

neys barely reach above grade, and all swarm with children, pale, eager, dirty little creatures that root about in the yellow clay and fresh dumpings like the dogs they play with. Poor children, it is not their mothers' fault that they are wild and unkept, for the languid parents give all their strength to the shop-work in order to half feed and partly clothe them. I had only walked a few blocks in this deep-rutted street in search of H. G—— before being convinced that I was not in the district of protuberant optimists.

The first woman I made inquiry of was carrying a bucket of sawdust from a neighboring ale-house. She didn't know the name, but when I mentioned coats she grew loquacious.

"Oh, yes, the 'slave hole' it's called; that's the sheeny tailor's! Don't go to him, my dear; he'll grind the marrow from your bones. Go to service, girl, go to service. You can have a cot in my room till you find a place. I was with him one fortnight and worked my eyes most blind and he paid me \$1.75. No, I m from England, but I never had harder times in the old country than now. There I paid five shillings for lodgings and here they cost me four dollars." She told me she got the sawdust for sweeping out a corner dram-shop and used it to boil her tea-kettle with.

The grandeur of 258 quite over-powered me. Instead of a "hole" I found myself entering a large two-story red brick house still in process of construction. I ascended the front steps, and after the maneuver of the celebrated king of France marched down again to the basement—to the shop—into the presence of Mr. H. G——. I handed him my letter and while he read it I took him in—optically. He was an unctious little fellow with kinky hair, cunning brown eyes, hatchet features, and a small mustache the color of roasted coffee. He was attired in two shirts—a nether one of chocolate flannel and a linen one a few shades lighter—a pair of check pantaloons, carpet slippers, and a huge gold ring of masonic design.

He read the letter with the cigar in his mouth, the smell of which combined with the flavor of his feet and the exhalations of his toilet was something preponderant.

He asked me what I had worked at, and after a few gasps I gave him some of my history slightly distorted.

I was told to take off my hat and while doing so he stepped back out in the entry and vacated a hook among the factory girl's wraps, but as I did not care to take the chances of tempting the gutter snipes and going home bare-headed I declined his attention and hung them in a corner on the floor. All ready, sewing box in hand, I faced the gaping, silent throng, and was pointed to a chair at a long table, about which ten girls were sewing with a speed and a silence that was terrible to contemplate. They wore cotton dresses of the poorest quality, some of them open at the neck and nearly all rolled to the elbow. The youngest were four little girls of 13, one of whom was operating, two basting, and the fourth finishing a blue cloth cloak. One large Irish hand, possibly 25, sat at the upper end of the table. Of the rest, 15 years would be a fair average age. One poor girl who was very lame had a machine, and it made my heart ache to watch her pale face and follow her thin little hands guide coat after coat under the needle. All the girls were thin and haggard, some were very pretty, some few had color in their cheeks, but it was the hectic flush, not the healthy glow of youth and physical strength.

In all we were twenty girls, eight men and two boys—poor young fellows in their teens, with mealy complexions, wild eyes, hollow cheeks and sunken chests. Neither weighed a hundred pounds, but both pressed goods with heavy irons and were cuffed and pushed about by the boss and his assistant. The men worked in slippers and undershirt without straps or suspenders to keep their trousers in place, and the girls wore heavy peg shoes. I noticed some of the machine hands worked the foot-plate in their stocking feet.