

24 BRITISH COAL INDUSTRY

teen : " I work always without stockings, or shoes, or trousers ; I wear nothing but my shift ; I have to go up to the headings (i.e. coal-face) with the men ; they are all naked there ; I am got well used to that, and don't care much about it ; I was afraid at first and did not like it."

These girls earned very small wages. A woman of twenty employed as a drawer would work for 2s. a day or less, whereas a man of that age would want 3s. 6d. They worked fearfully hard. Thus Ann Thomas, windlass woman of South Wales : " I find the work very hard ; two women always work the windlass below ground. We wind up 800 loads [a load was about $1\frac{1}{2}$ cwt.]. Men do not like the winding, it is too hard work for them."

Always the mines are dark, always they are and will be dirty, but to-day they are dry, the roads are well kept and reasonably high, and the air is fairly fresh and healthy. Then often the mines were wet and the ventilation was only directed so as to clear the face, the interior of the colliery being very insufficiently aerated. It was in the centre where the roadways were that the women and children mainly worked. Some of these children were found working ankle-deep in water or crawling through pools. Once a little girl of seven years of age, who was supposed to be watching an air gate upon the proper working of which the safety of all in the mine might have depended, was found asleep, her lamp having gone out and the rats having eaten her meal of bread and cheese.