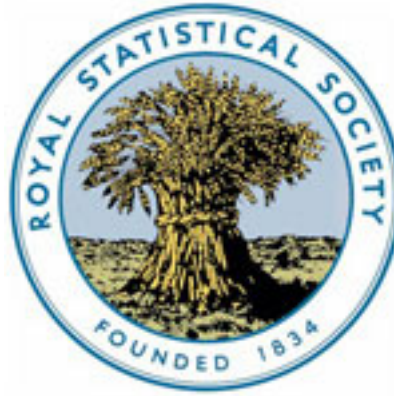


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L'Ouvriere en France. by Caroline Milhaud

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on their behalf doles were collected which, as Miss Jebb remarks, were quite powerless to remedy the real causes of suffering. It is doubtful if even now the effects of bad and insanitary housing in lowering the health and efficiency of working people is at all fully appreciated.

Want of employment in Cambridge is the subject of two interesting chapters. Full weight is given to the extreme complexity of the problem. After allowing for those who by character or physique constitute the unemployable rather than the unemployed, it appears that a considerable degree of unemployment in Cambridge is due to a temporary inflation of the building trade, which has been followed by a slackening of work. Further, "a great deal of want of employment is due simply to ill-health, the average physique of the working man being lower than it ought to be, and life-long invalidism not uncommon" (p. 66). A further cause is the disproportionate number of casual unskilled workers. This is attributable to the great demand for boy labour, as messengers, errand-boys, etc. The author notes that "in Cambridge it is more possible than in many places to live without earning an income," as, for instance, by lifting luggage, attendance at games, and so forth. Neither the immediate demands of trade, nor the personal wants of a leisured class, provide any means of ensuring the regular training and development of efficient industrial workers. Not only better physique but "greater intelligence and versatility" is needed, even for so-called unskilled work (p. 77).

Miss Jebb's researches suggest among other things that it is highly desirable that some future investigation on these lines should be devoted to the study of working-class life in a fashionable watering-place or pleasure resort, where the conditions incidental to the industries connected with luxury and amusement might receive an ampler illustration than at Cambridge, where they are, however, already sufficiently evident.

B.L.H.

5.—*L'Ouvrière en France*. By Caroline Milhaud. 202 pp. 8vo. Paris: Felix Alcan, 1907. Price 2.50 francs.

The compact size of this book, its clearness and brevity, its general attitude of judicial survey of the whole position of working women in France and of the measure of success attending efforts at reform in France and elsewhere, would fit it for a manual on that subject if its contents were as accurate as they are readable.

Here it will only be necessary to examine to what extent the author may be regarded as a safe interpreter of the statistics of the subject, in so far as it is possible to do so by comparison of her statements with official reports ready to hand.

Throughout the chapter on wages (pp. 23—36) it is maintained that women are paid much less than men. As this is regarded as an injustice, it is natural to conclude that the writer means that, even for identical work, women are paid less than men. But nothing is given to support this conclusion. On p. 32, when discussing the reasons for the difference in the wages of men and

women, the writer leaves wholly out of count any physical or other superiority of men to women.

We have extracted from the report of the Office du Travail, on "*Salaires et Durée du Travail dans l'Industrie Française*," published in 1894, the averages paid to groups of cotton weavers for a day of 10 hours. The numbers for whom such particulars are given are not large. Of 476 male weavers and 718 female weavers we find that the distribution of wages per 100 males and per 100 females was roughly as follows:—

Percentage Averaging	Males.	Females.
1'50 per cent. and under 2'00 per cent.....	1'9	25'2
2'00 " 2'25 " 	28'8	38'9
2'25 " 2'50 " 	13'2	14'5
2'50 " 2'75 " 	47'7	21'4
2'75 " 3'25 " 	—	—
3'25 " 3'50 " 	8'4	—
Total	100'0	100'0

This does not suggest unequal rates of pay for the same work, but rather a difference in age distribution, and a slight—very slight—superiority of men over women as weavers.

The wages of both men and women in France seem very low as compared with English wages in the same trades. But low as they appear to be, judging from the report quoted above, they do not appear to be quite so low as our author states. On p. 26 the wages of men weavers at Armentières are quoted as only 2 frs. 50 c. a day, and the writer adds that the men are always paid worse than the women, and that weavers in the Vosges receive less than weavers in the Nord. But here again, taking out the average daily rates of groups of women above 16 years of age in cotton weaving factories in France for 2,276 women, as given in the official report, we get the median of these averages as 2 frs. 68 c., the lower quartile as 2 frs. 44 c., and the upper quartile as 3 frs. 36 c. The men's would be somewhat higher still.

So, again, in the dressmaking trade. The writer states that in certain great houses in Paris there are women earning as much as 400*l.* or 480*l.* a year. But she adds that it would be difficult to find half a dozen of these in Paris, and that the highest rates earned by the best hands in the ordinary dressmaking workshops are 4 frs. to 6 frs., the majority of dressmakers only earning 3 frs. or less (p. 29).

But in the report of the Office du Travail on "*La Petite Industrie. I. II. Le Vêtement à Paris*" (pp. 520—526) are given the day wages of dressmakers in 38 workshops. Excluding dressmakers paid salaries, we find for about 330 dressmakers that the median wage is 3 frs. 25 c., the lower quartile 3 frs. 00 c., and the upper quartile 4 frs. Besides these workers on daily rates, there are 16 first hands receiving salaries in addition to meals; of these,

four earned from 48*l.* to 65*l.*, four from 72*l.* to 80*l.*, four 120*l.*, one 136*l.*, one 192*l.*, and two 200*l.*

In the chapter on industrial disease and mortality we have an instance of the danger of accepting striking statements without checking them by original documents. In the course of a parliamentary committee, M. Jaurès elicited from three witnesses (presumably from Armentières) that, out of a total of 13 children born to them 7 had died, and with pardonable inaccuracy announced that for the workmen present the rate of infantile mortality exceeded 60 per cent. And on this basis alone, seemingly, the writer repeats: "At Armentières the infantile mortality exceeds 60 per cent.;" and adds, with no further reference to original data: "At Tourcoing it was calculated that it exceeded 70 per cent." (p. 48). While apparently impressed with the shocking nature of the evidence, the writer nevertheless does not regard it as sufficiently remarkable to suggest any analysis of infantile mortality in France and French towns.

The analysis of the Victorian Wages Board experiments shows a similar lack of critical spirit. The report of the Chief Inspector for 1902 (published in 1903) is the principal authority quoted, and the writer does not appear to have made any independent study of the statistics given in the Appendix to the Report. The tables of wages in these reports of the Chief Inspector contain no information as to the way in which they are compiled. It is ascertainable from casual remarks (*e.g.*, Report for 1898, p. 6, line 31) that they do not represent the average earned throughout the year. We are not told whether the employers select a week at their own will, or whether they are allowed to give full time rates, or whether one particular week is selected for them. We are given no particulars of slackness, although if we search for it we can find in another table certain information about overtime which might greatly affect the wages figures. But the author of "*L'Ouvrière*" feels no curiosity on any of these points. She accepts the statement that in the clothing trade, in which the greatest measure of success had been attained under a wages board, the average wage was 2*s.* 5*d.* higher in 1902 than in 1896 before the Determination was in force as necessarily a proof of its efficacy. She does not note that the sudden limitation of apprentices and improvers in proportion to full workers, which came into force at the end of 1897, would in itself raise the average by the dismissal of a considerable number of persons not worth the legal minimum wage fixed for full workers. Nor does she note the great effect produced by the federal tariff in 1901, and by the fixing of rates in the tailoring trade in Sydney in 1902 at a higher rate than those prevailing in Victoria. Again, we are told that the effect on home work has been good. But the writer makes no comment on the meagre information supplied as to home workers.

Although the author seems to us to have neither the critical judgment nor the experience to give in condensed form an accurate analysis of the subjects which she handles, her book may be recommended as a very fair *résumé* of the views and facts being put forward by writers advocating reforms intended to improve the position of women in industry.

C.E.C.