

I had taken all this in when the boss came near my chair and threw a plaid sack coat in my lap and without a word walked away. Here was a nice predicament I thought, as I looked the galley over. I asked the little yellow-haired Swede girl at my right where to begin, but she looked at me and resumed her "feeling" without a word of reply. Then I asked a big, yellow-haired, dough-faced German girl on my left and received the same kind of response. Instantly I realized their position. Compulsory silence.

I put twist in my needle, squeezed on my thimble and selected a side-seam in the farmer satin lining, for if there is any one kind of needle work that I pride myself on it is "felling." Well, I felled an hour, up one seam and down another, around the collar and along the bottom of the coat. Then I stitched and tacked the tail pockets, took a deep breath and settled back in my chair to take a rest. I didn't take it long, though. Before I could reel off two lines of Hood's "Song of the Shirt" the boss was at my elbow looking over my work with his nasty smelly cigar so near my face that I was obliged to pull back to escape being burned.

"Take smaller stitches," he said. "Don't 'fell' through. You haven't though. Now put in the sleeve-lining," and he left me muttering inwardly, "put in the sleeve-lining." I did. In a great deal less time I was told to rip it out. I put it in a second time and a second time did Penelope's work. The third time was not a charm, and when his unctious honor, who had been watching me all the time, neared my chair I politely asked him to show me how to arrange the fullness. He grabbed the coat, shook the "muffy" thing in my face, dropped the ashes from his two-for-a-nickel in my hair and observed: "I don't think you'll do. I want experienced hands," and though mute I thought: "You monster, to talk about experienced hands and pay \$3.50 a week?"

Well, he showed me how tailors put in sleeve linings, and I

showed the merits of his teaching. In future I shall never let a coat-sleeve go about my waist without wanting its owner to unbutton and let me see where the lining is fulled and how the top seam is felled.

At noon we had forty minutes for—I will not say dinner, because no one had anything that could be so designated, unless it were "Boss" G. and he went home. Most of the men had nothing to eat. I only saw two with a lunch. The girls had black bread and a can of cold coffee, which they consumed with evident relish. Not more than five minutes were spent over the repast. I devoured my crackers and gnawed at my lemon by way of dessert. In a hurry to get at my work as soon as possible to make up for lost time I threw the sucked Messina under the table and in a few moments saw a little stitcher pick it up and hide it in her pocket.

By a series of questions I got the following information from a pretty Jewess who had been in the shop for three years and was getting \$3.50 a week. She said regarding the salary: "Oh, I don't care. G. won't pay any more. My mother has money and doesn't mind so long as I learn to sew. I am 15 in October. I came here at 12, and don't know how much longer I will have to stay. G. thinks women are cows, that they must be driven. So he drives us. We have to be at work at 7 in the morning and stay till 6 in the evening."

"Half holiday Saturday?"

"Nix."

"What if you are sick?"

"If you're sick he 'pulls' you. He 'pulled' me for twenty cents for being late last week. He 'pulls' all the hands when they come late, and he 'pulls' if we talk."

That's why I could not get my neighbors to tell me how to start my work.

Rosy told me that she was thirteen, that her father peddled fish, and that she was the eldest of five sisters and two broth-