

SHOP SLAVERY AND
EMANCIPATION

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AND
EMANCIPATION

A REVOLUTIONARY APPEAL TO THE EDUCATED
YOUNG MEN OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

BY

WILLIAM PAINE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

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WHAT shall it matter to me as I cross the road with the hand of my friend in mine that this man or that man remembers aught against me, when I walked in bondage to the sordid industrial *régime* that struck at me almost before I could stand alone, and enslaved me as soon as I was old enough to earn my bread? I shall laugh in his face if I am still found lovable, for the thing which he remembers against me I shall have sloughed off, and come into my own again.—THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION

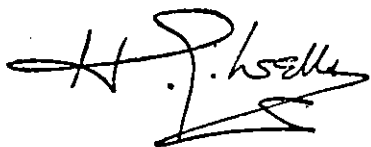
THE author of this book has asked me to contribute a word or so of Introduction for it to the general reader. It is a regrettable thing that so fresh and able a writer as Mr. Paine should need any introduction at all to the public; and I do not know whether Messrs. King would not be better advised to trust to the appreciation and recommendations of the reviewer at large for an adequate reception of this very sincere and splendid piece of writing. However, I bear my testimony for what it is worth, and add a word or so of opinion that is perhaps not quite in agreement with the opinion of Mr. Paine. He paints the dismal miseries of the living-in-shop assistant none too dismally; to that I can bear witness. For a wretched couple of years in my boyhood I slept in one of these

abominable dormitories he describes, ate the insufficient food supplied and drudged in the shop. Then when I was fifteen I ran away one Sunday morning to my mother, and told her I would rather die than go on being a draper. That seventeen mile tramp, without breakfast, to deliver that ultimatum is still very vivid in my memory. I felt then most desperately wicked, and now I know it was nearly the best thing I ever did in my life, and not only I, but Mr. Paine. And all the brotherhood of man fled with me that morning out of the house of mean bondage to life and opportunity. But such a lot of us, before it is too late, will not "rather die," and there you have the secret of all the tale of pitiful degradation that Mr. Paine recounts so bitterly.

But as for Mr. Paine's remedies I cannot so completely endorse them. I have my doubts of the comparative advantage of "living out" over "living in." You will learn something of the former state of affairs from

Samuel Warren's *Ten Thousand a Year*, and it seems to me that the choice between the two is little more than the choice between the barrack and the slum. I do not know if there exists any adequate comparative study of the social status and welfare of girls and women, and particularly of young girls in such a trade as the drapery, where living in is the rule, and such a trade as refreshment catering, where living out prevails. Perhaps he justifies his case by the possibility of "hostels" such as he describes on pp. 59 to 63. That is for the reader to decide. And while Mr. Paine's chapter "The Way Out" stirs me deeply, and while I am convinced that the only ultimate "way out," not only for poor shop assistants, but for all humanity, is just that generous and desperate love for which he cries, I do not at the present moment see any prospect of its immediate and special application to the employees of the distributing trades. Nor am I so hopeless as he of the possible goodness of rich

people and powerful people and employing people. And, indeed, it is to them particularly I must commend this book. I must say to them in the abundance of their leisure and opportunity, "This is a voice for you. Consider the stifled anger of it, the desperation. This is something that grows beneath the feet of you and your children. Your leisure and your opportunity is very largely a trust that you should help your still helpless and inarticulate brothers out of this darkness. No way is known. You have to find the way."

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. J. L. H. L. H. L." with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

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