

ers. She had been in the shop two years and was getting \$2.25 a week.

Another girl whom I dare not indicate said: "These beggarly Jews and Swedes are robbing honest girls of a living. Most of them have homes and are willing to work for nothing. I live with my mother and brother and can not make any more than enough to pay our rent, \$16 a month. I would go in a family, but my mother needs me; she is sick. G. is an awful hard man to work for. He steals my hire from me and I steal his cotton and silk whenever I get a chance."

During the noon hour the girls played in the front street and afterward amused themselves in the back yard with the men. At 12:45 o'clock the "boss" came into the shop, and five minutes later the place was noisy with flying shuttles, clicking needles, and the whizzing wheels of the roaring machinery. Fair young heads and pretty shoulders bent over heavy coats, and faces were so low that they almost touched the sewing in their owners' laps. The clatter of the machines was deafening, and every now and then the shop resounded with the heavy hot-irons wielded by the pressers in the back room. Nobody had any time to hand the work, instead of which the cutter threw it to the trimmer, who in turn threw it to the baster, and so it moved from hand to machine, going the round of the thirty odd workers with such rapidity that the air seemed filled with flying coats. The room was low, and with every passage of coat-tail muffy clouds of lint seemed floating about in space. Add to that poor light, bad ventilation, the exhalations of so many people, the smell of dye from the cloth, and the noxious odor of that ever-consuming cigar and you have material for the make-up of Mr. G.'s coat shop. All afternoon we sewed; sewed incessantly without uttering a syllable or resting a moment. G. was building the third story of the house, and every hour or so he left the shop in care of an assistant and went up to look after the carpenters. During these intermittent spells

the girls took advantage of the substitute and hummed. They didn't sing, they hummed songs and hymns, marches and waltzes, and when the sub was not looking they actually whispered.

But the absentee possessed marvelous powers of ubiquitousness and very little time was wasted in this manner. There are some people you would always know were in the room without seeing them. This hard-headed, godless little Jew was a character of that sort. We could feel his presence and a corresponding heaviness of atmosphere. Whenever he caught sight of a momentary idler he would glide up to her elbow and mutter a single verb—work! She worked.

At five o'clock I was so tired that I didn't know what to do with myself. My hair was matted with moisture and dusted with lint, and my head throbbed with pain.

I perspired at every pore, and the steels in my corsets rusted all the front of my nice Hamburg underwaist. I threw the big brown chinchilla overcoat I had finished on the floor and for a period of three minutes fell into a state of voluptuous inertia. With my sixth sense I saw the "boss" pick up the garment and the next moment another overcoat came flying across the table and dropped all over me. I threaded my needle preparatory to finishing my ninth garment, began a light calisthenic movement of my right arm to scatter the pain and limber up my elbow. I went through perhaps seven motions, with my chair tilted back by way of stretching my lower extremities, when I was interrupted by the benevolent young tailor and his incombustible cigar.

Grabbing the frame of my chair he jammed it down on all fours and told me to "get to work."

"How much am I going to get for this work?" I inquired, after recovering from my astonishment and the sudden shock of gravitation.

"Do you want to know?" he asked with a contemptibly significant laugh.