

Second Series, Vol. II
Part IV. Chap. II.

Dyeing and Cleaning

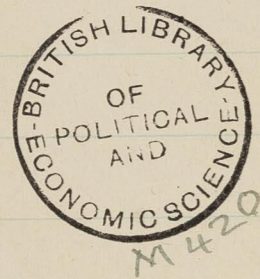
Interviews

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Dyers and cleaners. § 31.

name -	occupation -	Page.
Mr W. Eastman.	Dyer & clothes cleaner.	1.
Miss Lusk & Cook.	" " "	7.
Mr J. Saintree.	" " "	13.

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Regularity

M: W. Eastman -

There is a certain amount of irregularity owing to slackness or pressure of business. The slackest times about midwinter or midsummer.

Spring is the very busy time cleaning curtains & furniture chintzes for the summer.

In the autumn a good deal of dyeing as well as cleaning of theatrical clothes.

Steady hands are never discharged, but sometimes others are taken on during great pressure of business. Special care has to be taken in regard to character for honesty of the employees, as so many articles of some value pass thro' their hands and are not missed until the time ^{comes} for them to appear ready for packing & returning to their owners ~~comes round~~. And any article stolen ed will be at all easily traced as it passes thro' such a variety of hands.

The cleaning & dyeing depart are quite separate.

Piece work.

Irregularity.

No competition with native workmen.

Wages are mostly paid by the piece. but a minimum is generally fixed, and any work done ~~longer~~ over & above that is paid extra, while if there is less done owing to slackness the difference is not deducted. This is a system that suits the employes very well.

Taking the trade all round, about 8 months will be worked full time & over time & 4 months $\frac{1}{2}$ & $\frac{3}{4}$ time. In S. I. I do not say what became of hands that are irregularly employed. There is a residuum in this trade as in every other of the worst workmen - the idle, the unsteady & these were the kind who only find work in time of pressure. Some of the women might go into the laundry business, at other times, others of the men became porters, carmen & cabmen, train-conductors etc.

There ~~was~~ is no competition between British & foreign workmen. But a large number of Scotchmen found their way into the trade

Trade owing to the large dye works at Perth, which had at one time threatened to extinguish the London industry altogether. The latter was however now looking up & there could be no doubt that it was Perth that was beginning to feel the edge of London competition at present.

The wet-cleaning ~~process~~ is performed by putting the articles to be cleaned thro' a sort of churning process in water & specially prepared soap. Blankets are then pressed out under rollers & left for some time in water prepared with acids, & finally dried, pressed & wound as in an ordinary laundry. In the case of more delicate goods such stains as require it are taken out by hand.

But the more Wharfedale process is that of dry, or French cleaning, by spirits, sometimes by benzine, sometimes by naphtha. The latter is used at his works. The stuff to be cleaned is first soaked in a vat of the spirit &

then.

Dry cleaning or French cleaning.

then placed in a revolving, perforated cylinder - the machine is I believe called a Hydro - which turns at terrific speed. (The one at Mr. Davitree's makes 800 revolutions to the minute.) The spirit is thus thrown out of the cylinder by centrifugal force & the ^{fabric} comes out after about 20 minutes & so practically dry & clean. It has then to be hung up in a hot room for about 24 hrs. in order to get rid of the ^{rest of the spirit & the} smell of naphtha, which is rather sickening - In the room where the revolving cylinder works, any one ~~liable~~ ^{unaccustomed} to the spirit is liable to become suddenly intoxicated as the odor of it has a very sudden effect upon the brain. The sensation is rather like that of having laughing gas applied, yet a woman who is accustomed to it will stand over it for some ^{considerable} time without feeling any ill effects. There are intervals between the times when the hydro is revolving when a man can recover himself. After being shot out of the cylinder

cylinder, ~~from which~~ the spirit is again
 run into tanks & collected & refined afresh. The oftener it
 is refined the better it becomes. but a
 considerable quantity is lost on each process.

The only objection to this process is that it is
 not without danger, since the ^{naphtha} spirit is liable to
 spontaneous combustion under certain conditions
 & owing to certain causes, which have not yet
 been fairly determined & which cannot
 therefore be altogether avoided. Great care
 must in consequence be taken in regard
 to the building in which the process is
 worked, so that there should be absolutely
 nothing inflammable on the place. An L.C.P.
 inspector visits the building monthly.
 The men employed in this branch of the
 business are paid a regular wage
 all the year round whether there is work
 for them to do or not.

There are no unions in the ~~the~~ ^{degreasing}
 trade & the men have always worked
 in perfect amity with the heads of the
 firm.

There

There is a Friendly Benefit Society
belonging to the Firm.

Give Sick Benefits of	
5/- per week per premium	of 2 per week.
10/- " " " " " "	4 " " "
15/- " " " " " "	6 " " "

These Benefits may last, in full, 8 weeks
& in half 8 weeks - more. but ~~more~~ no member
is allowed to receive more than the above
as sick pay within one year.

Drink is very much on the decrease -
not 1 p.c. of the hands could be said to
be really intemperate in this respect. &
about 50 p.c. of women are teetotalers & a
fair percentage of men also - about 10 p.c.
& think he said.

The factory was roomy, comfortable, well
aired & not over hot in any part of it.
The worst ventilated part was Mr. E's own
room.

The time was rather slack & they were
working short time in some of the dep^{ts}
but the factory has been far busier
during

Manager - Mr Henry Kree.

Different branches -

during the past two years than ever before.
For further particulars see forms
filled in & returned by Postman.

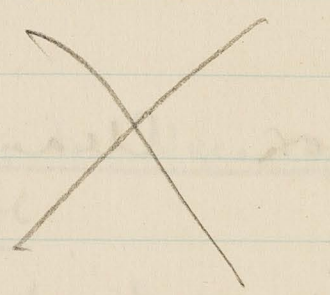
Messrs Lusk & Cook. Cleaners & Dyers.

Hadley Wick.

There are 7 different branches of skilled
men in this business.

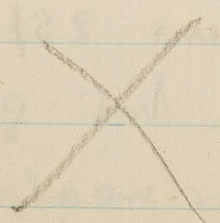
1. French or dry cleaning - Foreman 35/-
women fr: 10/- to 15/- or 16/- & men & youths
from that to 25/-
2. Wet cleaning - Foreman 30/- others 25/-
no female labour.
3. Dyeing. Foreman £2. others 30/-
4. Curtain cleaning. Foreman 28/- others 22/-
5. Silk finishing. Foreman 30/- men 20/- to 25/-
& women 12/- to 15/-
6. General finishing. all women 15/- to £1-1.
7. Glazing. Foreman 35/- others 25/- or 26/-
hrs. nominal fr: 7 to 7. but generally
shut at 6. with two hrs for meals for women

Irregularity



Condition of trade

Methods of training



$\times 1\frac{3}{4}$ for men. women get extra $\frac{1}{4}$ hr. for tea at 4 o'clock.

Winter is the slack season. & then a good many women leave the factory and a certain number find work at the India rubber factory which is busy during the winter.

About 60 per cent have regular work but the irregularity affects female labour very much more than men. the latter are hardly ever sent away except for unsteady behaviour.

Those who are on the irregular list hardly get more than 4 to 6 months work at the factory. The number of men irregularly employed do not reach more than 20 per cent. The year 1911 was far better than at present. very slack at the present moment. only working 5 days a week.

Apprentices as a rule turn out badly. they do not seem to have any larger sufficient honesty or long sightedness to make good use of the opportunities of training put at their disposal.

But-

But there is little doubt that the efficiency of English labour is decreasing on account of the want of a proper method of training - they had a German as general manager who had thoroughly mastered all the branches required. This caused some trouble at first with the men - but they were unable to suit themselves at all with an Englishman & the men have settled down to it now. Men are picked up ^{from} anywhere to be taught the business - at the fancy of the foreman or master. Apprentices used to be bound to the firm. They paid no premiums but were paid $\text{\pounds} 5$ a week for the first year, rising $\frac{1}{2}$ a week ^{each year} until their term was over.

It would take 5 years to obtain a good thorough knowledge of the cleaning or the dyeing branches.

There is very little competition between English & foreign workmen. The only danger at present being that the best

Competition between English & Foreign labour

best places ~~may~~ such as Foreman's leading hands etc. may be given to Germans whose better education & more thorough technical knowledge makes them often more efficient in controlling a whole department. The head foreman at this firm is a German: this caused some disturbance at first among the men but they have now grown accustomed to him.

There need, however, be no competition at all between English & Germans if the former had a better training.

As regards the French dry cleaning process there is however considerable competition, as the French ^{men} workmen are neater in dealing with small & dainty articles which are put thro' this process.

Perth is the great competitor with London. but the manufacturers there are now beginning to feel London competition more than Londoners do Perth.

The

Aniline dyes fr: Germany.

Proportion of female labour.

The greater portion of the aniline dyes used come from ~~Prussia~~ Germany -

The London firms do not produce either such good dyes or so cheap. Good dyes are, however, produced at Huddersfield for the Yorkshire & Lancashire

The proportion of women working is about 70 p.c.

M^r knee took me over the works. The processes do not differ materially from M^r Eastmans.

Articles coming in to the shop are sorted in the first room & arranged according to their various requirements: viz. dry cleaning, wet cleaning, hand cleaning, or dyeing. This requires considerable knowledge & skill & it is here ^{& certain} that familiarity with each branch is necessary. They are then noted down & labelled with a number & sent off to their respective departments. After finally passing thro' the finishing dept. ^{& be carefully examined before leaving} those which every article has to go of they

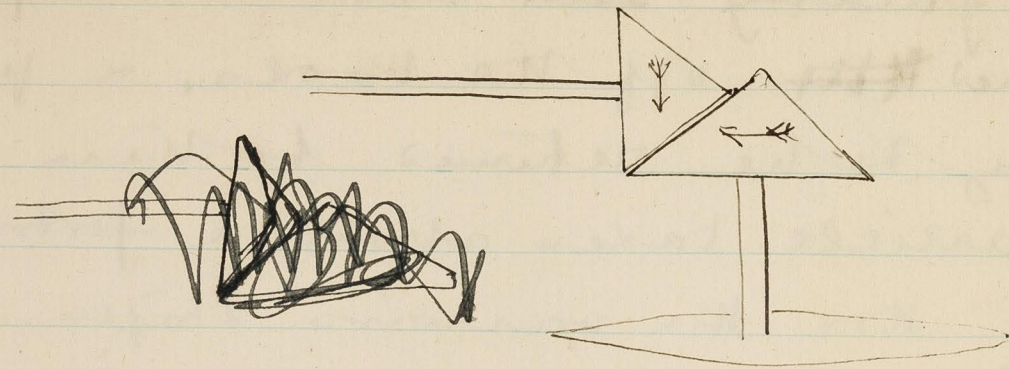
are

are finally sent down to the packers when
 they are ~~fixed~~ ^{fixed} off the books, & packed
 ready to be returned to their owners.
 An article takes about a fortnight in
 going thro the various stages.

The workshops were neither so airy
 nor so pleasant as Mr Eastman's.
 One of the lower rooms not being lighted
 at all except thro the door. The drying
 room ~~at~~ too in which a good many girls
 were at work ironing, & passing stuff
 under machine rollers for drying was
 kept at a very high temperature,
 about 90° the manager said, & the
 pale faces of the girls showed that
 this told on their health.

This firm uses Benzine for dry-cleaning
 instead of kaphtha spirit. The smell
 is less disagreeable & clinging, but it
 is more inflammable.

~~One~~ of their "hydros" i.e. revolving cylinders
 for driving out the spirit from the
 stuff. by centrifugal force. several were



Wages for men

Regularity

Condition of Trade

Methods of training

800 revolutions a minute & had to be driven by friction instead of cog wheels as the latter could not have withstood the wear & tear for any length of time.

M^r J. Daintree. Dyer & cleaner -
Southward Park R^d. S.W.

Employes. 20 women & 30 men & boys.
Foreman 50/- ordinary hand fr. 21/- to 30/- paid for all bank holidays provided they turn up at the proper time next day.
Work very regular. very few hands are ever discharged.

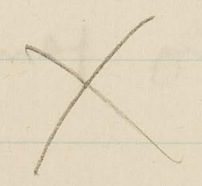
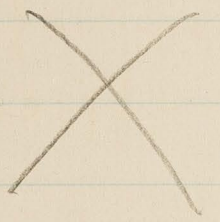
191. was a good year. 192 not quite so good. This year still uncertain but probably pretty good.

There are no apprentices any longer in the trade. This M^r D. thinks is probably

greatly to be deplored in spite of the trouble often given by apprentices, who refused to take trouble over their work, or to learn conscientiously. The extinction of ~~some~~^a systematic method of training meant the extinction of efficient workmen.

The business is taught as in the other firms I saw, simply by picking up the most intelligent man about the place & setting him to work at some particular section of a branch, which he mastered in a more or less short time, & then both he & the employer seem to rest content that he should go on at that & that section only as he - understanding it thoroughly is able to work more quickly, or to do as much work as possible with a little labour as possible.

The dyeing department which requires more skill, & is most highly paid, would require 5 years to become thoroughly master



Drunk

Works - dry cleaning

master of it.

A great improvement in this respect is noticeable within the last 10 or 15 years. This Firm, like most other factories, has become very much more strict in regard to allowing drink on the premises - a certain amount of beer is allowed in for ~~drinks~~ ^{lunches} - but not at any other time.

Here also Benzine was used instead of naphtha - as this more inflammable - M^r D. said it combined with oxygen at 130 - whereas naphtha only does so at about 200 - the smell is not so powerful & unpleasant, & it has not the same disagreeably intoxicating effect.

The hydros have an air-tight lid closed down upon them while in motion to prevent the oxygen of the outer air combining with the benzene gas within. But nevertheless accidents occasionally occur.

The ~~works~~ ^{rooms} were large & airy & there was no stiflingly hot room as at

Lusk

German Aniline dyes.

Josh & Coors. The work does not appear to be in any sense hard.

The German aniline dyes are both cheaper & better than those manufactured in London. To such an extent are they imported at present that Messrs Brooks & Simpsons the largest London Firm of manufacturers has ceased for some time to pay any dividends and are Mr D. believes, on the verge of bankruptcy.

Mr D., like Mr Eastman, complained a good deal of the unfairness of the restrictions placed upon their work by the ~~Employers~~ ^{Factory} disabilities act, viz that women might only work 48 hours a year overtime - & then for 2 hrs. - while leaving laundries free to work all the overtime they want. This is unfair to the cleaners for the laundries thus often are able to carry out jobs which would naturally fall to the former. But if they might be allowed to work 96 hrs over time in the year - of 1 hour at a time they would

would not feel so aggrieved. They never
did work ~~their~~ women hands 2 hrs overtime
at one time & therefore the regulation in
that respect was in a great measure
useless to them.

Jan'y: 15 - 1894.

Hours.

Saw Mr Eastman again.

Rest houses work 53 hours - general trade hours. 56.

Men. 6 to 6. - $1\frac{1}{2}$ - for breakfast & dinner
Women 8 to 8 - $1\frac{1}{2}$ - for dinner & tea.

Dyers are reckoned as skilled men. It takes a man from 4 to 5 years to become a skilled workman. The dyers are nearly all Scotchmen.

Cleaners are divided into two branches.

1. Fancy cleaners. who do the work requiring the greatest care. dealing with the best lace curtains etc. & are the highest skilled. They are the more intelligent among the ordinary cleaners who have risen to the higher position.
2. Ordinary cleaners. also to a certain extent skilled men.

They start as boys about 16 & 17 - but pay no premium - receiving at the first start a nominal wage. A cleaner should

know

know something of dyeing as well, a most
of them therefore spend some time in that
dept. - the cleaners. are nearly all Jordan
born men.

The best "white goods" blankets, linens,
curtains etc - are sent to cleaners, where
they are more carefully handled than
among laundry people. A certain number
of large drapers do dyeing work. but not
a quarter of the names mentioned in the
directory do any dyeing or cleaning themselves
they simply take in goods & forward them
to the firms.

It is not in any way an unhealthy
trade.

Finishing Dept. is composed of women
to the extent of about $\frac{2}{3}$ of its numbers.
After goods are dyed & cleaned, they
come up to the finishing depart^{ment} to be
ironed, and a passed through callenders to
give them back their original glossy
appearance.

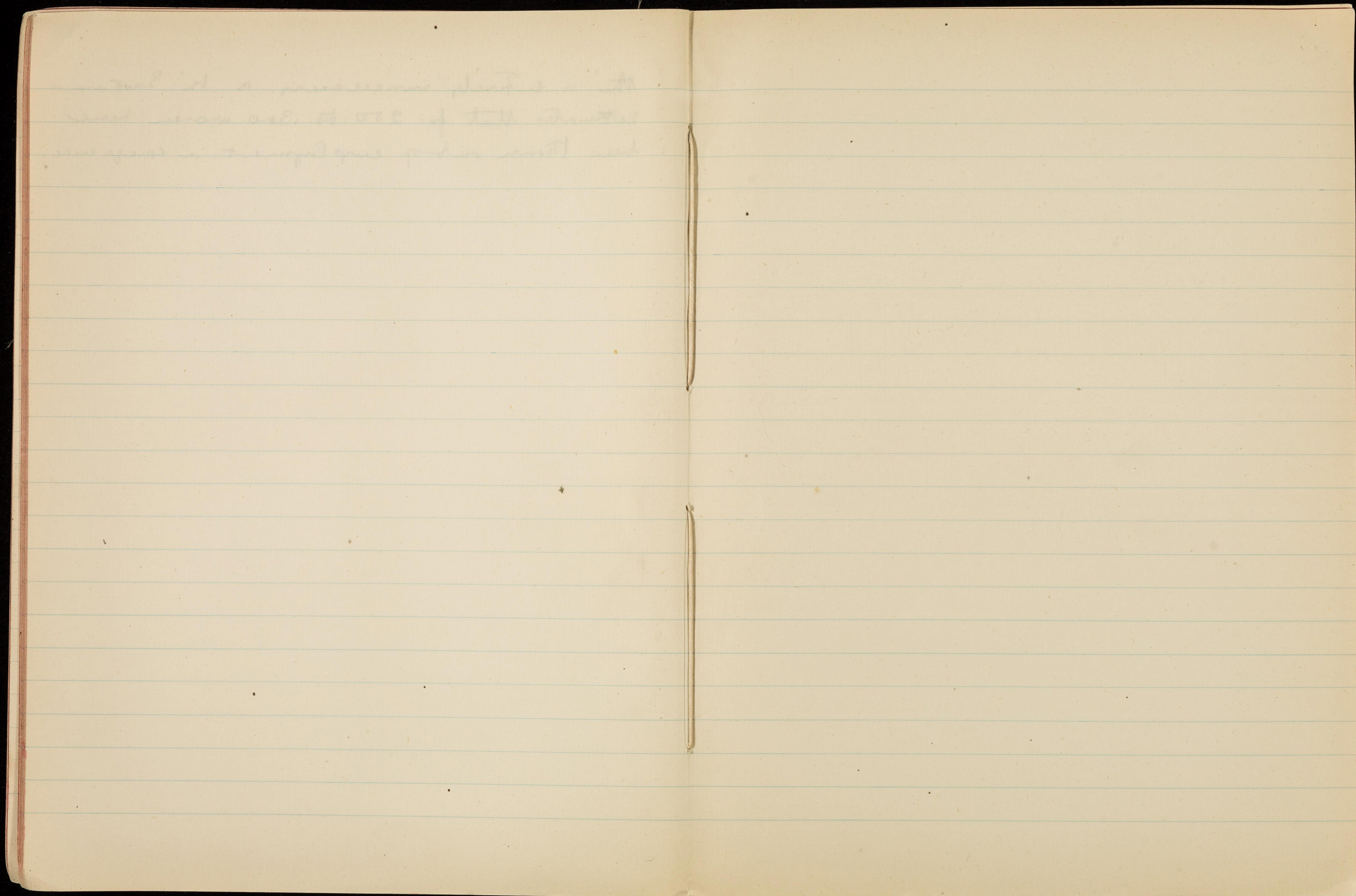
The number of persons employed in Jordan
is

in this industry went down considerably between 171 & 191. but is now again on the increase. as regards dyeing & cleaning as these branches are beginning to compete successfully with ^{Portland} the

introduction of machinery in two departments connected with dyeing & cleaning has however taken work away from a large number of persons. the first of these is carpet beating, upon which a good deal of casual labour was employed in spring & autumn. the ~~new~~ advertisement that it can by machinery, beat 450,000 sq^m yards of carpet in a week & another 250,000. - this alone means employing 100 men instead of about 1000.

The second displacement of labour has taken place in the women's cleaning department owing to the introduction of the french system of "dry cleaning" by naphtha or benzol. all curtains, silk flounces etc. had formerly to be taken to pieces by women, before being cleaned. & this reason. has however
The

this is entirely unnecessary. a Mr. Eastman estimates that for 250 to 300 women have been thrown out of employment in consequence.



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