

ered stairs, stopping on each floor to see the "boss" and apply for work. No success. The vest-shops were full and so were the trousers shops. In the jacket shop there was room for experienced hands only at the munificent salary of \$3 a week. The garments were cut and the sewer had the entire making.

As I passed through the crowded rooms I could not help noticing the machine-like way everything was done. Not a moment was wasted in greetings or exchange of friendly remarks. Almost at the very instant the girls took their seats the machines were whizzing and whirling and the bright little needles flying through seams, collars, bands and facings. Cutters clicked their shears, and little scissors and presser sponged leg-seams and collars and moved their heavy "gooses" under little clouds of steaming vapor. Everywhere it was work, work, work, for barely enough to keep life in the body and virtue in the soul of these hapless children of misery.

The only real luxury about these two great shops, containing in all about seven work-rooms and five hundred workers, was the wealth of sunlight and fresh air. On three sides of the buildings were windows through which the heavens smiled. The staircases, which, by the way, were boxed, ran along the right side of the building, and which, in case of fire, would have gone up in an instant, leaving the unfortunate inmates with absolutely no means of escape but the windows. I asked one of the bosses where his fire escape was, and he told me if I had no other business with him to "get out."

All the women and girls I talked with lived at home. I was informed that only those living in the neighborhood were engaged, thus doing away with the car-fare item. Some of the little girls were paid \$1 a week for tacking on tickets, sewing on buckles to back straps, and pulling out basting stitches. All other work was paid for by the piece and salaries varying from \$2 to \$10, according to the skill of the laborer,

\$4 being a very fair average for this season of the year. The worst feature of these shops was the limited room. The girls sat elbow to elbow and the floor was piled with work half an hour after the shop opened.

At 8 o'clock I went to B's shop at H. and C. street, where some evidences of decency were apparant. Instead of the rude timber generally put in work tables I found those on the main floor planed and grained. Off the shop was a cozy little office, and printed in three different languages were framed copies of rules and regulations. Quoting from the set, the employes were notified that the hours of work were from 7 to 12 and from 1 to 6; any one desiring to leave before would require a permit to do so from the office; any one neglecting to give the firm three days' notice prior to leaving would forfeit any salary due; every operator was obliged to oil and clean her machine in the morning before using it and in the evening after using it.

The prices paid were miserably low. A couple of girls who "tacked" pockets received 80 cents a hundred, and work was kept back so that often the earnings did not exceed \$2 a week. Once or twice \$18 was received in two weeks. Girls who did the "flesh" basting along the leg seams of pants were paid \$1 a hundred; 7 cents was the price paid for finishing the cheaper vests and 9 cents the better ones. Here I met white-haired women who sewed from morning till night to make \$5 a week.

The "boss" didn't need any help, so I tried the retail tailor store of K—N—, on Chicago avenue.

"Business is dull and we are not doing much up-stairs. You might come in next week if you are idle, but I'll tell you now that you can't earn over fifty cents a day. We are working on vests; make them all by machine. If you can sew well I'll give you one cent for joining the collar."

Telling him he would do nothing of the kind I put into Cleveland avenue and came upon the genuine slop-shop. At