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DRESSMAKING AS A TRADE FOR  
WOMEN IN MASSACHUSETTS

BY

MAY ALLINSON, A. M.

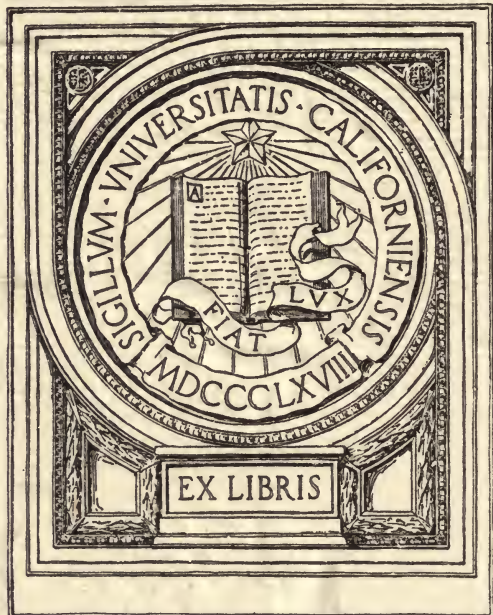


SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
IN THE  
FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

NEW YORK

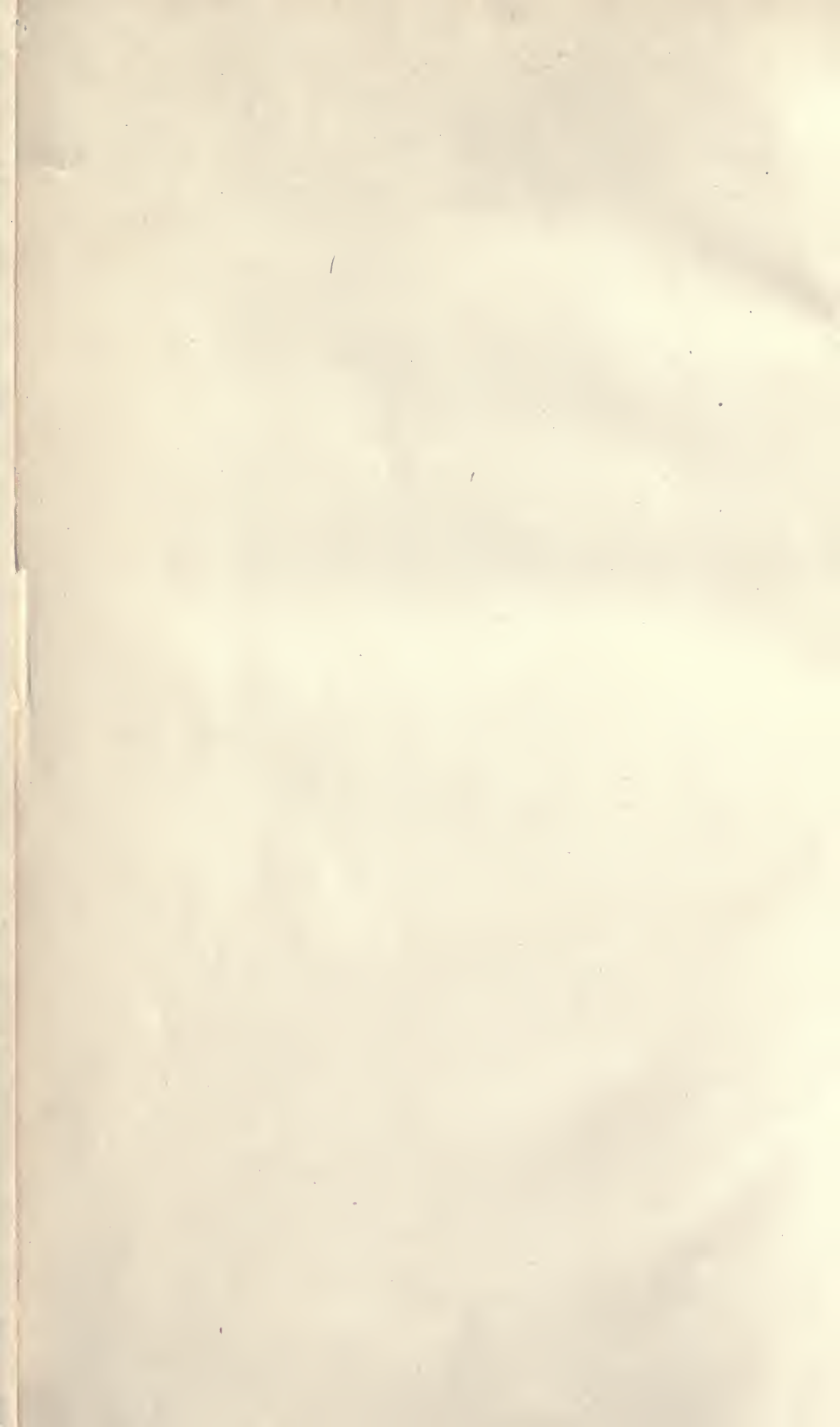
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BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

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DRESSMAKING AS A TRADE FOR  
WOMEN IN MASSACHUSETTS

MAY ALLINSON, Ph. D.



SEPTEMBER, 1916

WASHINGTON  
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WOMEN IN MASSACHUSETTS  
DRESSMAKING AS A TRADE FOR

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## CONTENTS.

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	Page.
Introduction.....	5-9
Chapter I.—Evolution of the trade in the United States.....	11-21
Chapter II.—The dressmaking trade of to-day.....	23-52
1. The family dressmaker.....	29
2. The journeyman dressmaker.....	29, 30
3. The private dressmaker.....	31-33
4. The dressmaker of the transition stage.....	33-37
5. The dressmaker of the shop of specialized workers.....	37-42
6. The commercial dressmaker.....	42-49
7. The manufacturing dressmaker.....	49-52
Chapter III.—Industrial conditions in the trade.....	53-81
Business administration.....	53, 54
The problem of capital.....	54-61
The problem of competition.....	61-64
The labor force.....	64-81
Chapter IV.—Irregularity of employment.....	83-111
The seasons.....	83-93
The workers' season.....	93-106
Instability of the labor force.....	106-111
Chapter V.—Overtime in the dressmaking trade.....	113-126
Chapter VI.—Wages and earnings in Boston.....	127-146
Chapter VII.—Teaching the trade.....	147-159
Chapter VIII.—Summary and outlook.....	161-165
Bibliography.....	167-175

This study was begun in the fall of 1909 by the author as a fellow in the Department of Research of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union of Boston in cooperation with the Boston Trade School for Girls and was completed by her while assistant and associate director of the department. It has been accepted as a thesis by the faculty of political science of Columbia University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of doctor of philosophy. The work was done under the general direction of Dr. Susan M. Kingsbury, director of the Department of Research.

# BULLETIN OF THE U. S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS.

WHOLE NO. 193.

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SEPTEMBER, 1916.

## DRESSMAKING AS A TRADE FOR WOMEN IN MASSACHUSETTS.

BY MAY ALLINSON, PH. D.

### INTRODUCTION.

The occupation of dressmaker ranked third in the United States in 1900 in the number of women employed, 338,144 women 16 years of age and over being engaged in it.<sup>1</sup> Only two occupations—that of servant and waitress and that of agricultural laborer—surpassed it in the number of women employed, but in none did women form a larger proportion of the total employees. Because of the numbers the trade employs, because it is woman's traditional occupation, and because it provides opportunities for development, training for the dressmaking trade has held a large and a logical place in the curriculum of vocational schools for girls. The growth of the movement for industrial education and for vocational guidance has called for a thorough knowledge of the various industries. Especially is this important in the case of those trades which have been recognized as in some degree desirable, and for which the trade schools have attempted to prepare young workers. Almost two-thirds (62 per cent) of the girls who went out from the three Massachusetts trade schools in 1914 had been trained for the dressmaking trade.

Dressmaking is a difficult trade subject for the casual and superficial observer to grasp, because of the variety of types of shops and methods of production which it presents. Dressmakers who go out by the day, small shops, large shops, factories of various types, give the superficial impression that every shop is different. Primitive and highly developed systems exist side by side, yet careful study shows that all may be classified within some six groups, each having a characteristic method of production. The student of census figures may be convinced that custom dressmaking is a declining trade and question if educators are justified in training young workers for this occupation. But in the development and growth of the large shop and the opportunity open to the day worker in the home, the investigator

<sup>1</sup> Special Reports of the Census Office, 1900. Statistics of Women at Work, p. 70. A total of 344,794 women was reported for 1900 and 343,161 for 1910. See Thirteenth Census of United States, 1910. Occupation Statistics, p. 56.



discovers tendencies not shown by the census, since it has abandoned statistics of the hand trades.

The seasonal fluctuations of dressmaking and the consequent irregularity of employment have been causes for worry and doubt to those intrusted with the direction of the young prospective worker. If, however, we study the returns of the United States census, we are able to find practically no industries which do not have slack seasons and times of pressure. Again, some of those trades which offer the greatest prospects are the most seasonal trades. Custom dressmaking and millinery, the most seasonal of all trades, show opportunities for self-development and financial advancement discovered in few other industries open to the woman of limited education. The question is not, then, "Should girls avoid or should they go into these trades?" but rather, "How can those features which complicate and hinder opportunity for advancement be met or eliminated?"

"It is impracticable to stop the fluctuations in demand," wrote the Webbs in 1911. "But here, also, it is not necessary that the fluctuations should be permitted to work havoc with the workers' lives. \* \* \* Though there is a slack season in nearly all trades, this occurs at different parts of the year. \* \* \* The seasonal alternations of overpressure and slackness to which so many workers are subjected, with such evil results, are due only to failures of adjustment. Now, it is not suggested that there is any way by which the local and temporary supply of each particular kind of labor can be precisely adjusted to the local and temporary demand for it. But it is clear that if only we put a little more deliberate organization into the matter a great deal could be done to avert the worst of the calamities."<sup>1</sup>

Comparison with other industries shows that, whatever may be its disadvantages, and though undergoing a marked decline, dressmaking still remains one of the desirable occupations for women in the industrial world.

A conference interested in the promotion of industrial education has defined a skilled occupation as one which meets three conditions: (1) Provision of a living wage for the worker; (2) a content which offers the possibility of differences in the quality of work turned out; (3) provision for promotion, through a series of progressive steps in the industry leading to something better.<sup>2</sup> Dressmaking meets these tests fairly well. While no woman-employing industry has been discovered in which the majority of workers earn a living wage, dressmaking ranks among the best in this respect. Since the fundamental and underlying principle of women's dress is variety, the dressmaking trade is one of the least standardized in

<sup>1</sup> The Prevention of Destitution, by Sidney and Beatrice Webb. London, 1911, p. 126.  
The Survey, Vol. XXXI, No. 17 (1914), p. 496.

process and product. Opportunity for promotion is unique in a custom trade where originality of thought and of design and artistic sense determine its very existence. Naturally few possess these qualities, which are not common to the masses, but increased opportunities for training would doubtless enable more to develop latent possibilities and to bridge the gap from the manual skilled processes to those requiring artistic ability.

Dressmaking is distinctly a domestic trade, only recently disturbed and stimulated by the modern industrial system. Thus, while geographically a universal occupation, its greatest development and largest opportunities appear only in large centers where the social and economic demand necessitates large scale development and business efficiency. Since the personnel is primarily feminine and the trade but recently emerging from its primitive domestic character, there is little development in business administration, practically no organization or community of action on the part of either the employers or workers for the protection of their particular interests, and but little official regulation or supervision.

Because of its tardy industrial development, custom dressmaking has received little attention from economists and statisticians. The standpoint of the former is expressed by Miss Abbott: "Although the 'sewing trades' are too important numerically from the point of view of the employment of women to be entirely neglected, their history can be given here only in outline \* \* \* partly because of the fact that the employment of women in the making of clothing is less interesting than in the other industries which have been discussed. Sewing, needlework of any kind except, perhaps, the making of men's garments, has always been regarded as within women's 'peculiar sphere,' and the point of interest is, therefore, not that so many women are employed in the sewing trade, but that so many men have come into the industry as their competitors."<sup>1</sup>

The United States Census Office, after several attempts to secure statistics for the hand trades, abandoned the attempt "in view of the demonstrated inaccuracy of a hand-trade census and the impossibility of making it otherwise than inaccurate."<sup>2</sup> The census of occupations, made by the United States every ten years and that made by the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics every intervening five years, give some statistics relative to numbers, nativity, and age secured in the population census.

From the industrial standpoint, no official statistics relative to numbers employed, seasons, and wages have been given since 1900, nor are they to be given in future censuses. Such statistics, when

<sup>1</sup> Women in Industry, by Edith Abbott, p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> United States Census, 1900. Manufactures, Vol. I, p. xi.



given, are inadequate for such an intimate acquaintance as is essential to the vocational educator or the placement agent. Those in charge of the direction of workers and prospective workers must know types of shops, method of production in each, processes available to young workers of limited experience, opportunities for advancement, the wages in relation to training and length of experience, types of girls who can avail themselves of the opportunities offered, the time of employment, length of working season as affected by experience and skill, conditions in the trade which explain the instability of labor or give suggestions for lessening it, and the trend of the industry itself.

This investigation was begun in the fall of 1909 by the writer as a fellow in the department of research of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union of Boston in cooperation with the Boston Trade School for Girls. The investigator agreed to visit all graduates of the dressmaking course who were in the trade, for information concerning their trade career and for suggestions which might be helpful to the school in formulating its program. Eighty-four were discovered and visited who had been graduated before the fall of 1909. In all, 200 women workers and 100 employers of various types were interviewed in Boston concerning processes of the trade, means of learning these processes, the various occupations, requisite qualifications, length of time necessary to acquire these, the wage paid for the various kinds of work, the seasons and their significance to the different types of workers; in addition, the means and opportunity for supplementing their primary trade, and the home conditions and responsibilities of the workers were also considered. In 1910 a study was made by the department of research for the Massachusetts State Board of Education of the "Industrial opportunities in Worcester, Cambridge, and Somerville," and statistics collected during the study of the dressmaking shops in these cities were incorporated in this report.

In 1911 Miss Jennie Clement, a Simmons student who lived in Lowell, volunteered to make a survey of the trade in that city under the direction of the writer, and these returns also were incorporated in this report. Because the city directory and statistics of occupation massed together without distinction dressmakers of every degree of skill, shop, factory, and home workers, and employers and employees, an attempt was made to secure a general survey of each city as a whole and to determine the opportunities open to the worker who has learned her trade and proposes to follow it seriously. The results are reported in the following chapters.

After all this information was collected it was felt that the data concerning wages, actual earnings, and seasons were inadequate, and that to obtain satisfactory information on these subjects pay



rolls must be studied. The investigator explained the situation to employers, and pay rolls were secured from 14 custom shops of varied types, covering 735 workers, and from two dressmaking factories, covering 522 workers. These were the only factories turning out a product comparable to that of the custom shops. While the information thus secured concerning seasons agreed to a surprising degree with the returns of the United States census in 1900, the wage statistics secured were unique and original, and made it possible for the first time to know the actual wage possibilities of a large number of workers in this trade. Some totally unexpected statistics relative to overtime, instability of labor, and the significance to the small employer of small capital and long credit also threw light on some of the most important problems of the trade.

The information gathered has been presented in considerable detail, with the hope that the statistical information gathered for the first and only time in this trade might be of service to employers, workers, educators, placement agents, and customers, all of whom may through increased knowledge do their share toward the solution of the problems presented.



## CHAPTER I.

### EVOLUTION OF THE TRADE IN THE UNITED STATES.

The women's clothing trade is unique among the industries of the twentieth century in its resistance to monopoly of wholesale manufacture, and is one of the few present-day industries which shows all stages of industrial evolution from a simple to a highly industrialized system existing side by side. Woman's insistence on individuality of style on the one side, and the large place occupied by women as producers on the other, have hindered and delayed large scale production, but the opening of the twentieth century shows that even this industry is being caught up in the current of centralized and large scale manufacturing. Still the five stages of chronological evolution observed in industry as a whole can be traced in the growth of an occasional small dressmaking shop of a couple of decades past into a great commercialized shop of to-day and can also be observed in the various types of shops about us.

These different systems of production typifying five different stages of evolution may be called (1) the family system, observed in home dressmaking; (2) the help or hire system, seen in the dressmaker who goes out by the day to the home of the customer; (3) the custom system, as seen in the "mistress dressmaker" who conducts a shop to which her customers come to have their work done; (4) the commercialized system, exemplified in women's furnishing stores, which combine a sales and a custom dressmaking department, and (5) the manufacturing system for retail and for wholesale trade. A brief sketch of this evolution through the three centuries of American history may provide a helpful background for a study of the present-day development.

In the American colonies, naturally, the earliest or family stage of industry, where "production was carried on within the family, by the family, and for the family,"<sup>1</sup> predominated and still exists to a large degree in the rural parts of the United States. Before the middle of the seventeenth century the second stage, the help or hire system, developed, by which the independent workman (usually a man) went from place to place offering his services and performing the work in the home of his customer.<sup>2</sup> Before the end of the century the third

<sup>1</sup> Principles of Economics, by E. R. A. Seligman, p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> A Simple Cobbler of Agawam, by Nathaniel Ward, p. 28; An Account of Pennsylvania and Virginia, by Gabriel Thomas, p. 41; Connecticut Colonial Records, Vol. II, p. 233.



stage, the custom system, appeared, under which the independent worker established himself and made garments in his own shop at the order of a special customer. But it was not until the eighteenth century that seamstresses appeared to any extent beside the journeyman tailor, and the mistress dressmaker owned a shop side by side with the master tailor. The fourth stage, the commercialized system, was exemplified in the dealers who imported clothing from Europe or manufactured it in their own shop, and their advertisements occupied a large place in the local newspapers of the eighteenth century. The early nineteenth century saw the rapid development of this stage of this industry. Men and occasionally women became importers of European models which were exhibited to local dressmakers. The second half of the nineteenth century brought the manufacturing system, which has taken over every kind of clothing in the past few decades. The highest point reached thus far is in the ready-to-wear garment, a competitor of and a compromise between custom and ready-made wear. Ready-to-wear clothing is "stock," single, exclusive patterns, made up by the large fashionable custom dressmakers in advance of the specific order of a customer, offering an individuality of style which is lacking in the ready-made garment in its many duplications and its various sizes and materials.

No wealth of material exists to show the characteristics of each successive phase of industrial activity, and especially is this true of the needle trades. Colonial records, papers, correspondence, archives have been diligently searched for historical pictures of the producers of women's wear, with results which show that certain characteristics are common to the trade regardless of difference in time and place.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of colonial times, as has been said, dressmaking was conducted mainly under the household system, the women of each family making the clothes it needed. Naturally the bound or indentured servants, when there were such, shared in this labor, or perhaps had entire charge of it. Advertisements may be found in old newspapers dwelling on the ability as seamstresses of negro slaves offered for sale. Indentured servants and slaves, however, really formed part of the household, and their labors can not be regarded as a beginning of the hire system.

It is not possible to say when the second system, under which the worker goes out for hire, appeared in the colonies, but if we may judge by the practice of frontier communities to-day, it must have been at a very early date. The natural tendency is for a woman who can sew to turn her ability to account among her neighbors. In early days, however, this tendency was limited by the multitudinous employments which kept women busy within their own

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<sup>1</sup> A bibliography and list of documents searched will be found on pp. 169 to 172.

homes. The unattached woman seems to have been rare. As late as 1698 Gabriel Thomas remarks that there were no "old maids to be met with, \* \* \* for all commonly marry before they are 20 years of age."<sup>1</sup> Forty-two years earlier another writer had observed that "loose persons," i. e., those free to dispose of their services as they pleased, "seldom live long unmarried if free."<sup>2</sup>

This relative scarcity of women or the fact that home dressmaking was largely done by servants and slaves may have been one reason why commercial dressmaking was largely in the hands of men. During the entire seventeenth century men tailors seem to have predominated in the commercialized sewing trades, for they are frequently mentioned by various writers, while women, when mentioned at all in this connection, are reported as scarce.

Before the end of the century dressmakers had reached the third stage, that of conducting a shop to which customers come to have work done, and by 1679 there was at least one instance of the fourth system, the women's furnishings stores which combine a sales department with custom dressmaking. In that year William Sweatland was conducting such a store at Salem, selling furnishings and making clothes for men, women, and children. There is still extant a bill of his against Jonathan Corwin, from which it appears that making and altering women's and children's garments formed an important part of his trade.<sup>3</sup>

Although women had apparently not reached this fourth stage during the seventeenth century, they had evidently attained the third, for in 1699 Jane Latham, "Seamstress and Manto Maker," wife of Joseph Latham, of New York, and Catharine White, "Tailor Woman," wife of Peter White, joyner, of the same State, were each doing enough business to take on a young apprentice to whom they contracted to teach the trade.<sup>4</sup> Taking apprentices presupposes the maintenance of a shop, as there is no record of dressmakers going out by the day and taking assistants with them.

Thus, by 1700, the first four systems under which dressmaking is carried on were in existence side by side in the colonies, though the first and second systems were probably very much in the lead. Throughout the seventeenth century the colonists, in addition to the clothes made by their own dressmakers and tailors, were receiving importations from abroad, especially from England. The writings of the times contain frequent references to the arrival of ships bearing, among other things, garments and finery for men and women alike.

<sup>1</sup> An Account of Pennsylvania and West New Jersey (1698), by Gabriel Thomas, pp. 45-51.

<sup>2</sup> Leah and Rachel (1656), by Hammond, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> See Weeden's Economic and Social History of New England, p. 287, where a copy of this bill, covering the period from Sept. 29, 1679, to Feb. 26, 1681, is given.

<sup>4</sup> New York Historical Society Collections, 1885, pp. 582, 583.



During the eighteenth century changes in the dressmaking trade were more in the nature of shifting the emphasis on certain aspects than of introducing new features. The four systems continued to coexist. The household system does not appear to have diminished in importance, and the papers contain frequent advertisements for household servants who could combine sewing with the performance of their domestic duties. The help or hire system was also maintained, and a transition stage between this and the custom-shop system is shown by "Elizabeth Sanders Porter, Mantua-Maker from Boston," who "begs leave to inform the Ladies of this Town (Essex) that she makes Gowns, Hats, Cloaks and Riding Habits in the best and neatest Manner, at her own Home or at the Ladies' Houses."<sup>1</sup>

Shops carried on under the third and fourth systems became increasingly numerous and important, and more and more commonly women were found at their head. The first half of the century was marked by closer relations with Europe and by greater prosperity than had prevailed before. The increasing wealth of the colonies and their growing commerce tended to introduce European standards of dress, while the coming of royal governors and the establishment of official social life in the cities gave an added impetus to the movement. English dressmakers, tailors, and staymakers came over to find their prosperity in meeting the growing demand for rich and fashionable garments, and though men preceded the women, the latter soon became prominent as mistress dressmakers. From this position they soon developed into merchant dressmakers selling the completed garment made from materials, chosen by samples, manufactured at home or imported. Before the close of the first half of the eighteenth century, women appear as full-fledged merchant dressmakers, importers, and merchants of women's clothing. A Boston newspaper in 1733 announced: "To be seen at Mrs. Hannah Teatts, Mantua-maker at the head of Summer St., Boston, a Baby drest after the Newest Fashion of Mantues and Night Gowns and every thing belonging to a dress, lately arrived in Capt. White, from London, any Ladies that desire to see it may either come or send and she will be ready to wait on 'em, if they come to the House it is Five Shillings, and if she waits on them it is Seven Shillings."<sup>2</sup> Thus, there existed in the early eighteenth century, some of the most modern present-day features of the custom dressmaking trade—a mistress custom dressmaker, an importer of European models, carrying a varied stock of "Mantues, Night Gowns and every thing belonging to a dress," which she was prepared to display either in her shop or in the home of her customers.

<sup>1</sup> Essex Gazette, Aug. 14-21, 1770.

<sup>2</sup> New England Weekly Journal, July 2, 1733.



During the latter half of the eighteenth century the woman merchant dressmaker assumed a more prominent place among the importers of goods and clothing. Jane Eustis in 1756 had developed all the characteristics of the modern commercialized custom shop. In 1756 she dissolved her "copartnership" with Mary Purcell and opened a shop "next door to Mr. Kent's office, opposite the north side of the Town House," where she "sold for the lowest rates for cash . . . Hoops, stays . . . stomachers . . . bonnets, hair hats, Padusoy cloaks . . . umbrilles . . . Men's, Women's, and Children's hose . . . women's black silk kid and lamb gloves and mittens. N. B. Said Eustis makes in the neatest and newest fashion Capuchines, Cardinals, Hatts, Bonnets and Pallances, etc., etc."<sup>1</sup> Ten years later, 1766, in the same shop she had just "imported . . . from London" and was selling "for cash at her shop opposite the North Side of the Town-House, Boston . . . Brown and black Padusoy's . . . Ducapes, pink and brown Mantuas, white and buff ground Brocades . . . quilted petticoats . . . Lady's habit . . . brocaded shoes and clogs . . . black and coloured bonnets and jockeys, plumes for ditto . . . silver and silk trimmings for gowns . . . chip hats and bonnets . . . with a great variety of Haberdashery and Millinery, too many to be enumerated."<sup>2</sup>

By 1756 this woman of the American colonies had developed her custom dressmaking and millinery establishment to a commercialized shop where she sold imported ready-made wear beside her own manufactures. But in 1766 Jane Eustis made no mention of custom or order work. If this omission indicates that this phase of her business had sunk into insignificance beside the more profitable sales department, the similarity to modern conditions and tendencies becomes almost complete.

The importation of clothing from abroad continued throughout the century, although naturally it was greatly diminished during the Revolution. After the break with England, and indeed for some time before it, such importations were attacked on the ground that patriotism demanded the use of home products. It is impossible to say to what extent this attitude affected the dressmakers. Advertisements of dresses and dress materials from England and France continued to appear in the city papers, but in 1790 Hamilton claimed "in a number of districts that two-thirds, three-fourths, and even four-fifths of all the clothing of the inhabitants are made by themselves."<sup>3</sup> Outside of the larger cities dressmaking had developed very little beyond the first two systems, while the third and fourth probably appeared very little, if at all.

<sup>1</sup> Boston News Letter, June 24, 1756.

<sup>2</sup> Boston Gazette, Feb. 17, Dec. 8, 1766.

<sup>3</sup> American State Papers. Finance, vol. 1, p. 132.

In the nineteenth century, the women's clothing trade, still retaining all its primitive stages, developed the characteristics of "la grande industrie." There was still the "young lady [who] wishes a situation in a private family where she can do sewing, or assist in the domestic concerns to pay for her board,"<sup>1</sup> "a Young woman from England [who] wishes to engage herself in a genteel family to do needlework,"<sup>2</sup> and "a Lady possessing unusual taste and skill, and experience in fitting and making all kinds of Ladies' and Little Boys' and Girls' Garments, [who] would like to work for a few families in Charlestown or vicinity."<sup>3</sup> Beside these appeared the master tailor and mistress dressmaker, employers of labor. To what extent tailors and dressmakers employed help before the Revolution it seems difficult to determine, but undoubtedly the evolution of the larger shop during the eighteenth century increased the demand, and the recruiting of workers through advertisements in the newspapers, the usual method to-day, became apparent at the opening of the nineteenth century. For example, "M. Boyles, Mantua-maker from London," advertised for "Two young women, wanted as apprentices," in Boston in 1799.<sup>4</sup> As her advertisement ran in the paper for four weeks, the applicants were apparently no more numerous or desirable than at present. In 1800 there was "wanted at the Tailoring Business a smart young Woman 18 or 20 years of age,"<sup>5</sup> and in 1828 "Six first-rate tailoresses to whom steady employ and the highest wages will be given . . . were wanted immediately."<sup>6</sup> M. Gillespie, dressmaker, "wanted immediately [in 1827] several persons as apprentices."<sup>7</sup>

The fourth stage of the dressmaking industry, the merchant dressmaker and milliner, is typified by "Eliza Bancroft [who] Respectfully informs her Friends and the Public that she has received a fresh supply of Fancy Goods Suitable for the Season—among which are black and white cambrics, black silk shawls . . . silk for Bonnets, and Gowns . . . She continues the Mantua Making and Millinery Business in the newest fashions."<sup>8</sup> Thus, before the War of 1812 there was developed the prototype of the modern woman's furnishings houses, which combine under one business management the three departments: (1) The sales department of materials and furnishings for women's clothing; (2) custom dressmaking; and (3) millinery.

Although the development on a large scale of the big furnishing houses with their millinery and dressmaking departments and the necessary capital gave the supremacy to men as "better prepared for rea-

<sup>1</sup> Boston Daily Advertiser, Mar. 24, 1813.

<sup>2</sup> Independent Chronicle, July 23, 1800.

<sup>3</sup> Bunker Hill Aurora, May 6, 1865.

<sup>4</sup> Boston Commercial Gazette, June 10, 17, 24, July 1, 1799.

<sup>5</sup> Columbus Centinel, Mar. 5, 1800.

<sup>6</sup> [Boston] Evening Gazette, Mar. 15, 1828.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., Sept. 15, 1827.

<sup>8</sup> National Aegis, Apr. 8, 1812.



soning and calculations,"<sup>1</sup> the woman European importer, wholesale dealer, and merchant dressmaker appeared in Boston before the middle of the nineteenth century.

A woman merchant dressmaker and importer of European models was established in Boston by 1840, who arranged "openings" for the display of the latest styles and models to the dressmakers of the surrounding country, thus exhibiting a prototype of the movement for "democratization" of styles in America, which is now centered almost exclusively in New York City and has practically disappeared from Boston.

Women conducted stores which carried a stock of materials and of clothing, not only in the large ports but in many surrounding cities. Grace Smith in Norfolk,<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Clapp "at the Noted Store" in Dedham,<sup>3</sup> "Mrs. Charlotte H. White . . . [who] . . . has opened a shop in the dwelling House of Deacon Tilly Flint" in Rutland,<sup>4</sup> advertised "a general assortment of English goods." Imports in the large cities increased in value, and merchants in Boston offered for sale "a complete assortment of new and fashionable Goods . . . Rich ball dresses, Lace dresses, Embroidered French cambric and sheer muslin dresses, India Muslin dresses, Mantles, Silk, and gold dotted muslin for dresses . . .<sup>5</sup> a few splendid French embroidered Muslin and Cambric Dresses, worth from 35 to 55 dollars. These being lately imported, are the most modern style and truly elegant."<sup>6</sup> Stephen Rhoads, in November, 1827, had received by the London Packet, "1 case of Ladies Imperial Pelerines, Sable, and Ermine, a very rich article."<sup>7</sup>

The influx of European goods and increasing luxury in the first half of the nineteenth century had, however, met opposition from many quarters. The manufacturers and statesmen of New England in the early nineteenth century vigorously resisted European importations of manufactured articles. The remedy urged was increasing taxation and the climax was reached in the tariff of 1828.

Apart from the political agitation, many opposed the trend toward extravagance, and especially as manifested in the introduction of European clothes and ornaments and the submission to European fashions, on grounds of duty, morality, and patriotism. There is little evidence that this opposition produced any particular effect.

The last half of the nineteenth century contributed the final phases of development in the women's clothing trade—the wholesale manufacture of women's machine-made clothing with the resultant so-called sweating system, and the custom ready-to-wear garments.

<sup>1</sup> France, Office du Travail. *La Petite Industrie*, Vol. II, *Le Vêtement à Paris*, 1896, p. 395.

<sup>2</sup> *Norfolk Repository*, May 28, 1805.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, June 4, 1805.

<sup>4</sup> *National Aegis*, July 3, 1805.

<sup>5</sup> *The Evening Gazette*, Jan. 6, 1827.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 6, 1827.

<sup>7</sup> *The Evening Gazette*, Nov. 15, 1827, Oct. 20, 1827, Aug. 2, 1828.

Thus by the end of the century all stages of development existed side by side. The large commercialized shop and department store of the latter part of the nineteenth century represent a stage of evolution in degree purely. They existed in the eighteenth century. They increased in size, amount of capital invested, and stock carried, in the nineteenth century. But the last stage of development, wholesale manufacture, originated and developed rapidly in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Wholesale manufacture of men's clothing existed to some extent in the first half of the century. The manufacture of women's clothing on a large scale in advance of the orders of prospective buyers involved a more difficult problem. A most serious obstacle to making up large quantities of women's clothing in varying sizes and in like and in different materials after a single model appeared from the beginning. Two factors, which M. du Maroussem calls "la coquetterie feminine,"<sup>1</sup> complicated the development—the attitude of the clientele, which insists that no two gowns shall be alike, necessitating infinite variations, and the desire for an adaptation of the fashion, style, and material of a garment to the particular form and personal characteristics of the individual woman. This individualization, which constitutes the radical contrast between masculine and feminine dress, was still further complicated by the rapidly changing styles in women's clothing. Each client required a garment adapted peculiarly to herself, but it must conform in its general lines to the exigencies of the general fashion, which in turn are uncertain because dependent on "the universal suffrage of the ladies of fashion." "How then," says M. du Maroussem, "in view of this unconquerable economic demand, manufacture large stocks in advance, as is the custom established in the manufacture of men's ready-made clothing? The process must be transformed." The promoters of the new idea sought to separate the common elements, to some extent, from the most diversified styles, and apply to them, as an invariable basis of the system, the anticipated fashion.<sup>2</sup> The promulgation of the styles is effected through two mediums: The creation of models in picture form, which are spread broadcast through special fashion publications, and the creation of models in the actual form of costumes made in advance and sold with the purpose of making reproductions and variations from them. Paris controls this phase of the trade. The United States has always looked to western Europe for initiative in style of dress. Certain large houses in some of the largest American cities create "Americanized styles" and models, but always in accordance with the decrees laid down by Paris leaders.

<sup>1</sup> France, Office du Travail. *La Petite Industrie*, Vol. II, *Le Vêtement à Paris*, p. 393 et seq. See also *Le Développement de la Fabrique et le travail à domicile dans les Industries de l'Habillement*, par A. Alfalton. Paris, 1906.

<sup>2</sup> See discussion by M. du Maroussem. France, Office du Travail. *La Petite Industrie*, Vol. II, *Le Vêtement à Paris*, p. 393 et seq.



The development of the "ready-made," using the word in its vernacular sense, was a matter of some four decades. Ready-made wear had been imported from Europe in colonial times, but wholesale ready-made clothing produced in large quantities in many sizes and varieties of materials showed a comparatively slow evolution. No attempt was made at first to invade the sphere of the fitted garment. With the introduction of the sewing machine in 1850, however, ready-made clothing soon took rapid strides in the looser and more masculine type of wear, such as outside cloaks, coats, and mantillas, as well as in corsets and similar furnishing goods, hoop skirts, and millinery.

The census of 1860 reported—"This branch of the domestic clothing trade, which thus employs nearly half a million dollars in capital, and with the labor of less than 1,600 hands, produced upwards of two and a quarter million dollars' worth of cloaks and mantillas annually, is one of quite recent growth, and has received its principal development within the ten or fifteen years preceding the last census. The manufacture has its principal seat in New York, which has 15 large establishments, one of which employs 100 girls and makes goods to the value of \$120,000 per annum. Two others employ 70 and 40 hands, respectively, and make each about \$100,000 worth. The whole value of cloaks and mantillas made in that city in 1860 was \$618,400. A large manufacturer in that city who commenced business in 1849 was the first to introduce sewing machines in the business, as well as the first to employ young women in the retail sales department. The largest establishment in Boston also employs 100 females and makes \$150,000 worth of ladies' cloaks and mantillas annually, while two others in that city employ each about 75 hands, and manufacture to the value of \$125,000 each. All but \$13,000 of the product in Massachusetts was made by 10 factories in Boston."<sup>1</sup>

During the four decades from 1860 to 1900 the ready-made-garment manufacturers invaded every branch of the women's clothing trade. Increasing development of skill and perfection of machinery and workmanship have made possible the manufacture of close-fitting garments. The development of popular taste and demand through the show windows and salesrooms of retail dealers has justified the manufacture of great quantities of stock. The decreased cost of the ready-made has resulted in its world-wide adoption. In the early eighties the manufacturers began making ladies' suits, in the nineties lingerie, soon to be followed by shirt waists, fancy waists, skirts, gowns of all sorts and materials, and finally neckwear on a large scale.

With increasing perfection and popularity of the ready-made, there has appeared a new phase in the development of the trade—the ready-to-wear, which represents the last resort of custom dressmakers and

<sup>1</sup> United States Census, 1860. Manufactures, p. lxxxiii.

tailors to combat the ready-made. Exclusive large custom houses still refuse to recognize or carry the ready-made, but they are attempting to cater to public demand for the completed gown or garments at short notice by making up stock in advance. "Ready-to-wear," said a member of such a firm, "is a single gown made up on a single exclusive pattern in advance of the specific order of a customer, but offering an individuality and exclusiveness of style in the finished product which the ready-made in its many duplications in various sizes can not do." This development has brought in its wake two most important results—first, the partial abolition of the necessity for late rush orders, as the customer can often find ready for use a gown suitable for her needs; and second, the partial alleviation of the slack season, as the workers fill in the time in which they are not busy with orders of customers by making up "stock." This ready-to-wear is offered for sale to customers wishing gowns on short notice, or preferring the finished product to the waste of time and energy and the uncertainty of satisfactory results sometimes experienced in custom work.

The attempt to cater to all the various needs of the clientele is resulting in many combinations, either of the two branches, custom and ready-to-wear, or of the three branches, custom, ready-to-wear, and ready-made. Many a custom tailor or dressmaker of a few decades ago has now been transformed into the head of a large establishment or has formed a partnership or corporation combining the two or three branches of the trade. Meanwhile the increasing tendency toward centralization and the competition of two powerful factors—the manufacturing and the combination establishments with their large capital and unlimited credit—have rapidly diminished the field of opportunity for the small custom dressmaker. She is brought face to face with the three great problems of modern industry—competition, capital, and the labor problem. The ready-made, with its increasingly fine product, good style, and low cost due to the manufacture of large quantities under a highly developed business system and administration, encroaches on the field from the one side; the large combination establishments encroach on the other side in two ways, for first, with practically unlimited capital they are able to work on a large scale with the highest degree of business finesse, to employ time and labor saving machinery, and to secure experts, who, with their originality and initiative, can give a certain characteristic exclusiveness in style and taste; second, because of the extensive scope of their business some of the more far-seeing firms so arrange their work as to eliminate to a large extent the seasonal aspect of the trade, thus attracting the workers and aggravating the labor problem for the small dressmaker.



On the other hand, there are certain important influences reacting in favor of custom work and of the small dressmaker. Custom work will probably always retain its superiority of workmanship—i. e., fine handwork, accuracy, and fine finishing. It will also meet and solve most effectively the peculiar needs of the individual. For these two reasons every stage of custom work can still retain its position in the labor world. The dressmaker going "out by the day" obviates for herself the problem of large capital and irregular payment of customers and meets the needs of customers who still insist on custom work in lingerie, children's wear, house dresses, and even the more elaborate gowns.

In spite of the problems enumerated above, the small dressmaker also has certain advantages which cause her competition to react on the large establishments. First, the "democratization" of styles effected by the semiannual importation of Parisian models by large New York importers and their "openings," at which all the newest Parisian styles are displayed to their customers (dressmakers) from far and near, enables the smallest (within these limits) as well as the largest dressmaker to give to her customers the newest style. One of the members of an old and well-established firm considered this the greatest menace to the high-class establishments. Formerly, he said, only the large establishments who could send a representative abroad twice a year could give exclusive and original styles to their customers. Now the smallest dressmaker of ability and ingenuity is enabled to give exactly as good style at smaller cost because of her lower expenses. Second, the small dressmaker gives her own talent, taste, ingenuity, and originality to the making of her gowns with no financial expenditure for this service. The large firm pays one or more head women salaries ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000 a year for this contribution, but the small dressmaker not only furnishes this herself but by personal supervision of the workroom effects greater economy of time and materials and the more interested cooperation of her employees. The small dressmaker has a more steady and regular clientele, enabling many of the more far-seeing ones to meet in a fairly satisfactory manner the seasonal problem. She is not expected nor does she attempt to maintain the standard of luxury and spaciousness of quarters, location of establishment, etc., required of the larger firms, with their resultant heavy expenditure.

Thus a nice balance of opposing, interacting, and reacting forces still makes possible at the present day the existence side by side of all stages of the clothing trade from the primitive to the most modern and scientifically developed.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE DRESSMAKING TRADE OF TO-DAY.

The dressmaking trade of the twentieth century is developing along three diverging lines: (1) In the increasing growth of the large wholesale manufacturers at the expense of the custom trade; (2) in the development of the large custom shop and decline of the small; and (3) paradoxically, in the comparatively large place occupied by the home dressmaker and day worker. Directors of vocational education and guidance must, therefore, know the industrial trend and predominant types in the neighborhoods to which they cater to solve their problem satisfactorily.

The manufacture of ready-made clothing has grown by leaps and bounds during the last two decades, increasing more than 100 per cent in practically every phase during the decade 1890 to 1900, and in some details to an even more phenomenal extent during the decade 1900 to 1910.

Table 1, immediately following, shows the development of the two branches, wholesale manufacturing and custom dressmaking, during the decade 1890-1900, while Table 2 shows the growth of the wholesale manufacturing trade during the decade 1899-1909.

TABLE 1.—DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S CLOTHING TRADE, FACTORY PRODUCT AND CUSTOM DRESSMAKING, IN THE UNITED STATES DURING THE DECADE 1890-1900.<sup>1</sup>

[Based on United States Census, 1900, Vol. IX, Manufactures, Pt. III, p. 302.]

Item.	Factory product.			Custom dressmaking.			
	1890	1900	Per cent increase, 1900 over 1890.	1890	1900	Per cent increase, 1900 over 1890.	Per cent decrease, 1900 from 1890.
Number of establishments.....	1,224	2,701	120.7	19,587	14,479	.....	26.1
Capital.....	\$21,259,528	\$48,431,544	127.8	\$12,883,097	\$13,815,221	7.2	.....
Wage earners, average number.....	39,149	83,739	113.9	48,613	45,595	.....	6.2
Men, 16 years and over.....	12,963	26,109	101.4	1,056	4,379	314.7	.....
Women, 16 years and over.....	25,913	56,866	119.5	47,164	40,835	.....	13.4
Children under 16 years.....	273	764	179.9	393	381	.....	3.1
Total wages.....	\$15,428,272	\$32,586,101	111.2	\$13,145,734	\$14,352,453	9.2	.....
Men.....	\$7,386,955	\$15,790,572	113.8	\$616,438	\$2,943,175	377.5	.....
Women.....	\$7,994,203	\$16,675,390	108.6	\$12,482,362	\$11,363,683	.....	9.0
Children.....	\$47,114	\$120,139	155.0	\$46,934	\$45,595	.....	2.9
Cost of materials used.....	\$34,277,219	\$84,704,592	147.1	\$23,393,829	\$16,503,754	.....	29.5
Value of products.....	\$68,164,019	\$159,339,539	138.8	\$57,071,732	\$48,356,034	.....	15.3

<sup>1</sup> Factory product covers all clothing manufactured for the wholesale trade; custom dressmaking deals with product made for retail orders.

<sup>2</sup> Includes custom work and repairing.



TABLE 2.—DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S CLOTHING TRADE, FACTORY PRODUCT, IN THE UNITED STATES DURING THE DECADE 1899-1909.<sup>1</sup>

[Based on the United States Census, 1910, Vol. VIII, Manufactures, p. 509.]

Item.	1899	1909	Per cent increase, 1909 over 1899.
Number of establishments.....	2,701	4,558	68.8
Capital.....	\$48,432,000	\$129,301,000	167.0
Wage earners, average number.....	83,739	153,743	83.6
Total wages.....	\$32,586,000	\$78,568,000	141.1
Salaried employees, total number.....	6,715	18,796	179.9
Total salaries.....	\$6,574,000	\$20,418,000	210.6
Cost of materials used.....	\$84,705,000	\$208,788,000	146.5
Value of product.....	\$159,340,000	\$384,752,000	141.5

<sup>1</sup> In 1900 the chief statistician recommended the abandonment of all inquiries into hand trades because of the impossibility of securing accurate and complete returns and the high cost for dubious returns.

In the manufacturing branch it is evident that the increase in capital and wages during the second decade was greater than in the first, but a corresponding increase does not appear in the number of establishments or workers. This indicates a process of consolidation and the development of the larger shop. The greater increase in wages than in number of wage earners indicates the employment of more highly skilled workers. This is also emphasized in the 179.9 per cent increase in salaried officials and 210.6 per cent increase in total salaries paid.

In the first decade while the manufacturing branch of the women's clothing trade showed an increase of 120.7 per cent in the number of establishments, 113.9 per cent in average number of wage earners, 147.1 per cent in cost of materials and 138.8 per cent in value of product, custom dressmaking decreased in all these phases of the trade. But while custom dressmaking lagged far behind in the race during this decade, the decrease in the number of establishments (26.1 per cent) was out of all proportion to the 6.2 per cent decline in the number of wage earners. During the same period the amount of capital increased 7.2 per cent and the total wages 9.2 per cent, all this indicating consolidation or the development of the large shop.<sup>1</sup>

The development and competition of the factory product has brought about a very uneven distribution of product between the factory and custom dressmaker. The census of 1910 describes women's clothing, factory product, as comprising "not only complete suits, but also dresses, skirts, petticoats, kimonos, dressing, sacques, wrappers, jackets, cloaks, capes, underwear, infants' clothing, shirt waists, linings, dress stays, belts, dress shields, and similar articles."<sup>2</sup> Custom dressmaking is, on the other hand, being increasingly limited to only the high-class, exclusive product; fancy

<sup>1</sup> See Table 1.<sup>2</sup> United States Census, 1910. Manufactures, Vol. VIII, p. 398.

house dresses, street suits, and fancy waists, which, because of individual style and exclusive patterns and materials, can compete with the cheaper ready-made product.

Although the factory branch of the trade is largely centered in New York, the value of its product representing 70.8 per cent of the total output of the United States,<sup>1</sup> the clothing trade throughout the country feels the effect of its competition through the distribution of New York's product.

This increase in the importance of the factory branch is bringing about new conditions and necessitating new adjustments within the custom branch of the trade. Four great problems—capital, competition, scarcity of skilled labor, and seasonal fluctuation—must be met by shops of all types, and the degree to which they are or are not solved determines the survival of the type. Out of the struggle is emerging, on the one side, the large custom shop and, on the other, the domestic or day worker, with the resultant submergence of the small shop.

The evolution of the large establishment in custom as in factory dressmaking has undoubtedly continued during the first decade of the twentieth century, though the lack of census statistics makes comparison impossible. Members of the trade, both in Boston and in other cities, almost unanimously testify to the increasing difficulty the small shop finds in competing on the one side with the large custom establishments, with their prestige and almost unlimited capital, and on the other with the wholesale manufacturing establishments turning out a cheaper product. Many who formerly conducted a shop find it more profitable to work on a salary or go out by the day. A head dressmaker of a large, fashionable shop in Boston, receiving \$50 a week, had for five or six years conducted a shop with a force of 20 to 30 workers, but could not meet the problem of capital. A Worcester dressmaker who used to conduct a shop abandoned it because of the scarcity of good workers and now takes in only such work as she can do herself. Many of the smaller dressmakers are closing their shops because of the difficulty of competing with the large custom and ready-made establishments and are going out by the day or taking only such work as they can do alone.

The growth of the wholesale manufacture of women's clothing is clearly shown by the census, and the development of the large custom dressmaking shop, though not so easily proved, is evident. It is more difficult to ascertain the numbers and importance of dressmakers working in their own homes or going out by the day, yet there is reason to believe that these constitute a large proportion of the workers in the trade, except perhaps in large cities where dressmaking is highly industrialized. Although the census gives no sta-

<sup>1</sup> Calculated from data from United States Census, 1910. *Manufactures*, Vol. VIII, pp. 574. 575.



tistics concerning these workers, a comparison of its data in two different reports may throw some light upon their numbers. In the special report on occupations of women (based on the population schedules) the number of dressmakers 16 years of age and over in the United States is given as 338,144.<sup>1</sup> In the report on manufactures for the same year (based on establishment schedules) the number of women aged 16 or over employed in custom dressmaking is given as 40,835; in addition, 908 salaried officials are given, and the number of establishments is placed at 14,479.<sup>2</sup> If it be assumed that each establishment had at least one proprietor, and if these be added to the salaried officials and others engaged in dressmaking, the total is 56,222. Subtracting this figure from the 338,144, given in *Statistics of Women at Work* as representing the number of dressmakers in the United States, there would seem to be 281,922 women engaged in dressmaking who are not classed as such in the census report on manufactures. It can not be assumed that all of these are women who make dresses at home or go out by the day; various causes may account for the difference between the two reports. Nevertheless, the figures are significant and give some idea of the proportion the domestic dressmaker forms of the total workers in the trade.

The difficulty of determining the relative importance of different types of dressmaking is much increased by the vagueness with which the term "dressmaker" is used. Thus, the United States census for 1900 reported 6,312 dressmakers in Boston.<sup>3</sup> But what is the definition of "dressmakers" and how are they distinguished from seamstresses or tailoresses? The census does not enlighten us. The census figures by occupations, moreover, include both employers and employees, while the employees include not only the skilled workers who might legitimately be called "dressmakers," but a great many "seamstresses" or plain sewers who do the finishing work on the gowns. These workers may have reported themselves as "dressmakers" or "seamstresses" to the census enumerators. Others undoubtedly reported themselves as dressmakers who were not; so the statistics are far from satisfactory.

The term "dressmaker" is so vague and so inaccurately applied that women are frequently listed as dressmakers in the city directory year after year who never have done dressmaking for others or who work only occasionally. A Mrs. G. is summarized on the credit list of a large store in Worcester as follows: "Above is not a dressmaker; never was. Said she was not when questioned, February 1, '07." Yet she was still so listed in the city directory for 1909.

<sup>1</sup> Special Reports of the Census Office, 1900. *Statistics of Women at Work*, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> United States Census, 1900. *Manufactures*, Vol. IX, Pt. III, p. 302.

<sup>3</sup> Special Reports of the Census Office, 1900. *Statistics of Women at Work*, p. 222.



Others who do some dressmaking may not be reported. A house-keeper, occasionally finding spare time in the spring or fall, goes into a large dressmaking shop for a month in the busy season. She is not a dressmaker, yet may be put under that heading by the census enumerator. Because of the lack of a fixed definition of the terms "dressmaking" and "dressmaker," statistics by occupation are of little value for practical or educational purposes.

In the absence of complete census returns we are forced to a study of local conditions to discover the predominant types in the trade. The Boston city directory records 696 "mistress" dressmakers in 1910, of whom only 240, or about one-third, can be regarded as regular employers. Nearly two-thirds of those recorded as independent dressmakers by the directory are day or home workers, showing the surprising extent to which the women's clothing trade still retains its domestic characteristics in a city like Boston.

The following table shows the extent of custom dressmaking in the cities studied:

TABLE 3.—EXTENT OF CUSTOM DRESSMAKING IN 5 CITIES IN MASSACHUSETTS.

City.	Popula- tion in 1910. <sup>1</sup>	Rank ac- cord- ing to size of city.	Number of establish- ments in cities, based on specified sources.				Number employed, based on specified sources.					
			United States Census, 1900. <sup>2</sup>	City direc- tory, 1910.	Fac- tory in- spec- tor's re- port, 1910.	In- ves- ti- ga- tor's es- ti- mate, 1910.	United States Census, 1900.	Factory inspec- tor's report, 1910.			Number reported in shops visited.	
								Men.	Wo- men.	Girls.	Men.	Wo- men.
Boston.....	670,585	1	271	696	181	240	1,605	97	1,926	40	26	2,032
Worcester.....	145,985	2	56	398	( <sup>3</sup> )	18	645	( <sup>3</sup> )	( <sup>3</sup> )	.....	.....	201
Lowell.....	106,294	4	155	217	( <sup>3</sup> )	33	327	( <sup>3</sup> )	( <sup>3</sup> )	.....	.....	50
Cambridge.....	104,839	5	15	167	( <sup>3</sup> )	12	24	( <sup>3</sup> )	( <sup>3</sup> )	.....	.....	54
Somerville.....	77,236	10	16	149	( <sup>3</sup> )	2	21	( <sup>3</sup> )	( <sup>3</sup> )	.....	.....	10

<sup>1</sup> United States Census, 1910. Population, Vol. II, p. 862.

<sup>2</sup> The United States census of 1900 includes only the shop having an annual product of \$500 or more. United States Census, 1900, Manufactures, Part I, pp. xxxix and cxxlii-cxxlv. The census of 1910 excludes custom dressmaking entirely from the reports on manufactures.

<sup>3</sup> Not reported.

While in Boston only about one-third of the dressmakers given in the city directory were employers, the proportion was even smaller in the other cities, ranging from 15.2 per cent in Lowell to 1.3 per cent in Somerville. This difference is mainly due to the proximity of the other cities to Boston, which makes large shops not only unnecessary but impracticable. The large fashionable custom shops of Boston with extensive capital, credit, prestige, and close connection with European centers of fashion are invincible competitors in the high-class trade. The large department stores of Boston offering ready-made clothing compete with the middle and

low-class establishments. Only the simpler stages of the trade, therefore, are found in Massachusetts outside of Boston.<sup>1</sup>

In Worcester, which ranks second in population in Massachusetts, only 18 of the 398 dressmakers listed in the city directory could be classed as regular employers. Fully 95 per cent were home or day workers.<sup>2</sup> Lowell, though ranking as the fourth city in the State, is a great textile center, with absentee owners and a large mill population, and has developed only the simple stages of the dressmaking trade. Only 33 mistress dressmakers were found on investigation.<sup>3</sup> In Cambridge, a residence and manufacturing city with a population of more than 100,000, only about a dozen dressmakers could be classed as employers and only six of these employed six or more girls. In Somerville, primarily a residential suburban city with a population of 77,236, only one dressmaker could be found who employed three or four girls, and one with six or eight girls. The rest were home or day workers, many sewing only occasionally for friends and others working in Boston shops.

The relative importance in the cities studied of day and home workers, as compared with custom dressmakers, is shown in the following table:

TABLE 4.—TYPES OF DRESSMAKERS IN 5 CITIES IN MASSACHUSETTS.

Type of dressmakers.	Boston.		Worcester.		Lowell.		Cambridge.		Somerville.		Total.	
	Num-ber.	Per-cent.	Num-ber.	Per-cent.	Num-ber.	Per-cent.	Num-ber.	Per-cent.	Num-ber.	Per-cent.	Num-ber.	Per-cent.
Day workers and home dressmakers <sup>1</sup> .....	456	65.5	380	95.5	184	84.8	155	92.8	147	98.7	1,322	81.3
Custom dressmakers <sup>1</sup> .....	240	34.5	18	4.5	33	15.2	12	7.2	2	1.3	305	18.7
Total <sup>2</sup> .....	696	100.0	398	100.0	217	100.0	167	100.0	149	100.0	1,627	100.0

<sup>1</sup> Investigator's estimate.

<sup>2</sup> According to city directories, 1910.

From this table it appears that the "custom dressmaker," using the term in its economic sense to indicate the "mistress dressmaker," who conducts a shop of her own and makes up the gowns of her customers in accordance with their specific demands, forms a very small proportion, only 34 per cent of those reporting themselves as dressmakers in Boston, 15 per cent in Lowell, 7 per cent in Cambridge, less than 5 per cent in Worcester, and about 1 per cent in Somer-

<sup>1</sup> The dressmaking trade of Worcester, Cambridge, and Somerville was studied in connection with a larger investigation on the industrial opportunities for women which was made by the research department for the State board of education. See United States Bureau of Education Bulletin No. 17, A Trade School for Girls: A Preliminary Investigation in a Typical Manufacturing City, Worcester, Massachusetts. 1913.

<sup>2</sup> This statement was made by the credit clerk in the largest department store in Worcester, who turned all credit records over to the investigator. It was substantiated by personal investigation.

<sup>3</sup> The trade in Lowell was studied under the direction of the writer by Miss Jennie Clement, a senior at Simmons College.



villè. The home and day workers, who form from 85 to 99 per cent of the independent dressmakers in Worcester, Lowell, Cambridge, and Somerville and 66 per cent of those in Boston, never appear in official statistics for the trade, yet a knowledge of the opportunities and demands for such workers is essential to educators and vocational advisers.

Custom dressmaking, like the factory branch, shows a tendency to concentrate in cities where large demands necessitate business and industrial organization, and here only are the various types of shops and methods of production found. Here seven distinct systems of economic production are seen in (1) the home dressmaker who sews for herself and family, (2) the dressmaker who goes out by the day, (3) the "private dressmaker," (4) the medium-sized shop of the transition stage where the first rudiments of division of labor appear, (5) the large shop of specialized workers and marked division of labor, (6) the commercialized shop, and (7) the manufacturing dressmaking shop. These seven stages show ascending stages of industrial evolution (1) in place of production, (2) in method of production, and (3) in relation between producer and consumer. The first stages of the trade show a close relation between place of production and the home, a simple system of production where the dressmaker and her small force of general helpers work side by side, and a close relation between producer and consumer. The more advanced stages show continuous evolution toward more highly specialized industrial organization. A description of these stages affords a picture of the trade as it exists to-day.

### 1. THE FAMILY DRESSMAKER.

The family system, the most primitive and simplest form of production, based on the family as an economic unit, still exists in the twentieth century and can be found in rural parts of the United States. The family produces for family needs (at least, those of the feminine element) and producer and consumer are identical. It is interesting to observe in this connection, however, that while dresses and hats can still be made at home by the family, shoes, stockings, knit underwear, etc., have been entirely monopolized by wholesale manufacturing.

### 2. THE JOURNEYMAN DRESSMAKER.

The dressmaker who goes out by the day typifies the next stage of evolution, the so-called help or hire system, in which the industry has developed beyond the capacity of the family group, and assistance is called in from outside sources. The producer goes to the home of the consumer where she makes up the materials owned and furnished by the client in accordance with her orders and sometimes



with her cooperation. She works "by the day," the wage usually including luncheon and sometimes dinner.<sup>1</sup> This, then, is but one step in advance of the family system. The producer who supplies the labor force is not a member of the family, so that producer and consumer are differentiated, but ownership of the work place, the raw materials and the instruments of production are still vested in the family, which also retains personal supervision of the work.

In spite of its simplicity as an economic unit of production, this primitive stage presents a wide variation in the character and ability of the workers as well as in the kind of work done and shows a resultant tendency toward specialization. Some day workers act only as "seamstresses" for the making of children's clothing, lingerie, and simple house dresses, receiving from \$1 to \$1.50 a day. Others go out by the day as "full-fledged dressmakers" who can be intrusted with entire charge of the making of any part of the customer's wardrobe. Such work requires not only initiative and ability, but knowledge and experience in designing, cutting, and making, and consequently commands a corresponding compensation. A capable and trustworthy dressmaker of this class can command from \$2 to \$4 a day. A good worker soon acquires an extensive clientele and the demand often far exceeds her ability to supply it, so she must either work beyond the regular eight and one-half or nine hour day, or become herself an employer, with one or more helpers at \$1 or \$1.50 a day.

The journeyman stage in the dressmaking trade has also an important place in England and France. Even in Paris, the world's center of the women's clothing trade, a proprietor of one of the large shops maintained that "the very great number of home dressmakers and dressmakers who go out by the day at three and four francs [58 and 77 cents] (besides meals) and even two francs and two francs fifty [39 and 48 cents]," proved one of the three greatest sources of competition for the custom dressmaker. She insisted that "there is an increase of these workers, who penetrate even into the rich clientele for house dresses and '*transformations*'."<sup>2</sup>

The custom system in which the mistress dressmaker establishes herself in her own shop is a natural development from the journeyman stage and takes the form of either (1) the "private dressmaker" with a few general assistants, (2) the transition stage seen in the small shop with the beginnings of division of labor and differentiation between employer and worker, or, (3) the specialized shop in which work and workers are highly specialized.

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<sup>1</sup> Similar conditions are reported for the day workers in Paris. See *La Petite Industrie*, Vol. II, *Le Vêtement à Paris*, pp. 406-408. France, Office du Travail.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 447.

## 3. THE PRIVATE DRESSMAKER.

As the "day worker" or perhaps "the head woman"<sup>1</sup> of a larger shop acquires a sufficiently wide acquaintance and experience to indulge her aspiration to become a "mistress dressmaker," the first stage of custom production appears. This class of workers is increased by the young woman or widow thrown upon her own resources who does not wish to go out by the day or the wife who wishes to augment her husband's income, and can not withdraw from the responsibilities of the home.<sup>2</sup> In this stage the dressmaker has become an independent producer, provides her own work room and instruments of production, and may either work alone or employ from one to six assistants. But the close personal relation with her customers, who are almost wholly relatives and friends, has given her the trade term "private dressmaker."

The following table shows the numerical importance of the private dressmaker in the cities studied:

TABLE 5.—NUMBER AND PER CENT OF SHOPS OF SPECIFIED STAGES OF CUSTOM DRESSMAKING IN 5 CITIES IN MASSACHUSETTS.

Stage of dressmaking.	Boston.		Worcester.		Lowell.		Cambridge.		Somerville.		Total.	
	Num-ber.	Per cent.	Num-ber.	Per cent.	Num-ber.	Per cent.	Num-ber.	Per cent.	Num-ber.	Per cent.	Num-ber.	Per cent.
Private dressmakers.....	111	46.3	16	33.3	23	84.9	18	66.7	1	50.0	154	50.5
Transition.....	58	24.2	4	22.2	4	12.1	4	33.3	1	50.0	71	23.3
Specialization.....	63	26.2	8	44.4	1	3.0					72	23.6
Commercial.....	8	3.3									8	2.6
Total.....	240	100.0	18	100.0	33	100.0	12	100.0	2	100.0	305	100.0

<sup>1</sup> The larger proportion of private dressmakers do not show here because those employing only casual workers were not visited.

It is significant that the private dressmaker constitutes the largest proportion of "mistress dressmakers" in all five cities studied, ranging from one-third in Worcester to more than four-fifths in Lowell. Almost one-half (46.3 per cent) of the custom dressmakers of Boston came within this elementary stage of the trade.

While this first phase of the custom system shows some variation in the place of production and in the relation between producer and consumer, the system is fairly uniform.<sup>3</sup> The shop of the private dressmaker shows still a close relation to the home, and private dressmakers were discovered in a single room in a house or in small suites of rooms, combining living and business quarters, and tucked away in the back and on the upper floors of a business building. A

<sup>1</sup> See schedules presented by Office du Travail (France). *La Petite Industrie*, Vol. II, *Le Vêtement à Paris*, pp. 414, 417, 419.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 410, 411, 412.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 409, 523. Also *Makers of our Clothes*, Meyer and Black, pp. 90, 91.



few had one or two room shops in the business district, which were used for business purposes only. The majority had no sign or business advertisement of any sort, depending wholly on the personal relation with customers to spread their fame. In Cambridge and Somerville all dressmakers carried on their business in their homes; but in Boston, Worcester, and Lowell more variation was discovered. But 13 of the 27 visited in Boston combined living and working quarters, while 5 out of 6 employing regular help in Worcester, and 4 out of 9 in Lowell, maintained the shop in the home.<sup>1</sup>

The workroom of the private dressmaker in the home is usually large, well lighted, and adequate for the small force employed; but a few very small workrooms were discovered in a business block where the rents were high. In some cases a small separate room and in others a single room divided by curtains constituted the workroom, in which cases the light and ventilation were insufficient. In this system of production the dressmaker is herself still the actual producer. She meets the customers, plans and designs the gowns (with or without the advice of the customer), cuts, fits, sews, and does the main part of the work. The majority of private dressmakers in the five cities studied either employed no helpers or took on a casual worker, usually an older woman, in the rush season, preferring the older seamstresses because they required less supervision and direction. The professional dressmaker, however, who has a definite clientele and does a fairly high class of work usually employs from two to six helpers, and prefers young girls just acquiring the trade. The younger workers, they say, bring a freshness and originality into the work, but after several years' experience the more capable are ready for promotion beyond the opportunities offered in a small shop. "My girls must go somewhere else when they have gotten beyond the \$9 stage," said one dressmaker. "I have no need for the specialized or expert worker."

According to the number of their employees, the private dressmakers visited in each city were grouped as follows:

TABLE 6.—SIZE OF WORKING FORCE OF PRIVATE DRESSMAKERS VISITED IN 5 CITIES IN MASSACHUSETTS.

Size of force.	Number of shops having specified number of workers in—					Total.
	Boston.	Worcester.	Cambridge.	Lowell.	Somerville.	
No workers.....	1	1			11	2 13
1 to 3 workers.....	15	4	3	1	1	24
4 to 6 workers.....	11	2	2	6		21
7 to 8 workers.....			1	2	1	4
Total.....	27	7	6	9	13	62

<sup>1</sup> See similar state of affairs quoted in schedules in *La Petite Industrie*, Vol. II, *Le Vêtement à Paris*, pp. 409, 414, 416, 418. France, Office du Travail.

<sup>2</sup> Not included in Table 5.



The beginner has a good opportunity for learning her trade in the shop of the private dressmaker, first, because she works under the immediate supervision of her employer, and second, because as the work is not highly specialized she is not confined to one process. The organization of the force is simple and informal, the workers sitting about the employer, who does the skilled part of the work and turns it over to the helpers, finishers, or plain sewers, by whatever term they may be called, for the simpler processes, such as sewing on hooks, eyes, and buttons, making button holes, collars, ornaments for trimmings, basting and seaming up linings, sewing and overcasting straight seams, and putting on braid. Since there is little division of work, the young learner under the supervision of her employer has opportunity to acquire general training and experience on all parts of the gown and to see the relation of the parts to each other.

The wage scale of the private dressmaker commonly ranges from \$3 to \$9. The young learner usually earns from \$3 to \$5 a week and the older or more experienced worker from \$6 to \$9. This wage scale remains the same for this type of worker, the plain sewer, throughout all the stages of her trade.

The business relation between producer and consumer is simple. The consumer comes to the producer instead of vice versa as in the journeyman stage, and in the smaller shops may provide all materials and trimmings and determine in detail how the gown shall be made. In the more advanced stages, however, the producer furnishes some or all of the materials and turns over the finished product to the consumer, thus profiting by the rebate (10 per cent in Boston) allowed by the furnishing stores.<sup>1</sup> In the private dressmaker stage, therefore, producer and consumer are removed one step farther in that the workroom, instruments of production, and, in the more advanced stages, the materials are provided by the producer instead of by the consumer. The private dressmaker, however, still remains in varying degrees the worker, according as she does or does not delegate the work to her helpers.

#### 4. THE DRESSMAKER OF THE TRANSITION STAGE.

The second stage of custom work is distinctly one of transition from the primitive stages of close personal relationship between producer and consumer, and identity of employer and worker, to the more highly developed stages involving increasing division of labor. In this stage are seen the beginnings of differentiation between contractor and producer, employer and worker, and gradations among

<sup>1</sup> M. du Maroussem says the large furnishing stores of Paris allow 2 to 3 per cent rebate to dressmakers. France, Office du Travail. *La Petite Industrie*, Vol. II, *Le Vêtement à Paris*, pp. 426, 441.

the workers according to their skill, capacity, and wage. As the trade grows, the employer's time is increasingly occupied with customers and buying on the one side, and with the greater amount of work to be arranged and supervised on the other. So with decreasing time and increasing work, the employer must delegate some of her work to "heads," and the advantage of more specialization of workers and further division of labor becomes apparent.

The dressmaker of this stage occupies a smaller place in the trade, forming about one-fourth of those studied in Boston and Worcester, one-third in Cambridge, and one-eighth in Lowell.<sup>1</sup> In Cambridge and Somerville and, with but one exception, in Lowell, this is the highest stage of development found in the trade. There are about 60 establishments of this type in Boston, 4 each in Worcester, Cambridge, and Lowell, and 1 in Somerville. The dressmakers in Cambridge, Lowell, and Somerville carry on the business in the home. The four in Worcester had shops in a business block, and only five of the twenty-seven visited in Boston combine home and shop. The majority of the shops consist of suites of two rooms, the reception and fitting room and the workroom, located in large business buildings in the business section. Signs on doors and windows advertising the place and kind of work now become more common. The private dressmaker works for personal friends and relatives. The dressmaker of the stage of transition seeks the patronage of a more general public. She therefore moves her shop to a more conspicuous and accessible location and seeks to attract the attention of the casual passer-by.

The dressmaker of the transition stage delegates her duties in varying degrees, according to the size of her force and her trade. Although she devotes her time increasingly to the business management and the supervision and direction of the production, she still cuts and fits the gown, and, in the smaller shops, retains in her own hands one or several of the more skilled processes. The degree to which responsibility is delegated in shops of different sizes is illustrated by the following data concerning the working force of two fairly representative shops:

Shop N, with a maximum force of 7 workers, has<sup>2</sup>—

2 waist girls, of whom—

1 head waist girl receives \$12.

1 finisher receives \$8.

1 coat girl, who receives \$12.

3 skirt girls, who receive \$8, \$7, and \$5, respectively.

1 plain sewer, who receives \$5.

Shop K, with a maximum force of 11 workers, has—

4 waist girls, of whom—

1 head waist girl receives \$9.50.

3 finishers receive \$7, \$6, and \$5, respectively.

<sup>1</sup> See Table 5, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Based on pay rolls.



- 1 coat girl, who receives \$12.  
 4 skirt girls, of whom—  
     1 head skirt girl receives \$14.50.  
     3 finishers receive \$8, \$7, and \$6, respectively.  
 1 errand girl, who receives \$1.50.  
 1 office girl, who receives \$8.

In shop N a head waist girl or "draper" drapes the soft, delicate materials on the figure, and must put them together so they will have artistic lines but fit the figure snugly, which requires artistic sense, deftness, and skill. The coat girl works with heavy, so-called "mannish" materials, which she must put together so they will fit the figure but retain the loose mannish effect and have the tailored appearance. Such work requires much greater strength, precision, and accuracy. The employer in this shop still retains charge of the skirts, delegating the simpler processes to the "plain sewers." In shop K the employer has delegated the more skilled work on waists, coats, and skirts to a head girl in each of these sections, and has also intrusted some of the business management to an office girl or book-keeper. The increased force and trade has necessitated increased delegation of the responsibility to special workers.

As shown in the following table the characteristic working force of the shop of the transition type in Boston ranges from 5 to 15 girls, in Worcester from 5 to 12, in Cambridge and Lowell from 5 to 10, and in Somerville from 5 to 8. Thus, an interesting relation between the size of the force and the city in which it does business is apparent.

TABLE 7.—SIZE OF WORKING FORCE OF DRESSMAKERS OF THE TRANSITION STAGE IN 5 CITIES IN MASSACHUSETTS.

[Based on reports of employers.]

Size of force.	Number of shops having specified number of workers in—					Total.
	Boston.	Worcester.	Lowell. <sup>1</sup>	Cambridge. <sup>1</sup>	Somerville.	
5 to 8 workers .....	11	2		3	1	17
9 to 12 workers .....	10	2	1	1		14
13 to 15 workers .....	4					4
Total .....	25	4	1	4	1	35

<sup>1</sup> No shop in this city employed more than 10 workers.

About one-half (25) of the shops in the stage of transition in Boston, one of the four in Lowell, and all that could be found in Worcester (4), Cambridge (4), and Somerville (1), were visited.

The wage scale of the shop of the transition stage shows the introduction of the more skilled workers. While the \$3 to \$9 scale was characteristic of the private dressmaking shop, the \$9 to \$15 rate appears for the "heads" in the larger shop. The "head girl" in



the smaller shop or "the waist draper" or "skirt draper" in the larger shop who assumes any initiative or responsibility receives a weekly wage of \$9 to \$10. In the Boston shops the majority of waist drapers fall within the \$10 to \$12 group, the skirt drapers being in the \$10 group, since their work does not offer or require so much opportunity for originality of ideas and for artistic and constructive ability. In the suburban cities, where the force is smaller and work perhaps of not so high a grade, the head girl or draper frequently receives \$9, and only one instance of a wage of more than \$10 was discovered.

TABLE 8.—MAXIMUM WEEKLY WAGE OF TWO CLASSES OF SKILLED WORKERS IN SHOPS OF THE TRANSITION STAGE, BY SIZE OF FORCE.

[Based on reports of 35 employers visited.]

Size of force.	Boston.					Smaller cities. <sup>1</sup>				
	Waist drapers.			Skirt drapers.		Waist drapers.			Skirt drapers.	
	\$9	\$12	\$15	\$10	\$12	\$9	\$10	\$11	\$9	\$10
Under 6 workers.....		2		2		1				1
6 and under 9 workers.....	1	5		6			5	1	1	6
9 and under 12 workers.....		5	1	4	2					
12 and under 16 workers.....	1	9		10		1	1		1	1
Total.....	2	24	1	22	2	2	6	1	2	8

<sup>1</sup> Worcester, Cambridge, Lowell, and Somerville.

The "sleeve girl" when employed in the larger shop of the transition stage receives from \$7.50 to \$9. She makes the sleeves, but is necessarily subordinate to the head waist girl, who must plan the waist as a whole. One shop in Worcester reported a coat maker at \$9 and three in Boston a coat maker at \$10 to \$15. Three reported so-called forewomen at \$15, who cut the materials and supervised the workroom in general, thus anticipating the stage of specialization in which the hired supervisors or heads of the workroom are common.<sup>1</sup> The wage of the skilled workers varies with individual skill and with the amount of responsibility assumed and corresponds to a certain extent to the size of the force, and to the extent to which the employer retains supervision of work and workers. The wage scale for the finishers and plain sewers remains the same as in the private shops.

In the workroom of the shop of the transition stage the young worker's opportunity to acquire her trade is even better than in the shop of the private dressmaker. She still comes under the personal

<sup>1</sup> See also Women's Work in Tailoring and Dressmaking, by Margaret Irwin; Great Britain, Royal Commission on Labor, 1893; Condition of Work in Scotland, by Margaret Irwin, p. 292. Also Women and the Clothing Trade in Amsterdam, by Mme. Treub-Cornaz, Women's Industrial News, London, September, 1901, p. 250, concerning division of labor.

supervision and direction of her employer, gains a fairly general experience, works on a higher class product, and under more systematized management. The work is still fairly regular and continuous, though less so than in the private shop.

The furnishing by the dressmaker of materials chosen from samples now becomes the more common method of doing business. This affords a distinct profit to the dressmaker in the rebates allowed by furnishing houses, but is counterbalanced by the necessity of increased capital and credit. A large force of more specialized and consequently more highly paid help necessitates heavier expenses and the business system necessitates large purchases in advance. As a result the problem of capital now assumes increasing proportions.

##### 5. THE DRESSMAKER OF THE SHOP OF SPECIALIZED WORKERS.

The stage of specialization in custom dressmaking was presaged in the transition stage. Increasing demands by the customers on her time and attention and the increased size of her force and of the amount of work gradually force the employer to relinquish still further to employees the more important phases of production as well as the supervision of details. However, the large shop of specialized workers is characteristic only of the larger cities. No shops of this type were found in Cambridge and Somerville, but more than one-fourth of the shops visited in Boston (26.2 per cent) and almost one-half (44.4 per cent) of those visited in Worcester came within this class.

The shop of this stage assumes increasingly the appearance of a business establishment. The large quarters are emphasized and advertised by gilt signs on the door and on many windows overlooking the street. On entering the reception room, a wide selection of materials, laces, embroideries, and trimmings of all sorts may tempt the eye of the visitor, or the room may present the luxurious appearance of a private parlor. Separate fitting rooms and workrooms lead off the reception room, and a separate workroom for each division of production, as a skirt room, sleeve room, waist room, and tailoring room, is observed in many of the larger shops.<sup>1</sup> Only occasionally is a shop of this kind found in the home of the dressmaker, though one of the largest dressmakers in Boston, employing 100 workers, and one in Worcester with 24 or 25 employees, carry on their business in the large residences where they make their homes. Even at this stage, which involves large finances, women predominate, although to succeed here a woman must combine shrewd business capacity with a high degree of professional skill and artistic ingenuity.

<sup>1</sup> Similar division of labor and specialized workers characterize the large shops of Paris. See description of shops in *La Petite Industrie*, Vol. II, *Le Vêtement à Paris*, p. 447. France, Office du Travail. Also *Women's Work in Tailoring and Dressmaking*, by Margaret Irwin, Glasgow, p. 33.



Men are found in the trade at this stage, however. Sometimes a husband or brother has charge of the financial department and sometimes a man appears as sole head of such an establishment, while a man tailor occasionally combines dressmaking with his tailoring department to meet the needs of his customers and better to solve and equalize the seasonal difficulties. As the street suit needs waists and blouses, the more progressive tailor is adding a department for waists, which occasionally develops into a dressmaking department. Virginia Penny wrote in 1863, "In Germany many dressmakers are men, and there is one on Broadway, New York,"<sup>1</sup> but the development and popularity of the tailor-made suit in the last half century has greatly increased the opportunity for and number of men in the dressmaking trade.<sup>2</sup>

The size of the establishment and of the working force varies widely in the shops of the specialized workers. As shown in the following table, one-half of the shops visited in Boston and Worcester employed from 12 to 18 workers; about one-fourth of the shops in each city employed from 20 to 25. Eleven visited in Boston and one in Worcester employed from 30 to 60, and one exceptionally large shop in Boston employed 112 workers.

TABLE 9.—SIZE OF THE WORKING FORCE IN SHOPS OF THE SPECIALIZATION STAGE IN BOSTON AND WORCESTER.

[Based on employers' reports.]

Size of force.	Number of shops having specified number of employees in—		
	Boston.	Worcester.	Total.
12 to 18 workers.....	21	5	26
20 to 25 workers.....	9	2	11
30 workers or more.....	1 12	2 1	13
Total.....	42	8	50

<sup>1</sup> One shop had a force of 112 workers.    <sup>2</sup> Force of 30 workers.

In the majority of the shops of specialized workers the employer still retains the planning, cutting, and fitting of the gowns, but in 7 of the 50 shops visited she had delegated even these most skilled processes. In shop B, with a maximum force of 65,<sup>3</sup> the distribution and wages of the employees are as follows:

- 1 head waist girl receives \$30, and supervises—
- 9 waist drapers, of whom—
- 2 receive \$15.
- 1 receives \$12.
- 2 receive \$11.
- 4 receive \$10.

<sup>1</sup> The Employments of Women, by Virginia Penny, p. 324.    <sup>2</sup> See Table 1.    <sup>3</sup> Based on pay rolls.



- 11 finishers, of whom—
  - 3 receive from \$9 to \$9.50.
  - 4 receive from \$8 to \$8.50.
  - 2 receive from \$6 to \$6.50.
  - 1 receives \$4.
  - 1 receives \$3.
- 1 head of linings receives \$12.
- 1 power machine operator receives \$12.
- 1 head sleeve girl receives \$15, and supervises—
  - 4 finishers, who receive \$10, \$9, \$7.50, and \$5.50, respectively.
- 1 head tailor (man) receives \$45, and supervises—
  - 6 tailors, of whom—
    - 1 man receives \$22.
    - 3 men receive \$21.
    - 2 women receive \$15.
  - 3 finishers, of whom—
    - 2 receive \$10.
    - 1 receives \$2.50.
- 1 head skirt girl receives \$24, and supervises—
  - 22 assistants, of whom—
    - 2 receive \$14.
    - 1 receives \$13.
    - 1 receives \$12.
    - 2 receive \$11.
    - 2 receive \$10.
    - 5 receive \$9 to \$9.50.
    - 5 receive \$8 to \$8.50.
    - 1 receives \$7.50.
    - 2 receive \$5.
    - 1 receives \$3.
- 4 office girls receive \$14, \$10, \$8.50, and \$5.50.

The head waist girl, head skirt girl, and tailor plan in consultation with their employer the different gowns and execute the work in their respective departments. Seven shops reported one or more men tailors. The tailor (or head tailor where several are employed) is usually also a cutter, and receives from \$18 to \$45 a week, according to the degree of skill and responsibility.

The employer in the stage of specialization as in that of transition is increasingly delegating her powers. The size of the force and the amount of responsibility assumed, therefore, explain the variation in the wage of the head workers. In a shop employing 12 to 18 workers, the employer still retains general supervision of the work. In shops employing 20 to 40 workers, the responsibility is increasingly assumed by the head girls, while in a force of 60 to 100 each head worker is practically in charge of her section of the work, and occupies the place which the employers hold in the stages of transition.

The following table shows the relation between the size of the working force and the wages of the skilled workers:

TABLE 10.—MAXIMUM WEEKLY WAGE OF THREE CLASSES OF SKILLED WORKERS IN SHOPS OF THE SPECIALIZATION STAGE, BY SIZE OF FORCE.<sup>1</sup>

[Based on reports of 49 employers visited.]

Size of force in—	Number of shops reporting classified maximum wage for—												
	Waist drapers.					Skirt drapers.					Sleeve drapers.		
	\$10 and under \$12	\$12 and under \$15	\$15 and under \$20	\$20 and under \$25	\$25 and over.	\$10 and under \$12	\$12 and under \$15	\$15 and under \$20	\$20 and under \$25	\$25 and over.	\$9 and under \$12	\$12 and under \$15	\$15 and under \$20
Boston: <sup>2</sup>													
12 and under 20 workers.....	1	5	13	.....	.....	5	3	7	.....	.....	5	3	3
20 and under 30 workers.....	.....	1	3	1	3	.....	.....	5	.....	2	2	2	2
30 workers and over.....	.....	2	2	4	3	.....	1	4	.....	1	2	3	3
Worcester:													
12 and under 20 workers.....	.....	3	2	.....	.....	1	.....	3	.....	.....	1	.....	.....
20 and under 30 workers.....	1	.....	1	.....	.....	1	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	1	.....
30 workers.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

<sup>1</sup> See similarity of conditions presented in Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of New York, 1908, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> Not all shops reported on all workers.

The head waist girl earns from \$10 to \$15 in a force of 12 to 18 workers; \$12 to \$25 in a force of 20 to 40 workers, and \$18 to \$35 in a force of 60 to 100 workers. The head skirt girl earns from \$10 to \$18 in a force of 12 to 18 workers, \$10 to \$20 in a force of 20 to 60 workers, and \$20 as a minimum in a force of 80 to 100 workers.

In the stage of transition the employer assumed general responsibility and the direction of production. Nine to fifteen dollar drapers on waists and skirts performed the more skilled work and finishers and helpers did the simpler processes. In the stage of specialization the employer delegates the responsibility and the direction of the processes to head waist, skirt, and sleeve drapers, these positions being merely superimposed on the system of organization of the smaller shops. The \$18 to \$35 draper, now taking, in a certain degree, the place of the employer of the transition stage, supervises the \$9 to \$15 drapers, who are in turn assisted by the \$6 to \$10 finishers.

Miss Irwin, in the report of her investigation of the dressmaking trade in Glasgow, notes the "great discrepancy in wage \* \* \* between the rank and file and the 'first' and 'second' hand, but, of course," she says, "there is a corresponding difference in their respective skill and ability,"<sup>1</sup> which is quite obviously the situation in Boston. The advanced stages of the trade require at the one extreme mere mechanical labor and continual repetition of several processes. The workers capable of meeting this demand are numerous, the value

<sup>1</sup> Women's Work in Tailoring and Dressmaking, by Margaret Irwin, p. 36. See also Le Salaire des Femmes, par Poisson, p. 72, and La Femme dans l'Industrie, par Gonnard, p. 109.



of their work is comparatively small, and their compensation is correspondingly low. At the other extreme is offered the opportunity for originality, initiative, highest artistic skill, judgment, administrative ability, and tact. Few workers possess or can acquire these qualifications, and the demand for those who have them greatly exceeds the supply. But, though few can qualify for these higher positions, "still the chances are there," as Miss Irwin expresses it, "and are to the dressmaker's apprentice what the marshal's baton was in the knapsack of Napoleon's young recruit."

The opportunity for the young worker in a large specialized workroom is problematical. Ordinarily she must enter as an errand girl whose work, specialized like that of all the others, seldom leaves time or opportunity for learning the sewing processes. If a girl by her own ability secures a transfer to the sewing room, or if she has sufficient maturity and capacity to enter as a sewer, she still faces great difficulties. The workshop is divided into separate sections or workrooms where particular parts of the work are turned out. The workrooms are large but crowded and rushed in the busy season, and the organization is much more formal than in a small shop. A "head girl" assumes responsibility for a certain part of the gown, and her subordinate workers are usually grouped around a table over which she presides. The work for the day is systematically planned; she distributes the work among her drapers and finishers, each of whom does one process only. She must make her division pay, and has therefore little time or inclination to divert her attention to systematic training of inexperienced young workers, so the learner must "pick up" the trade as best she can, if the head girl allows her to remain at all. When she has acquired proficiency in one process, it is not surprising if neither she nor her employer is inclined to change her employment. The employee must complete her work promptly and satisfactorily, and the young girl is contented with the easily and quickly acquired processes. The young worker, therefore, becomes in time a sleeve finisher, waist finisher, or skirt finisher, and may never see the relation of her section of the work to the whole. "I make sleeves all day long," said one girl in a large shop, "and never see the waists to which they belong. The waists are made in another room."<sup>1</sup>

The large shop does, however, have two great advantages by which the girl gifted with initiative and ability profits—the high-class work and the highly paid positions. The high class of work provides a valuable training which could not be acquired elsewhere. "I could make more money," said a young girl who came in each day from a suburban city, "by working for a dressmaker at home. After seeing

<sup>1</sup> Mme. Treub-Cornaz describes a similar situation in Amsterdam. *Women's Industrial News*, September, 1901, p. 250.



the kind of work done I couldn't be induced to work there. She is a 'regular country dressmaker.' I love to work at W———'s. I am working right under the head sleeve girl and learning how to drape sleeves. We work with beautiful materials." The highly paid positions in a large shop are open to the gifted worker. Individual instances of rising from errand girl to head girl, draper, or fitter are occasionally encountered, though opportunities for such advancement decrease with the increasing specialization in industry and the consequent lack of opportunity to acquire training.

The employer of the large shop furnishes all the materials. She may produce a garment at a price based on an itemized computation of the cost of work and materials, as in the previous stage, or she may name a set or contract price for the completed gown sufficient to cover various possible contingencies, such as long credit and several changes of mind on the part of the client. This system is possible only for the dressmaker who has a large reserve capital and extensive credit, for the business is increasingly placed on a credit basis. Many of the firms of this type purchase large and assorted stocks of materials and furnishings from New York and European importers who allow a three, four, or six months' credit, according to the standing of the local firm. A dressmaker of this type can not attempt business without sufficient capital for at least a season's or even a year's running expenses, as her customers' credit runs from 3 to 18 months.

In dealing with shops of this stage the customer occupies a position of independence as to the production and is in a position to accept or refuse the finished product, which is, until she accepts it, the property of the contractor throughout. Some firms report that an unscrupulous customer occasionally takes advantage of this situation to refuse a gown made for her, in which case the dressmaker may lose not only the cost of making and the anticipated profit, but even the cost of the materials used. This possibility exposes the head of a specialized shop to a risk not incurred by dressmakers in the simpler stages of the trade, who make up the materials of their customers and who at the worst lose only the labor involved. According to M. du Maroussem, the risk of such refusals constitutes a serious factor in the problem of the Paris dressmaker.<sup>1</sup>

#### 6. THE COMMERCIAL DRESSMAKER.

The "industrialization" of the trade, as M. de Seilhac<sup>2</sup> has aptly termed it, is a natural development which has been presaged in the preceding stages. It is the culmination of efforts to evolve a more highly developed system of administration, by which the great problems of capital, competition, labor, and seasonal fluctuation may meet a satisfactory solution. The establishment of this stage is seen

<sup>1</sup> France, Office du Travail. *La Petite Industrie*. Vol. II, *Le Vêtement à Paris*, p. 486.

<sup>2</sup> *L'Industrie de la Couture et de la Confection à Paris*, par Leon de Seilhac, p. 12.

in two forms—the commercialized shop and the manufacturing establishment.

The large custom dressmaker frequently develops into a merchant or commercial dressmaker for several reasons. The short season of the shop of specialized workers makes it difficult to maintain a regular force, and the stock of materials must find an outlet. The commercial dressmaker employs her force in the dull season in making up these materials in advance of orders, and offers for sale her ready-to-wear gowns as superior to the ready-made product of her closest competitor, the wholesale manufacturer. Then, too, she gradually incorporates in her stock the various accompaniments of her customers' wardrobes. Four different lines of stock are observed in the commercialized shops in Boston: (1) Ready-to-wear or ready-made waists, gowns, suits, and cloaks; (2) millinery; (3) neckwear and lingerie; (4) furs.<sup>1</sup>

A forerunner of the large commercialized shop is seen in the establishment of the small private dressmaker who has her girls in slack time make fancy ornaments and trimmings which she offers for sale to her customers, as well as in the shop of the large dressmaker who frequently makes up "Paris models" in the dull season, thus solving the labor and seasonal problems and disposing of materials which had not yet been made up. The commercial dressmaker merely emphasizes the making and sale of gowns produced in advance of specific orders of customers.

The commercial dressmaking shop is usually owned and conducted by a man, by a partnership of a clever woman dressmaker and a business man, or by an incorporated company.<sup>2</sup> "This seeming anomaly" (predominance of men), says M. Leon de Seilhac, "is explained by the fact that in a 'grande industrie' a woman is little fitted to direct affairs. Even if she had the power of administration and could combine this with economy (of management) she would be afraid to make the plunge. She would not dare risk enormous expenditures when she was not assured of recovering them. Or even the woman with a head for business, who had taste and was an 'artiste,' would too often be incompetent. The man alone can direct an 'industrie' so considerable."<sup>3</sup> However much truth there may be in M. de Seilhac's reasoning, the predominance of men in "commercialized" or "industrialized" dressmaking is as evident in America as in Paris.

<sup>1</sup> See similar cases in *La Petite Industrie*, Vol. II, *Le Vêtement à Paris*, pp. 442, 455, 457, 461, 462, 468. France, Office du Travail.

<sup>2</sup> M. du Marousssem reports a similar situation in Paris: "Grande Couture—The dressmakers, this masculine group which dominates the whole, representing the 'grande commerce,' draw the greatest profits from a combination of specialties (dressmaking, lingerie, furs, millinery)." France, Office du Travail. *La Petite Industrie*, Vol. II, *Le Vêtement à Paris*, p. 488. Also *L'Industrie de la Couture et de la Confection à Paris*, par Leon de Seilhac, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> *L'Industrie de la Couture et de la Confection à Paris*, par Leon de Seilhac, p. 13.



The commercialized shop usually presents all the characteristics of a large mercantile establishment. The output of the department of production must be disposed of. Such a shop must, therefore, appeal to the general public, and is usually located on a street floor in the shopping section of the city. Tempting show windows display the waists and gowns made in the shop or purchased from manufacturing establishments and attract the attention of the casual passer-by. Spacious show and sales rooms require a force of saleswomen. The large business necessitates a force of clerical and secretarial workers, who have had precursors in the occasional bookkeeper and stock girl of the larger dressmakers, but who now become a regular and necessary part of the force. The show and sales rooms, fitting rooms, and workrooms are all conducted and managed under a highly developed administrative or commercial system.

The working force of the "commercialized" shop shows still greater division of labor than prevails in the large custom shop. Secretarial and clerical workers, saleswomen, custom workers, and alteration hands now comprise the force.<sup>1</sup> In a large establishment of this kind the employer is occupied with the general supervision and administration, and as a result has less personal connection with the actual production. The degree of connection retained varies in different establishments.<sup>2</sup>

In the most advanced stage the whole charge and direction of the department of production is vested in a "designer," "forewoman," or "head dressmaker," under whatever title she may be described. One establishment, shop A, employing 100 girls in the store, assigns the whole charge of designing and producing fancy and lingerie wear, custom and ready-to-wear, to a force of 61 workers, thus divided as to work and wages:<sup>3</sup>

1 designer and head dressmaker, who receives \$50.

1 designer and fitter, who receives \$30.

1 fitter and head of stock, who receives \$18.

1 shopper, who receives \$12.

13 tailors, of whom—

2 men receive \$35.

1 man receives \$25.

1 man receives \$22.

2 men receive \$21.

3 men receive \$20.

<sup>1</sup> See description of similar establishments in *La Petite Industrie*, Vol. II, *Le Vêtement à Paris*, p. 463. France, Office du Travail.

<sup>2</sup> Similar variations are reported in the schedules of *La Petite Industrie*, Vol. II, *Le Vêtement à Paris*, pp. 455, 457. France, Office du Travail. An employer of the Quartier du Palais Royal, head of a large establishment combining custom and ready-to-wear production, "is occupied wholly with the commercial side of the enterprise." *Ibid.*, p. 457.

Another, of the Quartier de l'Opéra, "is occupied with the commercial side of the enterprise; also to some extent with the purely industrial, the fitting, because of lack of confidence in the head girls." *Ibid.*, p. 455.

<sup>3</sup> Based on pay rolls.



- 1 man receives \$12.  
 1 man and 1 woman receive \$11 each.  
 1 man receives \$9.  
 5 waist drapers, of whom—  
   2 receive \$18.  
   3 receive \$16, \$11, and \$9, respectively.  
 8 waist finishers, of whom—  
   1 receives \$10.50.  
   3 receive \$9.  
   1 receives \$8.  
   1 receives \$5.  
   2 receive \$4 to \$4.50.  
 2 workers on waist linings, who receive \$7 and \$4, respectively.  
 4 embroiderers, who receive \$10, \$8, \$7.50, and \$7, respectively.  
 1 sleeve draper, who receives \$16 and supervises—  
   1 finisher, who receives \$8.  
 1 head skirt girl, who receives \$30 and supervises—  
   4 skirt drapers, who receive \$18, \$12, \$11, and \$10.50, respectively.  
 11 skirt finishers, of whom—  
   1 receives \$12.  
   2 receive \$10 to \$10.50.  
   3 receive \$9 to \$9.50.  
   1 receives \$8.  
   2 receive \$5.  
   2 receive \$3.50.  
 2 office girls, who receive \$10 and \$8, respectively.  
 1 errand girl, who receives \$4.50.  
 4 unclassified by occupation, who receive \$10, \$8, and \$6 (2), respectively.

The members of another firm having 100 employees retain in their own hands the designing, but delegate the direction and supervision of the actual production to a "head dressmaker" receiving \$40 a week, and an assistant dressmaker on \$20 a week, with a 10 to 10½ months' season. A woman merchant dressmaker, who assumes the responsibility for a force of 30 and who takes the general supervision herself, pays her fitter \$30. While the head dressmaker or designer, the expert fitter, and the heads of stock in the commercialized shop replace the employer of the shop of specialized workers, the organization and wage scale of the subordinate producing force is practically the same as shown in shops A and B.<sup>1</sup>

TABLE 11.—MAXIMUM WEEKLY WAGE OF WORKERS IN THE PRODUCING DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCIALIZED SHOPS, BY SIZE OF FORCE.

[Based on reports of 5 employers visited.]

Size of force.	Head dress- makers.	Assistant head dress- makers.	Waist drapers.	Skirt drapers.	Sleeve drapers.
25 workers.....			\$17	\$20	\$14
25 workers.....			27	25	14
30 workers.....	\$30		15	12	.....
100 workers.....	40	\$20	18	12	12
160 workers.....	50	40	25	30	12

<sup>1</sup> See list of workers reported for shop A, above, and list for shop B on pp. 38 and 39.

With the complication of the business and the detailed division of labor, the salaried "head dressmaker" has acquired a position of high importance. The employer or firm has become emancipated from any personal relation with the producing department, since complete charge has been turned over to the "head dressmaker." The system of "contract by the job," in labor parlance, or contract price for the completed product now becomes customary. The capitalist employer provides the raw materials and disposes of the finished product, having no longer any direct or personal connection with the intermediate processes. The customer has lost connection with all but the final stage, acceptance or rejection of the finished product. The large establishment involves a greater outlay for rent and general expenditures, and requires the employment of higher priced workers, but possible returns are kept down by the competition of the small dressmakers on the one side and of the factories producing ready-made garments on the other. Profits must now depend primarily on the large numbers of garments produced and disposed of.<sup>1</sup> The tendency in the majority of such establishments is toward the predominance of the sales department and the gradual decline of the department of custom production. This is partially due to the increasing demand for the ready-to-wear garment, but the primary cause is the fact that the sales department yields greater profits than the department of custom production.

After reaching a certain size the custom department yields a loss rather than a profit. This instance of the law of diminishing returns seems to be due to three causes. First, as the size of the force increases a correspondingly increasing number of specialists, heads of the various sections of production, must be employed at large salaries.<sup>2</sup> Second, a hired supervisor or forewoman who secures the most economical use of time, labor, and materials is the exception. Third, the profits on the ready-to-wear can be definitely foreseen by setting a fixed price, with additional sum for alteration. A profit on the custom work can never be assured, as innumerable changes may increase the cost of production indefinitely. The customer who sees a completed garment may try it on for effect, and if it meets her approval, purchase it at the specified sum. If, however, she orders a custom-made gown, it may, when fairly near completion, fail to please her. It must then be taken apart and sometimes altered or made over again and again to please a whim or fancy, so that the total cost of additional labor, materials, and trimmings sometimes exceeds the contracted price, which must stand as originally set regardless of all changes. For instance, in one exclusive establishment a ready-to-

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<sup>1</sup> A large French firm of the same category tells the same story. France, Office du Travail. *La Petite Industrie*, Vol. II, *Le Vêtement à Paris*, p. 464.

<sup>2</sup> Compare wage scales of shops on pp. 34, 35, 38, 39, 44, and 45.



wear gown costing \$6 sold for \$40. A custom-made gown in the same establishment actually costing \$85 by the time it met with the customer's approval sold for \$85, the original contract price. The labor alone on a gown in such an establishment sometimes costs \$125. Many instances could be cited of garments being taken apart three, four, and five times to please a customer, making the cost of labor just so much greater than the amount calculated by the employer when setting the price. In this stage, then, the high-class custom work is not only less profitable than the production of ready-to-wear garments, but also involves much more worry and presents a serious problem in the necessity of securing expert workers. This situation tends to bring about a further development, either the total abandonment of manufacture by the firm, except for the alteration department, or the production of ready-to-wear for a wider and more general market. The custom work has sometimes been continued in order to retain old customers, or for the disposal of materials sold in the merchandise department. The department of custom production in either case, however, assumes the rôle of an accessory rather than of the principal.<sup>1</sup> Only one of the large furnishing houses of Boston has retained the department of custom production, which the firm says "does not pay."

The origin of a large, fashionable women's furnishing goods house of the first type dates back 30 years to the custom dressmaking establishment of a dressmaker who conducted a private business in her home. Her business gradually increased until, upon the maturity of her sons, it was decided to develop its scope. They established themselves in a commercialized shop in the business section of the city, and gradually added to the department of custom production millinery, ready-to-wear and ready-made clothing, and imported gowns, coats, suits, waists, skirts, lingerie, neckwear, and all feminine furnishings. After seven years' experience in this line the custom department was abandoned as a loss rather than a profit. The unreasonable demands of customers made it impossible to fix prices which would insure profits, while continuous leakage in the workroom, due to the impossibility of personal supervision and the heavy expense of highly specialized workers, made the outgo larger than the income.

The commercialized shop which has abandoned all custom production still usually retains an alteration department for altering gowns to fit the buyer. Alteration work does not demand the highest creative and artistic ability nor does it usually need young and inexperienced plain sewers and finishers, hence neither highly paid heads nor young helpers appear and a greater uniformity of workers and wages results. While young and unmarried workers predominate

<sup>1</sup> M. du Maroussm describes a similar development in Paris. France, Office du Travail. *La Petite Industrie*, Vol. II, *Le Vêtement à Paris*, p. 398.

in custom dressmaking, the older, middle-aged, married, or widowed women predominate in alteration work. The woman who has never gotten beyond the "finisher stage" and who, as a result, can secure employment in custom dressmaking only during the rush season, or the woman who has had to go to work in middle or in later life without the specialized training needed for custom work, finds in alterations an opening within her reach.<sup>1</sup> Alteration work, therefore, provides an opportunity which is lacking in the custom shop where originality, artistic lines, and adaptability are essential.

The workroom of the alteration department, which has no direct connection with the customer, is usually in some remote part of the store. One of the most fashionable ready-to-wear shops in the city uses the basement underneath the shop for a workroom. Two small windows opening on the sidewalk furnish very inadequate light and air. Large furnishing stores or ready-made clothing houses which do not use the basement for salesrooms often have their workrooms in the basement. Department stores, however, usually have fairly good workrooms on one of the upper floors, where better light and air are secured.

The alteration departments of eight houses of varied types carrying ready-made wear exclusively showed a range of from 35 to 125 alteration workers. The organization of the work and workers varies in different establishments. In one of the largest and best women's furnishings houses the alteration workers are under the supervision of fitters, who preside over individual tables around which work 10 or 15 alteration hands. In another the fitters never come to the workroom at all and the foreman assumes general supervision over the work. The alteration hands work about tables on each of which a particular kind of work is done, the gown workers, for instance, being at one table, skirt workers at another, and coat workers at another. In any case the workroom is supervised by a foreman or forewoman receiving \$20 or more a week. The wages of fitters range from \$12 to \$30, one shop reporting \$15, another \$18, and another \$20 as the lowest wage. Alteration hands are paid from \$7 to \$14, while one firm reports some beginners at \$5 to \$6 and another basters at \$6, \$7, or \$8. Two establishments have inaugurated the piecework system, making a wider range of pay both in rush and dull seasons, and causing greater fluctuation in the labor force. Here is seen competition among men and women coat workers. Four firms employed men with some women finishers on coats, while one employed all women because of the inferior social type of men engaged in this work. One foreman explained that of men and women working side by side on coats the women received \$8 to \$10, the men \$14 to \$15. Men, he

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to find M. Aine, *Les Patronnes, Employées, et Ouvrières de l'Habillement à Paris, Réforme Sociale* (1898), Vol. V, pp. 61-76, making a similar statement of the situation in Paris.



said, could turn out three to four times as much work in a week and showed more stability and less effects of nervous strain and overwork. Most of the men are foreigners, trained by a long system of apprenticeship and experience, who know the business thoroughly, and hence are superior to the woman worker. The heavy work also requires exceptional strength, making most women ineligible.

### 7. THE MANUFACTURING DRESSMAKER.

The merchant dressmaker may begin to look farther afield for a more general patronage than can be reached in his own city. Increasing capital and the means of transportation and communication make available more attractive and profitable openings elsewhere. He may fill orders by mail or by salesmen who sell directly to the customers in other cities. This stage calls for a more highly differentiated and systematized business management; in other words, it is a stage of highly centralized capitalistic production.

The development of a more than local market may be seen in various stages of evolution long before its final and formal appearance as centralized capitalistic production exclusively for a general market. Virginia Penny wrote in 1863, "Some dressmakers have kept the patterns of ladies in the South and made their dresses for years,"<sup>1</sup> and "A French lady on Broadway had a great run of southern custom."<sup>2</sup>

Some of the Boston custom shops even in the stage of transition have patrons from Maine and surrounding districts, while one reported a New York customer. One of these large shops in Boston caters to women in Washington, D. C., and other cities, for whom gowns are made and orders filled on measure. A fashionable merchant dressmaker of Boston now sends salesmen to the southern winter resorts to dispose of the stock ready-to-wear gowns made in her shop.

A still wider development of a general market is seen in the largest women's furnishings store in Boston, which combines a large sales department of raw materials, ready-to-wear and ready-made clothing, a large custom and retail manufacturing department, and an alteration department. The department of production has most of the characteristics of a factory, with 400 to 500 workers, minute subdivision of labor, the piecework system, and the most expensive and modern labor-saving machinery. The head dressmaker goes abroad twice a year for styles, buys models and materials for production, meets customers, and plans and designs the gowns.

A forewoman receiving a weekly wage of \$40 hires and supervises the working force and superintends the details of production. Fitters and head drapers are week workers and receive from \$20 to \$45. They

<sup>1</sup> The Employments of Women, by Virginia Penny, p. 326.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 326.

have charge of 10 to 20 subordinate workers, drapers receiving from \$8 to \$15 and finishers from \$6 to \$9. The great body of subordinates, both machine operators and handworkers, are pieceworkers, whose weekly wage depends on two factors, (1) their individual speed and (2) the amount of work available.

The stock is still sold only at retail, to the local market by the sales force and in the showrooms of the store and to the general market by traveling salesmen and saleswomen. Each one of these carries with him through the country a force of 8 to 10 fitters and saleswomen and a large stock of models of ready-to-wear garments which are displayed to the public in the showrooms of large hotels. The general trade is carefully systematized, divided into definite districts, and covers a large part of the United States.

So far as the mass of the working force is concerned all the attributes of the factory system are realized in this stage of development.<sup>1</sup> The capitalist employer provides the raw materials, disposes of the finished product, and controls all the intermediate processes. The costly power and labor-saving machines are the property of the employer and are established in the building owned by him. The laborer or producer has again reached the original position of the dependent in the help or hire system. She provides merely the human labor force at the dictation and in accordance with the orders of her employer. From the standpoint of the establishment but one step remains for the realization of the factory system—the abandonment of the department of custom work and the introduction of a standardized product sold at wholesale for a general market.

Factory production of the best class of dresses is, however, almost negligible in Boston because of the competition of New York City. But two factories making high-class dresses comparable to the product of a custom shop and selling wholesale at \$18 or more were found at the time of the study, one employing a maximum number of 37 and the other 228 workers. These two factories made a similar product, high-class silk, chiffon, and wash dresses, and each employed one salesman<sup>2</sup> to introduce the samples to retail dealers in New England, besides maintaining a sales and show room in the factory. Since the wholesale manufacturing establishment does not cater to retail trade, a salesroom on the street floor is no longer necessary, and the factory is usually found in an upper story of a large business block, reaching its patrons through its salesmen and by correspondence. In the smaller establishment, with a maximum force of 37, the owner still retains the designing and planning of the gowns, employing a man cutter at \$20 a week and a forewoman at \$18 to direct and carry on the department of production. In the larger establishment, employ-

<sup>1</sup> See definition of the "factory system," in *Principles of Economics*, by Seligman, pp. 93, 94.

<sup>2</sup> One employed a saleswoman on the road.



ing a maximum force of 228, the designing and planning of the whole output is vested in a man designer at \$60 a week for 52 weeks in the year. Forewomen at \$30, \$20, and \$18 direct and supervise the work of particular sections. The employer in the large factory has divorced himself entirely from the actual production and devotes his time to the business administration, holding the designer responsible for turning out a salable and profitable stock. Machine operators who manipulate power machines and hand finishers who put on the finishing touches which the machine can not do constitute two-thirds of the working force, earning \$5 to \$15 a week.

The small shop employing from 6 to 20 workers is the characteristic type (37.1 per cent of the total number of shops) in New York, the center of the trade, but employs only 15 per cent of all the workers. The larger shop of 21 to 50 workers, forming 29 per cent of the total number of establishments, employs the largest proportion of workers (29.3 per cent). The shops with forces of 51 to 100 and 100 to 250, representing 10.5 per cent and 5 per cent respectively of the total number of shops employ each 22.5 per cent of the average number employed.<sup>1</sup> The two Boston factories, though isolated, are, therefore, representative of the prevalent types in the trade.

This general survey of the dressmakers' trade in Massachusetts shows that the trade here is far from being "chaos," as Miss Black concluded it was in London.<sup>2</sup> Although the industry is in a state of transition and the simplest forms may be found existing by the side of the most complex, and though variations of a local, personal, or transitional nature are common, yet fairly general conditions and tendencies may be traced. Omitting from consideration the woman who makes clothes only for herself or her family, the trade shows a continuous development through six fairly well defined stages, i. e., the stage of the day worker, of the private dressmaker, the shop of the transition stage, the large shop of specialized workers, the merchant dressmaker, and the manufacturer. As no statistics can be obtained showing the number of dayworkers, it is not possible to say what proportion of the trade belongs to each of the stages. Two tendencies are apparent, however. Production under the factory system—the stage of the manufacturer—has shown a phenomenal

<sup>1</sup> Calculated from United States Census, 1910, Vol. III, Manufactures, 219.

<sup>2</sup> "We have now presented a survey of the three trades which we set out to investigate [in London]; and looking back upon our assemblage of facts, the word that rises in our mind is chaos. As far as we can see, the chief characteristic of these trades is an absence of uniformity. In very few is there parity of payments. Over by far the greater part of the field there is not a standard wage and hardly even a current wage. Individualism run wild, a lack of coordination, a swelter of persons all striving separately, this is the spectacle presented \* \* \* in the higher walks of the bespoke branch of dressmaking; there are traces of a customary wage for 'full hands' that once was current but that now is being broken down." *Makers of our Clothes*, by Meyer and Black, p. 143.

Miss Irwin reaches the contrary conclusion, that "the dressmaking trade [in Glasgow] presents little variety in remuneration and conditions of employment." *Women's Work in Tailoring and Dressmaking*, by Margaret Irwin, Glasgow, 1900, p. 33.

growth within the last few decades; and in the custom branches of the trade the small and medium-sized shops are disappearing before the competition of the domestic or dayworkers on the one side and the large shop on the other.

As the trade passes through these successive stages, the place of production shows a continuous movement away from the home toward increasingly commercialized and industrialized quarters. The size of the working force and to a certain extent the quality of the product alter from stage to stage so that each has certain characteristic conditions as to division of labor and wages paid. The plain sewer receives from \$6 to \$9 a week, this wage remaining about the same whether she goes out by the day or works in a specialized shop. As the trade develops, more and more specialized workers are added, until each department has its head worker, whose wages range from \$10 to \$50 or \$60 a week, depending on the degree of responsibility, with a force of assistants whose wages range downward to \$6 or less according to the character of their work.

The opportunities for young workers to learn the trade vary with the different types of shops. In general they are best in the shop of moderate size, where the worker is still under the immediate supervision of the employer, where subdivision of labor has not been carried to a point which deprives the learner of an all-round training, but where the class of the work done enables her to fit herself for the higher branches of the trade. The medium-sized shop, however, is being crushed out by competition. At best the opportunities for acquiring the trade in a shop are limited and unsatisfactory. Modern industrial conditions make it doubtful whether a young learner can satisfactorily acquire a skilled trade by working at it, and the majority doubtless can best secure their training through an outside agency which gives the foundation principles of the trade.



## CHAPTER III.

### INDUSTRIAL CONDITIONS IN THE TRADE.

Three problems, the need of capital, competition, and the difficulty of securing skilled workers, are vital factors in determining the development of the dressmaking trade. These problems should be appreciated by educators because they determine the conditions and opportunities in the different types of shops and show for what pupils must be prepared; by customers because their influence and thought may aid in solving them. These problems of capital, competition and labor appear in varying degrees of intensity in the different types of shops but must be faced and solved by all.

#### BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION.

The problem of capital assumes first place among the present-day questions of custom dressmaking because it is largely a woman's trade which has until recently been mainly a domestic industry, so that the importance of businesslike methods and scientific administrative system are only beginning to be realized. The passing of the dressmaking trade from the primitive stages of a domestic character to the industrialized and capitalistic system of production is so recent that a large part of the trade is still monopolized by the small dressmaker who does not understand business principles nor attempt to utilize them in her shop. The small dressmaker, both "private" and in the stage of transition, keeps few, if any, records of her income or expenditures. The business and administrative aspect of the trade is relegated to secondary place, usually with unfortunate results. "Why, I have no pay roll," said an employer of 14 girls in an injured tone of voice. "When would I ever get time to keep it?" "No, I never keep any records of any sort," said another. "I never even know whether the cost of a particular gown exceeds or is less than the price I have set." Only two of the twenty-five shops in the stage of transition visited in Boston showed any attempt at separation of the business administration from the production. In both, two women as partners conducted the shop, one supervising the workroom and one the buying and accounts of merchants and customers.

The growth of the shop and development of the business, however, force the dressmaker to delegate clerical work and supervision of income and expenses as she has delegated her powers in the work-

room. Although some of the smaller shops of specialized workers have no records, the occasional young stock girl or "office" girl implies the evolution of the bookkeeper who keeps systematic and intelligible accounts. In the large shops where a great deal of business is done, a head bookkeeper and one or more assistants are usually found, and there may be an office wholly devoted to clerical work.

Scientific computation of cost of production is still in its infancy, however. One shop of twenty-five workers was discovered where an itemized account of the time spent by each worker and the ultimate cost were recorded on tickets attached to each article made. The employer had previously been a head waist draper in a large commercial dressmaking shop where she had been trained in business principles. But such system is unusual even in the large shops. A large commercialized shop, conducted under the partnership of a successful business woman and her brother, had developed a very scientific system of administration by which "we know the cost of the air they breathe." The male member of the firm made a careful study of cost of time, materials, and production, which was explained to the workers when he inaugurated the system of accurately recording upon an attached ticket the time spent on each article. After a year's experiment, however, the plan was abandoned as unprofitable and unnecessary.

#### THE PROBLEM OF CAPITAL.

The problem of capital has a varied significance for the different types of dressmakers. Since the itinerant dressmaker goes to the home of her employer, she need not consider the problem of rent; as her client furnishes all materials, she has no need of credit at stores, and as she does not, as a rule, employ assistants, she is not confronted with a weekly pay roll. If she has a helper, however, as she herself is paid by the day, she can easily pay her help.<sup>1</sup> For her, therefore, capital is a negligible matter.

As soon, however, as the dayworker realizes her ambition to have a shop of her own—to become a "mistress dressmaker"—the problem of sufficient capital becomes an important matter for consideration. To pay rent until the business becomes self-supporting, to secure credit from stores and extend it to customers, and to meet the weekly pay roll, she must have reserve capital. A small private dressmaker may avoid the problem of rent by carrying on her trade in her home, or, if she has no home, may rent a room or suite of rooms in a business block down town. A dressmaker who does a small business usually combines living and business quarters as a measure of economy and financial necessity. Location is unimportant, as she caters only to

<sup>1</sup> See similar condition reported in France. Office du Travail. *La Petite Industrie*, Vol. II, *Le Vêtement à Paris*, pp. 406-408.



personal friends who can find her even in a remote or somewhat inaccessible spot. The dressmaker of the stage of transition, however, seeks a wider clientele, maintains a larger force, and has a larger trade, and so makes a larger investment in her business quarters, not only because the needs of her increased business require it, but because a good location and prosperous appearance are good business investments. The dressmaker of the large shop of specialized workers usually occupies commodious and pretentious quarters in the fashionable shopping district. Her large force of workers necessitates large workrooms; her increased trade necessitates stock rooms, and her enlarged clientele requires reception rooms, showrooms and fitting rooms. The merchant dressmaker of the commercialized shop emphasizes the making and sale of ready-to-wear gowns, the disposal of which suggests the advantage of a street floor. Easy access and tempting show windows appeal to a still larger clientele, attracting the casual buyer or passer as well as regular customers. Spacious showrooms and large workrooms in the fashionable shopping district necessitate heavy expenditures in rent as well as in materials and in the weekly pay roll. In each step is seen an increasing need of capital. Extended credit and scientific business methods as well as large capital are essential to carry on the large establishment, and the woman dressmaker, as has been pointed out, is unusual in this stage of the trade.

The problem of capital is accentuated by the system of extending credit which is so common in the business world but which proves a serious handicap to the woman dressmaker without a bank account. As soon as she opens a shop she is confronted with her patrons' demand for credit. The growing custom of furnishing materials increases the difficulty. In this day of keen competition the chief profits of the custom dressmaker lie in the furnishings bought at 10 per cent rebate and sold at retail prices to the customer.<sup>1</sup> The small dressmaker, however, with little or no reserve capital has only 30 days' credit at the local stores. If her bill is not paid within the specified time, the rebate is lost. Seven of the 27 private dressmakers visited in Boston reported customers who insisted on the six months' credit system, while others undoubtedly had such customers. A small establishment with limited capital, or none at all, is unable to exist on this basis. Customers, moreover, often delay payments unnecessarily, seriously handicapping the small dressmaker in meeting her own expenses. Those who have automobiles and other luxuries can not pay an \$80 or \$100 dressmaker's bill. One customer can not pay her bill because "I am going to Europe

<sup>1</sup> Miss Irwin reports a similar statement from the dressmakers of Glasgow. "The mere making does not pay. We have to get what profit we can out of trimmings and furnishings." *Women's Work in Tailoring and Dressmaking (Glasgow)*, by Margaret Irwin, p. 34.

this summer and must be economical." Another "will not be able to pay for these clothes this fall because John is going to college this winter and there are so many expenses." "Why, I never realized that it made any great difference," said a wealthy customer as she leisurely wrote out a check for \$250 which had caused months of worry to her dressmaker. "I just wait from one visit of the mailman to the next, hoping for a check," said one dressmaker. "That is one of the greatest hardships."

The matter of credit becomes still more serious for the dressmaker in the stage of transition because she makes a wider appeal for patronage, which results in more credit customers. She furnishes the materials to an increasing extent, and her enlarged force increases the running expenses and weekly pay roll, which necessitates ready capital. She does not carry a stock of materials, as does the dressmaker of the stage of specialization, but her patrons choose from samples which she secures from the stores. This custom, as well as the other phases of development observed in this stage, is in a state of transition, some dressmakers insisting on furnishing the materials, some leaving the choice with the customer, and some furnishing only the trimmings. The furnishing of materials yields a profit, but intensifies the difficulty of extending credit, for the dressmaker invests a large proportion of her capital in the product, and delay on the part of her customer involves her in financial difficulties with the furnishings stores.<sup>1</sup> Reports from 11 of the 25 establishments of the transition stage visited in Boston revealed financial difficulties resulting from the long credit system. The case of a young dressmaker, formerly a \$25 waist draper in a large fashionable establishment, who recently opened up a small shop in a back room with a capital of \$350, illustrates this point. Her business was at first necessarily done on a cash basis. She had to pay cash for her purchases and her customers must do the same. By the beginning of the second year she had drawn enough of her previous customers from her former place to enable her to take larger quarters and a larger force. She was now able to secure extended credit from women's furnishings establishments, but she catered to customers who paid once in six months or "still more commonly once a year." In her second year she was doing an annual business of \$12,000, but had \$4,000 in outstanding bills of six months' duration.

"Regular customers pay twice a year," said one of these dressmakers. "Customers have often come and ordered a gown when it was impossible for me to take the order because I had no money or credit to obtain the materials to fill the order." "Customers are

<sup>1</sup> One of the dressmakers of Paris reported that one of the three greatest obstacles to her success was the discrediting of rebates on bills, caused by the delay of her clientele, which robbed her of the greatest part of the profits. France, Office du Travail. *La Petite Industrie*, Vol. II, *Le Vêtement à Paris*, p. 423.



slow to pay their bills and some fail altogether," said another. "Last year we lost \$600 in outstanding bills. We had one customer for whom we worked 20 years. She was wealthy—her husband made money fast—but her bill with us reached \$2,300, \$200 to \$300 of which dated back to 1904. Finally we refused to make anything more until the bill was paid to date. We finally got the last of the amount this fall, but offended and lost the customer." Some of the more independent small dressmakers are refusing to cater to credit customers. One employer who has been in the trade for 30 years reduced her clientele to those who pay cash, and as a result cut her force and custom down to one-third its former size, but secured results more satisfactory to herself. Another employer with sufficient capital in outstanding bills was forced to close shop because of inability to meet running expenses. In the meantime an order came for some expensive work from a wealthy customer. "I should be glad to do the work for you," said the dressmaker, "but must ask that payment be made on completion of the work." The order was immediately withdrawn.

The majority of dressmakers of this type manage with some reserve capital in the bank, credit with large firms, and a sufficient number of cash or three-months'-credit customers to meet satisfactorily their running expenses, though large profits are lost through lack of capital in hand.

The large shop of specialized workers does business almost wholly on a credit basis. The largest and most prosperous firms buy their materials from European importers who allow three, six, or more months' credit according to the standing of the local firm, while the customers of such shops pay once in 6, 12, or 18 months. "Large capital or a very good credit and wide acquaintance are absolutely necessary," said the manager of a large commercial dressmaking shop. "The custom of paying bills once a year or once in 18 months is quite general. We send out a statement the first of each month to certain customers and usually can collect 87 per cent of the bills within three months. Some may not pay within a year or 18 months, but we don't bother them with statements. We know their money comes in slowly, but they are perfectly sound and reliable. We have one customer whose bill for this year amounts to \$2,200. We can't afford to offend these customers. They are sure pay, but they don't like to pay more than once a year, and then they send in a check for the full amount without the least effort. The rich people are the ones who allow bills to run the longest. Although this is true in many businesses, I believe it is worse in dressmaking than in anything else."

The capital problem is thus one of the most serious problems of the trade for all types of shops. Reserve capital is necessary to meet the immediate expenses, such as rent, light, and wages. Credit is necessary to secure materials and furnishings in advance. The system of giving credit established by the large firms is one of the most effective weapons against small establishments, which can not exist on this basis.

"Why don't you inaugurate a 30 days' credit system like the stores?" asked the investigator of a great number of dressmakers. "That would be impossible," was the reply. "Our customers would simply leave and go to some one who would grant the long credit." Cooperative action alone could solve this great problem of long credit for the majority of dressmakers. Some, because of their independence of spirit, individual capacity and ability, can set the terms upon which they will work for their customers, but the majority are not able to do this alone. A small Boston dressmaker declared her intention of starting out anew next year and informing customers that interest would be charged on outstanding bills, but the result is questionable in a trade so dependent on the client's good will. The large shops, however, are able to meet the difficulty by fixing a "contract price" which is made sufficiently large to cover all such delays.

Unfortunately the hardships of the capital problem reach beyond the dressmaker to her employees, especially in the small and medium-sized shops where the bank account is limited. The small employer with no reserve capital can pay her girls only as her bills are paid. Three or four weeks often go by without payment. Sometimes the employer pays part of their week's wage to pacify them. One girl said "We used to go to Mrs. ——— and ask if we might at least have car fare." "How can I pay you," her employer answered, "until my customers pay me?" It does not seem possible that the small dressmaker who does not keep a pay roll can remember whom, when, and how much she has paid, and under these circumstances disputes frequently result over the amount due. The financial difficulties of a medium-sized shop are illustrated in the accompanying pay-roll record taken for two periods, one in 1905-6 and one in 1910-11.



TABLE 12.—WEEKLY PAY ROLLS OF A DRESSMAKER WITHOUT LARGE RESERVE CAPITAL, FOR THE YEARS 1905-6 AND 1910-11.

Week of the month.	1905-6			1910-11		
	Number employed.	Amount paid to workers.	Amount remaining due workers.	Number employed.	Amount paid to workers.	Amount remaining due workers.
September:						
1st week.....	2			2		\$4.82
2d week.....	7		\$20.92	10		36.19
3d week.....	11	\$68.08	33.25	11	\$98.59	
4th week.....	12	76.70	35.08	10	70.25	
October:						
1st week.....	12	51.92	50.50	10	75.22	
2d week.....	13	93.08	35.00	11	66.83	10.00
3d week.....	13	74.00	41.50	14	63.67	43.00
4th week.....	13	76.08	43.00	14	78.92	55.83
5th week.....	12		62.50	14	54.73	96.83
November:						
1st week.....	13		74.50	15	124.67	80.16
2d week.....	13	81.33	77.17	16	97.25	93.16
3d week.....	13	77.09	77.00	17	61.17	134.80
4th week.....	13		140.98	17	53.50	188.33
December:						
1st week.....	13	119.06	75.34	16	170.67	127.16
2d week.....	12	83.25	59.67	15	116.74	124.75
3d week.....	11	73.25	55.92	15	136.08	104.33
4th week.....	4	54.61	17.67	14	109.25	78.33
5th week.....		5.00	11.67			
January:						
1st week.....	9	63.50	4.91	14	106.83	78.00
2d week.....	10	75.63		13	97.67	77.00
3d week.....	10	53.08	5.50	13	93.33	75.00
4th week.....	10	52.33	17.00	13	92.66	78.00
5th week.....	9	13.54	58.00	12	83.66	80.00
February:						
1st week.....	9	30.00	90.00	11	83.00	81.00
2d week.....	9	79.50	104.25	11	163.08	3.00
3d week.....	7	54.02	102.57	11	11.00	27.09
4th week.....	12	73.25	89.93	13	78.98	38.09
March:						
1st week.....	14	93.35	99.08	13	81.08	40.09
2d week.....	13	70.89	86.70	14	72.74	41.84
3d week.....	14	38.67	129.71	14	92.25	47.00
4th week.....	15	46.58	154.88	13	88.08	56.00
5th week.....		13.67	12.33			
April:						
1st week.....	11	71.12	121.36	14	107.33	53.00
2d week.....	15	44.25	161.99	14	99.09	46.33
3d week.....	15	62.87	191.60	14	100.50	34.60
4th week.....	12	91.45	199.83	14	106.25	51.00
5th week.....	3	22.25	225.12			
May:						
1st week.....	13	124.79	215.50	13	89.33	50.50
2d week.....	14	82.67	236.67	13	102.50	51.00
3d week.....	13	57.80	232.00	13	107.50	45.00
4th week.....	13	104.74	231.50	13	137.00	6.00
5th week.....		25.00		13	86.83	4.00
June:						
1st week.....	12	95.67	194.08	13	96.50	5.00
2d week.....	12	56.42	217.83	13	91.66	2.00
3d week.....	12	68.00	200.76	13	107.50	
4th week.....	12	21.35	254.57	13	99.50	
July:						
1st week.....	10	85.50	228.89	12	61.51	
2d week.....	8	74.67	217.72	9	38.50	
3d week.....	8	159.83	33.00	7	56.33	
4th week.....	5	50.35	.50	5	12.50	
5th week.....	2	2.00				
Length of season.....		48 weeks.			47 weeks.	

The owner opened a shop in a business building about 15 years ago and has at present a force of 10 to 15 workers, the majority of whom began with her as young learners. In 1905-6, when the first pay-roll record was taken, she had been in business 10 years. Yet there was

a deficit in the weekly pay roll every week of the 48 except 2. The amount remaining due exceeded the amount of wages paid in more than one-half of the 48 weeks worked. By 1910, five years later, she was on a somewhat better financial basis. There was no deficit on the pay roll 9 of the 47 weeks the shop was open, and the amount remaining due exceeded the wage paid in only six (12.9 per cent) of the 47 weeks worked.

In 1905-6 the deficit in the pay roll shows two peaks, one in November and one in May. These correspond to the heights of the dress-making season, and are due to the fact that few people pay their bills until their wardrobe is complete, but the money begins to come in as the finished gowns are sent out. In 1910-11, the fall peak still occurred in November, but in the spring March shows the greatest deficit.

The significance of this situation to the individual girl is shown by the weekly wage record of a \$10 (later \$12) draper working in the shop.

TABLE 13.—WAGES PAID AND DUE A \$10 DRAPER (RAISED TO \$12 IN 1910-11) WORKING IN THE SHOP OF THE PRECEDING DRESSMAKER.

[Based on pay roll.]

Week of the month.	1905-6				1910-11			
	Number of days worked per week.	Amount.		Number of days worked per week.	Amount.			
		Paid.	Owed.		Paid.	Owed.		
September:								
1st week.....								
2d week.....								
3d week.....	3		\$5.00	5	\$10.00			
4th week.....	6	\$10.00	5.00	6	12.00			
October:								
1st week.....	6	6.00	9.00	6	12.00			
2d week.....	6	11.00	8.00	5	10.00			
3d week.....	6	7.00	11.00	6	5.00		\$7.00	
4th week.....	6	10.00	11.00	5 $\frac{7}{8}$	8.50		10.00	
5th week.....	6	1.00	20.00	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	3.00		18.00	
November:								
1st week.....	6	7.00	23.00	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	14.00		15.00	
2d week.....	6	10.00	20.00	6	12.00		15.00	
3d week.....	6	10.00	20.00	5	5.00		20.00	
4th week.....	5		28.33	6	2.00		30.00	
December:								
1st week.....	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	12.00	25.50	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	20.00		21.00	
2d week.....	4	16.00	16.17	6	15.00		18.00	
3d week.....	6	5.50	26.17	6	14.00		16.00	
4th week.....	4	16.17	10.00	6	14.00		12.00	
5th week.....		5.00	11.67					
January:								
1st week.....	5	15.00		6	12.00		12.00	
2d week.....	6	15.00		5 $\frac{3}{4}$	11.50		12.00	
3d week.....	5	8.33		6	12.00		12.00	
4th week.....	5	8.33		6	12.00		12.00	
5th week.....	6	5.00	5.00	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	11.00		10.00	
February:								
1st week.....	6	2.00	13.00	5	8.00		12.00	
2d week.....	6	10.00	13.00	5 $\frac{3}{8}$	24.00			
3d week.....	5	6.67	15.00	2			4.00	
4th week.....	6	10.00	15.00	6	8.00		4.00	
March:								
1st week.....	6	1.00	24.00	6	10.00		10.00	
2d week.....	4	15.00	9.00	5	10.00		10.00	
3d week.....	6		19.00	6	10.00		12.00	
4th week.....	6	3.00	32.67	6	12.00		12.00	



TABLE 13.—WAGES PAID AND DUE A \$10 DRAPER (RAISED TO \$12 IN 1910-11) WORKING IN THE SHOP OF THE PRECEDING DRESSMAKER—Concluded.

Week of the month.	1905-6			1910-11		
	Number of days worked per week.	Amount.		Number of days worked per week.	Amount.	
		Paid.	Owed.		Paid.	Owed.
<b>April:</b>						
1st week.....	5½	\$11.00	\$32.67	6	\$12.00	\$12.00
2d week.....	6	1.00	43.67	5	12.00	10.00
3d week.....	6	4.00	51.67	4½	10.00	9.00
4th week.....	4¾	11.67	51.50	6	10.00	11.00
5th week.....	6		61.50			
<b>May:</b>						
1st week.....	6	15.50	60.00	5	10.00	11.00
2d week.....	6	6.00	66.00	6	11.00	12.00
3d week.....	6	6.00	72.00	6	12.00	12.00
4th week.....	5	10.00	72.00	6	18.00	6.00
5th week.....				3	8.00	4.00
<b>June:</b>						
1st week.....	6	9.00	73.00	5	9.00	5.00
2d week.....	6	12.00	73.00	5	15.00	
3d week.....	5		81.33	6	12.00	
4th week.....	6		91.33	5	10.00	
<b>July:</b>						
1st week.....	5	12.00	93.00	4	8.00	
2d week.....	5	13.00	90.00	4	8.00	
3d week.....	6	52.00	50.00	6	12.00	
4th week.....	5½	61.50		3		
5th week.....	3½	7.00				
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>457.67</b>	<b>.....</b>	<b>240½</b>	<b>474.00</b>	<b>.....</b>

In 1905-6 there were only 6 weeks in the 46 when her employer was not in debt to her. In the last week of June and in the first two weeks of July her weekly arrears in wage were at least \$90. In 1910-11 the improvement in the financial condition of her employer resulted in better conditions for the workers. Twelve of the 45 weeks showed no deficit and the weekly arrears in wage reached the maximum of \$30.

The customer of the small dressmaker, therefore, has a serious obligation which she often does not recognize, because she does not realize the far-reaching effects of her negligence or failure to pay her bills promptly. The girl ultimately bears the brunt, for her employer, with no reserve capital, can pay her girls only as her own bills are paid. The large shops with reserve capital, for this reason, offer another strong inducement to the girl, for the advantage of a regular weekly wage often counterbalances the advantages of a longer season. On this basis alone, the large shops compete seriously with the small dressmaker.

#### THE PROBLEM OF COMPETITION.

Capital, credit, and cost and character of product form the basis of the struggle for existence carried on by the custom dressmaker versus the wholesale manufacturer, the large custom shop versus the small, and the woman dressmaker versus the man tailor, and this struggle forms the second great industrial problem in dressmaking—competition. The development of the ready-made wear has had two

definite results—(1) decreasing the amount and (2) changing the kind of work done by the dressmaker. The scope of business of the private and of the transitional dressmaker is now largely limited to fancy and lingerie dresses and to alterations of custom or ready-made wear. "Most of the work left to dressmakers is the making of fancy gowns, and work for people not of regulation size and figure," said a private dressmaker. "Some of my old customers now depend altogether on ready-made wear. Others may have one fancy gown made in a year." By the irony of fate, a large part of the work which has passed out of the hands of the dressmaker into the factory comes back to her to be altered to fit the customer. "We altered the prettiest little silk dress this afternoon," said a forewoman in a dressmaking shop. "The customer bought it down town for \$18. We couldn't have made one like it for less than \$35 or \$40."

While the large manufacturer has competed most seriously with the dressmaker doing a small or medium-sized business, the increasing perfection of the ready-made product is resulting in its adoption by the wealthier classes. Custom work, because more expensive, must maintain its position chiefly by superiority of product. While the small dressmaker has only this weapon, the large custom dressmaker is adopting other methods of maintaining her position by introducing variety as well as superiority of product—a movement which explains the growth of the large shop. Some 8 to 10 employers in Boston have faced squarely the popularity of the ready-made wear and added a department of ready-to-wear or ready-made. Since the prevalence and popularity of the tailored street suits transferred to the ladies' tailor a large proportion of the high-grade custom tailored work, the large dressmaker is meeting this situation by adding a department conducted by men tailors or by making some combination with a man tailor. Thus the large shop is meeting all its competitors by adopting their own weapons.

The small dressmaker can compete with the large custom dressmaker because of smaller expenses and lower prices. While the dressmaker doing a moderate business is being crowded out, the importance of the day and home worker in the trade has been already noted. M. du Maroussem was convinced of the increasing importance of the small dressmakers in France and pointed out three factors which were facilitating this development: First, the great furnishings stores put at the disposal of the patrons quite as wide a choice of materials as do the great dressmaking establishments; second, the journals of the modes furnish the artistic idea and provide the intellectual part of the task for the most humble dressmakers; and third, the pattern houses perform the same service in a less public way. To this list might be added a fourth factor in the American situation—the importation of European models. The importers are bringing



about a remarkable democratization of the trade, and, as a member of a large Boston firm explained, are helping the smallest dressmaker, if clever and ingenious, to become a serious competitor of the largest establishment.

The increasing popularity of the tailored street suit has made the man tailor an important competitor, for it is generally admitted that men excel in heavy tailored work. The small tailor who does his own work can underbid the dressmaker who must employ a tailor. The large tailors are gradually adding waist departments and dress-making for the convenience of their customers and for the equalization of the seasonal fluctuation through a wider variety of product.

"The competition of the ready-made and ready-to-wear of the Jewish tailors and of small dressmakers who turn out work for lower prices is making a serious invasion on high-class large establishments," said the owner of a high-class shop. "It is only within the last few years—the era of the importer—that they have appeared on the scene as serious competitors. Now that importers bring the European models to New York twice a year, the small manufacturer and small dressmaker and tailor can see the styles and get the ideas just as well as the large firms who have gone to Europe to get them. They can turn out the product at much less cost because they do not maintain the pretentious establishments and specialized workers of the large shops."

Dressmakers of suburban cities have an additional problem in competition. Wealthy people of Worcester, Cambridge, and Somerville go to Boston for their better costumes. Not only the large stores offering high-class ready-made and ready-to-wear, but large custom dressmakers as well, draw the trade away from the home city. Little need or opportunity for the development of high-class dress-making therefore exists. The prestige of fashionable Boston establishments makes impossible high charges in the smaller centers. "We could do just as good work as the Boston shops," said a Worcester dressmaker, "but we can't ask half the price." The statement was well borne out by a wealthy woman, who said "I had a suit made at \_\_\_\_\_ in Boston this fall which cost \$100. I could have gotten it for half the price in Worcester, if I hadn't been in a hurry and had to have it in a few days." Department stores and mail-order houses also secure the trade of the less prosperous. This competition, therefore, forces the dressmaking trade in these cities to remain largely in the elementary stages of the trade.

The lack of development in Lowell is due to a different cause. Lowell is a mill city with a large population and with large investment of capital, but the capitalists do not live in Lowell, and the population which resides there creates small demand for high-class work.

Thus the dressmaking trade in small cities shows little development for various reasons, which may be summed up in the one reason, lack of demand.

The two great industrial problems—capital and competition—are the barriers which are retarding and changing the current of development.

The women's clothing trade, which has longest retained its domestic character, has within the last two or three decades been brought sharply face to face with the industrial development and organization of the twentieth century. Capital and credit have become essential for existence for all but the dayworker and assume increasing importance with the increasing size of the shop. The small dressmaker has only a limited credit, and must have reserve capital to meet running expenses. Large establishments have long credit, but have enormous current expenses, necessitating large available capital. The extension of credit to customers has become so thoroughly established that there are few shops which do not have a large or small number of credit customers. The small and medium-sized shops are collapsing under this system. The large shops, though often seriously inconvenienced, can use the credit system as a powerful weapon against the small competitor.

#### THE LABOR FORCE.

Besides the problems of capital and competition the recruiting of workers has become one of the most serious questions which face the employer in the dressmaking trade, for the disappearance of the apprenticeship system and of opportunities for learning the trade in the shop, together with the increasing demand for skill and artistic ability, are leaving both employer and worker in a practically untenable position. These conditions within the trade, together with the great increase in the number and variety of openings for women workers, have left the trade commonly regarded as peculiarly belonging to women almost stranded for lack of good workers.

The scarcity of skilled workers menaces the dressmaking trade in Boston. The labor situation in a city like Worcester seems to be less acute than in a larger city like Boston. The large employers of Worcester say they seldom take on a new worker, holding their regular force year after year, and some of their workers have been with them 10, 14, and even 18 years. One employer of 12 girls has not taken on a new girl for 5 or 6 years, and some girls have been with her 14 years. The greater stability of the force in such a city is due to the longer seasons, to the fact that comparatively few shops employ help, giving little opportunity for shifting from one to another, and to the fewer opportunities in other lines of work for the girl who feels superior to the factory.



The scarcity of skilled workers, however, is noticeable there as in other cities. Seventeen of the eighteen regular employers complained of the great scarcity of workers. The superintendent of a large store which conducts a custom dressmaking department said he could "get plenty of fitters in the dressmakers who have had to give up business because of inability to get efficient help, but I have had an advertisement in the paper for a head sleeve girl for a week, and no one has even applied." Another dressmaker, who used to keep several assistants, can not get satisfactory help anywhere at present, so only does such work as she can manage herself. "Many dressmakers who used to do a big business," she said, "have given it up for lack of workers, and now go out by the day."

How are these workers recruited? Advertisements in the newspapers, placards in doors and windows, and passing the word through employees to their friends are the most common methods.

TABLE 14.—METHOD OF SECURING POSITIONS AS REPORTED BY WORKERS THEMSELVES.

[Based on personal interviews.]

Method of securing position.	Workers using specified methods.	
	Number.	Per cent.
Personal relation:		
Friend.....	65	.....
Relative.....	18	.....
Forewoman.....	16	.....
Employer.....	7	.....
Total.....	106	33.5
Advertisements.....	39	12.3
Application.....	40	12.6
Agency.....	8	2.5
Trade school.....	124	39.1
Grand total.....	317	100.0

While 39.1 per cent of the positions reported by workers visited were secured through the Boston Trade School for Girls, this means is open to only a small proportion of the workers as a whole, the large number here shown being because all graduates of this school were followed up.<sup>1</sup> The personal relation, hearing of and securing a position through friend, relative, or friendly forewoman, seems to be the most common method for the more stable workers, 33.5 per cent of the 317 positions reported by workers visited having been secured by this means. Advertisements, application (on seeing a sign in the window or by chance), and the employment agency are rather the resort of the drifters and less competent workers or strangers and new workers, 27.4 per cent of the 317 positions being secured through this means.

<sup>1</sup> Eighty-four graduates, who had been trained in dressmaking, were interviewed.

Good workers are so scarce that, once having demonstrated their ability, they have small need of outside agencies to secure work for them.

These methods of recruiting the working force result in a motley assemblage of aspirants, so employers say. "I advertised the other day for four girls," said one employer, "and about four dozen applied. I tried four, but they are not much good." "American girls are still going into dressmaking," said a French dressmaker, "but they don't seem to have sufficient fundamental training and experience. They make so many serious blunders and ruin beautiful materials by carelessness and awkwardness. A woman of 36 came to the shop the other day, and I took her on at \$1 a day. She could not do anything well. Custom dressmaking can exist only by putting out a product superior to the ready-made wear." "There are many old women going about applying at shops for work. They give a long list of places where they have worked. They are absolutely inefficient, and I have to do the work over after them."

The most promising applicants are engaged, although personally unknown to the employer. He usually asks some questions regarding former positions, but gives little heed to the answers. "We can't follow up the references the girls give us," said one. "We would not get anything else done." The girls frankly admit that they always "tell a good story." "If I was getting \$7 a week at my last place, I tell the next employer I was getting \$8," said one girl. The girls are engaged on the spot. If they prove competent and faithful workers, every inducement is offered to hold them; if not, they are dismissed at the earliest possible moment. Where the forewomen and head girls remain fairly stable and permanent and when they are women of tact, consideration, and administrative ability, the trade does not suffer as much as might be expected from this haphazard method, but where such conditions do not prevail the workroom is sometimes chaotic.<sup>1</sup>

The labor force may be classified into three groups, (1) the nucleus or core of the force, which is employed throughout the shop season, (2) the finishers and helpers, who are an essential part of the force but are laid off twice a year in dull seasons, and (3) the "rush hands" who are taken on only during the height of the rush season to aid in getting out on schedule time the work which rapidly accumulates for immediate completion.<sup>2</sup> The core of the force, which works about 40 weeks or more, the characteristic season, constituted but 21.8 per cent of the 600 custom workers and a still smaller proportion, 15.3 per

<sup>1</sup> This haphazard method of securing workers is described by M. Aine as the prevailing situation in Paris. *Les Patronnes, Employées, et Ouvrières de l'Habillement à Paris*, par Aine, en *Réforme Sociale* (1898), Vol. V, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> M. du Marousssem describes the three classes as (1) "ouvrières du noyau," who have an average working season of 260 to 300 days a year; (2) "ouvrières de la catégorie intermédiaire," who average 200 to 230 days; and (3) "ouvrières supplémentaires," who average from 60 to 160 days. France, Office du Travail. *La Petite Industrie*, Vol. II, *Le Vêtement à Paris*, p. 494.



cent, of the 522 factory workers studied from pay rolls. In the custom shops this core forms a varying proportion ranging from 9.4 per cent in shop A to 55.2 per cent in shop F, but a median of 26.2 per cent appears in the 14 custom shops studied intensively.<sup>1</sup> The stable portion of the working force, therefore, constitutes a much larger proportion in custom than in factory dressmaking, where the median of the two shops studied is 17.2 per cent.

This nucleus force comprises the workers necessary for production, but all are not necessarily the highly paid. Waist, skirt, and sleeve workers, and tailors, where employed, are necessary in the nucleus force, while the head workers are usually retained through the shop season. A few of the less skilled receiving less than \$10 a week also secure the long season.

TABLE 15.—OCCUPATION AND WAGE OF NUCLEUS FORCE IN FOUR LARGE CUSTOM SHOPS.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Case number.	Shop A.		Shop B.		Shop C.		Shop D.	
	Occupation.	Wage.	Occupation.	Wage.	Occupation.	Wage.	Occupation.	Wage.
1	Head fitter....	\$30	Head fitter....	\$45	Forewoman....	\$25	Waist draper..	\$19
2	Head tailor....	30	Head waist....	30	Head coat....	15	do.....	19
3	Cutter and fitter.	25	Head skirt....	24	Waist draper..	13	Skirt draper..	17
4	Tailor.....	21	Coat tailor....	22	Head skirt....	13	Waist finisher..	15
5	Head skirt draper.	18	do.....	21	Head sleeve....	12	Skirt finisher..	12½
6	Fitter.....	18	do.....	21	Waist finisher.	11	Waist finisher.	12
7	Waist draper..	16	Waist draper..	16	M a c h i n e operator.	10	Skirt helper..	10
8	Sleeve draper .	14	do.....	16	Waist finisher.	10	Stock.....	10
9	Shopper.....	12	Head sleeve draper.	16	Coat tailor....	10	Waist helper..	9
10	Designer.....	10	Office.....	15	Skirt finisher..	8½	do.....	7
11	Waist draper..	9	Coat.....	15	Waist finisher.	7½	do.....	6
12	Clerical.....	8	Skirt.....	14	do.....	7		
13			do.....	14	Stock.....	7		
14			Waist.....	12	Finisher.....	6		
15			do.....	12				
16			Office.....	11				
17			Waist.....	11				
18			Sleeve.....	11				
19			Waist.....	11				
20			do.....	10				
21			Skirt.....	10				
22			Coat.....	10				
23			Waist.....	9				
24			Sleeve.....	8½				
25			Waist.....	8½				
26			Skirt.....	8				
27			Waist.....	8				
28			Office.....	8				
29			Waist.....	7½				
30			Skirt.....	6				

The less skilled workers form a varying proportion of the nucleus force, being 16.7 per cent in shop A, 26.7 per cent in shop B, 27.3 per cent in shop D, and 35.7 per cent in shop C. The medium-skilled workers can, in small numbers, thus obtain long working seasons in the large shop, a situation which enables a limited number to profit

<sup>1</sup> See Table 30. Those working 35 to 40 weeks in shops D and N are considered the core.

by the opportunities there offered for wider experience and advancement. Needless to say, those who are thus retained are the most valuable and promising workers.

The second group of finishers and helpers, who are an essential part of the force but have two distinct seasons, constitute about 20 per cent of the force in custom dressmaking, and only about one-tenth (11.5 per cent) of the factory workers. The third group, the drifters and rush hands, working less than six months, claims the largest proportion of workers in both branches, more than one-half (58.2 per cent) of the custom workers and almost three-fourths (73.2 per cent) of the factory workers. An element of error enters into this figure which can not be checked up definitely because the group necessarily includes also those who left in the middle of the year because of illness, to be married, because of a quarrel with the forewoman, or because of some personal reason, but the proportions are probably approximate.

Three reasons are most frequently heard from workers for their choice of this trade as an occupation: natural taste and inclination, knowledge acquired at school, and advice of family or friends. Almost one-half (41.5 per cent) of the 200 women visited went into the trade because they had a natural taste for it and had always sewed at home. "It just came natural. I knew how to sew ever since I was a little girl, and always sewed at home," was the general statement, or "I just naturally knew how to sew. I wanted to get into some business with an opportunity for use and development." "I came to Boston, wishing to get office work," said one. "I could not get a place; sewing was natural to me, so I went into a dressmaking shop." This is frequently the reason influencing the woman suddenly thrown upon her own resources, who naturally turns to the work for which she has some natural capacity. "My husband died, and I must support myself and children," said a woman of 40. "I owned a little store, but I couldn't make it pay so I went into a large dressmaking shop where I run a power machine." "I have no father," said a young girl, "and I wanted to help put my small sister through school. I naturally took up the thing I liked and could do best." Some (10 per cent) had learned the fundamentals of sewing at school, either in the public school, private school, or convent, and naturally utilized the one accomplishment which could be turned to money-making. Many children who would otherwise have to go to work at 14 may be sent to a trade school at some sacrifice if they can within a limited time prepare themselves for a trade.

Initiative or advice of family or friends is also an important influence in determining a girl's career. The dressmaking trade, like millinery, carries a certain prestige not accorded other industries because it has an apparent relation to woman's much-talked-of



sphere, because of the type of product, place and conditions under which the work is done, and because the social level is generally higher than that of factories. Parents, therefore, frequently determine for the girl that she shall be a dressmaker just as those of a higher social level decide the daughter shall become a teacher, because it is the "genteel" thing to do. "The family think it much nicer work for a girl than the factory." "Mother thinks it is the nicest trade for women." The prejudice against "the factory" in the families of the middle class of Boston and surrounding cities is a problem which has frequently baffled the directors of trade schools and vocational bureaus for girls.

Since the small wage and short season of the young worker brings a very small income, one is curious to know from what type of family these young workers come. For dressmaking is a trade which assumes a professional character and necessitates years of training and experience, and the majority of its workers, when entering the trade, must not of necessity be economically dependent on the trade itself, this being true of any occupation of a semiprofessional nature. The parent of the \$4 and \$5 worker ranges as to occupation from the laborer to the professional man, but the family income in the majority of cases is not large, and the nominal annual income of the young \$5 worker ranges only from \$152 to \$238.

Yet the parents were putting their daughters into a seasonal trade which requires some years of experience before an adequate wage can be earned. Five girls contributed to the family income by turning their entire wage over to the mother, while others contributed something to the family and met part of their own expenses from their wage.

The attitude of the parents is, however, expressed by an Italian girl of 15 on a weekly wage of \$5 who lived in a miserably dirty brick tenement house in a very poor neighborhood. "Mother likes dressmaking as a trade," she said. "She knows about the long vacations. It is hard for her if the children are out of work, and if they can find something to do she likes it better. But if not, she is willing that they should be at home." A girl of 17 on a \$4 wage lived in a neat but poorly furnished home with her mother. She "had thought of bookkeeping, but mother didn't like the idea of girls working in offices, so when I couldn't finish high school, she wished me to learn dressmaking. I always liked sewing." The parents of these girls, while realizing the long period of apprenticeship and semidependence involved, often make the effort to give their daughters a training which they believe will give them "a good trade."

Whatever the motive for entering the trade, the woman who goes into a skilled trade does so because she has some taste or capacity for that kind of work or because she sees in it the opportunity for a

profession. In this respect the worker in the skilled trade differs from the one in unskilled trades, who is very apt to have left school to go to work as soon as the law allowed, without any special guidance or inherent fitness for work. Proximity to a factory or an opening obtained through mother, father, brother, or sister who has worked there before seems to be the determining influence in the question of the factory child's future.<sup>1</sup>

But dressmaking does not invite the young girl just out of school with wide-open doors as do the unskilled trades, and for the same reason offers little opportunity to the old woman, because it is an art and a skilled trade which excludes the two extremes. One per cent of the 200 personally visited were under 16 years of age, though less than one-third of 1 per cent were reported as in this age group for the United States as a whole; 12.5 per cent of the 200 visited were under 18 years of age and but 8.5 per cent over 40. The census reports a large percentage of older women because of the "fact that dressmaking can be pursued at home by women whose household duties do not permit them to participate in shop or factory work,"<sup>2</sup> and all census returns by occupations necessarily include the women who go out by the day, who are women of more maturity and experience.<sup>3</sup> But since this study attempts to deal only with the professional worker and primarily the worker in the shop, the domestic worker has not been included and the dayworker only as a means of comparison. The majority of shopworkers are neither very young nor very old. Sixty per cent of the 200 visited were under 25 years of age and four-fifths under 35.<sup>4</sup> Miss Irwin reported that the ages of the more skilled workers in Glasgow range from 20 upward, one employer reporting the average marriage age about 24,<sup>5</sup> and M. Aine found the majority of custom workers in Paris "jeunes et gaies." "Few married women," he said, "work in the shops." "The personnel of the dressmaking shops is primarily young; one encounters on the other hand more elderly women in the cloak-making establishments."<sup>6</sup> The older woman who has never progressed beyond the \$9 stage is occasionally encountered as an "extra" in the large shops or as a helper to the private dressmaker, but usually drifts, as she

<sup>1</sup> Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Education No. 17, 1913. A Trade School for Girls: A Preliminary Investigation in a Typical Manufacturing City, Worcester, Mass. Washington, 1913, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Special Reports of the Census Office, 1900. Statistics of Women at Work, p. 71.

<sup>3</sup> Census of Massachusetts, 1905, Vol. II, p. 155, which reports 3,284 (57.5 per cent) of the 5,711 dressmakers in Boston within the 25 to 44 years of age group.

<sup>4</sup> Carroll D. Wright in 1884 determined the average age of dressmakers (employers) in Boston to be 30.59 and of employees 26.48. Fifteenth Annual Report of Massachusetts Bureau of Labor, 1884. Working Girls of Boston, p. 39. This average is based on a small number of cases: Employers, 35 cases; employees, 62 cases.

<sup>5</sup> Women's Work in Tailoring and Dressmaking, by Margaret Irwin, Glasgow, 1900, p. 34.

<sup>6</sup> Les Patronnes, Employées et Ouvrières de l'Habillement à Paris, par Aine, en Réforme Sociale (1898), Vol. V, p. 69. Also Le Travail de Nuit des Femmes, par Georges Alfassa, en Révue de Paris, Sept. 15, 1904, p. 367.



becomes more incompetent with increasing age, either into alteration departments, ready-made-clothing factories, or into home work for these factories. The main working force in custom dressmaking, therefore, by this process of elimination continues to consist primarily of comparatively young workers with a certain degree of skill.

Professional workers in custom dressmaking have, on the whole, gone to work at an early age. More than one-half (54 per cent) of the 200 visited began at the age of 16 or under, 14.5 per cent beginning at 14 or under,<sup>1</sup> but two influences, conditions in the trade itself, and legislation, are tending to advance the age at entrance.

TABLE 16.—AGE AT BEGINNING WORK, AS REPORTED BY WORKERS.

[Based on personal interviews.]

Age at beginning work.	Number.	Per cent.
13 years.....	7	14.5
14 years.....	22	
15 years.....	37	39.5
16 years.....	42	
17 years.....	37	29.0
18 years.....	14	
19 years.....	7	
20 years.....	11	
21 years.....	4	8.5
22 years.....	1	
23 years.....	1	
24 years and over.....	1	8.5
Not reported.....	17	
Total.....	200	100.0

The increasing complexity of the work and specialization of workers is resulting in the practical disappearance of the apprenticeship system or use of young workers, so there are continuously decreasing opportunities for girls under 16 years of age. Moreover, legislation requiring age and schooling certificates for minors between 14 and 16 at work and limiting the working day to eight hours in New York and Massachusetts is also lending its influence toward their exclusion.<sup>2</sup> More than one-fourth (29 per cent) of the workers visited began work between 17 and 19 years of age and 8.5 per cent did not go to work until 20 or over. "Girls should enter the trade young," say most dressmakers, though few wish to bother with "very young girls." Not all these girls who have gone to work at an early age went into the dressmaking trade immediately. One-fourth of the 200 visited had done some work previously, so they had not entered the dressmaking trade as early as the previous table seems to show.

<sup>1</sup> Carroll D. Wright in 1884 reported the average age at beginning work for employer dressmakers as 17.47 and employees 18.82. Fifteenth Annual Report of Massachusetts Bureau of Labor, 1884. Working Girls of Boston, by Carroll D. Wright, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> New York Department of Labor, Twenty-sixth Annual Report of Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1908, Pt. I, p. 158.

The following table shows the earlier occupation of those who had worked at something besides dressmaking:

TABLE 17.—PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN THE DRESSMAKING TRADE.  
[Based on personal interviews.]

Previous occupation.	Workers.	
	Number.	Per cent.
Professional: Teacher.....	1	2.0
Clerical: Office worker.....	1	2.0
Mercantile:		
Sales girl.....	4	.....
Check girl.....	1	.....
Bundle girl.....	2	.....
Total.....	7	14.0
Custom work:		
Millinery.....	3	.....
Embroidery.....	1	.....
Tailoring.....	1	.....
Total.....	5	10.0
Domestic and personal service:		
Housework for pay.....	4	.....
Housework at home.....	6	.....
Waitress.....	1	.....
Child's nurse.....	5	.....
Lady's maid.....	1	.....
All kinds.....	1	.....
Total.....	18	36.0
Manufacturing:		
Machine-made clothing.....	7	.....
Miscellaneous.....	11	.....
Total.....	18	36.0
Grand total.....	50	100.0

Three lines of work, personal and domestic service, manufacturing, and that in mercantile establishments, provided transitory or juvenile employment for the majority of workers who had been previously employed. Personal and domestic service is especially an opening for young foreign girls who do not know the English language. "I have done all sorts of things, anything to learn the language," said a young Swedish girl, "first housework, then second girl, cook, lady's maid, and combination of lady's maid and family seamstress." Finally, she was a finisher in a large dressmaking establishment, earning \$7 a week. A young Scotchwoman, however, who was not handicapped by language difficulties, had been caretaker of a house when she first arrived, then plain sewer at \$6, filling in her summers with housework and taking care of children, and at the end of 12 years had risen to the position of head waist girl in a large dressmaking shop with a weekly wage of \$30.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Additional illustrative cases of girls who have had previous employments:

Case A.—Born and educated in Sweden; came to Boston at age of 15; housework 4 to 5 years, \$5 a week; at present, age 26, head sleeve girl in small shop, \$10 to \$12.

Case B.—Born and educated in Newfoundland; came to Boston at age of 19; spent 10 years in various kinds of work: Shoe factory, \$6 to \$7 a week; lady's maid, housework, seamstress; now head of shirtwaist table in middle-class shop, \$12 a week.



Young girls frequently begin work early as child's nurse until they have reached a more mature age, while the older woman has frequently spent her earlier life in the home, taking the place of the mother who has died. After the family has grown and scattered she enters the sewing trades in which she has acquired some experience in her home duties.

Temporary or immediate economic pressure often forces young girls into the undesirable trades. Some find a way out but others, once there, are there for life. A young dressmaker of 33 whose father had died when she was 6 years old, leaving her mother, younger brother and sister and herself to work out the problems of their existence, could not finish school and went to work when only a child in a factory. She drifted from factory to factory and at the age of 19 found herself working in a gelatine factory for \$6 a week. "I realized that I could stay there forever and never make more than \$6. The youngest and poorest worker could earn \$6 a week as well as the oldest and best." A friend in a dressmaking shop offered her an opportunity to learn the trade. She entered the shop as errand girl at \$3 a week. At the end of 14 years she was head sleeve girl in a large fashionable shop at \$15 a week and filled in her vacations by "going out by the day" at \$2.50 a day.

A thoughtful woman of 40 had gone to work in a shoe factory at the age of 14 and worked there for 16 years. "I used to wonder what I could do which would offer better opportunities and possibilities when I really settled down for my real life work." She "always knew how to sew" and decided to go out sewing by the day. Gradually she realized the need of more knowledge and wider experience and through a customer secured a position in a large shop in Boston where she learned "the system." After going out by the day for several years, she tried going into business for herself, but could not meet the capital problem. "Customers insisted on running bills from six to ten months. They would go away for the summer and not pay their spring bills until fall. So I had to give that up and became head sleeve girl in a small shop, receiving \$12 a week."

Mercantile establishments had provided juvenile employment for 14 per cent of the workers who had had a previous trade. The young workers had been check and bundle girls and the older women, sales girls. Ten per cent had worked in the closely allied needle trades, millinery, embroidery, and tailoring, while 4 per cent had done professional and clerical work before entering the dressmaking trade.

The majority of women employed in some previous work had been engaged in something having little or no connection with their subsequent skilled trade. They had gone to work, blindly, either from choice or necessity. Some had gradually felt the need of a better trade with wider opportunities and found their way out

through their own initiative while others had been pushed into dressmaking through efforts of their friends.

While the majority of workers in the dressmaking trade—about four-fifths of the 200 visited in Boston—are or must be content with elementary schooling, almost one-fifth of those visited in Boston, as shown in the following table, had had further education.

TABLE 18.—SCHOOLING OF 200 WORKERS IN THE DRESSMAKING TRADE.

[Based on personal interviews.]

School and grade.	Workers.	
	Number.	Per cent.
University graduate.....	1	0.5
High school:		
Graduate.....	8	
3 years.....	3	
2 years.....	5	
1 year.....	13	
A while.....	2	
Night school.....	3	
Total.....	34	17.0
Grammar school:		
Graduate.....	44	
9th grade.....	3	
8th grade.....	8	
7th grade.....	10	
6th grade.....	5	
Not specified.....	32	
Total.....	102	51.0
Commercial school.....	2	1.0
Catholic schools:		
Convent.....	2	
Parochial.....	8	
Total.....	10	5.0
Private schools.....	3	1.5
Country schools and schools in other States.....	11	5.5
Foreign schools:		
Belgium.....	1	
British-American Provinces.....	12	
British Isles.....	5	
Norway and Sweden.....	4	
Russia.....	2	
Portugal.....	1	
Total.....	25	12.5
Unclassified.....	12	6.0
Grand total.....	200	100.0

The majority of those having more than an elementary schooling had gone to high school, one was a university graduate, one came from a fashionable girls' seminary, and two had attended a commercial college. A few others might have had further schooling, but "never cared much for books." Forty per cent of the 54 workers studied in the shops of Worcester were high-school girls, and 39 per cent from the ninth grade. The girls in the dressmaking trade of a city like Worcester are from distinctly a higher



social stratum than those found in the manufacturing industries. Many came from families where financial pressure did not prematurely force them into the industrial world, yet when they were ready to earn their living, the custom trades, dressmaking and millinery, seemed the only or most desirable openings available.

Whether the higher educational status in the dressmaking trade represents a definite and commensurate cash value would be difficult to determine from the 200 cases visited, for many influences such as length of experience, physical condition, artistic sense, and administrative ability complicate the problem. It might be suggested, however, that the higher educational status and higher wage scale observed in custom dressmaking doubtless have some relation.<sup>1</sup> And a very obvious relation may be seen between the educational status and the higher social status which characterize the dressmaking trade, raising it above the manufacturing industries.

Nationality is also an interesting factor in determining success and advancement. But 4 of the 24 foreign born and bred who were personally visited earned less than \$9, and two of these were less than 20 years of age and had had but 2 years' experience. More than one-half (58) of the 100 firms visited expressed a distinct preference for girls of foreign birth or descent, especially Irish, Swedes, and Nova Scotians; and their reasons are sometimes most suggestive. One of the large fashionable dressmakers prefers "European girls trained in the trade schools of Europe." Another says, "Foreign girls are the best workers. They are willing to adapt themselves to shop conditions. They are anxious to learn, are quick and bright. A little Austrian girl who could not speak the English language started in with me four years ago on \$1 a week. She is now making \$8 a week." "I have had two Italian girls this year," said another, "who were trained in the shops of Venice. They are the best workers I ever had." The superiority of trade training on the continent and the greater facilities for obtaining it are, in the opinion of English students of the subject, the explanation of the superiority of the European worker,<sup>2</sup> which in turn explains the greater demand for her services.

Forty-three per cent of the 5,711 women dressmakers reported in Boston in 1905 were foreign born, and almost three-fourths (71.8 per cent) were of foreign parentage.<sup>3</sup> This predominance of women of foreign descent is probably due to the fact that sewing is still more

<sup>1</sup> See forthcoming bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics on Industrial Efficiency of Girls Trained in Massachusetts Trade Schools.

<sup>2</sup> Boy and Girl Labor, by N. Adler and R. H. Tawney, London, 1909. London County Council, Women's Trades. Fifteenth Report of the Education Committee of the London County Council (1908), by Mrs. Oakeshott, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Census of Massachusetts, 1905, Vol. II, Occupations, p. 155. Forty-five per cent of the 6,568 reported in 1910 were foreign born and 73.3 per cent were of foreign parentage. United States Census, 1910. Occupation Statistics, p. 473.

prevalent in the homes of these people than among Americans of native parentage, and still occupies an important place in the schools and convents, so that the sewing trades offer the obvious opportunity for a livelihood. The men in the trade, though relatively few, are practically all (90.9 per cent) foreign born, the majority being Russian Jews. Of the women of foreign parentage, 30.2 per cent were Irish and 20.2 per cent British American, only 5 per cent being Russian or Italian.

According to the United States census for 1900,<sup>1</sup> women of French parentage formed the largest proportion of women in the trade. Very few such women were found among the dressmakers of Boston, and in the State as a whole they formed, according to the Massachusetts census of 1905, less than 1 per cent of those in the trade. Several years ago the largest and most exclusive shop in Boston tried the experiment of importing several expensive dressmakers from Paris to take charge of the dressmaking department, but after several years' experience the firm was forced to admit the scheme a failure. In spite of American dependence on Paris, Parisian creations must be modified and Americanized to meet popular acceptance, and the conclusion from long experience is that Americans or Americanized women best know and appreciate American needs, demands, and tastes.

Both the industrial and living conditions of the workers in the dressmaking trade contribute to individualism and isolation and make organization or cooperative action difficult. While the workers in certain trades, such as machine-made clothing and many manufacturing industries, congregate to a marked degree in certain sections of the city, those in the custom dressmaking trade of Boston are to a large extent suburbanites. To the north, the south, the east, and the west they were found in neighboring suburbs and even in surrounding cities. The character of the industry partially explains this situation. The workers are presumably in the trade because of some aptitude for the work, hence go to the city where lies the best opportunity for development. The worker in the unskilled industry may take one kind of work as well as another and usually chooses that near home or easily accessible. The working force of certain industries, especially the unskilled, are, moreover, characterized by certain racial groups which tend to congregate in particular neighborhoods, but dressmaking is the meeting place of a great variety of social and racial elements.

The majority, over three-fourths of the 200 workers visited, lived at home; 137 of these formed a part of the family group, while 16 were in homes of their own.

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<sup>1</sup> United States Census, 1900. *Statistics of Women at Work*, p. 71.



TABLE 19.—LIVING CONDITIONS OF 200 WORKERS PERSONALLY VISITED.

Living conditions.	Number.	Per cent.
<i>With family.</i>		
Contributing:		
Supporting family.....	17	8.5
All of wages.....	43	21.5
Part of wages.....	34	17.0
Paying board.....	8	4.0
Service.....	12	1.0
Total.....	104	52.0
Not contributing.....	8	4.0
Not reporting as to disposition of wages.....	25	12.5
Total, living with family....	137	68.5
<i>Boarding.</i>		
In subsidized homes.....	12	6.0
With relatives.....	6	3.0
With friends.....	8	4.0
With others.....	20	10.0
Total.....	46	23.0
<i>Housekeeping.</i>		
Cooperative.....	5	2.5
Independent.....	11	5.5
Total.....	16	8.0
Unclassified.....	1	.5
Grand total.....	200	100.0

<sup>1</sup> These 2 contributed by sewing for the family.

A small number, 17, of those living with the family group, had dependents such as a widowed mother or invalid sister. None earned less than \$9, though one-half did not exceed \$12. The 16 in homes of their own have been tabulated under the heading "housekeeping." Two were mothers with two children dependent on them, one earning \$18 and one but \$9. The young son of the latter earned \$5. Five formed part of a cooperative scheme, where several brothers and sisters with neither mother nor father maintained a home on the cooperative basis, each contributing to a common housekeeping fund.

To what extent the family may be dependent on the young worker it is difficult to determine. While her small wage in many cases was a very helpful supplement to the family income, yet the family could subsist in case of the child's illness or idleness during slack season. Twenty-five of the 137 workers living with their families made no report as to the disposition of their earnings. The extent to which the remainder used their wages for family purposes is shown by the following table.

TABLE 20.—EXTENT TO WHICH WORKERS LIVING AT HOME CONTRIBUTED TO THE FAMILY INCOME.

[Based on personal interviews.]

Contribution.	Workers.	
	Number.	Per cent.
Supporting family.....	17	12.4
Contributing all wages.....	43	32.1
Contributing service.....	12	1.5
Contributing part wage.....	34	24.8
Paying board.....	8	5.1
Making no contribution.....	8	5.9
Not reporting.....	25	18.2
Total.....	137	100.0

<sup>1</sup> These 2 contributed by sewing for the family.

The majority of those who contributed all their wages to the family were not over 21 and did not earn more than \$8, though a German girl of 23 and an English girl of 22, each earning \$10 a week, turned in the pay envelope untouched. Among those who turned in part of their wages, the contribution ranged from one-fifth to five-sixths of the wage, the rest being retained for personal expenses, such as clothes and carfare. More than three-fourths of these were over 18 years of age, but the income of almost two-thirds of them was less than \$9.

A very small proportion (5.9 per cent) contributed nothing to the family income. One girl of 20, earning \$6 a week, said her money was her spending money. The parents of the others were able and willing to give the girl experience in managing her own finances, from which she clothed herself and paid all expenses except board. But one of this group was over 20 years of age. A girl of 17, earning \$6, gives her mother \$2 when she wants it, but usually uses her earnings for her own expenses. Another girl of 19, earning \$8.50, gives "some to the family, according to what it needed." Four girls, earning \$6.50, \$7, \$12, and \$13.50, "pay board while working." An equally small proportion (5.1 per cent) controlled their own incomes from which they paid board to the family, all being 20 or more years old.

Married women, as M. Aine reported for Paris, form a small proportion of the custom workers in Boston. But 2½ per cent of the 200 visited and 6 per cent of the 545 (16 years of age and over) studied from the pay rolls were married women. However, they constituted three times as large a proportion (17.6 per cent) of the 500 factory workers studied from pay rolls. These statistics corroborate conclusions drawn from study of the trade both at home and abroad—that, in general, the older women and those who have had to reenter the industrial field find more opportunity in the less skilled branch of the industry.



Less than one-fourth of the 200 workers personally visited could be termed "adrift" and almost one-third of these lived with relatives or friends, showing the desire for connection with some family group. One-fourth of this group lived in subsidized boarding houses for women, doubtless because of the low cost of living but perhaps to some extent because of the social life offered. Slightly more than half earned less than \$9, the remainder earning more. Combining the workers living in subsidized houses with those living with relatives and friends, more than one-half of this group may be said to be questionably independent.

The great majority of the workers visited are therefore "women living at home" and their homes provided an interesting sociological study, ranging from an attractive suburban residence surrounded by ample lawn and beautiful flowers to a miserable tenement in a poor and crowded section. The visitor could often form little conception from a glance about the house of the type of girl she might expect to see. A ring at the door-bell of a tumble-down frame house in one of the poorest sections of the city might be answered by a well-dressed girl with the unquestionable "air" of one who comes in contact with people of refinement. She was a fine lady to her sister who worked in a factory and to the rest of the family, who had not had her opportunities to see, to imitate, and to develop ease of manner, and good taste in dress.

In general, the beneficent influence of the better industry was apparent. The girl from the poor uncultured home most certainly profits by her experience in the custom shop. Contact with a class of workers superior to that in manufacturing industries, experience in handling beautiful materials, incidental if not actual connection with artistic creation, and training in a trade which she can utilize in her everyday life undoubtedly give her an advantage which is apparent.

#### ATTITUDE TOWARD UNIONS.

Social gradations, industrial conditions, the predominance of women, and the recent development of the trade from its domestic stages all militate against organization, so characteristic of the other branches of garment making but lacking in the custom dressmaking trade. Although an organization called the Ladies' Tailors' and Dressmakers' Union existed in Boston at the time of the investigation, it was composed almost entirely of men and represented largely tailoring shops where there was much overtime and nightwork. The women who were approached on the subject of unionism expressed contempt for and superiority over such connection. This attitude of the women custom workers is due to various causes. First, custom dressmakers are of a higher social stratum and feel superior to the factory workers, among whom

unionism has made greatest progress. Second, they know little of the purpose and meaning of unionism, which to them in their ignorance means strikes and disorder. Third, they have not felt the need of organization because they are not exposed to the many petty grievances faced by the factory worker, since owing to the character of the work and size of the shops, fines, piece wage, "cuts," and "speeding up" have not been developed. Fourth, the comparative isolation of the custom worker in the small and medium-sized shops which have been characteristic of the trade does not tend toward community of understanding and cooperation among the workers of the trade as a whole. As dressmaking develops toward greater industrialization, unionism will doubtless make more progress. The conditions in the industry itself up to the opening of the twentieth century have militated against such progress.

The labor problem of the dressmaking trade, however, menaces the existence of the industry, where the disappearance of the apprenticeship system has not been followed by other adequate means of training and preparing workers for the trade, though the development of the trade itself has increasingly demanded greater skill and ability. Provision of an adequate working force has become one of the great problems for solution, for the welfare both of the trade and of the individual worker. Difficulties in the way are the incapacity of the mass of workers to meet the demands of the trade, the seasonal character of the industry, the lack of system and proper arrangement of work in individual shops, and a maladjustment of the labor force due to the lack of an adequate labor and information bureau through which can be realized the necessary connection between demand and supply. While sewing is a natural resort for women, not only for the young women who are directed into it because it seems to be a "genteel" occupation but for many untrained women thrown upon their own resources, many are unable to measure up to the requirements. An adequate system of specialized training or an efficient bureau of guidance and direction might save both these types the misfortune of failure and find for them the opening for which they are best fitted.

Since dressmaking is such a skilled trade that it can utilize very few young girls, many who must earn as soon as the law allows must first enter unskilled industries, which always offer wide-open doors to the immature girl. While the capable and more ambitious may graduate from these unskilled industries, very few do or are able to, because they do not know what industries offer opportunities for advancement, or how or where to secure training for something better, or because they are too tired to take advantage of such training after a long working day of nine or ten hours. Four social agencies are, therefore notably needed at the present time: (1) Day



trade schools which can hold and train the child whose parents can dispense with her small earnings until she is 16 years old; (2) social agencies which can keep ambition and courage kindled in the child who must go to work at 14 in unskilled industries, and can develop the desire for additional training and advancement; (3) bureaus of information, vocational advice and guidance to show what industries offer good opportunities for advancement, the requisite qualifications and ways of developing these qualities, and to make connections between employer and worker; and (4) educational agencies providing part-time schooling in the daytime for the young workers and more advanced systematic night schools for the older workers employed during the day.





## CHAPTER IV.

### IRREGULARITY OF EMPLOYMENT.

#### THE SEASONS.

Irregularity of employment in dressmaking depends upon two main factors, the seasonal nature of the trade and the character of the individual worker. In other words, seasonal fluctuations and the instability of the working force both have a part in causing irregular employment.

The social life of a community largely determines the dressmaker's season. The tendency of the wealthy class to live in the city only about six months in the year and to spend an ever-increasing length of time in the country, causes social festivities to concentrate within the months of November to January. Upon return from the country in the fall, the feminine element deluges the dressmakers with orders for new gowns which must be completed within these few months. Again in the spring, the first warm day, June weddings, college commencements, preparation for a trip abroad or for a sojourn in the country, all bring in a rush of orders from March to June. But a beautiful autumn may tempt people to stay in the country later than usual or a cold, rainy spring may delay the demand for new summer clothes, thereby affecting the welfare of thousands of workers, for they are not employed until there is work for them to do.

Moreover, changes in the habits and customs of the people mean new adjustments for those who serve them, and especially is this true in the custom dressmaking trade where the relationship is direct and no intermediate agency equalizes the fluctuation of demand and supply. The general use of automobiles is making a serious invasion in the trade, because this prevalent outdoor pastime decreases the need for fancy indoor gowns, which largely constitute the work of the custom dressmaker. The opera in Boston during the last few years has, on the other hand, greatly increased the amount and value of product. The earlier exodus to summer resorts brings an earlier end to the spring "busy season" and the later return to the city in the fall a later opening of the shops for the winter season. The increasing exodus to the South in midwinter, on the other hand, has lengthened the winter season in Boston. "The winter season formerly was on the decline by Thanksgiving," said a dressmaker of long experience; "now it lasts through December and in some shops well through January. Customers must have new clothes suitable to the southern climate, and their orders help fill in the slack season."

Business men and women, the Parisian arbiters of fashion, have still further involved this complex interdependence of the worker

and purchaser for their own profit. Taking advantage of the fact that women of many parts of the world look to Paris for the fashions, they have formed a close corporation for mutual protection against the commercial competition of other cities, and have agreed to exhibit the new styles in models and fashion books only at specific dates. No models for summer gowns are shown before February 1, or for winter gowns before August 1; for summer cloaks before January 15 or for winter cloaks before July 15.<sup>1</sup> Buyers for the United States and western Europe, therefore, gather in Paris between January 15 and February 15, and between July 15 and August 1 to learn the new styles, and manufacturers, dressmakers, and the fashionable world await in respectful inactivity the decrees of the great designers.

The frequent and abrupt changes in style decreed by Parisian fashion leaders may greatly affect the seasons of individual workers. The vogue of "princess" and whole dresses meant "out of work" earlier for the specialized skirt workers, who made no claim to work on waists with artistic lines. The "kimono sleeves" meant small need of specialized sleeve makers, for the waist girl made the sleeves with the waist. The dainty chiffons left small opportunity for the plain finisher, as the delicate, perishable materials must be handled with deft and skilled hands. The increased use of embroidery trimmings offered occupation to the foreign girls and women who do beautiful handwork, some of them working in their own homes.

Dependence on Parisian fashion with its consequent congestion of the working season is largely due to the customer. The ultra-fashionable dressmaker whose customers insist on the latest Parisian whims must wait for the new models. "If I had two models side by side, one of my own and one of Parisian make, the customer would choose mine, if she was not aware that it was American made, but if told, of course would wish the Parisian model," said one dressmaker. "One must have 'models'" (which always means Parisian models), say all dressmakers who cater at all to fashionable people; so they must go to Europe once or twice a year, and the workrooms frequently are idle until their return. Social festivities then come with a rush, and the workrooms are suddenly transformed from barren, deserted rooms to crowded, busy workshops and hundreds of orders are rushed through at high speed. The work is soon turned out and the workers are rapidly laid off. The less "exclusive" shops depend on importers who bring the models from Paris to New York, while the still more modest dressmakers depend on fashion books and shop windows for the new styles. The dressmaker who caters to the middle and lower classes is much less bound by Parisian decrees, and as a result has a longer and more regular season. The small

<sup>1</sup> *L'Industrie de la Couture et de la Confection à Paris*, par Léon de Seilhac, p. 29. A new and more rigid syndicate has been organized by Paul Poiret during 1915-16. See report in *New York Times*, Jan. 23, 1916.



dressmaker who is clever and has good taste and inventive genius makes her own "Paris models" in the dull season, or persuades her customers that there is to be little change in the styles of evening gowns, and since they do not desire the latest freaks of fashion, she is not delayed by waiting for Parisian mandates.

The working, or "busy, seasons" vary for different localities, different shops, and different years,<sup>1</sup> but on the whole the orders for summer work tend to come in from March to June and for the winter work from September to December. The two seasons, spring and fall, characterize the dressmaking trade. The working force is gradually taken on through March and reaches its maximum in April and May. During the five months, April to August, which mark the heights and depths of the dressmaking season, the maximum number employed during the year has been gathered into the folds of the trade and scattered again to the four winds. While there is a precipitous drop in the number employed in June, July, and August, an equally rapid rise occurs in September and October, when the workers are again assembled for the winter's work, and the season reaches its height in November. However, the decline in January and February is never so great as in summer, as the majority of shops resort to various makeshifts to hold their best workers for the coming spring season.

An intensive study of the pay rolls of 14 custom shops in Boston, chosen so as to include varied types, shows a striking similarity to the seasonal fluctuation reported by the United States census.<sup>2</sup> This is plainly shown in the following table:

TABLE 21.—AVERAGE NUMBER OF WORKERS EMPLOYED IN CUSTOM DRESSMAKING IN THE UNITED STATES IN 1900,<sup>a</sup> AND IN 14 SHOPS IN BOSTON IN 1910,<sup>b</sup> BY MONTHS.

Month.	United States.		14 shops in Boston.	
	Average number. <sup>c</sup>	Per cent of median number.	Average number. <sup>c</sup>	Per cent of median number.
January.....	39,593	80	256	94
February.....	38,345	78	257	95
March.....	48,349	98	268	99
April.....	56,700	115	319	117
May.....	57,596	117	314	115
June.....	50,412	102	275	101
July.....	34,076	69	181	67
August.....	23,615	48	11	4
September.....	39,159	79	150	55
October.....	52,276	106	275	101
November.....	54,962	111	329	121
December.....	52,057	105	296	109
Median number.....	49,381	100	272	100

<sup>a</sup> Calculated from United States Census, 1900. Manufactures, Vol. VIII, Pt. I, p. 54. (Men, women, and children combined.)

<sup>b</sup> From pay rolls of 14 Boston shops, September, 1910, to September, 1911.

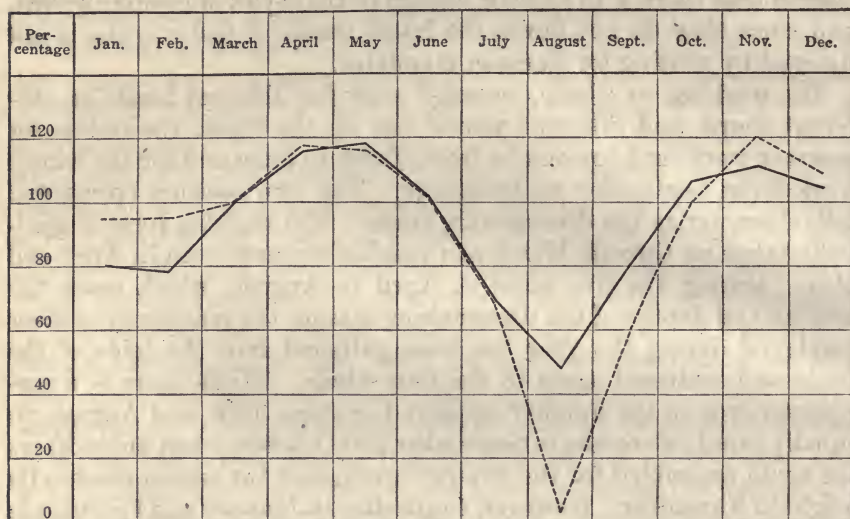
<sup>c</sup> The average number employed each month is secured by adding the numbers employed each week during the month in each of the shops, A, B, etc. (see Table 23), and dividing this total by the number of weeks worked that month for each individual shop; the resultant monthly averages in the 14 shops are added for the total average number employed each month in the combined shops. This method makes the monthly averages comparable with those secured by the census from individual employers.

<sup>1</sup> Miss Irwin, in her study of the trade in Scotland, recognized this fact. "The busy and slack seasons in the dressmaking trade are naturally largely dependent on social and local causes in different districts." Great Britain, Royal Commission on Labor, 1893. Conditions of Work in Scotland, by Margaret Irwin, p. 232.

<sup>2</sup> See Chart A.

CHART A.—FLUCTUATION OF THE WORKING FORCE, BY MONTHS, IN CUSTOM DRESS-MAKING IN THE UNITED STATES IN 1900<sup>1</sup> AND IN 14 SHOPS IN BOSTON IN 1910.<sup>2</sup>

[Based on Table 21.]



— United States.      ..... 14 Boston shops.

The curve for Boston does not drop as low in the dull winter months of January and February as that for the United States as a whole, but falls lower in August. Almost exactly the same variation appears between the curves for custom shops in London and for the United Kingdom as a whole.<sup>3</sup> These differences may be partially due to the fact that on the one hand the majority of Boston dressmakers attempt by various expedients to tide over the dull winter season because of the scarcity of good workers and the danger of laying them off, and, on the other hand, the established custom among the wealthy and middle classes of Boston of spending the summer out of town results in little or no demand in the summer months.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, this variation may be due not only to the difference in demand among the city and the country people as a whole, but also to the fact that the fluctuations of employment over a larger area neutralize each other and smooth the curves.

The two branches of the women's clothing trade have different working seasons. The factory dressmaking busy seasons precede those in custom dressmaking, since the ready-made gowns must be com-

<sup>1</sup> United States Census, 1900. Manufactures, Vol. VIII, Pt. I, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> From pay rolls of 14 Boston shops, September, 1910, to September, 1911.

<sup>3</sup> Clothing and Textile Trades. Summary tables by L. W. Papworth and D. N. Zimmern, published by Women's Industrial Council, London, 1912. (Summary tables based on census returns.)

<sup>4</sup> These Boston returns do not cover any private dressmakers, because none could be found who kept pay rolls, but they are for that reason more comparable to the census returns, which do not include dressmakers working in their homes or turning out an annual product of less than \$500.



pleted, shipped to their destination, and placed on sale in time to meet the demand for new winter and summer clothes.<sup>1</sup>

The following table shows the difference between the two branches in this respect:

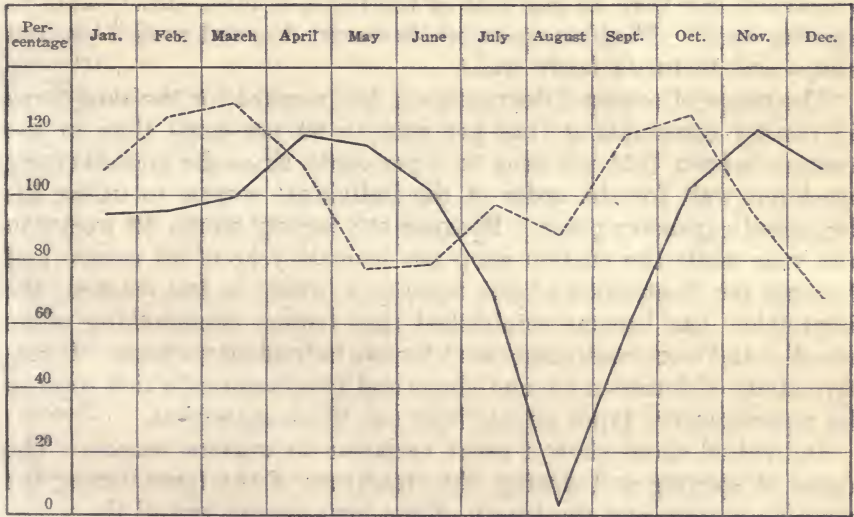
TABLE 22.—AVERAGE NUMBER OF WORKERS EMPLOYED IN 14 CUSTOM DRESS-MAKING AND 2 MANUFACTURING SHOPS IN BOSTON, BY MONTHS.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Month.	Custom shops.		Manufacturing shops.	
	Average number.	Per cent of median number.	Average number.	Per cent of median number.
January.....	256	94	164	103
February.....	257	95	189	124
March.....	268	99	194	128
April.....	319	117	166	109
May.....	314	115	116	76
June.....	275	101	121	80
July.....	181	67	141	93
August.....	11	4	132	87
September.....	150	55	180	118
October.....	275	101	189	124
November.....	329	121	137	90
December.....	295	109	105	69
Median number.....	272	100	152	100

CHART B.—FLUCTUATION OF THE WORKING FORCE, BY MONTHS, IN 14 CUSTOM DRESS-MAKING AND 2 MANUFACTURING SHOPS IN BOSTON.

[Based on Table 22.]



— Custom shops.      ..... Factories.

The factory force is, therefore, being taken on in January when custom workers are being laid off and the busy season reaches its

<sup>1</sup> See Chart B.

height in March, one month ahead of the custom season. After a reduction of the working force of factory dressmaking in April and May, it increases with more or less fluctuation through the summer months, June, July, and August, but it is not until September that the orders of timid and uncertain merchants justify a definite increase. In October the height of the fall season is reached, one month earlier than in the custom branch.

The difference in seasons in custom and factory dressmaking would seem to offer a good opportunity for dovetailing work in custom shops and factories, but the opportunity is not so great as appears on the surface. First, the seasons overlap, the factory season beginning about one month earlier but not ending before the custom season begins. Employers are averse to employing workers who will not remain through the season, and the worker, once located, frequently remains rather than change. Second, the methods of work in custom and factory dressmaking are very different. Custom dressmaking is largely fine handwork, and great care is required in basting, measuring, and fitting. Factory dressmaking is largely machine work, which necessitates skill and experience in putting the parts together quickly without basting, and running them through the machines rapidly and accurately. The handwork in the factory is for the most part very elementary, such as sewing on buttons, snipping threads, etc., though the work of drapers, who constitute less than 15 per cent of the force, is more closely akin to custom work.<sup>1</sup> Machine operators, however, dovetail work in custom shops and factories fairly well.<sup>2</sup>

The range of seasonal fluctuation is less marked for the shop force in factory dressmaking (128 per cent to 69 per cent) than in the custom branch (121 per cent to 4 per cent), since the manufacturer need not wait for the order of the individual wearer to utilize his large and expensive plant. Because the factory works 52 weeks in the year while the custom shop has a usual year of 40 weeks, and because the fluctuation of the force as a whole is less marked, the impression has become established that factory dressmaking offers steadier and more continuous work for the individual workers. Intensive study of fourteen custom shops and two factories which seem to be representative types do not bear out this supposition.

Individual shops show a great variation in working season. The dates of opening and closing, the steadiness of the force during the working season, and the length of the busy season and of the working year vary widely in different shops. Only two of the fourteen shops in Boston from which pay-roll records were taken were open

<sup>1</sup> Drapers constituted 14 per cent of 215 factory workers employed in week of maximum employment.

<sup>2</sup> *L'Industrie de la Couture et de la Confection à Paris*, par Léon de Seilhac. M. Seilhac also points out the possibility for dovetailing work in custom shops with work in ready-made clothing factories in Paris.



the first week in September and the last week in August. Six of the fourteen shops opened the second week in September, one the third week, three the fourth week, one the first week in October, and one the second week in November, while even greater variation is observed in the date of closing. But the different types of shops have characteristic working seasons which become apparent from the study of 139 establishments in Boston and surrounding cities.

The following table giving the weekly working force throughout the year in 16 establishments studied in Boston shows the extent of these differences:

TABLE 23.—NUMBER OF WORKERS EMPLOYED IN 14 CUSTOM DRESSMAKING AND 2 MANUFACTURING SHOPS IN BOSTON, BY WEEKS.

[Based on pay rolls, September, 1910, to September, 1911.]

Month and week. <sup>1</sup>	Number employed in specified—																			
	Custom shops.														Manufacturing shops.					
	A <sup>2</sup>	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L <sup>2</sup>	M	N	Total.	X	Y	Total.		
September:																				
1st week						6	3		2	10				2			4	22	145	167
2d week	9	3	6													41	20	155	175	
3d week	25	27	12			13	7		2	11		6	3			166	29	153	182	
4th week	51	46	28		10	20	17	12	5	10	6	7	1			213	35	160	195	
5th week	62						16	14	7			4	7			110				
October:																				
1st week	61	50	28		20	22	17	18	10	10	6	7	7	4	260	30	158	188		
2d week	59	54	25		21	22	17	21	11	11	6	7	7	5	266	33	151	184		
3d week	61	57	30		24	23	17	20	11	14	8	7	7	5	284	37	153	190		
4th week	50	57	31		24	23	19	19	13	14	9	6	7	6	278	37	159	196		
5th week		56	29		24	22					14	8		6	159	37	147	184		
November:																				
1st week	60	56	30		25	22	20	20	14	15	10	5	8	7	292	37	145	182		
2d week	61	57	31	34	24	23	20	20	16	16	9	5	8	6	330	35	120	155		
3d week	59	60	32	31	25	24	20	19	16	17	9	5	8	6	331	24	87	111		
4th week	54	61	32	31	25	24	21	18	16	17	10	5	8	6	328	23	76	99		
5th week													8		8					
December:																				
1st week	50	61	30	31	27	24	27	18	14	16	10	5	8	6	327	21	98	119		
2d week	46	65	30	28	27	24	24	17	13	15	10	4	8	5	316	21	111	132		
3d week	38	62	31	31	29	24	24	16	12	15	10	4	8	5	309	10	103	113		
4th week	35	62	27	29	29	24	22	16	12	14	10	4	8	4	296	8	97	105		
5th week	21	58	26	18	22	23	19	13	6		10	3		5	224		41	41		
January:																				
1st week	18	62	22	25	25	23	19	22	8	14	6	4	8	4	260	11	120	131		
2d week	18	55	22	27	24	22	16	22	12	13	5	4	7	4	251	14	149	163		
3d week	19	54	22	26	24	22	13	22	13	13	9	4	8	4	253	18	161	179		
4th week	20	54	24	26	22	24	12	22	14	13	9	4	9	4	257	15	166	181		
5th week											12				12	16		16		
February:																				
1st week	30	52	25	8	25	24	12	21	4	11	9			9	3	233	16	171	187	
2d week	37	51	26	26	26	24	10	20	14	11	9			9	3	266	18	178	196	
3d week	36	42	23	27	26	23	12	20	15	11	9	1	9	3	257	21	169	190		
4th week	34	28	25	27	26	25	12	20	15	13	11	2	9	3	250	29	153	182		
5th week													9		9					
March:																				
1st week	38	6	29	31	27	25	12	19	15	13	11			9	3	238	37	158	195	
2d week	39	6	27	27	25	25	11	19	15	14	11			9	3	261	31	157	192	
3d week	44	38	29	29	28	26	13	20	14	14	11	2	9	3	280	33	164	197		
4th week	49	52	35	30	25	27	14	20	16	13	11	3	9	3	307	32	158	190		
5th week												3			19					
April:																				
1st week	48	54	34	30	26	27	16	22	17	14	11	4	10	4	317	30	154	184		
2d week	46	56	31	32	25	26	15	22	16	14	11	4	10	4	312	28	147	175		
3d week	49	57	33	31	28	26	15	22	16	14	11	4	11	4	321	29	142	171		
4th week	51	58	30	30	26	25	17	22	17	14	11	5	11	4	321	28	137	165		
5th week	51	58	30	31	27	25	15	19			11			4	271	27	107	134		

<sup>1</sup> The variation in the number of weeks in the month in different shops is due to the fact that the pay day varies. Some shops close the books Thursdays and some Fridays.

<sup>2</sup> A and L are commercialized shops.

TABLE 23.—NUMBER OF WORKERS EMPLOYED IN 14 CUSTOM DRESSMAKING AND 2 MANUFACTURING SHOPS IN BOSTON, BY WEEKS—Concluded.

Month and week. <sup>1</sup>	Number employed in specified—																	
	Custom shops.															Manufacturing shops.		
	A <sup>1</sup>	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L <sup>1</sup>	M	N	Total.	X	Y	Total.
May:																		
1st week.....	52	59	31	31	26	24	15	22	16	13	11	4	11	4	319	26	100	126
2d week.....	51	58	29	29	28	23	16	23	16	13	11	5	9	4	315	26	83	109
3d week.....	50	57	28	30	25	23	15	23	18	13	11	6	9	4	312	25	86	111
4th week.....	46	58	27	28	26	23	15	21	18	13	11	8	9	4	307	25	93	118
5th week.....										13					13			
June:																		
1st week.....	38	57	26	27	22	23	15	21	18	13	11	8	9	4	292	26	95	121
2d week.....	32	57	25	26	25	23	15	23	19	13	9	7	9	4	287	25	96	121
3d week.....	27	56	23	25	21	23	15	23	18	13	7	7	9	4	271	25	96	121
4th week.....	18	52	23	23	22	22	15	23	18	13	7	5	9	4	254	25	91	116
5th week.....	17								19				7		43		99	99
July:																		
1st week.....	18	46	20	22	14	18	13	21	19	12	7	5	7		222	24	99	123
2d week.....	15	44	17	19		12	9	18	18	9	6	5	6		178	24	118	142
3d week.....	12	41	10	16			6	19		7	6	3	6		126	19	143	162
4th week.....	10	34		15			2	16		5		3	6		91	20	117	137
5th week.....		14						13				3			30	21		21
August:																		
1st week.....	5											3	6		14	22	94	116
2d week.....	3											1	5		9	22	89	111
3d week.....												3	3		6	22	123	145
4th week.....												4	3		7	22	132	154
5th week.....													1		1			
Total number in year.	127	99	59	45	39	29	56	35	37	25	11	11	17	10	600	76	446	522
Maximum number at one time.....	62	65	35	34	29	27	27	23	19	17	11	8	11	7	375	37	178	215
Median number.....	38	56	28	28	25	23	15	20	15	13	10	4	8	4	25	134		
Number of weeks in working year.....	49	47	45	37	41	44	46	45	45	47	44	48	50	39	52	52		

<sup>1</sup> See notes on p. 89.

The seasons of the dressmaker who conducts a shop depend on four factors—the weather, the social life and habits of her clientele, the size of her working force, and her own ingenuity and administrative capacity—so that, while the different types of shops have each a characteristic working season, individual shops within that type may show variation either way. The private dressmaker has long seasons, first, because her clientele, consisting mostly of the middle class, does not demand the latest Parisian whims, so she need not go to Europe nor wait for the latest styles to begin her work; second, because their social life and demands are comparatively uniform throughout the year. More than one-half, 60 per cent, of the private dressmakers visited in Boston, Worcester, Lowell, and Cambridge, reported working seasons of 11 to 12 months, which seems to be characteristic of this type in other countries as seen from reports from Paris, London, and Glasgow.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Investigators report a similar situation in other countries. Office du Travail. *La Petite Industrie*, Vol. II, *Le Vêtement à Paris*, pp. 412, 415, 419. *Women's Work in Tailoring and Dressmaking*, by Margaret Irwin, p. 34. Miss Irwin says: "On the whole the workers for private dressmakers appeared to have less slack time than those employed by shops, although two of the latter (employees) were very emphatic in their statements to the contrary. One girl said she had never lost a day in a shop, and she had weeks of 'idleset' with private dressmakers. Probably the shops keep a regular staff of workers to whom they give steady employment throughout the year, while there appears to be a floating body of workers who get employment in them during the busy season, and who are discharged when the pressure is over." *Women's Work in Tailoring and Dressmaking*, by Margaret Irwin, p. 36.



TABLE 24.—LENGTH OF WORKING YEAR, BY TYPES OF SHOPS.

[Based on reports of 138 employers.]

Length of working year.	Kind of shop.								Total number.
	Commer- cialized.		Specialized.		Transition.		Private.		
	Num- ber.	Per cent.	Num- ber.	Per cent.	Num- ber.	Per cent.	Num- ber.	Per cent.	
12 months.....	2	28.5			3	8.6	9	19.1	14
11 and under 12 months.....	1	14.3	8	16.3	8	22.8	20	42.6	37
10 and under 11 months.....	1	14.3	28	57.2	15	42.9	14	29.8	58
9 and under 10 months.....	3	42.9	12	24.5	7	20.0	3	6.4	25
8 and under 9 months.....			1	2.0	2	5.7	1	2.1	4
Total.....	7	100.0	49	100.0	35	100.0	47	100.0	138

<sup>1</sup> One employer not reporting.<sup>2</sup> Two employers not reporting.

The seasonal fluctuation and irregularity of work become more serious for both employer and worker in the next and more complex type of shop, in the stage of transition. The social life of the clientele is more centered in certain social events and more confined within certain limited seasons. Some go South for the winter, while many leave town for the summer. Consequently the work tends to concentrate in two fairly definite periods, spring and fall, leaving two equally definite periods, summer and winter,<sup>1</sup> in which little is done.

The range of variation in the clientele is, however, still sufficiently wide to offer a fairly satisfactory solution of the seasonal problem to a good proportion of employers. The customers who go South in the winter provide work for January and February. Others send in their work before the spring rush. The increasing use of shirt waists and wash dresses, and the earlier exodus to the summer resorts, have opened up the spring season in February, so that some employers find the winter seasonal depression growing less marked than formerly.

While the private dressmakers showed a well-marked grouping in the 11 to 12 months' season, the shops of the transition stage distinctly group in the 10 and less than 11 months' season, 42.9 per cent being found here. Ninety-one and five-tenths per cent of the private dressmakers had a season of 10 or more months, but only 74.3 per cent of the shops of the transition stage came in this group; that is, only 8.5 per cent of the private dressmakers, as compared with 25.7 per cent of the shops in the stage of transition, worked less than 10 months, the characteristic season for the trade.

The working year varies with the city in which these shops are located, as shown by Table 25, since it is the social life of the people which determines the seasons.

<sup>1</sup> Women's Work in Tailoring and Dressmaking, by Margaret Irwin, p. 33. Also Cadbury, "Women's Work and Wages," p. 102: "Dressmaking is a season trade, but the fluctuations are much more felt in the fashionable districts."

TABLE 25.—NUMBER AND TYPE OF SHOPS IN 5 MASSACHUSETTS CITIES, BY LENGTH OF WORKING YEAR.

[Based on reports of 138 employers.]

Length of working year.	Boston.					Worcester.				Lowell, Cambridge Somerville.		
	Com- mer- cial- ized.	Spe- cial- ized.	Tran- sition.	Pri- vate.	Total.	Spe- cial- ized.	Tran- sition.	Pri- vate.	Total.	Tran- sition.	Pri- vate.	Total.
12 months.....	2		2	6	10		1	1	2		2	2
11 and under 12 months..	1	3	3	10	17	5	3	5	13	2	5	7
10 and under 11 months..	1	25	13	28	47	3		1	4	2	5	7
9 and under 10 months..	3	12	5	2	22					2	1	3
8 and under 9 months.....		1	2	1	4							
Total.....	7	41	25	27	100	8	4	7	19	6	13	19

<sup>1</sup> Two opened shops in summer resorts in July and August, thus realizing practically a 12 months' season.<sup>2</sup> One opened a shop in a summer resort in July and August, thus realizing practically a 12 months' season.<sup>3</sup> One shop unclassified.<sup>4</sup> Two shops unclassified.

In Boston over half the shops of the transition stage have the 10 months' season, while in Worcester none have less than an 11 months' season, because the social life of the smaller city is less concentrated within short periods, the clientele is less dependent on Parisian decrees and delays, and the seasonal exodus is less marked than in a large city, these combined causes resulting in a longer and more regular working season for the dressmaker.

Seasonal fluctuation and irregularity of work reach their height in the large shop of specialized workers. The dependence on Parisian fashion and the migratory habits of the fashionable patrons cause the orders to be massed within two or three months of the spring and of the fall, thus necessitating a large force for a short time. A large force demands expensive head workers, whose salaries represent a large expenditure. Economical management, therefore, means putting the orders through at full speed and laying off the workers as fast as they can be dispensed with.

The characteristic year of the large custom shop is 10 months, 57 per cent of the 49 shops visited coming within this group. A smaller proportion than of the shops in the transition stage reported a working year of 10 months or more, and a slightly larger percentage worked less than 10 months, most of the latter being in Boston.

The commercialized shop, combining custom and ready-to-wear production for more than a local market, may equalize, to some extent, the marked seasonal fluctuations experienced in some of the fashionable custom shops, since the stock must be made up in advance of the custom season, to be on sale when the demand comes. The sales department also provides an outlet for the product, which may be made up in dull season and disposed of by midwinter and summer



sales.<sup>1</sup> Of the seven commercialized shops visited in Boston, two reported a 12 months' season, one 11, one 10, and three 9 months, but the pay-roll records of two of these show that only a small proportion of the workers profit by the longer season.<sup>2</sup> The largest shop of this type in Boston, employing 400 to 500 workers, has a piece-work system which places the employee under a double disadvantage. She must take vacations and also frequently has slack work and a corresponding fractional week's wage.

The solution of the seasonal problem in alteration departments has been approached from several sides. One exclusive furnishing store tries to hold the whole force by midsummer and midwinter sales and transfers from one department to another. "This shifting is a matter of careful and scientific management."

Some alteration establishments have two classes of employees—the regular or week workers and the seasonal or pieceworkers, the latter bearing the brunt of the seasonal fluctuations.

The wholesale dressmaking factory has a working season of 52 weeks, but the decline of demand in midwinter and spring causes a reduction of the force in November and December and in May, so that but a small proportion of workers profits by the longer shop year.

#### THE WORKERS' SEASON.

While the working season of the shop varies in the main from 10 to 12 months, the season of the individual worker shows a much wider range. The duration of employment within a given year depends partly on the worker's own skill and ability and partly on trade conditions over which she has no control. Taking the trade as a whole, the number employed each month varies as shown in the following table:

TABLE 26.—AVERAGE NUMBER OF MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN EMPLOYED IN CUSTOM DRESSMAKING IN THE UNITED STATES IN 1900,<sup>a</sup> BY MONTHS.

Month.	Men.		Women.		Children.	
	Average number.	Per cent of median number.	Average number.	Per cent of median number.	Average number.	Per cent of median number.
January.....	3,863	85	35,359	79	371	91
February.....	4,021	88	33,958	76	366	90
March.....	5,187	114	42,741	96	421	104
April.....	5,688	125	50,571	114	441	109
May.....	5,220	114	51,940	117	436	107
June.....	3,720	81	46,288	104	404	100
July.....	2,451	54	31,316	70	309	76
August.....	2,416	53	20,973	47	226	56
September.....	4,065	89	34,736	78	358	88
October.....	5,283	116	46,583	104	410	101
November.....	5,563	122	48,976	110	423	104
December.....	5,071	111	46,579	104	407	100
Median number.....	4,568	100	44,515	100	406	100

<sup>a</sup> United States Census, 1900. Manufactures, Vol. VIII, Pt. I, p. 54.

<sup>1</sup> The secretary of the investigation committee of the Seasons Trades' Conference held in London, Feb. 27, 1901, reported that "in some branches of industry (investigated in London, Liverpool, and Leicester, dressmaking being . . . preponderantly represented) it is possible to make up stock in slack seasons, but in many cases the employees are discharged." Women's Industrial News, Mar., 1901, p. 220. The bureau of labor reports houses in Paris which make "modeles pour l'exportation" as an accessory industry. Office du Travail. La Petite Industrie, Vol. II, Le Vêtement à Paris, p. 467.

<sup>2</sup> See Table 23, pp. 89, 90.

It will be seen that for men, women, and children alike the number employed falls below or does not exceed the median for six months of the year. In other words, a considerable number of those employed during the busy season are without work, so far as dressmaking is concerned, for at least six months of the year.

The table also shows that while a six months' working season prevails for the three component parts of the working force, men, women, and children, as well as for the entire working force, the dates of beginning and ending are not identical. The spring season for the men (tailors) begins in February, which is the lowest point of the midwinter season of the women workers, since the demand for the tailored garment precedes that for the house dress, so more than the median number of men workers is employed during March, April, and May, and of women during April, May, and June.

The spring season for the men, i. e., the tailoring season, opens and closes one month earlier than that for the women, i. e., the dressmaking season. August marks the lowest depths for all workers. During September, men, women, and children are taken on as the orders straggle in from the returning patrons, and October, November, and December constitute the fall season for all three groups.<sup>1</sup>

Although six months represents the working season for at least the median number employed in the trade, the season of the individual worker may vary considerably on either side of this limit. One class of workers, and only one, can be comparatively independent of seasonal fluctuations. The capable dressmaker who goes out by the day can have steady work for as much of the year as she chooses. The reports of the several workers of this kind who were visited during this investigation corresponded with the statements of both American and foreign students of the subject. One reported that she worked 11 months, and three that they worked from 10 to 10½ months in the year. "Miss D——— makes no appointments between the middle of July and September." Another "could work all the year, but I need a rest of a month or two." The demand for good dressmakers who will go out by the day is so well known that shop employees sometimes resort to this kind of work as a means of filling in their slack seasons.

The shopworkers find their season materially affected by the kind of shop in which they are employed. The table already given (Table 23, pp. 89 and 90) to show the variations in the shop seasons shows also the uncertainty of the workers' tenure of employment.

Since the number employed often changes every week, and since neither the largest nor the smallest number employed is typical in considering the relation between the season of the shop and that of the worker, the median force will be used as a basis for the discussion,

<sup>1</sup> See Chart B.



the term being used to indicate the weekly working force when at least the median number employed through the year are on duty. The following table shows the relation between the season of this median force and the shop season:

TABLE 27.—WORKING YEAR OF EMPLOYEES IN 14 CUSTOM DRESSMAKING AND 2 MANUFACTURING SHOPS IN BOSTON, SEPTEMBER, 1910, TO SEPTEMBER, 1911.

[Based on pay rolls.]

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Shop.	Number of weeks the shop was open.	Maximum number of workers employed.	Median number employed during the year.	Number of weeks the median number worked.	Per cent of the year the median number worked.	Per cent of the shop season the median number worked.	Number of months the shop was open. <sup>1</sup>	Number of months the median number worked.
Custom:								
A.....	49	62	33	27	51.9	55.1	11.3	6.2
B.....	47	65	56	24	46.2	51.1	10.9	5.5
C.....	45	35	28	23	44.2	51.1	10.4	5.3
D.....	37	34	28	19	36.5	51.4	8.5	4.4
E.....	41	29	25	26	50.0	63.4	9.5	6.0
F.....	44	27	23	32	61.5	72.7	10.2	7.4
G.....	46	27	15	30	57.7	65.2	10.6	6.3
H.....	45	23	20	27	51.9	60.0	10.4	6.2
I.....	45	19	15	24	46.2	53.3	10.4	5.5
J.....	47	17	13	33	63.5	70.2	10.9	7.6
K.....	44	11	10	22	42.3	50.0	10.2	5.1
L.....	48	8	4	32	61.5	66.7	11.1	7.4
M.....	50	11	8	34	65.4	68.0	11.5	7.8
N.....	39	7	4	31	59.6	79.5	9.1	7.2
Manufacturing:								
X.....	52	37	25	27	51.9	51.9	12.0	6.2
Y.....	52	178	134	25	48.1	48.1	12.0	5.8

<sup>1</sup> Secured by dividing number of weeks by 4.33.

It is apparent that the season is considerably shorter for the median force than for the shop. Twelve of the 14 custom shops and both the factories had a shop year exceeding 40 weeks, but in none did the median force have a working year exceeding 34 weeks, and in 8 custom shops and both factories they had less than 30 weeks. Generally speaking, the median number of weeks the custom shops were open was 45, as compared with a 29 weeks' season for the median force. That is, the median force had a working season of about two-thirds the shop year.

The two manufacturing establishments with a 52 weeks' trade year employed their median force 25 and 27 weeks, respectively, about one-half the shop year. None of the 14 custom shops studied intensively had a working season of less than 8 months, but in none were at least the median number employed 8 months, and in nine of the shops they were employed less than 7 months. Eight shops had the characteristic 10 months' season; two of these provided a 7 months' working season, two a 6 months' season, and four a 5 months' season for the median working force. Of the three shops with an 11 months' working year, two provided a 7 months' season

and one a 6 months' season for their median force. The working season for the median force in the large custom (A-D) shops employing more than 25 in the busiest season and for the wholesale manufacturing shops appears to be approximately one-half the working year of the shop in which they are employed. The smaller shops (E-N) employing less than 25 in the height of the season retain their median force from one-half to three-fourths of the working year. The significant fact is that 55 per cent of the 600 workers whose records were taken from pay rolls were employed in shops having a maximum of more than 25 workers.

In response to the questions "What are the seasons?" and "How many are employed?" employers so frequently replied "It is different every year," that the pay-roll records for two or three years were taken in several shops to see how true this was. The variations of five shops are shown in Table 28.

TABLE 28.—NUMBER OF WORKERS EMPLOYED IN FIVE CUSTOM SHOPS IN DIFFERENT YEARS, BY WEEKS.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Month and week. <sup>1</sup>	Number employed in shop—												
	B		D			F			J		N		
	1909-10	1910-11	1908-9	1909-10	1910-11	1908-9	1909-10	1910-11 <sup>2</sup>	1905-6	1910-11	1903-4	1905-6	1910-11
September:													
1st week									2	2			
2d week		3						6	7	10			
3d week	6	27		9		13	12	13	11	11			
4th week	25	46		22		28	30	20	12	10			
October:													
1st week	49	50	23	25		33	38	22	12	10		4	4
2d week	51	54	25	26		37	42	22	13	11		11	5
3d week	55	57	28	28		41	42	23	13	14		11	5
4th week	55	58	29	29		40	42	23	13	14		7	6
5th week	51	56	29	28		41	44	22	12	14		8	6
November:													
1st week	57	56	29	32		41	44	22	13	15	7	10	7
2d week	57	57	29	31	34	43	44	25	13	16	7	10	6
3d week	58	60	29	32	31	42	45	24	13	17	7	10	6
4th week	63	61	29	32	31	42	45	24	13	17	7	9	6
December:													
1st week	60	61	29	34	31	42	44	24	13	16	7	8	6
2d week	58	65	30	34	28	42	43	24	12	15	7	8	5
3d week	58	62	29	32	31	43	43	24	11	15	7	8	5
4th week	63	62	29	33	29	43	43	24	4	14	7	8	4
5th week		58			18			23				5	5
January:													
1st week	53	62	28	27	25	43	41	23	9	14	7	5	4
2d week	57	55	28	28	27	43	42	22	10	13	7	5	4
3d week	41	54	27	31	26	43	43	22	10	13	7	5	4
4th week	42	54	25	31	26	42	41	24	10	13	7	5	4
5th week	46		26	30		44	40		9	12	7		
February:													
1st week	44	52	26	32	8	44	40	24	9	11	7	5	3
2d week	41	51	27	31	26	44	42	24	9	11	7	5	4
3d week	31	42	30	32	27	46	42	23	7	11	7	5	3
4th week	29	28	30	32	27	47	43	25	12	13	7	7	3
March:													
1st week	3	6	31	33	31	49	43	25	14	13	7	7	3
2d week	12	6	32		27	47	43	25	13	14	7	8	3
3d week	41	38	33	34	29	47	44	26	14	14	7	8	3
4th week	49	52	33	32	30	49	43	27	15	13	7	8	3
5th week												8	

<sup>1</sup> The variation in the number of weeks in the month in different shops is due to the fact that the pay day varies. Some shops close the books Thursdays and some Fridays.

<sup>2</sup> Now owned by former forewoman and conducted on somewhat smaller basis.



TABLE 28.—NUMBER OF WORKERS EMPLOYED IN FIVE CUSTOM SHOPS IN DIFFERENT YEARS, BY WEEKS—Concluded.

Month and week. <sup>1</sup>	Number employed in shop—												
	B		D			F			J		N		
	1909-10	1910-11	1908-9	1909-10	1910-11	1908-9	1909-10	1910-11 <sup>1</sup>	1905-6	1910-11	1903-4	1905-6	1910-11
April:													
1st week.....	53	54	31	32	30	48	44	27	11	14	7	8	4
2d week.....	52	56	33	33	32	49	44	26	15	14	7	8	4
3d week.....	53	57	31	31	31	48	44	26	15	14	7	8	4
4th week.....	52	58	28	32	30	47	45	25	12	14	7	8	4
5th week.....	52	58		32	31		43	25	3		7		4
May:													
1st week.....	52	59	29	33	31	47	43	24	13	13	7	8	4
2d week.....	51	58	29	34	29	44	42	23	14	13	7	8	4
3d week.....	51	57	30	33	30	46	42	23	13	13	7	8	4
4th week.....	50	58	30	32	28	44	42	23	13	13	7	7	4
5th week.....			32			43				13			4
June:													
1st week.....	51	57	31	30	27	41	35	23	12	13	7	7	4
2d week.....	48	57	31	29	26	13	31	23	12	13	7	7	4
3d week.....	48	56	32	29	25	15	9	23	12	13	7	6	4
4th week.....	46	52	30	27	23			22	12	13	6	5	4
5th week.....												5	
July:													
1st week.....	44	46	32	25	22			18	10	12	6		
2d week.....	41	44	29	23	19			12	8	9	6		
3d week.....	43	41	26	22	16				8	7	6		
4th week.....	38	34	18		15				5	5			
5th week.....	20	14							2				
Median number..	50	56	29	31	28	43	43	23	12	13	7	8	4

<sup>1</sup> See notes on p. 96.

Shop B varied but one week in the date of opening and closed in exactly the same week in two years. Shop F opened and closed in exactly the same weeks in two consecutive years, and J and N opened the same week in 1905 and 1910 and varied but one week in closing. D opened on different dates in three successive years but varied only a week in closing. While a customer may need a wedding trousseau or a mourning outfit early in September or late in January, or the employer may decide to stay abroad or to rest until October, or some such cause may lengthen or shorten a particular working year, the seasons for the shop as a whole do not vary greatly from year to year. This means that the regular force of workers may count on a fairly uniform working season. The records of 24 of the 35 permanent workers employed in shop D both in 1909 and 1910 did not show a decreasing season in spite of the popular statement that the seasons are growing shorter. Three workers in shop J, whose records in 1910 could be compared with those of five years before, had the same working year, varying only one or two weeks.

The seasons for the median force of workers, however, varied more noticeably. In the large shops, B and D, the median force, although forming an increasing proportion of the total number employed, had shorter seasons in 1910 than in 1909. In the smaller shops, though, the median force seemed to be securing longer seasons.

TABLE 29.—WORKING SEASON FOR MEDIAN FORCE IN 5 SHOPS IN DIFFERENT YEARS.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Shop.	Season.	Number of weeks for median force in—			
		1905-6	1908-9	1909-10	1910-11
B	Fall.....	.....	.....	14	13
	Spring.....	.....	.....	13	11
D	Fall.....	.....	10	8	7
	Spring.....	.....	20	18	12
F	Fall.....	.....	6	10	11
	Spring.....	.....	18	11	21
J	Fall.....	12	.....	.....	15
	Spring.....	16	.....	.....	18
N	Fall.....	11	.....	.....	13
	Spring.....	11	.....	.....	13

Turning from the working season of the median force to that of individual workers, no more favorable conditions are found. The following table shows the actual duration in a given year of each worker's employment in shops:

TABLE 30.—LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT OF 600 CUSTOM AND 522 FACTORY WORKERS IN SPECIFIED SHOPS, SEPTEMBER, 1910, TO SEPTEMBER, 1911.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Classified number of weeks worked.	Number employed in—																	
	Custom shops.															Manufacturing shops.		
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H <sup>1</sup>	I	J	K	L <sup>2</sup>	M	N	Total.	X	Y	Total.
50 weeks and over.....	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	4	22	26
45 and under 50 weeks.....	3	5	3	.....	.....	.....	2	3	4	5	.....	2	2	.....	29	10	29	39
40 and under 45 weeks.....	7	25	11	.....	13	16	6	9	3	2	5	.....	3	.....	100	1	14	15
35 and under 40 weeks.....	7	7	5	11	8	2	1	3	2	3	2	.....	.....	2	53	1	12	13
30 and under 35 weeks.....	5	3	3	7	.....	3	1	3	.....	1	2	3	3	1	35	4	28	32
25 and under 30 weeks.....	10	5	3	3	.....	3	2	1	3	.....	1	.....	1	.....	32	4	11	15
20 and under 25 weeks.....	3	3	2	.....	3	1	1	1	1	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	17	3	18	21
15 and under 20 weeks.....	2	12	4	2	.....	2	5	2	4	3	.....	1	1	1	39	4	19	23
10 and under 15 weeks.....	19	11	5	2	2	.....	6	3	1	3	.....	1	.....	2	55	5	36	41
5 and under 10 weeks.....	28	13	5	5	3	1	7	3	9	3	.....	2	5	1	85	12	72	84
2 and under 5 weeks.....	25	8	5	5	5	.....	12	5	7	2	.....	2	.....	1	77	16	102	113
1 week or under.....	16	7	13	10	4	1	12	2	3	2	.....	.....	.....	2	72	12	83	95
Unclassified.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	.....	4	.....	.....	.....
Total.....	127	99	59	45	39	29	56	35	37	25	11	11	17	10	690	76	446	522

<sup>1</sup> Shop H covers the calendar year of 1911.<sup>2</sup> Shop L covers the year from March, 1911, to March, 1912, because the firm had dissolved partnership and started on a new basis just previous to this period.

While 90 per cent of the people employed in shop K worked six months or more, only 26.7 per cent in shop A had such good fortune.



Taking the group as a whole, but 41.8 per cent of the 600 custom workers and only 26.8 per cent of the 522 factory workers studied on pay rolls for a year period worked six months or more in a single shop.

Only 21.8 per cent of the custom and 15.3 per cent of the factory workers were employed for as much as 40 weeks, the characteristic trade year, in one shop.

The figures taken from the United States census, it will be remembered, showed a six-months working season for the median force. How far this differs from the season of the individual worker is shown by the following table, which gives the percentage of the working force employed 25 weeks or more, 25 weeks being about half a working year:

TABLE 31.—STABILITY OF FORCE FOR ONE YEAR IN 14 CUSTOM DRESSMAKING AND 2 MANUFACTURING SHOPS IN BOSTON.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Shop.	Total number employed during year.	Working 25 weeks and over.		Working under 25 weeks.	
		Number.	Per cent.	Number.	Per cent.
Custom:					
A.....	127	34	26.8	93	73.2
B.....	99	45	45.5	54	54.5
C.....	59	25	42.4	34	57.6
D.....	45	21	46.7	24	53.3
E.....	39	21	53.9	18	46.1
F.....	29	24	82.8	5	17.2
G.....	56	12	21.4	44	78.6
H.....	35	19	54.3	16	45.7
I.....	37	12	32.4	25	67.6
J.....	25	11	44.0	14	56.0
K.....	11	10	90.9	1	9.0
L.....	11	5	45.5	6	54.5
M.....	17	9	52.9	8	47.1
N.....	10	3	30.0	7	70.0
Total.....	600	251	41.8	349	58.2
Manufacturing:					
X.....	76	24	31.6	52	68.4
Y.....	446	116	26.0	330	74.0
Total.....	522	140	26.8	382	73.2

In only 5 of the 14 shops was as much as half of the force employed for 25 weeks, while the two factories showed each less than one-third of their force so employed. Only a trifle over two-fifths of the workers in custom shops were employed as long as 25 weeks, while hardly over one-fourth of the factory workers were in this group.

The working year is divided, as has been seen, into two seasons, spring and fall. This has a double effect upon the workers. The seasons seldom coincide in any two shops, since the demands of the customers of each establishment determine the time when its work is most pressing and when, as a result, the greatest number is employed. This variation in the time at which they are required in the different

shops enables many workers to shift from one shop to another, thus securing a longer season than they would have in only one. On the other hand, the division of the working year into two distinct seasons means for many of the workers a lay-off twice a year, with the attendant disadvantages of loss of wages, interruption to habits of regularity, encouragement to instability and restlessness, and the like. The following table shows the possibility of prolonging a short season by transferring from one shop to another:

TABLE 32.—DATES OF OPENING AND CLOSING OF FALL AND SPRING SEASONS FOR MEDIAN FORCE OF WORKERS EMPLOYED IN 14 CUSTOM DRESSMAKING AND 2 MANUFACTURING SHOPS IN BOSTON, SEPTEMBER, 1910, TO SEPTEMBER, 1911.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Shop.	Median number.	Fall season. <sup>1</sup>		Spring season. <sup>1</sup>		Weeks employed.		
		Began—	Closed—	Began—	Closed—	Fall season.	Spring season.	Total.
<b>Custom:</b>								
A.....	38	4th week of September.	3d week of December.	1st week of March.	1st week of June.	13	14	27
B.....	56	3d week of October.	1st week of January.	2d week of April.	3d week of June.	13	11	24
C.....	28	4th week of September.	3d week of December.	1st week of March.	3d week of May.	12	11	23
D.....	28	2d week of November.	4th week of December.	1st week of March.	4th week of May.	7	12	19
E.....	25	1st week of November.	1st week of January.	1st week of February.	2d week of June.	8	18	26
F.....	23	3d week of October.	1st week of January.	4th week of January.	3d week of June.	11	21	32
G.....	15	4th week of September.	2d week of January.	1st week of April.	4th week of June.	17	13	30
H.....	20	2d week of October.	2d week of November.	1st week of January.	1st week of July.	4	23	27
I.....	15	2d week of November.	4th week of November.	3d week of February.	2d week of July.	3	21	24
J.....	13	3d week of October.	4th week of January.	4th week of February.	4th week of June.	15	18	33
K.....	10	1st week of November.	5th week of December.	4th week of February.	1st week of June.	7	15	22
L.....	4	4th week of September.	4th week of January.	1st week of April.	2d week of July.	18	14	32
M.....	8	1st week of November.	1st week of January.	3d week of January.	5th week of June.	10	24	34
N.....	4	1st week of October.	4th week of January.	1st week of April.	4th week of June.	18	13	31
<b>Manufacturing:</b>								
X.....	25	3d week of September.	2d week of November.	4th week of February.	4th week of June.	9	18	27
Y.....	134	1st week of September.	1st week of November.	2d week of January.	4th week of April.	10	15	25

<sup>1</sup> The working force occasionally drops below the median number employed. (See Table 23.)

The fall season coincides in only three pairs of shops—A and C, B and F, and E and M—while only shops G and N have the same spring season. Occasionally workers in the shops having a fall season of only from 3 to 8 weeks have a chance of further employment in the shops having a season of 13, 15, or 18 weeks. In the spring the difference in length of seasons is not so marked as in the fall, but there is still the opportunity for dovetailing work in two or more shops.



This table also emphasizes the brevity of the working season for most of the employees, unless they can find some such method of lengthening it. In shops A, C, G, and L the median force was assembled by the fourth week of September, but not until October and November in the majority, while already in November and December the process of disorganization was beginning. In the 14 custom shops and 2 factories, 6 retained the median force less than 10 weeks in the fall and 12 provided less than 15 weeks' fall season. All through January, February, March, and April, the median force was being assembled for the spring season and through May, June, and July was being turned off. The spring season provided a longer working period, none of the 16 establishments having less than 10 weeks, while 9 had a spring season of 15 weeks or more. One-half the 14 custom shops had a fall season of 12 weeks or more and a spring season of 15 weeks or more for the median force. However, if the large shops A to G, which employ three-fourths of the workers, are separately considered, the fall season in but one instance, and the spring season in but two instances, exceeded 15 weeks for the median force, which again illustrates how short is the working period available to the mass of workers. The manufacturing shops provided very similar seasons for their median force, 9 and 10 weeks in the fall, and 15 and 18 weeks in the spring.

The fall and spring busy seasons alternate with the midwinter and midsummer dull seasons, causing dispersal or diminution of the force twice a year. The majority of custom shops close entirely during midsummer, but the midwinter season is usually a bridging over until the spring rush comes on. The fashionable clientele await the new spring models before giving orders, so the employer in shop B must go abroad in February and her shop is closed, except for the office force, for two weeks. The owner of shop D goes to New York for a week to see the new spring models. For similar reasons, the majority of even the most valuable workers in large shops like A and B have an enforced winter vacation of four weeks. Table 33 shows the extent to which the midwinter vacation prevailed in the shops studied. In four of the 14 custom shops and one of the two factories, more than one-half the force was laid off one week or more in midwinter. In shop A, although a commercialized shop, 66 per cent of the workers who were employed throughout the year were laid off in midwinter with a median vacation of four weeks. In the medium-sized shops like E, F, and G, the majority of the force were held and in the smaller shops like M and N the whole force remained intact.

TABLE 33.—RELATION OF MIDWINTER SLACK SEASON TO UNEMPLOYMENT IN 14 CUSTOM DRESSMAKING AND 2 MANUFACTURING SHOPS IN BOSTON.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Shop.	Total number employed during year.	Maximum number employed during year.	Workers employed one season or less.		Workers employed both seasons.							
			Number.	Per cent of total number employed.	Number.	Per cent of total number employed.	Not laid off in winter.		Laid off one week or more.			
							Number.	Per cent of number employed both seasons.	Number.	Per cent of number employed both seasons.		
Custom:												
A.....	127	62	88	69.3	39	30.7	13	33.3	26	66.7		
B.....	99	65	51	51.5	43	43.5	1	2.1	47	97.9		
C.....	159	35	31	52.5	27	45.8	14	51.8	13	48.2		
D.....	45	34	22	48.9	23	51.1	4	17.4	19	82.6		
E.....	39	29	18	46.2	21	53.8	15	71.4	5	23.8		
F.....	29	27	5	17.2	24	82.8	20	83.3	4	16.7		
G.....	156	27	42	75.0	13	23.2	10	76.9	3	23.1		
H.....	35	23	17	48.6	18	51.4	18	100.0				
I.....	37	19	26	70.3	11	29.7	6	54.5	5	45.5		
J.....	25	17	12	48.0	13	52.0	9	69.2	4	30.8		
K.....	11	11	1	9.1	10	90.9	5	50.0	5	50.0		
L.....	11	8	5	45.5	6	54.5			6	100.0		
M.....	17	11	11	64.7	6	35.3	6	100.0				
N.....	10	7	7	70.0	3	30.0	3	100.0				
Manufacturing:												
X.....	76	37	42	55.3	34	44.7	14	41.2	20	58.8		
Y.....	446	178	233	63.5	163	36.5	133	81.6	30	18.4		

<sup>1</sup> One unclassified.

<sup>2</sup> Not including special finisher not called in.

This midwinter break is an important cause contributing to shifting and instability. The majority of the custom workers are laid off one or two weeks and the factory workers four weeks, during which time some find other employment and do not return. In all but 2 of the 14 custom shops more than 45 per cent of the workers appearing on the pay roll during a year worked in that shop one season or less, while in the two factories more than 50 per cent did not work more than one season.

The extent to which the individual worker is affected by the dull season is shown by the following table:

TABLE 34.—NUMBER OF WEEKS' "LAY OFF" IN MIDWINTER FOR WORKERS IN 10 CUSTOM DRESSMAKING AND 2 MANUFACTURING SHOPS IN BOSTON, SEPTEMBER, 1910, TO SEPTEMBER, 1911.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Shop.	Number of workers losing—							Median number of weeks lost by workers.
	1 week.	2 weeks.	3 weeks.	4 weeks.	5 weeks.	6 weeks.	More than 6 weeks.	
Custom:								
A.....	6	1	1	6	6	1	5	4
B.....	4	20	12	7	2	1	1	2
C.....	6	2	2			1	2	2
D.....	14	4				1		1
F.....	1	2				1		2
G.....	1	1					1	2
I.....	2	1	3				2	2
J.....		1	3					3
K.....		3	1				1	3
L.....				1			5	6
Manufacturing:								
X.....		2	2	6			10	4
Y.....		8	1	21				4
Total.....	34	45	22	41	8	5	27	35



Of the 182 workers considered, over two-fifths (44.5 per cent) lost four weeks or more and over one-eighth (14.8 per cent) lost more than six weeks. The midwinter dull season is therefore a problem demanding solution from both employer and worker, and various schemes have been devised by ingenious employers to avoid the economic waste of a scattered labor force. Two methods are most common in the medium-sized shops—first, offering inducements to customers to bring in work, and, second, alternating the workers on one or two weeks' vacations. The middle-class dressmakers have their own clothes made, alter gowns of the regular customers, and make up garments at reduced rates.<sup>1</sup> One of the most fashionable French dressmakers, with a force of 25 workers, made gowns at a lower rate in these two months and could scarcely fill the orders. Another large firm said, "We take in a good many gowns at \$50 apiece to keep the force busy as much as possible." The profits are less, but the maintenance of a steady force and the opportunity to meet current expenses justify the effort. Wedding or mourning orders or a new outfit for a trip South are often available in January and February for the employer who keeps the shop open. A fashionable dressmaker, employing 55 workers, said: "The southern season is doing much toward filling in and tiding over January and February, formerly dull months." Many employers who have ingenuity and originality can give their customers what they wish without waiting for the latest decrees from Paris, and the delay and rush of the later season are thus avoided by the customer.

Some of the large firms have sought to solve the seasonal problem by widening their field and adding a tailoring department. "We have an increasingly shorter dull season in the winter because of our tailored suit department," said one large employer. "The tailored suits necessitate waists to go with them and provide work for the dressmaking department." The pay rolls of these shops show frequent instances where the mediocre worker, finisher, or helper is transferred from one department to another as the season progresses, thus lengthening her working season considerably. An interesting suggestion of future possibilities appears in the example of a few dressmakers who follow their customers to resorts and set up shop for the season. They take only a portion of their force, but all who have done so reported quite as busy a season as they desired.<sup>2</sup> The large fashionable commercialized shops are developing custom through salesmen who are sent to the fashionable summer and winter

<sup>1</sup> Speaking of unemployment in London, Miss Black says: "In what would be slack seasons, i. e., in January and September, regular customers may have their own materials made up, and this device helps to keep work going, though little or no profits are made." *Makers of our Clothes*, by Meyer and Black, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> See similarity of seasons in the dressmaking trade of Paris. France, Office du Travail. *La Petite Industrie*, Vol. II, *Le Vêtement à Paris*, p. 412 et seq.

resorts, where they sell ready-to-wear clothing or take orders from customers. Such ventures may in time become much more common and have two good results—lengthening and equalizing the working season. Alternating the workers on one or two weeks' vacations in midwinter is also a common method of equalizing the midwinter season and falls heavily on none,<sup>1</sup> as the girls are often glad of an opportunity to furbish up their own wardrobes.

Other shops, however, make no attempt to solve the problem, either from a belief that economy consists in putting the orders through at high speed and dropping the employees as rapidly as they can be dispensed with, or because of lack of administrative ability and ingenuity. The proprietor of a large shop which had a gloomy deserted appearance in midwinter said, "Some people get work in early, but we never do. People usually want to wait until the Paris styles come in before having new things made. Customers come to me sometimes before the arrival of the Parisian models and ask if we think such and such will be stylish. We usually say, 'Wait and see.' I have no faith in the present-day theories and attempts to establish American styles. The French always have, and I believe always will, set the styles." The reason why this dressmaker has short seasons is easily discovered. The "wait and see" policy quite precludes "getting work in early."<sup>2</sup> The majority of custom dressmakers seem to be able to cater to a sufficiently varied clientele to adjust the midwinter dull season fairly satisfactorily, but the less progressive and original employer sits with folded hands and a closed shop and complains that the seasons grow shorter and shorter. Likewise the ambitious and capable worker can secure fairly satisfactory working seasons, but the mediocre and incompetent, the very young and the very old, are tossed about with every rise and fall of demand.

The midsummer vacation is a still more important factor in the custom dressmaking trade, because it means a longer period of idleness for a larger number. The majority of shops are closed through July and August, though many workers have been laid off earlier. The force, thus scattered for several months, is not easily assembled in September and October, and many new names are discovered on the pay rolls in the fall. Table 35 shows the extent of this dispersion in seven of the shops studied. In the large shops A and D

<sup>1</sup> See report of similar adjustments. Great Britain, Royal Commission on Labor. Conditions of Work in Scotland, by Margaret Irwin.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Black, after making her study of the trade in London, in 1908, says: "Few employers seem to have devised any effective way of grappling with the grave problem of seasonal irregularity" (p. 175), but reports one employer filling in slack time in February with theatrical costumes, which are "made a month or more earlier than the opening of the fashionable season and in the dead month of September. . . the workers whom she keeps on during such periods are those whose need is greatest . . . sometimes she is able to send girls for a week or more to work in the country houses of her customers, and she makes a point of sending those whom she knows to be dependent on their own earnings." *Makers of our Clothes*, by Meyer and Black, p. 85.



only about one-third of the workers and in shop G 49 per cent of those employed in the spring of 1911 were found in the same shops the following fall.

TABLE 35.—NUMBER OF WORKERS EMPLOYED IN 7 CUSTOM SHOPS IN THE SPRING SEASON OF 1911 AND PROPORTION WHO RETURNED IN THE FALL AFTER THE SUMMER VACATION.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Shop.	Total number employed in the spring season, 1911.	Per cent returning in the fall season, 1911.	Per cent of those returning who earn \$9 or less.
A.....	69	32	68
D.....	44	39	47
G.....	33	49	68
H.....	23	78	41
K.....	11	72	75
L.....	8	75	67
M.....	4	75	67

In these three large shops,<sup>1</sup> typifying several stages of development, less than 50 per cent of the working force employed in the spring of 1911 returned after the summer vacation.

The working force of the smaller shops H, K, L, and M, employing a maximum of less than 25, are much less affected by the summer vacation because of the closer personal relation between employer and worker, the steadier and longer working season, and the maintenance of a fairly permanent force of regular workers. About three-fourths of the force employed in the spring returned for the fall season in these shops: Even the stable workers are not all highly skilled or well paid. In all but two of the seven shops the majority of former workers returning in the fall earned a weekly wage of \$9 or less.

The pay-roll records of several shops for a period of two or more years throw some light on this instability of the labor force. In shop B, 50 per cent of a total force of 96 employed in 1910-11 returned for work the following year. In shop D, 40 per cent of the 55 workers on the pay roll during 1908-9 returned to work the following year, and 49 per cent of a total of 65 employed in 1909-10 returned to work the next year. Only 26.2 per cent of the workers employed in 1908-9 were still on the pay roll two years later. In shop F, 38 per cent of a force of 58 employed in 1908 returned the following year, but the total force of 1909 returned in 1910 without the defection of a single worker. Only 41 per cent of the total number, 76, employed in 1910-11 in the small wholesale manufacturing shop X were still at work the following fall, though the shop working year is 52 weeks. In shop J, three workers of the force employed in 1905

<sup>1</sup> "Large shop" used in this report applies to shops employing a maximum of more than 25 workers.

were still at work in the same shop in 1910 and in shop N one of the force of 1903 was still in the shop in 1910, seven years later.

#### INSTABILITY OF THE LABOR FORCE.

As different types of shops have characteristic working seasons, so may the three type groups of workers anticipate fairly definite periods of employment. As has already been pointed out,<sup>1</sup> the working force falls into three groups: the nucleus of regular workers, with a working season of 40 weeks or more; the finishers or helpers, laid off twice a year, with a working season of 25 to 39 weeks; and the rush hands or drifters, employed less than 25 weeks. A survey of 600 custom and 522 factory workers shows the surprising fact that 58 per cent of the custom and 73 per cent of the factory employees worked in a single shop less than 25 weeks. These short-time workers are for the most part the "casual laborers" of the trade. They are workers without a trade, though they may know how to handle a needle. Especially is this true of the large group, 39 per cent of the 600 custom workers and 57 per cent of the 522 factory workers, who were employed in one shop less than 10 weeks. One-fourth of the custom and two-fifths of the factory workers stayed less than five weeks and 12 per cent of the custom workers as compared with 18 per cent of the factory employees remained but one week or less.

TABLE 36.—EXTENT OF "CASUAL LABOR" IN CUSTOM AND FACTORY DRESSMAKING.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Length of employment in individual shops.	Custom shops.		Manufacturing shops.	
	Number.	Per cent.	Number.	Per cent.
Under 25 weeks...	349	58.2	382	73.2
Under 10 weeks...	236	39.3	297	56.9
Under 5 weeks....	151	25.2	213	41.0
1 week or under ...	74	12.3	95	18.2

This mass of floating unskilled workers is one of the gravest phases of the labor problem to-day, and while probably greater in the unskilled industries,<sup>2</sup> it is more serious in a skilled trade which must have trained and responsible workers.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Education, No. 17. A Trade School for Girls—A Preliminary Investigation in a Typical Manufacturing City, Worcester, Mass. Washington, 1913, pp. 29, 30.



The following table shows the reasons assigned by 271 workers for leaving their positions:

TABLE 37.—REASONS GIVEN FOR LEAVING POSITIONS IN DRESSMAKING SHOPS.

[Based on personal interviews.]

Reason for leaving position.	Positions left.	
	Number.	Per cent.
Seasonal: End of season.....	63	23.2
Industrial.....	116	42.8
Low pay.....	42	.....
Better position.....	34	.....
Firm went out of business.....	25	.....
Unsatisfactory shop conditions.....	11	.....
"Didn't succeed".....	3	.....
Strike <sup>1</sup> .....	1	.....
Personal.....	92	34.0
"Didn't like it".....	51	.....
Illness.....	23	.....
Moved.....	10	.....
Married.....	5	.....
Needed at home.....	3	.....
Total.....	271	100.0

<sup>1</sup> Tailor shop.

It will be seen that fluctuation of demand, though important, is by no means the sole cause of unemployment. Less than one-fourth of the positions reported on had to be given up because of the end of the season. Forty-three per cent of the workers left because of other industrial causes and 34 for personal reasons.

Therefore, while dressmaking is a markedly seasonal trade, the seasons by no means explain the startling instability observed among the workers. Three-fourths of the reasons ascribed for leaving work were such as might be found in any industry.<sup>1</sup>

Four underlying causes, however, may be noted as especially applicable to the instability discovered in the dressmaking trade: (1) The seasonal fluctuations, (2) inadequate opportunity for acquiring skill and for advancement, (3) the increasing necessity for a high standard of workmanship and the inability of many workers to measure up to the demands, and (4) peculiar conditions in particular shops.

(1) The semiannual dispersal of the shop force throws a great mass of employees out of work twice a year, and, having found other positions, they frequently do not return to their former employer when needed.

(2) The poor opportunities for learning the trade are an important cause of the instability of workers. Few shops offer the young girl

<sup>1</sup> Miss Van Kleeck found that nearly 60 per cent of the 353 positions in bookbinding and the same proportion for 214 positions in the making of artificial flowers had been left for other than seasonal causes. *Women in the Bookbinding Trade*, p. 112, and *Artificial Flower Makers*, p. 49, by Mary Van Kleeck.

systematic training and she must "pick up" her trade as best she can. Unless very "bright," as the dressmaker expresses it, her employer, or the head girl under whom she works, refuses to allow her to remain at all, and unless very ambitious she seldom conquers the obstacles in the path to the skilled processes. If she does not develop beyond the stage of the plain sewer, her tenure is always insecure, because the least valuable worker is last taken on and first turned off. The art of dressmaking can not be quickly acquired and the majority of young workers, being impatient, believe they are not advanced by their employer as rapidly as they should be. The very common practice is to spend a short time in one shop acquiring the fundamentals and then to apply for a position at another shop as an experienced worker. While an employer may sometimes lose sight of the advancement of an employee who has grown up in the shop, and while a new employee has a certain opportunity for bargaining, the girl with such inadequate training and experience soon finds herself at a disadvantage in competition with the really experienced workers and becomes a drifter. She never becomes valuable enough to her employer to merit her interest or confidence, the drifting habit grows, and her incapacity dooms her to short seasons and irregular work. Thus 29 per cent of the 271 positions were left because of low pay, because the worker wanted a better position, or because she "didn't succeed." The employer, as a rule, sees little advantage and has little desire to cooperate in the movement for training workers in the shop because of the unreliable and uncertain tenure by which she holds her workers. "I started an errand girl two years ago at \$3 a week," said one employer. "She is now getting \$6 and was to get \$7 at the beginning of the year, but she wants to leave now. Girls don't stick to it steadily. They are always wanting to go somewhere else, continually changing. Girls can't be depended on. I had one woman eight years; suddenly in the midst of the season she left with no reason."

The uncertainty of their tenure of work is, on the other hand, one of the grievances of subordinate workers and for this reason they feel no compunction in leaving whenever a better opportunity appears. "Saturday night when I received my pay I was told I need not come back on Monday," said one girl. "It is almost impossible to keep the books straight," said the bookkeeper of a large fashionable shop in dull season. "On Saturday evening I am notified to drop six or seven workers off the pay roll." Subordinate workers say they never know from one week to the next when they will be notified that their services are no longer needed. The advantage of mobility to the worker, therefore, depends largely on individual circumstances. In general, it may be said that the young girl who starts in the small shop should, after acquiring a good all-round experience, go to the



large shop for the wider experience in methods of handling finer and more expensive materials, and the opportunity for advancement offered there. The young girl who starts in the large shop has the opportunity for a broad experience if she can conquer the obstacles and advance from one process to another. Unless she is especially bright or adapted to the work she will receive little help from her superiors. Most of the highly paid or skilled workers visited, however, had worked in very few shops, occasionally only one. They had worked up from the bottom and made themselves indispensable to their employers.

(3) Moreover, the increasing demands of the trade for superior workmanship have made it very difficult for the unskilled worker to hold a place. The increasing complexity of the artistic side of custom dressmaking is a universally recognized fact. Dressmakers and investigators, both at home and abroad, maintain that the trade has become an art, so a decreasing number are qualified to meet the requirements. But women when in need still, as in the past, turn to the trade as their natural domain. They are taken on and tried out, but only a small proportion can qualify for even the drifting type of helper. The worker who can turn her hand to anything can in reality turn her hand to only the most commonplace plain sewing. Alteration departments of stores carrying ready-made wear now attract large numbers of these mediocre workers. Factories and dressmaking shops which employ home workers supply some of these women with work, the embroidery on custom-made dresses being often done by workers in the homes. Philanthropic needlewomen's societies provide the most hopeless with work. Some of the local dressmakers believe that the artistic development of the trade combined with the lack of opportunity for workers to secure the requisite training primarily explains the unsatisfactory labor situation.

(4) Finally, the instability of the worker may be due to conditions in particular shops. Thirty-two per cent of the 271 positions were left for these reasons—"firm went out of business," unsatisfactory shop conditions, and "didn't like it." Some shops have short seasons, much overtime, and an absence of system which involves the shop in a continual flux. "X——'s is hopelessly confused and mixed up. There is constant doing over and overlapping of work. There is a great deal of overtime there." "I wouldn't advise my worst enemy to work at X——'s," said a head girl in the same shop, "and yet Miss X—— is delightful personally." Insufficient capital results in irregularity and uncertainty of pay. Many employers are going out of business. The forewoman in one shop has a "terrible temper." Workers are laid off in one shop, fill in a few weeks at another, have some personal grievance in another, hear they can get higher pay in another, and so drift from shop to shop. The large establishments

carry a certain prestige, offer wider social contact, assure regular pay, and in some cases, as in some commercialized shops and alteration departments, have longer seasons. These conditions all complicate the labor problem.

The stability of individual workers for a long period of time is not easily ascertained, for while reports from some are unquestionably accurate, others have drifted about so much they can not remember. A suggestive report on the number of shops worked in (excluding temporary positions of a few days) was secured from 200 workers personally visited. The following table shows the results obtained:

TABLE 38.—NUMBER OF SHOPS IN WHICH 200 WORKERS HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED, BY LENGTH OF EXPERIENCE.

[Based on personal interviews.]

Number of years in the trade.	Number of workers having been employed in specified number of shops.							Total.
	1 shop.	2 shops.	3 shops.	4 shops.	5 shops.	6 shops or more.	Unclassified.	
Under 1 year.....	8	7	2					17
1 year and under 2 years.....	6	11	9	4			1	31
2 and under 3 years.....	2	9	7	2	4			24
3 and under 4 years.....	6	3	8	2	1	3		23
4 and under 5 years.....	2	3		2	1	3		11
5 and under 6 years.....	3	4	3	1				11
6 and under 7 years.....		1	3	2	1			7
7 and under 8 years.....	1		1	1	3			6
8 and under 9 years.....		2	2	1		1		6
9 and under 10 years.....		1	3	1				5
10 and under 12 years.....			2	3	1		1	7
12 and under 15 years.....	2	3	4			2		11
15 and under 20 years.....		4	2	3	4	6	2	21
20 and under 25 years.....		2	3	1	1	4		11
25 years and over.....		2	2			2		6
Unclassified.....		1				1	1	3
Total.....	30	53	51	23	16	22	5	200

The instability of the young workers employed in the trade less than five years is at once apparent. More than one-half those employed less than one year had worked in more than one shop. More than one-half those at work two years had worked in more than two shops. The older workers of eight years' experience or more constituted one-third (33.5 per cent) of the 200 studied, and less than one-third (31.4 per cent) of these had worked in more than four shops. One-half of those with less than five years' experience, as well as of those with ten years' or more, had worked in two to three shops. The young workers find it difficult to meet the demands of the trade, and the employers, driven by competition and worry, have little patience with the girl who "must be shown how" or who "waits to be told what to do and how to do it." Consequently she is almost forced to become a drifter. Present day conditions in the trade also may make it advisable to work in different shops, some of which



offer better opportunity for acquiring the principles of the trade, and others for securing advancement.

It was stated in the beginning of this chapter that irregular employment in the dressmaking trade is due both to seasonal fluctuations and to the instability of the force. The foregoing discussion has shown that seasonal fluctuation has a very serious effect upon the individual worker, making her period of employment both brief and of uncertain duration. The control of this element of irregularity lies mainly in the hands of the employer and the customer. Several methods have been mentioned by which the employer can modify the seasonal character of the trade, while careful forethought and consideration on the part of the customer would do much to prevent the massing of orders into two brief seasons. Something might be done also by an outside agency. Since the seasons of different types of shops do not coincide, much waste of time and loss of earnings might be prevented by an efficient labor bureau through which workers laid off from one shop could be directed at once to the shops of another type where they were needed.

But when investigation shows that more than one-third of the custom and one-half the factory workers are employed in a particular shop less than ten weeks and one-fourth the custom and two-fifths the factory workers less than five weeks, it is obvious that the seasonal demand is by no means the only reason for irregular employment. Two causes for this instability given by workers and employers—lack of opportunity to learn the trade and the inability of the workers to measure up to the demand—offer suggestions to the educator and social worker for a constructive program. The trade no longer provides opportunity for training its workers, yet it increasingly demands greater skill and ability. Both employer and worker are struggling with the problem, but they will doubtless have to be aided by an outside agency which can provide publicly supported industrial training.





## CHAPTER V.

### OVERTIME IN THE DRESSMAKING TRADE.

The fashion trades in addition to the semiannual rush of work have the consequent problem of overtime. The accumulation of orders which must be rushed through frequently necessitates working after the regular closing hour. "The tendency to put off giving orders to the last moment is easily checked," reported the British Association for the Advancement of Science, "when the customers can be met with universal legal prohibition."<sup>1</sup> Has experience in Massachusetts corroborated this comforting statement?

The ordinary working day in the dressmaking shops in Boston is a nine-hour day. The majority of shops open at 8 a. m. and close at 5.30 p. m., though some of the larger shops work from 8 a. m. to 6 p. m. with one hour's rest at noon. The law in Massachusetts in 1909, when this investigation was started, permitted a ten-hour working day, limited by the 58-hour week for children between 14 and 18 years and for women. In January, 1910, the legal working week was changed to 56 hours, with the exception that where "the employment is by seasons" it may exceed 56 but not 58 hours, the total number per week not to exceed an average of 56 per week for the whole year.

What is a trade in which the employment is by seasons? Lawsuits arose all over the State, but no definition of a trade where "the employment is by seasons" was given. The legislature was occupied with the definition of its own law for two years, and before the definition had been secured the new law providing for an unqualified 54-hour week went into effect. That law would have greatly simplified the work of the inspectors and have enabled the workers to distinguish between illegal overtime and permissible overtime, but it was allowed to remain on the statute books for only one year. The next year, 1913, the seasonal exception was slipped back into the new law, which provided for a 54-hour week but allowed a 58-hour week in manufacturing industries where "the employment is by seasons." The question is, Is dressmaking a trade where the employment is by seasons? Officials in the department of the district police, as well as different inspectors, denied that dressmaking should come

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1903, p. 321.

under this protecting clause. What were the dressmakers themselves doing about it at the time of the investigation? Twenty-six per cent of 182 dressmakers posted their time schedules providing for a 58-hour week. The largest proportion (39 per cent) provided for a 56-hour week, and 31 per cent posted a 54-hour week schedule. The firms did not necessarily work every day the full number of hours posted, but could at any time work the full number posted on the schedule, for such overtime would seem to be perfectly legal.

The word "overtime" as used by the employees therefore might mean either time worked beyond the ordinary nine-hour day or time worked beyond the legal limit of 58 hours a week. Many girls did not know the difference.<sup>1</sup> They knew that "a woman goes around" and occasionally their employer was discovered working and fined, but they were unable to keep pace with legislation regarding hours of labor. Miss Collet reported that the workers of the trade in London, when informed that "the overtime complained of is permissible by the act if 'due notice is given,' . . . have in each case seemed to accept overtime as a necessary evil, and have never suggested that the act needed alteration. This submission to the law is most strikingly illustrated by a girl who, speaking very warmly in favor of her employers, said that it was quite true that they worked them overtime in the season, but they were compelled to do so by the factory act."<sup>2</sup>

Overtime may be the result of a variety of factors, but the exigencies of the patrons are the primary causes of illegal overtime in a custom trade. The large dressmaker has a stock of expensive materials, and it is to her interest to dispose of them. If a customer gives a belated order for a gown from some of these materials, the dressmaker can not afford to lose it. "I sometimes take an order that I know I can not finish without working overtime," said one dressmaker, "but I have the materials in stock and I must dispose of them. The inspector came the other evening, but fortunately I had closed up. If she had come almost any other evening this week, she would have caught us working."

Failure to organize the work systematically may also lead to overtime. Some well-regulated shops open and close like clockwork, and workers who have been employed for years have never known five minutes' overtime. Others are unanimously reported by the workers as regular offenders. There are not sufficient workers and the work is poorly systematized; consequently, the gowns are not completed at the specified time and the workers must finish them

<sup>1</sup> Miss Collet reported a similar situation in England. Great Britain, Royal Commission of Labor. Conditions of Work in London, by Clara E. Collet, p. 13. See also *Le Travail de Nuit des Femmes*, par Georges Allassa, en *Revue de Paris*, Sept. 15, 1904, pp. 368, 369.

<sup>2</sup> Great Britain, Royal Commission of Labor. Conditions of Work in London, by Clara E. Collet, p. 13.



before they go home at night. "There is a great deal of overtime at A——'s," said one girl. "Everything is hopelessly confused and mixed up and there is constant doing over and overlapping of work. We never stopped at six, and no extra pay. I refused to work later than 8 o'clock there." But these conditions are not merely local. "Frequently," said M. Alfassa, of the trade in Paris, "nightwork was the result of bad management; the materials and the trimmings are not distributed in good time; the saleswomen are careless about turning in the orders. It is to their interest to sell and consequently to grant everything the clients ask without concerning themselves with the capacity of production in the workroom."<sup>1</sup>

Overtime is more likely to occur in a custom trade, such as dressmaking, than in the manufacturing industries. A large factory, dependent on electric power, many lights, and a large force can scarcely escape the detection of the inspectors, and the results are scarcely worth the risk. Moreover union regulations make overtime impossible in many of the large factories. In a custom shop, the workroom of which is usually remote from the street, a few employees may easily work late at night with little danger of discovery. The trade because of its semiprivate nature has, moreover, not assumed sufficient importance in the eyes of the inspectors of Massachusetts to merit a great deal of attention. While about three-fourths of the estimated number of professional dressmakers in Boston appeared at least once, though seldom twice, on the records of the factory inspector during a period of one year, the inspectors of the other cities studied made no reports concerning dressmakers, and presumably no visits were made to the dressmakers of their respective cities. The majority are of a private character and employ few if any workers, hence do not seem to merit the time and attention of the overworked inspectors.<sup>2</sup> Nor is this neglect or perhaps oversight of the custom workers local. M. Alfassa reported one dressmaking shop in Paris which had not been visited once in eight years.<sup>3</sup> The isolation of the workers, their distribution among many shops, and the character and conditions of their work combine to make their protection more difficult than that of the factory worker.

In spite of their dislike of overtime, the employees are usually wont to protect their own interests by shielding their employer rather than

<sup>1</sup> *Le Travail de Nuit des Femmes*, par Georges Alfassa, en *Revue de Paris*, Sept. 15, 1904, p. 384.

<sup>2</sup> The law provides for "the inspection and licensing of buildings or parts of buildings used for industrial purposes, the inspection and licensing of the workers therein and of all other industrial employees within the Commonwealth." But in prescribing the duties of inspectors with relation to "lighting, ventilation, and cleanliness," and "toilet facilities," only "a factory in which five or more persons and a workshop in which five or more women or young persons are employed" are specified. *Laws Relating to Labor*, 1913, compiled by the Massachusetts State Board of Labor and Industries, pp. 5, 14, and 22.

<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to see that M. Alfassa found all the causes and conditions resulting in overtime in Paris which were found in Boston. *Le Travail de Nuit des Femmes*, par Georges Alfassa, en *Revue de Paris*, Sept. 15, 1904, pp. 367-389.

by assisting inspectors in the enforcement of the law. "Last year," said the mother of a young girl of 17, "Anna used to work three or four evenings a week until 7 or 8 o'clock (5.30 was the regular closing time). Sometimes the employer shortened the lunch hour, if in a hurry. When the inspector came, the girls said they never worked overtime."

Investigators and inspectors in London and Paris report a similar difficulty. "When found working by a factory inspector," said Miss Collet, in London, "they falsely declared that it was the first night they had worked overtime that week."<sup>1</sup> The Parisian inspectors complain at length of the many ruses by which they are deluded and circumvented.<sup>2</sup> This difficulty is largely the result of the workers' lack of organization, each girl fearing to take a stand which will involve her in difficulties with her employer.

Overtime in dressmaking is, however, much disliked by the workers for two reasons. It can seldom be foreseen, so the workers can not make their plans accordingly, and many firms do not pay for the additional time and work.<sup>3</sup> "I never could make engagements," said one much discouraged girl; "I never had Saturday nights. Miss M. used to say 'you know I can work you till 20 minutes of 7,' but we often had to work until 9. We were told if we did not stay, we need not come back next day." "About six weeks in the fall season," said another, "the girls have to work overtime. There is no definite arrangement. It is just according to rush orders or the amount of work which has to be got out in a specified time. I have had to work many times until 8 o'clock, and once until half past 10. I am sure I worked full 58 hours and I believe more, though I never kept count." "We worked six and sometimes more hours overtime a week almost regularly in Miss C——'s shop," said another. "We work two hours overtime regularly through the busy season," said another. "We worked until 7 o'clock every night for three weeks." Another girl must work evenings and Sundays if necessary. "If you could only abolish overtime," said a Boston girl, "dressmaking would be all right; but to work from 8 in the morning until 9 or 11 at night, and no extra pay, I would not do it any longer."

The law of Massachusetts prohibits nightwork, from 10 p. m. to 6 a. m.,<sup>4</sup> for women in manufacturing establishments. A girl of 21 worked until half past 10 in the heart of the city and had to go to her

<sup>1</sup> Great Britain, Royal Commission of Labor. Conditions of Work in London, by Clara E. Collet, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Le Travail de Nuit des Femmes*, par Georges Alfassa, en *Revue de Paris*, Sept. 15, 1904, p. 382.

<sup>3</sup> "At seven or half past seven," said Albert de Mun, when testifying before the Chamber of Deputies in France, "at the moment when the workers are about to leave, they are informed that there will be a 'veillée,' they had not been informed beforehand; very often they already have their hats on their heads." *L'Industrie de la Couture et de la Confection à Paris*, par Léon de Seilhac, p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> Laws of Massachusetts, R. L. vol. 106, sec. 27 (district police). Bulletin of United States Bureau of Labor Statistics No. 148, p. 972.



home after that hour. A girl of 17 "had worked until 11 o'clock when dresses just had to go out that night." "We worked many nights until 11 o'clock through most of the busy season," said another.

In spite of the many reports of overtime by the workers, the exact truth as to the actual amount is most difficult to secure from this source. Where the workers are paid at a specific rate for overtime, however, this can be accurately determined from the pay roll. Of the rest, nothing definite can be known.

On the pay roll of one of the large fashionable shops, 39 of the 43 weeks of the season 1909-10, and again in 1910-11, showed overtime. In 1909, there was a total of 1,277.6 hours overtime, which equals 141.9 days of 9 hours each, or 23.6 weeks of 54 hours each for a working force with a maximum of 65 workers. During the year 1910, \$409.73 was paid for a total of 1,671.3 hours overtime, making 185.7 days of 9 hours or 31 weeks of 54 hours. In other words, there was enough extra work to have occupied one person 23.6 weeks in 1909, and 31 weeks in 1910. Now this sounds as if the remedy were simple enough. Employ another person. But it is not so simple. All this extra work represented by the overtime was not the work of one person, nor could it be, since no one person in the trade produces all parts of a garment. One night a tailor and his assistants must finish a coat. Another night, perhaps, a dozen women must stay to finish up a dainty trousseau of delicate chiffon and laces. Because of the extreme subdivision of labor, a particular worker must, sometimes, stay and work overtime night after night because her particular services are needed. Again, the dependence of one worker on another may cause overtime. For instance, the power-machine operator may be delayed because the handworkers have not basted the materials together before the closing hour; the waist girl may be delayed because the sleeve girls have not completed their section; the trimmer or the tailor must put on the last finishing touches before the garment goes out of the shop. For this reason the instances of overtime may greatly exceed the number of persons working. Thus, in the second week of November, 1909, 37 persons in one shop worked overtime during the week, but some worked several nights, making 107 instances of overtime. The following table shows the number of hours overtime worked by each of these employees during the week.

TABLE 39.—AMOUNT OF OVERTIME IN A SHOP IN THE WEEK OF MAXIMUM OVERTIME ENDING NOVEMBER 6, 1909.

[Based on pay roll.]

Case No.	Hours of overtime worked by employees on—							Total hours overtime worked.	Amount paid for overtime.
	Mon-day.	Tues-day.	Wednes-day.	Thurs-day.	Friday.	Satur-day.	Sun-day.		
1					$\frac{3}{4}$			$\frac{3}{4}$	\$0.12
2 <sup>1</sup>	1	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1		9	3.50
3				1	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$		4	1.11
4								<sup>2</sup> 9	2.33
5				$\frac{1}{2}$	3			3 $\frac{1}{2}$	.46
6			1	1				2	.33
7				1				1 $\frac{1}{2}$	.28
8				1 $\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$			2 $\frac{1}{2}$	.37
9	1	2 $\frac{1}{2}$		2 $\frac{1}{2}$				5	.75
10 <sup>1</sup>				1		1		4 $\frac{1}{2}$	1.25
11 <sup>1</sup>	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	1		8 $\frac{1}{2}$	3.46
12		1		1				2	.24
13 <sup>1</sup>	1	4	1	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	9	21 $\frac{1}{2}$	8.33
14				1	$\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$		3	.50
15		1		1 $\frac{1}{2}$				2 $\frac{1}{2}$	.56
16								<sup>2</sup> 9	
17		1 $\frac{1}{2}$						1 $\frac{1}{2}$	.28
18				1				4 $\frac{1}{2}$	1.17
19	1 $\frac{1}{2}$		2	1 $\frac{1}{2}$				2	.37
20		1				1		7 $\frac{1}{2}$	1.58
21	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$		3 $\frac{1}{4}$	3 $\frac{1}{2}$			1	.13
22				1				9	1.67
23	1	2 $\frac{1}{2}$		2 $\frac{1}{2}$	3			5	1.39
24		1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	1			4 $\frac{1}{2}$	1.00
25		1 $\frac{1}{2}$		1		2		4 $\frac{1}{2}$	1.25
26			$\frac{1}{2}$	4				5 $\frac{1}{2}$	.90
27		1 $\frac{1}{2}$		1 $\frac{1}{2}$	3			6 $\frac{1}{2}$	1.50
28			$\frac{1}{2}$	3	2 $\frac{1}{2}$			7 $\frac{1}{2}$	1.73
29		1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	3	$\frac{1}{4}$		4 $\frac{1}{2}$	.83
30		1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	1			5	.56
31		1 $\frac{1}{2}$		1 $\frac{1}{2}$	2			2 $\frac{1}{2}$	.17
32		1 $\frac{1}{2}$						3	.50
33		1 $\frac{1}{2}$			1 $\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$		4 $\frac{1}{2}$	.96
34				1 $\frac{1}{2}$	3			2 $\frac{1}{2}$	.52
35			1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$				3 $\frac{1}{2}$	3.30
36 <sup>1</sup>	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	1	1	2		2 $\frac{1}{4}$	.36
37 <sup>1</sup>				2 $\frac{3}{4}$					
Total amount.....	13 $\frac{1}{2}$	30 $\frac{1}{2}$	14	50	33 $\frac{1}{4}$	13 $\frac{3}{4}$	9	182 $\frac{1}{4}$	43.81
Number of instances of overtime.....	10	20	14	30	19	13	1	107	.....

<sup>1</sup> Men; hence not limited by legislation.<sup>2</sup> Not specified by days.

No. 13, a man tailor, worked every night and Sunday, besides; four people worked every night; 19 workers stayed three or more nights for extra work. The men were not subject to the law limiting the week to 58 hours, but cases of illegal overtime appear for the women. Since the regular working week in the shop is 54 hours, any woman working more than four hours overtime exceeds the legal limit, which is the case of 15 women as shown in Table 39. In no case did the women work later than 10 o'clock (closing hour of the shop was 6 o'clock), though one young woman, No. 26, must have worked until 10, after which she had to reach her home in a remote suburb. The number working overtime during that week ranged from 10 on Monday to 30 on Thursday, only two of whom worked less than one hour. Any woman working more than one hour overtime in a day again exceeds the legal limit, which is a 10-hour day. On Thursday of this week 11 women exceeded the 10-hour day; during the whole week



there were 40 instances of women exceeding the 10-hour working day. November was the month of maximum overtime both in 1909 and 1910, and the second week showed the greatest rush in both years. In the second week of November, 1909, 37 people, representing 107 instances, worked 182½ hours, enough for three people working a 58-hour week and one person working one day. In the same week of 1910, 44 people, representing 168 instances of overtime, worked 186½ hours, again enough for three people working a 58-hour week and one person working a day and a half. December also is a rush month with a good deal of overtime, though it rapidly decreases during the month.

The following table shows the variation of overtime by months in a large shop:

TABLE 40.—OVERTIME IN A LARGE SHOP FOR TWO CONSECUTIVE YEARS, 1909-10 AND 1910-11.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Month and week.	Overtime in 1909-10.					Overtime in 1910-11.				
	Number of persons.		Number of instances.	Number of hours.	Amount paid.	Number of persons.		Number of instances.	Number of hours.	Amount paid.
	Em- ployed.	Work- ing over- time.				Em- ployed.	Work- ing over- time.			
October:										
1st week.....	49	2	2	13½	\$3.00	50	4	5	3½	\$4.32
2d week.....	51	3	3	2	.65	54	10	13	10½	2.13
3d week.....	55	8	12	13½	2.82	57	12	16	22½	5.33
4th week.....	55	8	8	14½	3.26	58	17	19	13½	2.66
5th week.....	51	25	56	85½	23.47	56	21	50	58	17.56
November:										
1st week.....	57	40	107	122½	26.83	56	37	94	111½	26.70
2d week.....	57	37	107	182½	45.64	57	44	168	186½	43.53
3d week.....	53	36	98	111½	37.96	60	40	112	155½	37.27
4th week.....	63	19	37	58½	12.21	61	41	111	127½	29.69
December:										
1st week.....	60	27	54	89½	22.95	61	43	122	146½	37.68
2d week.....	58	19	40	49½	15.39	65	30	81	104	28.95
3d week.....	58	21	36	33½	24.59	62	38	98	118½	30.22
4th week.....	63	12	17	28½	8.49	62	25	42	42½	9.12
5th week.....						58	10	12	13½	3.18
January:										
1st week.....	53	7	8	7½	1.31	62	11	18	17	2.85
2d week.....	57					55	10	12	9½	1.57
3d week.....	41					54	16	27	23	5.39
4th week.....	42	5	7	4½	1.59	54	14	19	15	3.09
5th week.....	46	17	28	40	11.43					
February:										
1st week.....	44	13	20	15½	3.40	52	6	7	6½	1.04
2d week.....	41	3	4	2	.39	51				
3d week.....	31	7	8	8½	2.02	42	1	1	½	.10
4th week.....	29					28	1	1	½	.09
March:										
1st week.....	3					6				
2d week.....	12	1	1	4½	.83	6				
3d week.....	41	19	32	45½	14.23	38	1	1		1.00
4th week.....	49	2	2	1½	.38	52	7	5	3	2.97
April:										
1st week.....	53	7	7	13½	4.74	54	20	29	19½	5.17
2d week.....	52	17	34	47½	14.16	56	18	43	26	7.80
3d week.....	53	18	39	40	11.64	57	21	33	22	5.69
4th week.....	52	13	26	23½	6.94	58	21	37	43½	13.52
5th week.....	52	20	38	32	9.36	58	24	62	54½	12.78
May:										
1st week.....	52	4	5	6½	1.47	59	32	69	55½	11.63
2d week.....	51	7	8	7½	1.34	58	27	59	46½	9.38
3d week.....	51	15	20	21½	4.08	57	18	42	29½	6.52
4th week.....	50	17	23	18	4.96	58	20	46	30½	6.70

TABLE 40.—OVERTIME IN A LARGE SHOP FOR TWO CONSECUTIVE YEARS, 1909-10 AND 1910-11—Concluded.

Month and week.	Overtime in 1909-10.					Overtime in 1910-11.				
	Number of persons.		Number of instances.	Number of hours.	Amount paid.	Number of persons.		Number of instances.	Number of hours.	Amount paid.
	Em- ployed.	Work- ing over- time.				Em- ployed.	Work- ing over- time.			
June:										
1st week.....	51	20	43	51½	\$10.23	57	12	16	14½	\$3.10
2d week.....	48	12	18	16	3.18	57	17	39	30½	6.18
3d week.....	48	10	12	6½	1.35	56	18	31	18	4.48
4th week.....	46	9	12	8½	1.85	52	9	21	14	4.06
July:										
1st week.....	44	3	4	2	.46	46	16	30	28½	6.04
2d week.....	41	4	4	3	.80	44	.....	.....	.....	.....
3d week.....	43	5	7	4¾	.88	41	9	21	25	4.88
4th week.....	38	10	13	10½	2.08	34	13	19	24½	5.45
Total.....	.....	.....	1,000	1,277½	342.36	.....	.....	1,631	1,671½	409.73

The relation between overtime and the seasons is apparent.<sup>1</sup> The maximum overtime comes in November and May, the heights of the two seasons in this particular shop in 1910. The minimum overtime in January, February, and first part of March corresponds with the depths of the trade depression. The fall season in this shop is, however, characterized by a great deal more overtime than the spring. This seems to be explained by the character of the clientele. The patrons of the shop are wealthy and fashionable people, who do not return to the city until October. The orders precipitate a deluge of work demanding immediate execution, for everyone has "nothing to wear." Through November, therefore, the work can be completed only by overtime for a large part of the force. The spring orders, however, come in much more gradually and are distributed over a greater length of time, so while there is still a great deal of overtime, the management is better able to control it.

The labor problem which the employer faces also becomes apparent. The cataclysmic rush of work in the fall necessitates one of two things, overtime or more workers. But scarcity of skilled labor is one of the most serious difficulties of the trade. Moreover, it is not one or two workers who are needed, but different workers in the various departments for a short time. Skilled workers can seldom be picked up for a short rush season, as they have comparatively steady work, and few employers can stand the expense of holding through the year a large number of skilled workers who are needed but a few months. The alternative appears to be overtime as long as the orders of the customers come within a short rush period.

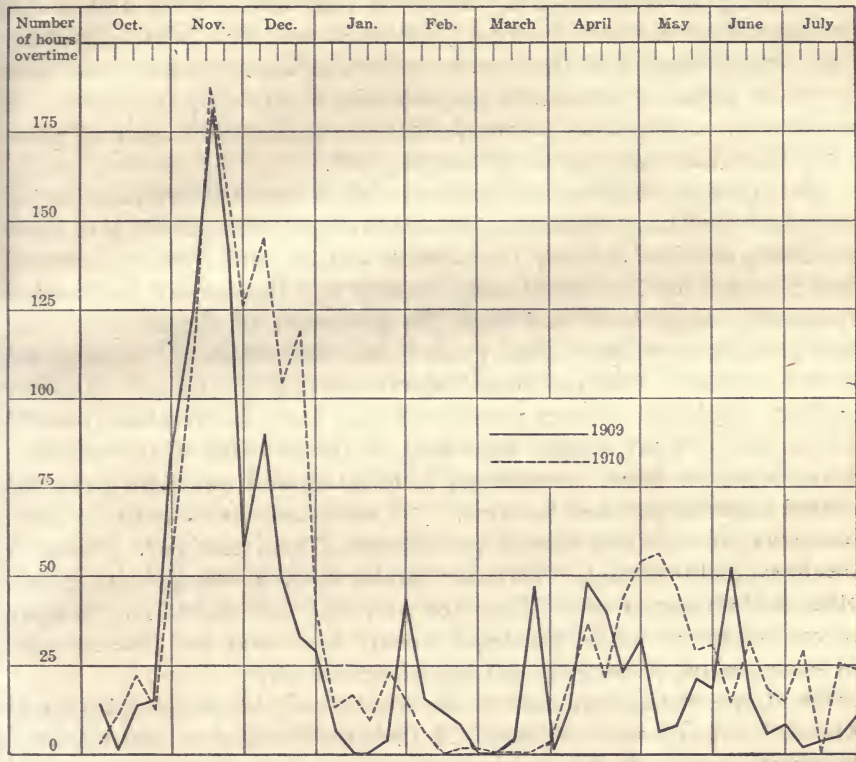
<sup>1</sup> See Chart C.



DRESSMAKING AS A TRADE FOR WOMEN IN MASSACHUSETTS

CHART C.—OVERTIME IN A LARGE SHOP DURING THE YEARS 1909-10 AND 1910-11.

[Based on Table 40.]



Few pay rolls, however, give such complete record of overtime as was found in this shop, and therefore to what extent such overtime is characteristic of the large fashionable shops in general it is impossible to say. The pay roll of another shop, equally large and catering to the same type of people, showed very little pay for overtime and that only occasionally. The natural presumption would be that there was little overtime there. Reports from the workers, however, show this is not true. The majority said overtime was compensated by equal time off, though one said she had the choice of pay or time off. The overtime, under this system of compensation, does not appear on the pay roll, nor can it be accurately ascertained from any source.

Another high-class shop, though employing about half as large a force (35), showed much less overtime. Some appeared on the pay roll during 15 of the 39 weeks working season. The second week in November, eight workers received 50 cents extra and five workers \$1 each for overtime, but the number of hours worked was not specified. Again, the first week in December an equal number

received varying amounts, none exceeding 50 cents. The last week in April and first week in June four people received overtime pay, but during the remainder of the season only one or two, and in one instance three, workers were paid for overtime. The relation of overtime to the heights of the seasons is here again apparent. But this is not an accurate account of the overtime in this shop, as one worker reported overtime with no compensation, an instance again of overtime that does not appear on the pay roll.

More than one-half the 200 workers visited reported overtime during the year which may or may not have been illegal; one-third (34) of those reporting received no pay for additional time and work. Overtime was reported for 59 shops, though in only 6 of these was it habitual or frequent. More than one-third (39 per cent) of the 59 shops did not pay for overtime. One worker said she received "nothing for once or twice." One was paid "about one-half the time." Another said her employer "always promised to pay them for overtime, but she never did." Four shops, according to the reports of the workers, made it up to them by allowing time later, and one shop gave the choice between pay and time off.<sup>1</sup> "I sometimes work until 7 o'clock several times a week during rush season," said one girl. "Once I worked until 9 o'clock. But they make it up to the girls by giving them an afternoon off. They are perfectly fair about it. We are never asked to exceed the legal weekly limit and are glad to work overtime some evenings to get the afternoon off."<sup>2</sup>

The large establishments, on the whole, may be said to pay for or at least compensate overtime. A fashionable shop of 100 workers, however, notorious for its continuous and extended overtime, did not pay for it, while some of the small shops did, so it is difficult to generalize. The payment for overtime ultimately depends on the businesslike methods of the employer and on the employees themselves. Some employees refuse to stay night after night without pay. Others are afraid to refuse.<sup>3</sup>

Overtime without pay would seem to be a profitable system. To what extent this opportunity is abused by the employer it would be difficult to say. "The girls worked at Miss B——'s shop during the three months of the spring season every night until 12 o'clock," said one worker. "Miss B—— would declare the gown had to be

<sup>1</sup> Miss Collet discovered a similar diversity with regard to payment for overtime in London. Great Britain, Royal Commission of Labor. Conditions of Work in London (1893), by Clara E. Collet, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Irwin reported a similar custom among some dressmakers in Scotland. Great Britain, Royal Commission of Labor. Conditions of Work in Scotland, by Margaret Irwin, p. 292.

<sup>3</sup> Miss Collet, in London, and Miss Orme and Miss Abraham, in Ireland, found a similar situation. Great Britain, Royal Commission. Conditions of Work in London, p. 13; Conditions of Work in Ireland, p. 322.

M. du Maroussem reported one employer in Paris who paid double for overtime. Nothing is said about the others, who probably do not pay for overtime. France, Office du Travail. La Petite Industrie, Vol. II, Le Vêtement à Paris, p. 439.



done within a certain time and then a week after we would see it hanging in the closet.<sup>1</sup> She announced once that 'No girl need expect to stay who wouldn't work overtime.' She usually wouldn't ask a girl outright to stay at night, but would say certain dresses had to be done, and if we didn't stay we knew we would lose our places."

"Mme. Z—— came in one evening," said another girl, "and announced that all should work until 6 o'clock (half past 5 being the regular closing time), although there was no particular need for it. The more I thought of it the more angry I got. Off of 18 women thus she would get in just a whole day's work for no pay. When half-past 5 came I left and went home. Mme. Z—— said nothing to me the next morning." An older woman of 45, however, who only managed to get four months' work in the whole year, could be much less independent. "We often stayed at S——'s three or four nights a week until 7 or 8. I did not care to be 'stiff' about those things for fear of being discharged."<sup>2</sup>

A few of the Boston workers said that supper was provided when they worked late. "Many nights through most of the busy season we worked until 11 o'clock. Miss H—— gave us a sandwich for lunch, but what was that?" said one girl. "Sometimes we work overtime at C——'s," said a more contented worker, "but we are paid the regular rate and a nice supper is always brought in—sandwiches, hot coffee, cake, and fruit. C——'s is a grand place to work."

The rate of pay for overtime varied with the different shops. The majority who were paid received the regular rate or approximately that amount.<sup>3</sup> A large alteration department had a regular overtime rate of 25 cents an hour. The \$12 worker thus received about her regular rate for overtime work, while the \$9 worker received almost half again her regular rate.

An ingenious scheme of adjustment of seasonal fluctuation and hours was discovered in a private shop, but with the burden still on the worker. The regular working day was from 8 a. m. to 5.30 p. m., with one-half hour for lunch. The employees worked one-half hour over the regular day two or three times a week throughout the busy season. No pay was given for the extra time and work. In dull mid-winter from Thanksgiving until the opening of the spring season the hours were changed from 8 a. m. to 4 p. m. with one-half hour for lunch, and workers received but five days' pay. In the busy season they worked more than they were paid for. In the dull season five days' work was spread over six days and they were paid for just five

<sup>1</sup> See similar report by M. Alfassa. *Le Travail de Nuit des Femmes*, par Georges Alfassa, en Revue de Paris, Sept. 15, 1904, pp. 384, 385.

<sup>2</sup> Great Britain, Royal Commission. *Conditions of Work in London*, by Clara E. Collet, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> A girl receiving \$7.50 a week, for instance, received 11 cents an hour (13 cents would have been regular pay).

days' work. To what extent the work done during overtime in the busy season would have occupied the dull season is difficult to determine. The demands of customers are the ultimate controlling force.

Conditions at the time of the investigation made overtime profitable to the employer. She could get a great deal of additional work at no additional cost and without violating the 58-hour law. "I have noticed," said a girl of 22, "that the dressmakers who rushed the girls and kept them overtime had patrons coming back oftener for alterations." The quality of work done and temper of the workroom force might thus counterbalance the amount of work completed. "Moreover, the work done during the day is good," says M. Alfassa, "while that done in the evening is extremely defective."

In isolated cases of an eight-hour day the employer has maintained that the same results can be secured in an eight as in a nine hour working day. "Miss Olivia Flynt, Chauncy Street, Boston (reported) Hours of Labor per day (8)" in 1871. "We are assured by the employer and employed that their profits have been quite as large since the adoption of the eight hours for a day's work some eighteen months since, as before, when working nine and one-half hours per day."<sup>1</sup> Two proprietors of shops in Boston now have an eight-hour day, one of whom says she can turn out as much work in eight hours as in nine hours throughout the season.

Legal prohibition of nightwork and regulation of shop hours is undoubtedly beneficial in controlling overtime, though a rigid enforcement of the legal limit of hours will probably result in only partially checking the tendency of customers to give late orders and to require their completion within an unreasonable time. It may result to a certain extent in driving the work out of the shop to the home. Some half dozen workers representing three or four shops reported taking work home in the evening, for which the majority received no additional pay. "I have taken a coat home from H—— and embroidered on it at night with no extra pay," said one girl. Another took material home Saturday and worked on it a large part of Sunday. An employee in one of the large shops, however, said, "In extreme rush we take embroidery home at night. We get extra pay and I am glad to be able to earn the extra money." The employer thus escapes the danger of being discovered by the inspector, but violates the law which forbids work being sent to the home without a license.<sup>2</sup> The wearer is exposed to the possibilities of clothing made under unsanitary conditions and the worker has seriously over-

<sup>1</sup> Second Annual Report of Massachusetts Bureau of Labor (1871), p. 216.

<sup>2</sup> Laws of Massachusetts, R. L., vol. 106, sec. 56 (State Board of Health). Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics No. 148, pp. 982 and 983.



drawn on her reserve force. Both workers and inspectors reported a similar situation in England.<sup>1</sup>

The evil effects of long hours and overtime for women have been so clearly and voluminously portrayed in the United States and Europe that it seems unnecessary to deal with them except in a cursory way.<sup>2</sup> The physical and nervous strain of overtime added to the regular working day is self-evident. The work begins at the regular hour the following day regardless of the hour at which the worker left the shop the preceding night.

The moral aspect of the problem has been emphasized by French writers. The young girls and women are exposed to many unpleasant experiences returning to their homes late at night.<sup>3</sup> Young girls become accustomed to being out at night, and their parents have no way of knowing when it is necessary. "Does Anna have to stay at night very often?" the investigator asked a mother. "I can't tell," said the mother. "Sometimes she comes home late and says she was kept in at the shop. But you can't always believe what young girls say."

A more equal distribution of work throughout the year, or work for a larger number of women must result if the legal regulation of the working day be enforced. English trade-union workers and inspectors believe that such a result has been secured in England.<sup>1</sup> Legislation and adequate inspection can contribute to the betterment of working conditions. The 54-hour week without exceptions should greatly simplify the situation in the dressmaking trade, as under it the legal and the actual working day of the majority of shops are synonymous. Enforcement of this legislation is the problem of the times, but it can be greatly facilitated by the customers and by employees.

The movement for abolishing nightwork for women received a powerful impetus in the signature by 14 European States of the international convention respecting the prohibition of nightwork for women in industrial employment. The convention guarantees to women in industrial occupations in the signatory States a night rest of 11 consecutive hours, part of which must cover the period from 10 p. m. to 5 a. m. This convention came into force January 14, 1912, in the 12 States which had ratified it by January 14, 1910. These coun-

<sup>1</sup> Great Britain Factory and Workshops Acts Commission. Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the working of the Factory and Workshops Acts, Vol. I, p. 56. London, 1876.

<sup>2</sup> Decision of the United States Supreme Court in *Curt Muller v. State of Oregon*, and Brief for the State of Oregon, 1907; also *W. C. Ritchie & Co. v. Wayman and Davies*, in the Supreme Court of Illinois, December, 1909, by Louis D. Brandeis, assisted by Josephine Goldmark. *Fatigue and Efficiency*, by Josephine Goldmark, New York, 1912. *Le Travail de Nuit des Femmes*, par Georges Alfassa, en *Revue de Paris*, Sept. 15, 1904. *Le Travail de Nuit des Femmes dans L'Industrie Francaise*, par Marthe Jay, p. 12. *Die gewerbliche Nachtarbeit der Frauen*, Stephen Bauer, Jena, 1903, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> See similar statements in *Le Travail de Nuit des Femmes dans L'Industrie Francaise*, par Marthe Jay, p. 12. *Le Travail de Nuit des Femmes*, par Georges Alfassa, en *Revue de Paris*, Sept. 15, 1904, pp. 367-389.

tries are Germany, Austria, Hungary, Belgium, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Portugal, Switzerland, and Sweden.<sup>1</sup> The United States as a unit has no such legislation. This important matter is left to the individual States and the resultant variation is always a weapon of the employers against reduction of the working hours in a particular State on the ground that it unfairly handicaps them in the competition of trade. In 1916 but nine of the States prohibited nightwork by women.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bulletin of International Labor Office (1906), p. xxxiii. Spain and Denmark were the two remaining countries.

<sup>2</sup> Arkansas, Connecticut, Indiana, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina.



## CHAPTER VI.

### WAGES AND EARNINGS IN BOSTON.

Custom dressmaking with its emphasis on fine handwork is still, at the opening of the twentieth century, primarily woman's work. The last official statistics given for this branch of the trade were those collected in 1900. In that year the average number of men, women, and children employed in custom and factory dressmaking, and the wages received by each group, were as follows:

TABLE 41.—NUMBER AND WAGES OF MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN IN CUSTOM DRESSMAKING AND IN MANUFACTURING SHOPS IN THE UNITED STATES.<sup>1</sup>

Workers.	Custom shops.				Manufacturing shops.			
	Average number employed.	Per cent of average number of wage-earners.	Total wages paid.	Per cent of total wages paid.	Average number employed.	Per cent of average number of wage-earners.	Total wages paid.	Per cent of total wages paid.
Men.....	4,379	9.6	\$2,943,175	20.6	26,109	31.2	\$15,790,572	48.5
Women.....	40,835	89.6	11,363,683	79.1	56,866	67.9	16,675,390	51.2
Children.....	381	.8	45,595	.3	764	.9	120,139	.3
Total.....	45,595	100.0	14,352,453	100.0	83,739	100.0	32,586,101	100.0

<sup>1</sup> United States Census, 1900. Manufactures, Pt. III, p. 302.

It will be seen that in custom dressmaking the women represented almost 90 per cent. In the factory branch of the clothing trade, involving heavier machine work, more emphasis on speed, and a greater variety of materials and product, men constituted 31.2 per cent of the force.

Turning to the matter of wages, it appears that in custom dressmaking, although men formed less than 10 per cent of the working force, they drew 20 per cent of the total wages paid. In the manufacturing branch the men also drew more than their proportionate share of the total wages, but relatively their excess is less than in custom dressmaking. This is due to the difference in the skill required of men in the two branches of the trade. However, in both branches the men drew a much larger proportion and the women and children a much smaller proportion of the total wages paid than they represented in the working force.

The investigation on which this chapter is based has been confined to those shops making high-class dresses, custom and wholesale, a

branch of the trade which is still practically monopolized by women. While custom dressmaking in Massachusetts has reached a fair degree of development, the manufacturing branch, because of concentration in New York, is unusual and sporadic in this State, and has necessarily been treated more from a comparative standpoint than as a basis of study in itself. The pay-roll records of 735 workers in 14 custom dressmaking shops<sup>1</sup> and of 522 workers in the only two high-class dressmaking factories in Boston making a product selling at wholesale for \$18 or more, and the personal testimony of 200 workers visited in their homes form the basis for conclusions on the wage situation in the dressmaking trade of Boston.

The sex and age of the workers studied in Boston are shown in the following table:

TABLE 42.—NUMBER OF MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN UNDER 16 EMPLOYED IN 14 CUSTOM DRESSMAKING AND 2 MANUFACTURING SHOPS IN BOSTON DURING ONE YEAR.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Workers.	Custom shops.														Manufacturing shops.					
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	Total number.	Per cent.	X	Y	Total number.	Per cent.
Men.....	30	6	.....	1	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	39	6.5	7	15	22	4.2
Women.....	97	83	59	44	38	27	55	34	35	25	10	11	17	10	545	90.8	69	431	500	95.8
Children.....	.....	10	.....	1	.....	.....	1	1	2	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	16	2.7	.....	.....	.....	.....
Total.....	127	99	59	45	39	29	56	35	37	25	11	11	17	10	600	100.0	76	446	522	100.0

Comparing these figures with those from the census just given, it appears that the proportion of women in the custom trade in Boston does not differ very greatly from that in the whole Union. In factory dressmaking, however, Boston shows a much larger proportion of women than are found in the trade as a whole.

This is largely due to the fact that "women's clothing trade, factory product," as described by the census, includes much of the heavy wear largely made by men, while the "factory dressmaking" studied in Boston is confined to the making of a product similar to that of the custom shop—light-weight dresses of silk and chiffon, on which women are principally employed, men appearing only as designers, foremen, cutters, pressers, and shippers. Children under 16 formed 2.7 per cent of the 600 custom workers employed in 14 custom shops in Boston during the year 1910–11, while none were found among 522 factory workers. Public sentiment, the activity of the Con-

<sup>1</sup> The records of 600 workers appeared on the pay rolls of the 14 custom shops during a one-year period, September, 1910, to September, 1911. As an additional four months' record from September to December, 1911, was taken from several shops to gain information concerning the effect of the summer vacation on the stability of the force, the wages of the additional 135 new workers who appeared during this period have been used in some tables to make as large and representative a group as possible on which to base conclusions.



sumers' League, and the small value of girls under 16 in a dress-making factory militate against their employment. They are used as errand, floor, and stock girls, but Boston employers show an increasing unwillingness to employ them even on these tasks, saying they are too young and irresponsible to compensate for the trouble they make. More than two-thirds of the children under 16 in the custom trade earned less than \$5 a week.

Turning to a consideration of weekly wages, the following table shows the number and per cent of men, women, and children in different wage groups:

TABLE 43.—CLASSIFIED WEEKLY WAGES OF MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN UNDER 16 IN 14 CUSTOM DRESSMAKING AND 2 MANUFACTURING SHOPS, IN BOSTON.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Classified weekly wages.	Custom shops.								Manufacturing shops. <sup>1</sup>							
	Men.		Women.		Children.		Total.		Men.		Women.		Total. <sup>2</sup>			
	Num-ber.	Per-cent.	Num-ber.	Per-cent.	Num-ber.	Per-cent.	Num-ber.	Per-cent.	Num-ber.	Per-cent.	Num-ber.	Per-cent.	Num-ber.	Per-cent.		
\$1 and under \$5.....			62	9.3	17	68.0	79	10.8			70	14.9	70	14.1		
\$5 and under \$10.....	3	7.1	372	55.7	8	32.0	383	52.2	6	27.3	296	62.8	302	61.1		
\$10 and under \$15.....	6	14.3	181	27.1			187	25.4	4	18.2	95	20.2	99	20.1		
\$15 and under \$20.....	6	14.3	30	4.5			36	5.0	7	31.8	8	1.7	15	3.0		
\$20 and under \$25.....	20	47.6	4	.6			24	3.3	1	4.6	1	.2	2	.5		
\$25 and under \$30.....	2	4.8	5	.8			7	1.0								
\$30 and under \$35.....	2	4.8	3	.4			5	.7	1	4.5	1	.2	2	.5		
\$35 and under \$40.....	1	2.4					1	.1								
\$40 and under \$45.....									2	9.1			2	.5		
\$45 and under \$50.....	1	2.3					1	.1								
\$50 and under \$60.....			1	.1			1	.1	1	4.5			1	.2		
Unclassified <sup>3</sup> .....	1	2.4	10	1.5			11	1.3								
Total.....	42	100.0	668	100.0	25	100.0	735	100.0	22	100.0	471	100.0	493	100.0		
Per cent.....	5.7		90.9		3.4		100.0		4.5		95.5		100.0			

<sup>1</sup> No children under 16 employed.

<sup>2</sup> 29 pieceworkers excluded.

<sup>3</sup> Some names appear on the pay roll for a day or two with no wage at all, or several weeks with varying small sums. These are drifters, but worth noting.

<sup>4</sup> Including 135 miscellaneous workers. See note, p. 128.

The difference in the wages of men and women appears very strikingly here. While almost two-thirds of the women employed in custom dressmaking earned less than \$10 a week, practically the same proportion of the men earned \$20 or more. In factory dressmaking three-fourths of the women earned less and nearly three-fourths of the men earned more than \$10 a week.

The table also shows the difference in the opportunities offered by the two branches for earning good wages. In custom dressmaking 35 per cent of the women employed earned \$10 or over, against 22.3 per cent in factory dressmaking. Only two women in the latter branch earned as much as or more than \$20 a week, while in custom dressmaking nine earned from \$20 to \$30, three from \$30 to \$35, and one between \$50 and \$60. Because of the demand for

artistic lines, originality, and individuality, custom dressmaking is unique in the clothing trades for the opportunity open to the women who can meet the required standard. In spite of the opportunity, few are able to measure up to it, and the discouraging fact remains that almost one-half the custom workers and two-thirds of the factory workers earn less than \$9, which has been estimated as the minimum living wage in Boston.<sup>1</sup>

The week wage prevails in the high-class dressmaking trade, both custom and manufacturing, in Boston. In the former, the character of the trade makes the week wage preferable for two reasons: First, since custom dressmaking stands for individuality and originality, every gown must be different, which makes the establishment of a piece rate difficult, and, second, the week rate is usually recognized as essential to fine, high-class work, for pieceworkers are likely to be more interested in the amount than the quality of output. In no purely custom shop in Boston was the piece-wage system in use, and in the two wholesale dressmaking shops only 29 of the 522 workers were on piece wage. In the larger factory it was customary to put new workers on a piece rate for a few weeks, to enable the forewoman to set their weekly rates. Since the pieceworkers are few and not representative, they will be excluded from the general discussion of wages in Boston. The following table shows their average weekly wages. It will be seen that 24 of the 29 averaged less than \$5 a week and that not one earned \$9 a week.

TABLE 44.—CLASSIFIED WEEKLY WAGES OF 29 WOMEN ON PIECEWORK IN 2 MANUFACTURING SHOPS IN BOSTON.<sup>a</sup>

[Based on pay rolls.]

Classified weekly wages.	Number of women earning wage specified.		
	Shop X.	Shop Y.	Total.
Under \$1.....		5	5
\$1 and under \$2.....		3	3
\$2 and under \$3.....	3	1	4
\$3 and under \$4.....	4	3	7
\$4 and under \$5.....	3	2	5
\$5 and under \$6.....	1		1
\$6 and under \$7.....			
\$7 and under \$8.....	2		2
\$8 and under \$9.....	1	1	2
Total.....	14	15	29

<sup>a</sup> Average wage based on number of weeks worked. None worked more than eight weeks in shop X and none more than 13 weeks in shop Y.

One large high-class establishment, doing both custom and retail manufacturing<sup>2</sup> and employing from 400 to 500 workers, was unique in that the piece-wage system was the prevailing method of wage

<sup>1</sup>The Living Wage of Women Workers, by M. Louise Bosworth. [New York, 1911.] pp. 9-11.

<sup>2</sup>Gowns made up in advance of orders and sold to the prospective wearers either through the store or traveling saleswomen.



payment, only the heads and a few others receiving a week wage. The piece-wage system is also invading the alteration departments of the large stores. One firm had put all alteration workers on piece rates, while two firms were imposing this form of payment on the seasonal or extra workers only. Although the week wage has the advantage of a definite assured income, the worker may be laid off the moment she can be dispensed with. The pieceworker may, on the other hand, make something, although less than usual, in dull season, if she comes to the factory each day.

Although the wages of adult women workers in the dressmaking trade may seem discouraging, comparison with other industries shows that relatively they are high. The wages in boot and shoe manufacturing ranked highest of the large manufacturing industries in 1905, with 32.6 per cent earning \$9 or more. Wholesale millinery ranked second with 26.6 per cent, women's clothing, factory product, 21.7 per cent, men's clothing 13.1 per cent, printing and publishing 17.7 per cent, bookbinding 11.7 per cent, and paper boxes 8.7 per cent earning \$9 or more.<sup>1</sup>

Wages in custom and factory dressmaking secured from local pay rolls are, therefore, much better than those reported for the large manufacturing industries. Forty-nine per cent of the custom workers and 36.3 per cent of the factory workers earned \$9 or more. Factory dressmaking turning out a high-class product shows a higher wage standard than the women's clothing trade as a whole, for 67.8 per cent earned less than \$8 in the trade as a whole as compared with 47.1 per cent in factory dressmaking in Boston; 78.3 per cent earned less than \$9 in the trade as a whole, while 63.7 per cent earned less than \$9 in the Boston dressmaking factories. Custom dressmaking with its fine product requiring skill and artistic sense ranks still better, only 33.1 per cent earning less than \$8, and 50.6 per cent less than \$9.

The difference in opportunity to earn a good wage in the two branches is also apparent; 35.6 per cent of the custom as compared with 22.3 per cent of the factory workers earned \$10 or more; 17.9 per cent of the custom workers as compared with 7 per cent of the factory workers earned \$12 or more. Six per cent of the custom workers earned more than \$15, 2.1 per cent received \$20 or more, and 1.4 per cent, \$25 or more.

The wage scale of an individual shop is largely determined by the character of its trade and the size of the force. Large and fashionable shops employ more expensive help than is needed in the small shops. In shop A, employing during the year 97 women,<sup>2</sup> 12.4 per cent earned \$15 or more; 10.3 per cent, \$18 or more, and 4.1 per cent,

<sup>1</sup> Special Reports of the Census Office. Manufactures, Part IV, 1905, p. 732.

<sup>2</sup> According to Table 23, pp. 89 and 90, the maximum number employed in shop A in one week was 62.

\$25 or more, while in shop C, employing 35, but one woman earned \$25, and in only one of the remaining 12 shops was \$25 paid. Combining the large shops A to G, each employing a maximum of 25 or more workers, and the small shops H to N, each employing less, fairly definite wage groups appear.

TABLE 45.—CLASSIFIED WEEKLY WAGES OF WOMEN 16 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER WORKING IN LARGE AND SMALL CUSTOM DRESSMAKING AND MANUFACTURING SHOPS FOR A ONE-YEAR PERIOD.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Classified weekly wages.	Women earning classified wages in custom shops.						Women earning classified wages in manufacturing shops.					
	Large shops.		Small shops.		Total.		Large shops.		Small shops.		Total.	
	Num-ber.	Per-cent.	Num-ber.	Per-cent.	Num-ber.	Per-cent.	Num-ber.	Per-cent.	Num-ber.	Per-cent.	Num-ber.	Per-cent.
\$1 and under \$5.....	31	7.7	15	10.5	46	8.5	70	16.8			70	14.9
\$5 and under \$10.....	221	54.9	74	51.8	295	54.1	255	61.3	41	74.6	296	62.8
\$10 and under \$15.....	112	27.9	43	30.0	155	28.4	83	20.0	12	21.8	95	20.2
\$15 and under \$20.....	25	6.2	2	1.4	27	5.0	6	1.5	2	3.6	8	1.7
\$20 and under \$25.....	2	.5	1	.7	3	.5	1	.2			1	.2
\$25 and under \$30.....	2	.5	13	2.1	5	.9						
\$30 and under \$35.....	3	.8			3	.6	1	.2			1	.2
\$35 and under \$60.....	1	.3			1	.2						
Unclassified.....	5	1.2	5	3.5	10	1.8						
Total.....	402	100.0	143	100.0	545	100.0	416	100.0	55	100.0	471	100.0

<sup>1</sup> The \$25 wage is abnormal in the small shop employing less than 25 workers. These three were tried out in one year in one shop where the employer did not personally conduct the business.

The proportion, more than one-half earning \$5 to \$10, and one-fourth, \$10 to \$15, is approximately the same in both; but the difference appears at the extremes. Those earning \$15 and over were 8.3 per cent of the total employed in the large shops and but 4.2 per cent in the small, while they constitute 7.2 per cent of the force in the combined shops, illustrating the influence of the large shops in the returns for the trade. As the other extreme the \$1 to \$5 workers form 10.5 per cent in the small shops and 7.7 per cent in the large establishments. Most of the low-wage earners are young learners, 18 to 20 years old, who can be profitably employed in the small shops where they work directly under and with their employer.

The lower wage scale of the small shop raises the question: To what extent does the proportion of learners explain the difference? Slightly more than one-fourth of the women 16 years of age and over employed in the large shops were earning less than \$8, and a little more than one-fifth of these were under 18 years of age. Almost one-third of the women in the small shops earned less than \$8 and one-fifth of these were under 18 years of age. The lower wage scale of the small shop large enough to keep a pay roll, therefore, is explained by the class of work and type of product rather than by the immaturity of the workers. The decline of the small shop is there-



fore a dubious misfortune, for the large shop, in spite of less individualism and greater subdivision of labor, does not necessarily, as the census has pointed out, mean a lower wage scale.<sup>1</sup>

TABLE 46.—PROPORTION OF WORKERS EARNING LESS THAN \$8, AND PROPORTION OF THESE UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE, BY LARGE AND SMALL SHOPS.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Item.	Large shops.		Small shops.	
	Number.	Per cent.	Number.	Per cent.
Workers employed.....	402	.....	143	.....
Earning under \$8.....	115	28.6	45	31.5
Under 18 years of age....	26	22.6	9	20.0

While the worker in the small shop completes a whole, the worker in the large shop completes a specific part and, because of the superior product, an even higher degree of efficiency is sometimes required from the subordinate workers, while the increased supervisory force increases the wage scale greatly. The disappearance of the small shop with its opportunities for training young workers, however, is leaving a gap in the industrial world which should be bridged by such educational agencies as are necessary to equip the prospective workers.

Since the occupation signifies a fairly definite degree and type of ability, it determines to a large degree the wage. The 25 or more occupations in the dressmaking trade may be grouped into three classes—the professional, the purely industrial, and the general service. With the latter may be included the clerical workers. The professional and the general service groups constitute the extremes in skill, ability, and consequent wage, while the industrial workers constitute the great middle class.

The industrial class comprises the plain sewers and finishers, embroiderers, collar and lining makers, machine operators, and pressers, all of whom need manual skill primarily. They formed more than one-half (55 per cent) of the 600 custom workers and almost two-thirds (62.5 per cent) of the 522 factory workers employed during 1910–11 in the 14 shops and two factories studied.

The professional class comprises the designers, forewomen, cutters, fitters, shoppers, tailors, drapers, and makers, who stand for artistic sense, creative and administrative ability in addition to manual skill and constitute somewhat more than one-fourth (29.8 per cent) of the custom but only 15.9 per cent of the factory workers. The general service and clerical group comprises the traveling saleswomen, models of the factory branch, office force, and the stock and errand girls, constituting 7 per cent of the custom and 4.8 per cent of the factory workers.

The industrial group and the unclassified workers, who are largely the drifters of the trade, occupy an unduly large place in the working force for a one-year period because of their shifting and instability. In the week when the largest number was employed the professional group formed 33.8 per cent of the custom and 21.9 per cent of the factory workers. The industrial group formed 53.3 per cent of the custom workers as compared with 66 per cent of the factory force. The clerical and general service represented about the same proportion in both, 6.1 per cent in the custom trade and 6.5 per cent in the factory branch. The unclassified group formed 6.9 per cent of the custom and 5.6 per cent of the factory workers.

The following table shows both the division of the working force among these three groups and the classified weekly wages within each group:

TABLE 47.—CLASSIFIED WEEKLY WAGES OF 600 CUSTOM WORKERS, BY OCCUPATIONS.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Occupation.	\$1 and under \$5	\$5 and under \$10	\$10 and under \$15	\$15 and under \$20	\$20 and under \$25	\$25 and under \$30	\$30 and under \$35	\$35 and over.	Un- classified.	Total.	
										Num- ber.	Per cent.
<i>Professional.</i>											
Designers and forewomen.....					1	4		1		6	1.0
Tailors:											
Men.....		2	6	6	18	1	1	2		36	5.7
Women.....		2	10	3		1				16	
Cutters.....			3			1				4	.7
Fitters.....			3	3						7	1.2
Shoppers.....			1							1	.1
Drapers:											
Waists.....		1	40	6			1			48	15.0
Skirts.....		3	23	6	2		1			35	
Sleeves.....		1	5	1						7	
Makers:											
Waists.....		5	6							11	3.1
Skirts.....		2	5							7	
Sleeves.....			1							1	
Total.....		16	103	25	21	7	4	3		179	29.8
<i>Industrial.</i>											
Finishers:											
Waists.....	12	80	18	3						113	50.2
Skirts.....	5	74	12							91	
Sleeves.....	1	9								10	
Finishers and plainsewers	22	60	4						1	87	
Embroiderers.....		6	2							8	1.3
Collar makers.....		1								1	.2
Lining makers.....	1	6	1							8	1.3
Machine operators.....		6	5							11	1.8
Pressers.....		1								1	.2
Total.....	41	243	42	3					1	330	55.0
<i>Clerical and general service.</i>											
Office.....		3	4	4						11	1.8
Stock and errand girls.....	19	8	2	4					1	31	5.2
Total.....	19	11	6	5					1	42	7.0
Unclassified.....	1	29	10	1					8	49	8.2
Grand total.....	61	299	161	34	21	7	4	3	10	600	100.0

<sup>1</sup> Head fitter. <sup>2</sup> Occupation not definitely specified, 3. <sup>3</sup> Head of linings. <sup>4</sup> Head of stock.



It appears from this that the workers in each division of the custom force show a characteristic earning capacity. Almost three-fourths (73.7 per cent) of the industrial workers came within the \$5 to \$10 group, a similar proportion, 71.5 per cent, of the professional group earned from \$10 to \$20, and nearly one-half of the general and clerical workers earned under \$5. The workers of the professional group comprise the widest range of occupations, ability, and wage, for above the makers and drapers, who constitute the majority and congregate within the \$10 to \$15 group, are the designers and forewomen, tailors, cutters, and fitters, 44.9 per cent of whom earn \$20 or more, and at the top appear a few heads and experts earning from \$30 to \$50 a week. In the clerical and general service group at the one extreme are the young errand girls earning less than \$5, and at the other the \$15 bookkeeper and \$18 head of stock in the large commercialized shop.

Much greater standardization of wage, work, and workers appears in the factory trade, as already noted; nearly two-thirds of the working force are industrial workers and need manual skill primarily. More than three-fourths of the workers in each of the three groups come within the \$5 to \$15 group. Power-machine operators and finishers or plain sewers constituted more than one-half the working force; but 13.2 per cent of the women were drapers and designers and forewomen typifying artistic skill or administrative ability, and few even of these exceeded \$15. The new opportunity for women appears in the clerical and general service group, in the models earning from \$10 to \$15, and the traveling saleswomen from \$15 to \$20.

TABLE 48.—CLASSIFIED WEEKLY WAGES OF 522 FACTORY WORKERS,<sup>1</sup> BY OCCUPATIONS.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Occupation.	\$1 and under \$5	\$5 and under \$10	\$10 and under \$15	\$15 and under \$20	\$20 and under \$25	\$25 and under \$30	\$30 and under \$35	\$35 and over.	Total.	
									Number.	Per cent.
<i>Professional.</i>										
Designers and foremen.....								3	3	} 2.1
Designers and forewomen.....		1	2	3	1		1		8	
Cutters, men.....		3	1	5	1		1		11	- 2.1
Drapers:										
Waists.....		20	24	1					45	} 11.7
Skirts.....	2	4	10						16	
Total.....	2	28	37	9	2		2	3	83	15.9
<i>Industrial.</i>										
Finishers and plain sewers.....	48	105							153	29.3
Machine operators.....	1	81	32						114	} 23.6
Sample makers.....			3						3	
Tuckers.....		2	4						6	} 5.6
Pieceworkers.....	24	5							29	
Examiners.....		1	1						2	.4
Pressers:										
Men.....		1	2	2					5	} 3.6
Women.....		6	6	2					14	
Total.....	73	201	48	4					326	62.5

<sup>1</sup> Of the professional group, 78.3 per cent earn from \$5 to \$15; of the industrial group, 76.4 per cent earn from \$5 to \$15; and of the clerical and general service group, 76 per cent earn from \$5 to \$15.

<sup>2</sup> One man.

TABLE 48.—CLASSIFIED WEEKLY WAGES OF 522 FACTORY WORKERS, BY OCCUPATIONS—Concluded.

Occupation.	\$1 and under \$5	\$5 and under \$10	\$10 and under \$15	\$15 and under \$20	\$20 and under \$25	\$25 and under \$30	\$30 and under \$35	\$35 and over.	Total.	
									Num- ber.	Per cent.
<i>Clerical and general service.</i>										
Traveling saleswomen.....				1					1	.2
Models.....			6						6	1.1
Office.....		1	3	1					5	1.0
Stock, errand, and floor girls.....	4	18							12	2.3
Shippers, men.....			1						1	.2
(Total.....)	4	9	10	2					25	4.8
Unclassified.....	15	69	4						88	16.8
Grand total.....	94	307	99	15	2		2	3	522	100.0

<sup>1</sup> One boy.

But the significance of the weekly wage in a skilled trade like dress-making must be interpreted by two important factors which largely determine it, age and experience.

Since the value of the worker is dependent on "common sense," as the dressmakers phrase it, and on the manual skill accompanying maturity, the wage is to a certain extent determined by age. The young worker under 18 has a very small place in the trade, constituting but 8.5 per cent of the 600 custom workers studied from pay rolls. Table 49 shows the weekly wages of 95 workers under 18. Approximately, two-thirds of the 14 to 16 year old girls earned less than \$5 as compared with one-fourth of those from 16 to 18 years; 45.6 per cent of those 16 to 18 years old earned less than \$6 as compared with about the same proportion, 40.7 per cent, of the 14 to 16 year group who earned less than \$4. Practically the same proportion earned less than \$8 and none earned \$9.

TABLE 49.—CLASSIFIED WEEKLY WAGES OF WORKERS, BY TWO CLASSIFIED AGE GROUPS.

[Based on pay rolls and personal interviews.]

Classified weekly wages.	Workers 14 and under 16 years.		Workers 16 and under 18 years.	
	Number.	Cumulative per cent.	Number.	Cumulative per cent.
Under \$2.....	1	3.7	1	1.5
Under \$3.....	4	14.8	4	5.9
Under \$4.....	11	40.7	9	13.2
Under \$5.....	17	63.0	19	27.9
Under \$6.....	19	70.4	31	45.6
Under \$7.....	25	92.6	56	83.8
Under \$8.....	26	96.3	65	95.6
Under \$9.....	27	100.0	68	100.0



Two of the 200 workers personally interviewed were under 16, one earning \$5 and one \$6 a week as finishers. The one receiving \$5 had attended the Boston Trade School and the one receiving \$6 had gained experience sewing at home for younger brothers and sisters and at public night school, so both had been able to enter the shop as sewers, which is unusual for girls of this age.

While it was impossible to secure the ages of all the older workers studied on pay rolls, the women of 16 to 20 years constituted 31.5 per cent of the 200 personally visited, and 93.7 per cent of these earned less than \$9. Almost one-half (49.5 per cent) of the 200 workers visited were under 22 years of age and just two-thirds (66.7 per cent) of this group earned less than \$8, while but 9.9 per cent of the women 22 or more years of age earned less than this minimum. To what extent the large proportion in the low-wage group may be explained by youth and immaturity it is impossible to say, because of lack of official statistics. Observation in Boston, Glasgow, and Paris, however, confirms the belief that a large proportion of the regular working force in the shops is made up of comparatively young women.

Up to 35 years the workers show in general a tendency to advancement in wage. The age of 35 represents the climax of opportunity in the trade. Those who have the capacity for leadership have been discovered and brought to the front. Those who have not reached success before this will probably not advance much beyond the position they then hold.

TABLE 50.—AGE GROUPS OF WORKERS, BY CLASSIFIED WEEKLY WAGES.

[Based on personal interviews.]

Age group.	Number of workers earning—												Oth- ers. <sup>1</sup>	To- tal.			
	Under \$5	\$5 and un- der \$6	\$6 and un- der \$7	\$7 and un- der \$8	\$8 and un- der \$9	\$9 and un- der \$10	\$10 and un- der \$12	\$12 and un- der \$15	\$15 and un- der \$18	\$18 and un- der \$20	\$20 and un- der \$25	\$25 and over.					
Under 16 years.....		1	1														2
16 and under 18 years.....	2	6	9	4	2												23
18 and under 20 years.....	4	1	20	5	6		1	1									40
20 and under 22 years.....			6	7	6	7	3	3	1								34
22 and under 25 years.....		1	1	4	4	1	6	2	1								21
25 and under 30 years.....				1	2	3	6	5	2								23
30 and under 35 years.....				1	1	2	1	2	3	3	1	1	4				20
35 and under 40 years.....						5		3	5	1		1					20
40 and under 45 years.....				1		3		2	3								12
45 and under 50 years.....				1					1		1						3
50 years and over.....						1											2
Total.....	6	9	37	24	21	22	17	19	15	5	2	6	17				200

<sup>1</sup> Independents, pieceworkers, and drifters.

The wage groups, therefore, have a fairly definite personnel. The less than \$7 group is distinctly the zone of the young worker who is under the age of 20. The \$7 and less than \$10 group includes workers of all ages from the young girl under 18 to the woman over 50, because it represents only mediocre manual skill. The \$10 and less than \$15 group and the \$15 and under \$18 group show workers of a higher degree of artistic and creative ability, excluding the very young and including some women in the forties who have reached this stage earlier in their career but never advanced beyond it. The \$18 and over wage group contains the artists, administrators, and creators, and consists for the most part of women of 25 to 40, excluding both young and old. Two classes at the extremes—those earning less than \$5 and those earning over \$18—are clear-cut types, the former comprising the young learner and the latter the expert; the \$7 to \$10 group at the center is a motley collection of all ages, the workers here possessing but mediocre skill.

The length of experience as well as age determines the value and earning capacity of the worker, since the dressmaking trade requires training of the eye and hand and development of skill and taste. The wage increases with experience up to 15 years in the trade, after which the relation becomes decreasingly apparent. Ten years or more seems to be necessary to place the worker within the professional group earning \$15 or more, but in five years she should be earning a living wage of \$9 or more.

TABLE 51.—RELATION OF EXPERIENCE TO WEEKLY WAGES.

[Based on personal interviews.]

Years of experience.	Number of workers earning weekly—															Oth- ers.	Tot- al.	
	Under \$4	\$4 and under \$5	\$5 and under \$6	\$6 and under \$7	\$7 and under \$8	\$8 and under \$9	\$9 and under \$10	\$10 and under \$12	\$12 and under \$15	\$15 and under \$18	\$18 and under \$20	\$20 and under \$25	\$25 and over.					
Under 1 year.....	1	3	3	8	2													17
1 and under 2 years.....		2	5	14	2	4	2		1								1	31
2 and under 3 years.....			1	10	8	3		2										24
3 and under 4 years.....				3	4	5	5	1	2								3	23
4 and under 5 years.....				2	2	2	1	4										11
5 and under 6 years.....					3	2	4		2									11
6 and under 7 years.....						3	1	2	1									7
7 and under 8 years.....						1	1	1	1	2								6
8 and under 9 years.....							1	2	1	1							1	6
9 and under 10 years.....								1	1	3								5
10 and under 15 years.....					1		2	3	3	3	1	2	1	2				18
15 and under 20 years.....					1		2		3	4	2		5	4			4	21
20 years and over.....					1		1	1	2	4	2			6			6	17
Unclassified.....						1	1					1						3
Total.....	1	5	9	37	24	21	22	17	19	15	5	2	6	17			200	



The wage group of less than \$7, therefore, is primarily the zone of the young worker under 20 years of age and with less than 5 years' experience. The \$7 and less than \$10 group includes not only young and old but women with a working experience ranging from 1 year or less to 20 years and more. The experts earning \$18 or more are, in the main, women 25 to 40 years of age with a working experience of 10 but less than 20 years.

But the weekly wage by no means gives a true insight into the actual weekly earnings, for days lost cause a surprising reduction of the nominal weekly wage. Holidays, of which there are nine in Massachusetts, and occasional days lost for illness or personal reasons reduce the earnings, for the workers are paid for actual service only. Deduction for tardiness is made in two custom shops where time clocks have been installed, but this is unusual.<sup>1</sup>

The irregularity of work and consequent variation between the nominal wage and actual earnings differ with different workers and different shops. The following table shows the extent to which the workers in one shop are affected by such irregularity:

TABLE 52.—OCCUPATION, WAGE, AND PROPORTION OF FULL WEEKS OF SIX DAYS EACH FOR ALL WORKERS EMPLOYED 39 OR MORE WEEKS IN SHOP "A" DURING WORKING SEASON.

[Based on pay roll.]

Occupation.	Nominal weekly wage.	Total number weeks worked.	Number full weeks of 6 days each.	Number part weeks of less than 6 days.
Head skirt draper.	\$18	50	11	39
Waist draper.....	9	50	30	20
Head tailor.....	30	49	41	8
Clerical.....	8	48	15	33
Head fitter.....	30	46	37	9
Fitter.....	18	44	30	14
Fitter and cutter..	25	43	34	9
Shopper.....	12	43	29	14
Embroiderer.....	10	43	28	15
Sleeve draper.....	14	42	22	20
Waist draper.....	16	41	25	16
Tailor.....	21	40	22	18
Waist finisher.....	5	39	7	32

The head skirt draper on \$18 a week had only 11 full weeks of 6 days each and consequently received her nominal wage of \$18 for only this number out of a working season of 50 weeks. The waist finisher on \$5 a week received that sum for but 7 out of the 39 weeks in the shop. The head tailor and head fitter on \$30 a week do not suffer deduction, however, for occasional days lost, since those earning more than \$25 are usually on a professional basis. In general, the well-paid workers seem to lose less time from short absences; this may be partially due to their sense of responsibility as well as to better conditions. Employers frequently complain of the irresponsibility of many workers who stay out for all sorts of reasons, greatly handicapping those in the shop. Whatever is the cause, 100 people working 40 to 45

<sup>1</sup>The various causes of reduction of the income of workers in other industries are discussed in The Living Wage of Women Workers, by M. Louise Bosworth, pp. 33-39.

weeks had a median number of only 30 full weeks of 6 days and consequently only 30 full weeks' pay.

TABLE 53.—PROPORTION OF WEEKS NOT BROKEN BY SHORT ABSENCES, IN A 50-WEEK PERIOD, FOR 600 CUSTOM WORKERS.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Weeks worked.	Number of persons working specified weeks.	Median number full weeks of 6 days worked.
50 weeks.....	2	20
45 and under 50 weeks.....	29	37
40 and under 45 weeks.....	100	30
35 and under 40 weeks.....	53	23
30 and under 35 weeks.....	35	22
25 and under 30 weeks.....	32	15
20 and under 25 weeks.....	17	13
15 and under 20 weeks.....	39	10
10 and under 15 weeks.....	55	7
5 and under 10 weeks.....	85	3
1 and under 4 weeks.....	151	.....
Unclassified.....	2	.....
Total.....	600	.....

The number of full weeks with full pay ranges from one-half to three-fourths of the number of weeks worked by 600 custom workers.

The actual earnings of the workers are, therefore, much lower than the nominal weekly wage. Taking the more stable group employed 25 or more weeks in a single shop as a basis, the following table shows the relation between the nominal and the actual wages:

TABLE 54.—NOMINAL AND ACTUAL AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES OF 250 CUSTOM AND 139 FACTORY WORKERS EMPLOYED 25 OR MORE WEEKS IN ONE SHOP.<sup>1</sup>

[Based on pay rolls.]

Classified weekly wages.	Workers in custom shops.				Workers in factories.			
	Nominal wages.		Actual average wages. <sup>2</sup>		Nominal wages.		Actual average wages. <sup>2</sup>	
	Number.	Per cent.	Number.	Per cent.	Number.	Per cent.	Number.	Per cent.
Under \$5.....	14	5.6	28	11.2	5	3.6	10	7.2
Under \$6.....	21	8.4	44	17.6	7	5.0	19	13.7
Under \$7.....	39	15.6	69	27.6	14	10.1	36	25.9
Under \$8.....	60	24.0	115	46.0	20	14.4	70	50.4
Under \$9.....	101	40.4	139	55.6	42	30.2	99	71.2
Under \$10.....	127	50.8	169	67.6	70	50.4	112	80.6
\$9 and over.....	149	59.6	111	44.4	97	69.8	40	28.8
\$10 and over.....	123	49.2	81	32.4	69	49.6	25	17.9
\$12 and over.....	74	29.6	47	18.8	31	22.3	13	9.4
\$15 and over.....	34	13.6	21	9.6	13	9.4	7	5.0
\$18 and over.....	21	8.4	15	6.0	8	5.8	2	1.4

<sup>1</sup> The 250 custom workers include 9 men, none receiving less than \$9, and 5 children under 16, four of whom earned less than \$5, and the 139 factory workers include 8 men, none earning less than \$12.

<sup>2</sup> Actual average weekly wages are based on total income of those working 25 weeks or more divided by the number of weeks worked.

Among the custom workers 40.4 per cent nominally received less than \$9, but actually the average weekly earnings of 55.6 per cent fell below \$9. Almost one-half (49.2 per cent) received a nominal wage of \$10 or more, though but 32.4 per cent actually earned this



amount. The loss is much heavier, however, in the factory group. Of the 139 employed 25 or more weeks in one shop, 30.2 received a nominal wage of less than \$9, while the actual average earnings of 71.2 per cent fell below this minimum; 49.6 per cent received a nominal wage of \$10 or more, but the actual average weekly earnings of only 17.9 per cent reached or passed \$10.

The cumulative loss of earnings due to short absences of less than one week for 250 custom workers and 139 factory workers employed 25 weeks or more in a single shop was considerable.

TABLE 55.—PERCENTAGE OF REDUCTION OF NOMINAL INCOME CAUSED BY SHORT ABSENCES FOR 250 CUSTOM AND 139 FACTORY WORKERS EMPLOYED 25 OR MORE WEEKS IN A SPECIFIED SHOP, BY TYPES OF DRESSMAKING.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Types of dressmaking.	Percentage of loss.			
	Median.	Upper quartile.	Lower quartile.	Average.
Custom dressmaking.....	8.7	13.2	6.3	10.5
Factory dressmaking.....	13.6	17.1	10.7	14.0

The median loss for custom workers was 8.7 per cent and for factory workers 13.6 per cent; the average loss 10.5 per cent for custom and 14 per cent for factory workers. For 56 per cent of these custom workers, the reduction of nominal income amounted to less than 10 per cent, and for 59 per cent of the factory workers to less than 15 per cent. Therefore, if we desire to estimate the actual earnings of the workers and have not access to pay rolls, the nominal income of custom workers may be reduced about 10 per cent and of factory workers 14 per cent for short absences alone.

While the percentage of loss varies with different types of shops, it also varies with different types of workers. In custom dressmaking the percentage of loss from short absences decreases with increasing wage, ranging from 11.8 per cent for the workers earning less than \$5 to 6.3 per cent for the women earning \$15 and over, and in factory dressmaking from 14.4 per cent for the workers earning \$5 and under \$10 to 7.4 per cent for those earning \$15 or more.

TABLE 56.—PERCENTAGE OF REDUCTION OF NOMINAL INCOME CAUSED BY SHORT ABSENCES FOR 250 CUSTOM AND 139 FACTORY WORKERS EMPLOYED 25 OR MORE WEEKS IN A SPECIFIED SHOP, BY WAGE GROUPS.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Classified weekly wages.	Custom shops.			Manufacturing shops.		
	Median.	Lower quartile.	Upper quartile.	Median.	Lower quartile.	Upper quartile.
Under \$5.....	11.8	7.3	23.5	13.7	12.6	14.4
\$5 and under \$10.....	10.1	6.7	14.0	14.4	11.9	18.4
\$10 and under \$15.....	8.5	6.6	12.4	12.8	10.7	17.1
\$15 and over.....	6.3	3.1	10.4	7.4	3.0	10.4
Total.....	8.7	6.3	13.2	13.6	10.7	17.1

Two factors, therefore, deduction for short absences and loss from slack season, modify the actual earnings of the worker. The former can not possibly be determined from any source but the pay-roll records, since the workers can not remember. The latter can not be accurately determined from this source, since the worker often fills in her time in several shops.

The annual income for employees from the shop therefore can not be computed without danger of misleading returns, but the total earnings for workers employed 40 weeks or more in a single shop are presented as suggestive. Two of the 14 custom shops had a shorter trade year than 40 weeks, and all their workers must be excluded from the following table showing the classification by total income. Only 22.9 per cent (125) of the 545 women 16 years and over in custom dressmaking, and 14.2 per cent (71) of the 500 women in factory dressmaking, therefore, are considered from this standpoint of annual income.

TABLE 57.—ACTUAL INCOME OF 125 WOMEN 16 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER IN 12 CUSTOM SHOPS AND 71 IN 2 MANUFACTURING SHOPS WORKING 40 WEEKS AND OVER.

[Based on pay rolls.]

Classified annual earnings.	Workers in custom shops.		Workers in manufacturing shops.	
	Number.	Per cent.	Number.	Per cent.
Under \$200.....	6	4.8	4	5.6
Under \$250.....	13	10.4	6	8.5
Under \$300.....	28	22.4	12	16.9
Under \$350.....	52	41.6	21	29.6
Under \$400.....	68	54.4	35	49.3
Under \$450.....	82	65.6	51	71.8
Under \$500.....	96	76.8	58	81.7
\$500 and over.....	29	23.2	13	18.3
\$550 and over.....	21	16.8	8	11.3
\$600 and over.....	14	11.2	5	7.0
\$650 and over.....	11	8.8		
\$700 and over.....	9	7.2		
\$750 and over.....			4	5.6
\$800 and over.....	7	5.6		
\$850 and over.....			1	1.4
\$900 and over.....				
\$950 and over.....	5	4.0		
\$1,000 and over.....	4	3.5		

It must be borne in mind that these are the favored group whose earnings are necessarily higher than the earnings of those who must drift from shop to shop to piece out their income for the year. If \$450 is accepted as the minimum annual income on which a woman can live, 65.6 per cent of the custom workers and 71.8 per cent of the factory workers were not earning a living wage. If \$400 is accepted as a possible minimum, 54.4 per cent of the custom workers and 49.3 per cent of the factory workers are not self-supporting. Three-fourths of the custom and four-fifths of the factory dressmakers studied in Boston earned less than \$500. The average total income of the women working 40 weeks or more in a single custom dressmaking shop was \$439.82, and for the workers in factory dressmaking \$405.23.



The Massachusetts Minimum Wage Commission reports show that the wage scale of other large women-employing industries is still lower; 83.4 per cent of the "regulars" employed in stores earned less than \$450; 88.9 per cent in paper-box factories, 91.5 per cent in hosiery and knit goods, and 93.5 per cent in laundries earned an annual income of less than \$450.<sup>1</sup>

The regular or stable workers in the dressmaking shop seem to have a fairly definite season and income on which they can depend from year to year. The following table shows the working season of 22 workers employed 40 weeks or more for two consecutive years in shop B:

TABLE 58.—ANNUAL INCOME OF 22 WOMEN, 16 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER, EMPLOYED 40 OR MORE WEEKS IN 2 CONSECUTIVE YEARS IN SHOP "B."

[Based on pay rolls.]

Case No.	1909-10		1910-11		Increase or decrease in income.	Increase or decrease in weeks worked.
	Income for year.	Weeks worked.	Income for year.	Weeks worked.		
1	\$1,241.33	45	\$1,308.67	46	+\$67.34	+1
2	830.33	43	958.34	43	+128.01	-----
3	624.66	43	630.88	44	+ 6.22	+1
4	623.00	45	665.00	46	+ 42.00	+1
5	622.65	44	644.81	43	+ 22.16	-1
6	613.73	44	563.25	40	- 50.48	-4
7	587.12	44	634.16	44	+ 47.04	-----
8	567.26	43	546.62	41	- 20.64	-2
9	481.37	43	571.44	44	+ 90.07	+1
10	470.00	42	487.56	43	+ 17.56	+1
11	437.86	42	432.13	41	- 5.73	-1
12	418.43	42	448.03	43	+ 29.60	+1
13	414.20	43	450.69	44	+ 36.49	+1
14	410.42	42	463.26	41	+ 52.84	-1
15	405.27	43	479.17	46	+ 73.90	+3
16	344.97	43	392.06	43	+ 47.09	-----
17	316.56	41	327.76	40	+ 11.20	-1
18	287.20	45	299.60	43	+ 12.40	-2
19	273.67	42	332.60	42	+ 53.93	-----
20	273.76	45	342.28	45	+ 68.52	-----
21	253.23	42	299.33	41	+ 46.10	-1
22	211.18	43	288.90	45	+ 77.72	+2

It appears that the number of weeks worked varied very little, though all but two of the workers showed a higher income in 1910-11 than in 1909-10 because of increase in salary.

The loss of wage for holidays and occasional days off usually can not be made up by the employee, except by sewing for friends, but the loss from time laid off is met by some through secondary employments.

Almost one-fourth, 43 of the 200 workers visited, found other employment during the dull season. The wage, season, and age determine not only whether the worker resorts to a secondary employment but also the kind she takes up.

Only one of the six workers earning \$1 to \$5 per week found other work, because they were young and immature and because their par-

<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts, Reports of the Minimum Wage Commission, 1914 and 1915.

ents were unwilling for them to leave the paternal roof for work outside the city. On the other hand, not one receiving more than \$15 was found seeking other work. Such a woman is usually able to take the much-needed rest. The pay-roll record of the workers in the two extreme wage groups, those receiving under \$5 and those receiving \$15 or over, may, therefore, be generally regarded as the actual income of these workers. None of the girls under 17 sought other work because they were not yet dependent on their earnings, but gave their services to the family during the vacations. One-half of those resorting to secondary employment earned from \$6 to \$8, were from 17 to 22 years of age, and had a working season of 8 or 9 months. The following table shows the occupations to which the 43 workers mentioned resorted during the dull season in their regular trade:

TABLE 59.—SECONDARY EMPLOYMENTS REPORTED BY 43 WORKERS.

[Based on personal interviews.]

Secondary employments.	Number of workers.
Bookkeeper.....	1
Booth tender.....	1
Child's nurse.....	4
Clerk.....	1
Embroiderer.....	1
Manicuring.....	1
Machine operator.....	1
Sewing.....	24
Straw machine operator.....	1
Waitress.....	6
Odd jobs.....	2

It will be noticed that three occupations, sewing by the day or at home for friends, serving as waitress, and acting as child's nurse, are the most common. Age and maturity determine to a certain extent the kind of secondary employment the girl takes up. Acting as child's nurse is a young girl's employment, none over 19 resorting to it. Waitress work is the resort of the stronger and more mature woman, none under 25 reporting this for secondary employment. The older woman over 30 who has not sufficient skill to secure sewing from friends or neighbors must resort to "odd jobs." But the girl who sews has a trade which she can always utilize at spare moments,<sup>1</sup> and there are few girls who do not have acquaintances, friends, or relatives who are wanting clothes made at the first spare moment. "Oh, I don't mind being laid off," said a skirt girl earning \$11 a week, "I always have friends and relatives waiting for me to make up their clothes. Sometimes I make as much as \$25 a week sewing in vacation." A girl of 18 who had been in the trade only one and one-quarter years

<sup>1</sup> Great Britain, Royal Commission on Labor. Conditions of Work in Liverpool and Manchester (1906), by Clara E. Collet. Miss Collet discovered in Liverpool and Manchester that "Many girls took in work from neighbors to do at home in the evenings and slack time." "Some of these season hands would do dressmaking on their own account when the season was over."



"gets in some sewing from neighbors, but is not enough advanced to undertake much." A young girl of 20 who has been in the trade three and one-half years works by the day among the neighbors about three months in summer and one week in winter, receiving \$2 a day, and helps with the family sewing when she has time. A woman of 38, who is head skirt girl on a weekly wage of \$15, has worked at the summer home of two of her employer's customers for the last eight years and received \$10 a week and board. She makes up fancy house dresses and evening gowns. "A girl who can sew can get all the work she can do at home and by going out by the day. All the girls in our shop (force of 15 to 20) can hardly wait until vacation."

New England, with its many summer resorts, offers numerous opportunities for girls who wish a secondary occupation in the summer. Six of the girls visited went to summer hotels as waitresses in the summer months, when their shop was closed. "I have gone to summer hotels as a waitress for about 20 years," said a head waist girl on a \$15 weekly wage. "We get \$15 a month with room and board and our tips amount to from \$40 to \$60 for the season." Another woman went to a summer hotel every summer where she received \$3 a week, but "made \$100 a season by tips." A woman of 30 had been "waiting on table at Magnolia for the last four years. We receive \$3.50 a week and \$2 more a week for tips. I'm sorry I didn't do it sooner. I get a rest and a vacation from sewing. I'm saving money, and am at no expense. Usually the girls don't receive their money until the end of the season; then they have quite a little sum toward a bank account. At the hotels where I go there are a great many nice girls—teachers and sewing girls." Employers sometimes complain that their girls leave them before the spring season is over to go to the summer resorts and that they get back late in the fall. Other employers are glad to make arrangements to allow the employee a change of work.

The summer dull season is not a source of dread to all workers, as is the popular supposition, but has a varied significance for the workers in the dressmaking trade. For the highly paid worker it means vacation and rest. For the energetic and athletic and outdoors-loving girl it means change of occupation in employment at summer hotels and resorts. For the resourceful girl who knows or wishes no other trade it means sewing by the day among acquaintances and relatives. For the inefficient, without the power of adjustment, it means "out of work."

It is just this type of worker who is unable to make adjustments when occasion demands. A finisher of 35 years or more earning \$9 a week supported her aunt, her niece, and herself. She had very short

seasons, and at the time of the visit was out of work. "Why don't you try to find some other kind of work during the dull season in your trade?" "Oh, I should never dare go out and try something I knew nothing about," she said. "Did you ever try going out by the day?" asked the investigator. "No; I never tried it," she said. "But I think I should like it." For 20 years she had been struggling along from shop to shop as a finisher, yet had never dared "try something else" nor tried to fill in by sewing by the day.

The dressmaking trade, therefore, with certain advantages, presents some big problems for solution. Still primarily woman's sphere, the competition of men does not complicate the situation. While the wage may seem low, few other industries show as high a wage scale, and the opportunity for advancement and corresponding income is unique in custom dressmaking. Nevertheless, more than one-half in custom and two-thirds in factory dressmaking are industrial workers, with varying degrees of manual skill, earning from \$5 to \$10. The professional workers, who combine skill with artistic and administrative ability, representing one-third of the custom and one-fifth of the factory workers, are found in the \$10 to \$15 wage group, though experts and heads range from \$18 to \$50 a week. Viewing the wage with regard to two important factors, age and experience, those earning less than \$5 are found to be young workers with short experience and those earning \$18 and over young women between 25 and 30 years of age with a working experience of more than 10 and less than 20 years. The large group earning \$7 to \$10 comprises an infinite variety of ages and experience, but with one common characteristic—mediocre ability.

But the real earnings of the worker can not be accurately estimated from her nominal weekly wage, for this is decreased by two important factors: short absences and dull season. Short absences of less than a week reduce the income of the custom worker about 10 per cent and that of the factory employee 14 per cent. The loss from slack season is more difficult to estimate, but is probably considerable. Many therefore must resort to subsidiary occupations to supplement their income. The woman who sews is more fortunate than most workers, as she has a trade that can always be utilized, if not for profit, at least for the advantage of herself and her family. Some, however, because of immaturity, lack of skill, or desire for change, resort to quite different occupations.



## CHAPTER VII.

### TEACHING THE TRADE.

How can the young worker learn the trade? This important question is increasingly demanding attention with the contemporary disappearance of opportunity both in the home and in the trade itself. In 1699, Hannah Buckmaster, aged 12 years, with the consent of her mother, was apprenticed for five years to Joseph Latham, shipwright, and Jane, his wife, seamstress and mantomaker, to be taught "to make mantoes, pettycoats, sew and marke plain worke," and in 1700, Mary Moore, aged 11 years, with the consent of her father and mother, was apprenticed to Richard Stoaks, and Margaret, his wife, for four years. Said apprentice was to be taught "to sew plaine worke and reade the English tongue."<sup>1</sup> A century and a half later the apprenticeship system was in the last stages of disintegration, though various vestiges still survived.

In 1863 Virginia Penny wrote that "In New York the conditions on which apprentices are taken vary greatly." First, some employers took on young girls for a period of two years during which they were "to learn the trade thoroughly." Second, some took on young workers for a year and "boarded (them) during that time for their work." Third, some "pay nothing for six months and even receive \$10 or \$15 for instruction." Miss Penny, however, in 1863 made the very modern complaint that "the young girls are kept at making up skirts, sewing up sleeves, and such plain work, and so learn nothing during the time." Fourth, one employer says, "a girl of fair abilities can learn dressmaking in six months." The first three months she did not pay anything, but the last three \$1 a week. After the girls had learned she paid according to their taste, skill, and industry. Finally, some houses provided no systematic or thorough training at all. Young workers "who can sew right well when they commence" begin with a nominal wage of \$1.50 to \$2 a week, "but they are not taught to fit unless the employer is a conscientious woman and there is a special contract."<sup>2</sup>

At the opening of the twentieth century the apprenticeship system has practically disappeared from custom dressmaking in the United States. But a few sporadic instances and the pseudo

<sup>1</sup> New York Historic Society Collections, 1885, pp. 582, 583.

<sup>2</sup> The Employments of Women, by Virginia Penny, pp. 325, 326.

apprenticeship of the errand-girl service remain. The pay roll of one of the large shops showed a young girl working for no wage some six weeks. A Swedish employer in Boston, a small dressmaker in Cambridge, and one in Worcester reported three months' unpaid apprenticeship during which time the girls ran errands and did some simple sewing; \$3 was the usual beginning wage. A young Italian girl of 12 or 13 years in the "North End" of Boston had worked after school until 9 o'clock for a private dressmaker in that neighborhood for a year without pay. Two small employers in Boston reported three months' unpaid apprenticeship with car fare. But generally speaking, unpaid apprenticeship as a means of learning the trade is unusual at present.

Two reasons are given by employers for its disappearance: (1) "we can't get girls to serve as apprentices without pay" and (2) "we don't want them—we haven't time to teach." The great and unsatisfied demand for skilled workers in the trade raises the questions: Why do not girls serve the apprenticeship necessary to acquire a good trade? Why, on the other hand, if employers are so desperate for help, do they not try to train their own workers? The answer to these questions is found in the evolution of the trade itself. Industrial advancement and competition have resulted in transfer of the place of production to industrial quarters and in the development of systematized organization, which means that every member of the force must show an immediate economic profit. Division of labor is carried to a degree which gives little chance for learning the trade as a whole. Moreover, since heads of sections must make their divisions pay, they have little time or inclination to train the unskilled worker. The restriction of custom dressmaking to house gowns of delicate or perishable materials leaves small opportunity for the beginner and there is very little work left in the professional dressmaker's shop that could be turned over to absolutely unskilled hands. The most simple processes, such as binding of seams, must be done neatly and carefully or the delicate silks and chiffons show bad effects. The hooks and eyes must be sewed on by exact measurements. The collars must fit perfectly. The ability to handle these delicate materials without musing, soiling, or stretching them is a part of the beginner's education. What avenue of approach then does the trade itself offer to the young inexperienced worker? Practically the only means of entrance for the young girl who has had no previous training or experience is through "a pseudo apprenticeship," as M. Alfassa dubs it,<sup>1</sup> that is, the errand-girl stage. The errand girl picks up stray bits of information concerning the trade, but this is a slow and haphazard method. The French expression "trottin" and the English word "trotter"

<sup>1</sup> La Crise de l'Apprentissage, par Georges Alfassa, in *Annals des Sciences Politiques*, July, 1905, pp. 421-441.



well express the errand girl's primary occupation. She runs errands down town to match materials or buy thread or findings, and delivers the gowns at the homes of customers. She may or may not be called upon to sweep and dust. She answers the door bell and the telephone and is general utility girl. One naturally asks: When does she have time to learn anything of the trade? She is, of course, securing a general training in her shopping expeditions, and in the small and medium-sized shop there are many spare moments when she has a chance to use her needle. In a large shop, however, where four or five errand girls are sometimes employed, one for each workroom,<sup>1</sup> these girls, like the other workers, are more specialized and have less time or opportunity for sewing. Although they sometimes work up through the stages of the trade, the system offers occasion for exploitation of children. One young girl who entered a shop as errand girl was at the end of five months put on the sewing force, but another worked six years as errand girl at the end of which time her employer "thought she was ready for sewing."

In general, a knowledge of the fundamentals of the trade is essential to secure entrance as worker in the shop of to-day. The newspapers are full of advertisements like "Dressmaker apprentices paid, must be good sewers"; "Girl wanted to learn dressmaking, paid while learning, a little experience preferred."<sup>2</sup> The busy dressmaker is rare who will stop to teach the young girl such simple yet essential principles as how to hold a needle, to wear a thimble, to hold the materials so they will not be mussed or soiled, and to develop accuracy of measurement and ability to take neat but rapid stitches. The girl formerly acquired these fundamentals to a certain extent in her own home, but neither home nor shop now gives systematic training along these lines.

"The question that these investigations raise," wrote Mrs. Oakeshott, inspector of women's technical classes in London in 1908, "is whether it [apprenticeship] is worth reviving in any form or whether as a system workroom training is effete and must be replaced."<sup>3</sup> Training in the workroom if properly conducted undoubtedly offers certain advantages. In a small shop where only a few girls are employed the young worker has the advantage of a general training on all parts of the gown under the direct supervision of her employer. She sees the relation of the different parts to the whole. She has the opportunity for adaptation to the discipline of shop hours, learns the necessity for strict application, acquires the art of working with others, and has a chance to develop initiative. In other words, an appreciation of business methods, a realization of the necessity of prompt and efficient service, and a sense of values is cultivated.

<sup>1</sup> One large shop advertised for 25 errand girls. Boston Globe, Sept. 16, 1911.

<sup>2</sup> Boston Globe, Oct. 9, 16, 23, 27, 1910, etc.

<sup>3</sup> London County Council, Women's Trades (London, 1908), p. 5.

Only the small shop, however, can provide general training for the inexperienced young girl of to-day; it has been in a sense a training school for many workers in the trade, but census statistics seem to show its disappearance and elimination. Moreover, the small shop, during the last decade, has become very limited in its field, since much of its work now consists largely of alterations and of making a medium-grade product. Thus the young worker's experience is necessarily restricted, she acquires little or none of the science of the trade, and has a very limited opportunity for advancement. Large employers frankly admit the small opportunity for inexperienced workers. The head dressmaker in a large fashionable establishment favored shop training but acknowledged that in her own workroom the girl can be given little attention. "We put her into the workroom and just let her pick up as best she can, but it is a more practical training." "She becomes a helper under one of the more advanced girls," said another. The industry no longer teaches its workers the trade as a whole but allows them to acquire such knowledge as they may be able to "pick up" during their working experience in the shop. The exceptional girl will profit by her opportunity and surmount all difficulties, but the great majority will not.

What can be done to help this great majority bridge the gap? Where can the girl get the fundamentals which will enable her to take advantage of her opportunities to "pick up" in the shop? A cursory glance would seem to show that there are many agencies through which she might secure the fundamentals: the public day school, the night schools, the high school of practical arts, the Young Women's Christian Association classes, the various endowed institutions, both public and private, where sewing classes are held, the private dressmaking schools, and lastly, the new and recent development of the last decade, the trade schools for girls. With the exception of the last method, the purpose and results of all of these efforts may be hastily described.

The aim of the sewing classes of the public day schools has been cultural rather than industrial; to give the girl a certain amount of manual training which has a definite relation to her domestic life, not to equip her to earn her living in that particular trade, any more than the corresponding manual training of the boy is to fit him to become a carpenter. The manual training in the school usually consists in simple sewing for two hours once or twice a week in the upper grades. The young eighth-grade girl who spent a year making a kitchen apron had acquired a knowledge of many processes, such as cutting, basting, hemming, and buttonholing, but she was by no means equipped to maintain a place in a dressmaking shop. She must have more systematic and intensive training to induct her into the trade.



The municipal public school system also provides evening classes which include dressmaking in the curriculum, but these are not industrial training classes nor do they attempt to train for the trade. Their aim is social as well as educational, namely, to make the pupil a more efficient producer and consumer in the home. These classes perform a valuable service if rightly conducted, but they should not be mistaken for industrial training classes. Neither do their pupils increase competition in the trade, as might be supposed, for the majority are heads of families or women with other occupations who are trying to maintain a respectable wardrobe on a scanty income. The teachers questioned knew of none who had gone into the trade, and but two of the 200 workers visited had had any training in the evening schools. Classes in dressmaking in the Young Women's Christian Association, churches, and various endowed institutions of the city all exist for the same purpose—helping the girl or woman to make her own clothes or those of her family.

The high school of practical arts provides a four years' training, but dressmaking classes in such a school turn out few industrial workers for the trade. The economic status of pupils in this school which enables them to devote four years to secondary education enables them to prepare themselves for something better. The four-year course excludes the industrial worker, providing leaders and teachers of the trade and equipping the girl for something above the industrial level.

Private dressmaking schools, though not numerous, range from the small private dressmaker who advertises "Dress cutting taught by practical dressmaker for \$5; situation furnished,"<sup>1</sup> to the large school in the center of the business district advertising "100 women and girls wanted at once to learn dressmaking and millinery by the famous system."<sup>2</sup> In spite of the promises held forth by some of these schools, very few workers were found who had been trained in them. One shopworker was attending an evening class for further instruction. Several independent dayworkers had taken a course for which they paid \$25, but maintained it had not fitted them for the shop; that the whole training had been based on a particular system which they found used in no shop. Moreover, the cost of instruction in private schools must shut out large numbers and consequently can not supply the needs of the great mass of workers.

The public school authorities of New York and Massachusetts have made a radical diversion within the last decade in assuming the responsibility of training girls directly for the trade. The pioneer trade school for 14 to 16 year old girls was opened in New York in 1902 by Mrs. Mary Schenck Woolman, who became convinced that the young girls of this age who were leaving the public schools could be

<sup>1</sup> Boston Globe, Oct. 30, 1910.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, Mar. 4, 1910.

equipped with the fundamentals which would secure entrance into the desirable trades. "Three principles may be laid down with regard to the desirability of woman's work," wrote Miss Marshall. "First, the occupation must not deaden the natural powers nor reduce the individual to the position of a mere machine; second, it must develop that kind of efficiency which will be valuable to the woman as a home maker; and third, it must not be detrimental physically or morally."<sup>1</sup>

The needle trades, accepted as fulfilling these requirements, have been introduced in all the trade schools for girls, and have necessitated a new point of view and new methods in education. The trade school for girls must face two facts: "(1) that the primary aim of the classes was to reach girls who were obliged to go to work young, and who could not, therefore, spend much time in training; (2) that the classes were to train for trades, hence that workshop conditions must be studied and adopted."<sup>2</sup> Investigation showed that a knowledge of the fundamentals was essential to secure a stable position in the shop. The school must lift the girl over the stage of general service which is otherwise the only means of entrance for young and inexperienced workers and which proves a "blind alley" for many. The girl must learn such seemingly elementary yet really difficult things as holding a needle properly and easily, handling delicate materials without soiling or musing them, basting, sewing and overcasting a seam without puckering it, sewing on hooks and eyes so they meet, and using some judgment in the distance at which they are placed, for on collars they must be close together and on lingerie blouses farther apart; making buttonholes; turning and hemming the bottoms of coats and skirts; putting braid on skirts; gathering; using the proper sized stitch for different materials and different purposes; tacking girdles to waists, or overdresses to the linings; tucking by hand and machine, and alterations.

All these processes constitute the work of the young general worker, helper, plain sewer or finisher, and are practically the only work open to one of limited experience. These, then, are the processes on which she must be drilled, for her capacity to do these things well determines her ability to maintain her position. But not only must she know how to do these things, but in all she must display three very important requisites—neatness, accuracy, and speed.

But when she has met the technical requisites of the trade, there are still important lessons to be mastered. She must become accustomed to the consecutive work of a nine-hour day, so the trade school, attempting to provide a stage of transition, maintains a

<sup>1</sup> Industrial Training for Women, by Florence M. Marshall, National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education, Bulletin No. 4, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Fifth Annual Report of the Boston Trade School for Girls, December, 1909, p. 12.



working day from 8.30 a. m. to 5 p. m., with one hour at noon. Materials are furnished by the school and garments are made for sale or on order under the guidance and direction of teachers who have worked in the trade, providing as much of the shop conditions as is compatible with training. But the trade school wishes to give not only the necessities, but some outlook into the future. Miss Marshall has estimated that three-fourths of the school time must be devoted to meeting the demands of the trade, and in the other fourth, the learner must be equipped with some of the fundamentals which will insure her success as a future worker. For instance, good health is one of her most valuable assets and she must learn how to sit properly without humping over as is the natural inclination of sewers. She must be taught the necessity of good food and what is proper food. She must learn the value and necessity of cleanliness, of fresh air, and of exercise, which are most essential for a sedentary occupation. One mother when asked: "How has Mary been most benefited by the trade school?" said, "She takes a bath every morning and she walks to work." Moreover, she must be given some of the elementary but fundamental principles of "artistic sense," such as pleasing combination of color and materials, artistic design, planning waists, dresses, trimmings; perhaps also she should have a little experience in the more artistic processes of the trade, such as draping and trimming, as an impetus and glimpse into the future rather than as training for an immediate opening.

The Boston Trade School for Girls, beginning with a curriculum of a few months, has been able to lengthen the course of study to two years, at the end of which time the learner is ready for the trade and has also reached a suitable age for entering it. The test of any vocational school is the recognition given by employers and the success of the students themselves. The remarkable growth of the Boston school during its six years' existence as a private organization, from 15 or so in the summer of 1904 to almost 200 when in 1909 it was taken over under city management, illustrates the attitude of girls and parents toward such a school.<sup>1</sup>

The attitude of the trade is also illustrated by an interesting advertisement appearing in the Boston Globe on October 8, 1910, "Wanted, Sewing girls with Boston Trade School training. Apply to ....." Eighty-four graduates, all who had gone out from the school up to 1910 as accredited and were still employed in the trade, were visited; 34.5 per cent entered the trade with a beginning wage of \$4, 33 per cent at \$5, and 14 per cent at \$6. Three-fourths were less than 18 years old when they began work. The trade-school girl undoubtedly has an immediate financial advantage

<sup>1</sup> The school has continued to grow under public-school management, showing a registration of 594 girls during the school year 1913-14.

over the girls trained through the trade. While four-fifths of the workers visited who had entered as paid apprentices and the same proportion of trade-school girls entered under 18 years of age, none of the former group as compared with almost one-half the latter had a beginning wage exceeding \$4. The trade school now aims to place girls at not less than \$6 a week.<sup>1</sup>

In the shop the young graduate finds herself a member of the great "industrial group" described in the chapter on wages (p. 133), which represents primarily manual skill and constitutes 55 per cent of the great working force.<sup>2</sup> The workroom still has much to teach her. She is capable of good workmanship, but she must adapt herself to the discipline of the nine-hour working day, and to the routine work, the short cuts, and the frequently slipshod methods of the trade. She must realize that economy of time and effort are the watchwords of the trade. She must gain appreciation of business methods, and of the necessity of strict application and efficiency, and acquire the speed demanded in the trade. She must develop initiative and ability to see what is to be done and how to do it in case she has never done it before. Several employers have reported instances of going into the workroom and saying: "I should like some little ornament to give this a finishing touch," or, "Will some one make a bow or knot like this one in the picture?" A young trade-school girl has frequently volunteered to try it and succeeded. All these characteristics the actual shopwork and increasing maturity must develop. The trade school provides the foundation, the impetus, and the broad general outlook. The shop experience and increasing maturity must broaden out her experience and usefulness in the trade.

As she becomes acquainted she is interested and wishes to know how the other workers acquired their trade. Five general methods other than her own are discovered: (1) apprenticeship with tuition for a few of the older or foreign-born women, (2) unpaid apprenticeship, (3) so-called apprenticeship on a small wage involving errands, (4) the errand-girl service solely, and (5) entrance as a regular worker having acquired the fundamentals at home.

About equal proportions entered as paid apprentices on less than \$5, and as paid workers on \$5 or more, these two methods inducting into the trade two-thirds of those without trade-school training.<sup>3</sup> Apprenticeship with tuition plays a very small part as a means of entrance because the system has disappeared, and the errand-girl service is also an unimportant avenue because few advance through this stage to the sewing processes; the majority "don't like it" and

<sup>1</sup> See intensive study in forthcoming bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics on Industrial Efficiency of Girls Trained in Massachusetts Trade Schools.

<sup>2</sup> See Table 47.

<sup>3</sup> Paid apprentices 31 per cent and paid workers 34.5 per cent of 116 workers visited who had not been trained at the trade school.



drop out. A somewhat larger proportion entered through unpaid apprenticeship.

Two present-day illustrations show the character of training and variety of results secured under the old apprenticeship system. An English woman of 44 years was apprenticed about 30 years ago to a private dressmaker in England with a premium of about \$97 paid in advance. In return she received from her employer room and board, the premium money dealt out to her as pocket money in 60-cent bits each week, and thorough training in the making of every part of the dress. At the end of two years she was a full-fledged "bodice-hand," taking the waist from the fitter and finishing it, and after two years as bodice-hand she went to London and secured employment as waist finisher in various firms in London, earning the equivalent of \$4.50 a week. She later came to America, and has been in Boston several years working as finisher in various establishments at a weekly wage ranging from \$6 to \$8. At the age of 44 her opportunities are limited mostly to alterations or machine-made clothing establishments, for she has never advanced beyond the plain-sewer stage. Employment agencies tell her they are not able to furnish her work, as she is too old, and the young women are preferred.

An interesting comparative study of possibilities and capacity to profit by them is seen in the experience of a Swedish woman, who after a year's similar apprenticeship in Sweden, worked a few years in her own country and came to America at the age of 20, unable to speak the English language. In four years she was earning \$18 a week, and in eight years \$25 a week as fitter in one of the largest and most fashionable establishments in Boston. She had then worked up a small clientele of her own and determined to go into business for herself. With a capital of \$350 she opened up a small shop, and by the end of the second season, at the age of 30, was doing an annual business of \$12,000.

Unpaid apprenticeship, in which the employee pays the employer nothing and vice versa, represents the second stage in the apprenticeship system. The period of supposed training is much shorter and much less comprehensive than in the original form, and while the original apprenticeship presumably taught the whole trade, these decadent forms more usually teach a particular process. This is shown by the length of time given to the training. More than one-half of the 20 workers had a three months' period without pay; 15 per cent exceeded this, six months, however, being the maximum, and the same proportion had a shorter period ranging from two to six weeks without pay. The most highly paid worker visited had gained her preliminary training through a six months' unpaid apprenticeship in a large shop. She was apprenticed at the age of 14, and after 17 years of varied experience, both as employee and em-

ployer, she was earning \$50 a week as head dressmaker over 65 employees in a large, fashionable establishment.

So-called apprenticeship on a small weekly wage is the next stage of decadence in the apprenticeship system, which often may mean a combination of general service and sewing. For since the worker is being paid, she is usually expected to earn her wage by numerous duties, such as answering the doorbell or telephone, running errands down town, and perhaps sweeping, for her services in the sewing are, as a whole, of very little value at first unless she has had some training and experience. With increasing development and complication of the trade, however, even this avenue is gradually closing, and the errand-girl stage has become the common, but very limited, opening into the trade for the immature worker. But 12 of the 200 girls visited had advanced through this avenue, and there is a good deal of circumstantial evidence to indicate that, while many enter as errand girls, few advance from this stage to the sewing processes. Twenty per cent of the 200 visited entered the trade as paid workers with a wage of \$5 or more, which indicates acquaintance with the fundamental principles of sewing, presumably acquired in the home; three-fourths of these were 18 years of age or more. The opportunity to acquire this experience at home is, however, decreasing with the predominance of cheap ready-made wear.

TABLE 60.—AGE OF 200 WOMEN AT THE TIME OF ENTERING THE TRADE THROUGH FOUR DIFFERENT METHODS.

Age at entering trade.	Means of entrance.							Total.
	Apprenticeship.			Er-rands.	Paid worker.	Trade school.	Unclas-sified.	
	Tu-tion.	Un-paid.	Paid.					
Under 14 years.....	2	1	1	1				5
14 and under 16 years.....	1	8	13	6	5	19		52
16 and under 18 years.....		4	15	4	5	51		79
18 and under 21 years.....		5	3	1	15	13		37
21 years and over.....			2		9	1		12
Unclassified.....	1	2	2		6		4	15
Total.....	4	20	36	12	40	84	4	200

While the shop pressed by competition can not waste time on a girl who does not adapt herself readily to its needs and demands, the trade school can help and develop many a young girl who later becomes an efficient worker, and by placing her in the shop as a sewer prevents the tremendous waste of the present haphazard methods.

Once established in the trade "it all depends on the girl," employers maintain, but her previous training and the conditions within her particular shop are also determining factors. A young girl of



17 who attended the trade school for a year was placed in one of the largest shops in Boston at a beginning wage of \$6 and in less than a year was in charge of linings at \$8 with four women working under her. Almost one-half those earning \$8 and \$9 had reached the \$8 wage in less than four years and three-fourths in less than six years. The \$9 wage expresses more maturity and experience, the majority having had five or more years' experience, though about one-fourth reached this stage between three and four years. On the other hand old women who have spent all their life in the trade earn \$7 and \$8. However, almost one-half of the 64 women visited who were within the "industrial group," and earning from \$7 to \$9, had reached the \$7 wage in less than three years and two-thirds in less than four years.

TABLE 61.—LENGTH OF TIME REQUIRED TO REACH THE \$7, \$8, AND \$9 WAGE BY 64 WORKERS IN THE INDUSTRIAL GROUP.

Weekly wage.	Number earning specified wage in time specified.							Total.
	Under 1 year.	1 year and under 2	2 years and under 3	3 years and under 4	4 years and under 5	5 years and under 6	6 years and unclassified.	
\$7.....	7	10	12	12	8	2	13	64
\$8.....	6	5	2	6	10	2	10	41
\$9.....				1	5	7	9	22

After working several years the young helper or finisher is very likely to come down to the shop some morning and find her employer in despair, for several waists and gowns must be sent home that day and the head sleeve girl or the waist draper is sick in bed. The young girl volunteers to solve the problem. "I did waist draping in the trade school several weeks" or "I've often watched the waist draper do it" and her employer under necessity dubiously consents. The young girl glowing with enthusiasm and puffed with pride does her very best and, with occasional help when in doubt, has her share of the work completed at the appointed time. The next time the head girl is ill, or if she leaves to be married, or to go to some other shop, the young helper naturally slips into her place. This is a transition stage between the purely industrial work involving manual skill on which the \$5 to \$9 workers are employed, and the highly skilled artistic and administrative occupations of the women earning \$15 and over.

Into this \$10 to \$14 wage group our young protégé has advanced after some years' experience. In this stage are the makers who put together the parts of the waists, skirts, and sleeves, perhaps some cutters in the small shops, the majority of the drapers, some of the high-class finishers, who also combine "making" with finishing, and a few expert machine operators. A trade-school girl who went to

work at the age of 17 with a beginning wage of \$5 had in three years become a waist draper in a large fashionable shop, earning \$10 a week. A young colored girl who attended the trade school seven months began work at the age of 16 on \$4 a week and in four years was earning \$12 as a sleeve draper. Two young sisters who attended the trade school seven and nine months respectively began work at \$4 and at \$6 and in four years were each earning \$11. Two-thirds of the 22 women within this group personally visited had not reached this semiprofessional stage before six years and the majority required a longer period.

It is just about this time, after several years' experience, that the girl begins to aspire to something better. At this stage the majority are about twenty-two or twenty-three years of age. Their parents now begin to expect them to be independent, and they feel they have been in the shop long enough to have some share in the creative work which is so much more interesting and profitable. If now they could have opportunity to study the principles of art and design, planning, cutting, artistic combination of materials, trimmings, and colors, they would appreciate and profit by the training. Their increased maturity and experience would enable them, if properly equipped, to meet a part of the demand for the higher class of workers. The colored girl had never abandoned her outside studying of allied subjects, such as art and design, so she was able when the sleeve draper married to take her place on a wage of \$12 with only four years' shop experience. The artistic and administrative positions paying \$15 and more are for the most part held by comparatively young women ranging from 25 to 40 years of age. After that they usually go out by the day, do business in their own home, or open a shop. A great many women do not rise above the industrial stage in the trade because of lack of artistic and creative ability. Some who have latent ability might with proper stimulus and impetus develop those qualifications requisite for advancement. Systematic and well organized evening classes offering such training in close cooperation with the needs and demands of the trade would undoubtedly lift many over the obstacles encountered in the shop. The capable girl will surmount them, but the timid and less resourceful will often allow them to conquer her.

So a coordination of technical training and of trade experience is essential. The preliminary training and experience acquired in the trade school shorten the period of acquisition in the shop, and, also, inducts into the trade many who could not surmount the initial obstacles in the trade, such as speed requirements and knowledge of the fundamental and elementary processes. In the trade school, however, the training and development of the young worker is paramount. The interests of the pupil and teacher are identical;



namely, as rapid advancement as the young girl is capable of making. When the pupil has acquired sufficient skill in one process, she is advanced to the next. In the shop, just the contrary is true. Commercial profits are paramount, so that the interests of employer and worker may be by no means always the same. It is, therefore, not surprising if, when rushed with work and under obligation to turn out completed gowns without a flaw, the employer keeps her young employees on those processes which they have learned to do well, and the employees' point of view is quite as natural though shortsighted. When they have mastered one process, the weekly wage they earn at it is frequently more attractive than the prospect of a long period of training with remote possibility of large remuneration.

The chief emphasis of a preliminary trade school must be put upon the actual processes open to the young girl. After several years in the shop, she has acquired sufficient maturity and understanding of the trade to be ready for further advancement. Here, again, many who may not be able to advance on their own initiative to higher positions involving artistic ability and greater technical skill, or to go out by the day as general dressmaker could be assisted in bridging the gap through carefully planned and coordinated evening courses in cutting, fitting and draping. Openings and opportunities are continually appearing in the shop for the woman who is able to grasp them. Courses of training in the advanced processes of the trade have a vital interest and a real significance now for she can put into execution the principles acquired in the class room.

The large opportunity for the home dressmaker in Massachusetts would seem to justify such courses, and the difficulty of securing capable workers for even the limited number of openings in the shop involving advanced technical skill and artistic ability shows the need of increased opportunities for acquiring such skill.





## SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK.

The conditions of women's work in the dressmaking trade show some phases where improvement is desirable and possible, but comparison with other women-employing industries shows that it nevertheless has some decided advantages. The development of wholesale manufacture has made serious inroads into the field, but the result has been new adjustments rather than annihilation, for contemporary with the development of the ready-made clothing industry has grown, on the one side, the large custom shop which caters to the numerous class of women demanding exclusive product with individuality and fine handwork. . On the other side are the dayworkers, who go from house to house fulfilling these same demands for those who can not pay the prices charged by the large shops. Dressmaking has occupied the largest place in the curriculum of the Massachusetts trade schools, and for this trade the large majority of pupils have been trained, but directors of vocational education and guidance must recognize several fundamental facts: First—They must know their neighborhood and the demand from the standpoint of numbers employed, numbers required, types of shops, and methods of work in the shops to which they cater. Second—The custom dressmaking trade is not a child-employing industry, only one-third of 1 per cent of the working force being under 16 years of age. Third—Since the field of custom dressmaking has become confined principally to a fine product involving skill and artistic ability, the opportunity for entrance is extremely limited, and we have the anomaly of a trade demanding increasing skill and artistic sense and providing decreasing opportunity for its workers to acquire the requisite qualifications. The labor problem, therefore, is at present one of the great difficulties of the trade, both for the employer, because she can not secure the requisite skilled labor, and for the worker, because she has small opportunity to equip herself to meet the demands of the trade.

Since neither home nor shop provides the girl with the requisite elementary principles of the trade, trade schools for girls have been inaugurated in several cities.<sup>1</sup> The young girl who has been well grounded in the elementary principles is lifted over the gap between the home or the school on the one side and the shop on the other

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<sup>1</sup> Boston, Worcester, Somerville, Cambridge, and other cities.

and enters as a sewer. It is increasingly the large shop into which the young worker must be inducted, since the small and medium-sized shops are being crushed out under the competition of the wholesale factory, the large custom shop, and the dayworker, but the degree of evolution varies in different localities and must be studied as a local problem. Generally speaking, in the future the young worker will be subjected in an increasing degree to the conditions of the large shop, the most important of which is the division of labor. The tendency of the shop is to make her a specialized worker. The majority of workers will, after some years' experience, need some new impetus and some additional help in acquiring training and experience in the more skilled processes which will enable them either to advance to the higher positions in the shop or to go out by the day as general workers. The public-school system is just beginning to work out the method of providing this additional aid for the older girl.

Fourth—There is the problem of the girl who must go to work as soon as the law allows and the unskilled industries with wide-open doors and small demand for ability receive the majority. A few may find their way out and drift into something offering more opportunity for development. But everything is against them. Two or three years in unskilled monotonous work, probably accompanied by drifting from factory to factory, does not afford opportunity nor leave time to secure training for something better. Nor have these workers any way of knowing of anything which is better, what are the demands and conditions of work, or how or where to equip themselves. Both social and educational agencies are necessary to provide the impetus, information, and training for these young people handicapped by economic necessity.

The dressmaking trade provides better working conditions and more opportunities for advancement than are found in most of the other large women-employing industries, for the trade is still primarily monopolized by women, so that the young workers work with women, for women, and do not have to face the competition of men. The social content of the working force is distinctly above the industrial level, including a larger proportion of women of more than ordinary education. Moreover, the work itself has certain advantages. The worker handles pretty, dainty things, gains a knowledge of what constitutes good taste in dress, acquires an ability to make her own clothes, and secures in her trade an accomplishment which can always be put to remunerative uses. The nine-hour working day is in some shops frequently and in some never exceeded. In general, the large fashionable shops whose orders all culminate within a very short period and demand immediate execution are the greatest offenders.

While the wages may not meet the standard to be desired, comparison with other industries shows them in a favorable light. Forty-



nine per cent of the custom and 36 per cent of the factory workers, 16 years of age and over, studied on pay rolls, received \$9 or more; 66.9 per cent of the custom and 52.9 per cent of the factory workers received \$8 or more. Few industries show a larger proportion of women in these wage groups. Moreover, the high wage available to the woman with artistic sense and creative ability makes custom dressmaking unique among the large women-employing industries.

Two factors, however, reduce the nominal income, short absences and seasonal fluctuation. Short absences cause an average loss of 10 per cent of the nominal income of custom workers and 14 per cent of that of women in factory dressmaking. Slack season still further reduces the income. The loss through this cause can not possibly be estimated accurately for the drifters since the only source of information—the individual workers' memory—is too unreliable, but a suggestive estimate can be made for the steady workers with the probability that it is higher than that of the less regular workers. But 23 per cent (125) of the 545 women, 16 years and over, employed in custom shops and 14.2 per cent (71) of the 500 employed in factory dressmaking during the trade year, September, 1910, to September, 1911, worked 40 weeks or more in a single shop. Of the 125 custom workers 65.6 per cent and of the 71 factory workers 71.8 per cent earned less than \$450. The shrinkage of total income from these causes is not peculiar to the dressmaking trade.

If then they can earn a higher income in a shorter period they have opportunity to fill in if necessary with other occupations, or, if not necessary, to rest. Since, however, a large proportion of the steady workers in the dressmaking trade earn less than the estimated living income during their trade year, even less can the drifters and irregular workers, so a large part of those earning from \$7 to \$15 must resort to secondary occupations. While the woman who sews has a trade which she can utilize outside the shop, many, because of immaturity, lack of skill, or desire for change, resort to other occupations to piece out their income.

A survey of the trade yields suggestions to the educator, placement agencies, parent, and prospective worker, to those interested in promoting industrial welfare, and to the customer.

For the educator—

1. An intimate knowledge of and acquaintance with the shops and methods of production, and demand for young workers in the particular neighborhood is essential if the pupil is to be adequately trained to meet the demands. A knowledge of the status and trend of the trade in the locality must underlie all industrial education.

2. A system of preliminary training must be devised for the 14 to 16 year old girl, who may through adequate and practical training be put into the shop as a sewer.

3. A part-time course of training might well be developed for the young 14 to 16 year old girls who must go to work as soon as the law allows, but who, according to the law passed in Massachusetts in 1913, must attend continuation schools as soon as they can be provided, thus providing opportunity for them to lift themselves out of their unskilled employment.

4. A systematic advanced course in the skilled processes of the trade should be provided in technical evening classes that the young worker after several years' experience in the shop may equip herself either for the higher shop positions or for independent work.

For the placement agency also—

1. An intimate knowledge of the particular dressmaking shops of the neighborhood is essential, that the adviser may know the requisite qualifications of the workers as to age, degree of skill, and personal characteristics.

2. Equally essential is a knowledge of the seasons of demand, not only in the different types of dressmaking shops, but in all other industries of the neighborhood, that the worker may be directed into other employment during the dull season of her particular shop.

3. The placement agency can do an important service in advising the parent and prospective young worker of conditions in the trade, difficulties to surmount, time necessary to secure a living wage, and demands and requisite qualifications.

4. The placement agency and vocational educators should be in closest touch, the experience and knowledge acquired by each being contributed for the advantage of the other. Some standard test should be evolved by which the capacity of the prospective worker could be determined, so that the facts of the case may be set clearly before her or her parent, and advice given as to whether or not to continue in the trade. The experience and knowledge acquired by placement agents in their contact with worker and employer should react on the curriculum of the school and the training of the child, enabling the school continually to readjust the curriculum and to direct those unfitted or incompetent for this occupation into something within their reach. Many misfits, much discouragement, and much loss of time and earnings might be avoided. Such an agency for wise direction and good advice is one of the crying needs of the time.

The social worker has a great opportunity for valuable service in cooperation with the school and the placement agency. Intimate acquaintance with the families of a particular neighborhood gives weight to her suggestions for further schooling or specialized training; she can moreover inspire the worker to look forward to something better, and give encouragement to further preparation or improvement. This personal relation between social worker and the family



and child has been utilized to great advantage in the juvenile advisory committees and care committees associated with the juvenile exchanges recently established in England.

The customer has such an important influence in determining the working conditions in a custom trade that the mere knowledge of the far-reaching effects of her thoughtfulness or negligence ought to be sufficient to better conditions. The customer can do much toward steadying and lengthening the working season by forethought and cooperation with the dressmaker. Late orders and demands for completion within unreasonably short time mean overtime work for some of the employees, with its consequent physical strain, a late and lonely walk home after dark, and an excuse for young workers being on the streets at night. Delay and negligence in paying the bills may mean not only great inconvenience to the employer but delay in the pay of her girls, with the resultant evils of indebtedness and disputes, and sometimes loss of pay due.

Custom dressmaking, which best meets the approval of the fastidious woman, provides better working conditions on the whole and better opportunity for the worker than the factory branch of the trade, and in this branch the customer has the greatest opportunity and influence in determining conditions under which the employees work.

From the general public interested in industrial welfare should come the demand for reasonable and comprehensive legislation and its adequate enforcement. One of the first requests should be for simple and unqualified limitation of hours of work. The exemption clause allowing overtime "where the employment is by seasons" makes enforcement of the law impossible and sanctions and legalizes overstrain and pressure in a trade already characterized by these unfortunate conditions.

The dressmaking trade, most prone and liable to overtime because of the absence of a steadying agency between demand and supply, should be especially the care of the inspection force. Since the large shops employ about three-fourths the workers and are the most liable to pressure from their patrons, the problem is not really so difficult as might seem at first glance, though the small shop should not be overlooked on this account.

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## LIST OF BOOKS, RECORDS, AND PERIODICALS DEALING WITH WOMEN IN THE CLOTHING TRADE.

### UNITED STATES.

#### I. Special studies in the clothing trade.

- Eaton, Isabel. Receipts and Expenditures of Certain Wage Earners in the Garment Trades. (Publication of the American Statistical Association, IV, 1894-95, No. 30.) (Low-skilled branches of the clothing trade in New York and Chicago.)
- Henry Phipps Institute Report. Factors Affecting the Health of Garment Makers. (Philadelphia, 1915.)
- Pope, Jesse. The Clothing Industry in New York. (New York, 1905.) (Outside ready-made garments for men, women, and children.)
- Willett, Mabel Hurd. Employment of Women in the Clothing Trade. (Columbia University Studies, 1902.) (Principally men's clothing trade in New York.)

#### II. General studies on women in industry.

- Abbott, Edith. Women in Industry. (New York, 1910.) (Ch. X. Cursory survey of the evolution of the manufacture of ready-made clothing.)
- Adams, T. S., and Sumner, Helen. Labor Problems. (New York, 1907.) (Chs. I and II. Woman and child labor. III. Sweating system.)
- Bosworth, Louise M. The Living Wage of Women Workers. (Publication of the Department of Research. Women's Educational and Industrial Union.) (Boston, 1911.)
- Butler, Elizabeth. Women and the Trades. (New York, 1911.) (Chapters on "Needle trades" deal with men's clothing, gloves, and millinery.)
- Campbell, Helen. Women Wage Earners. (Boston, 1893.)
- Goldmark, Josephine. Fatigue and Efficiency. (New York, 1912.)
- Kelley, Mrs. Florence. Some Ethical Gains through Legislation. (New York, 1905.) (Chs. III and VII. References to conditions in the clothing trade.)
- MacLean, Annie Marion. Wage-earning Women. (New York, 1910.) (Chs. III, IV, and V. References to machine-made-clothing trades.)
- Penny, Virginia. The Employments of Women. A Cyclopedic of Woman's Work. (Boston, 1863.)

#### III. Studies from the vocational standpoint.

- Annual Reports of the Boston and Manhattan Trade Schools for Girls.
- Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy. Finding Employment for Children who Leave the Grade Schools to go to Work. (Chicago, 1911.) (Sections on dressmaking.)
- Girls' Trade Education League bulletins. No. 5. Dressmaking. No. 6. Millinery. No. 11. Clothing, Machine Operating. (Boston, 1911 and 1912.)
- Marshall, Florence M. Industrial Training for Women. Bulletin No. 4 of National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education.
- Richards, Charles R. Industrial training. A report on conditions in New York State in the Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the New York Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1908, Pt. I.

## III. Studies from the vocational standpoint—Concluded.

Talbert, Earnest L. Opportunities in School and Industry for Children of the Stockyards District. (University of Chicago, 1912.)

United States Bureau of Education. A Trade School for Girls: A Preliminary Investigation in a Typical Manufacturing City, Worcester, Mass. Bulletin No. 17, 1913.

United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. Conciliation, Arbitration, and Sanitation in the Dress and Waist Industry of New York City. Bulletin No. 145, 1914.

—— Vocational education survey of Richmond, Va. Bulletin No. 162, 1915.

—— Vocational education survey of Minneapolis, Minn. Bulletin No. 199, 1916.

## IV. Government publications.

## 1. United States Government reports.

United States Census, 1860. Manufactures, lxii. Account of the Clothing Industry. (Historical development.)

United States Census, 1900. Manufactures, Pt. III, pp. 261-302; General discussion, pp. 261-296; Historical and descriptive—Men's clothing, pp. 296-300; Women's clothing, pp. 300-302.

Bureau of Labor Statistics. Wages and Regularity of Employment in the Dress and Waist Industry of New York City. Bulletin No. 146, 1914.

—— Wages and Regularity of Employment in the Cloak, Suit, and Skirt Industry. Bulletin No. 147, 1914.

—— Regularity of Employment in the Women's Ready-to-wear Garment Industry. Bulletin No. 183, 1916.

—— Report on the Condition of Woman and Child Wage Earners in the United States. II. Men's Ready-made Clothing, 1911. IX. History of Women in Industry in the United States, 1910, Ch. III.

United States Public Health Service. The Health of Garment Workers. Bulletin No. 71, 1915.

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## INDEX.

	Page.
<b>A.</b>	
Adrift, and living at home, proportion of workers classified as .....	79
Age:	
At beginning work.....	71
At time of entering the trade.....	156
Wages, classified weekly, and .....	136, 137
<b>B.</b>	
Boston and Worcester:	
Specialization stage, shops of, maximum weekly wages of waist, skirt, and sleeve drapers in ....	40
Specialization stage, shops of, size of working force in .....	38
Boston, Cambridge, Lowell, Somerville, and Worcester:	
Commercialized shops, number and per cent of.....	31
Custom dressmaking, extent of.....	27
Dressmakers, types of.....	28
Dressmaking shops, number and type of, by length of working year.....	92
Private dressmakers, number and per cent of.....	31
Private dressmakers, size of working force.....	32
Specialization stage, shops of, number and per cent of.....	31
Transition stage, shops of, maximum weekly wages of skirt and waist drapers in .....	36
Transition stage, shops of, number and per cent of.....	31
Transition stage, shops of, size of working force.....	35
Boston, custom shops and manufacturing shops in:	
Children, women, and men, number employed.....	128
Children, women, and men, wages of.....	129
Fall and spring seasons, dates of opening and closing .....	100
Midwinter lay off, number of weeks of.....	102
Midwinter slack season, relation to unemployment.....	102
Piecework, classified weekly wages of women on.....	130
Stability of labor force.....	99
Workers employed in, average number.....	87, 89
Business administration in the trade.....	53, 54
<b>C.</b>	
Capital, problem of, in the trade.....	54-64
Casual labor, extent of, in custom and factory dressmaking.....	106
Children, women, and men in:	
Custom shops and manufacturing shops, classified weekly wages paid, Boston.....	129
Custom shops and manufacturing shops, number employed and wages paid, United States.....	23, 127
Custom shops and manufacturing shops, number employed, Boston.....	128
Custom shops dressmaking, average number employed, by months, United States, 1900.....	93
Commercial dressmaker, the .....	42-49
Commercialized shops:	
Boston, Cambridge, Lowell, Somerville, and Worcester, number and per cent of.....	31
Occupations and wages (1 shop).....	44, 45
Wages paid in, by size of force.....	45
Working year, length of.....	91, 92
Competition, problem of, in the trade.....	61-64
Custom shops and manufacturing shops:	
Children, women, and men, number, wages, etc., of, in.....	127-129
Employment in, classified number of weeks of.....	98
Labor force, stability of, for 1 year, Boston.....	99
Large and small shops, wages of women in.....	132
Midwinter lay off, number of weeks of, Boston.....	102
Midwinter slack season, relation to unemployment, Boston .....	102
Occupations and wages.....	67, 134-136
Spring and fall seasons, dates of opening and closing, Boston.....	100
Wages of workers employed 25 or more weeks in 1 shop.....	140
Wages, reduction of, caused by short absences.....	141
Women working 40 weeks and over, classified annual earnings of.....	142
Workers employed in, average number, by months, Boston.....	87
Workers employed in, number of, by weeks, Boston.....	89
Working year of employees in, Boston.....	95
Custom shops:	
Absences, short, proportion of weeks not broken by.....	140
Boston, Cambridge, Lowell, Somerville, and Worcester, number, etc.....	27, 28
Occupations and wages of nucleus force in.....	67
Vacation, summer, proportion of workers who return after.....	105
Wages, classified weekly, by occupation.....	134
Workers employed in, average number of, Boston, 1910, and United States, 1900.....	85
Workers employed in, number of, in different years, by weeks.....	96, 97

## D.

	Page.
Dressmaking, evolution of the trade, United States.....	11-21
Commercialized system.....	11, 13
Custom system.....	11, 13, 20
Family system.....	11, 12
Help or hire system.....	11-13
Manufacturing system.....	11, 17
Ready-made and ready-to-wear garments, development of.....	18, 19
Dressmaking trade of to-day.....	23-52
Commercial dressmaker.....	42-49
Family dressmaker.....	29
Journeyman dressmaker.....	29, 30
Manufacturing dressmaker.....	49-52
Private dressmaker.....	31-33
Specialized workers, dressmaker of the shop of.....	37-42
Transition stage, dressmaker of.....	33-37

## E.

Earnings and wages in Boston.....	127-146
Earnings. ( <i>See also</i> Wages.)	
Employees. ( <i>See</i> Workers in the dressmaking trade.)	
Employments, secondary, reported by workers.....	144
Experience or number of years in the trade, workers classified by.....	110
Experience, relation of, to weekly wages.....	138

## F.

Factory product, women's clothing, development of the trade, United States, 1800-1900 and 1899-1909.....	23, 24
Fall and spring seasons, dates of opening and closing, Boston.....	100
Family dressmaker, the.....	29
Family income, contributions to, extent of by workers living at home.....	78

## I.

Income. ( <i>See</i> Family income; Earnings; Wages.)	
Industrial conditions in the trade.....	53-81
Business administration.....	53, 54
Capital, problem of.....	54-61
Competition, problem of.....	61-64
Labor force.....	64-81
Unions, attitude of workers toward.....	79-81
Irregularity of employment.....	83-111
Weeks of 6 days each, proportion of, worked.....	139
Weeks not broken by short absences, proportion of.....	140

## J.

Journeyman dressmaker, the.....	29, 30
---------------------------------	--------

## L.

Labor force.....	64-81
Labor force, instability of.....	106-111
Lay off, midwinter, number of weeks of, Boston.....	102
List of books, records, and periodicals dealing with women in the clothing trade.....	167-175
Living conditions of 200 workers visited.....	77
Lowell. ( <i>See</i> Boston, Cambridge, Lowell, Somerville and Worcester.)	

## M.

Manufacturing shops and custom shops:	
Children, women, and men, number, wages, etc., of, in.....	127-129
Employment in, classified number of weeks of.....	98
Labor force, stability of, for 1 year, Boston.....	99
Large and small shops, wages of women in.....	132
Midwinter lay off, number of weeks of, Boston.....	102
Midwinter slack season, relation to unemployment, Boston.....	102
Occupation and wages.....	67, 134-136
Spring and fall seasons, dates of opening and closing, Boston.....	100
Wages of workers employed 25 or more weeks in 1 shop.....	140
Wages, reduction of, caused by short absences.....	141
Women working 40 weeks and over, classified annual earnings of.....	142
Workers employed in, average number, by months, Boston.....	87
Workers employed in, number of, by weeks, Boston.....	89
Working year of employees in, Boston.....	95
Manufacturing shops, classified weekly wages and occupations in.....	135, 136
Married women, proportion of, in custom shops and manufacturing shops.....	78

## N.

Nationality, a factor in advancement.....	75
---	----



O.		Page.
Occupations and wages:		
Commercialized shops.....		44, 45
Custom shops.....		67, 134
Manufacturing shops.....		135, 136
Specialization stage, shops of.....		38, 39
Transition stage, shops of.....		34, 35
Workers employed 39 or more weeks in 1 shop.....		139
Occupations. ( <i>See also</i> Secondary employments.)		
Overtime.....		113-126
Causes of, primary.....		114
Hours of, in a large shop, two consecutive years.....		119, 120
Hours of, in a large shop, 1909-10 and 1910-11 (Chart C).....		121
Hours of, in 1 shop, in a week of maximum overtime, 1909.....		118
Pay for, rate of.....		123
P.		
Piecework, wages of women on, Boston.....		130
Positions, methods of securing.....		65
Positions, reasons given for leaving.....		107
Previous employment of women.....		72
Private dressmaker, the.....		31-33
Private dressmakers, shops of, number of, and size of working force, in 5 cities.....		31, 32
Private dressmakers, shops of, length of working year.....		91, 92
R.		
Ready-made and ready-to-wear garments, development of.....		18-20
S.		
Schooling of 200 workers in the dressmaking trade.....		74
Scope of present study.....		8, 9
Season, the workers'.....		93-106
Seasons in the trade.....		83-93
Slack season, midwinter, relation to unemployment, Boston.....		102
Somerville. ( <i>See</i> Boston, Cambridge, Lowell, Somerville, and Worcester.)		
Specialization stage, shops of:		
Boston and Worcester, size of working force in.....		38
Boston, Cambridge, Lowell, Somerville, and Worcester, number in.....		31
Occupations and wages.....		38, 39
Working year in.....		91, 92
Wages of waist, skirt, and sleeve drapers, Boston and Worcester.....		40
Specialized workers, the dressmaker of the shop of.....		37-42
Spring and fall seasons, dates of opening and closing, Boston.....		100
T.		
Teaching the trade.....		147-159
Transition stage, shops of:		
Boston, Cambridge, Lowell, Somerville, and Worcester, number in.....		31
Occupations and wages.....		34, 35
Wages, maximum weekly, of skirt and waist drapers, Boston and smaller cities.....		36
Working force, size of, in 5 cities.....		35
Working year, length of.....		91, 92
Transition stage, the dressmaker of the.....		33-37
U.		
Unions, attitude toward, of women workers.....		79
V.		
Vacation, midsummer, proportion of workers returning in the fall after.....		105
W.		
Wages:		
Actual average and nominal, of workers employed 25 weeks or more in 1 shop.....		140
Annual, of women working 40 weeks and over.....		142, 143
Children, men, and women in custom shops and manufacturing shops.....		127, 129
Class of \$7, \$8, and \$9 per week, time required to reach.....		157
Earnings and, in Boston.....		127-146
Experience, relation of wages to.....		138
Occupations and, in commercialized shops.....		44, 45
Occupations and, in custom shops.....		67, 134
Occupations and, in manufacturing shops.....		135, 136
Occupations and, in shops of specialization stage.....		38-40
Occupations and, in shops of transition stage.....		34-36
Occupations, etc., and, of workers employed 39 or more weeks in 1 shop.....		139
Paid and owed a \$10 draper in a specified shop.....		60, 61
Piecework, of women on, Boston.....		130
Reduction, percentage of, caused by short absences.....		141
Women in large and small shops.....		132
Workers earning less than \$8 per week, proportion of, in large and small shops.....		133

	Page.
Workers in the dressmaking trade:	
Adrift and living at home, proportion of, classified as.....	79
Age, and classified weekly wages.....	136, 137
Age at beginning work.....	71
Age at time of entering the trade.....	156
Custom shops, fluctuation of working force, by months (Charts A and B).....	86, 87
Employment, number of weeks of, custom shops and manufacturing shops.....	98, 100
Experience or number of years in the trade of, and number of shops employed in.....	110
Experience, relation of, to weekly wages.....	138
Factory workers classified, weekly wages of, by occupations.....	135, 136
Family income, contributions to, extent of, by workers living at home.....	78
Lay off, midwinter, number of weeks of, Boston.....	102
Living conditions of 200 visited.....	77
Married women, proportion of, in custom shops and manufacturing shops.....	78
Overtime, hours of.....	118-120
Overtime in a large shop, specified years (Chart C).....	121
Pieceworkers, classified weekly wages of, in 2 manufacturing shops, Boston.....	130
Positions, methods of securing.....	65
Positions, reasons given for leaving.....	107
Previous employment of women in.....	72
Schooling of 200 workers.....	74
Seasons, spring and fall, dates of opening and closing, Boston.....	100
Secondary employments.....	144
Unions, attitude toward.....	79
Vacation, midsummer, proportion of workers returning in the fall after.....	105
Working season, in different years.....	98
Working year, number of weeks in.....	95



## VITA

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The author was born in Macon, Illinois, on August 6, 1880. She graduated from the Decatur (Ill.) High School in 1897, attended the Illinois State Normal School in 1898, and taught in Oak Park from 1899-1903. In the fall of 1903 she entered the University of Illinois, receiving the degree of A. B. in 1906, A. M. in 1907, and holding a graduate fellowship in history during the year 1907-8. During the year 1908-9, she attended Columbia University, holding the Curtis Scholarship in History. In the fall of 1909 she entered the Department of Research of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, Boston, on a fellowship. During 1910-11, she was Assistant Director and during 1911-12 Associate Director of the Department. The year 1912-13 was spent in Europe and the two following years, 1913-1915, as Associate Director in the Department of Research, Women's Educational and Industrial Union, Boston, Mass. During the first year she was also Instructor in Economics at Simmons College. The year 1915-16 was spent in graduate study at Columbia University, completing the requirements in the Department of Social Economy for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. During this year she attended the seminar in Social Economy and Social Legislation under Professors Devine and Lindsay, making an intensive study into the health of women workers. During residence at Columbia she worked under Professors Lindsay, Devine, Seager, Simkovitch, Chad-dock, Osgood, Shepherd, Robinson, Giddings, and Hollingworth.

As a fellow in the Department of Research, the study of *Women in the Dressmaking Trade in Massachusetts* was undertaken in connection with the efforts of Boston educators to better understand and meet the problems of industrial education. During the three years as Associate Director of the Department, four similar investigations were conducted. A preliminary survey of Worcester, Cambridge and Somerville

## VITA

was made for the Massachusetts State Board of Education. The Worcester study was published in 1913 as Bulletin Number 17 of the United States Bureau of Education under the title of *A Trade School for Girls: A Preliminary Investigation in a Typical Manufacturing City, Worcester, Mass.* *The Public Schools and Women in Office Service* was published in 1914 by the Boston School Committee. *The Boot and Shoe Industry in Massachusetts as a Vocation for Women* was published in 1915 by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics as Bulletin Number 180. The final study, *Industrial Efficiency of Girls Trained in Massachusetts Trade Schools* was made for the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics to be published as a Bulletin of the Bureau.











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