The Superintendent was in a bad humor when I called at his office by appointment to pick up certain figures he had volunteered to collect for me.

"Did you meet those women going out?" he growled. Yes, I had. "Committee from some club or other, come to tell me it was my duty not to hire any more wives who had husbands fit to work.

"I told them to go talk to the women, but they refused, said every time I took on a wife, I pulled down a home, and the home was the foundation of American society.

"That's what the women think," I told. "Most of them work to preserve that, and I'm going to do all I can to help them." That made them huffy, and they went off.

"I wish you would tell me to go talk to your wives who work," I said.

"Sure, I will. Then maybe you can tell that committee that I'm not the one that's to blame." You see, the Superintendent really valued his reputation for just and kindly dealings with his force.

It was that little episode that led to my first meeting with No. 24, as Mrs. Jennie Beecham was officially known in the mill where she looked after a set of heavy spinning frames -
"flyers" they called them.

The foreman beckoned her from her post when I presented the Superintendent's card. She hesitated. To go with me meant lost time, possibly tangled skeins. If you are on piece work interruptions, however interesting, cut down your pay envelope—something factory visitors don't always remember. In this particular mill, however, everybody took his cues from the "old man" as they affectionately dubbed the Superintendent. His rule was to accommodate where you could.

"I'll look after things, Jennie," said the foreman as the woman hesitated. She nodded gratefully, gave a swift appraising glance at her noisy domain, twisted in a loose bit of cotton feeding onto a spindle and led me to a small office, at one side of the long, low, clattering room.

No. 24 wore the big black enveloping apron and the dark dust cap which the factory required, but the ugly uniform could not conceal the fact that she was a pretty woman, and also one who had an eye on her looks for she wore her cap at a coquettish angle and a curl of her bright hair had been drawn from under the band and carefully arranged over an ear. Moreover, she was gracious and self-possessed, quite the hostess indeed as she seated me and took a wad of cotton from an ear, explaining that she
found the clatter of the room less fatiguing if she wore cotton. What could she do for me?

You do not keep so busy a woman waiting. I told her at once I wanted to know why so many wives - not widows or "separated" women - worked. They told me she had a husband and a child. Why did she leave them nine hours a day, five and a half days a week, and how did she manage?

One would think such a question might be resented, but it was not, though it brought out heavy lines in No. 24's face I had not noticed, and it made her blue eyes suddenly sad.

"I used to wonder about wives who worked," she said. "When I was first married, if I saw a woman wearing a marriage ring behind the counter in the department store, I blamed her - thought she was trying to shirk house work and babies. Shows how little I knew. I never thought it could come to me - queer how when you're young and happy and being taken care of you never think anything will happen to you as it does to other people. Life isn't like what you thought it was.

"I was married and had a baby and my husband was doing well - a good accountant. Then the War came and he thought he ought to go - so did I. It seemed so splendid. Well, he went to France - and came back, without his right leg. Suffers all the time - has had four operations - can't work. Of course there's the pension, but it won't keep us and educate my little girl."
She's twelve now and I want her to have as much education as I had - I can't endure not to give her a chance. I can earn more here than clerking or typewriting or book-keeping. I make $40. a week sometimes.

Of course it's heavy work but I'm getting used to it. They're good to you in this factory - understand. I like it more and more.

"But your husband, your home, how can you leave them?"

"My husband does the work mostly. Wonderful how handy he's learned to be. Good cook - neat. There are days he's too bad to be up, but not often. My little girl says he breaks down sometimes when he sees me going to work and cries and cries. A man hates to have his wife working - at least a man brought up like he was, but I tell him it don't help to worry. There's no other way. We've got to stand it. 'It's like the War,' he says sometimes, 'you have to go on - obey.' And you get used to it like ma.

"But I'm not the only one in this town - not the only one in this factory, - and there are those who are worse off than I am. There's the woman whose husband's never came back. There's one who cries all Armistice Day - never look at her that the tears are not running down her cheeks. Her husband was killed. She never got his body. And her baby was only a year old. When trouble like that comes you have to manage best you can and no two of us ever came do the same. She had her mother out West, a widow, and she came on, to live with her, - keeps the house and takes care of the baby while Katie works. They're doing real well. The mother is happy - she has a
home again. But Katie can't get used to having Jo dead. I expect she will. You get used to anything - learn to get on without what you think you can't live without. Maybe she'll marry again - some do.

"There's No. 19 - you ought to talk to her - widow fifteen years - just married again. She'll talk - she's so happy.

"What surprises me as much as trouble coming when you didn't believe it could, is the way people make out. What they learn to do and how they get so they put up with things they never dreamed they could stand. Why, I like my work. It isn't only the money though of course that's why I'm here - got to have it. It's hard, and I go home ready to drop sometimes, but, after all, it takes my mind off my trouble. I don't believe I could endure to sit beside my poor husband all day, always remembering how he's been broken to pieces. When once he was so strong and handsome. It's better for him to have something to do - some way to help. You'd never believe how hard he tries, how interested he gets in setting the table and scouring the silver spoons. And I don't know but Sweetie - that's my little girl - is learning something she'd never learned if it hadn't been for the trouble. Girls now-a-days get pretty and spoiled, petted too much - things too easy, but my girl thinks more about helping her Dad and keeping him cheered up than about her clothes and her parties. I tell him sometimes she's getting something
we could never have given her if he'd been strong and rich. So maybe it won't be all less. Maybe something will come out of it for all three of us if we can only hang on long enough."

The foreman stuck his head in. "Sorry, Jennie, but I've got to go to the other end. You'll have to take your set."

No. 24 sprang up, stuffed the wad of cotton into her freed ear, shook hands, saying cheerfully as she did so, "Glad I met you, does me good to talk sometimes," and away she ran to her flyers.

I made my way across the room looking for No. 19. I found her quite another type from Mrs. Jennie. None of the youthfulness, the pathetic prettiness, the gentle manner, the correct speech. Whatever No. 19 had been fifteen years ago, she belonged now to the spinning room. She had taken on something of its noisy, busy roughness, its gay bustling, competent spirit. It was as much an accepted fact of life for her as the home she had somehow kept through fifteen years of widowhood.

Her broad red face smiled, her bright eyes twinkled when I put my question -

"Sure, I'll tell you if you want. Come in here," and she led me to the woman's rest room. "Just look after my set a minute," she asked her neighbor.

"Now I'll tell you quick what happened to me. I was married young to a fine boy and good worker. We started right in to buy a home - had a nice little house."
"He wouldn't hear to my working though I belonged like him to mill folks. My mother was as good a spinner as my father, and so had my grandmother been - in the blood. But he wouldn't hear to it. I was a good manager. If a woman knows how to cook and sew and buy careful she can almost as well on one pay envelope as on two - that is, as long as there's only two of you. If it's going to make your man happier when you start out for you not to go to work, why, then, I think you ought to do that way. I always said the most important thing about marriage was making your man happy. Bill was that proud of himself because he could support me. Seemed to rest him when he got home to find me all cleaned up and waiting for him."

"Well, we did splendid and both of us was tickled to death when the twins came. Boys - strong and cute as they could be. They was just six weeks old and I was feeling fine when my man got pneumonia and died on me in two days. I couldn't believe such a thing could happen. Queer how life turns out - ways you've never dreamed. But you can't do anything - can't change anything. There he was - dead, and the twins needing to be fed. Only a bit of insurance and the house not half paid for. People said I ought to find a home for the twins and board and work. Humph! Bill had set too great a store on a home for them and I wasn't going to go back on Bill and his kids. I was going to keep our home and bring up our boys like he'd planned."
"'Twaft easy of course, but it's queer how things open and
how somebody always comes along that needs you much as you need them.
You learn that among us working people. We have to stand together.
There was a woman I knew whose man had been killed just before Bill
died — nice woman. She had a baby around a year old. Sewed, but
she was delicate and wasn't getting along — wasn't happy. Her people
always treated her as if it was her fault, she had to come back
on them — leastwise she felt so.

"Well, I saw my way when I thought of her. I'm going into
the mill I told her, you come and keep house for me and take care
of my babies with yours. I can't pay much but you'll be earning your
keep and can piece out—sew a little.

She said it seemed as if the Blessed Virgin had sent me.
I kind of felt that way about her. It worked fine and 'twan't many
years before I had the house paid for. I don't believe I could have
stood Bill's dying so sudden if I hadn't had work. I tell you
when you've got trouble, a machine to run is a great comfort. Keeps
your mind busy. I've got so I just love my set, it's done so much
for me.

"'Married again?' They told you, didn't they? Yes, me and
my friend who kept house for me both married. I've got a fine
steady man — one of Bill's pals. Twins were gettin' too much for me,
needed a father. They're that pleased!

"'Am I goin' on workin'? 'Deed and I am. You couldn't get me
is a familiar one among the young women of the country.

This is a most important thing for us to understand today. Every morning between seven and nine o'clock hundreds and thousands of women start their days work in the factories and workshops of the country. Every evening between five and six o'clock these women finish their work and go home — often to housework, help with supper, and put the children to bed. The girls of today are the women of tomorrow and upon their vision and ideals, upon the vision and ideals which are partly the product of the industries in which they work, depend in large measure the future progress of the country and of civilization.
out of this factory. Think of what it's meant to me, when I was in trouble. Then, I'm used to things here. Got out of way of keepin' house. Then he's got a sister who's been keeping house for him ten years or so - fine woman but set in her ways. It would throw her out of a home if I took over the housekeeping. She wouldn't be happy bein' dependent. Now we pay her and she's that pleased, - keepin' her brother and earning her own money. We have a right good time.

"Some people say they'd think I'd want my house to myself. So I might if things had been different, but what would have become of his sister? One thing I've learned havin' so much trouble, is that there's always somebody needin' help, that can help you if you'll let 'em. I ain't sayin' it's easy always to get along but we manage. We all have to do best we can. No two of us alike."

A fact to which No. 24 had already called my attention.

I went back to the Superintendent to talk over what I had heard. Here was real courage, I told him. Here was sound philosophy, born of hard experience. I felt somehow that I couldn't pity those two women in spite of the cruelties of life had asked them to endure. They seemed to me to have found something which meant so much to them that they were willing to suffer any pain, endure any hardship in order to save it. What silly little lives the women who never cared enough to sacrifice their ease for anyone or anything led compared to them!
But, I asked, were tragedies like theirs, death, disease, or back of all the wives who work? If so, what a mountain of woe it meant for there are so many of them—nearly 2,000,000—almost a fourth of all the women in the land, young and old, who toil for wages. And so many of them bring home pitifully thin pay envelopes. The two women with whom I had talked earned handsomely—from $30 to $40 a week, and the work was steady; but the great majority of the 2,000,000 earn a half or less of these wages—$10—$12—$15—$18 a week, and often went weeks without jobs. What a price to pay for a home! Think of 2,000,000 women fighting like this to save the family. Why they make an army. Certainly we needn’t worry about the future of the institution with them on guard.

"Hold on, now—hold on," cried the Superintendent as I aired these reflections. "There are fifty women on that floor, and you have talked to two. No question about what those two are working for. No question about their courage or that they’ve learned a lot about life that a woman who always has it easy never can know; but don’t think the whole fifty are like those two. I know about them; that’s my business. I’m not responsible for their wanting work or having to work like that committee seemed to think, but I have to see to hiring and training and holding on to the good ones. You get to know a lot about a woman who comes every day for months and months to your factory. There’s the employment manager and the company nurse and the foreman and sometimes the woman herself
all talking to me. I know more about some of the women who've been around here a few years than their own husbands ever will. It isn't big troubles like you struck this morning that drives most of them to the factory, but just hard luck of one kind or another. Don't make any mistake, most of them work because they must. People who are comfortably off like the women in that committee don't understand that lots of workingmen now-a-days can't earn enough to keep a family and get anything ahead. They live up to their last cent if the woman don't work and even then they do if anything goes wrong. Somebody falls sick or a baby comes or there's a shut down. Time and time again he can't get work and she can. What are you going to do? It ain't a tragedy exactly but it's hard luck that accounts for a good many of my working wives.

"And then there's the woman who work because they want better homes. They could get along somehow on their man's wages, but they are ambitious. They want something ahead and a home of their own; and when they get a home they want to furnish it well. Why there are women here who are always buying things for their houses and their children which they couldn't have if they weren't working. They are the kind that are apt to want to educate the children and they train them, plan for them - good solid women, looking ahead and getting lots of satisfaction out of their work. They are fine in a factory - have hold on the girls, too. This being a mill town, most of the girls go to work as early as the law allows and when they marry
they keep right on. Even if they stay out a while they're pretty sure to turn up after a month or two, asking for a job. They say they're lonesome - miss the crowd - don't like to stay in all day. Natural enough. That's what their mothers and grandmothers, too, sometimes, are doing - working and keeping house. Why, I've had three generations of women working here at one time, from one family, grandmother, mother and daughter. A fine steady lot and all well fixed.

Once in a while we get a wife here that hasn't any reason for working but just to get more money to buy more silk stockings and things - wants her own money, wants to be independent of her man. Well, why shouldn't she be? If a woman wants money to spend on herself bad enough to work nine hours a day in a cotton mill, I say it's up to her. And if she is a little flighty, as that kind is apt to be, why the work will be pretty sure to steady her down. But just as I told you, and don't make any mistake about it, most of these women with husbands work because they must if they are to save and to improve their homes, and they have a hard time. They have two jobs - and there's always a tug of war going on between the two. I wish we could ease up on them more than we can in the factory. Women as brave as most of these working wives deserve more from industry than they are getting. Still, it is hard to tell what we can do!

The Superintendent was certainly right when he called
the double job of the working wife a Tug of War. It is for the sake of the home that she enters the factory. It is always uppermost in her thoughts, but the factory is perforce a jealous task master - you must keep its hours, give it for the bulk of the day an undivided attention. Neglect it, disobey its orders and it rejects you. When things are going well at home the woman can give what it demands and do it cheerfully since she is serving the home. It's when things go wrong that the tug comes. What maddening anxieties must sometimes torment her, impair her efficiency, cut down her output. Her man went off "mad" this morning - will he get over it by night? She can think of nothing else. She left the baby restless, feverish, will the grandmother, the "little mother" who fills her place, watch him, give him his medicine? They are behind with the rent, will they never catch up? All the alarms, the worries that come to family life, however comfortable the circumstances, are here - with the added ones that earnings never sufficient for all the needs, bring.

"I feel as if I should fly today," a busy shoe-worker said to me once as I stood by her machine. "My man lost his job and he just sits and sulks - won't even tidy up."

It takes little imagination to picture the difficulties in the way of the woman who tries to carry the double job, whatever her earnings. Nothing but management sees her through. That is
recognised universally in the industrial world. "She knows how to manage" — "She ain't no idea about managing" — they tell you, talking of one another's problems. The "good manager" is the pride of her family — the poor one the contempt of the neighborhood. But no two of them ever manage in the same way — that they all agree, and none of them can work it out alone. They must have help from others. In thousands of cases it is to the members of the family too old or too young or too unfit to work for one reason or another, to whom they naturally turn. The interdependence of relatives is recognized by all self-respecting, responsible working people. They see that it is only when all the members hold together that a home can be provided for all throughout their lives. "Don't forget you'll be old sometime and can't work," is one of the mother's warnings when a child frets over the expense and care of an aged grandmother. It is on these young or old or feeble members that all the cares of the household fall in the hours the mother is in the factory. But if they are too weak or ill to work they mustn't complain. "Make things harder" — that is the ethics of the situation — alas, often forgotten.

Responsible members of the family stand by one another and so do the responsible women of a neighborhood. Those who work at home keep an eye on the children of those in the factory, drop in to see how an invalid is doing, give the medicine, the broth, "pick up the house." In every industrial community you find women with many burdens of their own who accept as a part of their day the helping
out of those in trouble, those who are especially handy-capped, or over-burdened. When they see a neighbor's home is getting the worst of it in the Tug of War with the factory they lend a hand. Above all, the home must be kept together. What is to become of the children, the man, if it breaks up? They are an informal sisterhood banded together in defense of the institution which they feel is their particular care in the world.

Wise women are born of these tugs of war carried on as they are sometimes through long years. I have rarely known a wiser one than Mother K, and certainly few had paid more in endurance and hard work for her wisdom than she had.

When I first met her she was seventy years old—small, wrinkled, but her color was clear, her eyes bright, and as she said she was "spry as a girl on her feet."

Mother K. kept house for a grandson of fifty—a widower with a little girl of twelve, whom she was training. I had met the man at his lathe in a New England manufacturing establishment, one of the old fashioned, helter-skelter, rule-of-thumb type, which was being put under a modern scientific management. How did he like the changes? I had asked him; and he said promptly, "Well, I don't understand very well yet but I'm for it. I have scientific management in my home and I know it works there. It ought to here. Come home to supper with me and you'll see."

I accepted his invitation with some misgivings. What
would his wife say if I came in without a warning.

"'Tain't my wife," he chuckled. "She's dead. It's my grandmother. She don't need warning for company." Nevertheless, I felt a little uneasy about my reception. But if my sudden appearance disturbed Mother K. she didn't show it.

The K's lived on the second floor of one of those two-story apartment houses so common in New England factory towns - four rooms, an enclosed back porch, an attic store room. Everything was in perfect order. The supper, already spread on the kitchen table set against the wall, was bountiful, wholesome and appetizing. I think Mother K. may have opened an extra jar of fruit for me, but that was all. Her only comment was, "If I'd knew you was comin' I'd had waffles instead of hash."

Supper over, she showed her friendliness as well as her sense of courtesy by letting me wipe the dishes. There was only one digression before we sat down to chat - the grandson insisted on taking me to see the closets he had built in the loft, under her direction. The most impressive example of her scientific management to his mind was the way she kept potatoes and apples. "We buy 'em wholesale," he said grandly, uncovering the barrels, in which each particular spud, each bit of fruit was carefully wrapped in paper.

"See what we save." She had figured it out, and there it was, pasted on the closet door! He was full of wonder and admiration, too, at the arrangement of the family wardrobe. I suppose the poor fellow
had left his Sunday clothes on a chair or strung them on a nail all his life — often finding them on the floor when he wanted them. Not now. Everything he owned, from worn overalls to "best suit" was carefully placed on the hangers and suspended from the rods she had directed him to put up. He left the best to the last — the pretty frocks
of his little girl, hanging neatly in order of their importance
and covered with a curtain which he drew with something like
reverence.

Now, where, I asked myself, has she learned all this?
Certainly not from her neighbors. The answer came out in our talk
after supper. Mother K., so I discovered that evening, had in her
seventy years experienced to the fullest the life of the mill town.
In her childhood her father and mother both spinners began their
twelve-hour day at 6 A.M. She could scarcely remember the time when
she was not a "little mother" caring for a baby under the direction
of a widowed grandmother who kept the house. There were black streaks
in her recollections - illnesses, deaths, the babies came so fast and
died so often, - strikes, shut downs. But it was by no means all gloom.
School, church, family celebrations, the woods, the shore picnics,
singing school - all the gaieties of the young in a mill town, she re-
called, with gusto.

She went to work at twelve and married at eighteen. "We
started fine, saving every week - for my folks was that kind. And I
had training - could cook and keep a house - always had to help.
Grandma saw to that just as I do now to this young lady," nodding at
the child who from her father's arms laughed happily - a little
superior perhaps but not defiant.

"We had our set backs. Babies cost money, but we figured
'twas better to have them - makes life more interesting. The fuller
the house, the more things happen and if some are hard more are happy. And what would we do without them when we grow old? Look at me.

Where I'd be now if I hadn't had a family? Shut up somewhere alone - in a Home. Call that living? Now I've got a good place where I'm needed.

"I kept right on workin' after every baby, Might have managed not to after a while if it hadn't been for the shut downs, which folks don't remember when they figure how much we make and how we ought to get ahead. And then there were the strikes. Twelve hours was too long, and we had to fight to get it down to ten. All that puts you behind.

"We were managing though and were buying a home when my man died - just like that" - snapping her fingers.

"Terrible loss?" Yes. And it left me lonesome. He was a good man. But I managed. The girls went into the mill earlier than we'd intended. Better for 'em than doing nothing. After all, work's the greatest education there is. I never let any of mine be idle. Why, I had my girls wiping dishes at four. And they always turned in their pay envelope to me, like theirpa did, and I gave them a little something every week for their own - just as I always did him.

"Boys all went into the mill, except Tommie. He wanted an education and we all turned in and helped. He went through Boston Tech. and has a fine place now. Superintendent in a big machine shop. You always feel real proud when one of yours is educated, I was
always hoping mine would take to it. Tommie was the only one that
did.

"Girls married early. I kept 'em home till their babies came. They're all settled now and not doing so bad.

"Working women could get along, save for homes, have families — that is, if they didn't have any real bad sickness, that's the worst. -- if it wasn't for two things - men that drink. There's some that will get it, law or no law, though I must say Prohibition is the best friend God ever sent to working women with families. Shiftless, drinking men - and shiftless women - the kind that don't know how to cook and clean and buy cheap and that won't learn. That kind of folks can't manage no matter what's done for 'em, though of course some of the things they've done have helped a lot. I never could be thankful enough that the State made the mills give us good water to drink, opened the factory windows and put up fire escapes. I saw a mill burn down in this town forty years ago. Fifty caught in it. That makes you bitter - might have been prevented. There's some things that can't be - like shut downs. I never believed they'd close if they was paying expenses - 'twouldn't be sense. But fires and bad air and poison water - seems a shame the State would have to drive owners to do things like that.

"Yes, I always told my girls whatever they did, to marry steady boys. I'd seen to it they knew how to keep a clean house and set out victuals fit to eat and more than that, not to be comfortable
if things weren't decent. Makes more trouble to let things go -
get shiftless, than it does to work when you're tired - so I always
thought. Of course it ain't easy but you can't let go, not for a
minute - a working woman can't - not till she's dead. And she won't
die so soon keeping hold as she will lettin' go."

"When did I leave the mill?" When I was sixty. Family all
settled and I went to housekeeping for old Mrs. Tuckett. She owned
most of the mill where I had worked. Her man was dead and she wasn't
strong. She liked me around for though I wan't anything but a spinner
she was used to me and I knew all about the folks, high and low, most
of them dead, that she liked to talk about. I learned a lot there.
Never saw clothes all lined up on hangers until I went to her house.
Lots of things in those grand houses you can have - make 'em your-
self like Bill did ours, and about settin' a table and manners.

"Old Mrs. Tuckett died two years ago and my grandson here
lost his wife about that time and I came right here to keep house
for him. Lucky for me to have a place to step into where I was
needed. Tommie wanted me to come to them - said I'd never need to
do another lick of work. Humph! What would I do if I didn't have
work. No, I want a home where somebody needs me. I'm a little set
in my ways maybe, but Bill and Susie here seem to like to have me
around and I tell 'em if they do like I say they'll never come to
want."

Bill and Susie's only comment was a chorus of chuckles
and giggles!

Mother K's pungent personality, her sturdy grip on realities, the fearless spirit in which she had faced hardship and disasters and come come out unconquered - and unconquerable - made me echo the Superintendent's wish - "Women as brave as most of our working wives deserve more from industry than they are getting" - but I echoed at the same time his doubt about what to do. There are well-meaning people like my Superintendent's committee who demand in the name of the home that wives be forbidden the factory and shop, and there is an occasional employer who attempts it, with the result that the women lie their way to the work bench. As things now are in the industrial world, it is not a possible solution. Tens of thousands of men cannot earn enough to support a family in any degree of comfort without more help than comes from the most careful and diligent house-keeping. Tens of thousands more cannot support a family and get ahead, buy a home, without the wife's pay envelope. She must work.

Moreover, we are breeding women who want to work. The last century took from women of the working class the home industries by which they formerly made their contribution to the upkeep of the family, just as it did from the responsible rich the obligation of management. It left women in a sense stranded. In finding work through which they can make the economic contribution
which they formerly made by home industries, women are winning back
a certain self-respect which they were in danger of losing. The
working wives are here. There must be more of them in the future
instead of less. The problem is to ease their Tug of War, at both
ends of the rope.

A shorter week - forty-four, or better still, forty hours -
a higher minimum wage - a sanitary, well lighted, safe working place -
a cafeteria - a rest room - compensation for accidents - a factory
nurse - insurance for illness and unemployment - these are helps
which we can fairly ask of the employers. Many employers have gone
far toward realizing some or all of them. Many, too, give a special
consideration which goes a great ways toward softening their situation.
Going into a spinning room one afternoon, I found the employment
manager and foreman anxiously talking about a woman operative that
had not turned up on time. It was a rush day in the place and her
absence was holding back output, but they were less concerned about
that than the reason of her absence, which had just been reported.
Her little boy, four years old, had disappeared - slipped from her
caretaker and though she and her neighbors had searched through the
noon hour he had not been found. The word had spread through the
busy room and on every hand you saw anxious faces, heard exclamations
of sympathy - and when the woman came running in flushed, disheveled
but joyful, crying, "He's all right!" - there was general rejoicing.
And the foreman, far from scolding, came over to say, "Gee, but I'm
relieved. I know how I'd feel if it had been one of mine." That consideration was worth far more to her than her lost time. You could tell from her face.

But it is wrong to force the mothers who must work to leave a young child to unreliable care in the hours she is absent. She can never be entirely free from anxiety that he will be injured, wander away, even be stolen. It is the more wrong for industry and society to permit this because the method of relief has been so long demonstrated both in this and other countries - the creche or child's nursery which takes a little one in the morning and keeps him through the day is a way of easing the burden of the working mother which should be available in every industrial community. No matter who provides it: the factory - and some do - the community, a settlement, church, a benevolent individual - it should and would be as universal as schools, kindergartens, if we thoroughly grasped the woman's situation, felt the hard necessity driving her, sensed her importance and our responsibility toward her.

But there is no single point at which so much can be done for the working wife and mother as in caring for the health of her and her family. "Sickness is the worst that comes to us," Mother K. told me. "That's what keeps the best of us back."

It is not only the expense which often eats away savings and takes away the home but it is the hopelessness, the depression that comes from repeated epidemics, accidents, striking now there
and now that one in the household. There are families which are
never free from some form of disease. It is not only the afflicted
person that suffers, the energy of the group is sapped, its hope
dulled. There can be no care-free happiness in the presence of
chronic affliction.

Industry cannot any longer be accused of ignoring the cruel
ravages ill health and injuries make on the laboring men and women.
At no point has it attacked these evils which have grown up with
it with more energy and intelligence. Indeed some of the best
health work doing in the country is by employers of labor. More than
one concern has set out to make the community which has grown up around
it and upon which it depends for labor, a place of universal well being.

I do not know a more thorough-going and inclusive effort of
this nature than that of the picturesque show towns - Endicott &
Johnson City - near Binghamton, N. Y. The towns are peopled almost
entirely by shoe workers and their families - some 60,000 in all.
Many years ago the management put a full time surgeon and physician
into its plants to look after injuries and diseases incident to their
occupation. The doctor was kindly, interested. His patients were
soon bringing to him ailments that had nothing to do with the shop,
asking him for advice for a wife, a child. He soon found himself with
two men's work on hand, but the management was intelligent enough to
see that he was rendering a service that rebounded to the stability of
the labor force and gave him an assistant - then another - and another.
It was not long before the mothers who did not work as well as those who did were coming to his consulting office with their troubles. As the demand grew the staff and equipment were enlarged to meet it. Nurses were added and care given them to make their rounds. Specialists for eyes, ears, throat, teeth were employed and the very best equipment given them for their work. Today 27 full time physicians and surgeons and 51 trained nurses look after the people of the shoe towns. Any physical ill which comes to any man, woman or child in the community is attended to - at the company's expense.

Consider what all this means to the working wife - and there are hundreds of them in these towns. What a burden of fear and dread it lifts from her from the day she marries. She does not fear to bear children, because of the expense and the lack of care. A pregnant woman has the best of counsel about caring for herself, and such confidence are the women coming to have in the service that even the foreign new comers seek it. When her hour comes she goes to one of the three Medical Centres which furnish beds for maternity cases. There her baby is born, and she is kept for two full weeks in such cheerful surroundings and under such care as many of them never knew existed on earth. "It's like heaven" a husky woman with a day-old baby - her first - told me. She need not worry about home either, for the nurse is supplanting whoever is left in charge. As she grows stronger she is taught how to care for her child. And when she goes home she has a farewell which makes her feel how
important the E. J. Corporation at least feels it is to have added a child to the world.

But the doctor in dismissing her does not forget her. She is expected to bring the baby once a week to the clinic for examination. This goes on for six months when he is graduated, the chief ceremony being to take his picture, which henceforth will hang with the hundreds of other E. J. babies which decorate the corridors of the medical centres.

But this service not only sees her safely through her confinement and looks after her child, it charges itself with every other burden that disease may have laid or may be in danger of laying on her or her family. There is the aged and feeble mother or father that she must look after - a nurse eases their pains and helps in keeping them cheerful; there is Johnnie who has sore throat. Long tonsil "don't breathe right" - out comes his tonsils, "which I never could have afforded." There's her man with a pain in his back that the doctors have long told them nothing but an operation would cure. They take him away one day and after weeks he comes back - weak but cured. A new man - "and it never cost us a cent."

The incessant fear she has lived under is lifted. She has a chance now - "nothing to do but work good and regular and take care of my house. If any of us gets sick they see to it," a worn mother told me!
But how - how can a business afford such an outlay for it is very great, the cost of taking care of all the ills of 60,000 people. They have come to believe they cannot afford not to do it. As the E. J. Corporation sees it, two great and persistent fears follow the industrial worker - man and woman: unemployment and illness. Either, long continued, destroy efficiency. The Corporation has developed its medical service to relieve its working body of the second of these cankers. As a result, so Dr. D. C. O'Neil who has built up the service claims:

"We have a family of happy, contented workers. They are receiving adequate medical care from doctors interested in their welfare and not influenced by financial considerations; they are not forced to consult quacks or to purchase medical nostrums; they are not impoverished by the advent of illness; they are not a burden on the charitable institutions of the community; they are able to produce more finished material per worker than any similar group; they are so satisfied with working conditions that a very low labor turnover prevails; and they have no quarrels with their employer since the business was established."

But we must not forget that the proportion of our 2,000,000 working wives who receive even a modicum of this medical service is small. The great majority must shift for themselves, neglect their ailments, run in debt, suffer in mind and body.

Convinced as the shoe towns are that the cost of the
medical service is more than paid by the workers themselves in quality and quantity of output and in willingness to co-operate in management's plans. Convinced as all employers are who have attempted even a fraction of this service that it holds workers who would otherwise wander and so pays for itself, there is only a small percentage of our industrial establishments that give any attention to the problem. District nurses where they exist help but they do not pay the doctor's bills. Free clinics help but rarely do they go far enough nor are they universal. Friendly agencies soften the blows in many a quarter but they are always uncertain. Organized charities are a last resort but are not available in every community. Count up all the efforts to come to the woman's aid and still there remains a vast untouched need. There could hardly be a more satisfying work to which to put one's hand than to aid in reducing this need for where in all the world of women do we find braver souls than these working wives - harder tasks than their Tugs of War.