

My Own Shop.

EXPLOITATION OF THE BINDERY GIRL IN THE PRINTING INDUSTRY.

By Marian Nagrom

One of the industries that helps to support the present capitalist system is the printing industry. This by turning printing from its real mission of education and enlightenment to capitalistic purposes and the general spreading of illusions and lies.

Among the many trades that comprise the printing industry one of the most important is bookbinding. The Bindery is the department in which the finishing touches are put to Books, Magazines, Catalogues etc, and where the greatest amount of skill is really necessary.

The work in the bindery falls into two classes. First, the work done by men. Here we find the paper cutters, folding and ruling machine operators and binders, the binding requiring much skill in administering the last touches for which high wages are commanded. Then there is the womans department in glaring contradiction to the old adage that "womans place is in the home". Here we find women and girls from the ages of eighteen to forty-five. Some of them are married and have children, but work because they find their husbands earning inadequate for the household.

The new machine.

The women's part of the bindery work consists of hand folding, inserting and gathering. Wire stitching is an important feature of the work, but with the installation of machines that automatically stitch and insert as well, the girls who do this work, skillful, only after years of experience, find themselves gradually displaced. This new machine requires one girl for each section of a pamphlet and one for the cover. Because of the speed with which the finished booklets come out of the machine, two girls are needed to take them out of the packer, count stack them on a truck for the shipping room. With the help of no more than six or eight girls, this machine does the same amount of work in ten days that the girls alone would do in five or six weeks.

"Hurry, Hurry:"

Then there are the folding machines with the automatic feeder. This does away with hand folding, which is the pride of every experienced bind-

ery girl, and feeding which requires much skill and steady nerves. In the modern bindery "more production" is the watchword and "Hurry, Hurry" the slogan.

The wage of the bindery girl, as of all other workers is her greatest grievance. Most of them feel the humiliatin of walking up to the pay window to receive half the pay of the men for the expenditure of the same amount of energy and effort.

Equal Rights.

The girls are fairly well organized in the International brotherhood of Bookbinders. At the recent convention held in Baltimore the following resolution was presented:

"Where as, under this new era of reconstruction the status of Women has been placed on a scale equal with that of men, politically, professionally, and in many cases industrially and old prejudices of sex have been swept away one by one, thus giving to women in various fields, equal opportunity and equal compensation with men of like qualifications, therefore be it resolved, that the women Bindery Workers shall be placed upon the same equality with men bookbinders and receive equal pay for equal work. That equal work shall be interpreted to mean not only the same identical processes performed by men bookbinders, but shall include all the activities, either manual or mechanical, performed by women which are requisite for the proper construction of a book, or other printed or blank work done in bindery or printing office by women. These activities require as much training and skill and carry as much responsibility as duties performed by men binders".

"KICK THEM OUT"

Needless to say, our very careful and diplomatic president of the pure A. F. of L. type, took precautions to sidetrack any efforts on the part of our committee, and our aspirations were in vain. Very shortly the whole labor movement will no longer be encumbered by such weaklings, which time will be readily exploited by we women workers for the realization of our industrial rights. You see, we are just as much hampered by misleaders as the men. High time to get rid of them!