



of his workers? Can it be possible that "small" children mean small wages and large profits? And at Christmas time—"the children's time," as we call it in our soft rhetoric—the march of this army of little workers is heaviest; it is then that the feet falter most wearily.

You cannot, in any city, at any season, go upon the streets too early nor too late to miss the tired recruits of this children's army. Between seven and eight in the morning, and between six and seven in the evening, you see them sprinkling the ways of traffic, flying to or from their work. But at Christmas time this army of little conscripts suddenly increases. On the streets; in halls and elevators; in offices, stores, and cellars; in workshops and factories—in almost every industry we have built for luxury or utility, thousands of little feet and hands and brains are there to serve and suffer. It is, however, in the box, the confectionery, and a few other factories that the masses of children throng. It is in these that the hours are longest, the drive hardest, and the pay scantiest. Nowhere else is there a harder fate for the little holiday workers save only among the bundle-packers, the cash-girls, and the delivery-boys in the large retail stores.

A thing so dainty and delicate as confectionery we are slow to associate with drudgery, and weariness. The lucent, glistening piles of the Christmas shops, little delectable mountains flavored with every hiving from Attica to San Diego, and tinted and scented with the cheerful May time—all this ambrosial stuff might seem to have come, like flower and fruit and comb, out of the ever-springing joy of nature. Yet this trade, which employs more people than milling, canning, or meat-packing, is one of the industries in which little children are found to be most efficient and desirable. The candy factory of the cheaper grade is a place swarming with little ones, especially girls. It is a place where children are worked cruelly long hours to fill orders; where the work is murderously monotonous; where health and character are broken down.

Three months before Christmas the smaller confectionery establishments call in troops of little children and begin full work and overtime work, making ready for this brave pomp of the holidays. There must be preparation for the bulging paper sack and the swollen tarlatan bag of the Christmas tree, for the bottle of straited sticks, and the pudgy "sucker" with its noble lasting quality. Tons upon tons of candy must be prepared for the holiday markets. What irony of civilization is this—one

band of children wasting their bodies and souls to make a little joy for the rest? What sardonic mind conceived this caricature of justice, this burlesque of life?

"Dipping" chocolates, that is, plunging bits of candy into a vat of boiling chocolate, a fraction of an ounce at a time, but totalling one hundred pounds in a day, at a half-cent a pound—this is one of the tasks of candy-making that a small girl can do. For a while it is fun to dip the tidbit, and fish it out, and set it away neatly coated; quite as fine a game as making mud-pies. And the girl may eat as many pieces as she pleases, till comes that sudden and horrid day when she renounces chocolates forever. But the pretty game palls after ten hours of bending in the same position, ten hours of using the same set of muscles in the little arc of motion from the vat to the shelf. The odor, too, grows nauseating. But, worst of all, in the cheaper shops with utensils unprotected by asbestos, the poor little legs under the table, huddled up to the big hot pot, sunken beneath the surface, begin to get burned. "Quick, quick, sister," a visitor at the home of one of these candy-workers heard one of the little home-comers cry. "Quick, sister; it is awful to-night." And her big sister, without further intimation, ran for the vaseline bottle, and there on the little legs were the ever-renewed scars and blisters of her cruel trade.

Another hardship falls on the girls handling caramels. I refer to the continuous passing with the trays from the cooking to the refrigerating rooms, the sudden transition from the ninety degree atmosphere to one of only twenty. Physicians who tend these stooped, hollow-chested children find in this sudden changing of temperatures a fruitful cause of the lung and bronchial troubles that pursue these fated workers.

In five large candy-factories of a big city the regular day's work is from seven-thirty to seven-thirty, with a half-hour for luncheon. But in the "rush" season the time goes on till nine or ten in the evening. For overtime the little ones get from five to seven cents an hour. The work done by the children, if done in a fair temperature and for a brief time, would not be any harder than "Pom, pom, pull away," or "King George's Army." But when the lifting aggregated hundreds of pounds in a day, when the steps multiply into miles and leagues, when time is stolen, not only from play but also from rest and sleep, the problem grows appalling.

The ventilation in some of these cheaper places is abominable. The odors of the different candy flavors and the smells of burnt sugar all mix into a nauseating blend. "Sometimes," says Gussie, a candy-maker who abominates candy, "sometimes the smells are awful. Maple sugar is one. Oh, the barrels of maple sugar in a hot room all day long—it is the limit! Our heads ache and ache. Lots of girls faint with the heat and the smells."

The candy-making of the factories is pieced out with home-work in the tene-

ments—a work that saves the manufacturers rent and storage and over-seers. Hundreds of pounds of candy are given out to the parents and children of the tenements, to be taken home and wrapped bit by bit in paper, or boxed for the stores. Picking nuts from the shells is a chore that can be done by anyone. A child is seldom too sick to work at this. The cough of tuberculosis interrupts only for a moment, and convalescents from diphtheria or scarlet fever are soon able to take the meats from the broken shells. Miss Mary Sherman describes one of the tenement-house factories, one that supplies candy-makers and grocers,



The Christmas Demand Greatly Increases the Call for Boxes

and makes a specialty of the "health foods." She testifies that a dozen young Italian girls were picking out, sorting, and packing nuts at six cents a pound; also stuffing dates and other fruits with nuts. She says: "The workers were, without exception, dirty. Their hands were filthy. One girl whom I watched for a long time separating nuts had ulcers covering the backs of her hands."

When machinery annexed box-making to its long list of industries, it made possible the manifold and swift manufacture of boxes, and drew the helpless children into the trade. The

