

**THE CONDITION OF  
WORKING WOMEN AND  
THE FACTORY ACTS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649419951

The Condition of Working Women and the Factory Acts by Jessie Boucherett & Helen Blackburn

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**JESSIE BOUCHERETT & HELEN BLACKBURN**

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MINERAL WATER GIRLS.

*Frontispiece.*

THE CONDITION OF  
WORKING WOMEN

*AND THE FACTORY ACTS.*

BY

JESSIE BOUCHERETT,  
HELEN BLACKBURN,  
*AND SOME OTHERS.*



LONDON:  
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

1896.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE CONDITION OF WORKING WOMEN.

SEVERAL official books have lately been published on this subject. Miss Collett's 'Statistics of the Employment of Women and Girls' is the most recent; the report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1894 is the next; the oldest, and perhaps the most interesting, being 'The Report on the Employment of Women,' by the four lady Assistant Commissioners who were appointed to the Labour Commission, and who presented their report in 1893. The four ladies were Miss Eliza Orme, the senior Assistant Commissioner, who had made her mark as a lecturer;

Miss Clara Collett, who had been employed by Mr. Booth to inquire into the condition of the poor at the East End; Miss May Abraham, who was secretary to Sir Charles and Lady Dilke, and a brilliant trades-union orator; and Miss Margaret Irwin, who was secretary to a trades-union for men and women at Glasgow, called the Women's Protective League.

The investigations of these ladies, as might be expected, brought to light some curious anomalies. One of these is the disproportionately low wages paid to women in some trades as compared with the wages paid in some other trades. For instance, a girl apprenticed to the dressmaking trade receives no wages for the first year, then she becomes an improver, generally at 3s. 6d. a week, and finally an assistant at 10s. a week. A girl employed to bottle mineral waters works for a fortnight without wages to learn the business, after which she receives 10s. a week, jumping at once into the same income which the other girl has been three years or more