64.
69.
74.
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Name of Firm or Worker	Address	Page
C. Olley. (Cork mfr)	69 Mansell St. Minories.	6.
J. Bussey & Co. (Cork mfr. Splitters)	200 Borough High St.	13.
Funeral furniture makers.	Remarks on ages (Census)	16.
Willow cane & Rush basket	" " " "	17.
Cork bark cutters, workers	" " " "	18.
Other workers in wood	" " " "	19.
Mr. Olley. Corkcutter.	Cork burner, cutter.	20.
Messrs Hope Smith & Co.	Cork Importers.	28.
Mr. Cook.	Basket maker Dealer.	29.
Mrs Holman.	Chair mender.	35.
Wm. Arthurson	Cork sorter & cutcher.	25.
Charles Meyers.	United Cork Trade Friendly Soc.	37.
Thomas Okey.	Basket maker & rod merchant.	41
Messrs Scott.	Basket makers.	47.
J. Okey.	Letter re the Trade.	51.
School for Indigent Blind	Basket makers.	54
J. Cooksey.	Funeral Furnishers & Undertakers	57.
H. Schneider	Bamboo & cane worker	64.
Dottridge Bros	Wholesale Funeral Carr & Coffin	69.
Burridge	Funeral Furnisher & Undertaker	74.
Heinrichs & Co.	Bamboo & wicker Furniture	79.

Name of Trade Society.	Meeting House or Secretary.	Days of Meeting

Queries. Forewood Tuesday Dec-4 94 4i

S. 17.

Who are the chief producers?	Home work. Factories are being replaced by Charity for Women to work
Who are the chief consumers?	
How much is machinery used?	only for cutting the Crops.
What has been the effect of charity?	depressed prices Ch Ar. sells 15 in bundle for 2/8 whereas trade sells 13 in in 2/10
What is the price of 100 bundles now as compared with 20 years ago?	13 in bundle. 3/3 – 3/6 20 yrs ago.
Meals –	all w go home. at 12 & 4. get ready hour tea
Womans work –	chop & tie
Hours –	8.30 – 7.30. come in about 9 – 10 or 11.
overtime –	7.30 PM is latest
What is a bavin?	bundles of twigs used by bakers
Do the charities give a large bundle? –	yes.

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S. 17

Queries for Undertakers.

1) Are coffinmakers ever 1st or 2nd men

2) What constitutes a 'job'.

3). Do the undertakers or the ~~of~~ carriage masters provide the men to go to the burial

4). What is 1st turn men do when not out with a funeral.

5) Are the masters organised.

6). Where do bodies out of the dead come?

7). Where are meals taken

8). Are carriage masters called Blackmasters

13

14

15) Where are meals taken.

4iii

17.

makers.

use.

chter house!

o they compete

Ret makers.

Ret work upwards

4iii

S 17.

Queries for Basket Workers.

1. What are the chief things made by baskets makers.
2. Price of tools.
3. Is machinery ever used.
4. Do men shift much from House to House.
5. What is a 'shop' Knife used for.
6. What house is known as the 'Slaughter house'
7. What sort of work do the blind do? & do they compete
8. Disso.
9. Do wives work.
10. What clubs do men belong to outside b
11. Is there any overlap going but brush & basket makers.
12. Does one always begin at the bottom of a basket & work upwards
13. Who make fish baskets.
14. Where are the women employed
15. Where are meals taken.

4 iv

S.17.

Queries for Cork Trade

1. Which is the largest shop & how many does it employ. Exam?

2. Is the 'notcher' under the foreman or does the foreman notch.

3) Is the cork cut into lengths before being?

4). Have they a price list. how are prices arranged.

5). Do men working any part dress as shirt sleeves?

6). Do wives (or earn something?

7). Where are meals taken.

4.v

Queries for Bamboo workers.

1). O.T. rates in East End }
West - }.

2). Has the Union a price list?

3). Hours in the West End Trade.

4). Are the underworkers also piecework in the E. end trade?

5). What are the earnings of a ~~[illegible]~~ worker

6). Are bamboo the

meeting -

Thursday October 18th. 1894. G.H.D.

Mr. C. Olleyston Cork manufacturer. Importer of Foreign corks & Corkwood & dealer in wooden skivers & spiles.
69 Mansell Street. Minories. E.
Works. 171 High Street Shadwell. E.

Employs

1 man @	45/-	foreman.
2 "	30/-	
2 "	26/-	
2 "	25/-	
1 "	20/-	
1 woman.	17/-	Cork sorters.
1 "	14/-	
1 "	10/-	
1 "	8/-	
6 boys between	8/- & 11/-	

Hours 8 AM to 7 P M. with 1 hour allowed out of them for dinner & ½ hr. for tea.
These he said were the usual hours in the trade.

On Saturdays at 2 they stop.
Overtime is rarely worked. When it is necessary the men are only too glad to go on and are paid the usual rates for it i.e. they are not given any thing extra.
The usual rates are

8d per hour for a good man.
7d ---- an average ..
6d . ---- for a second rate.

7d may be taken as a fair average payment for a fair man on time work.
There are no marked seasons. He has orders from all parts of the world & as the summer is different here & in the antipodes so he has orders both in winter & summer for things like ginger beer corks.
Work is very regular therefore as a whole though sometimes one man may have a sudden press for a special order while another may be slack.
The Minories & vicinity are the cork

market of London & London is the largest market & clearing house (for corks) in the world.

Cork comes from S. France. Spain Portugal & Algiers. Spain & Portugal are the principal producers. Cork is the outer bark of a tree (sort of oak) which can be cut every 7 years without damaging the tree. The longer the cork is uncut the thicker it gets.

Very nearly all wine corks are cut abroad: it would not pay to cut them here. They are sent over here & then either transhipped or resorted & then kept or sent away to the colonies Germany & all parts of the world.

Bungs for brewers are always burnt & cut in London.

The cork is first ~~burnt~~ grilled, like chops on a brazier, man stands & turns them & prevents them ~~catching fire~~ burning through. This is to close the pores & prevent any oozing from being possible. This done

they are swept to take off the loose block and sent to the cutter.

For this burning — the most skilled of all the processes — the man has to stand at a very hot fire. Perspires very freely but no complaint of drink. Their own man is a teetotaller & many of the men now drink oat meal water or barley water where they used formerly to drink beer.

There is drink in the trade but not more than in all trades. It is no special complaint & he would say that the men were a very steady sober lot.

There is no shifting into other trades: a man when he is out of work goes to the Cork cutters club & puts down his name in a book there & when a master wants a man he sends there.

Burning is skilled & the men at the highest rates do this: the ordinary cutter is a 25/ to 27/- man.

Very healthy work tho' the sweeping & burning is very dirty work.

Apprenticeship system is dead though it used to to be general. Machinery has made the cutting so simple.

Boys are take on as errand boys: see the men at work & after a bit are put to the machines & so learn.

They are very friendly with their men, many have been with them over 20 years: most of them they have brought up themselves.

There had been in the 70's a proposal to tax foreign wine in some way which the cork merchants of London opposed. They sent a deputation & were received by Mr Gladstone who had surprised them all by his knowledge - "not of course of the practical workings" - but of the theory of the trade & the names of the principal kinds of cork trees & the districts from which they came. Mr G's knowledge was still talked of with wonderment in the trade.

Brewers' shives (or bungs) & homeopathic medicine corks are the chief London cut cork.

corks. Women & girls do the sorting* a thing which the foreigners have never learnt. Mr. Olley can make 3 or 4 qualities out of what he buys from abroad as one quality.
Brewers shives they have tried to make but they always taper them the wrong way up ie the bellies (ie bottoms of the corks) are made of the outside of the bark & the backs (or tops) from the inside instead of vice versâ.— He begged that this should not be made public
Medicine corks are cut across the grain ∴ there is less fear of leakage. a perfect cork should have no flaw across but be perfectly smooth.
Mr. Bucknall & Sons are the largest firm in the trade & supply all the very best wine merchants who pay a good price to get a good thing & refuse to pay any lower altho' they might now get as good corks at a less price ∴ they have always paid a high price & have come to believe that a good thing cannot be got any more cheaply.

Many corks are sent to have a wooden top which is often covered with metal. This is not done by cork cutters but by men who make it their special business. He sends the corks: the man cuts a hole in the top of the cork in sorts wooden top cork: makes it fast with glue & then returns it.

He will let me see over their factory at Shad well. (171 High St.) & send me a card when I may come.

Very friendly & willing to give any further information

He does not make cork sheets (for hatboxes etc) this is a specialty of about 6 houses in London

Oct. 19th. G. H. D.

J. Bussey & Sons. Cork manufacturers & splitters, & bakers.
200 Borough High Street

I called to ask how it was they had failed to make any wages return & saw their traveller.

They employ 6 men & 5 boys on piece work which he said was usual in the trade ~~too~~. They used to have a few women & girls at sorting but now they have given it up and sell their wine corks in the qualities in which they buy them from abroad.

Spain & Portugal & Algiers are the chief cork supplying countries. He does not think that any comes from the South of France.

Their chief customers are Brewers, Wine merchants, & Druggists. & hatters, cigarette makers for the fine sheets of cork that are used inside hats & helmets and for cigarette mouth pieces.

They had had an order for 5000 gross of strip

of cork 12 in long for cigarette cork tips from Christiana.

They have a particular machine for splitting which they keep very secret & only 3 men are allowed to go near it.

Young men & lads work at the cork making machines. It is merely hand & foot work - no steam - and can be learnt in 3 months

Work is very regular all the year round. It cannot be called a season trade.

A quick worker can make 35/- more or P. and the usual wage for women (tho' they do not themselves employ any) is 9/- per week.

The work of a man results in 100 to 150 gross of corks in a day varying with the speed at which he can work.

Burning is the skilled part of the work.

They have no apprentices. When they want men they send round to the Cork makers Trade Society. They train up errand boys whom they think smart

let them try at the machines when they get older & so bring them into the work.
London is the trade centre for cork bagging & selling. Wine corks all come from abroad ready cut. Medicine corks & brewers skivers are ~~trade~~ specialities. No bags come from abroad.
1891 was a very fair year.
1893. - .. good -..
1894. decidedly good.
The men he named say are a very steady lot.

Taken from the Census Enumeration (1891).

Funeral furniture makers do not begin very early in life. There are only 9 of them in the trade under 15 years of age. But after 15. there are between 220 & 240 in ~~every~~ each decade up to 45. Then there is a drop but they live long & out of the total 1036 males 90 are of 65 years & upwards.

Undertakers coachmen are included by the Census under 'Coachmen, cabmen, groom.

Willow cane & Rush basket worker.

The greatest number of these are between the ages of 15 & 25 amounting total
The large drop (of 50%) comes after 55 years of age. & another of 50%. after 65.
Women are most numerous between 15 & 25. then there is a drop from ~~100~~ 160 to 90 between 25 & 35 & after that a slight rise between the ages 35-45 followed by the steady decrease in numbers owing to the gradual inroad of old age.

Cork Bark Cutter Workers.

The women employed are mostly girls between 15 & 20. Of the whole 217 in the trade 91 are between these ages. But 20 & 25 there are 50. Then there is another sudden drop & no recovery at a later age.

With the men the final fall is most marked after 55 years of age.

There are a good many young men in the trade for the decade 15-25 shewing 294 men as compared with 158 between 25 & 35.

Others in Wood Cork bark.

941 of all those men in the trade are between 15-25. comparing with 494 between 25 & 35.

The numbers remain nearly steady till 45 is reached. Then there is a drop of 44% in the next decade followed by another of 50% between 65 —

The women are chiefly between 15 & 20. After 35 years there is no increase as compared with those between 25 & 35. shewing no return to work in later years

Oct 22nd. G.H.-D.

Mr Olley. 171 High St. Shadwell. Cork bark burner & cutter. By an introduction from his brother with whom he is in partnership

Employs 20 to 25 men throughout the year
The 'burner' who is the most skilled and most highly paid man does his work piecework when he is burning.
This he does here every other day of the week.
When he burns he earns at the rate of 2/- per hour, and this is the regular rate of earning for 'foremen' throughout the trade.
In the cork industry 'foreman' means 'burner' simply. it does not mean that the man has any other man under him.
The Foreman stands at a great blazing open fire with large chimney.
Fire fed by cork shavings. Across the fire is a 'grill' of stout iron bars. The

'burner'.

'burner' stands with a 'bale' or 'bundle' of cork at his left hand. In his right he has a pair of tongues with which he takes the slabs of cork & places them on the grill. He must note each piece of cork & judge how much burning it will need to close its pores & cracks properly. The slabs on the fire, looking like huge steaks that have caught fire are turned by their cook & then thrown off on one side when they are sufficiently 'done'. A boy takes them sprinkles water over them which puts out the burning embers & then stacks them for 24 hours. If they bite they curl up but can been bent straight either by standing on them for a minute or placing weights on them just when they come off the fire.

The next day the blacked slabs are swept & passed on to the 'notcher' who cuts them into strips & squares ready for the machinists or cutters who ~~with~~ cut them up into brewers shives & taps

Pickle shives known to the trade as 'Dafis' or into smaller chemist's corks called 'vials' or smaller still into Homoeopathic corks.

The machinists stands at a machine which he works with his left foot & right hand. With the right hand he shoves along the knife which cuts the corks & with the left foot he presses on a treadle which makes the rough square of cork revolve against the knife and also helps the arm in pushing the knife along.

The cork 'shavings' are used for the 'barners' fire & also sent to the Linoleum or Kamptulicon maker who grinds them up to make his floor cloth. So great is the demand for cork shavings that they are imported in bags from abroad.

The largest cork cutting establishments employ from 35 to 20 hands. The usual run is about 20. The smallest have about 3 men. But many so called manufacturers get their cutting done for them at trade rate

rates & he Olley supplies many retailers in this way

Apprenticeship is no more. Smart errand boys are promoted to machines & the best of the machinists are moved up to being burners but burning is trying work & very few can stand it long.

Work is very regular year in root. When the demand falls short he can always make for stock & does so. There are never > 12 men out of work in the whole trade (& two of the men at work corroborated this). The reason was that wages are so low that not very many are tempted to enter. But altho' low they are regular.

Trade used to be altogether a Piecework trade but since the introduction of machines it is becoming more & more a timework one. He finds that time pays him better than piece for the men are rather more careful. He is always about the shop himself so that he sees that the men do not slack.

The Tradition used to be for men to keep Saint Monday

Monday always & seldom to work more than 3 or 4 days a week. This tradition still survives and some masters do not mind as they like to say they employ 40 or 50 men instead of 20 or 25 but themen work for 2 the week naturally only get half the wages. He will not keep men on these terms himself. They used to be hard drinkers but have sobered down very much of late years. When in want of new men he sends up to the club house (Crown & Anvil. Swan St. Minories. Mr Webb sees).

One of themen said the soc. only had 20 members but no members seem to be able to register themselves as if they were members.

It pays him better to get new men rather than to work overtime. Overtime is all very well for a few days or even a week but beyond that you get no more work for the extra hours worked. No extra or rate is paid. Just the usual 6d. per hour.

On time work ordinary men get 24/- or 25/- per week throughout the year: an extra good man may get 27/- or 28/-.
On piece work they get 28/- to 30/- but have to ~~have~~ work hard for it

~~Thursday~~ Wednesday Oct. 27. G.H.D.

William Arthurson. Cork sorter & notcher at the Crown & Anvil. Swan Street. Minories. (Working man)

He is a Scotchman: had served a 7 years apprenticeship in his youth but complained that though bound by an indenture his master had not put him through every branch of the trade (eg he had never mastered the art of burning). Is now out of work but fully able to do a good days work although he will be 75 next birthday (November).

Foremen average 22/- per week and machinists 30/- to 35/- all mostly on piece though a little time is now worked. But he was very unwilling to talk about earnings.

Hours are generally from 7–7. with 15 minutes off at 9 o'clock in which they eat the breakfast they had brought with them

though they are supposed to have had it before.
Still there is not time to have much more than a cup of tea before starting for work. Then there is an hour for dinner from 12-1 and ½ an hour for tea.
Some firms begin at 7.30 or 8 & do not allow the breakfast interval.
On Saturdays some firms stop at 2 and some at 3.

It is very healthy work & the men as a whole are on the 'steady' side. He is himself a comparatively old man but very strong & well.

Foremen turn once, twice or 3 times a week according to the orders in hand.
In his firm (employing he said about 80 persons) there were 3 foremen.
When not turning they turn to sorting or notching ie cutting up the cork as it arrives into pieces suitable for the orders in hand: for a slab cork is of different thicknesses.

Apprenticeship is a thing of the past. Now boys are

are taken on as errand boys & then put to the machines if found to be smart lads.
Women are a good deal used in sorting.
Two shops use steam machinery for slicing the fine strips. Bungs are cut by hand & foot machines.
Wine corks & tap corks are cut across the grain.
No overtime rate is given & every little is worked. In one shop where he was 7½ hr OT rate was issued after 7 PM. But most shops give nothing extra
There are no seasons in the trade. There used to be a great seasonal demand for ginger & lemonade corks but now either glass balls or the patent screw in stoppers are used & there is much less work in the line now. It is extraordinary that the trade shd not have suffered but certainly it has not & there are never a great many out of work.

Oct 24th G.H.D.

Messrs Hope, Smith & Co. 3-7 Leman Street. E.
importers of cork.

Import a great deal of Foreign cork & virgin cork is one of their special lines. This is the outer bark of the tree under which the cork used for cutting & manufacture is found.

Their manager knew nothing about the London manufacture. Corks he bought from Spain Portugal Algiers & S of France. Beyond this he was ignorant of what sort of trees it came from or how often cut or of what sorts were made in London.

He imports great bags of shavings which he sells to the linoleum & floorcloth manufactories.

The manufactured corks come in bags made of a loose material & the slabs of cork in bundles or bales.

Oct 25th G. H. D.

Wm Cook. 140. Tabard Street. S.E. Basket maker & dealer.

Employs 7 men and one boy. The men average 33/- per week on piecework. There are no seasons and work is pretty regular throughout the year tho this year (1894). there seems to be distinctly less than in former years Work indeed is more regular than the men among whom there is some complaint about drink.

Hours are irregular, men come in when they like but one of those at work there said they never did more than 9 hours per day & vary according to their own pleasure from 5 to 9 hours per day. On Saturdays they stop at ~~2 or~~ 1 On week days they come in exactly when they like: there are no general hours for beginning in the trade

A good basket maker should be able to make any sort of basket. Those who can say they are fit for 'General' work. Rather less skilled men keep to making

Hampers

Market sieves.

& Builders baskets for carrying bricks etc. These are made of 'rods' which still have the bark on & as the bark is brown or green the rods are called 'browns' or 'greens'

'General' work includes laundry baskets, Pass baskets, chairs, Bassinette, grocers bottle baskets, bakers baskets etc etc. These are all made in London but there is very keen competition from Belgium & France in laundry baskets & nearly all those you see hung up in shops are imported. They are lighter to carry but are not so strong as English ones. Still they are cutting up the London trade altogether.

London is about the centre of the English

basket

basket industry.

The blind are taught basket making and they are very good at Builders baskets but for other work in which so much has to be done by the eye they can never excel. It is almost impossible to measure exactly the size & shape of a basket before it is done.

It is skilled work. There is no regular system of apprenticeship but a father asks to be allowed to bring in his son and pays the master so much per week for his son's room. It is rather a Father & son industry.

The men sit working on a stout plank slightly raised at one end from the floor. At the higher end the man has a box on which he sits as his basket grows bigger & in which he keeps his tools. It is tedious work the men in the shop said & makes the arms wrists & fingers ache. But it is healthy & you can work on till any age only

Ever

speed is not so fast & you cannot earn so much money.

The men shift about from shop to shop if they want a change. Mr Cook said they more often left him than he sent them away, they were rather inclined to move & drink.

The 'rods' or wickers' come from England & France & Belgium English rods are better & stronger & have more life in them.

The Buff coloured wicker chairs are made by boiling the green rods in water & then peeling them. There is a dye in the bark of the willow which is very penetrating. It is also (in the bark) used by the chemical manufacturers in some bitter medecine or other.

The small square brown wicker baskets are almost entirely made by women in the country. He can buy them much more cheaply than he could make them himself.

Punnets or strawberry baskets are made of split

split deal. This is a separate industry & very little of it is done in London

Market sieves are in demand when there is a good fruit season & prices are high.

Sills are herring baskets. They are not made in London but are particular to Yarmouth & Lowestoft.

The Rods are imported all ready peeled either in the country or abroad. In the trade they are called Rods or wickes but when sent by rail they are always called bundles of "osiers"

The only part that is time work is done by the men employed by the telegraph dept in mending the parcels post & letter baskets

So far basket making has defied machinery no machine has ever been invented to do it at all satisfactorily.

The Rods for working are steeped for 3 or 4 hours in water & then become bendable without breaking: afterwards they become hard & dry. The easiest to work have been soaked & then stuck up all night to let the slipperiness wet run off. The rods stick out & are

cut off flash with the basket by means of a knife with a handle (blade) handle called a 'picker'

Chair mending. when done in London is given out by the shops to women who work at home & also by the blind in Tott. Ct. Road.
Bamboo cart making etc. is a diff.t branch and is done a lot by Germans in London.

One of the men at work is a society man. Said it was fairly strong & has a price list which is enforced. Society work with non soc men.
Secy. A. Tyler.
34 Deacon St.
Stepney Green.

Some work is done at home but not very much so Mr Cook said. Sometimes his men work at home buy their own rods & sell to him.
Rushes are used in some work: bought ready plaited. Wicket workers also make baskets of split cane.

Oct. 25th

G. H. D.

Mrs Holman. 44 Wickham Place. Tabard St.
on an introduction from Mr Cook.
She is a chair mender and chair bottom caner.

She is sent so many dozen chair bottoms by the big shops. She buys her own cane & returns them.
Most chair bottom are got from Hugh Lycate.
she is given 7/- for 1 dozen chair bottoms (the ordinary chairs). out of this she has to provide her own cane at 1/6 to 2/- which she splits herself.
By working hard she can cane one dozen in two days.
The big shops if they do their work in London at all, they give it all out to women to do at home.
She has a young woman with her who is subject to fits "otherwise I would not be bothered with the likes of her on my hands" (the girl herself

standing by all the time). she some time helps in caring.

Lives in a 2 roomed house with washhouse and garden or yard with a copper at the far end.

She the County Council made her landlord put & he then raised the rent so that now she pays for 2 rooms & washhouse 5/6 per week, which is as much as she used to pay informer days for 4 rooms when she lived lower down the street.

Oct. 27th G.H.S.

Mr. Charles Reeves. Secy. to the United Cork Trade Friendly Society. at the Crown & Anvil. Swan Street. Minories. Satur.
private address.
17. Ratcliff. St. Commercial Rd. E.

This is merely an out of work Society Promoted to assist members when out of employment.
Subscription 3d. per week.
On. Benefit 10/- after 6 months membership.
11/ — 12 — — — —
12/. — two years —.
for 12 weeks.
But members may not receive more than £7. 4. in any 52 weeks.
This is an increase on the old rates, which were 9/- 10/- & 11/- for 12 weeks
They have 100 members.
& a balance of £384.
? ~~37~~ 5. men out of work at present.

Foremen burn once or twice a week, very seldom 3 times.

The Largest house 'Evans'? employs about 200 altogether: on the South side of the water they have nearly 100. of whom 3 would be foremen & the rest machinists sorters etc. On this side in the minories they employ another 100 mostly women & boys in sorting. (These numbers seem rather large. qrd)

Foremen when not burning cut up the cork into lengths to suit the orders: this needs experience. Cork is of different thicknesses, it is cut up into lengths of the same thickness & then passed to the 'notcher' who cuts it again into quarters. This takes place both after & before (?) burning.

Women & boys sort the common bottle corks as they arrive from abroad. They earn 10/ to 15/. Many women he said earn 15/- & the average he wd certainly put at

11/. or 12/.
For notchers & machemists the average wage
be 28/. to 30/. all the year round.
Foremen make 45/. to £5 or £6 when they
have a great deal of bursing to do.
Trade is very regular. One demand succeeds
another.
Nearly all Piece work. Very few time workers
8-7 are the usual hours with 1 hr for
dinner & ½ for tea. & until 2 on
Saturdays. Some of the old fashioned
houses do not shut until 3 or 4 on Sats
because it has always been the custom.
There is no OT rate tho' some houses (v few)
pay T & ½.
Foremen don't shift but the lower men shift
a good deal especially the lower
price of them
Apprenticeship is no more: boys work their
way up from being errand boys. The
time it takes to learn depends on their
aptitude
They have no printed price list but custom

but custom has made me that is practically common to most houses.

Very healthy trade.

The trade is altogether diff.t to what it used to be in the matter of sobriety. A few of the old men keep it up & dont work more than 3 or 4 days per week but they have ruined their society by it. (it is now said to have only 20 members) whereas the soc increases every year: has a balance of £384. was founded in 1880 & no soc prob gives so much for so small a subs.

Relations very friendly with the masters who send up to it when in want of new men.

Only members are allowed to sign on the ow. list & ~~that~~ the man longest on the list is chosen when a master sends up.

According to their out of work book there are 57 employers.

Officials willing to give any other info. wanted.

There are very few men now who only work 3 or 4 days for choice tho' it was common 20 or 25 years ago. Such as do it now are exceptions.

There are no special complaints in the trade.

Oct 27th S.H.D.

Thomas Okey. Basket maker. 29a. Old Montagu Street. Whitechapel. Old Merchant.

Mr. Okey had read a paper on basket making at Toynbee about a year ago & therefore I called upon him.
He is the fourth generation in basket making ~~trading~~ so that both among masters & men the industry seems hereditary.

All work is on Piece & the men earn diff amounts according to their various capacities one man will earn 28/- at work on the same kind of job & for the same hours at which another will make 36/-.
He shewed me the books in which the variations in earnings were very much marked. Ordinary men seemed to make anything between these limits. Good men he said when very

very busy can earn as much as 50/.

Most shops are open from 8 – 8. or from 8 to 7. but very few men come at 8. They probably turn up about 9. There is no fixed rule about meal hours. As it is piece work the men take what time they like.

The men do not certainly work more than 48 hours in the week or an average of 8 hrs per day.

On Saturdays the rule is to stop at 1 or 2

Saint Monday is still kept with seeming regularity but on the other hand this is generally made up later.

The men say "they "put on the nose bag on Fridays".

From May to Aug during the fruit season is their busiest time then there is work for everyone who calls himself a basket maker: and again they are busy from Oct to Dec. for the X mas trade.

Masters can make up stock but they won't do this with poor workers; & ∴ less skilled

Skilled men are those who suffer between December & May.

Brown work eg market sieves, hampers etc ie anything made with the rods with the bark on. This is less skilled than General work. The men make from 28/- onwards at this while on General work they can earn 30/- to 50/-

Skilled men are real artists. They must have a good eye & sense of proportion because it is hard to do anything by direct measurement. They are difficult to find.

The Blind are not good basket makers for the reason. They must have a skilled man with eyes always attending to them.

Good men remain where they are. They bring up their sons to the trade. It is a regular Father to Son Industry. There is no apprenticeship now.

The less good men shift about in search of work: you will always find a fringe of these in every trade

There is a little but not much work done at home the growth

growth of Trade Societies has put a stop to it & created a feeling against it

The London Union of Journeyman basket makers is a strong Society and enforces a most elaborate pricelist.

They have no OT rate.

Union work with non-Union men.

Trade is about stationary in London. These last years there has been no increase but at the same time no decrease.

Germany is a keen competitor in "Domestic" basket work, picnic baskets etc.

Belgium & France compete with laundry baskets but the foreign imports are now receiving a check at the hands of the workers in Nottingham & Grantham which like London are centres for the industry.

The tools used & provided by the men themselves are.

1. Shop Knife price 8d

Picking knife - - 1/- for picking off the outside ends which stick out.

Iron or Flogger for driving the work down.

Bodkin for making holes to insert new rod - eg for the handles etc. price 1/-
Shears for cutting off the very stout pieces of cane or wicker.

Scott's is the largest house in the trade and does a great deal of wicker chair work employing 50 to 75 men of whom 20 would be kept on chairs alone.
They open at 8 - 7 PM. & until 1 on Sats.

Masters vary from this size (ie Scott's) down to one man working by himself.

Wicker comes from Belgium, France, Madeira England.

Basket-work means anything made of wicker which is not fastened by nails.
Wooden bottle case makers are carpenters

There are no women in the London wicker work trade.
Women work in chairmending and trim & fitt the insides of baskets but do nothing of the outside work. There are also a few women rush basket makers but very few.

In France & Germany wicker work is done in certain villages.
In France, neighbouring villages have banded themselves together under a cooperative system. They employ a joint seller to dispose of what they manufacture.
Such home work as is done is sold to a house known in the trade as the 'Slaughterhouse' here any man can always dispose of his work but the price given for it is of the poorest.
Straw envelopes ~~for~~ bottles are imported from abroad where they are made in prisons. He had this morning received an offer to supply them of a superior quality with string, wall delivered on board a vessel at 15 fr. per 1000.
Brown rods are sometimes soaked for a fortnight before use.

Was v friendly - will answer any further questions. Will send some notes supplementary to those given above.

~~Mon~~ Oct. 31. G. H. S.

Messrs Scott & Co. 144. Charing Cross. Road.
General Basket makers. Govt contractors

Called with an introduction from Mr. Okey & saw Mr Ernest Scott.

Mr Scott hesitated a good deal at first but afterwards gave information more willingly & finally offered to do anything in his power to ~~wards~~ arriving at a proper understanding of the trade provided that he should not have to tell all the ins & outs of his own business which he said was unlike any other business in the trade.

They have been 200 years in the trade.
Employ (according to one of Mr Okeys men) 50 to 75 men.
Mr Scott wd not say how many himself.
They are the largest house in the trade.
Their specialty is fine basket & chair work.
They

They also make Govt. parcel post baskets, clothes baskets, picnic baskets etc etc the bottom floor was stacked with them. all looking highly polished & mostly of strange shapes.

Market sieves & laundry baskets they do not attempt to make. In laundry work there is foreign competition but no foreigner or in fact any other house in London touches the work they do. "In fact we stand above competition in every respect."

They pay list prices

The average man makes 30/- to 35/

The Good man 60/- rover.

He said 30/- to 35/. would represent the average earnings of a basket maker.

Their shop is not open until 8.30 & shuts at 6. They dont often work over hours they find it pays better not to do so. They is no O.T. rate.

All work is Piece work so the men can go out to meals when they like.

On Saturdays they stop at 2.

They are regular all the year round but are a bit busier as a rule before Xmas.

The men here are mostly regular all the year round. In the trade generally the custom is to engage men for a particular job & then to keep them or turn them off according as you have more or nothing for them further to do.

No machinery is used. it has been tried but has failed. It is one of the few industries of which this can be said.

A basket maker is therefore purely a handicraftsman in the old still, he sits on his plank and with a few straight rods creates a basket or a chair & shapes it according to his fancy.

As a rule the Father apprentices the son to himself in his masters workshop: there are regular legal indentures and the father pays the firm for doing this.

Five years is the regular term for which boys are apprenticed tho of course it takes a good deal longer than this for a man to

learn his business thoroughly
The men – theirs men at any rate – are very steady and they have no complaints about drink. Nadays they are a little slack about coming in which is the custom of the Trade.

November. 1.

Copy of letter received from Mr. J. Okey.
29a Montague. St.
Whitechapel.

"I have already referred to the Basket makers Union & some particulars may not here be out of place. This excellent Society which is a benefit as well as a Trade Society was founded in the early years of the Century, & now numbers 315 members
The contribution is 9d weekly
Strike pay is 15/- per week
Out of work - " 15/- " - for 13 weeks yearly.
Sick pay - - 12/- - - — " — " —
Death pay to members £6.
— — members wife £6.
It is interesting to note that wages have risen steadily & concurrently with the existence of the Union. In 1822 wages for a basket sieve was 5½. it is now 9d. being a rise of 65.%. A 3 doz Hamper has risen from

8½. to 1/1 or 50%. These are not exceptional cases but are taken as & fairly represent the average advance.

The proportion of unionists to non unionists is as 260 to 315. that is about 46.% of the men are nonunionists. This I believe compares favourably with most other organized trades.

Moreover the workmen have benefited themselves in other respects. When some 30 years ago I went to work as an apprentice, we had to find our own light which then consisted of a tallow dip fixed in a cleft stick stuck into the wall. Now the employer is compelled to find sufficient light for his employees to work by. & gas has become general. At that time the nominal shop hours were from 6-30. to 9. Now the nominal hours are 8 to 8 or 8 to 7 Meal times in each case included. But then as now these hours were only worked 4 or at most 5 days per week. To amid the general decay of religious belief among

workmen the pious devotion to St Monday has survived, & on Saturday work is over by 1. or 2. p.m.

The type of workmen has much improved within my memory. The old ragged hard working, hard swearing, hard drinking twiggy is almost extinct. I can just remember one or two survivors into this degenerate age from classic times. Men who would deliberately work like slaves for months & then indulge in hard guddles of six weeks duration ~~etc~~ & yet live on to a green old age.

I am inclined to think that the comparatively high wages commanded by basket makers is partly due to the fact to which I have already referred among the general misconception as to the status of, & skill required for the art.

Nov. 1. G. H. d.

School for the Indigent Blind. St Georges Fields Southwark.

The report for 1894. says.

'Of the male pupils now in the School 40 are basket makers, 19 brush makers, 14 weavers & mat makers, & 6 are learning pianoforte tuning: the remainder are studying music. There also attached to the basket shop where they learn chair caning & the lighter kinds of basket work.

Of the female pupils, 41 are employed in chair caning, 12 in brush drawing & 11 in the manufacture of sashline.

In the Adult Shop where are made some of our best baskets, rugs & cocoa-nut matting there are 21 out workers of whom 19 are old pupils. The workmen in this department are steadily supporting themselves by their own labour, earning wages varying from 9/- to 25/- per week according to the usual trade

tariff"

"A type-writing machine with raised letters, if it could be produced at a moderate expense would open up a wide field of usefulness for the blind and afford them a new method of earning a livelihood'

The total wages paid in 1893. in the adult shop.

Basket makers.	£367. 13. 6.
Mat	£309. 19. 10.
Wood choppers..	£35. 14. 11
Brush makers.	£9. 5. 1.
	£722. 13. 4

Average earnings of Basket makers.	14/9 per week.
Mat.	14/10½.
Highest average of Basket ..	£1. 4. 0
Lowest	6. 6.
Highest ... Mat ..	£1. 0. 9
Lowest	8. 9.
Average earnings of woodchopper	9. 6.

They also sell the work of former pupils who are outworkers.

There are also 18 assistants varying from 18 to 59 years

years of age, of £4. 10. 0 each.
They have now (Nov. 1. 94). 15 at work in the shop.
Last week the lowest wm paid to any man was 10/-
and the highest 26/-.
Boys & women chairmenders get 6/ or 7/.
They work from 7-6. and have from ~~2~~ 1.30 to 2.30 as dinner hour.
All piece work paid according to the Union list prices.
Thers blind seem to work a good deal more slowly than those who see. They have one overseer with eyes.
When busy they take one or two on & dismiss when slack. They are busy before Xmas & in the Summer for builders baskets.
Boys are taught by a special system.
The blind have a trade soc. of their own which meets occasionally: the list in Doll. Ct. Rd also sends members.
The Basket work trade generally is more flourishing now than it has been for years.

No. 6 G. H. D.

D. Cooksey. Funeral Furnisher & Undertaker.
52 Amwell Street. Clerkenwell.

Funeral Furnishers are now generally also undertakers, that is they ~~they~~ not only provide the conveyances, mute etc but also make the coffin etc.

There are often 'brass plate' undertakers i.e. middlemen with a plate on their doors, who used to take the orders from the customers & then pass them on to the undertakers. This is prob. owing he said to the increasing competition and the feeling of the public that they get things both cheaper & better if they go to the actual maker.

The undertakers serve by it because they can make their customers wait some hours or even a day or two & so get more business whereas a middleman must be supplied on the very day or hour.

It is somewhat a personal trade. A comes to me because

because you buried her friends B's aunt & soon you hardly ever got a stranger dropping in without an introduction. Some families will only be buried by one man & will put off the funeral rather than not have him.

Funeral furnishers attend to the carriage part. The largest (say Sattridge) would have 100 horses. Funeral horses cannot be geldings because they lose their colour at certain ages or mares because they are discoloured at certain seasons. They are naturally black & entire. They are bought at 2½ years of age & can be worked gently at once. These 100 horses would require 50 men to attend to them.

Beyond these there would be 10 first turn men i.e. men who got 1st choice every job that turned up. They are paid somuch (4/6 is the rule) per job & have a standing wage of 7/- per week not called yard money. 6 × 4/6 = 27/ + 7/ = 34/- would be their regular earnings.

They would besides get a certain amount of tips or

drinks - Dips are more often given now. A generous man will give £ 1 to be distributed down to 2/6 they wd average perhaps 4d per job which would mean another 2/- per week.

Below these are the 'yard men' or second class men who are paid a standing weekly wage of 28/- per week. They get second choice of jobs & when they do get one they pay in all their money to the firm. Dottridge wd have 20.

Below these again are the 'odd' men who wander around and are taken on as wanted. There are a good many of these who are known to the employers, men who do not care about regular work perhaps. When employed these men get job money i.e. 4/6. and gen 1/- for washing up & tips.

Work is for 6 days in the week. Very rarely on Sundays now tho' it used to be common. The cemeteries here made many restrictions you must be there before 9 am. etc so it is not often

Mr himself has 1 horses for whom he has 2 men always & then takes odd men as wanted.

Under

Undertakers measure the body ~~make the coffins~~: has the coffin made to style: arranges with the cemetery people: provides the carriages & men & goes with the funeral.

The coffin makers whom he employs are not highly skilled. It is more important to have a fairly steady: presentable man with a good suit of black clothes & respectful & sympathetic manner than a highly skilled one.

They earn 25/- to 40/- per week according to the class of work they are on.

Generally time work. Sometimes if when there is an extra press & he engages more men to get a certain batch of work done for him.

There is no Trade Society. It is a trade quite by itself & has no connection with cabinet making. Not everyone likes to do it so perhaps wages are higher than in other trades. Father will teach son. There is no system of Apprenticeship. Men are picked because of their respectability etc

& then taught the little that is required.
They are steady men. They must be. The masters reputation depends on it. Did not know how the reputation of the 'jovial' undertaker ever came in. They used to drink a good deal & 30 yrs ago he remembers he cd not get a funeral as far as Highgate cemetery without stopping for an hour by the way for the men to liquor up. That was when you hired other mens horses. Now you keep your own & most men do, you visit & theirs coming back within a certain time.
Funerals for an adult cost anything from £2.15 upwards.
Poor people pay for show on the way to the grave & rich pay little for show but a good deal on the grave itself.
An ordinary tradesman's funeral would cost about £10.
When busy the profits are very large. 92 & 93 were very good years but 94 is the worst on record the deaths are $\frac{1}{3}$ below the average. Most men must have been losers

what.

What undertakers like is a good steady death rate any excess causes too much anxiety and a slackness is sure to follow. They have their horses always & they may just as well go out to work every day as stay at home & kick the stable to pieces.

They are busy during the cold biting winds through the winter & spring.

There used to be what they called a "Plum Season" in the autumn but improved drainage has completely put an end to this.

Feathers have gone out of date. There used to be several warehouses for this only now he knows of one only. Only Cobbers & Sweeps have them now.

Engraved plates are done out. The ordinary 'wiggly scroll is gen done in by the coffin maker. All the handles & furniture come from Birmingham.

Lead coffins are very little used now. Used to be common. The trade has a centre for these in one shop who keeps them in stock, gen a plumber.

Crape used always formerly to be provided for all the mourners by the undertaker. This was an expensive item, 30 yrs ago some wd have been buried without all the followers wearing Crape. Now it is never done. Then flowers were unknown. They wd have been considered popish. Now crape has disappeared & flowers are very common.
Now hearses are very rarely seen. and very few are buried in vaults.

Nov. 7th

F. H. D.

H. Schneider. Manufacturer in all kinds of Bamboo & Cane work. 6. Shacklewell Lane 3 doors from High St. Kingsland. Not far from Dalston Junction. On an introduction from J. Argyle.

The business used to be a good one & paid well & the work was done by skilled men.
He himself served an apprenticeship in Stamberg & then came over in answer to an advertisement. That was 30 years ago.
Now he has set up for himself. & employs 2 men & 3 of his own boys.
Now the trade is almost entirely in the hands of foreigners mostly Germans & Polish Jews.
The Jews have taken it up & have cut the prices lower & lower.
Bestendorf, Englander, Francis } employ forty or 50 hands & are the largest employers.

Francis' is in Tabernacle Street. The others are in & about Curtain Road which has become the centre of the trade - It is now almost a part of the furniture trade though it really had its origin in the basket industry.

The west end used to be the centre & good work was done there but now there is not so much but a firm 'Iverson' in Tottenham mews still does a good deal.

Work used to be on piece: now a little is done on piece but time work is becoming more general.

Earnings are very low. Hours are both very long & very short.

4d. 6d. per hour would about represent the rates for men.

Many would also work for 3d. & then work often 16 hours in order to get a decent days earnings.

A good deal of Overtime is worked before Christmas but no extra rate is paid.

Where work is on P each shop has its own price.

price list.

From the middle of October until Xmas the trade is ~~[illegible]~~ busy. Then they are very slack after Xmas. They brighten up again for the Spring when people clean up & want something fresh looking. They are slack again in the Autumn.

A mans success depends on his inventive faculties. Bamboo is easy to work, does not require much skill but you must devise new shapes & uses to please the public. eg newspaper racks, music stands, tables chairs, overmantels in fact every conceivable thing in which bamboo can be brought to bear.

All bamboo comes from Japan. They buy it ready marked & fit for working. The ends at which the joints are made are filled with wood & sometimes the whole rod is — but only in the best work.

Any boy can fill the ends & cut them pieces to the proper size, skilled work is only necessary to make a good joint.

Therefore factories have a few skilled men with a great many lads or young men practically unskilled working for them. In this way a man learns

The custom is for a man to provide his own tools which are simple i.e. a rasper or two and a saw. which in all would not cost more than £2 at the outside.

These men possessing their own tools work at home when out of employment. Buy some stuff, cut it up, make their families help, then hawk it round. So prices are still further cut.

If successful in selling the man may set up permanently for himself especially if he can hit on any thing which suits the public fancy.

It is very healthy work & not very laborious. The curse of these men is drink. They are not a very steady lot. It is so easy to say you are a bamboo worker & many rough nes have come in.

There is no foreign competition. The stuff would take

take up too much room aboard ship

Very willing to give any further information.

Nov. 7th

S. H. D.

Mess. Sotheridge Bros. East Road. City Road. N.
Funeral carriage masters. Undertakers.
Manufacturers, Importers & warehousemen
(To the trade only). Branches in Birmingham
& Carrara (Italy).

They employ 200 to 250 men.
Send out carriages daily for from 30 to 40
funerals & sometimes more.
Do all kinds of funeral work. Supply
coffins, inside trimmings, upholstery,
masonry.
They only work for the trade unless it be
for one of their own relations or
servants.
The undertaker measures the body, arranges
for the men, style of funeral etc &
then sends up to the wholesale furnisher
to send him coffin, men, carriages etc.
Undertakers seldom make their own coffins
& not one in 10 has his own horses.

Some like their coffins sent in the 'white' i.e. unpolished, some as plain rough boards; it final depends on the skill of the undertaker & how much he likes or is able to do himself.

Undertakers now prefer to be called 'Funeral directors'.

Mess.rs Dottridge can supply goods done up to any stage you may chose to order them.

Of the 200 - 250 men employed.
50 would be coach men.
The rest are.
First turn men.
A. { Back turn men.
Odd men.
Coffin makers.
B. { Monumental masons.

A. are concerned in the funeral carriage master's work.
B. in the undertaking line.

First turn men are those who are paid so much per job (gen 4/6) plus 7/- some-time

times called yard money.

Back Turn are paid by the job when they get it & also paid so much per horse per day to wash down & clean. The Back Turn men only get second choice of jobs.

Odd men are called in from outside when they are busy.

Coffin makers are all on piece work. When very busy they work long hours but are not paid anything extra except for mid-night work in an emergency.

They earn 6d. to 9d. per hour according to the class of work they are on.

It is not skilled work except in the very best. A great deal of machinery is used & they keep large stocks.

It is very much of a Father to son trade but no regular apprenticeship.

They have no union and are not connected with the cabinet makers. It is a separate branch of the trade by itself.

The firm is open from 7.30 to 7.
Dinner hour 12 — 1 & men may take their meals in the workshops if they like. Some do but the majority go outside to the cheap coffee rooms & shops of which there are plenty about.
They allow ½ hour for tea.
Stop at 2 o'clock on Saturdays.

They are busy during the cold winds and during epidemics.
But after every rush of deaths the weakly are taken off & a slack time is sure to follow. Thus at the beginning of cold & fogs those who suffer on the chest fail & there is a press of work but those who survive the first onslaught don't succumb at all.

They were very busy indeed during the influenza it was almost too much for them.
For all the undertakers apply to them since there are only two or 3 wholesale firms in London. This year the equable temperature has made the rate low.

No coffins are imported from abroad in good class work. Most are made in London.
A good many are assigned to them by people who do not wish their dead relatives to be buried abroad.
Sailors are superstitious & so they are generally sent over as 'Natural History' specimens.

The men are a steady lot he would say, at any rate there is not more drink in this than in most other trades.

They have a sick club in the shop to which all the men belong. They are not forced to, but they do because the firm will make them no allowance when ill unless they are members.
Subscription 3d per week & 10/- per week Benefits.
Every Xmas they share out & start afresh.

Would be very glad to see a proof before it was put in Book form.

Monday Nov. 12th G.H.D.

E Barridge. Funeral Furnisher & Undertaker.
296 Walworth Road. S.

Mr Barridge was just going out to secure a job as I arrived - He said he wd return in ½ hr. if I wd wait & left me in the shop with his foreman. The following is therefore an interview with the foreman as Mr B. never returned altho' an hour passed.

This foreman was a coffin maker & was head in this which is only one of their shops. Messrs Barridge are the largest Undertakers on the South side of the River. Their Factory is at Peckham.

Coffin makers are generally time workers tho' in the big shops or when hired for a special job some are on piece.
They earn 30/- to 35/ per week though there wd be a good many who would not make more than between 25/- & 30/-. No

great degree of skill is necessary. Fathers generally bring up their sons to the trade. There is no apprenticeship. It is a distinct branch from carpentering cabinet making etc & although a carpenter could in a month or two learn coffin making & become better than a regd coffin maker by trade yet a coffin maker would be no good as a carpenter.

Drinking is not so very bad though he must confess that they do like a drop now & then. Would say there was more drinking in this than in other trades. Sometimes they have such very nasty jobs. But you get accustomed to it after a bit & don't mind. The worst he ever was in was after the wreck of the Princess Alice, shant forget that in a hurry.

Men don't shift very much. You must have decent manners. On receiving an order it is generally the principal who goes to measure the corpse

'Nimrods' is only one of the code names for a

a certain size of coffins supplied by Dolbridge the largest wholesale maker in London. Some are called Brown Nimrods, others Jupiters, Venuses, Mars etc. These go telegraph for when in want of anything of a sudden.

Coffins are usually made of Elm, the inside fittings are supplied by wholesale firms who make these a specialty. The outside furniture comes from Birmingham & is supplied to the trade by a firm called Hardy in Stanford St. Lambeth.

Lead shells are not often used now; they are supplied by plumbers.

Mars busy season is during the cold winds but they have never been so slack as during this year not for the 33 years he has been in the trade.

Supposed that "blasted County Council (sig) about & improving the drainage" had been to blame in lowering the death rate.

The Plum season in the Autumn is a thing of the past. the improved drainage has killed

killed this too.

The average rate at Burridge's is to send out 4 funerals per diem. Mr. B has 30 horses of his own & a 'beautiful stock of coffins & choice of hearses' to be seen any day at the Peckham works.

Big size for a coffin wd be 6ft 1 by 17.

At Burridges those who are 'first turn' one day become second turn the next. There are also a good many odd men about on the look out for jobs. Thinks this is a fairer system than having a lot who are always 'first turn'.

Tips don't amount to very much. It just depends.

There is no Trade Society and he wishes there was.

On Sundays something extra is generally paid & he showed a slip of paper showing the earnings of himself & his mate for last Sunday which were 12/- between them.

The worst of the business is that hours are so long & you don't get anything extra for O.T. An order will come in late at night & you must stop up for it.

The curve is given to the coffin sides not by straining the wood but by making incisions with the saw on the inside and then bending & holding in place by nailing to the ends.

Nov. 16th G.H.D.

Heinrichs & Co. Bamboo & Wicker furniture manufacturers. 123-8 Old street. St. Lukes. Workshop in Central street Corner of Powell St St. Lukes.

Employs 100 persons of whom 70 are young men or boys earning under £1 per week.
The most highly paid are as a rule English. They are the best workmen. Many of these (about 6) make 48/- as a weekly wage.
The other highly paid men are Germans, Poles, Russians earning from 20/- to 35/- per week.
Under them & working for them come the majority making 8/- to 18/6. per week. on piecework.
2 women & a girl he employs to varnish.
The men earning high wages have others working under them. He takes 2 or 3 young men 'Green men' from Germany & Poland he called them

them he starts them at 7/6 per week telling the head man to make what use of them he can. The work is done piecework. On Fridays it is all brought in & paid for. From the total Heinrichs himself deducts the sums due to the underworkers. If the total made allows too large a margin for the head worker then he says the under man must be given more & therefore raises their pay. He never allows the lumpsum to be paid directly to the head man & then distributed.

Hours 7–7. with 1hr. for dinner & ½ hr for tea a few feed in the Factory if they do & they use his gas to heat up their dinners he charges each 6d per week, but most of them go outside for dinner.
On Saturdays they stop at 2.

They make mailcarts in Summer, all sorts of bamboo cords. writing tables, looking glasses wicker screens (the most skilled work). Wicker chairs. make up bent wood chairs (wh. are sent over from Austria in kit). tea tables etc etc. The great thing is always to invent

something.

something new. He invents new patterns continually has them drawn & coloured by draughtsmen & then registered. There is a great deal of cribbing among both small & even big men & Mr. H. goes around with his solicitor pretty often. If they could not pay damages he threatens them, if they can he sues them. Not long ago he got £400 out of a firm which infringed one of his patents.

There is a good deal of home work. Men make up wobbly things 'botchers' he called them & then hawk them round. They have cut up the trade which has gradually sunk in quality. It began in the West End but has gradually descended to the E. losing caste as it went.

They are busy before Xmas, in the Spring and Summer for children's mail carts. There is a great trade in them.

Slack in the autumn.

When slack he employs about 70: his is the most regular house in the Trade.

When slack the skilled men generally stay away

and come in for a day or two's work when they like. He could not say whether the skilled or the unskilled were those whom he especially turned off.

He does a great deal of work for the ~~whole~~ wholesale houses such as Barker in Kensington Evans' etc. He always says he is one of their men when asked for fear of losing their custom. "I am always very straight & honest about that" he said. But he would prefer to deal with the public direct if he could.

The men shift a good deal in search of work. They cook the books & will not come in on Mondays this is his chief complaint against them. Especially when he has a good deal on hand will they make a point of staying away.

Although they are piece workers they are bound to keep the hours of the shop, otherwise they are fined & this is deducted from their wages.

When a man comes he is made to sign a paper saying

he will come in punctually on mondays not use indecent language or misbehave himself. That he will finish any job & will be responsible for it. That if any work of his has to be finished for him he will himself pay the man.

As a matter of fact he is very glad to get half his men in on mondays.

The Englishmen drink the most, earn the most money ~~but~~ they work the best.

The foreigners when green are sobers but they soon learn togo on the booze.

"It is not as if they bought bamboo furniture with their high earnings but the men who work the most only have deal tables & chairs, it all goes to the pubs".

This is the largest hse. in the trade. Next would come a good many round Curtain road & Tabernacle street - all foreigners employing foreigners. Francis of Tabernacle St. was really a pole named 'Pobbelowsky' (or something like it) & had been trained by

by Heinrichs himself. Then there was Englander Eissler & others. I thought they would not last very long they were putting such shocking goods on the market.

He shewed all his wages books.
Earnings of men for a full week were 8/. 9/. 10/ — 18/6. on piecework.

Bamboo work was paid rather more highly than cane work though cane work was much more difficult & needed skilled work the reason he said was that bamboo work was newer than cane.

Poles, Germans, Russians & Frenchmen & English were all working together in his shop. The one he took home was new & well lighted with w.cs on the roof, one for each floor.

He had a Russian Jew working for him who had come round begging for some work. He was a fine looking oldish man who spoke 5 languages & now earned 28/8 for a full week. Spoke a little English said he had been in the factory 8 months

but

was sorry to find there was only one branch he was any good at & making tripods with a tray at the top. If the demand for these ceased he was afraid he wd have to go.
There was also a German nobleman.
These however were exceptions, the others were mostly from the country parts & had been peasants.
He has a shop in Dresden & exports a great deal out there. In Germany you can get bad things more cheaply than in England but you must pay just as highly for anything good out there & often it will not be quite so good. He was making up a great many screens for Germany. The German work would not stand the crossing so not much is imported into London.
He had just exported £200 worth of goods to Germany for which he had had to pay £40 in carriage & a duty besides.
If he got a good contract he paid his men rather extra & would give them a present now or then. "It always pays me to do this for

I get it out of them again one way & another &
they are pleased at it.
~~Chairs~~ Earnings work out at he wd say.
7d. & 8d for skilled bamboo workers per hr.
9d. for a few & sometimes even 1/-
6d. per hr. for cane workers.
Chair caning he gets done by women out. He pays
7/- per doz & a women if she work
good & cd. work fast would get done
about 3 doz in a week.
When pressed he gets some other of his work done
out
Rush work is done by some men in Southwark.
Fish baskets at one house in the West Br. Rd
near St George Circus. Kampenfeld (Polish) by
name.
Some of his greeners have the option of taking
one of his rooms which he furnished well
& cleanly (he said) at 2/6 each per week.
3 or 4 were put in the one room.
There is no system of apprenticeship, he teaches
young men by putting them under older &
skilled men; then they want more than he

he will give, they are so ungrateful, they will go & set up by themselves & try & cut prices. But they are sure to come in again & beg for money to keep them going which he never refuses

The cane & bamboo & all the trays & stamped leather paper come from Japan. He is afraid his this years goods will all have been stopped by the way. Goods which should have reached him now have never arrived, & won't get to him till February next.

Mr Steinrichs who had started by saying he had important business & other matters to attend to; then said he wd give any further information at any time.
I had been with him well over 2½ hours. (There was several interruptions of buyers etc)

November. 23rd G.H.D.

Mr James Glover of Mess Glovers. Sawmills.
They make wooden boxes, cases, & firewood
Hatcham Mills. Ormside St. Old. Kent. Road
Called with reference to their firewood cutters as they are nearly the largest workers in London in this line.

The trade has been ruined by the competition of General Booth, Workhouses and the Church Army.
Their trade varies from 50,000 to 150,000 bundles of firewood per week.
All work is piecework: So much is paid per 100 bundles. Men women & girls work together & are given out so much wood from which they make so many bundles.
The price used to be 14d per 100 bundles. Now Gen. Booth who obtained the School board contract by offering to do it 2d lower than

then their tender has taken it from them.
He is the worst sweater in the trade
he only pays his people 2d. per 100 &
gives them a cup of tea or bread
in addition. Instead of elevating a
single person he is depressing a thousand.
He refused to take their wood to cut up
though they offered it to him as cheaply
as any other person in the trade. In fact
no works were bad enough for him.
Here the system is to work in 'lotts' of
man, woman, & girl.
The man cuts the logs up with the
old fashioned bow saw.
The woman chops them
The girl ties them up into bundles
The three working together can make 30/-
in a week.
The men are generally dock labourers in
the summer & come to this in the
winter.
He has 15 to 20 berths employing 30
to 45 persons.

You very seldom get the men in of a Monday.
The tradition of London is against Monday work.
Twenty years ago not one of the men could write their names.
Education has improved this, the old system must die & if the work is to be done at all it must be done by machinery.

They now use a circular saw to cut the blocks for the women to chop.

He said there were never accidents with the chopper. The women became so practised that they could cut to ½ an inch in the dark but I noticed that several of them had one or more fingers of the left hand (which holds the block of wood) tied up.

The women were evidently of the poorest class & all working away in berths divided by a skirting of wood in a ~~house~~ barn open to the air on one side.
They were working so hard that not one stopped

stopped to look up as ~~they~~ Mr. Clover rd came in.

I saw no men at work. There was a boy to the circular saw cutting the blocks: In one lath A woman was chopping. A girl gathering up the pieces chopped & a woman pressing them into bundles on a 'horse' & tying them.

The 'horse' is a wooden table with a partition in the middle:

The girls stacked the wood over one side of the partition. The woman took a certain number of sticks from this stack placed them in a rope which she twisted tight with a wooden screw & then when sufficiently compressed tied them up with the bits of tarred string.

Against workhouse work he was very strong but admitted that the blind might be allowed to do some.

Reverting to the 'submerged 10th of Gen Booth' he said that 'those sort should be

allowed to die & not to drag others down to the same state as themselves.
The work is skilled he said very much so, but there is no system of training or apprenticeship
The work in London is decreasing owing to the increased use of fire lighters & gummy resinous mixtures.
Thinks the union has broken up.

He will be glad to answer further questions if written with the questions on one side & a space left on the other for the answers.

The men are probably casuals with very irregular earnings & habits.
The women are probably wives of the casuals & daughters working to keep the home together.
Cold & draughty work. The class who would do it would compare with the furpullers

Nov. 1. & Dec. 3. 1894.

Copies of two letters received from C Newman Secretary to the Fancy Cane, Wicker and Bamboo Workers' Union.

Address. C. Newman.
51. Almorah. Road.
Islington.

Nov 1st 1894

Dear Sir.

In answer to your letter the number of members in our Union at the present time are sixty five.

3. The English Union & Non-unionist work together, but there are shops in the East of London, where Polish & Lithuanish workers only are employed, as we cannot drag ourselves down to their level. I have forwarded two copies of our Rules as we are just having the new ones registered.

I Remain
Yours respectively
(signed) C Newman.

Dec 6th.

Mr. Dottridge head of the firm of Dottridge Bros East Road..

He had been sent the report to revise. Everything he said was substantially correct. One or two points however might be altered with advantage.

The work did need some skill and there was a demand now for a simpler coffin. This meant that defects cd. not be covered up with nails & ornamentation.

A skilled carpenter cd. get into the work in 2 or 3 mths.

The class of undertakers men was improving. Very few indeed made their work through but all customers liked to think they were buying a coffin that was made by their own undertaker in their own district.

This feeling is so strong that sometimes