grocers' assistants in London.

A good deal of Mr Lucken's evidence will be found in his evidence before the Labour Commission (see the printed matter). The reading of that evidence does not give nearly such a

favourable impression of the man as a personal
connection. I should say that he was a
most favourable specimen of a master, who
fancied upon the that the relations of
masters and men are so much altered. As long
as he was in business he always had his men
living in, and says, I think truly, that he
did all he could to make their lives happy
and comfortable. He says that they always had
their meals with the family. He did not
forbid them to frequent public houses, but
allowed such men to get them from the
housekeeper at any time as long as they
did not abuse the privilege. He built them
a small shop and set up theatricals
concerts, and social evenings. They certainly
had to work hard, but not so hard as he
did.

Altogether the position of the men has
immensely improved in the last thirty years.
Their wages are certainly double what they
were, the hours are much shorter, and the
work while they are at it, is much easier.

For one thing all the articles sold by the grocer required an enormous amount of work Expended on them before they were fit for sale. Sugars had to be blended, fruit had to be cleaned etc. Now all this work is done in the wholesale houses and warehouses, and the retail grocer has scarcely any & warehouse work.

There is no reason as regards health why men should fall out of the trade early, but in the retail trade they do. You seldom see an old man behind the counter. The reason is that shopping is mostly done by young women when women get on in life they send their daughters out to do the shopping. The young women always go to the shops where the assistants are young, and no men can afford to keep old men behind the counter at the risk of losing his trade. The older men often get jobs in the wholesale trade.

July 2nd

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Note of Interview with the Manager of the Imperial Oil Company.

The Imperial Oil Co. almost divide the wholesale trade in ~~Petroleum and Kerosene~~ Lighting oils with the Anglo American Oil Co.

Wages. Their carmen are paid a fixed wage with a commission on sales. Their wages average from 28/ to 30/ a week. Some of them may add to their earnings by giving short measure to customers but not to any great extent.

Hours. The men start on their rounds at 7.30, and have always done by 7. They take their meals as they like during their round.

Regularity. The busy season, but the trade their staff in the wholesale the men round whether they're men who are known

busiest is of course the company do not employ the carmen; as in the have to do each the same are busy or slack. The out in the summer about

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without exception paid work in the Imperial Water trade.

General condition of the trade. The oil trade ~~has~~ of London has for some years been in a bad way. It has been injured in the best end by the Electric light and in poor districts by the penny in the slot gas. But the chief disturbing factor in the trade has been the action of the Anglo American Co. This Company is simply the English representative of the Standard Oil Trust of America. They came to England with the expressed intention of killing all trade in opposition to their own. The lowest price at which they can sell their oil at a profit is 3¼ per gallon but last winter they lowered the price to 2¾ in the expectation of forcing out all others. The Imperial Lear Lamm made a good fight against them, and this year the Anglo American finding that they had made an enormous loss took fresh, but on the other tack and gradually raised the price to 5½ a gallon, with the result

that a large number of their customers left them and went to the Imperial. They are
boasted of retailers throughout the trade, so no
one has any idea from day to day what the
price will be.

July 4th.

Note of Interview with Mr. C.C:-

Mr C.C. who preferred not to give his name is a grocers assistant now out of work. He has been in London for ten years and was for five years with Mr Jones, a large grocer in Christ St, Poplar. He was last with Lipton.

Wages. The wages of a Manager who lives in are about 15/- a week; of one who lives out about 30/.

1st Assistant Counterman will get 12/ living in; 24/ to 26/ living out.

2nd Counterman 10/ in and 24/ out.

3rd Counterman 8/ in and 20/ to 24/ out.

Boys get from 6/ to 9/ with nothing found.

There is little or no opportunity in properly managed shops of adding to the wages by illegitimate methods.

Except perhaps in large towns or stores there are no deductions in the shape of fines.

Men have to find their own aprons at a cost of about 1/ each. They require not less than

six a year. They are always obliged to wear their clothes, and are expected to be dressed neat and smartly. In some farms (e.g. Lipton) they have to wear smocks costing from 9/9 to £1, and will want not less than three a year.

Hours. At Jones' they worked from 7 to 10 on the first four days, till 11 on Fridays, and till about 12.30 on Saturday. Church C.E. has been had to begin before 7.30. The closing hours being much the same everywhere except perhaps in the West End.

As a rule they have 20 minutes for breakfast and tea, and 30 minutes for dinner, but on Saturdays tea is a very uncertain meal.

Holidays. Most of the larger farms give a holiday of some sort in the year, but the longest C.E. has ever had is from Monday to Thursday.

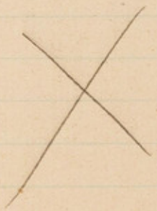
The majority of men still live in, though they would prefer to live out. The masters prefer

to have men living in, as they fear that if they live out they may help themselves to food. There is therefore a great objection to married men, who can scarcely get place except as Managers of branches.

There is no apprenticing in London, though still some in the country. The majority of grocers assistants are countrymen.

There is no trade in which men are thrown out so young; a man can do her the greatest difficulty in finding work. C.C. is 27, and says that as a rule men now be find young men preferred to him.

C.C. thinks it is better to be in a small shop where the Master superintends, than in a branch shop of a big firm under a Manager. Managers are very jealous, and do all they can to keep back assistants who show ability, for fear they should supplant them.



It is a common practice where men live in to supply no food on Sunday, so that men have to turn out for the day.

The number of men out of work in the trade is always very great. There are always dozens of men applying for every vacant place

July 4th.

Note of Interview with Mr Parrett:-

Mr Parrett is a man over 40 & has been in many shops in London: at one time he managed a trade in the city for Hubbard & Co, Tea Merchants: his last place was as foreman in a small shop in Porters Road N. Over a year he had a small shop of his own which he lost £135.

Wages: Managers 25/ to 35/ out; and 12/ to 20/ in.

1st Counterman 25/ to 30/ out; and 14/ in.

2nd Counterman 21/ to 25/ out, and 10/ in.

3rd Counterman 14/ to 16/ out, and 8/ in.

Boys get from 2/ to 8/.

The Check tillers or Cashiers are now employed by ~~all shops~~ almost all shops, and men have no opportunity of adding to their wages.

Mr Parrett prices the prices of aprons as from 1/6 to 2/ and says a man will require at least three a year.

With regard to White Shirts - in no shop are less than two & such required: in most shops the men wear them: but in some they are expected to find on a clean one every day.

Hours. Mr Perrett has been led to open work before 8: otherwise his Evidence confirms that of C.C.: with the Exception that in the City he opened and closed at 9.

Meals in such shops are very uncertain: men are always liable to be called away. Food is often very bad and quite insufficient.

Holidays are general in large firms, but rather the Exception in small ones.

There is no apprenticing now. It is not wanted: there is little or nothing to learn. The work which used to be done by the retail grocer, is now done by the Wholesale House. Goods used to be delivered in bulk: they now nearly all come in packet form. Few grocers

now thoroughly understand their business, and the Yearding's done for them.

Busy and Slack seasons. Most grooms and especially the Stone lads or extra hands at Christmas. Last Christmas Jim Parrett took a job at the Civil Service Stores in the Haymarket. All the men so taken on are members of the trade.

Jim Parrett-Lee has found the trade unhealthy, though he has known men break down under the long hours

Jim Parrett-confirms the difficulty of getting work after youth is past. An enormous number of aged grooms assistants become canvassers for Insurance Companies or for Sewing Machines etc.

Jim is less living in than he used to be. The men prefer to live out, and the masters do not much care - one way or the other.

The relations between masters and men are not so good as they were. Masters are coming to look upon their men as more machines, and take no interest in them and no trouble to teach them.

Rather in contradiction to this Mr Parrott says that his firms are as a rule better than small firms; they often provide excellent rooms for their men, and in some cases libraries etc.

Mr Parrott again says that the majority of men are conservatives.

The "cutting" in the trade is terrible; the gross profit is not much more than a penny in the shilling; and Mr Parrott does not see how the small men with one shop can struggle on for many years longer. In poor neighbourhoods there will probably continue to be a few "generals" where the master is content to work very hard for a very small return, but otherwise the small men must drop out.

July 8th.

Note of Interview with Mr H. W. Kettle of Messrs. Jackson and Kettle:-

Messrs. Jackson and Kettle are Grocers and Oil and Colour Merchants with several branches.

Wages. Mr Kettle's evidence as to wages confirms that of other witnesses, but he says that in the oil and colour line they are usually rather ~~higher~~ higher than in Grocery; at 18 even to the men in the oil and colour trade get their highest wage much sooner than those in Grocery. They come from a lower social class, and usually always begin as bread boys very young: by the age of 18 or 20 they will be earning full wages, and if they are capable may soon look forward to being managers of branches. Grocers are usually the sons of more respectable parents, who do not care for their children to go into a trade which they consider dirty: in many cases they still begin as apprentices, and at 18 they are only earning the wages of lads.

hours in the Oil and Colour line are if anything rather longer than in Grocery.

With regard to early closing - Mr Kettle personally would prefer compulsory to voluntary closing. Voluntary closing he says is really compulsory on the larger firms: if you do not close early on the day fixed a parade with a board will be held outside your shop by the early closing Association, and a system of intimidation carried on; the small men who keeps open is left alone. Messrs. Markham and Kettle have lost much trade through Thursday closing which they can see no hope to regain unless their small neighbours are forced to close too.

Assistants. In the Grocery they take on a few hands at Christmas. In Oil and Colour the trade is regular throughout the year.

Masters ~~and~~ prefer men to live in, and men who are steady ~~prefer~~ prefer to do so themselves; they know that they cannot

live decently on their wages if they live out, and those who wish to live out are always regarded with suspicion.

I asked Mrs Bettle as to the line of distinction between the two businesses. She says that that distinction now was is rapidly wearing down; oil and colourmen have taken to selling a number of things which at one time were considered only the province of the fruiterers, though fruiterers have not yet taken to selling oils and colours. Profits are so small now that men find it impossible to live on the one business. In a few years there will probably be only very large businesses, and very small ones.

July 10th.

Note of Interview with Mr H. Clifford:-

Mr. Clifford is a grocer and oil and colour man
with a number of branches.

Wages. Mr Clifford confirms the evidence
that wages in the oil and colour line are rather
high, he should say about 10 p.c. higher.
This is due to the fact that it is a skilled trade.

Hours. At some of his shops Mr Clifford
closes at 9, at others at 9.30 according to the
neighbourhood. He has the strongest objection to the
long hours, but feels convinced that they cannot
be shortened to any great extent by voluntary
effort: the public are too selfish and inconsiderate.
On three occasions the grocers in the neighbourhood
of Strood Green, where Mr Clifford's chief shop is
have tried early closing on Thursday: twice it
has broken down, and is now on trial for the
third time. Nothing will run work short of
compulsion, and any compulsory system would
require a perfect army of inspectors to ensure its

being carried out. Mr Clifford thinks that the best hope for the residents is to try and get more holidays out of the masters. Personally he gives all his men a Lady holiday once a fortnight, besides about five days holiday in the year. The annual holiday is now he thinks almost universal throughout the trade.

Resolved. Extra Leads required at Christmas, but Mr Clifford thinks that it is only the grocers who have large Christmas Clubs who take on Extra Leads, unless perhaps an additional boy to deliver parcels. The majority of unemployed grocers advertise in "The Grocer" and at Christmas the advertisements fall from about 2 pages to half a page.

Health. Mr Clifford says that statistics show that grocers are an unusually healthy body of men.

Grocers assistants as far as education and social position goes rank next to drapers assistants. A good many therefore leave the trade for it,

X

become Commercial Travellers.

Mr Clifford then takes unmarried men who want to live out. He thinks they are too fond of helping themselves to biscuits, cheese etc. If married men live out arrangements are sometimes made for them to have their meals in.

Mr Clifford told me much more which was merely in confirmation of previous evidence.

July 18th.

Note of Interview with Mr H. J. Giles Secretary of the Metropolitan Grocers' Federation:-

Mr Giles is a shrewd Yankee with a great gift of the gab, and I should say a very thorough knowledge of the grocery trade. Some weeks since he asked me to give him a list of questions, to which I gave his written replies, with some of his comments on them which required explanation.

1. Define as nearly as possible the province of (a) Grocer (b) Italian Warehouseman (c) Provision Dealer (d) Oil and Colourman (e) Cheesemonger?

Answer:-

"(a) Sells tea, coffee, spice, sugar, and proprietary articles. (b) Overlaps former in many cases, but a few sell also foreign prepared provisions and other foreign produce. (c) Sells bacon, cheese, butter, eggs, poultry, and game (d) Sells oils, colours, paints, pickles, sauces, soap, and cotton Chandlery.

Until comparatively recent times there was no overlapping among these various trades;

Tea, coffee, spice and sugar are the staple articles of the grocer's trade. The Italian warehousemen sell nothing but foreign produce, e.g. macaroni, olive oil, sardines and other "delicatessen", while the articles sold by the others are equally well defined. Now the grocers and the Italian warehousemen are completely merged, and there are few grocers who do not at all events touch on the province of the oil and colourmen, and vice versa. With few exceptions the big men in the trade now go in for all these branches, and many of them sell articles not ~~strictly~~ included in any one of them. The change was brought about by the necessity of competing with the stores. Each man found it impossible to make a living out of his own trade, and was forced to ~~do~~ trench upon his neighbours province.

2. Average rate of wage of various grades of labour in (a) wholesale (b) retail trade?

Answer:

"(a) From £80 to £600 a year.

(by. Out of the House 30/; in the House 15/.

The men employed in the wholesale trade are salesmen with large salaries, warehousemen and clerks. Warehousemen are not necessarily merely unskilled men carmen packers; most of them, and at all events the foremen are usually thoroughly skilled in the articles which they have to handle, and their wages run up to £150 a year.

3. Do men usually lose and board in?

Answer:-

"Most left in and left out."

4. Have men to keep any special articles of dress, and if yes, are they found by the firms or provided by the men? Have the men to pay for any tools or implements?

Answer:-

"Not generally and have no tools to find".

Two Jews admitted the aprons. Some firms, &(S.f. Lipton's and Home and Colonial),

Expect their men to wear white jackets, which are supplied by the firm. Many firms expect their men to wear dark clothes.

5. Is there any general system of fines for unpunctuality or other causes, and if so are the fines retained by the masters, or returned to the men in any way, e.g. as sick fund or otherwise?

Answer:-

"Generally in large establishments but not in medium or small ones. When there are fines, sometimes to a sick fund, sometimes to an outing or holiday fund."

6. Have the men any opportunity of adding to their wages by piecework or "speeding" methods?

Answer:-

"No overtime or premiums or commissions generally paid as is done in the drapery trade. "Speeding" methods, by stitching foods rather common as there are so many

opportunities."

7. Hours of labour in (a) Wholesale (b) Retail trade with hours of beginning and ending?

Return:-

"(a) 10 hours a day - 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (b) 12 hours a day 8 a.m. to 8 p.m."

8. Intervals allowed for meals, and whether taken off or on the premises?

"Breakfast and tea half an hour; dinner an hour when ordinarily taken off the premises; varies when taken on the premises."

9. Do men as a rule get any holiday in the year?

Return:-

"Yes a week or a fortnight."

10. Is overtime common throughout the trade?

"No"

11. Are there busy and slack seasons, and how

what cases, and if yes, are extra hands taken on during busy seasons? If they are so taken on, are they as a rule unemployed members of the trade, or do they come from other occupations?

Brown:-

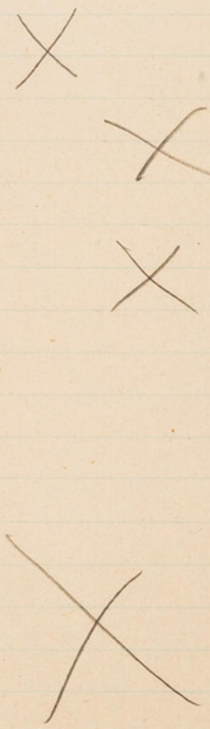
"Printers trade principally. Extra hands not generally taken on. In some special classes of the trade such as ~~trade~~ Weekly Newspaper & Printing class districts on Saturday nights extra hands are taken on. Men are always men out of work in the trade."

12. Is apprenticing general in the trade, and if not how do men learn their work?

Brown:-

"No. Men learn the trade by passing through the stages of message boy, porter, apprenticeship does not count exist, and in addition is hard made to extend it."

Mr Spiller denies that knowledge of the trade is not now so important as it was. In his opinion it is more important than ever. The practical part of the trade is the



ignorance of its members. To see his
immortal soul lost one person's assistant out of
a thousand could tell the difference between Peter
and Southey. Many of them men set up for
themselves and are ruined by their ignorance; they
are at the mercy of travellers and dealers in
proprietary articles. Nine when they have got their
goods in the shop they dont know how to keep
them. One sees very often tea lying loose
in the window with spice on one side, sugar on
the other, and bacon hanging just over it; tea
is most sensitive and sucks in something from
any other food in its immediate neighbourhood.
Grocers are now beginning to realise the
importance of knowledge if they are to hold
their own, and almost without exception the
men who are doing really well are men who
have taken the trouble to go right through the
trade, and who really understand the articles
in which they deal.

13. Is there any reason to suppose that
the majority of men employed are conscientious?

Answer:-

"Yes the majority are. Currants are I take the London town assistant is not so good as the countryman".

Many men refuse to have London in their shops.

14. Do there any Associations of the Grocers & Men?

Answer:-

"Yes of Grocers. The Metropolitan Grocers and Provision Dealers Association. Not of Men except the Early Closing Associations.

15. Are large stores and traders with many branches pushing out the smaller men?

"Yes to a large extent".

16. Do members of the trade to any large extent add to their profits by adulteration, and if yes is such adulteration of a nature likely to be injurious to the public health?

Answer:-

Continued in another book.

Specimens.

Notes on Vegetable Markets of London from County Council Report.

Covent Garden:-

The retail trade in Covent Garden is quite inconsiderable. This is owing perhaps to the fact that so many first class fruiterers and florists shops have sprung up of late years in the West End. The market is the great centre for the distribution of special commodities which go to all parts of the metropolis and to many of the Midland towns that cannot obtain local supplies. Goods are sometimes bought in Covent Garden and are taken to the Borough Market to be resold. Covent Garden is preeminently a wholesale market into which goods are brought in bulk sold in bulk, and distributed in bulk. The trade in the market is capable of considerable Extension, but the Expansion should be gradual and natural. According to the Duke's agent what is needed to make the improvements complete

is readier means of getting to and from the market, and this can only be done by municipal authority.

I find there is so much about the Markets in this Report that I have thought it better to buy another copy, and tear out the leaves.

June 25th.

Note of interview with an unknown fisherman.

I to-day visited Lowestoft in the hope of seeing a Mr. J. Sexton, but failed to find him. However I entered into conversation with a man who was standing on Mr Sexton's premises, and who told me that he was a fishmonger in the market.

With regard to the Porters in the Harbour he told me that they earn a great deal of money, which they spend very freely. Many of them think nothing of spending £1 on their breakfast. Their earnings of course vary much, but he thinks that any man who cares to work earns less than £1 a week, while in the summer, and especially during the herring season they may take £3 or £4.

June 29th.

Note of Interview with Mr R. Thomas.-

Mr R. Thomas is the Proprietor of Spitalfields Market.

The tenants in the Market employ a certain number of permanent men who are paid from 20/ to 30/ a week. They probably earn a further 20/ a week in carrying out goods.

The bulk of the labour in the Market is that of porters employed by the purchasers. There is no licensing system and anyone can act as a porter. Mr Thomas at one time tried a system of licensing and badges, but found it impossible to work it. He suggests some public body to carry out a licensing system efficiently. The men may earn anything from 4/6 to 10/ a day. Summer is the busiest season, and Saturday the busiest day. At busy times more men turn up.

The men are an extremely rough, improvident lot. They seem have any money in hand, and when work is slack are

always coming to by. Houses they are certainly less rough and more solid then they used to be.

Work begins at 6 o'clock but there is little doing after 6 o'clock

July 1st.

Note of Interview with Mr Coleman of W. J. Coleman and Sons:-

Messrs. Coleman are fruit- and vegetable salesmen at Covent Garden and King's Cross.

Wages. Mr Coleman averages the wages of their permanent men at from 35/- to 40/ a week. These men are alt supposed to be licensed by the Duke of Bedford, but as a matter of fact many of them are not, and practically any one can work in the Market.

Hours vary a good deal from day to day, but they average not less than 12 hours ~~a day~~. Men get an hour off for breakfast and an hour for dinner, but not necessarily at fixed hours.

Regularity. The busy time at Covent Garden is during the summer, and especially during the strawberry season, but most wholesale

people have a depot at King's Cross or some other market or both with an Covent Garden, and the slack season at one market is the busy season at another, so that the permanent men are kept fully employed throughout the year. There is always a great deal of shifting of labour between the various markets, and men who want a job can usually get one somewhere.

Habits of men. The casual porters who have not got permanent jobs may drink a good deal, but the regular men are as sober and steady as any other body of men, and there has been much improvement throughout the trade of late years. The work however is dry and exhausting, and there is a good deal of temptation to drink.

There are a number of Jews in the wholesale fruit trade, but they are nearly always dealers and salesmen and do none of the rough work. There may be a little foreign labour in the Foreign Fruit Market, but nowhere else.

The sale of oysters falls off a great deal in hot weather, as many people do not like a fire. In hot weather therefore the men in the market seem lazy, as they do not make so much by carrying.

July 1st

Note of Interview with Mr Brooker:-

Mr Brooker is a greengrocer with two shops in good districts. He was introduced to me in the Market by Mr Coleman.

He tells me that he pays his permanent hands from 25/- to 35/- a week. They do not live in, and to do so is very unusual in the trade.

Hours. The hours of a shop worker in the trade are terribly long. "he is worse off than a convict". Week days from 9 to 10 or 10.30, and on Saturdays from 9 to 1 or 1.30. The hours of the men are as a rule from 8 to 10 with two hours off for meals.

Regularity. Mr Brooker always has to take on extra help on Saturday. The men he employs are those of the loafing type who do not want a permanent job, and would not take it if offered them.

Method of learning. There is not now, and has been there has been any apprenticing in the trade. There is no reason why there should be, as there is nothing to learn.

The trade is very healthy, being out in the air all day.

Habits of men. Mr Dorton notices the general improvement in sobriety. He used to have the greatest difficulty in getting Extra Letters on Saturday, as he could not depend on men going to their duties. Now he has no difficulty in getting back men as he wants.

It is exceedingly difficult now to make a living at the trade. It can only be done by very large sales, as prices have been cut so much.

July 15th.

Note of Interview with Mr. W. S. Wright:-

Mr. Wright is a greengrocer at present out of employment.

Wages of assistants vary from 20/ to 30/ a week.

Nearly all greengrocers, now & then a few round with a cart à la costers, though they do not shout. The men who goes on this round often later ready money, and may have opportunities of adding to his wages, but they do not like milkmen make much in this way.

Hours. The shops keep open at least one man for market work. In summer he starts work at 3 and finishes about 6; in winter his hours will be from about 5- to 6. He gets home from the market at 8, has his breakfast, and usually spends the remainder of the day in attending to the horses and going a round. When he gets to the market it is the custom

for the master to give him 2/ or 3/ for Coffee Money.

The shopmen who do not go to Market work exactly the same hours as grooms.

Most masters now give their men about a week's holiday in the year.

Dress. Men have to buy nothing except aprons, and about 5/ a year will cover the necessary cost.

Asperity. The busy time is during the soft fruit season for about three months from the end of May. Most masters require almost a double staff during that time. Women many of the men who are taken on are not grooms, but coachmen. Extra hands are often taken on at Christmas too.

Most men who go regularly into the retail trade set up for themselves at some time in their lives; there is no trade in which less capital

is required for a start. Hence the profits are very small; no other trade suffers so much from the competition of the coster.

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