

"May I have basting cotton?"

"There aint any. You have to wait till it gets here."

I gave a girl a penny for a needle and stole some thread from an absentee's stock. Then I waited fifteen minutes while the binder got through and basted up the seams for the stitcher. That much done I got to work on the plush. The forewoman passed by and told me I "was not showing enough fur. Go over to the sample and look at the work."

She sneered when I asked her where the samples were, but a neighbor volunteered the information. There was no sample on the rack and I stepped over to inform the forewoman, who curtly told me it was none of her affair.

"Will you please tell me how wide to make this trimming?"

"Go to Annie."

Poor Annie was doctoring a machine and said "in a minute." On her way to me three stitchers implored her to look at their miserable implements and I waited patiently till I caught sight of the forewoman looking at her bangs in a hand-glass. Apologizing for the intrusion I asked her if the sample had come yet.

"No."

"I wish you would kindly show me how wide to make this trimming."

"Go to Annie, I told you."

"Annie is too busy. She's mending machines."

"Well, I won't be bothered with you."

"What's the reason you won't?"

"Cause I won't"

"Well you will. Tell me how wide you want this plush or I will see Mr. A——"

"See him. I don't care. There he is," pointing to a snaky, half-starved creature whose shanks I had been sketching and on whom I had scornfully turned my back. It was too much to ask of a free-born American woman to recognize the superi-

ority of such a person. He came up to us in an instant. The forewoman was livid with rage and she began to talk as fast as her tongue could move. Some fifty or more girls heard the tirade breathlessly. Before the half-dressed proprietor had a chance to get over his astonishment I threw the front of the cloak at his face, the side body at the forewoman, and walked off to my disabled chair with Mr. A. for a bodyguard. He was the color of a sanitarium babe when we reached my work table. He had the two pieces of cloak in his hand, and when he raised his fist to strike me I worked up an Indian-club attitude and dared him.

He escorted me to the toilet-room, where I went for my hat and jacket, and before slamming the door in his face by way of a hint as to the privacy of the place I threw my needle and thread at him. Mr. A. saw me across the shop and down the first flight of stairs. And there ended my first experience in a cloak factory.

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SIXTY CENTS A WEEK FOR WORKING FROM 7.30 IN THE MORNING UNTIL 5.30 IN THE EVENING.

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I next made application for work at W's, on Wabash avenue, where hundreds of girls are employed on corsets, bustles, skirts, jerseys and cloaks. Boarding the freight elevator I was drawn up to the top floor, where a pretty little Jewess informed me that Mr. S. was engaged, but would see me in a little while. She showed me to a seat in the rear end of the store at the entrance to the shop-room, and for a single hour I listened to the drop, drop, drop of the heavy machinery and the snatches of song and merriment between the iron roar. Presently Mr. W. came and sat by me.

"Did you want work?" he asked.