THE Clicking Room comes first
they stand before specially
prepared boards of soft wood and
sweep their curved and pointed
knives around the galvanised iron
patterns placed on the skin
they stand side by side... they do not look up when you enter... they have no time for a quick
draw... no smoking here... fling the skin on the board... grasp it in your fingers... pull to
see the direction of the stretch... place your pattern so that the grain
on the vamp will meet the pull of
the lasting without give... round
with the knife... watch your
fingers... blood from a
ysh spoils the leather... keep in... keep in... that little
gash at the end of the stroke means
waste... you can't lay your pat-
ttern plumb with the edge, if the
leather is gashed... remember
that all these odd-shaped pieces of leather are to be sewn to-
tgether by machinists to form the
uppers of shoes... and there must
be no flaws in the upper... but
there are flaws in the skin... miss
the flaws... cut around the flaws
but no waste, curse you, no
waste... Use your brain... You are a Clicker... Clicker,
are superior... Clickers wear a
collar and tie... Swiftly men... thrust the spike
that projects from the edge of your
knife's handle through the little
holes in the pattern... those little
pricks are to guide the machinist... but God Almighty, they'll
never see those marks... the light...
the strain on the eyes... and seeds;
they might be hard to see in
suede, but they are plain in patent.

you are paid four pounds one per

business.

week to make little odd-shaped pieces of leather

they are grouped in bundles and go

to the Machine Room... for-

gen them, you are a Clicker... they go on.

The Machine Room is an oval...

the iron roof is just above your head... and the girls with
curved backs, sitting in rows on old

stools... the curved backs of the seated girls

and against your knee the

knee press that raises the wheel to

release the vamps... let it down

beetle... it is an ap-

pointing wind... it rises

tight, the lace shreds... the bench vibra-
tions... there are a

hundred machines... the arrowed

leather writhes from the savagery

of needles... the Perforator

and the Bang-bang... bang... and

the confetti of leather for the worn

shoes upon your feet to trample on.

Or hands that tremble

and fingers that dart

and the Perforator

Elly is a scar

and Elly Vickers can

the Binder.

And Vera is a star... and the fore-

woman hovering... hoovering... hoovering and the fore-

woman hovering... and the lace and white and flap of unga-

bined feet... and the wind of apricot

sweet... and the lace and who

against your knee the

knee press that raises the wheel to

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Gladys, airily.
"I'll bet I do," said the girl in the blue jumper.
"You shut up," said Gladys.
They all laughed.
Several girls emerged from the door of the opposite factory. They wore blue linen uniforms and were self-consciously carrying a new basket ball. They tossed it from one to another. They laughed embarrassedly at each other as if they were conscious of acting childishly.
"Gord! Look at them," said the girl in the blue jumper. "Get inside you lasses," she bawled across the street.
One of the girls playing turned and poked out her tongue at the seated group.
The girl in the blue jumper glanced quickly at her companions with her mouth slightly opened. Satisfied that her reaction was justified she raised a curved hand to her mouth and "Yah, ya lare, Boo Hoo! ya lare.
"Shut up, Elly." Gladys was annoyed.
"Who do they think they are, anyway?" growled Mabel withdrawing into a disgruntled contemplation of the players.
"You make cheap, yelling like that," said Gladys looking up and down the street.
"What do you think of that new girl sitting next to Biddy, Gladys?" asked Mabel, noticing Leila Hale walking with Biddy Freeman and Sadie Bryce.
"She'll be all right when she des up. I see Ron Hughes eyein' her off."
"Him," sniffed Mabel.
"Well, you went out with him."
Mabel was silent.
The three girls passed. Mabel jumped up and joined them. The factory stirred as if awakened from sleep. It murmured with the switching on of its motors. Belts leapt upward and fell thwarted. The walls trembled. Pulleys sped into blurred circles. Louder... .
"Every Wednesday night."
"Don't he see you any other night?"
"No."
"Then he's married."
"He is not."
"Did he say why he doesn't meet you oftener?"
"He said he's working."
"Oh yair! That's what they all say."
"I'm sure he's not married."
Mabel was rebellious.
"How old is he?"
"About thirty-three."
"He's married all right. That's the chap I saw with you last Wednesday, isn't it?"
"Yea."
"He looked married to me. He's worn. Does he ever take you to a show?"
"He doesn't like pictures."
Sadie laughed derisively. "Married men never do. They're frightened of being seen. Whose does he live?"
"Footscray."
"Do you know the street he lives in?"
"No, I never asked him. He'd tell me, though."
"How often do you meet him?"
"Every Wednesday night."
"I'll bet he doesn't."
"You try him."
"All right. I will."
The girls turned and began to retread their steps. At the factory door they stood talking, while they waited for the first bell. A second ring was given five minutes later. They must now be standing before their machines.

The factory stirred as if awakened from sleep. It murmured with the switching on of its motors. Belts leapt upward and fell thwarted. The walls trembled. Pulleys sped into blurred circles. Louder... .
"Footscray."
"Do you know the street he lives in?"
"No, I never asked him. He'd tell me, though."
"You ask him for the street and number. Tell him you might like to write to him some day. I'll bet he puts you off."
"I'll bet he doesn't."
"You try him."
"All right. I will."

Standing silently before their machines the workers waited. The second bell rang through the factory's voice. Machines clamored their answer.
"Footscray."
"Do you know the street he lives in?"
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"All right. I will."

Standing silently before their machines the workers waited. The second bell rang through the factory's voice. Machines clamored their answer. The complaining cams of the rapid stitcher... . the scream of the pounder... . the snarl and tear of furious needles... . the grating, teeth of the endless looper... . the rumble of racks pushed along the wooden floor... . Hop into it, lads... .