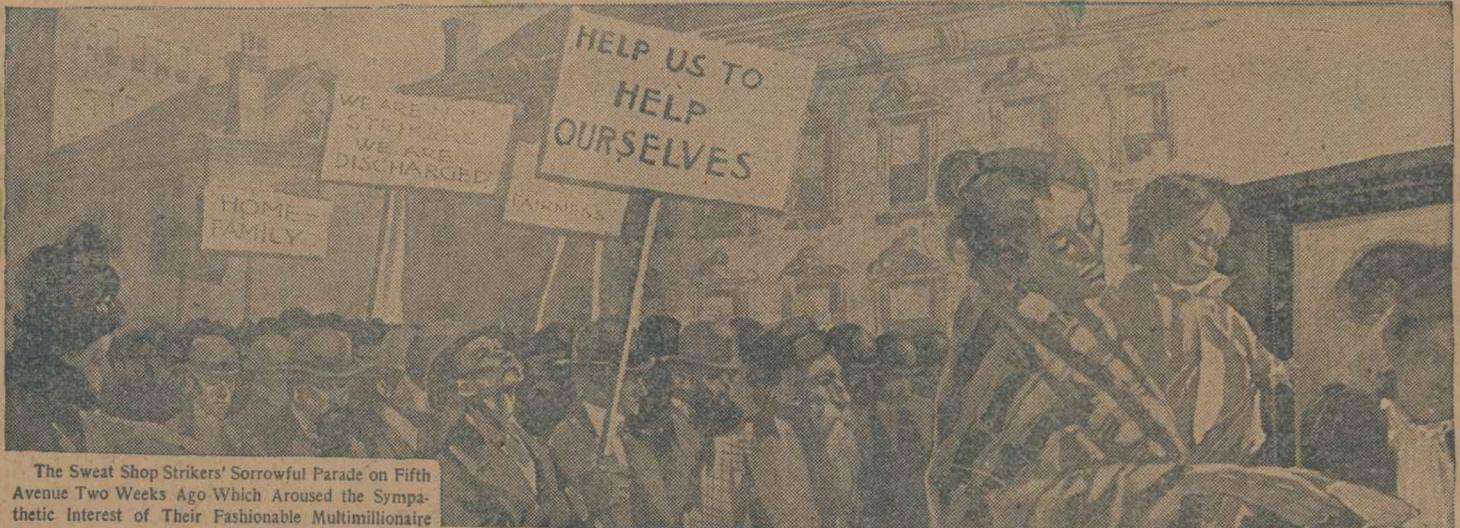


# Fashionable Leaders of Fifth Avenue Join Hands with Their Wretched Sisters of the Sweat Shops.



The Sweat Shop Strikers' Sorrowful Parade on Fifth Avenue Two Weeks Ago Which Aroused the Sympathetic Interest of Their Fashionable Multimillionaire Sisters.



PHOTOGRAPH OF A NEW YORK SWEAT SHOP

**How the Wealthy Throng of Gay Fifth Avenue Was Brought Face to Face with the Starving Tailors Who Made Their Garments and Was Induced to Listen to Their Cry for Help**

A circular outlining the cause of the strike and the destitute condition of the sweat shop families. Mrs. Astor's heart was wrung. She and her fashionable friends secured the interest of the Social Reform Club, the Consumers' League and the Church Association for the Advancement of the Interests of Labor, all of which pledged their co-operation. One sole condition is imposed. The work must not be done in the squalor of the sweat shop districts, but in sanitary places.

Two weeks ago Mrs. John Jacob Astor looked from the window of her carriage at the parade of the striking Ladies' Tailors' Union. She pitied, then she planned, then she acted. Hence the story of the co-operative tailor shop and how the most fortunate women in New York have helped their unfortunate sisters of the slums.

It is a long way from the splendor of Fifth Avenue to the squalor of Chrystie street, a greater distance from the luxurious homes about Central Park to the wretched back tenements of "Shinbone Alley" and Mott street. But the distance has been bridged by the gentle pity of women prompted chiefly by the act of one of their queenliest leaders, Mrs. John Jacob Astor.

The women of New York's "400" have pledged \$50,000 and their support to a co-operative shop for the striking Ladies' Tailors' Union.

The mistresses of the Fifth Avenue mansions have heard and hearkened to the hungry cry of the wives of the striking tailors on Chrystie street.

Some of the arias of the opera this Winter will be forgotten by the Song of the Shirt.

The cry was insistent. It sounded shrilly above the tinkle of the lute in their boudoirs, above the voices "freighted soft with fashion, not with feeling" in their drawing-rooms. There was a note of madness in it. It voiced the lurking agony in great cities. It made a discord in the well-ordered harmony of Fifth Avenue life.

Fortune's fair favorites heard and heeded. They pledged \$50,000 to stop the cry. The \$50,000 may be used for the establishment of a co-operative shop for the striking Ladies' Tailors' Union. And it all came about through a parade.

A little more than two weeks ago Fifth Avenue saw a strange procession. It was filing past its bronzed doors and its plate-glass windows. They were striking tailors. And they were so few—not a hundred. Their faces looked so anxious, so desperate. It was like a comedian's effort to be tragic.

The strikers were little fellows. Underdressed because of the long hours and the crouching postures of their work in the hot, rank shops ever since they were children. There were deep lines in their faces. Some of the lines ran crosswise and spelled the word care. Some ran lengthwise and told the story of their despair. Their faces were all very pale.

The ladies' tailors appeared to be well dressed. It would be suicidal for them to look otherwise. They must have well-fitting coats though their stomachs were no longer chums with food. If they were found dead in the streets their coats must be neat and "stylish," for they must "advertise the business."

They carried cheap banners. The strike of the Ladies' Tailors' Union had lasted six months. They could not afford gay silken ones. With the help of the wives at home they had fashioned some of manilla paper and scrawled upon them odd, misspelled legends.

"We Were Discharged Because We Belonged to a Union." "We Want to Keep Our Families Out of the Poorhouse." "Six Months of Idleness—Six Months of Want." "Help Us to Help Ourselves."

Following the parade came the women and children. They did not "advertise the business." They wore faded calico dresses and threadbare shawls were wound about their heads. Their faces were pinched, their lips colorless, their hands thin and blue. In all their lives the fair dwellers in Fifth Avenue had not seen a parade like this.

Mahomet had come to the mountain. The slums were paying a

visit to society.

The wives and children of the strikers carried circulars and handbills. They slipped them under the doors or into a crevice of the grillwork.

The carriages rolled along among this small mob. A handsome woman drove in one of them. She was Mrs. John Jacob Astor.

No wonder the eyes of the mob followed her. She was a perfect model for the gowns they had made in Chrystie street. Some of them remembered working until the gray of morning in the sweat shops upon gowns almost like that very gown she had on. They did not know she was Mrs. John Jacob Astor. She did not know they were the sweaters.

Mrs. August Botker was in the little procession. Mrs. Astor could not have desired a better foil for her beauty. Mrs. Botker's face had the impassivity of despair. The expression never changed, because the attitude of the mind was always the same. Mrs. Botker was afraid—terribly afraid—of that awful verdict by the corner, inattention, for the five children and the "man" and herself, even the wan child in her arms. The thought was ever before her. She dreamed of it every night.

Mrs. Botker had been reared on the Russian steppes. She knew the bitter sting of the cold whiteness of the prairies. She feared nothing but that terrible coroner's verdict. She knew by intuition, and the agencies that carry news of the rich to the homes of the poor, that the woman in the victoria was a queen of fashion. But fear such as Mrs. Botker's is a great leveller of distinctions.

She stood in the path of the horses, and the coachman was forced to rein them in lest he run her down. Mrs. Botker sprang to the carriage. She pressed a circular into Mrs. Astor's hand. She could not read the ill-spelled thing herself. The "man" had told her that in it was printed the story of their woes. Her shawl fell back and she turned her heavy face up to the woman's leaning from the carriage. There was puzzled pity in one and dumb misery in the other.

Mrs. Astor accepted the circular. She had not driven a block before Paula Cantanelli, aged eight, stood in the way of the horses. Again the coachman threw back his shoulders and "pulled up." Paula ran to the carriage and pressed another circular into Mrs. Astor's hand. Her face was brighter than Mrs. Botker's. There were not so many years of hopelessness behind it. Mrs. Astor was touched. She dropped a bit of silver into the child's hand.

There were others who began taking interest in the procession when the significance of its march was made clear to them. When, therefore, the Church Association for the Advancement of Labor and the Social Reform Club and the Consumers' League interpreted the meaning of this movement they subscribed liberally of their money.

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PETER SCHAM-MACK



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THE women of the "400" have declared that they will shut up the sweat shops. They will not wear dresses wet with tears. Led by Mrs. John Jacob Astor, the richest, cleverest and most beautiful woman in America, they have promised to raise \$50,000 for a co-operative tailor shop to be managed by the strikers of the Ladies' Tailors' Union. John Jacob Astor will give one of his buildings in Thirty-sixth street for the use of the "sweaters."

The parade of poor strikers in Fifth Avenue two weeks ago awakened unique interest. The families of the strikers followed them and distributed circulars to the women in handsome turnouts. Mrs. John Jacob Astor was driving on that day, and an East Side Russian, with a child in her arms, stopped the carriage and timidly handed to her a