With this unheard-of and unexpected introduction Mrs. S. leaves me. I find a dusty table near a dirty zinc to put my hat and ask for a machine.

"Can you run a machine?" the head of the establishment asks.

I tell her a falsehood which I defend by personally arguing that I can do anything that these untutored young foreigners can perform. Determined to try I drop into a chair before a big "Household," and agony begins. I endeavor to apply my knowledge of the Wheeler & Wilson to the machine. Trouble follows. The wheel is not under the table and is not meant to turn forward. The thread breaks a dozen times in twenty-four minutes, the intervening time being spent in threading the needle, which, like an equestrienne, has a side seat. I hem and tuck rags to get the stitch. The bobbin gives out, and how to fill it again, thread the shuttle and lace the top cotton, gives me much trouble. A little German girl at my left throws an occasional hint of value to me. She has a frightful cold in her head which she frankly confesses she caught the night before in Wicker park. I offer to help her, agreeing to stitch all day if she will only tell me how to put the work together. It's a bargain. I bind the edges of the front, back and side gores, get the hood in shape, and stitch the pockets. Just as I am beginning to feel like a Household conqueror, Mrs. S. comes along and throws a bundled Dutch dress on my machine-table and tells me to make it. I protest that I had much rather help Annie, fearing I may not get the cloak right.

"Just make it. When it aint right you rip it. That's the way we learn the girls."

Of course the string and sleeves, cuffs, hood, pocket laps collar, fronts, side bodies, back gores, back straps, and three skirt breadths are spread out before me. I sieze a bunch of bias binding and I bind and rip and rip and bind till noon,

marveling all the time at the work that literally rolls out all about me. Poor Annie's eyes get red; so does her little nose; her face swells, her voice gets husky, and her handkerchief is as wet as a laundry. She has only made two garments working from seven to twelve. "I only made forty cents this morning," she said, "but it's this awful cold." I can make six when I work hard. I usually earn seven dollars a week. Sometimes it's more, but not often, and some times it's less. I must go home now."

She folds up her work, covers her machine with her apron, has the two dresses entered in her book, and goes off to nurse her cold.

A girl with a complexion like a peach and light blue eyes says she has been working four years. "I began at fourteen in Z's factory," she says. "There I got so I could make one dollar a day easily, but I had awful head aches and the doctor said I must only sew three days in the week. Then I went to the shop every other day for a year, but the pain didn't go and the doctor said it was the steam power and made me leave. Since I have worked by foot my head is all right. Yes, my parents are living and own a little cottage on Sedgwick street."

The hand girls were all beginners. They were all ages from eleven to sixteen, earning one, two, and three dollars a week sewing on buttons, butting in bustles, and filling the inside linings. Most of them were Swedes and unable to speak a word of English. All the hands brought big lunches of bread, sausage, or ham, and fruit pancake. I was hungry enough to devour my worst enemy, and notwithstanding I interviewed a dozen or more of the diners not a morsel was offered me. There was an hour for noon, but most of the machines were thundering away at 12:30. The closets, two in number, were down in the cellar, and the foulness of the place was sickening. A kerosene lamp, hung four feet from