

edging for which the girl gets 2c a yard, being able to make three to five yards an hour? What of the girls who, with their deft fingers willowing plumes, received 15c an inch three years ago and 3c an inch today? What of the fact that the telegraph operator will get a third less if a woman than a man, though she receives the same number of messages and handles the same amount of work, with the same capacity as the man sitting by her side? What of the fact that the bookkeeper as efficient, as accurate, as capable as the man will receive one-third the wages because she is a woman? What of the fact that the basis of a teacher's pay is not the quality of the teaching, but the question, man or woman? What about the bindery girl who loses her position as a hand-worker and is reduced in her wage from \$14 to \$5 a week because of the introduction of machinery? What of the fact that in trade after trade we are eliminating skill by the introduction of machinery?

"The investigations into the question of low wage paid to the women in America have brought out the close relationship between the low wage and the social evil. The girl who is hungry and tired and lonely is likely to take 'a long chance' and when invitations come from foreladies as well as foremen in the department stores or factories, or are brought by leading customers of her employer, her instinctive friendliness naturally responds. That there is commercialized vice, organized for the purpose of betraying the youngest of our sisters, we all know, and that it sends its representatives into the day's work of factory and store and business we also know. The only protection for the girl under those circumstances is to be found in her trade union organization. It adds the strength of the group to her own individual strength and guards and protects and teaches self-government and self-respect. To

strengthen the hands of the girls so that they are empowered to protect themselves within the four walls of their work is the imperative duty of every man or woman who wishes to combat the social wrong.

"But if there is the darkness of tragedy here, there is also the light of heroism. It is essential that it be definitely understood that there are girls by the tens of thousands who have maintained the integrity of their womanhood in the face of great personal suffering and self-sacrifice, as well as in the face of grave temptation. I know girls who have lived twelve in a room, on twelve mattresses, because their earnings did not permit them better sleeping accommodations, and who have lived for three years at a stretch on rye bread and olive oil, unless invited out for a meal. I know girls who have simply paid for the space of half a bed during the night when the same bed was not only shared by them during the night with another girl, but had been used by two other girls during the day time, these other girls being night workers. I know girls who take it as an every-day matter-of-fact experience of working girl life that they should go daily without their luncheons. I know girls who have entered saloons because they could there get a bowl of soup as well as a glass of beer for five cents, receiving in that bowl of soup better nourishment than any other expenditure of such five cents could bring them. I know other girls who, with equal 'matter-of-factness,' never think of spending money for car fare or lunches or laundry or outings, and never dream of earning enough to make life even half-way decent and comfortable or giving a chance for any realization of aspiration or ideals or education—or sweetness of fresh air in the mountains, or by the sea—and yet these girls, by the tens of thousands, in the face of such constant denial of all that makes life worth while, have held