

The Story of My Life by "Billie Button"

CHAPTER VI. My education begins and I become a Real Button.

I SOON found out that however much HUMAN babies are coddled, baby BUTTONS have a perilous time of it. My development to maturity was as strenuous as it was swift. With other blanks from the same cutter I first passed through the sorting machine, where five different thicknesses of blanks are automatically separated from one another. Away next to the grinding machine—severe kindergarten for infant buttons—where the rough clam shell "bark" is taken off by revolving emery wheels. On then, "rig-a-jig-jig-and-away-we-go" to a sort of big churn affair partly filled with water, in which we blanks bump up against one another and the water until our rough edges are worn down smooth. It's good for us, but it's a worse drubbing than you get in a Turkish bath. After THIS experience our stay in the drying machine, where all moisture is taken out of our systems, seems like the Seventh Heaven.

Now comes a most important step in my life. I am about to be advanced from my novitiate as a "blank" into full orders as a real, bona-fide, honest-to-goodness button. This initiation takes place in the "Automatic" Room, where a wonderful machine gives us blanks three degrees in quick succession. First our edges are rounded off by sharp steel chisels beneath which we pass. Then zip-biff, a depression is cut in our middles, and zzt-zzt, sharp steel bits cut in our button-holes—four of them for me, as you've seen by my picture, two for some of my cousins. At last I am a really unmistakable Pearl-Button.



At last I am a really



There are forty machines for advancing us from blanks into buttons in this room at the factory, and from twenty-five hundred to three thousand of us take the degree every minute of the working day.

But my education isn't over. I've got to acquire a lot of things yet before I can go out and fill my destined place in the world.