Pages The Chicago

SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 1

# CITY SLAVE GIRLS

## Nell Nelson Continues to Expose the Slave-Grinding Hell-Holes of Chicago.

## Graphic Account of Her Experiences in the Filthy "Slop-Shops" of the West Side.

## No Rest for the Weary and Wretched Women and Children This Side of the Grave.

## A Day Among the Butcher-Shops and Canned-Meat Factories of the Stock Yards.

## How Messrs. Armour and Fairbanks Might Brighten the Lives of Their Employes.

The birthright of an American girl may be a glorious attribute on the deck of a transatlantic steamship or the floor of a London ball-room, but it is not worth the flop of a brass farthing in the cloak factories of Chicago.

It was high noon by the Jesuit college clock when I got to the rear of 230 West Twelfth street, where David Karasick has his shop. Nobody in but an old man. His face is seamed with wrinkles; he has a big nose the color and texture of a mushroom; his head and half his face is covered with hair of chinchilla shades; his back is humped at the shoulders and his clothes are filthy and worn. I ask for work and am told that no hands are needed. He has a pocket that hangs across his waist and into which he puts rags, pieces of thread, hooks and eyes, pins, buttons, and the empty spools that he on the floor about the vacant machine-chairs. I watch the silent old man as he drags his loose slippers across the floor, and behold I have the key to wealth! But it doesn't profit me worth a copper. So I survey the premises.

One-room, windows on three sides, and all shut. From the north windows I get a view of a two-story hen-house. Filth inside and out. The outlook from the east side is a picture of poverty, squalor, and filth. The buildings have no paint. In some are human beings, in others dumb brutes. Half-washed clothes dangle from window-sills and clothes-lines in tatters and rags. In the yards are heaps of manure and the alleys are foul-smelling and filthy. Along the street move flannel-shirted, horny-handed, sooty-faced men to smoke, to rest, to quarrel, and to dinner. Passing and repassing all day long and every day—Sunday and Saturday—are young women and old women, youths, maidens, and children, with as many cloaks or coats or pants as they can carry. The garbage boxes are reeking with filth. Some one has thrown ashes or sweepings in the box and neither the swill man nor the ash man will remove the contents. Mayor Roche and Dr. DeWolf, equally ignorant of the manner in which their subordinates discharge their duty, permit this sort of thing to go on till the very neighborhood is polluted and the air poisoned by these reeking masses of corruption.

"Oh, it's nothing," I am told, and I see for myself and count from Karasick's window and door eleven of these garbage piles that swarm with maggots and flies. The

overcome by the air that floats up from the yard below. It is done and I take it to the boss, who examines it for fully five minutes.

Too fine. Custom work. Don't need so good on such cloaks. You stay?"

"How much a week?"

"Five dollars. You Christian?"

"Yes."

"Work Sunday?"

"Never!"

"Then I don't want you. Shop closed Saturday. Shop open Sunday."

"How much if I work five days?"

"No, you must work six days, like all."

"Not Sunday. Pay me, please."

I get out. Out past the stable-door, past the children in the manure-pile, past the ragged, yellow clothes on the line, past the back doors, past the swill-boxes, and the poor, pale-faced women carrying cloaks to and from neighboring shops till I reach 147 Twelfth street, where Isaac Berliner hires me. His shop is over a rag store and the smell is far-reaching. Mr. and Mrs. Berliner work with the men and girls. There are two rooms, poor light, bad ventilation, low ceilings, disgusting smells from the kitchens, the snarling, fault-finding remarks of the man, the petulance of his wife, and the filthy condition of the place and the revolting contiguity of so many people were something not to be endured. I occupied my chair in the dark, crowded room fifteen minutes and left. Like David Karasick's this shop is open all day Sunday.

In the rear of 441 Taylor street I was offered work by a tailor. He had two small rooms in which men and girls were working like slaves on custom coats. There was a fire in the stove on which the men heated their irons, and two boxes of garbage just outside on the pavement filled the room with their odors.

Leaving the field of cloth and cloaks I applied to E. A. Morris, the confectioner, 81 West Jackson street. The forewoman is a thin, bloodless young woman, with wild eyes and unmistakable evidences of overwork.

"No, I can't give you a place. You are too big. I want little girls. All these hands have been sent to us by peddlers because they are so very poor. You couldn't live on the salaries we pay. These children get $3 and the old hands up-stairs $4."

The midget laborers were filling pans with chocolate and maple caramels. Young boys cut the sheets of soft, brown saccharine stuff into squares which a dozen little girls transferred to the tins. At deep troughs filled with pop-corn and gum-drops were other children filling small paper bags. Up-stairs the girls worked on stick goods. Their quarters, while rude and bare and hot from the steaming sirup-pots, were light and airy.

At Brougham's packing-house, 89 Jackson street, I applied for work in the canning-room. The foreman was kind. He took me out in the dark, little packing-room, in which the light and breeze were fenced off by walls of tin cans. The girls were pale and thin and very young. But, oh, how they did paint! Each stood near a wall of cans that had just been filled with meat—pressed corned beef, tongue, or ham—still warm. At hand was a pot of japan paint with which the girls brushed the ends and rims of each can. I told the foreman I knew I could do the work. He tried me. I daubed on the paint, held the brush wrong, and got more color on my hands than on the can. The girls laughed at my awkwardness; so did the foreman. I was chagrined with my failure and asked for some water to clean my hands. The man gave me a benzine bath, and then showed me to a basin of dirty water on the surface of which a hundred or more dead flies were afloat. The quarters in which these girls work are little more than deadly—no sunlight, no free fresh air, no place to sit, and the blue paint smeared over their hands and arms and dripping from the breast and belt of their dresses. Their

Schlessinger and son. It is 9 o'clock when I enter what seems to be a store. On the right is a small office containing a desk and a mountain of cloaks. Two yards back is a long cutting-board at which the father, mother, and son are chalking or cutting out cloth. The old man has the everlasting frosts on his head, and in the wife's hair is more silver than jet. The son is still in the morning of his manhood. His manner is arrogant, his tone harsh, and his treatment of an old Christian, who has come in with a letter, presumably from his wife or daughter soliciting work, is painful to contemplate. I feel like a vagabond when Mrs. Schlessinger demands an explanation for my presence.

"I was here yesterday and you told me I might come to work today," I venture to remark.

"Oh, yes. You was the one that looked on yesterday and asked all about the wages, hey?"

This is overwhelming and I tremble internally, expecting every moment to be seized by my jersey collar and Psyche knot and thrown out in the car-track. I bite my lips to keep my knees from knocking.

When she says "Well, you may come this way," I am thankful for my safety and follow. Half-way down the store is a partition some five feet high, hung on both sides with cloaks and jackets, braided sacques and Dutch dresses, which contrivance screens the girls on the opposite side from view. A short distance back is a perfact embankment of work, fringe and inner trimmings. Passing these two fortifications we came into the presence of the "sweaters," all but six of whom are running machines at a tremendous speed.

"Girls! Girls!" exclaimed Mrs. Schlessinger.

Some of the little engines stop.

"Girls! Girls!" she says again.

They all stop. And so does my breathing.

"This girl has come to work here," Mrs. Schlessinger continues. "I aint got no time to learn her. You all help her if you got time."

With this unheard of and unexpected introduction Mrs. Schlessinger leaves me. I find a dusty table near a dirty zinc to put my hat and ask for a machine.

"Can you run a machine?" the head of the establishment asks.

I tell her a falsehood which I defend by personally arguing that I can do anything that these untutored young foreigners can perform. Determined to try I drop into a chair before a big "Household" and agony begins. I endeavor to apply my knowledge of the Wheeler & Wilson to the machine. Trouble follows. The wheel is not under the table and is not meant to turn forward. The thread breaks a dozen times in twenty-four minutes, the intervening time being spent in threading the needle, which, like an equestrienne, has a side seat. I hem and tuck rags to get the stitch. The bobbin gives out, and how to fill it again, thread the shuttle and lace the top cotten gives me much trouble. A little German girl at my left throws an occasional hint of value to me. She has a frightful cold in her head which she frankly confesses she caught the night before in Wicker park. I offer to help her, agreeing to stitch all day if she will only tell me how to put the work together. It's a bargain. I bind the edges of the front, back, and side gores, get the hood in shape, and stitch the pockets. Just as I am beginning to feel like a Household conqueror Mrs. Schlessinger comes along and throws a bundled Dutch dress on my machine-table and tells me to make it. I protest that I had much rather help Annie, fearing I may not get the cloak right.

"Just make it. When it aint right you rip it. That's the way we learn the girls."

Of course the string and sleeves, cuffs, hood, pocket laps, collar, fronts, side bodies, back gores, back straps, and three skirt breadths are spread out before me. I seize a bunch of bias binding and I bind and rip and rip and bind till noon, marveling all the time at the work that literally rolls out

as I believe in the goodness of woman I do not know where you can find one to succor you. There's Mrs. Tillie M. Carse with her eloquent, soulful eyes. But she is begging $100,000 for a temperance temple and has no time to give you help or counsel.

Go to Miss Willard?

She is sympathetic. It will do your heart good to meet her for she will call you "dear child" when you have told her your errand, and press your hand in her warm palm, and tell you—well, I don't know what she will tell you, for she and Miss Mary Allen West have a heap to do between the Woman's council, the Woman's National league, the Woman's suffrage, the Woman's Christian Temperance union, and the prohibition party. There is Mrs. George Marsh—but she can spare no time from the Industrial school; Mrs. A. A. Carpenter has a big heart, but the Woman's exchange fills it, and so it is with Mrs. Blatchford and Mrs. Hobbs and Mrs. Leander Stone and Mrs. N. K. Fairbank and Mrs. Field and Mrs. Armour and Mrs. J. M. Flower and Mrs. A. L. Coe and Mrs. S. M. Allerton and Mrs. Potter Palmer. They have St. Luke, the Illinois street boarding-house, the Woman's Christian boarding-house, the Decorative Art society, or the Girls' Friendly society, and your case doesn't come under any of these, don't you see?

Mrs. Dr. Clinton Locke is a dear, good woman who has, perhaps, done more real charity for the Chicago poor than any woman on the South side. A few years ago she went "slumming"—that's what they call it in New York—went out Archer avenue and along Nineteenth, Twentieth, Butterfield, Clark, John's place, Liberty court, and Canalport avenue into the holes and hovels under and above the sidewalk and in and among the stables and woodsheds, where she personally taught ignorant Irish, Polish, Swedish, German, and Italian mothers how to make broth from scraps, gruels from chaff, and tempting cookies from cheap flours. She made them keep account books for her inspection and forced them to buy bones and joints for soup and cheap cuts instead of steaks for their husband's meals. She gave them lessons in "drips," taught them how to make a plaster, a petticoat, soft soap, and molasses-cake, helped them smother the fire during the cool days and sift the ashes for cold weather; preached the economy of cleanliness, sobriety, cheerfulness, and industry, and helped many and many a mother to make herself and her family decent. She has done her share of mission-work west of State street, and what you want, poor little machine-slave, is another Mrs. Locke to rise up and teach you how to sew, how to keep your clothes and body neat, how to sit at your work-table, how to care for your health and save your vital energy. You must be taught that profanity, "mashes," the midnight picnic, the pop-corn-parties-in-the-park, the "Dago lunches," and the insults of the street advances of car men, "society" men, and factory men are the very ruination of all that is lovely and holy and good in woman. You must be taught that you are not to be herded and driven like cattle nor scourged and robbed like convicts. You must be taught that you are a woman, that you live in America, that you are "some account," and that there are hundreds of women who will help you to help yourself and thousands of men who will want no better pastime than to knock down the creature who insults your womanhood. **NELL NELSON.**

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### VOICES OF THE [illegible]

### The Wealthy Are [illegible] Up [illegible] Against a Day of Wrath.

TO THE EDITOR: It is a mistake to suppose that the Chicago employers of cheap female labor confine their attention to that city alone. No, no, they are as many-mouthed as any octopus and gather in their victims with each capacious maw. These philanthropists would seem to limit their sphere of usefulness and consequently employ agents, who appear to be converts to their points of view, in many country towns not only in Illi-

Along the street move flannel-shirted, horny-handed, sooty-faced men to smoke, to rest, to quarrel, and to dinner. Passing and repassing all day long and every day—Sunday and Saturday—are young women and old women, youths, maidens, and children, with as many cloaks or coats or pants as they can carry. The garbage boxes are reeking with filth. Some one has thrown ashes or sweepings in the box and neither the swill man nor the ash man will remove the contents. Mayor Roche and Dr. DeWolf, equally ignorant of the manner in which their subordinates discharge their duty, permit this sort of thing to go on till the very neighborhood is polluted and the air poisoned by these reeking masses of corruption.

"Oh, it's nothing," I am told, and I see for myself and count from Karasick's window and door eleven of these garbage piles that swarm with maggots and flies. The sun beating down on the cheap pine box has made the wood shrink, and from constant kicking and shaking and probing of the miserable rag-pickers who inhabit this locality the frame-work has been loosened and the wood carried off for fuel, leaving on almost every block one or more naked heaps of decaying matter.

Out of the south windows I look into the kitchen of some dozen wretched families. The children are numerous and almost naked. They are unshod and unclean, so very unclean that it is barely possible to tell their complexion. The mother breaks a loaf in pieces in one house and throws it to the little dirty faces on the doorstep. In another home the children eat from a frying pan and next door all drink from the spout of the teapot. Down in the yard is a pile of filth in which children play and are followed by a lot of chickens. The stable below stairs is locked, but stronger than bolt or hinge is the smell from within, and viler still is the stench from the closets in and about the yard.

At 12:45 o'clock the hands begin to arrive from lunch, first a young Pole, then a Russian, then a German Jew. They wear woolen shirts and do the machine work—do it beautifully, too, and their machines go like the wind. The patriarch in skull cap and slippers goes round the shop looking at one and the other, watching each operator to see that no extra waste of thread is left at the end of the seams. Two more men and then a girl. She does binding, nothing else, and gets $4 a week. At 1 o'clock six young girls are seated at a table in the northwest corner of the shop. They have been running. They are hot, full of fun, and one throws the window up. Like a volley from the enemy roll in the closet and stable smells and I move away to escape it. The boss is three minutes late. He is a slight, meek man of 35, with a shirt the color of brown soap, dark trousers, and a cheap coat. A light beard covers his mouth and chin and the expression in his eye has that soft, quiet, gentle quality sometimes seen in cattle and sheep. I tell him I want work.

"Machine?"

"No."

"You can finish cloaks?"

"Yes."

"Where have you worked?"

"A dozen places. Stein's, Ellinger's, Benson's, Olsen's, Newman's, Schlessinger's, Never-Rip, etc."

"Here, finish this. I will see what you can do."

"How much?"

"Eight cents, and I pray, Father Abraham, forgive this thy son's oppression."

I am given a chair at the table with the girls. Propped up on slender sticks is a stout cord, on which is a lot of spool-thread—white and black, fine, coarse, and medium. Some more of the philosophy of Mr. Karasick's old father-in-law. The thread is not wasted and the girls are not liable to carry it off. I am given a big cotton and wool, principally cotton, ulster to finish. I work like a lash-driven convict on the facings and collar and cuffs till 4 o'clock, and am almost

of tin cans. The girls were pale and thin and very young. But, oh, how they did paint! Each stood near a wall of cans that had just been filled with meat—pressed corned beef, tongue, or ham—still warm. At hand was a pot of japan paint with which the girls brushed the ends and rims of each can. I told the foreman I knew I could do the work. He tried me. I daubed on the paint, held the brush wrong, and got more color on my hands than on the can. The girls laughed at my awkwardness; so did the foreman. I was chagrined with my failure and asked for some water to clean my hands. The man gave me a benzine bath, and then showed me to a basin of dirty water on the surface of which a hundred or more dead flies were afloat. The quarters in which these girls work are little more than deadly—no sunlight, no free fresh air, no place to sit, and the blue paint smeared over their hands and arms and dripping from the breast and belt of their dresses. Their wages are $5, but each is expected to paint at least fifteen hundred cans per day. Dirty little girls in rags and broken shoes, many of their wrists not thicker than your two fingers, were in the rear of the shop scouring cans, for which they were paid $3 a week. The hours of toil are from 7 o'clock to 12 and from 1 o'clock to 5. The girls were gay and inclined to be happy in their dungeon slavery, for, after all, they are better paid than scores of help in the employ of Pardridge, Julius Stein, Ellinger, and Mrs. Wellman.

At the suggestion of the foreman I took a Halsted street car for the stock-yards, and with so much experience presented myself at the Fairbank Canning company. I did not see Mr. N. K., and what is more didn't want to see him. The girls, numbering a hundred or so, were at work up on the second floor in one of the numerous buildings. They painted and labeled by the piece, getting 5 cents a hundred. Plenty of girls handled 2,500 cans a day, giving them a salary of $7.50 a week. Experienced hands earned $9 and beginners and dryers $4 per week. No provision was made for the comfort of these girls. They swept the greasy floors when necessary, packed the goods, and were jostled and pushed about by the bloody butchers and greasy packers. All worked in cast-off clothing, many literally dripping with paint. A great many of the girls were Irish, but the Swedes and Germans were numerous. I can not understand how they endure the work which, while purely mechanical, requires them to be on their feet from 7 to 5:30 every day, and from all I could learn they do not stand it. Few with whom I talked have been in the yards five years: all wanted to get married, not to have money and nice clothes and theater tickets, but to get rested.

At P. D. Armour's packing-house the girls were paid from 3 cents to 5 cents per hundred for labeling and japanning cans, wages varying from $6 to $9. Beginners received 75 cents a day for two weeks, or until they could handle fifteen hundred cans per day, when they received $6, and were raised to the maximum figure as their skill increased. As at Fairbank's, they were young girls with haggard faces, emaciated figures, and work-weary bodies. At noon they sat in the windows to eat their lunch, and the vessel on the zinc from which they slaked their thirst was nothing more elaborate than a tin-can cut down. It is certainly very good of Mr. Armour to build Sunday-schools, educate struggling artists, buy pictures, and patronize music, but these young women are human if their senses are dulled to the sickening smells of the slaughtering establishment and a clean sitting-room with neat walls and chairs in which to rest at noon, and clean towels for the 6-o'clock toilet would not be wasted charity.

These girls are called "tough." Perhaps they are. Perhaps their language is not chaste nor their manners pleasing, but Mr. Armour and Mr. Fairbank know as well as need be known that their hearts are pure and their lives blameless. Considering their origin, their nature, their surroundings, and their associates they are too good to be put on the level they are. **Nell Nelson.**

## SCHLESINGER'S SLOP-SHOP.

### Working Nearly a Day On a Cloak to Earn Ten Cents—Girls Who Toil For Three Dollars a Week and Board Themselves.

Another day in a slop—a shop where I get a blinding headache and a dime.

The place of servitude is at 1187 Milwaukee avenue and the proprietors are Mr. and Mrs.

hint of value to me. She has a frightful cold in her head which she frankly confesses she caught the night before in Wicker park. I offer to help her, agreeing to stitch all day if she will only tell me how to put the work together. It's a bargain. I bind the edges of the front, back, and side gores, get the hood in shape, and stitch the pockets. Just as I am beginning to feel like a Household conqueror Mrs. Schlessinger comes along and throws a bundled Dutch dress on my machine-table and tells me to make it. I protest that I had much rather help Annie, fearing I may not get the cloak right.

"Just make it. When it aint right you rip it. That's the way we learn the girls."

Of course the string and sleeves, cuffs, hood, pocket laps, collar, fronts, side bodies, back gores, back straps, and three skirt breadths are spread out before me. I seize a bunch of bias binding and I bind and rip and rip and bind till noon, marveling all the time at the work that literally rolls out all about me. Poor Annie's eyes get red; so does her little nose; her face swells, her voice gets husky, and her handkerchief is as wet as a laundry. She has only made two garments working from 7 to 12. "I only made 40 cents this morning," she said, "but it's this awful cold. I can make six when I work hard. I usually earn $7 a week. Some times it's more, but not often, and some times it's less. I must go home now."

She folds up her work, covers her machine with her apron, has the two dresses entered in her book, and goes off to nurse her cold.

A girl with a complexion like a peach and light blue eyes says she has been working four years. "I began at 14 in Zimmerman's factory," she says. "There I got so I could make $1 a day easily, but I had awful headaches and the doctor said I must only sew three days in the week. Then I went to the shop every other day for a year, but the pain didn't go way and the doctor said it was the steam power and made me leave. Since I have worked by foot my head is all right. Yes, my parents are living and own a little cottage on Sedgwick street."

The hand girls were all beginners. They were all ages from 11 to 16, earning $1, $2, and $3 a week sewing on buttons, putting in bustles, and filling the inside linings. Most of them were Swedes and unable to speak a word of English. All the hands brought big lunches of bread, sausage, or ham, and fruit pancake. I was hungry enough to devour my worst enemy and notwithstanding I interviewed a dozen or more of the diners not a morsel was offered me. There was an hour for noon, but most of the machines were thundering away at 12:30. The closets, two in number, were down in the cellar, and the foulness of the place was sickening. A kerosene lamp, hung four feet from the floor partially lit the dark passage along which were coal-sheds and closets in suites for the several flats in the building.

At 3 o'clock my cloak was not finished. I had pains in my head and back, my ankles ached, and my feet were scalded with heat and perspiration from the constant motion of the machine. No need of acting this time. I simply went to Mrs. Schlessinger and told her I had no dinner and was too faint to work another moment.

"Didn't you have no lunch?" she asked. "Why didn't you tell me? I could have given you a cup of coffee."

I thanked her for her good intention, and asked to be paid. "Well, that Dutch dress is 20 cents. If you done half you get half pay. That's right, ain't it? I tell you you can't make a living at this; it's too hard for a woman that ain't used to it. I would like to pay more, for when the girls make I make, don't you see?"

For the sake of exit I acquiesced, took my dime, and went out. At the door I met two little Polish children, Polly and Annie Schmidt, who told me they lived at 318 George street, near Carpenter, and could not get work in the shop till they were "leven." Both had a basket of greasy, filthy victuals they had picked along the alleyways and into Polly's hamper I dropped Mrs. Schlessinger's bright dime for luck.

Some day soon I shall use the money so kindly sent to the editor of The Times for a shop-girls' shoe and stocking party (and little Polly and her sister shall have a card).

You poor, dependent, neglected girl, who started out in real ernest, without education or training, to earn your own living, from the bottom of my heart I pity you. I have been thinking all day where I could send you for aid and instruction, but is lovely and holy and good in woman. You must be taught that you are not to be herded and driven like cattle nor scourged and robbed like convicts. You must be taught that you are a woman, that you live in America, that you are "some account," and that there are hundreds of women who will help you to help yourself and thousands of men who will want no better pastime than to knock down the creature who insults your womanhood. **Nell Nelson.**

## VOICES OF THE PEOPLE.

### The Wealthy Are [illegible] Up [illegible] Against a Day of Wrath.

To the Editor: It is a mistake to suppose that the Chicago employers of cheap female labor confine their attention to that city alone. No, no, they are as many-mouthed as any octopus and gather in their victims with each capacious maw. These philanthropists would seem to limit their sphere of usefulness and consequently employ agents, who appear to be converts to their points of view, in many country towns not only in Illinois but in neighboring states. For munificence the prices paid in the country for crochet work by an agent for a Chicago dry-goods house compare well with those of the Western Lace Manufacturing company. The country worker, if she has no other means of conveyance, must walk to the nearest town. There she will receive wool enough to make several dozen toboggan caps. By working from 7:30 a. m. until the same hour in the evening she may manage to make three of these a day, and she will be paid 6 cents a piece. Other articles, commonly called fascinators—the name may strike the workers as being what the late Artemus Ward called "sarkasm"—pay even better. The price is the same, but four can be made in a day. The country lasses can take their choice on which article of headgear they will grow rich. The wretched part of it all is that the agents have small difficulty in finding girls willing to undertake the work, so scarce is work that the opportunity for making a few dollars is eagerly seized. What wonder that country girls leave home, hoping for better things in the great cities. That they but escape Scylla to fall on Charybdis The Times has all too plainly made manifest.

What seems to be needed is a home in the city for young women who work for a living, where they can live in comfort on a small sum and be assisted in their endeavor to find respectable employment. Something of the kind has, I am given to understand, been started, but on a very limited scale for want of funds. This misery need not be, could not be, if those who can afford it would give more generously, and if those who do give would exercise their benevolence in a proper direction. In England, where the wages of women are as pitiful as those quoted by The Times, £475,442 was given last year to foreign missions; and in England the streets of the large cities, especially of London, swarm with prostitutes. So many are there that it is a mockery to attempt to arrest them. Chicago is not overmoral now, and if the mills of the gods are allowed to grind on as they are grinding now—and grinding down the poor and helpless—we shall have the same state of things in our own city when we, too, have a population of over four millions of souls.

Is it a matter of such wonderful congratulation that there is a church to about every four blocks in Chicago when the poor never enter them? Do you see the working-classes in Grace church, St. John's, Dr. Lorimer's, the Second Presbyterian, or even at Prof. Swing's services? Is there a single "fashionable" church in Chicago where the poor and rich meet together? Is it not, indeed, requiring a great deal of philosophy when we expect young people to display their shabby clothes in such places? With what feelings do you suppose these young people listen to the anthem which bids them "Trust in the Lord, wait patiently on him." What aspect can religion take on for them. A writer to The Times, who signs herself "Mary" says concerning her own employer and that of others: "If such men are not punished in this world then I can only cherish the hope that there is another where punishment will be meted out to them. What are we living for?" she goes on. Another few years of injustice and hardship and Mary and many others will be living for the avowed purpose of taking their revenge in this world.

The employers talk about "crushing out anarchy." They are building it up. What kind of citizens do they expect the sons of the working women of Chicago to be? Will they be taught to look upon the rich as brethren in the Lord? I fancy not. Self-interest alone should move the influential men and women of Chicago to stop this human slavery. Think how hideous are the disparities in a great city like Chicago in the eyes of the poor. Think how many noble natures are crushed into the mire by the force of mere physical want. Think of the temptations of the poor, of the sadness of the home where the parents see in each little child given them but a future bread-winner! Remember how much more lenient we are to the crimes of the rich than to those of the poor. We only help the "deserving" poor, and often keep our sweetest smiles and best civilities for rich men whose money has not been honestly acquired and whose morals are shocking, and rich women who never thought a noble thought or did a generous act. "The hand that rocks the cradle rocks the world." Don't harden that hand by too much unpaid work, for the heart will keep pace and then, as an outcast, the desperate woman will is already compulsory on parents and guardians to send their children and wards to the public school a given number of months in the year.

"It is a shame to compel girls and women to work for such grinding, niggardly wages," says still another. And yet it will not do for a tariff-reform organ like THE TIMES to advocate protection to even this class of labor. In other words, why insist that these shall be paid higher wages, when if these places were made vacant you could fill every place several times over in a single day by a single advertisement in THE TIMES? The free-trade theory, if right at all, must be right in regard to wages; and if a manufacturer must take an open market for the sale of his products he must have an open labor market in which to obtain his help. It is scarcely within the range of a possible philanthropy to take all these hapless victims of the worst phase of labor and give them good clothes, good educations, happy homes, and lives of idleness by any public process. And, while their lot is a hard one, it is none the less apparent that it would be much harder if they were denied or could not get the work they are now doing even at the miserable apology for wages of which you complain. Perhaps if these manufacturers were guaranteed double price for their product they would at once double the price of wages to their employes, and yet the country resounds with the partisan cry of "Cheap everything," which from sheer force of sympathy includes cheap wages. But these girls and destitute women are in the world, and must, like everybody else, work their way through it. Active labor is better than idleness for woman or man. But labor ought to be respected even in a factory that pays small wages, and in this respect THE TIMES is a good missionary agent. The meanness of manufacturers is often manifested in indignities offered to hel[illegible]s and unnecessary burdens that are harder to be borne than the poorly paid labor. Added to this comes the temptation—often emphasized by this censorious supervision—to wrong doing as an "easier way" to ease, and it is a compliment to the native modesty and virtue of the sex that while the list of the overtempted is a long one it is not ten times as long.

But these poor working-women are with us and they are here to stay. What will society do with them? Order their employers to pay them more and treat them better? Who can enforce such an order in the face of such overproduction of labor from that source? Women have crowded into all fields of labor and nearly cut in twain the former wages of men. Have we too many girls and women? If so, how shall we reduce the number? By the process common in India or the theory of Besant?

P.

### A Possible Remedy.

CHICAGO, Aug. 2.—TO THE EDITOR: If ever a newspaper deserved credit for unflinching courage in advocating the cause of the oppressed when to do so must bring the hatred of the rich and powerful surely THE TIMES now deserves full stint of praise. The boldness with which it publishes name, place, and manner of the offenders is as remarkable as the reports of Nell Nelson are vivid and stirring in description of cruelties inflicted on the "white slaves." These articles must bring good results. They will arouse strong indignation, which may in the end lead to devising some means for regulating the treatment of now defenseless employes. They will certainly warn the thousands of girls who foolishly wish to come from innocent and safe homes to seek work in the city. If the articles serve no other end than to keep such girls safe at home they will have done a most noble work.

But are these downtrodden girls deserving of the warm sympathy the articles in THE TIMES excite? Is it not true that many if not all of these workers prefer their lot, with all its hardships, privations, insults, and, too often, its prostitution and utter ruin of body and soul, to honest work which may be harder than that of the shops, but which affords plentiful and good food, honorable shelter, and much larger pay than they now get—assuming that the reports published by THE TIMES are true of all or of the majority of shop girls? Judging from those reports the tasks of the shops, the bending over sewing or other machines, the confinement behind counters without opportunity for rest, the long hours in close rooms, the exposure to stormy weather, and the want of sufficient nutritious food must be at least as hard to bear as more active work would be under more healthful surroundings.

Is it not a fact that if one-half of the number of girls now working in shops were to withdraw the other half could dictate terms to their employers If this is true do not the girls bring on themselves needlessly all they endure? Is it not a fact that every one of these girls can, if she will accept it, get respectable, healthful, and profitable employment? If she will not take such work is she deserving of sympathy and aid? If she persists in staying in the shops does she not deliberately choose to endure all that follows rather than help the thousands who are begging for the services of bright, capable girls? Would it not be well for the girls to look the case squarely in the face, that they may see a truth patent to many of their friends, and then act promptly and decisively, each for herself? They need no help from legislation nor from women's aid societies of any description to relieve themselves from the oppression so vividly described by Nell Nelson, for a remedy for all their wrongs lies in their own hands.

P. E. W

### What Does Protection Do for Them?

CHICAGO, July 31.—TO THE EDITOR: Your

"family" she can not, because she does not know how to work. Housekeeping is a trade, cooking a profession. How, where, and of whom shall she learn? Not in her destitute home, of her slatternly mother. The pitiful remark made to Miss Nelson by one of them, "Schooling isn't of much use to a shop-girl," is pregnant with suggestion of reform in our school system. The public school does not exist as a public charity, but as a public economy, its object being to make good citizens. If it fulfill that object it prepares for self-support. Now is the time to strike for the establishment of free industrial schools, where the science of getting a living shall be taught, even if we must have it at the expense of some of the artistic work which now ornaments our public-school system.

It may be objected that poor families require the children's wages before they are old enough to avail themselves of such educational privileges. Then here is room for philanthropy to establish a fund from which such children can draw a sum equal to the pittance they now earn, and so be kept in school till they know how to do something well enough to command living wages. Tippling parents are, I believe, behind child-labor in most cases, but if Chicago had total prohibition, both Sundays and week days, she would still need free industrial schools, accessible to every child.

BESSIE V. CUSHMAN, M. D.

### One Poor Girl's Experience.

CHICAGO, Aug. 5.—TO THE EDITOR: I came here educated, with friends and influence, but could not get into an office. Finally I got to sorting feathers in a duster factory. I was well treated there, especially by the forelady. I had to ride eight miles and walk two altogether. I earned a quarter the first day and felt encouraged. Next day I had to sort the fine feathers that sifted out. It took me all day to earn my quarter. It is 1 cent a pound. Next I went across the street to Shield's candy factory. Then I tried buttonholes at Jennings'. A pale widow with four children sat next me. "I am glad my supper doesn't depend on my 18 cents," I said; and "mine does," sighed she. In a cloak shop at Twelfth and Laflin the woman said she could not teach me, but I could work under one of the girls for nothing for two weeks. I learned in half a day. I know my work was right, but I was discharged in a few days with no reason. I have seen the "ad" since that. It is a scheme to get cloaks finished for nothing.

I might add a bit of personal experience in the housework line. I did housework for a family of ten two weeks. I was sent away with $1, "not because you have earned it," they said, "but because we are sorry for you." I pumped every bit of water, carried it all up-stairs, and did all the work except some of the cooking. When I apologized for my inexperience the woman said, "to think that you, a girl with hardly the clothes to her back, should dare to say you had been brought up in affluence." You should some time tell about the woman who got a girl just to do a three weeks' washing and the minute that was done made it so disagreeable she couldn't stay. A hired girl's pay is not sure at all.

### The Single-Tax Idea.

MONMOUTH, Ill., Aug. 8.—TO THE EDITOR: THE TIMES is doing a grand work in exposing one phase of industrial slavery, but it will be of no avail unless followed up by a strong, sincere, and persistent effort to find and apply an effectual remedy. It is a waste of time to advise the girls of the stores and factories to go into domestic service. They never will and never should do it so long as they are humiliated by being regarded as inferiors and subjected to the tyranny common in so many households. Besides, their entrance into service would only result in displacing an equal number of those who now hold those positions, and who in their turn would be compelled to struggle and suffer as the shop-girls now do. No! The only thing to be done is to relieve the larger part of these girls from the necessity which compels work in such distasteful and unseemly occupations and by releasing their fathers and brothers from the thralldom of poverty.

Unlock the land! Guarantee to everyone an equal and inalienable right to the land. It is incontrovertible that since land is necessary to existence an equal right to the land is a necessary corollary to the equal rights guaranteed by our constitution.

THE TIMES is doubtless aware of the rapid spread of the single-tax idea. Will it be the first of the great dailies to lead in its advocacy, or at least to open its columns to a full and fair discussion of the same?

OBSERVER.

### Colonization Recommended.

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn., Aug. 7.—TO THE EDITOR: Let me also make a suggestion respecting the "city slave" trade. Disregarding its causes, the true condition—not only in America but over most of the world—is that too few depend upon the soil; too many are crowded upon mechanical industry. Efficient reform must readjust this condition, and the best method will begin where the dislocation is most grievous. The most galling conditions are found in the slave market of lower industry, where the deadly competition of workers finally settles. Let the government colonize its unemployed. There is no limit to public utility in this direction. It is the direct line of reform. Its initiative is imperative, prosperity and national security both demand it. Non-producers are made valuable producers, and the dead weight that clogs all industry is not only dropped but rendered exceedingly serviceable. It would astonish most people to know the actual dead weight that industry now carries. Five million people in our country could be spared to coloni-

girls' minds and they learn that the competent, trustworthy house servant is valued as a useful member of society the shocking state of affairs THE TIMES exposes will cease. These poor girls are all of them densely ignorant of what they can do, and no more philanthropic work could be undertaken than to organize a society to instruct them how to perform properly the ordinary duties of house servants and then to obtain them situations.

Girls' labor is now so largely displacing men's labor that a serious state of affairs will soon confront society. Whatever does not conduce to the real welfare of the laboring classes of both sexes at once becomes a national evil and weakness, and in the disturbed relations of labor to capital all over this great country are signs of coming evil.

AN OLD SUBSCRIBER.

### Less Palaver and More Discipline.

PELLA, Iowa, Aug. 9.—TO THE EDITOR: The most interesting portions of the communications in THE TIMES under the head of "City Slave Girls" is the comments elicited from the very class where sufferings under the abuse of grasping task masters are so pathetically set forth. From these comments it appears that among the poor good food and comfortable clothing are altogether secondary considerations. They first want independence and the chance to amuse themselves; or, as they perhaps would style it, "to have some fun," and consider the prime necessaries of human existence as matters of minor importance. They object to house service because they do not want to be "bossed" over, and because they want to have their evenings and their Sundays free. If now they prefer to labor hard in an unwholesome atmosphere at starvation prices for ten hours per day under despotic and exacting supervision to living in a family where they may enjoy wholesome food, good air, and satisfactory wages, because they object to woman's rule and want of leisure, the writer does not see whose business it is nor how it is to be helped. No one is placed so high in active life that he outgrows the necessity of practicing obedience—stricter as the importance of his duties increases. As to leisure and "fun," the higher people rise in social positions the less they enjoy it. In Europe the poor deserve commiseration because all avenues to comfort are crowded; but what is needed in this country at this juncture is less palaver and more discipline.

OLD STYLE.

### The Tariff Blamed for It.

CHICAGO, Aug. 4.—TO THE EDITOR: The pathetic story of Nell Nelson has awakened the sympathy of thousands for the poor, helpless factory girls. A great paper like THE TIMES is capable of exercising an immense amount of influence, and when it undertakes to befriend the deserving poor and expose the tyranny of greedy brutes it should have earnest support. While it is commonly known that factory life, at its best, is neither pleasant nor remunerative, few, I dare say, dreamed that such a shocking state of affairs existed as is pictured by Nell Nelson, and even now many will be ready to say that her story is overdrawn.

The protectionist tells us that no honest person need want for work here, and that industry and merit are always rewarded. If he could see how many of our poor girls and women slave ten hours a day for 40 and 50 cents would he still preach the same doctrine? Our manufacturer is protected to the extent of from 40 to 50 per cent, and yet he can not pay higher wages than the manufacturer in England, who is not protected! And yet they tell us the workingman is benefited by our protective tariff!

I believe our unjust tariff laws are chiefly responsible for such abuses as THE TIMES is now engaged in exposing.

J. S.

### Nell Nelson's Kind Work.

WHITEWATER, Wis., Aug. 6.—TO THE EDITOR: Some of your good lady correspondents on this "slave" question want a hired girl. Naturally enough, from their standpoint they have no pity for these poor girls, and ask why don't they come to the country and enter service as domestics? They forget that domestic service is not so delightful as some good ladies and some very poorly informed preachers picture. It may be urged that thousands of domestics are not so unfortunately situated. True; so there are thousands of girls in the stores and factories and offices of Chicago that are by no means to be included in Nell Nelson's picture of the slave girls of that city.

Real reforms, like oaks and cedars when matured, are the result of slow and steady growth. The tendency of our times is to hot-house reforms—forced plants. I would add my word of praise of Nell Nelson's kind work. May some John the Baptist soon hasten to all our poor and sorrowful ones, crying the mountain tops of this century are becoming beautiful with the feet of those who bring you salvation, who bring you glad tidings of good.

GEORGE H. HASTINGS.

### Could Not Do Without "The Times."

FREMONT, Neb., Aug. 6.—TO THE EDITOR: Let us not forget in the great, grand effort in behalf of humanity that the idea of "inequality of sex" is the main cause of this degredation and shame. The sentiment given to me not long since by an elderly gentleman, a member of the Church of England, "that in Adam's time man fell, and low as man fell woman fell still lower and she never can rise again," is, I firmly believe, the sentiment of nine-tenths of the male members of the English-speaking nations. Nine-tenths of those who do not belong to the church think that justice lies in doing as did the American citizen

enough to appear in a procession. It there w any excuse for being a bomb-throwing anarchi these poor Chicago girls would be justified in tr ing that role. But there is nothing for them to d but suffer and starve or do worse.—*Atlanta (Ga Constitution.*

### Look on This Picture and on That.

It does not require any very deep economic i sight to make one aware that there is somethin radically wrong with a state of society which pe mits such gross inequalities as those between th condition of the Chicago sewing-girls and Andre Carnegie: That thousands of women should liv in endless misery while one man has a yearly i come sufficient to keep 2,500 families in comfort enough to make one doubt the value of our boaste civilization.—*Kansas City News.*

### Thirty Cents a Day.

Too much credit can not be given THE CHICAG TIMES for its manly defense of the poor workin girls of that city. * * * The expose of TH TIMES shows that some women working in the various sinkholes make less than 30 cents per day—40 cents for car fare and 20 cents for crackers, cheese, and dress. What is the consequence? Poor girls have resort to other avenues for a livelihood. Forsooth! A fine reflection on the methods of a Christian government.—*Burlington (Wis.) Standard Democrat.*

### The Beam in Our Own Eye.

The New York *Press* is much agitated over the discovery of women and children in Englan working for the pittance of a shilling a day. Th editor of the *Press* has as yet said nothing of the work of THE CHICAGO TIMES in discovering hundreds of women in big, prosperous Chicago working for 30 cents a day. Let us pluck the beam out o our own well-protected eye before worrying ove the mote in the eye of our free-trade neighbor.—*Kansas City (Mo.) News.*

### What a Monstrous Commentary.

The factories which wear out the lives and brutalize the womanhood of these poor creatures while they struggle to make a half-starved livelihood are institutions whose owners are made rich under the shelter of a protective tariff. What a monstrous commentary this female slavery in Chicago is on the glib assertion that the tariff protects American labor and secures it high wages.—*New Orleans States.*

### Probe to the Very Bottom.

It was a matter of necessity to justify itself in an action for libel that induced THE CHICAGO TIMES to probe the question of white female slavery in the cloak, shirt, and other like manufacturing establishments in that city, and since it is in the fight and finds it a fruitful field THE TIMES is giving an exhibition of spirit that reminds one of the days of Wilbur F. Storey.—*Fond du Lac (Wis.) Commonwealth.*

### Shocking in the Extreme.

The disclosures made are shocking in the extreme. The average slave on a southern plantation before the war was infinitely better off than the working girls of Chicago are today. But these white slaves never strike. They can not afford to lose a day's wages. We are glad that their grasping, soulless employers are being shown up.—*Mobile (Ala.) Register.*

### The Investigation Comes None Too Soon.

The straits to which the most helpless classes of wage-earners in our great cities have already been reduced is shown by THE CHICAGO TIMES' expose and similar ones which have preceded it, and bodes no good to the country. In this matter as in many others the country failed to apprehend a danger long impending until it had worked irremediable mischief.—*St. Joseph (Mo.) Gazette.*

### The End Will Surely Come.

There is the same agitation, the same rumble of discontent that presaged the abolition of chattel slavery, and will just as surely end in the emancipation of white slavery. It may be necessary that it shall come through some great crisis like our civil war, but it will come, and be the triumph of our American democracy as the emancipation of black slavery is the boast of our republic.—*Milwaukee Review.*

### The Bed-Rock of Unrest.

The poverty, destitution, tyranny, starvation wages, inhumanity, and outrageous injustice which is graphically depicted in the "City Slave-Girl" articles is the bed-rock foundation from which springs up communism, socialism, anarchism. . . . It is no answer but it is mockery to say that these things have always been and are everywhere.—*Rensselaer (Ind.) Democrat.*

### A Crusade That Will Do Good.

THE CHICAGO TIMES has opened a crusade against those employers who hire working-girls and then put them upon starvation wages. It has conducted the warfare vigorously. . . . Crusades of this kind accomplish much good. They open the eyes of the public to social abuses which should be in some way rectified.—*Detroit Free Press.*

### Whom Does the Tariff Protect?

The tariff does not protect the workers. Who, then, does it protect? It certainly protects Julius Stein, Ellinger, Wetherell, and the bosses generally, at the expense of labor, and that is why wealthy corporations favor it. If the tariff really protected labor there would be no such white slavery in America as THE CHICAGO TIMES describes.—*Butte (Mont.) Mirror.*

### Calculated to Make the Blood Boil.

The perusal of these CHICAGO TIMES articles is calculated to make the blood