

LOOPING SILK STOCKINGS

By VERA BUCH.

Row upon row of workers' houses
Stretch at the foot of the factory.
Company houses, dingy and gray,
Each with a high pointed roof
And a puny red spike of a chimney.
Narrow and gray, like our lives,
From the factory window I see them.

And yonder on the hill, a jewel in the sunlight,
The house of our boss.
Slender columns rising white from the blossoming shrubbery,
Rosy roof all aglow, great glimmering windows.

I look down the long room, like a vast whitewashed jungle,
With its row upon row of machines, all clicking and turning,
Heads of workers bent low, great vistas of columns and drop-lights,
Two hundred and fifty girls I see, young and old, looping silk
stockings,
Even the little hunchback, with her back like a question-mark,
And her face like a poor hunted rabbit's.
... But the daughter of our boss I do not see.

Where is she this spring day, the rich man's daughter?
Is she playing her piano there in the palace-like mansion?
Is she driving her car in the sweet air, breathing the scent of the
blossoms?
Or is she dawdling in Europe, seeing the wonders
We never shall see? ... She is not here, the rich man's daughter.

All day I have sat here, looping silk stockings,
Heel and toe, heel and toe, each mesh precisely
Impaled upon its sharp needle.
Numb is my brain with the tiny monotonous meshes,
Drowsy my thoughts with the tireless thumping machinery.

Yonder the hazy sun gilds the palace-home
With a distant, dream-like splendor.
Was it in a dream I heard that some day
I shall play with the boss' daughter there, and she
Work with me here, some day, looping silk stockings? ?