

"Oh, you'll have a hard time."

Thirty pair of eyes looked at me.

"Can you sew?" I was asked.

"You bet."

This bit of slang captured the teacher and set me on a comfortable plane with my neighbors. Reversing the tactics of Ella Wheeler Wilcox, I began at the hardest task first, and got the blonde-haired teacher to show me how to arrange the collar. It was a rolling affair that was attached to a cape, and had to be double-faced with satin. The bands were cut on the bias, and novice-like I stretched the first one and had to rip it off. Three times I ripped it and sewed it, and when I showed it to a girl at my right hand she said: "It ain't right. She'll pull it off."

"Would you tell me how to fix it?" I asked.

"Oh, I can't. Go to Miss S." She screamed to Miss S. to come. Despairing of her aid I made another attempt.

"I'd show you if I had time," my neighbor explained, but I've been on this cloak two and one-half days, and its only 45 cents."

There are chords in a woman's heart which are struck by accident only—strange, varying strings which, remaining mute to the most earnest and passionate appeals, respond at once to the slightest and most casual touch. I sympathized with the poor little woman, who turned about and opened her heart to me.

"It's an awful hard place to work in," she said. "Prices are going down all the time, and the girls can hardly earn anything. Yesterday was pay-day. We're paid the 1st and 15th. I had only \$6.10 coming to me for the two weeks. I have the toothache all the time and I am a month at the dentist's. He's filling my teeth with cement and I don't have anything coming to me when I pay him. All I keep out of my wages is thirty cents for car-fare. I live out on F. and R.

streets and can't always walk in the morning and get here at 7:45. Sometimes I do, but I never ride home. If I didn't live home I'd—I'd—I'd—I'd starve. I would. What'd prevent it?"

Interested in our talk a pretty, brown-eyed girl across the table told us that she had been trying to get a pair of shoes since June. I live at Englewood and have to keep out \$1.25 for car-fare," she continued. "Monday I took out this 40-cent cloak and it isn't done yet. I took it to the forelady this morning and she said it was all right. Just a minute ago I showed it to her and she ripped all these plaits and pulled the bustle out. I'll not be able to get it done tonight, I know. Last fortnight I made only \$4.20."

"Here, you girls, stop your talking and do your work or I'll have to fine you," said the teacher.

"You'r new and I'll excuse you," she said, turning to me, but you musn't talk any more. Where's your collar? Oh! you have the hooks and eyes on the wrong side. Rip them off and put the hooks on the right and the eyes on the left. Then press out your seam."

I took my turn at the gas-stove, skirmished round for a piece of paper or a rag large enough for a holder, burned my finger and came near burning a hole in "Homer's" neck. When I went back to my chair the little Englewood girl was in tears. She had the fur down the front of her cloak too tight and was ripping it off for the third time. The fur may have been nine-tenths wool, but so uncertain was the hair that the girl had taken a fine comb from her box and was trying to comb up the nap to hide the needle line. Her companion, Mary, had been in equally hard luck. Five times she took her brown "milady" and five times came back with it. First the felting was not thick enough; next the color was wrong; the third time the buttons were not plumb; the fourth complaint was made against a crescent bustle, Mrs. S. having expressed a preference