Section 25
Brushes etc

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Section 25.

Section 25 Brushes etc.

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29 July.

Paid by piece.

Wages. ?

Regular.

Hours.

?

(1

Gertrude Riley. Brush drawer at Kents. Brush factory - Bethnal Green - living in Queens Mansions dwellings.

G.R. has only been at work about 8 months. They are paid by the piece. and start at 4/6 rising to 9/6 or 10/- the latter unusually high.

The work is regular all the year round - at least so she believed - and as she has other friends working in the factory she w^d probably know.

Hours are fr 8.15 a.m. to 7 p.m. ÷ 1 3/4 for meals - viz. 1 for dinner ¼ for lunch. a ½ for tea.

Plain work is better paid than fancy - at the latter a girl cannot earn more than 7/6 -

(This information was volunteered by a girl named Peck. working on fancy work. but she was very young. hardly 17).

The work in the factory is quite healthy.

Kents have the name of being the best factory in the district. Every girl tries to get in there

Mrs Savory or Satry. living in Queens Mansions. an old woman over 60 – outside worker for one of the minor Brush factories. The husband is a steady man & good workman but has been out of regular employment for two years. At his age (over 60) he says it is impossible to get taken on –

The old lady keeps on with the brush business altho she is unable to earn half what she formerly could – Her husband said that she could once – given good times – make 12/ or 14/- a week. now 3/6 or 4/6 are as much as she can do.

Drawers work is ~~Brushes~~ are paid by piece – so much a thousand holes – this comes with an ordinary sized brush to about 1¼ a-piece or 15 per dozen. The wing-brush drawers whose work is more skilled are higher paid.

The Queens mansions dwellings are not so good as the Waterloo Co's – but rents are cheaper. 2 front rooms 4/6 – which is just about met by what Mrs S. makes by brush-drawing.

2 back rooms 4/3 – want of air & light air bad

Phone.

United Society of Brushmakers.

Secretary. Mr S. G. Porter.
33 Brownlow Road
Dalston. E.

July 12/93.

This Society is one of the oldest in the Kingdom. In the Report for the year ending March 1893, a trade plate is reproduced dated 1786, which came into the possession of the London Society when the Kings Lynn branch was dissolved.

The Secretary gave me a copy of the Report & the ~~book~~ Rules and volunteered any other information that might be wanted.

The Society is grouped in Seven Divisions, the ~~leading~~ principal branch in each being termed a Head Society & the minor societies being grouped with it. The Head Societies are: London, Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Bristol, Dublin & Glasgow. London is also the head of the United Society.

Objects of Society. To provide Out of Work benefit, sick pay, superannuation & burial allowances.

Contributions vary according to the cash in hand as shown by the returns from London. When the Balance in hand is under £1000 contributions are 1s 9d per week
" " " £2000 " 1 6d "
" " " £3000 " 1. 3d "
" " over £3000 " 1s –

London orders change of rate of contribution

Members of 60 may if they ask it, pay on the following reduced scale: 1/-, 10½ or 9d respectively, when ordinary rates are 1/9, 1/6 or 1/3. They can then draw superannuation allowance when out of work and sick pay when ill.

Apprentices must serve 'full seven years' and be bound between the ages of 13 & 16, nor can they leave their master ~~unless~~ if he continues in the trade, until the expiration of the seven years without losing their right to the trade.

The masters are not allowed to take apprentices as they like. A master may have one apprentice but not a second until he has employed three men for a year, nor a third until he has employed five men for a year, nor a fourth until until he has employed 12 men for a year, and so on (see rules) until the ratio of apprentices becomes one to 10. Apprentices may join the Society twelve months before they are out of their time, paying half contributions. At the end of this time they pay 10/- entrance fee & become free members.

Benefits Out of Work. Free members receive 10/- for first 18 weeks when out of work; 8/- for the second eighteen weeks & 7/- for the next 18 weeks and then if still out of work Superannuation if entitled to it. A member discharged through taking part in a trade dispute is allowed

[Continued page 17

Bristles are all imported from Russia & Poland. & are supposed to come off the wild boars.

Messrs Kent - Brushmakers. ~~Old J~~ Bethnal Green.

This firm turns out Brushes of all kinds Besoms, tooth-brushes. making the bone handles straight off of the leg-bone of the ox. & also hand looking-glass frames.

They have a good name in the district for paying fair wages. and are on good terms with the brush-makers union - to which most of their men belong.

They employ about 200 hands indoors & nearly the same number out workers - of the latter all are women & children. The indoor hands seem to be nearly evenly divided.

The greater part of the work is paid by the piece. altho' one or two branches of women are time workers.

The Branches are as follows.

Fancy Drawing - i.e. bringing the wire thro' the holes drilled in the back of the brush - looping it onto the bristles & then drawing it back so that the bristles are bent double into each hole & the two ends stand out straight for the brush.. Some

of

Polishers. women. earn 10/- to 20/-

of the women working at this branch, work with the most extraordinary rapidity. They are paid per thousand holes. (how much?). & can earn from 6/- for a beginner up to 16/- in busy times. The latter price, however, is very rarely reached. The wages sheet showed 14 indoor workers at this branch at the present moment - of whom only 4 reached 10 or over 10 - the majority getting between 8/- & 10/- & one earning ~~£~~ about 15/-

2 Drillers. men. these drill the holes in the back of the brushes to prepare them for drawing. piece-work 30/- to 40/-

3. Finishers. men. who give the brushes their proper shape - before they go into the "drawing shop": fr: ~~about~~ 25/- ~~when~~ working along up to £3 with a boy to whom about 6/-8/- or 10/- may be paid. so that one may count this branch as ranging between 25/- & £2-10-

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Footh. brush making.

1. Cutters - men who cut up the bones as they come in fr: the bone-boilers. There are

~~about~~ four

four men engaged in this. The principal cutter gets 45/- the others about 35/-
The very disagreeable dust is much mitigated for the principall cutter by water being mechanically poured over the bone as it is being sawn - in the other cases there is a good deal of dust, but the cutting does not require such close attention as in the first instance & they do not therefore keep their heads close down to the saw.
Fashioners - men. These practically do the same business with the bone as the Finishers do with the wood - getting it into shape by means of files - After this the handles are once more boiled to get any sort of grease out of the bone - after this they are put into a sort of churn with water, & get a polish by friction like a brook-pebble. after this they are ready for the
Drillers. women. earning 8/- to 10/-. The drilling of the tooth-brushes is different to that of wooden brush. The holes are not bored right thro'; perhaps one $\frac{1}{16}$th of an inch being left at the back unperforated. the

handles

Hours.

the handles are then passed over to the Graver who with a minute circular saw, cut lines down the back of the Brush following the lines of the drills. This is supposed to look neater than drilling holes right thro'. & the wire with which the bristles are drawn less in a force which is afterwards filled in with coloured wax so that the back shall be perfectly smooth.

The Graver a man. earns 30/- & after learning his ~~After~~ it passes into the hands of the drawer who practically completes the brush.

There are one or two further small processes. such as stamping with name of Firm; waxing the back, packing, putting up etc. all done by women on Piece work. earning from 8/- to 10/- Nine and a quarter. viz fr. 8 a.m. to 7 p.m with $1\frac{3}{4}$ for meals.

The business is very slack at present. no orders coming in either fr. America or Australia to both of which there is a considerable export trade.

A certain number of hands have to be discharged when work is as slack as at present

Methods of training.

41

present. The women used formerly to go into the machine sewing business, but the manager does not think that is still the case.

The question of boy labour seems to be regulated entirely by the men & as the union is strong, probably satisfactorily. no apprentices are taken on by the firm.

The wood used for making brushes is mostly beech. chestnut. or of late since the death of the Emperor of Germany there has been a great demand for ebony handles!

There is nothing unhealthy in the trade, but there were very few old men at work. hardly any over 50 I should think.

The greater part of the workshops were large & airy enough - but the polishers were occupying a series of little working men's houses, which made stuffy & not over comfortable shops. The firm intend building a proper factory there in course of time.

9th. August.

Unionism.

Hours.

Time & Piece.

Wages

Messrs Rigby, Battock & Co. Brush & Broom manufacturers. Bethnal Green Rd.

This is a strong Union shop. Every man working here is said to belong to the Trade Society. There is however no Union among the women.

The regular hrs are 8.30 a.m. to 6-1/5 p.m. but these are not strictly adhered to by the majority of piece workers. Who are allowed a large measure of freedom as regards hours. The ~~time~~ workers are expected to be punctual in attendance & are allowed 1½ hrs for meal.

The only day or time workers are &

1. Finishers. (men).
2. Trimmers (women). Their business is to trim the bristles of the brushes after they have been "drawn".

All the rest work by the piece.

The Finishers have only worked time, since machinery has been largely introduced into their dept. They earn for the boys 8/- at starting up to 30/- or 35/-. There are

are not allowed to take on boys to help them as at Kent's. Each boy is regularly apprenticed and works under the Union.
There is a larger per centage of boys & youths working in the Brushing shop than elsewhere - men & boys were about evenly divided whereas in the other shops - broom-making etc. they - the boys - seemed to be as 2 to 10 or thereabouts.
All the system of apprenticeship is strictly carried out in accordance with Trade Union regulations.
The Household brush-makers - broom-makers & paint-brush makers work piece.
These men can earn fr: 30/- to 50/- or even £3 a week - without the assistance of any boys. Their work consists principally of preparing the bristles, tying them into bundles, and fixing them into the holes in the back of the brush or broom - with hot pitch. There is nothing unhealthy in their work - one or two of the men were evidently of considerable age - quite white haired - & the smell of the pitch is said to act as a disinfectant in the case of epidemics being about.

Outworkers · reduce wages.

about.

Among the women - the piece workers - i.e mainly drawers - can take anything from 6/- to 18/- It would be difficult to strike an average - the weeks earnings varied very much & depended so greatly on the zeal or sharpness of the individual. Perhaps 10/- or 11/- is the average for household & stable Brushes. & 7/- or 8/- for Dancy (i.e. hair brushes). The reason why wages are lower in the latter branch of the dept. is that it can be worked at home. by out-workers. in fact the greater part of it is given out - & outworkers always reduce wages in any industry they take up, since the work is generally considered not in the light of the only means of subsistance, but as a sort of help and addition to any other income in the receipt of which the family may be.

Household & ~~Dancy~~ Stable Brushes on the other hand, cannot be given out - because of certain large & expensive tools - e.g. large shears, fixed on the table at the side of each girl - with

that any often stuff given out is lost - not long
with a little ~~pot~~ bundle of bristles, back a week.
The woman to whom they had been given died shortly
direction of the Firm for which the worker & had end

which she trims of straggling bristles - These
it would be difficult for a woman to
supply herself with, & it is therefore
more convenient ~~to~~ go to the factory a
poor there
There have never been troubles with the work-people
& very rarely any between them.
Business ~~is~~ very regular - there is neither
much overtime, nor extra hands taken on &
subsequently discharged.
Scarcely any export trade done. ~~The~~ present
depression is not much felt.
The Factory ~~is~~ is particularly airy & well
lighted.
The out-workers are not registered as regards
addresses. most of them are known as having
worked in the Factory before, & their names
are simply entered on a book. It is very rare
ago however a poor woman came from Poplar
They had been given out a twelve-month before
after, & by accident her friend found out the
to return the stuff a year after.

9th August.

Mr Carter. Ivory cutter & turner. Hemlock. Lys St. Shoreditch.

A small business employing only 3 men. 2 turners & 1 cutter. All three had been with the firm over 30 years. & were old men. A good deal of elasticity allowed in regard to hours. The men were supposed to come at 8.30 & leave ½ to 7 but they very often did not come till 9. One. The cutter had been very ill for some time & therefore they were not severe with him in this respect. They recd the cutter 30/ a week - the Turners 32/. & this he would say, would be a fair average in the trade.

The business has however largely decreased ~~as far~~ as London is concerned. & has gone mainly to Sheffield & also in a large measure to France.

London is the principal ivory market in the world - the only two others are Liverpool & Antwerp. but not a fifth of the stuff sold in London is cut up there. This firm, one of the oldest & largest, has

now

now been turned mainly into a dealing business. The tusks are brought in & cut into 3 divisions. the point. the ~~solid~~ centre. & the hollow. The point goes to France for the manufacture of billiard balls & umbrella handles. the centre is sometimes exported as it is to India & worked into bangles for the natives, or else cut up into bangles in England & exported ready made. on the whole, however, those made in India are preferred. & the hollow goes to Sheffield where it is used for knife handles.

About 500 tons of ivory are sold in London in the year. of which less than 20 are probably cut & turned in London itself. ~~They~~ There are not many men working at it. Since ivory combs went out of fashion. Ivory now is mainly used. for knife handles, piano forte keys. bangles for India. billiard balls & backs of brushes.

The best ivory is the "soft" which comes from the E. coast of Africa & the Cape. tho' the latter has almost ceased to export. This is white & creamy in

in colour & much more elastic in quality than the "hard", which is exported from the other parts of Africa.

~~The outworkers~~

(continued from page 4)

United Society of Brushmakers - continued.

20/- a week for 13 weeks. When travelling to seek work 6d per day is allowed for bed money.

Sick benefit

Under 50 years of age at admission 10/- for 12 weeks & 8/- for other 12 wks.
" 60 " " 8/- " & 6/- " "

Superannuation. All members, incapable of working at the trade are eligible for superannuation if members of the trade for 14 years as under:

Members for	14 years	4/-	per week
"	21 "	5/-	"
"	28 "	6/-	"

Funeral benefit - £7 for member & £4 for wife of free member

Emigration. £5 to go to America if member for 5 years
£10 " Australia " 10 years.

Strikes & Disputes. No strike is to take place until the particulars of the dispute have been laid before arbitrators; the Head Society appointing the men's representative. If more than 3 members are involved, a vote of the whole trade must be taken. The strike when authorized is supported by a direct levy on all working members at the rate of one

penny per week for every 5 men on strike. The men on strike receive 12/- per week + 1/6 per week for each child under 13 years of age. This continues for 12 weeks.

There are some minor regulations of interest such as, that no money be allowed for beer on club nights & that a rental be paid for accommodation at club house; that no opposition be made to the introduction of steam power; when trade is depressed members are asked to help the funds by loans at 5%; ~~[illegible]~~ that members boring pan or machine work for women be expelled; that the Society be responsible to employers for the members to the extent of 40/- each man, either for work unfinished or cash overdrawn on account when a man leaves.

The Society has also a system of tramping the country for the benefit of out of work members. The chief towns of the country, in which brushmaking is done, are arranged in order. This order commences with London & ends with Bristol. It is printed on the cover of a small book called a 'blank' which contains a number of vouchers. ~~which~~ The man asks for his blank when he wishes to look for work: the secretary gives it him, and writes in it his standing in the Society & whatever relief is given the man. He then has to go to

the next town mentioned on the route & report to the Secretary there & so on until he has gone the round. If however a Secretary knows of ~~out~~ work in any place, he would give the man a pass to that place. When the man has obtained work he has to return his blank to the Secretary, who retains it until the man goes on tramp again. This book is thus a record of the time the man has travelled and the relief he has received.

The Report for the year ending March 31st 1893

The Balance sheet shows the Receipts for the year to be as under:

Contributions	£6066	of this the London Province contributed	£ 1676
Strike Levies	804	" " "	£ 236
Entrance Fees, Arrears etc	245	" " "	£ 95
Total Receipts being	7129	" " "	£ 2010

Expenditure.

"Receivers" e.g. out-work.	£2844.	of which the London Province paid	£ 479
Sick Benefit	£1022		£ 254
Superannuation	935		£ 332
Funeral Expenses	405		£ 122
Strike Expenses	780.		£ 5
Total Expenditure	£6800		£ 1363
Balance in Hand. March 1893.	£1225;	at London	£ 441

A 'Reserve Fund' has been started & £141 out of the year's savings for its inauguration.

The Membership at March 1893 was as under:

London Province:	Payers 418;	Receivers 20;	Sick 13;	Superan. 22;	Total 473
The United Society	" 1300;	" 80;	" 45;	" 57;	1482

The year included a period of disturbance in the north – Lancashire & Leeds and the contributions including strike levies amounted £ 4.15.1 per member or about 7/10d per week. The cost of 'out of work' benefit was 8 3/4d per member per week.

Of bad shops two were specially mentioned:

Ludbrook Mile End Road. E. He employs women to do work done by men in other places e.g. basswork.

A. Smith of March Lane, Stratford. E. A notable unfair House. Has a government contract.

Mr P. promised to give any other information respecting the shops and gave the following papers: Balance sheet & Report to March 1893 marked A/32; copy of Trade Rules 13/32; List of Fair Houses ; and List of Employers for London County Council etc. D/32

For other information see Sheet.

Have left. 114 Bishopsgate St.
letter returned.
26. VII. 94

Masters' Society by address

Amalgamated Society of Brushmakers

London Office. 114 Bishopsgate Street Without

Organizing Sec. Ben. Ellis.

Mr Ellis says that the Society is purely a trades union. The only benefit is "out of work" benefit, viz 10/- per week for 8 weeks & then 5/- for another 4 weeks. Strike pay is 12/- per week but there is no time limit to the period for which it is given. Women are admitted & pay half contributions & receive half benefits. Subscription is 6d per week & Entrance fee 2/6

The Society is a national one & has branches in 15 towns & a membership of about 1000 (vide Mr Ellis) In the report figures are written against ~~her~~ each branch ~~of~~ & apparently represent the membership of each: these make a total of 501 of whom 70 are in London.

The rules have been revised & they are now in the Chief Registrar's hands awaiting approval. Mr Ellis promised to send a copy of them & also the earlier rules. He gave me a List of prices (marked F 32) for all classes of work including the Painting Brush Price list. The latter was approved by the Master Brush Makers' Association in 1891.

Painting Brush making is the best branch of the trade. Men earn the highest wages.

The prices vary much in the amount that they allow a man to earn the difference depending on the quality of the materials used. Thus in 'Pan' work the material may be either 'dressed' or 'undressed', while with 'hairs' the quality + length make a great difference.

The Balancesheet + Report for the Six months ending Dec 30/92 (G. 32) shows that the total income for ~~for~~ the 6 months was £ 350 + the balance in hand £ 236. The Report is chiefly remarkable as an attack on the "United" Society, which is termed a "wretched body of persons", while the Secretary is described as "having two faces + alluded to as 'this person'".

The following notes ~~infra~~ give Mr Ellis's opinion respecting some of the Shops:

Crowden ~~& Garrett~~	Garrod, Southwark Bridge Rd	Have a strong prejudice against the men's Societies.
Rooney	, Bishopsgate Street.	Medium class shop
Rudbrook	Shalford.	Very bad.
Smith	"	Very bad
Matthews.	106 Upper Thames St.	One of the best Shops in London.

Kent & Son. 15 Robinson Rd E. Pays girls very badly. Boys also very badly paid. Some other workers get good money.

Mr Roots Commerce Road Wood Green N. Employs more boys than any other firm.

Mr Ellis will introduce us to some of the men. He suggests that a number of the men should be seen at the Club house some Monday evening. He will get them together if he is written to.

29 August. Went over Messrs H. & Co.
Factory – very airy & well ventilated. Good
sanitary arrangements. clearly kept. lavatory etc
for men. gas cooking stove to each floor –
All kinds of paint brushes made – from
large white-wash & distemper brushes down
to small so-called "camels hair" for artists.
All made with Russian or Siberian pigs
bristles – It is not unknown how the bristles
are got from the wild pig – but it is supposed
that the animals shed them at a certain
season of the year & that the peasants
then pick them up & sell them to trading
firms who make them up into rough bundles
for export to England & elsewhere.
A few of the handles about the size of
which it is necessary to be very precise on
account of the manner of fitting on bristles
are

Messrs Hamilton & Co – Builders – paint brush manufacturers
96. Clerkenwell road.
All the productive work is paid by the piece
only the boys – packers & store-room men
are time workers.
There are four departments.
1. Painting brush manufacturers. (Union)
2. Bristle-dressers. (Union)
3. Artists tool dept.
4. Drawers. of the latter there are however
only one or two hands who carry out special
orders.
There is a regular slack season in
the trade, which ranges from end of August
to January – but this does not affect the
men in the firm as stuff is stocked during
slack season.
Work therefore continues without a break
throughout the year –
Men do not shift out of this work to
any other.
Trade is just now very fairly good
altho' the slack season is just beginning

are manufactured at ~~Chesham~~ the Factory but the greatest number of handles are made at Chesham. alder, birch & beach wood are used. Nearly all the paint brushes are fastened ~~into~~ the handles with glue or cement & then bound tightly on with tinned iron or copper wire, or with string covered with glue. Bristle drawing & ~~picking~~ sorting forms a considerable item of the work & in the case of the finer Siberian bristles requires much more care & skill than in the coarser black Russian ones. The man doing the former was paid 1/6 per pound sorted. for the latter only 5 3/4 per pound was paid. About 90% of the work is done entirely by hand.

Apprentices.

as an evidence of this - the manager said they had been looking out for some time for a skilled workman & been unable to get ~~them~~ one. all who had applied being men well unknown for unsteadiness of character or for some defect. He believed every decent workman in this trade in London was at present in employment.

In regard to this statement however he drew a distinction between the Branch of work of the firm - Painting Brushes - & the Fancy (Hair) Brushes. The latter he believed was in a very slack state 1891. was much the same as the present. Apprentices serve for 7 years. (all the question of apprentices is regulated by Union Laws). There are no premiums accepted - but during his time of service. the apprentice is paid half rate of wages - the other half going to either the workmen who is engaged in teaching him, or if he is working on his own acct ~~to~~ the firm. Each apprentice is made

thoroughly

Loss of working capacity.

Hour

Dowie.

thoroughly acquainted with each section of his Branch of work.

Men begin to lose their wage earning power between 50 & 60. but there is no reason why they should cease work before 70. except natural decay. The work is perfectly healthy & not very laborious. The only part which might be likely to affect the men injuriously being the washing of the brushes after they have been made. Each man washes the brushes he has finished, & this necessitates, standing in a room heated at high temperature by hot water & steam, & fairly hard work as well. If men then after perspiring profusely stand about in draughts they are very apt to get severe chills.

For Dowie workers the hrs are what men like. between 8 a.m. & 7 p.m. when the doors open & shut:

Dowie workers do 52½ hrs a week.

A great improvement is noticeable in this ~~matter~~

Habit & tricks of men

There is considerable foreign competition in articles in which, being of cheap material, the labour charge forms a considerable item.
For instance in a Brush of expensive material costing 10/6. the wage item is not more than 3½d. It is plain that in this case if it were reduced by one half, the difference in the cost price would be so slight that it wd not repay the cost of carriage etc. from abroad. In this kind of high class work then cheap labour abroad hardly affect English trade. It is only in the very cheapest sort of articles as for instance in a class of brushes sold at 2/- per doz: where the wages charge amounts to 7d per doz. that foreign competition especially German is mainly felt.
The men live mainly away from the Factory in northern or Eastern Suburbs.
No women are employed. The manager said he was glad of this. He believed that unions & trade societies were of positive

value

value to manufacturers, since they established a fixed rate of wages for the time being. Each manufacturer in the Brush trade who adhered to the Union knew the rate of wages paid by the rest, and that they would not be able to undersell him. This tended to general security; & the prevention of sudden fluctuations in prices which upset the calculations of the manufacturer & the dealer.

He did not however think that the unions did very much towards raising the standard of wages. Every man in an union shop became a union man however he worked – a strict surveillance was necessary to see that the work was well carried out. Of course if a man found that by working quickly & intelligently he could produce much more in the hour & earn proportionately larger wages, he would do so. A good deal of humbug was talked about a workman's pride in his work. How can a man have any particular pride in

brushes

branches which he turns out by the thousand per annum? There is no great kudos attaching to their being well & solidly made? at least as far as he is concerned. and he looks naturally enough more to increasing his wages than to putting an extra finish to articles which he produces mechanically by the gross. The only way of remedying this, is by having a good well-paid foreman drawn from the ranks of the men, & therefore with a thorough knowledge of the work; a man with tact enough to make himself liked by the men & yet strong enough to insist on work being done over again, whenever it has been found to be scamped.

Ivory & Bone Brushmakers Soc.

Established.

Numbers. in 1890.

& Now (1893. Aug).

Women employed in this branch
& their wages.

August. 17th. G.H.D.

Alfred Masters. 38 Copenhagen Street N. Secretary to the Ivory & Bone Brushmakers Trade & Protection Society.

The Society was established January 1890.

There was great enthusiasm among the men after the Dock strike and every man in the trade (There were certainly not 6 exceptions) joined the Union.

In the whole of London there are only 150 men in this line, & in the other parts of G.B. there are not more than 30.

Now there are 120 on the Books of the Union. The country members (who were all locked out at once on protesting for a raise in wages) no longer belong.

There are 400 women employed in this Branch in London
Earning. 4/. 6/. 11/. per week.
Brush Drawers & Finishers get 10/.
Brush. Trimmers. 12/.

Proportion of Non-Unionists.

The two do not as a rule work together

Relations of masters & men.

French competition

No recog. board of Arbitration.

Wages. There are only 2 Houses which do not pay Union Rate.

There are not 30 non-unionists in London.

Unionists & Nonu. do not work together except in a very few instances & their are Unionist Houses.

The present relations of employers & employed are good. It is not so much the masters and men who dislike one another as the masters & masters. There is very great jealousy & distrust between master & master.

The reason perhaps is in the keenness of the competition. The masters are beaten by the French who probably have better machinery. There is a great Factory at Beauvais where brushes are turned out in great numbers, very cheap & very well finished. An master man boys over there when he can & wanted to know how quickly he could learn French enough for the purpose.

There is no recognized Board of arbitration.

Wages. average. 25/. in good Houses } 48 to 50 hours.
20/. in medium.
15/. in lowest

Hours customary.

Loss of capacity.

All Piece work.

Regularity.

No Overtime

Work shared during slackness.

No shifting.

Hours. 8 – 7.30, on ordinary days: these are & always have been the custom in the trade. 8 – 1 on Saturdays.
1 hr. is allowed for dinner.
½ hr. ..... tea.
& generally a short interval is given for lunch.

After 40 or 45 men begin to lose their capacity it is very hard work, requires strength to file down the bone to the required size & shape.

All work is piece work.

Work is as a rule regular, the beginning of the year being the slackest season. This is applicable to the whole trade.

Overtime is almost unknown & there is no special rate for it

In slack times the best men only were kept on the less good being turned off, this used to be the case now slackness is to a large extent shared by the whole body of men together.

There is no shifting to any other trade, the men are incapable, (only one exception where a man had gone into fardressing & which he begged shd not be mentioned as the man wd

Men Kept to one branch.

Only outsiders shift to other houses.

Apprenticeship system dying.

Condition of admission to Soc.

To make a Tooth. Brush.

be identified at once.

The men are always kept to one branch, the trade is getting more more subdivided every year in the attempts to produce more cheaply & compete.

Men gen: keep to one house, a few outsiders shift from house to house in the same branch of the trade

Apprenticeship of 7 years to dead.

There are still a few of from 3 to 5 years but the system is dying.

As long as a man is earning journeymen wages he may be admitted to the Society.

To make a Tooth Brush.

You take your bone & cut off a piece of the right length with a circular saw.

You then plane it flat by hand.

The shape is then given to it by a machine (this is technically called profiling).

With a file called a 'float' the whole is flattened the plane marks are taken out & the edges are bevelled & the ends rounded.

To wash a hair brush.

The neck of the brush is filed by a special tool called the 'Neck Tool'.
The whole is then scraped by a ~~brush~~ knife & then put into a polishing tube & is then tumbled up & down for 12 hours in a tub of whiting & water until the familiar clear polish results.
Exactly the same process is followed for bone hair brushes.
Ivory brushes are made entirely by hand.

To wash a hair brush.
Put it in lukewarm. soda & water.
never into hot water.
(a walnut of soda to a quart of water)

Mr Masters himself is an ivory & bone brush Fashioner
earns. 27/. per week.
works with G.B. Kent. & Son.
pays 7/. wk rent for 3 room.

Gave papers re Union & wages.

Copy of letter recd from the Foreman in Mason's Brush Factory. 10a Crawford Passage. Farringdon Rd.

Sir,

In answer to your letter I beg to state Mr Mason is left town for his holidays. When he will return I cannot say exactly. I will as foreman answer your enquiry.

Slack time runs thro the hot season when mud is scarce & brushes & brooms are not much required; this year as been very quiet having to get rid of 18 to 20 men. The others being put on short time, the wage being limited to 30/- per week.

As regards competition we being a strong society shop have to contend with machinery & womens labor which is greatly utilised against us by non-society shops. We are not ourselves ~~open~~ able to use same without coming into conflict with the mens society a thing we try to avoid. Foreign competition is likewise very keen. and there no doubt

fair

Why?

fair trade would be best. - But strange to say, the ones who would get most by it - the working men cant see it - Time 9.30 to 6. is about a hands makers time, they being a piece paid class, claiming this very strongly - In your report dont forget the effects of drink on all classes of trade society men - There is always a lot who we only employ when terribly driven by trade, poor wretches, shattered by drinking habits These are in many cases the cause of strikes as they are unable to be got rid of by the different societies so long as they obey the rules but are are always more or less out of work.

Mr Griffin - Brushmaker Pabast St. gives following information re materials used for brushes.

Horse hair - English is the best. then S. American Chinese & Colonial.

Bristle fr. India, China, Russia & France.
The best bristles are Siberian & Russian these have increased exceedingly in value in the last year or two. owing it is said to the expulsion of the Jews who used to deal largely in them.

Whisk - fr. Italy & France made of roots of grape vine.

Bass the fibre of the Piassava palm fr. Brazil & mostly used for coarse ~~bristles~~ brooms. Broom making is termed technically pannung.
Pannors often drill the holes in the body of the broom at home having foot lathes. But the pannung work is done in the factory. by tying together little bundles of the Piassava fibre with hemp - or thread of some kind. Dipping the base into a pan of hot pitch & sticking it

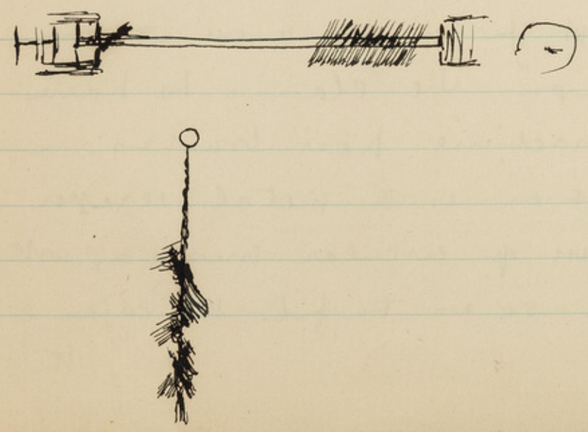
6th Septr.

it into the holes drilled in the body of the Broom.

Revd W. Dodge says a panner can earn about 30/- a week. - that the women generally earn 7/- to 8/- at drawing work. but if it is done by a single woman who can give her time to it she can make 14/ or 15/- a week. This is at a good season of the year.

In the Boro'. 3/- to 3/6 is paid for a single room. & 5 for a house with 2 rooms. 9/- or 10/- for a double house.

Mr. Webber. Brushmaker & inventor. Tabard Street - 2 roomed house with yard at the back covered in & used as a factory - rent 15/-. would probably employ about 6 or 8 hands ~~when~~ in the factory when full at work - at present quite empty - except for his son & one woman engaged in "drawing" - He claims to have invented the machine hair brushes - & his last invention is a metal scraper made on the pattern of circular brushes, with a spring inside so as to fit the edges of



the scraper close to the sides of the tubes which it is intended to clean. These scrapers are especially meant for cleaning marine boiler tubes. He has also made one small enough to fit the tubes of an engine boiler. The metal scrapers will only do for iron & steel tubes. Brushes must be used for copper tubes. He makes all kinds of Brushes except the best hair brushes. viz: wire brushes for cleaning bottles & flues. The latter are simply made. a piece of iron wire of a certain thickness is bent double. the loop end is fixed in a vice on one side, & a round ~~piece~~ rod of iron put into it so as to keep the loop while the rest of the wire is twisted. the other ends of the wire are then fastened into a machine which, ~~by turning~~ when the handle is turned cause them to twist quickly round each other. But before doing this. a layer of bristles is placed between the two wires. and as they revolve one upon the other, ~~into~~ the bristles are twisted round as well & stand out rising up the wires in a spiral

spiral. This sort of work is made with wonderful rapidity. The twisting machine is moveable so as allow for the shortening of the twisted wires. in order however to keep the wire straight, a strong spring is placed at the back of the moveable machine in the shape of an inch board firmly fixed in ceiling and floor to which the machine is attached. this gives as the machine moves along under the shortening process of the twisting wires & draws the machine back to its original position as soon as the wire is released.
Mr W. makes all parts of the brushes himself except the round backs of the ordinary tube brush, which are supplied to him cut in half sections. each half is then drilled, drawn finally glued & ferruled together.
This year is exceptionally slack. Mr W. believes that along Tabard St only about 8 or 9 out of every 10 hands in the small factories. are employed at present. This is ascribed to the dry year & there being consequently no mud to sweep.

Ile

He takes no apprentices himself. Will not be bothered with him. But there are a good many small masters who employ far too much boy labour. There is no sort of rule in the matter.

Journeyman average £1 to 30/- per week. rents for 2 rooms 4/6 or 5/-.

Mr Ashlet Clarke. 37 Staple St near Tabard St. S.E. a finisher & shaper. working for Mr Stanks of Tabard St.

Earns from 20/- to 22/- as an average all the year round. This he told me without looking at his books. but on examination of his last book & two earlier wage books which he gave me, I see that he rarely rises above £1 in the week & is often below 10/- Lately work has been so slack that for two weeks he earned 1/6 & 1/10 respectively. Besides this the shaper & finisher has to find his own tools, & his own tacks & glue for gluing the ~~back~~ covering piece of wood

39

"Panners" are paid 18 or 20 knots a penny.
Drilling is work requiring considerable skill. especially where the bristles have to stand out at an angle from the face of the brush, & not straight. For the purpose of drilling the holes at the proper angle a metal back "guide" is used, which gives the boring instrument the right direction.

Women work.

(This man a brush-maker)

wood & also the sand-paper for finishing.
The Panner on the other hand earning probably nearly the same average weekly wages, has to find no material himself. In this way he is much better off. Also he is better off by working in the factory & keeping regular hours. The man that works at home knows no regular hours - he may have to work far into the night & he may be forced to be remain idle half the day.
All brush-makers are paid by the piece.
The rate of wages paid for drilling 5/ per 1000 - but 1,200 are often counted as 1000
The finishing & drawing are paid differently according to the size & class of the brushes required.
The work done by women is almost all "drawing" but in some steam factories they do the drilling as well.
A hard working single woman with nothing else to attend to probably averages 9/. all the year round at drawing - The ordinary drawing hand however probably makes not more than 6/-

There

There are a few employers who have regularly bound apprentices, but this is not the rule. A large number of boys are employed.
By far the greater part of the work is done outside the factory, material being supplied as in Mr C.'s case. He is working for Hames of Sabard St. who has a fair reputation of paying good wages.
There are a certain number of sweating shops who pay about 25 p.c. less wages.
Work is very slack at present. about 50 out of 300 of the Tanners Society are not at work at present. & no doubt numbers of non-society men.
Mr C.'s house consisted of two small rooms about 10 ft. by 8. & a diminutive yd. for this he paid 5/- That was the usual price about that district.
The lower room was his workshop & was used also as kitchen & living room. He his wife & 3 children sleeping in the upper room.

Sept. 7th

Mr Henning - of Henning Bros. 29 High St. Bloomsbury - Was for twenty years a manufacturer of turned & carved ivory work. Has given it up owing to uncertainty of fashions - It is at present a decaying trade - There is only one firm which does much in the ivory line, in connection with brushes which is Bennet of Camberwell Road. But very few men are at present employed upon it in London - The main branch of the industry in England is situated in Sheffield - to which it has been removed from London on acct of the trade in knife handles. The articles for which ivory is used come in the following order in regard to the ~~amount~~ quantity used for each - & piano keys.

1 Knife handles, 2 Billiard balls. 3 Brush backs. 4 umbrella handles - & 5 paper knives. Except for the two first ~~articles~~ categories, the ivory trade would be in a dying condition. Its place has been largely taken by celluloid & since silver has become cheap by that metal. It is cheaper in the market than

at

at present being 8/- the lb instead of 10/- as it was some 15 years ago. But this is only because there is a less demand - the supply is diminishing rather than increasing.

Ivory cutters wkmen earn fr. 35/- to £2-5 all the year round.

Nearly all the men have left the workers in London - one rarely meets any young ivory cutters & there are no more apprentices so far as Mr H. knows, learning the work at anyrate in London.

Mr H. considers Germans & French clever & better mechanics especially for work requiring neatness & deftness. The Germans are extraordinarily careful in cutting ivory not to waste any. The English on the other hand are far more wasteful. But even the ivory carving industry in France is a moribund one, & Dieppe which used to be full of ivory carvers has now only.

Ivory turning is not an unhealthy occupation especially if worked by a wet saw process. when no disagreeable dust need be inhaled.

There is no particular slack or busy season.

The

The orders depend entirely on the fashion of the moment. This is especially the case with umbrella & stick handles - for which the tops of small tusks are mainly used.

Billiard balls are made out of the small straight tusks of the ex. elephant.

Most of the ivory called East Indian has originally been brought ~~— stopp~~ by Banyans & stripped at Zanzibar ~~to Bombay~~. If on arrival it is found not to be suitable to Indian requirements Bangles etc - it is sent off to England as Indian ivory.

Sept. 12th 1924.

74

Mr Condron: Small manufacturing Brush maker employed formerly fr. 30 to 40 hands. - now the business is very much fallen. He only makes the very best articles for a few firms that have dealt with him for a considerable time.

His line is fancy work. i.e. Hair-brushes, clothes brushes & hat brushes. The latter are made with horse-hair.

Bristles are increasing so greatly in price that it is Mr C's opinion that some substitute will have to be found. He does not believe like Mr Webber of Tabard St in fine wire as a substitute but thinks the necessary qualities for a brush are more likely to be found in split quills - an article of which some use is already being made in France.

There are four quite distinct classes of brush work - tho' many of the larger firms embrace two or three of them.

These are. 1. Household Brushes.

2 Painting Brushes

3. Fancy "

4 Brushes for mechanical appliances

Such

Wages.

Depression.

such as the circular brushes for cleaning boiler tubes shewn me by Mr Webber.

The drawing is practically all done by women except the coarser fibre work which is drawn with string nor wire & is sometimes done by men.

Women who devote 8 or 9 hrs. a day to drawing & earn fair wages should make about 10/- a week. But the majority only give 4 or 5 hrs a day - looking upon the work as a sort of extra help or assistance & therefore make little more than half that amount. 4/- or 5/-

Among men the Finishers & Boxers should, if working for a good shop get about 27/- all the year round.

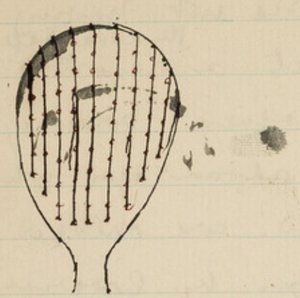
The present year is very depressed.

The Brush trade was at its height in the 2 or 3 years after the Franco-German war when the 2 nations were struggling to recover from the temporary dislocation of trade.

But since that time (1873) business has gone down-hill - especially as it seems with the smaller

smaller manufacturers, who not having the same command of the market or the advantage of regards name, travellers, illustrated catalogues, power of stocking & numbers of other small advantages which however all tell in the end. are obliged either to undersell the large firms by lowering wages or else to go to ground.

At the present time France competes severely in the high class work. They have adopted a fashion of "trepanning". wooden brushes as well as wooly ones. i.e. instead of boring holes right thro the back. & then after the bristle have been "drawn" gluing a thin piece of wood on the back to cover the holes & the wire, as is done with most English wood-back brushes. the holes are bored in a line along the length of the back of the brush for the tops. other holes are then drilled from the face to meet these - but not penetrating the whole thickness of the brush-back. a wire is next past along the ~~central~~ ~~hole~~ long tunnel hole that has been ~~produced~~ formed from the tops. & ~~the bristles are~~ it is pulled ~~thro~~ each of the surface holes, the bristle are attached & finally the wire is pegged down



Representation of face of trapanned brush.
The long lines being the holes bored from the top
the red dots the holes bored half way thro'
the thickness to meet the tunnels.
In the case of the ordinary brush the red holes
would be bored right through the thickness o
the wire attaching bristles visible at the back
until the thin piece of wood covering the wires
has been glued & tacked on.

Intemperence

down at the top, & cut off.

The French also turn out nearly all the pocket brushes sold. it is difficult to get Englishmen to turn their attention to any small work.

Since the big boom of the years after the war, a lot of men who came in then to learn the trade have left or drifted into other work. there is however no kindred or allied trade into which they can go in slack times.

The apprenticeship system may be said to be practically dead (This especially the case as regards fancy & household brushes) Boys learn how they can. It is only rarely that apprentices are regularly taken on. & properly taught.

Mr C. has not noticed any great difference lately in regard to intemperence, tho' he is inclined to think that the money which used to go formerly in drink is perhaps more spent on tram & bus fares. cheap railway tickets. etc.

The wages are rather higher than 30 years ago, but there is no remarkable change in this respect.

Time required to learn.

Loss of capacity

respect either.
A fair finisher would probably be about 2 years learning the work thoroughly.
A Panner wi Fare a year or less.
Of course the work & especially a panner may be learnt in theory in 5 minutes. but the deftness & quickness that is necessary in handling. the different parts quickly enough to earn good & full wages requires great & constant practice.
There is no union. Mr C. believes, in the Fancy Branch of Brush making. (?).
Russian Bristles & Siberian are the best They have risen very considerably in price in late years.
Mr C. uses the washed or prepared bristles These cost 35 years ago 10/- the lb. at present they are sold for 16/- & the tendency of price is always upward.
There is absolutely nothing except natural decay to prevent a man working. He remembers one man who had gone on up to 75 & another to 77 years of age. Boring is rather hard work

Rents.

Sept. ?

work when the machine has to be turned by the foot, but in most large factories this is now done by machinery. Damping is the easiest work. The only work that may ~~be~~ perhaps be rather unhealthy is that of bristle sorting. which is dirty dusty work. & the small particles of bristle are likely to affect the lungs. (I can't say this struck me in going over the large factories)

About the Caledonian Rd.

decently built 6 roomed house. 14/- or 15/-

8 roomed house. £40 per an.

5/6 per week for 2 room or single story.

A large number of railway men living about there who have possibly forced up prices.

There is also in the neighbourhood a very low quarter of slums. (black in map).

Mrs Cons. wife of a dog biscuit worker. said she had been working for 1 year as a girl in a Tabard St. shop. learning book-making she was paid 1/- a week. & they worked in a shed in the back yard where the pony was stabled. In rainy weather part of the place was flooded & they had to cross the yard on planks.

21 Sept. 1893.

Mr Henderson - small factory. Tabard St.
employs 2 sons. & 2 men - & at present 2
women on the premises - & generally a few
more women outside at drawing. Trade is
so slack at present that he is doing drawing
work himself as well as back gluing. (veneering
it is called in the trade) which is part of the
prisoners work - in the factory 1 son & 1 man
bore & prepare backs - the women draw the
bristle. the old man glues & tacks & the
other son & the man do the rest of the finishing.
i.e. planing down & sand papering etc.
The back yard is roofed over & converted
into a sort of factory, in which there are
four rooms or divisions - It was not very
stuffy or disagreeable. & did not seem unhealthy.
Trade has never been so slack as at present -
There are a considerable number of hands out
of work. He considered a smart woman ought
earn 10/- a week if she gave up her time
to it. & a good finisher 30/- - This
naturally is busy time - In some of the
high class factories on the other side of
the

the river, a prisoner might earn far more. He had one friend working as a prisoner at one of the big shops. who could go in when he liked. "with his umbrella under one arm & an overcoat on the other. work his ~~[illegible]~~ 8 hrs a day, and drew £2 or 50/- on Saturday night." but he got forgetting which was boss he or the Supervisor, & ~~took~~ a drop too much sherbet — so he got the sack & was sorry for it."

Boring. - About a day: brushes with 130 to 150 holes would be an hours work. But this is very difficult to state definitely as each different kind of brush requires more or less care & attention. Then is which holes are bored perfectly straight & not at an angle being of course the quickest done. It is hard work. The whole weight of the body rests on the left foot while he turns the wheel which makes the cutter revolve with his right. He leans his chest against a thing of wooden rest & with arms rigid & elbows fixed tight on the table draws the wooden - ~~[illegible]~~ brush back towards him

Some women also go with flower baskets to the city on Saturdays. when being a half holiday this can not earn much more than 9d or so. & often make 3/- or 4/- with their flowers.

towards. brain until the cutter has penetrated right thro' the wood. In order that ~~brooms~~ stalks, backs may not be spoiled & may have the regulation number of holes - guides are provided. i.e. either wooden or metal backs already pierced which are fixed on to each unpierced back in turn & guide the borer -

It takes a good two years or more to learn to bore every kind of ~~f~~ brush properly.

Mr H. works mainly for large wholesale City firms - he does not sell much privately tho' he keeps a small shop in Tabard Street - & work executes private orders.

The women go in great numbers hop-picking & fruit-picking & it is often a difficulty to get a sufficient number of hands in summer. But as summer, especially this summer, is generally slack in the "domestic" & "household" branch of manufacture, which is mostly followed in Tabard Street, this does not usually matter very much.

There are 3 kinds of bass. 1. the hard. & Peruvian or "monkey-bass" which is the

reals

real piassava fibre. & 3 African. which is lighter coloured & less durable & also cheaper. These are now generally mixed together for cheapness sake. The white mexican palm fibre is also used for the cheaper kinds of paint brushes.
The Broom has, like bristle, risen very considerably of late years - something like ⅓ of the price that it formerly fetched. & this coming together with Foreign competition has made it far harder to get a living than formerly. He (or a master) never thought of working every day of the week 15 years ago. 3 or 4 were quite enough - now in his old age he is obliged to work 6.

Mr Hants. small master - in a court off Tabard St. works at home with his wife, & one other man. in an exceedingly small room but much more than 6 ft. square. Works for orders when he can get them, but otherwise hawks his goods about at street corners or in the Hy market. It loses a lot of valuable time doing so, but "we can't sit at home staring at each other" his wife said. "when we went

Some

some money to feed the children."
She counts 20/- or so a good week – She can do any kind of the rougher sort of brush work. whether painting or drawing with his wife. They were painting some rooms when I was there. There are 7 children – one enlisted as a soldier. they scraped together £10 & bought him out. he has now joined the militia.
They pay 8/- rent for a dolls house with four rooms.
They buy their own material even when working for orders for City firms etc.

Mrs Smith – married woman with baby & other small children.
takes in "drawing" at home. cannot do a great many hours of work a day, having to look after the family – when unmarried was reckoned a very smart hand & could earn about 8/- or 9/- now however 3/- to 4/- would better represent her weekly taking.
A clean tidy woman .. room carefully kept. & baby very ill. She started at work at 8 years of age.

Mr W. Bromfield - living in same court. also small maker. working with wife & son. principally at rather bad. hot brushes

"We cant afford to pay for the real prowage of the animal (i.e. the bristles as they come fr. the hogs back) but we has to put up with other peoples refusials."

Sells his brushes at 2/- the doz: - cost of material about 1/- - get for labour & profits 1/-

Growing old & shaky & can not work at boring for more than ½ an hour together.. ~~Dawsh~~ can't have more than 500 holes in an hour.

Could not tell me what his average week takings would amount to.

He pointed with pride to the difference of resisting power existing in one of his brushes as opposed to a German brush his son had bought in Liverpool - the German had become clotted & caked together, whereas this the bristle worn down was still comparatively open. That, he said, comes fr: the fact that the cheap German goods are not drawn but punched which deprives the bristles ~~of~~ a certain elasticity that ~~partakes~~ them

them for easily cleaning.

He also hawks his goods about in check times but prefers to go fr: shop to shop rather than spend time waiting about in the market places.

The three of them work in the kitchen and a diminutive workshop, reclaimed fr: the yard. It is very untidy - bristles & shavings lying in every direction. the fast learning of the bristles are valueless, formerly they used to sell for some purpose - he forgot what - but this is no longer the case. They keep a little room in the front for visitors - "In case a body should chance to come in, we don't want 'em to think that we always live like pigs."

The work is very healthy now - neither he nor his wife complaining about bristles, particles attacking their throats or lungs.

He pays 6/6 rent for a very diminutive 4 roomed house. i.e. parlour in front about 6ft. sq^re.. Kitchen. & two bedrooms off first floor.

Mrs Aylwin. brush & broom handle polisher & stainer. works at home. family of 5. husband casual labourer & violent drunkard.

Finds her own materials. paints, stains etc. cost her about 5/- to every gross of handles & backs. She can get thro about a gross in a day or rather less, & makes on each gross 3/6 so that she reckons to make 19/- or 20/- a week when in full work. & this in spite of the fact that she has a family.

10/- a week she considers very bad. 15 or 16/- are the average thro' the year.

She does not look well & the work is not particularly healthy. Her mother, she says, died after a years illness of using white lead paints — ~~especially~~ vermilion being a favourite colour for handles of certain brushes. — But she has given up using them ever since on that acct, & now works principally with stains & innocuous colours.

On the sticks which have to go on 7 times thro' her hands before they are ready she makes only ½d a piece.

Tabard. Street the centre of the brush trade for the commoner class of goods, has been a brush making colony since the days of Q. Elizabeth. It was formerly the high way to Kent. & was called Kent St. but owing to its bad reputation the name was changed. The houses are not bad. fairly commodious rooms. & in many cases the yard has been turned into factory for brush making, or else to a stable for the costers pony. Nearly all the houses have cellars or basements in which people used to live, but this has been largely discontinued in consequence, I am told, of the action of the L.C.C. Still they are largely used as workshops. & a good deal of wood chopping, & also brush drawing etc. is still done in them. There are generally holes for ventilation giving both on to the street & into the yard. & it is said that, in the good old days, when old Kent St. enjoyed a considerably worse reputation, it was not unusual for a few sheep out of flock that was being driven up to the London market for Kent, to disappear mysteriously down these holes, & never be heard of again. The street possesses 10 public house

28 Sept:

Star Brush Co. Eden Grove Holloway. h
Mr Bradley.

All work here is done by machinery. There are no "brushmakers" at work. simply women & boys feeding the machines which turn out the common kind of brushes & the grass. No finer kind of brushes are made; that would not pay. it would require a considerable amount of skilled labour to sort the bristle. & these are so various & different that they can only be used for a great variety of brushes. Where therefore machinery is employed and considerable uniformity is necessary it is practically impossible to attempt to manufacture high-class brushes. The wood is cut & drilled, hair is gathered in bundles & bunches in by machine. There is absolutely no hand work.

The firm have been able to beat foreign competition in the same line by constantly improving & developing their machines

Altho' they have an engine of 160 horse power

they

they do not burn more than 100 tons of coal in the year. plus their own shavings - Both the managing directors are engineers. & are able thoroughly to look after their work people as far as machinery goes:

Boys earn 5/6 minimum wage. & begin by sweeping & cleaning. When they get onto machine work they begin to work by the piece - and by quickness & sticking to the week can make up to 14/- But the majority of them cannot stand the monotony of the work. & many who are ~~leaving~~ earning 10/- a week will leave & go off to earn say 7/- or 8/- elsewhere.

If the machine goes out of order & stops - the time is made up to them - this is to keep them on the premises - because otherwise they are rather apt to go off & not come back for the day.

There is a slack season in July & August & generally in December. when people are spending their money on Christmas dinners & presents & not on useful brushes.

But their work is quite regular. It is never

never necessary to turn any people off.
In fact their trade has gone on steadily
for the last 16 years ever since it started.
A little slackness at present owing to the
coal strike.
Foremen earn fr. 35/ to 45/- the rest
are all boys & women earning fr: 5/6 to
about 11/- Boys who grow up are kept
on at other jobs. such as the "wood-cutting"
& stapping
which would correspond to "finishing" in
ordinary shops - This is also machine work.
the men earn about 22/ to 23/-
There are besides a number of engineers earning
45/- & fitters etc at some varying fr:
30/- to 40/- most of the boys only come
to work at the factory as a stop-gap
until they get some regular trade.
Absolutely not skill is required. only
a certain agility - there is nothing
to learn.
A kitchen has been started by the firm
which is managed by the workpeople themselves
upon co-op. principles. It was built & a
arranged

arranged by the Fund. who then lent the Committee of management £10 to furnish it with the necessary crockery & Knives & spoons etc. This money has now been paid back & the Kitchen is a most flourishing concern. No profits are made upon it whatever. everything is sold at cost price. & nothing exceeds 1d. Bowl: bacon. for. 1d bowl: of soup for ½d (first rate soup I tasted it) - rice pr ½d - cup of tea or coffee ½d a slice of bread with jam, or butter 1d & so on. It is managed on the most economical principles - every article being carefully weighed out - so much sugar to so much tea. etc.

The men had at one time fallen largely into the hands of two usurers working at the pm: these men used to charge 2d per shilling per week, & managed to get a large number of men in their power. so much so that the managing director was at last obliged to intervene. The debts were settled. and a kind of loan club formed which men might join by paying a small weekly sum. & pr: which they could borrow

Wednesday 4 October.

boom in case of need at a reasonable rate of interest.

There are 13 foremen who are in a proportion of 1 to 30 to the other workers.

All the highly paid men are either foremen or mechanics. The actual brushmakers do not earn more than £1 per week.

Mr Brick. Foreman. Wholesale Chapp's Brush Factory. Lemon St. (private address 88 ~~Lemon~~ Jamaica St. Stepney E.)

Apprenticeship lasts 7 years. in which 2 branches i.e. boring & finishing – or banning & boring are generally taught. But all firms do not take apprentices.

Men shift a good deal from one employer to another. & sometimes from one branch ~~to another~~. but there is no kindred trade into which they can move.

They rarely continue at the harder work such as boring after 50 years of age.

men with a good Cattle can bore from 3000 to 4000 an hour. trade union rate of wages being 4d per 1000 upwards according to thickness of board – In ill. paid shops 2½ to 3½ is paid for the thickest boards. Foreign competition & machine competition deals rather hardly with cheaper & common work.

The brill. machine brushes. i.e. brushes for cleaning & mechanical appliances. tubes etc. are mostly made in Yorkshire.

Tabard St prices rule something like 40 p.c. below the union shops.

Mr Birch began work at 9 travelling round to fairs with his father who was a small brush-maker. as was his grandfather also. at 13 years of age he went into Kent's brush factory as a finishers boy, "papering up" brushes (i.e. smoothing them with sand paper). Here he learnt something of a finishers work by watching the man with whom he worked. & occasionally trying his hand with the tools when he

was

that he went for a year & a half to a packing case makers in the City. Starting at 10s/- but the employer said he was such a good boy that the employer raised him to 16s/- after first week.

was out at dinner etc. This is the way most of the finishers boys learn. On one occasion when his employer was ill for two or three days & could not go to work he surreptiously - so as not to lose his weekly wage entirely - made a dozen or two brushes on his own account, & they were successfully passed - & he was allowed the full rate of wages for them tho' told that this must not happen again.

This work lasted till he was 17 years of age, he started at 6/- a week & was raised up to 8/- at the last.

Then he got a job with an uncle going round to fairs & looking after a "striking" machine - i.e. machine for testing strength for this he was paid £1 per week. but the job ended after 10 weeks, after this he was then thrown altogether out of work. For some time he tramped about looking for work & wore out 1 pair of boots in a fortnight. At last he saw an advertisement hanging up in one of the Tabard

continued on page. 78.

3 Oct: 1893.

Mr Smith. Manager of the Bass Dressers Cooperative Society Limd 105 Charles St. Stepney E.

Bass dressing is quite a separate branch. not usually connected with the brush factories at all tho' some of the factories in London dress the bass for their own use.

The Bass or Piassava fibre is imported in ~~packets~~ bundles about 3ft ~~long~~ in length. ~~that~~ in which the fibre is twisted ~~back~~ like the tail of a cart horse at a fair & tied ~~up~~ round with threads of fibre ~~to~~ hold ~~them~~ together. ~~In order to~~ "dress" the fibre it has ~~to be~~ first freed, & then steamed in a tank in order to straighten it out. it is then sorted, the short being divided from the long & nee more steamed. Then it goes through a process of "combing" similar to that to which bristles are subjected, in order to separate the thick & strong fibres for the thinner & weaker, after which it is cut to certain fixed lengths & required ~~by the Brush manufacturer~~. Lastly the long

Bags.

Panners & borers.

long ends are trimmed off with a pair of shears, & the short pieces ~~are~~ eliminated by a deft process of shuffling. The Bags in the ready for use bag only to be weighted & tied up in bundles, ~~of a given weight for convenience.~~

Bag dressers earn on an average 7s to 8s per hour or about 2s 8d per week ~~but the work is paid by the piece.~~ all work on piece, &

The trade price usually is 6/- per cwt not including cutting. In some shops ~~(at the Loop among others)~~ 8/- is paid per cwt., including cutting.

Bag dressers can make about 28/- per week.

Panners & borers earn about the same. It is usual for panning hands to bore their own stocks. They thus make the brooms nearly right thro. 15 knots a penny - is the regular trade price for panning & boring - i.e. 15 holes bored or filled with bags. At this rate a good workman should make 10s an hour but there are

Hours.

Foreign competition with Bass dressing.

Price of Bass

are many who do not make ~~nearly~~ so much.
Foreign competition has not touched
passing to any extent. The work is too
coarse & heavy, & cheaply made in England
to make importation a paying concern.
neither is passing work yet done by machinery.
The Coop. factory is open for 52 hrs.
in the week, but men do not work more
than 48 hrs - as trade ~~is very quiet~~ is
extremely quiet at present, and has
been so for the last two years, ever
since the Boot strike of 1895.
The only competition with the production of grass dressers
is a certain "bassine" a cheap fibre
which comes over from Colombo in Ceylon
ready dressed - It is cheaper than
the S. American fibre dressed in England
& not quite so good -
The price of Bass has been subject to
very considerable fluctuations during
the last 4 years. as the following figures
will show

shew.

Dec: 1889. Dressed Bass.

5½ inches length.	sold at	50/- per cwt.
6. " "	"	52/- " —

Oct: 1891.

5½ "	"	100/- " —
6. "	"	102/- " —

Oct: 92.

5½ "	"	72/- " "
6 "	"	74/ " "

Sept. 93.

5½ "	"	66/- " —
6 "	"	68/- " "

The price which rose so rapidly, owing to the 100% increase 1890 & 91 the S. American not being able to meet the demand fell equally rapidly upon the introduction of African & Singalese Bass. ("Bassine" a cheaper fibre) & is not likely to rise again. But these fluctuations have undoubtedly hit hard many small employers & workers who, without any wish to speculate, were sometimes forced almost unconsciously to do so, & often lost heavily.

Union.

Healthiness

Training.

The Bass dressers union which had worked itself into a strong combination of 200 men ~~agli~~ successful ~~a strike~~ in 1889 - fell away considerably after an unsuccessful one in 1891.
There are ~~now~~ probably not more than 150 men at work in the industry in London many of them having drifted into other forms of work.
The work is said to be particularly healthy in spite of the dust which flies from the bundles of bass as they are shaken out on a sorter. In a good well ventilated workshop there is nothing to fear.
Men go on ~~at work~~ for 30 or 35 years, without losing their capacity for earning good wages at the trade.
Boys are ~~generally~~ taken on on a start by making themselves generally useful. learning by degrees how to handle the bass.
In some places apprentices are still taken but this is unusual. Occasionally boardering & planning are taught simultaneously. Thus out of about 20 hands at the loop 3 were equally adept at both branches.

30 Oct. 1893.

Mr Charles Merriam. Manager of the British Xylonite Factory - Homerton.

Both combs & brushes are manufactured here. It may in fact be said to be the only comb manufactory of any importance in London. There are 2 or 3 others but they are said to be very small - & employ perhaps not more than 12 skilled hands in all.

The main centre for cheap horn ~~brushes~~ combs is Aberdeen where about 1000 people are working at this industry. At Edinburgh also there is a large Vulcanite comb factory, & one or two other smaller places in the provinces - such as Sheffield.

The principal seat for the best tortoiseshell & ivory combs is in Paris.

The making comes. the xylonite material is cut in strips by machinery. it is then "fashioned" by hand with knives, planes & files - much as bone is "fashioned" in the manufacture of tooth brushes - which are with hair brush backs also manufactured of Xylonite - the men doing this work earn

earn 30/- per week. - The teeth of the combs are then cut out by machinery, generally attended to by women or boys. - Next the combs passes into the hands of the "scourer", who does the rough polishing - This is done by pressing the comb very hard against a swiftly revolving wheel - which looks like a grindstone but is really made of numberless sheets of calico - which stand out perfectly stiff from the axel when in motion. a little clay made of ground flint & water is dabbed upon this wheel. & this is sufficient to give the first smoothness to the comb. ~~It is then sent to the polishing shop~~

This work does not require much skill but very considerable strength & endurance. & a man unaccustomed to the work can not do very much of it. Thus, altho it is piece work & the 'hours' worker are about the same namely 4/4 to 4/6. the wages earned vary from 28/- to £2 -.

The bright polish is put on by women working on the same system. But the work

is

is naturally very much lighter. They can earn from 16/- to 18/- per week.
In the finer kinds of combs the teeth are finally "grailed": i.e. have the edges filed off with a delicate file. This is perhaps the most skilled work of all & requires some years of practice before it can be thoroughly acquired. but it is work which is less & less required - especially in any combs which are not quite of the first order.
The retail buyer probably does not know the difference between a grailed & an ungrailed comb.
Grailers make about 32/- per week
Mr. Merriam said that there had considerably reduced the hours of late years & now never worked more than 8 hours a day. & four or 5 on Saturdays - making 44 to 45 hrs per week. This had made no difference in the output of the piece workers. They first knocked off hours at a slack time - but then finding that just the same amount of work was done. had

continued

continue the system ever since to the satisfaction of all concerned.
They are very strict both in the matter of hours & as regards intemperance.
A drunken man is at once discharged, & any body who stays out for an hour or six hours or a day, is kept out completely for twice the time that he stayed out of his own accord.

Continuation of Burke's personal narrative.

Tabard Street for a boxer & finisher. It was over an hour before he could summon up courage to ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ apply for the place, feeling that he really knew next to nothing about the work. as he had only been a finisher's boy at the big factory. However at last he did so, excusing himself at the time to the master by saying he had not been working at brushes for 2 years. However, it being a time when the trade

was

He was then about 26 years of age.

was busy - he was taken on. & tho' he spoiled a dozen or so of brushes at first he managed to please his employer & from the first start off earned 25/- a week. This was of course at a shop at which very cheap & rough goods were turned out. After this for some years he wandered from one small employer to another - each discharging their men as soon as orders were slack, and they were stocked up. which was not a long affair after orders had ceased coming in. Six or seven years passed in this way. till at last he got a footing in one of the big first class firms where employment is generally regular. Here their average week wages throughout the year was about 32/- to 34/- shillings. But by working at high pressure more might be made. Feeling himself secure he engaged himself to be married. ~~He relaxed to one of his ways that he~~ He meant to worked with redoubled energy for the four weeks before his marriage so as to buy all

all the necessary requisites for setting up house. For 3 weeks he made £2 - 5 a week. That was his dismay & surprise at the end of the third week, to be told that he did not suit the place & his services were no longer required. When he demurred - his employer said. Well to tell you the truth ~~we~~ trade is bad & we can't keep on so many hands." The latest arrivals were naturally those to go, & there was nothing to be said. His wedding had then to be put off indefinitely & the weary business of tramping about & getting odd jobs for small masters here & there began again. By great good fortune, however, having won a character for steadiness & hard work, he was offered at 27 a place as foreman in a good shop. The wedding took place a little less than a year from the date at which it was originally fixed. & he has been in regular employment at this place ever since. "The great ~~dread~~ curse of journeymen

journey means life" he said in concluding his narrative of irregularity of employment. When I thought it likely that I should be thrown out of employment, it seemed to paralyse me completely, & I used to sit at home brooding over it until the blow fell. As long as a man is still working he can of course do little to help himself in finding a new place, but as soon as the blow fell, I used to trip and all over the place hunting for work. as I said I once wore out a pair of boots in a fortnight." The fear of being turned off is the worst thing in a working man's life, & more less acutely it is almost always in the case of the vast majority present to his mind.

There are about 1,300 men in the trade of whom he knows personally or by sight upwards of 900 from constantly changing about from one employer to another. Houses in Jamaica St. Stepney are rented about 12/- to 12/6. & 6/6 is paid for 2 rooms