

# POVERTY'S STING in the ENGLISH CHRISTMAS



The Woman Nailmaker averages \$2.50 a week



A Woman who has worked in a Colliery Twenty Years



At work in a Shoe Factory

## Toiling Women and Unemployed Men Have Little Cause for Joy

THOUSANDS of unemployed men, tramping wearily from place to place in vain search for work; thousands of despairing women in desolate homes, endeavoring to soothe their starving children or toiling at occupations much too severe for their physical endurance, and at miserable wage—such is the shadow that poverty casts over England's Christmas.

In all the ensuing twelve months England has not forgotten the bitter words of Stewart Gray, uttered last Yule time in Manchester Cathedral: "You can have no Christmas in England while the land echoes the hollow groans of its millions who are perishing of the misery and starvation which society does not relieve."

Today that condition is worse than a year ago.

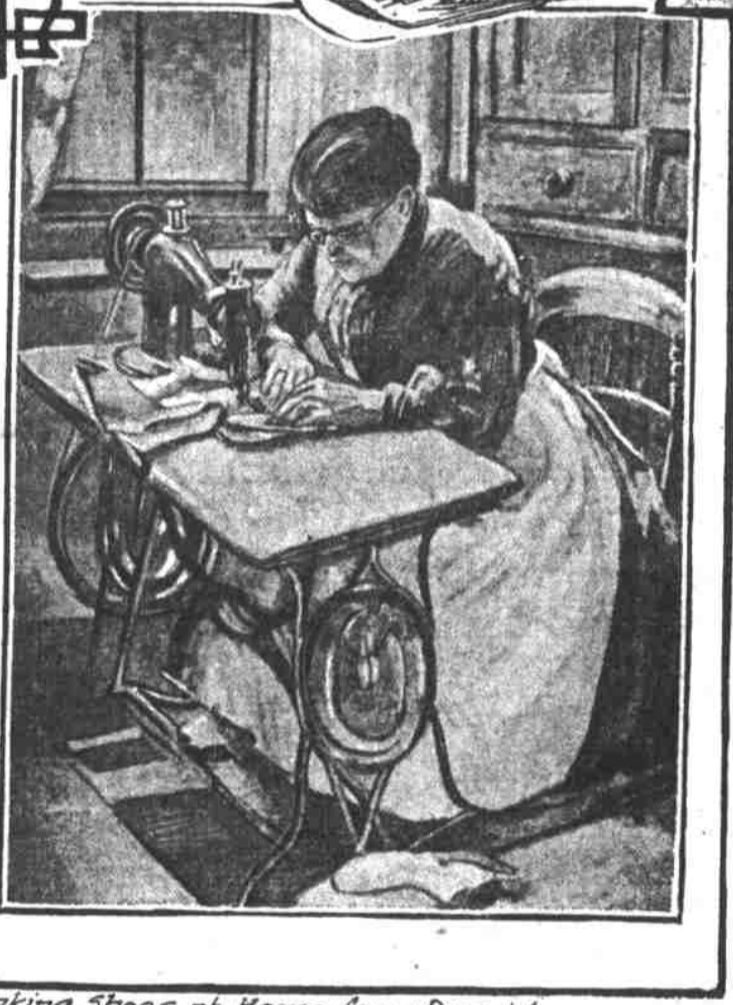
A sad Christmas for the great army of the unemployed; a poor Christmas for the thousands of women who toil at tasks that men should do, and yet receive but a part of man's wage. Poverty's sting is in the English Christmas.



A Demonstration of the Unemployed in Hyde Park

The work is hard and the surroundings dismal. "The whole of the Cradley Heath district, where the greater part of these industries is carried on, is one hideous, blighted waste," recently wrote Sylvia Pankhurst, the noted suffragist advocate.

The numbers of little, straggling villages which join together and make one large disjunct town, are surrounded on every side by low, desolate hills, dotted with pit banks, smouldering cinder-heaps and tall factory chimneys pouring out volumes of



Making Shoes at Home for a Poor Wage

## WHEN A MAN IS SICK IN CHINA



Barber Shop on the street



Chinese Physician



The Dentist plays his part in Medical Treatment

WHEN the world was informed, not long since, of the illness and death of China's emperor—a weak, unfortunate creature who had been ruler only in name—it was also told of his closing days: "The physicians of foreign education who had been attending his majesty were dismissed from the palace and the old-style practitioners reinstated."

Toward the end of his life the emperor had turned again to the remarkable mixture of superstition, charlatanism and quackery that still characterizes the practice of medicine throughout most of the Chinese empire.

ach—in fact, the brain is ignored. Without the barber the average Chinaman would be in a dilemma. Once a week, as a general thing, he visits that important personage, actuated by the motive that causes an American to send his trousers at regular intervals to the tailor for pressing.

First of all, the barber shaves the head and face of his customer, scrapes and cleanses his ears and the inside of the eyelids and applies a salt solution to the eyes with a brush of fine hair. One cause of the great extent of eye trouble and blindness in China is believed to be this method of treatment.

To complete the renovating process the customer's back is thoroughly massaged; he pays his fee of three cents and departs feeling that he has been well cleansed externally.

There are internal ills, however, to be remedied or guarded against, and for this purpose the physician is consulted next. Very gravely the doctor makes an examination and hands out the medicine deemed necessary.

One evil must always be guarded against. During the examination a devil is liable to jump down the

patient's throat. In such case treatment is suspended, the patient goes away under instructions to set off one hundred firecrackers, in order to frighten away the intruder, and to make daily visits to the josshouse for five days.

Then the patient returns to the doctor, and probably receives a box of pills. Remarkable is the list of ingredients from which pills are made. Those of spotted rhinoceros horn are a specific for intestinal troubles. A splendid blood tonic, it is believed, is made by grinding tiger bones to a powder and mixing with wine.

Chinese dentists, as a rule, have great strength of arm, wrist and fingers, as most of the extracting is done with the fingers. If the patient wishes a wholesale extraction of teeth, the dentist will pull two without charge and will then make a bargain as to the price of completing the job. The charge is usually about 2 cents a tooth.

A FEW weeks ago, while the Christian world was making ready for the coming of Christmas time, London's Board of Education appropriated \$25,000 for the purpose of feeding hungry school children.

The board estimated that 50,000 children were going to school each morning without breakfast.

Only a short time before, Manchester unveiled a costly monument commemorating an act of bravery in the Boer war, for which Corporal Pitts received the coveted Victoria cross.

Almost at the moment of the unveiling, when silver-tongued orators were extolling his deed, Corporal Pitts, overlooked or forgotten, battered into surrender by the blows of an unkind fate, was applying for admission into the Blackburn almshouse.

Recent investigations made by Lord Northcliffe's newspapers show an appalling state of affairs. In Glasgow alone 15,000 heads of families are unemployed, unable to get work. Similar conditions are revealed in other cities.

Official statistics show that there are 786,237 registered paupers in London; it is estimated that there are 60,000 empty dwelling houses there.

London is a city of sharp contrasts. It is put down as probably the wealthiest city in the world; for example, its property is insured against fire for over \$5,200,000,000. At the same time, according to statistics of the County Council, of the 7,000,000 or so people in city and suburbs, "one person in every thirty-three is a pauper; twenty persons in every 100 die in a workhouse or workhouse infirmary. Poor-relief expenditure has grown to the annual amount of \$70,000,000."

Unhappy as is the condition that confronts the Englishman out of work this Christmas, the woman who toils in any one of the trades or occupations open to her is but little better off.

She is enabled to keep body and soul together, but that is all.

The women who work in the manufacture of boots and shoes. Leicester is a center of this business, and many Leicester women have labored at shoemaking since their childhood days.

Some make shoes in their homes, others work in the factories. The home toiler uses an ordinary treadle sewing machine and, as a rule, carries the work right through, from the time the different parts have been cut out until the shoes are ready to be blocked and have the soles fastened on.

There are many divisions of work in the factory, however, each stage of progress being attended to by a special set of toilers.

One woman may place the vamps, another the toe caps and so on. Steam power drives all the sewing and other machines; the various parts of the shoes are cut out by men cutters and then passed along to the women.

The wage scale is based upon piece work; women cutters and machine workers earn, usually, from \$2.75 to \$4.75 a week, but recently, because of short time in the factories, compensation has ranged from \$1.75 to \$2.50 a week.

A very large proportion of the women of Leicester take home work or go into the factories to supplement the wages of the men of the families.

In the so-called "black country" of Staffordshire, many women are employed in nail and chain making,

black smoke. "It must be remembered, too, that many of these women who toil all day at chainmaking or nailmaking, have domestic duties to attend to when their other work is done."

Skilled women in the chainmaking industry rarely earn more than \$1.75 to \$2.50 a week, and out of this pitiful wage must pay from 50 cents to 65 cents a week for fuel for their forges.

Women nail-makers earn even less than their sisters in the chain-making trade, as they average only about \$1.25 a week.

It is unusual enough," says Sylvia Pankhurst, "for a woman who has only herself to keep to subsist upon such wages, but for those who have others dependent upon them it seems well nigh impossible.

"I know one honest, hardworking woman chain-maker, a widow with two children, who earns \$1.50 a week, gets 75 cents additional from the Poor Guardians and pays over 80 cents in rent. This leaves her something like \$1.30 to live upon.

"There are others in even worse case. One of these is a woman who has three children—one of them in arms—and whose husband has deserted her.

"She earns \$1.25 a week. She can not get relief from the Guardians unless she consents to enter the workhouse. She has no relatives who can help her."

Thousands of women are employed in the British mines—most of them are known as "pit brow lassies." A man and a woman will stand all day beside the shaft waiting to drag the heavy tubs of coal, each holding 700 pounds, from the up-coming cage. Often one will see this work done by two women.

Women on the "pit brow" begin work at 6 o'clock in the morning and continue at their labor until 5 in the afternoon, with half hour intervals at 8:30 and 12:30, and a fifteen-minute breathing spell in the afternoon for tea. These arduous labors give them hardened muscles and great strength, and they are asserted if the windows are open and the fresh air is allowed to come in.

Women mill toilers in Scotland—who do much of the work that is done in England—receive regular wages for five months of his wife, a strong, hardworking woman who formerly helped swell the family income, now gets about one day's work a week.

A widow with a young family to support, has not had a full day's work as a charwoman for thirteen weeks. Here is a boot finisher who has been unable to find a job for four months, although he is an industrious, careful man.

It is the picture above is shown a "pit brow lassie" who has worked at the same colliery and at the same task for over twenty years.

She pushes the heavy cars, each holding 700 pounds of coal, from the ascending cage to the sorting screens.

Great numbers of women are employed in British cotton mills. While much of the work is not arduous, it requires a light, quick touch, flying fingers and keen sight. A great deal of practice is needed before the operator becomes expert.

This work would be more endurable if mill conditions were different. As it is, the women toil in oppressive heat and amidst an almost deafening noise of machinery. Cotton will not spin, the mill operators assert, if the windows are open and the fresh air is allowed to come in.

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STATESMEN ALARMED

Conditions in England, as relating to the great and constantly increasing army of the unemployed, are causing the statesmen of that country much concern. For some years the condition of the British working man has been growing steadily worse, and the best minds of the land have been unable to devise an adequate remedy.

There is not enough work to give employment to all who seek or need it—either skilled or unskilled workers. Great Britain has only about 100,000 manufacturing and the number is not sufficient to absorb all the skilled laborers seeking employment.

"Here," said the Rev. Mr. Massey, missionary at the Worship street police court in London, recently, "is a man, a French polisher, who earns good pay when work is to be had. He has not had a job since last Christmas. He has nine children, and only one of them, the eldest girl, who is beginning as a machinist, is able yet to earn anything."

"A laborer on my list has been unable to obtain regular work for five months; his wife, a strong, hardworking woman who formerly helped swell the family income, now gets about one day's work a week.

"I am acquainted with a young family to support, has not had a full day's work as a charwoman for thirteen weeks. Here is a boot finisher who has been unable to find a job for four months, although he is an industrious, careful man."

"And so the dreary record might go on indefinitely."

"For the first time in history, a prominent Englishman declared the other day, 'statesmen of the first rank have recognized the gravity of the problem of the unemployed, and are treating it as a national question.'

Plans for relief have been engaging the attention of cabinet ministers and Parliament. The poor-relief expenditure, as has been stated, has grown to \$70,000,000 a year, while expenditures for old-age pensions, recently authorized, will raise the amount in the near future \$60,000,000 more.

Municipal expenditure in behalf of the unemployed has reached considerably over \$5,000,000, and more than \$25,000,000 is expended annually in private charity.

It is a heavy tax to pay, and yet what the English unemployed demand—work—is not forthcoming. Poverty's sting in Britain's Christmas is rapidly becoming a fevering sore, an alarming crisis that threatens the foundations of the nation.

There will be few Christmas trees this week where many were in the more prosperous years of the past; thousands of little stockings will remain unfilled, thousands of little hearts may lose their faith in Santa Claus. That is one of the saddest thoughts of saddened, chastened England.