The work-shop was the breeziest, airiest, roomiest place I had ever worked in, but far from attractive, being rude in finish and poorly lighted. About the east wall was a low gallery stocked with goods, and the opposite wall was used as a clothes-press by the one hundred or so girls. There were hats, jackets, shawls and cloaks, dress-skirts, basques, petticoats and corsets which the girls had divested themselves of as much for economy as comfort. There was no machine to strain the ear and make the head ache, and its absence was to me as soothing as the quiet calm of country life. Another remarkable feature was the cheerfulness that prevaded the shop. No restraint but duty was apparent. The girls chatted and laughed, gave and borrowed experiences and luxuriated in an occasional flight of laziness. Indeed, I could not but regret somewhat the freedom of speech, for I heard many things in the course of my afternoon's work that were far from wholesome. The girls at my table were mostly of Irish parentage and seemed to be responsible to no one superior in authority. They were a romantic set of young women with apparently no interest in life beyond a speedy marriage.

Plans had been laid for a picnic the following evening in Douglas Park, and all the girls were going, each having invited a "feller." Various schemes were contrived for securing their favor. From what I gleaned picnicing is by no means uncommon among the "necters." On Sunday evening all the girls had been "to the parks" and during the week they had "gone walkin'." One girl was engaged. It was her last week and provoked some mad speculations of luxury and pleasure. The bride prospective expressed a weakness for cream puff and "skirts with lace on," in both of which extravagances she intended to indulge when she became a wife.

Some of the girls told me they had been at school, having passed through the sixth grade, and were inclined to go to church, "only it's little you can make out of the church.

They get all they can out of you and don't care what becomes of you." They didn't read the newspapers, they told me, "because there's never anything for working-girls in them." Most of them shopped at the cheap stores, but confessed a total ignorance of fabrics and methods of economy. For instance, one girl with a complexion like a dried hazelnut was making herself a tan-colored satin that she paid forty-nine cents a yard for, and with which she intended to wear "a white felt hat trimmed with a wing and snow veil."

The forewoman gave me a dozen blue silk scarfs and sent her assistant to instruct me. That young woman was a domineering individual with an experience of ten years and very pretty dimpled hands. She used her needle with considerably more grace than her nose, and there was a deal less of the velvety quality in her voice than her hands. I failed to probe her. She was curt in her answers, boorish in manner, and very economical in the knowledge she imparted. Twice she came to see my work and each time said: "It won't do; rip it out." The work paid fifty cents a dozen and I finished twelve and one-half cents worth by five o'clock. I had to do my own pressing and furnish my own thread and needle. The girls I interrogated earned from three to ten dollars a week, the latter after eight year's experience. Plenty of girls made seven dollars a week, but a constant changing of fashion prevented a higher average the year round, as it was necessary to learn the style before being able to turn out more than ten dozen a week. Take it all in all E. Brothers' was the most humane factory in which I had any experience.