

I don't know what I'm going to do. Clerking is very hard, but I can't sew or I'd go and work in a necktie factory where girls get ten dollars. Do house-work? No, I wouldn't like to live out. I can't cook anyway. I could mind the children, but nurse girls only get twelve dollars a month. Yes, I know they have their board. No, not their washing. If you don't help the kitchen girls whenever they tell you you have to do your own washing, and I'd rather than have them bossing me."

A mite of a cash girl who wore broken slippers, said she had better shoes at home, but it was so hard running all day that she couldn't wear them.

One of a cluster of girls from the grocery floor who were earning \$3 and \$3.50 a week said: "People talk bad about the B—— store but it's as good as any of them. We needn't be at the store till eight in the morning and they never fine us if we're late. Lots of times when I have been sick the floor-walker has told me to go out and walk round and if I didn't feel better when I came back he let me go home. If it rains Mr. N. lends us car-fare. He never said to pay him back but I always did. We get 'p. ms.' too, and last week I made eighty cents extra. At noon we can take forty minutes and go where we like. We girls always go to Cooper & Siegel's and eat in the basement. At the Fair they give you a dinner for twenty-five cents, and whenever we have a lot of 'p. ms.' we eat there."

"Why don't you eat up stairs in the lunch room?" I asked.

"Well, 'cause the benches havn't any backs, and it's nicer to go out for a change."

Like "the wards of Jarndyce," caged up in this place of abomination that the heavenly compassion of the proprietors have provided for their hapless "ladies," I met hope, youth, squalor, want, disease, despair, woe, cunning, innocence, rags, beauty, bravery and industry variously personified in all

stages of miserable girlhood and womanhood. Much of the talk I heard was coarse, indicative of ignorance and low breeding, but I saw no evidence of depravity or viciousness. One hears a great deal about the purchase of the shop-girl, but the insinuations are as false as they are base. The skeptic has only to look at the garb of these poor pale-faced, stoop-shouldered girls to admit their virtue. Vice is better dressed. I spent an hour or more on the main floor watching the swarming customers joggle one another and haggle with the young girls who waited on them. So many people in the densely-stocked, over-crowded, ill-ventilated room polluted the atmosphere, making the strong weak and the weak sick. Every available foot of space was utilized, some of the counters consisting of pine boxes on the side of which emaciated children measured fringes, trimmings, ribbons, and cheap stuffs. One of these "troughs" filled with Hamburg edging was placed between the two elevators, and the little girls in charge were knocked and pushed about by the hurrying crowd in a most unseemly manner. I did not see any girl sitting down nor any provision for a momentary rest. There was no mistaking the poverty of the homes from which these hapless young creatures came, for their garments were old and shabby and in many cases unclean, unkept, and unsuitable. Worse than their clothes was the unkept condition of the hair and person of some young girls. As in the adjoining establishment, I saw girls waiting on customers in their stocking feet. I saw the floor-walker push and drag the young girls about and the managers bully and drive both. One of these dignitaries, a tall, argus-eyed blonde, with stooped shoulders and a drooping head, was the right man in the right place. Everybody dispersed at his coming. His scowl was something terrorizing, and had I been a subordinate and given the choice of the lash and one of his glances of reproof, I should have taken the former. There was another head, a tall, compactly-built