

She taught me to select the "bodies" and "downs," and after pointing out the difference in the "tails" and "wings" told me to "pick." I did so till I had feathers in my pockets and ears, in my hair and nostrils, and all over me. They stuck in my woolen waist, got between my teeth and into my mouth and eyes till I could see nothing but flukes and stems, and could tell the "sides," "tails," and "breast" by the taste. It was all I could do to keep from suffocating. Annie said I would get used to the dirt in a little while and thought I ought to be able to pick five pounds a day in a few weeks.

Annie had a good head for figures and some some pretty sound ideas regarding the condition of the working girls.

"I get 7 cents a pound for sorting the quills and 10 cents for the down feathers. When I work hard I can pick ten pounds of the quills and three of the down. That makes \$1 a day for five days. We close Saturday at noon and then I make 60 cents or so. About \$5.50 a week. It's hard to make any more this hot weather. In the winter any good hand can make \$7 a week, but very few earn more. I have been at the business for about three years. When I commenced there were months that I didn't make more than enough to pay for my car-fare and lunches. The girls who size or measure the feathers get 1¼ cents a pound, but the machine moves slowly and they only earn about \$4 a week. Girls who split and bunch feathers earn between \$5 and \$6, and those who sort the long tail and side feathers get 1 cent a pound. The best hand in the shop picks 80 pounds a day. Awful quick worker, but that's not \$5 a week."

A BASEMENT THAT ON A HOT DAY IS SO STIFLING IT REMINDS ONE OF THE "BLACK HOLE OF CALCUTTA."

WORKING FROM 7:45 UNTIL 6:30 AND RECEIVING IN EXCHANGE FOR THE TERRIBLE DRUDGERY AND HARD LABOR A MISERLY \$2 OR \$3 A WEEK.

For dismal surroundings, economy of comforts, and heartless treatment, to the B. store belongs the palm.

I did not work in that establishment, although I tried very hard to do so. I was in the store at 8 o'clock on Friday morning as arranged with Mr. H. who had partially promised to hire me. "One of the girls in the hosiery department" he had said "is sick, and if she doesn't come back Friday morning I will try you."

I could not find the gentleman, although I hunted the main floor and the floors above and below. My plan of fluctuation was to take the elevator up one story and walk down, then ride up two and walk down the third flight. In that way I took in the entire store and a great part of the employees. I began at the bottom and spent a full hour in the basement, where I saw so much and suffered so much that the upper floors had no surprises for me. In the first place the atmosphere was almost unendurable.

Hot! It must have been 100 degrees above!

Out in the open air not a breeze was stirring and the heat was sizzling. Down where I was I could not see a single opening to admit the air, fiery as it was, except the open door