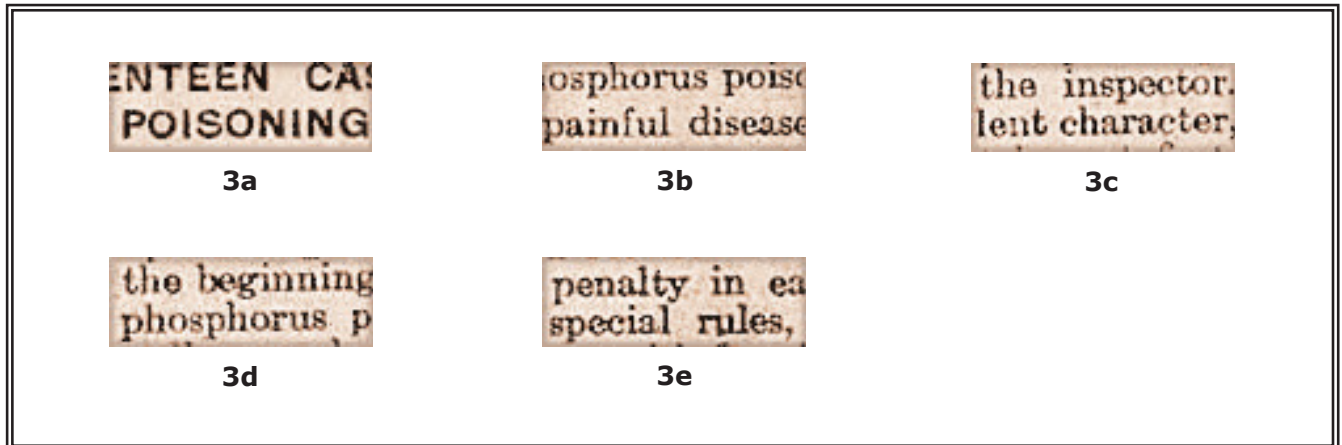


White Slavery

Source 3

An article from the Daily Chronicle of 2 June 1898 describing a case of 'phossy jaw'
(Catalogue ref: HO 45/9849/B12393D, Associated Newspapers)



As you study the source, ask yourself:

1. What was 'phossy jaw'?
2. What had the firm done wrong?
3. How had 'phossy jaw' affected the workers?
4. Do you think the result of the trial was a fair one?
5. If the firm knew about the problem of 'phossy jaw', why do you think they tried to keep it quiet for as long as they did?

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Source 3a

PHOSSY JAW.

**MESSRS. BRYANT AND MAY AT
WORSHIP STREET.**

**SEVENTEEN CASES OF PHOSPHORUS
POISONING NOT REPORTED.**

THE FULL PENALTY INFLICTED.

[Special to "The Daily Chronicle."]

Yesterday afternoon, Mr. Corser heard, at Worship-street Police-court, the summonses against Messrs. Bryant and May, Limited, for not reporting cases of phosphorus poisoning which had occurred at their works in East London. Messrs. Bryant and May were not represented by counsel, and their managing director, Mr. Gilbert Bartholemew, admitted the offences with which the firm were charged.

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Source 3b

Phosphorus poisoning is one of the most terrible and painful diseases to which the workers are subject. It arises from the inhalation of the fumes of yellow phosphorus used in the manufacture of matches. The Home Office has laid down stringent special rules for the guidance of factories where this is used, one of the most important of which is that every case shall be at once reported to the district inspector of factories, and to the certifying surgeon. Last month a man named Cornelius Lean, who had been working at Bryant and May's, died. An inquest was held, and it was found that death was due to phosphorus poisoning. This led to inquiries being made, and it was discovered that no less than seventeen cases had occurred, none of which had been reported. This led to the Home Office taking proceedings.

Messrs. Bryant and May, Limited, were summoned by Mr. Vaughan, inspector of factories, for not reporting the case of Caroline Hawkins, lately at work in their factory at Bow, who is now suffering from necrosis of the jaw. There were three

Source 3c

A Case of Phosphorus Necrosis.

The defendants were charged with not reporting this case, which was one of phosphorus necrosis, to himself as factory inspector for the district, and to Mr. Bate, who was the certifying surgeon; and they were further charged with a breach of the special rules laid down by the Home Secretary for the working of match factories, under the Factory Acts. Mr. Vaughan then read the clauses in the Factory Acts of 1891 and of 1895, which bore upon the case. The latter Act required that every case of phosphorus poisoning should be at once reported to the inspector. This disease was of a very virulent character, and although it might be cured when taken at first, it sometimes developed and caused the death of the patient.

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Source 3d

For it was, went on Mr. Vaughan, one of a long list of cases, several of which had ended fatally, and all of which had been deliberately and systematically concealed and suppressed. This must have been the case, because the works were under constant inspection by himself and the sub-inspectors. Positive denials had been given to himself and to the other inspectors that any cases of phosphorus poisoning had occurred. And even so lately as the beginning of May, when a man had died from phosphorus poisoning, one of his (the inspector's) colleagues had been assured by Messrs. Bryant and May that up to that particular date no other cases of death from phosphorus necrosis had ever come to the knowledge of the firm. What were the real facts? Between 1893 and that day there had been no less than six deaths of persons employed in Messrs. Bryant and May's factory from phosphorus necrosis, and how it was that no inquests had been held he could not understand. These six deaths could be directly traced to phosphorus poisoning. Beyond this there were eleven other cases of phosphorus poisoning which had been contracted at Messrs. Bryant and May's, and the sufferers were now under the charge of the works doctor, who reported upon them to the firm every week. They were still under this doctor's charge, and were, Mr. Vaughan understood, being supported and subsidised by the firm of Bryant and May.

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Source 3e

Further inquiries were made, and certain facts were elicited from persons working in the factory themselves. When confronted with these facts, Messrs. Bryant and May made a clean breast of it, and supplied him (Mr. Vaughan) with a long list of names of persons who were suffering from phosphorus poisoning contracted in their works. This was a very large firm, and was one of the leading firms of match makers in the kingdom. Under the circumstances, he desired to point out the seriousness of the case, and to press it home as much as he could.

Mr. Corser: This is a very bad case. The firm of Bryant and May is one of the largest in the country, and it behoves them therefore to be all the more careful. I see no reason why I should not inflict the full penalty in each case—£10 for the breach of the special rules, and £5 in each case for not reporting, with 5 guineas costs on the first summons and 2s. costs on each of the other summonses.

The fines and costs amounted to £25 9s.