

and nothing of her own just rights. Her life is made up of years of toil, months of privation, and weeks of struggling and striving to keep up with the rushing throng, ravenous for her bread and envious of her miserable position. She works from dawn almost to dusk, carrying every dollar of her earnings to some wretched home in which abide parents, brothers, and sisters—often, too, relatives having absolutely no claim on her, none of whom love her, and none of whom show by word, act, or deed that her generosity, goodness, and real nobility of soul is appreciated.

She goes without shoes the best part of the year, albeit in the employ of a shoe manufacturer; she goes without pretty dresses that younger sisters may be clad, and the money that should go to the purchase of the hundred little niceties that add so much to the beauty and charm and daintiness of budding womanhood is withheld for the purchase of family flour or text-books for the younger children who are at school. What does she get?

Three meals a day, a roof at night, and car-fare.

Perhaps you think she doesn't know any better, hence the bliss of ignorance.

Well, now, don't be too sure about that.

I had just been to P., D. & P. shoe factory, on the top floor of the N. R. J. building, looking for work. The girls were crowded together like sheep in a stock-yard pen. All were at machines. Some stitched shoe-linings; others lined the vamps and uppers; others "tapped;" a few worked button-holes, and all the experienced hands turned the shoe. This consisted in hammering down the seams till the crash lining could be turned in and made "to lay smooth." To accomplish this each girl had to wield, not a wooden mallet, but a heavy iron hammer, from three to ten strokes being necessary to flatten out the leather seam. This done there was the top facing to put in, the holes to be made; and the buttons to be

marked, and the same process repeated again and again until 5:30 o'clock. The wages vary.

In order to get work I was told to begin at table-work. That means sewing on buttons—two stitches for each button, finishing button-holes, and pasting sock-lining in the sole of the shoe.

How much? Two dollars a week.

At the end of a year I would get a raise of \$1. At the end of four years I would be given a machine and a yearly raise till I reached \$8, the maximum wages for female help. But Messrs. P., D. & P. didn't need any help, and I left the big, barn-like shop with its naked timber roof and brick walls, glad to leave the leathery atmosphere and the hollow-eyed, stoop-shouldered, miserably-clad men, youths and girls. Like their neighbors across the court, the firm disregards the necessity for modern conveniences. There are a few closets and a sink, and there all obligation ceases. Nothing is thought of the four flights of steps to climb, of the deafening machinery overhead, of the impure air and the dirty floors and stairs.

As I was leaving the building I met two girls on the landing who asked, "What luck?" I told them there was no show for inexperienced girls.

"Oh, we're broke in long ago. Worked for the U. S. company four years. It's a good enough place, but I got a lame wrist turning shoes. The hammering is too hard. I'll take a machine but I won't turn any more.

"Oh, I make \$6 a week. Began at table work for \$2.25. They raised me to \$3 in six months; after that I got \$3.50, then \$4, then \$4.50, then \$5, and last January they gave me \$6.

"We have six children and I give all my money to my mother. My father is a builder. He doesn't have much work in the year, and winter times when he's laid off I don't have a cent to myself. Only car-fare, that's all. Sometimes I don't