

argument. With this summary dismissal after waiting nearly two hours, I rode up to the top floor to see if I could not find an opening in the grocery store. Mr. S. was hung up in a side gallery midway between the ceiling and floor with a dozen or more perspiring clerks. It did not take me long to discover that I was being pursued, for I had not been engaged two minutes with the head of the mailing department, a most arbitrary, red-haired, narrow-chested creature of 30 or so, before Messrs. H. and N. sent him word to appear at once. Before leaving Mr. S. said he would hire me if I had references that would satisfy him as to my "honesty and respectability," but when he returned from the one-minute interview with the managers a great change had come over him.

"No, I can't hire you until I know something about you. You are a stranger to me. I will want you to fill the country orders and there will be plenty of chances for a dishonest girl to steal gloves, handkerchiefs, jewelry, and other articles that can be secreted in the pocket. I must have a letter from some firm or corporation."

I offered to furnish a letter from a minister, but it was declined as "no good." On the promise that I should be engaged as soon as I produced the indorsement of a firm or corporation I withdrew and returned in an hour with the following:

"CHICAGO, Aug. 3, 1888.—TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: This is to certify that the bearer is a young lady who has worked in our costume department during the production of "The Crystal Slipper," and is thoroughly trustworthy and efficient and we can recommend her to any similar position.

THOMAS W. PRIOR,

Business Manager and Treasurer Chicago Opera House."

After persuing it, Mr. S. called a little girl, and pinning my letter to a note of his own, sent it to Mr. H. The dignitary appeared, and in a very ambiguous style declined my services. I learned afterward that A. E., the cloak manufacturer, had

"warned" the B. store, and while I was off getting my letter that benevolent man had furnished a description.

It is a little singular that while the B. store refused to give me a position as clerk, a most urgent invitation was sent to *The Times* requesting that a reporter be sent to examine the books and methods of the concern. By way of inducement a voluminous account accompanied the invitation relative to salaries, rules, etc.

"NELL NELSON" SPENDS A DAY AMONG THE SERFS AND
BONDWOMEN IN THE SHOPS OF "LITTLE HELL."

FOR FOUR HOURS OF UNCEASING TOIL IN A DIRTY,
CROWDED TAILOR'S ROOM SHE IS PAID SIX CENTS.

It was 7 A. M. by all the whistles in "Little Hell" when I reached that section of the city in search of an opening in a slop-shop. The streets were crowded with shop hands hurrying to their day's work—men and boys with pipes in their mouths carrying dinner-pails or lunch-baskets; little girls in groups of two and three, in beggarly rags; young women and old women, some of them white-haired and stooped with age, wearing shawls about their head and shoulders and the meanest apologies for shoes. Many girls were bare-headed, and went through the street with old skirts and dilapidated waists that had neither collar or sleeves.

At the corner of E. and W. streets is an immense tailor shop into which the girls fairly swarmed, some going into the main and some into the rear building. Both buildings have three stories, each containing a shop under a different "boss." I followed the crowd through both buildings, beginning in the basement and going up and up and up the narrow, dirty, cov-