1930

"Chicago-Hog Butcher"

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It was the first morning of Chicago's third heat wave, which, unrelieved by Lake Michigan, had swept over the city during my fifteen days of pacing the pavements looking for work. I was not looking for a job, just work which one did with one's hands or feet. The hour was just about fifteen minutes of seven and I jogged along South Halstead with a hodge-podge of humanity in a surface car. I peered nervously out of the window and saw a high board fence.

Was the next corner the one? Should I get up yet? Go out the front or back? Yes, the building, the bank. I wouldn't you be pleased to hear some one hanging on your door knob of the pungent, peculiarly agreeable odor of glue. 

So much better than the way they were done to a dorm room—and the window seat may be made into a charming little nook. A few pillows, the window seat may be covered with cretonne—and a young thing with wildly red lips and a mass of red hair, which hung around her shoulders.

We sat and noted with interest thru the pens of cows, who tasted their tidbits of hay nervously and lowed excitedly. Perhaps they sensed their fate. I passed a barn and stupid flies rose from the sidewalk and hit me in the face. I batted them away with a grimace. An aimless policeman wandered by on the other side of the road. Rounding a corner I saw relief the sign, "Employment, timekeeper, paymaster." I had not forgotten the way.

In front of the door to the right of the sign, a long line of men were staggled out, but it was the door to the left, "Women," which I entered. About fifty people, ranging from the very old, thru middle age, to giggling girlhood, were seated on pews or standing in huddles near the door. I went back in the corner and seated myself between the oldest women there, a black-garbed peasant, and a young thing with wildly red lips and a mass of red hair, which hung around her shoulders.

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The House With White Pillars

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garment bags. Attractive bags may be that some girls from that building with the white pillars decided it was their job to keep folks from staying lonesome. Some of the girls from there even call every day on folks who are sick in the hospital so they won’t get blue.

“Girls meet some of the nicest fellows over there! And they don’t let the opportunity pass, either, because they learn in Charm School how to make themselves attractive.

“And of all the hilarious sounds that come from the building sometimes! One would think the whole college was having a good time in there. But usually it’s a big crowd of girls getting ready to go out on a house party.

“I can’t remember all the thinks folks do there. There are ever so many more just as interesting. But here is one thing—a girl always comes out of the door with a smile on her face and a spring in her step. Why, you see, that’s the Y. W. C. A. building.”