Manuscript pages: Tuberculosis and working conditions

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after case where the disease was well entrenched it has been utterly
driven out. Listen to the statistics. In 1904 there were 200 out
of every 100,000 dying annually from tuberculosis; - in 1921, 17 years
later this terrible toll had been cut in two, reduced to 100 deaths
in every 100,000. But at the very moment that those who had been
fighting so long and hard against the disease were rejoicing over
this result, they were startled to find that one group of working
women were suffering more from tuberculosis than they ever had be-
fore. This was the group made up of young girls from 15 to 19
years of age. This was found to be true in every industrial country
which keeps careful statistics. Our young girls who go into factories
are falling victims in increasing numbers, to the Great White Plague,
and they are the only group of workers that is so suffering. Why is
this so? They go to work too young. Their resistance to the germ
is far less than it will be later. They go to work without proper
knowledge of the dangers that await them. Young and careless, what-
ever instruction they may have received has fallen on heedless ears.
Their chief concern is their pay envelope, and to get that, even
with a pittance in it, they are willing to run all sorts of risks.

Their parents are, as a rule, both too ignorant and too
hard pressed to concern themselves with the conditions under which
their daughters are working. They do not even realize that their
homes are not proper places for health. When it is discovered that
the girl has been attacked, too often there is nobody that knows what
should be done.
Now, what can we do about it? That great American physician, Sir William Osler, used to say that the battle against tuberculosis was not a doctor's battle, it belonged to the public; that is, to you and me.

If this is so, how are we to wage our battle? First, we must educate the girl to her danger, then, to what she must do in order to avoid contagion. Then, we must see to it that she has a regular physical examination, which, if it shows a If this shows the start of the disease, she must be helped to the cure, which, at the start, is always possible.

In addition to this educational campaign, we must continue the fight to get for her, and for all working people, homes and working places which make for health rather than for disease. This is a campaign worthy of the mettle of us all, so let us up and at it.

I don't know how many pairs of ears have stood by me through this little talk, but to all those who are still listening, let me say - I thank you.