

the lowest depth of the conditions which tenement house manufacture fosters, lurks a danger to the community which no regulation can eradicate. From this danger nothing short of prohibition can protect the purchaser.

Tenement house manufacture is rapidly spreading in Chicago and entering a large variety of industries. Wherever the system enters, the trade becomes a sweated trade, carried on in the worst and most unwholesome premises, because it falls into the hands of the very poor. An interesting illustration is afforded by a recent innovation in mattress making. The tick cover of the mattress has long been an article of tenement house manufacture. The tufts (pieces of leather with which mattresses are tacked) are now cut in living rooms in tenement houses. The leather is bought in scraps from saddlery and shoe factories; the tufts are sold to upholsterers. The work of cutting tufts is done by hand, the leather scrap being laid on a block or other solid substance, and cut by a mallet stroke upon a die, one tuft at a time. The strain of the work is so severe, that the cutter's wrist is always swollen. Tufts of fine leather sell for 35 cents a pound, and it takes 20,000 to make a pound. Those made of heavy coarse leather sell as low as 9 cents a pound. Three pounds are the most that an active man can cut in a day of ten hours. Scrap leather costs \$35 a ton, and the buyer must be something of a capitalist to get the stock, as those who sell it will not dispose of a few pounds at a time. Consequently the man who works at tuft-making, if he can not buy his stock, falls into the hands of middleman or sweater, and cuts for him at 3 cents a pound, making a day's wage of 9 cents. The home of this man, which is also his workshop, can scarcely be in a condition to guarantee the clean and non-infectious state of the mattress for which he has cut the tufts. In this direction tends all tenement house manufacture.

HEALTH OF EMPLOYEES.

The tenement house sweatshops employ more women than are found in any other branch of manufacture, one-fourth of all the women engaged in manufacture in the State being at work in these shops in Chicago. Of the whole number of employés in the sweatshops, nearly two to one are women and children, the actual numbers being 9,037 of them to 5,817 males over sixteen years of age. The children of both sexes number 1,307, and the females over 16 years number 7,780, of whom fully 75 per cent. are between 16 and 20 years.

These children and young girls, the most helpless of the working class, the least able to insist upon wholesome conditions of work, are found suffering from the worst surroundings. Young backs grow crooked more easily than older ones; young girls are browbeaten and overworked more unresistingly than older ones; young eyes and lungs are more sensitive to the fluff and dust disengaged from cheap-dyed woolen goods and scattered in the air by the flying needles of heavy machines. The poison gases from

ill-flushed closets and family sinks in shops, the heat from the pressers' iron and the fumes from his charcoal or gasoline, affect the immature girl more quickly than the adult; tender membranes succumb more easily to the irritation of bad and damp air in basement shops.

Worst of all for the worker's health is the exhaustion which follows piece work done at foot-power machines, driven at high speed, through unlimited hours. During the rush season, there is literally no limit to the hours of labor save that set by utter physical exhaustion; the sweater does not go to bed at night, but throws himself upon the floor or cot to sleep an hour at a time when he can no longer stand; men and women work at the machines until they fall asleep over them, and in some cases until they faint from exhaustion. The working day of fourteen hours is the rule, and only the most tenacious workers are found worth the room they occupy, when the season is at its height. Older employés are crowded out because they cannot keep up the pace, and in this trade men are old at 35. The trade life of the sweatshop worker is probably shorter than that of men in any other occupation; and consumption, either of the lung or intestine, is their characteristic malady.

Shops over sheds or stables, in basements or on upper floors of tenement houses, are not fit working places for men, women and children.

Most of the places designated in this report as basements are low-ceiled, ill-lighted, unventilated rooms, below the street level; damp and cold in winter, hot and close in summer; foul at all times by reason of adjacent vaults or defective sewer connections. The term cellar would more accurately describe these shops. Their dampness entails rheumatism and their darkness injures the sight of the people who work in them. They never afford proper accommodations for the pressers, the fumes of whose gasoline stoves and charcoal heaters mingle with the mouldy smell of the walls and the stuffiness always found where a number of the very poor are crowded together.

In shops over sheds or stables the operatives receive from below the stench from the vaults or the accumulated stable refuse; from the rear, the effluvia of the garbage boxes and manure bins in the filthy, unpaved alleys; and from the front, the varied stenches of the tenement house yard, the dumping ground for all the families residing on the premises.

Shops on upper floors have no proper ventilation; are reached by narrow and filthy halls and unlighted wooden stairways; are cold in winter unless all fresh air is shut out, and hot in summer. If in old houses, they afford no sanitary arrangements beyond the vaults used by all tenants; if in modern tenements the drains are out of order, water for the closets does not rise to upper floors, and poisonous gases fill the shops. This defective water supply, the absence of fire escapes, and the presence of the pressers' stove greatly aggravate the danger of death by fire.

Shops on the middle floors are ill-lighted, ill-ventilated, and share the smells from the kitchens and drains of surrounding living rooms.

The group of workers in each shop is so small that they can take no effective measures for their own protection against long hours and bad sanitary conditions. Whatever is to be done to ameliorate these conditions must be done by legislation in the interest, not of the large body of garment workers only, but of the public health.

THE PURCHASER'S RISK.

With 15,000 garment workers employed in sweaters' shops, conditions such as these become a matter of public concern.

A shop in a crowded tenement house gathers together men, women and children from other tenement houses where disease is likely to be, and throws them into direct contact with the tenants of the building in which the shop is, and in which there is always liability of contagious disease owing both to the great number of tenants, and to the character of the houses selected for the purpose. The risk of sending out infectious garments to the purchasing public is thus enormously increased. This danger of infection in garments made up in tenement houses is an all-pervading, unavoidable danger, as it has been the duty of the inspectors to point out in each report.

The tables upon which these reports are based show, from year to year, the error of the belief that manufacturers of standing have no goods made up in these shops. They show that the risk run by the purchaser of a costly cloak or a custom-made suit is precisely the risk run by the working man buying a cheap, ready-made suit and by the poor woman who gets from a bargain counter knee-pants for her boy; that in the cloak trade, the clothing trade, the merchant tailor's custom trade, though the manufacturer or merchant tailor may have shops in good sanitary condition, nothing of his manufacture can be guaranteed non-infectious so long as the greater part, or any part of his work is done on tenement house premises. While any of his goods are made up in tenement house sweat shops, all the garments which he offers for sale must share the reproach and the suspicion which attach to tenement house manufacture.

So long as this form of manufacture is tolerated, it remains the duty of the inspectors to point out that the unsanitary condition of many of these tenement houses, and the ignorance and abject poverty of the tenants, insure the maximum probability of the presence of disease; while the spread of infectious disease to the workers in the shop is facilitated by the swarming of the children everywhere, and the universal failure to isolate patients. Consumption, now recognized throughout the medical profession as one of the most infectious of diseases, almost inevitably carried in garments made by persons suffering from phthisis, is the characteristic disease of the sweatshop worker. Diphtheria, small-pox,