

■ *Formative Writings*

1929—1941 SIMONE WEIL

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY

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WILHELMINA VAN NESS

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DOROTHY TUCK MCFARLAND
WILHELMINA VAN NESS

Preface

This volume is intended to help fill a gap in the still unfinished process of translating into English what might be called the first generation of published editions of Simone Weil's writings. This generation comprises the French editions of her writings, grouped loosely under a diversity of headings and published between 1947 and 1966. Most of this material has been translated into English, but a remnant of major formative texts, as well as a scattering of essays and fragments that reflect difficult, unfamiliar, and neglected aspects of Weil as a thinker and a person, has not, and it is impossible to validly assess her thought and person without some direct knowledge of this part of her *oeuvre*.

Formative Writings, 1929–1941 is a collection of texts from this remnant. The equivalent of approximately one more volume of short texts remains to be translated. The texts selected for this volume were written between 1929 and 1941, a crucial and transitional period, one of an anguishing rite of passage for Weil, Europe, and the world. In chronological order, the texts are “Science and Perception in Descartes” (1929–30), a formidable dissertation Weil wrote as a twenty-one-year-old philosophy student at the Ecole Normale Supérieure; “The Situation in Germany” (1932–33), a ten-article extravaganza of dissident Left journalism on the subject of Hitler's rise to power and Comintern politics; “Factory Journal” (1934–35), Weil's unedited, almost daily record of the “year” she spent as an unskilled factory worker; “War and Peace” (1933–40), a selection of essays and fragments reflecting aspects of her pacifist thought culled from the “War and Peace” and “Spain” sections of *Ecrits historiques et politiques*; and “Philosophy” (1941), a light essay that accurately reflects some of the breadth of her mature thought on Eastern and Western art, mysticism, science, and philosophy.

The selections are primary sources for a great deal of what has been said about Weil's thought and psychology over the years. Most have been summarized or presented in digest form by Weil's biographers. “Science and Perception in Descartes,” which does not lend itself to any convenient

form of packaging, has been largely neglected. “The Situation in Germany,” when it is read in its entirety, leaves no doubt about the quality and extent of Weil’s participation in French Leftist and Comintern politics. It provides information about Weil that simply cannot be had from any other source, information that has not been conveyed by references to, or summaries of, its content. Similarly, in writing about her factory experience, both Weil and her commentators used her “Factory Journal” selectively. The elapsed time and detail of her experience and the emphases that can be seen in the original are invaluable for evaluating what she and her commentators later made of it. The texts in “War and Peace” are primary sources of the immensely complicated pacifist position that Weil endeavored to sustain during much of the thirties. They episodically trace its development and not incidentally illustrate the Leftist component in it. One of the most anguishing and controversial texts Weil ever wrote—“A European War over Czechoslovakia?”—is included, a text that must be considered in any assessment of Weil and her thought. “Philosophy,” published originally in *Cahiers du Sud*, slipped through the cracks of the translation process at least in part because it never found its way into any of the French collections of Weil’s works. It is included here as a means of bringing this collection full circle—back to Weil’s original love of philosophy and concern with science. The essay also illustrates a fact of Weil’s life and *oeuvre* that needs to be more widely recognized: that throughout her life she consciously chose and followed a dual vocation of philosopher and teacher. In “Philosophy” she returns to an academic milieu in which she is completely at home, and in which she operates very much in the role of a teacher—in this case of her peers.

Most of the texts in this collection are more obviously tied to the special milieus—the academic world, the dissident Left and trade-unionist circles—in which they were written than often seems to be the case with Weil’s writings. The diversity of “voices” and even “roles” that she to some extent assumes in all of them, however, points to another fact about Weil that is not widely recognized: she is always in some degree composing in a specialized language and/or consciously engaging in an experiment in *popularisation*, by which she meant “teaching” in its purest, broadest sense—the art of transposing and transmitting truths intact to whomever was being taught. In “Science and Perception in Descartes,” “A Reply to One of Alain’s Questions” (one of the essays in “War and Peace”), and “Philosophy” she is using variants of her academic voice. “Science and

Perception” is written in a florid, baroque prose style that Weil cultivated as a student to carry the youthful forms of her highly unorthodox thinking into mainstream French philosophy. “Reply” was addressed as much to her former teacher Alain as to the academic circles in which she and he circulated and in which his “questions” were being discussed. “Philosophy” was written for the edification and education of amateur philosophy lovers in Marseilles. In “The Situation in Germany” and many of the pre-Munich texts in “War and Peace,” Weil translated her concerns directly into the language and in some cases the jargon of the Leftist circles she was addressing. At the opposite pole, Weil compiled her “Factory Journal”—a casual text, sometimes telegraphic to the point of being incomprehensible—for her own private use, and perhaps wrote a few of the sad, general post-Munich texts in “War and Peace” to and for herself.

Readers should also be warned that Weil’s style, generally formal and elegant and over a half-century old, adheres to conventions that are now regarded as hopelessly sexist. In her writings “mankind,” “man,” and “men” stand, as they cannot legitimately do now, for all humanity. We have left most of her usages intact, since it would be untrue to her fundamental style, and sometimes to her content, to use less gender-loaded language. She was, incidentally, and for reasons wholly consistent with the general tenor of her thought, not a feminist. Her loyalties were always to all humanity. She refused on principle to parse the human race into sexual or other divisions, or to extend priorities or privileges to any part except, as a compensation for injustice, the oppressed. By them she meant the suffering underclass of any time and place, those who are always most in need of having a balance redressed.

A further note on Weil’s terminology that may be initially puzzling to readers: In “The Situation in Germany” we have kept her usage of the term “Hitlerite,” rather than supplying the more customary term “Nazi.” Weil rarely used “Nazi” in her writings. In this text she refers to Hitler’s followers either as National Socialists or as Hitlerites. Here, as in Weil’s later writings, her usage of “Hitlerite” is a constant reminder that she viewed Hitler as the embodiment of a force that exercised a fatal attraction for those in every class who felt themselves powerless. Today the term “Nazi” on a page powerfully blocks the kind of knowledge of the early mechanism of Hitler’s appeal that the term “Hitlerite” usefully retains.

In addition to tying up tag-ends from the first-generation publishing

process, the publication of Weil's *Formative Writings, 1929–1941* also belongs to the new era of publishing and studying Weil that began in the 1970s with the publication in France of the revised and expanded edition of her three-volume *Cahiers* (1970, 1972, 1974) and the appearance of Simone Pétrement's probably definitive biography, *La Vie de Simone Weil*, which was published in 1973 and has been widely translated. In America and England during the same decade, Conor Cruise O'Brien's article "The Anti-Politics of Simone Weil"¹ and Peter Winch's introduction to *Lectures on Philosophy* (1978) appreciably raised the level of scholarly discussion of Weil and her thought. In the 1980s *Simone Weil: Interpretations of a Life* (a selection of essays by Staughton Lynd, J. D. Cameron, and others, edited by George Abbot White), three monographs on Weil by John Hellman (1982), Dorothy Tuck McFarland (1983), and John M. Dunaway (1984), and Jean Bethke Elshtain's article "The Vexation of Weil"² have continued the generally more accurate and high level of discussion of Weil and her works that began in the 1970s.

Most significant of all for the long run, Weil's entire *oeuvre*, published and unpublished, has finally been brought together; a complete microfilm of it was made by the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris in the late 1970s, and a team of scholars in France is now preparing a new edition of Weil's complete writings that will include a good deal of unpublished material. Since errors, misrepresentations, and severe damage to the nature and integrity of her thought have resulted from the scattering and compartmentalization of her writings that occurred during the first-generation publishing and translating process, this complete edition will greatly facilitate the orderly and intelligent study of her life and work.

WILHELMINA VAN NESS

¹ *New York Review of Books*, May 12, 1977, pp. 23–28.

² *Telos*, no. 58 (Winter 1983–84): 195–203.

Although what she is trying to say comes across more clearly in her “Factory Journal” than elsewhere, it is, indeed, very hard to hear, because it describes an experience of deep psychological wounding against which one habitually and instinctively protects oneself, an experience that it is impossible to fully appreciate on an intellectual level alone. The psychological suffering Weil underwent in the factory—a suffering that she made every effort to remain conscious of and not to flee from—unquestionably affected her very soul and brought about her real entry into the community of human suffering. From being a dedicated worker on behalf of the oppressed she became one of them and one with them.

The factory experience was a watershed in Weil’s life. It was her first profound contact with affliction (a central concept in her later religious writing), especially with the aspect of social degradation that she considered such an important part of the totality of affliction. It led directly to her understanding, later expressed in her moving essay on the *Iliad*, that “the sense of human misery is a pre-condition of justice and love.”³ It was, finally, of major importance in her receptivity to Christianity. Having been brought to a condition in which she considered herself a slave, while traveling in Portugal a month or so after leaving the factory she came upon a group of Portuguese fishermen’s wives carrying candles in a religious procession and singing “ancient hymns of a heart-rending sadness.” Describing this incident later, she wrote, “the conviction was suddenly borne in upon me that Christianity is pre-eminently the religion of slaves, that slaves cannot help belonging to it, and I among others.”⁴

³ *The Iliad, or The Poem of Force* (Wallingford, Penn.: Pendle Hill, 1956), p. 34.

⁴ *Waiting for God* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1973), p. 67.

■ Factory Journal

πόλλ' ἀεκαζομένη, κρατερῇ δ' ἐπικείσεται ἀνάγκη¹

Not only should man know what he is making, but if possible he should see how it is used—see how nature is changed by him.

Every man’s work should be an *object of contemplation* for him.

FIRST WEEK

Started work Tuesday December 4, 1934.

Tuesday. 3 hrs. of work in the course of the day. Beginning of the morning, 1 hr. of *drilling* (Catsous).

End of the morning, 1 hr. at the *stamping press* with Jacquot (that’s where I met the warehouse keeper). End of the afternoon: ¾ hr. turning a crank to help make cardboards (with Dubois).

Wednesday morning. *Fly-press* the whole morning, with some periods of no work. Done without hurrying, consequently without fatigue. Didn’t make the rate!²

From 3 to 4, easy work at the stamping press; .70 per hundred. Still didn’t make the rate.

To 4:45: *machine with buttons*.

Thursday morning. *Machine with buttons*; .56 per hundred (should be .72). 1,160 in the whole morning—very difficult.

Afternoon. Power failure. Waited from 1:15 to 3 o’clock. Left at 3.

Friday. Right-angle pieces, at the stamping press (tool only supposed to accentuate the right angle). 100 *pieces botched* (crushed, because the screw came loose).

From 11 A.M. on, *handwork*: removing cardboards from an assembly that they want done over (fixed magnetic circuits—replace cardboard with small copper plates). Tools: mallet, compressed-air hose, saw blade, flashlight; very tiring for the eyes.

¹ Much against your will, under pressure of a harsh necessity. *Iliad* 6. 458.

² Weil uses *coulé* (“didn’t cut it” or “blew it”), a variant of *couler le bon* or *bon coulé*—working-class slang meaning that one failed to reach a minimum speed on a given order.

Tour of the tool shop, but no time to see much of it. Bawled out for having gone there.

Saturday. Cardboards.

Didn't make the rate on a single voucher.

Women workers:

Mme Forestier

Mimi

Tolstoy fan (Eugénie)

My co-worker on the iron bars (Louisette)

Mimi's sister

Cat

Blonde from the munitions factory

Redhead (Joséphine)

Divorced woman

Mother of the burned kid

Woman who gave me a roll

Italian woman

Dubois

Big shots:

Mouquet

Chastel

Warehouse keeper (Pommer))

Set-up men:

Ilion

Léon

Catsous (Michel)

"*Jacquot*" (has become a worker again)

Robert

"*Biol*" (at the back)

(Or V . . . ?)

". . ." (furnace)

Male workers:

violinist

conceited blond

old man with glasses (the one who reads *l'Auto*)

singer at the furnace

worker in drilling goggles ("we'll see" . . . very nice)

boy with the mallet (drinks—the only one)

his co-worker

my "fiancé"

his brother (?)

young blond Italian

welder

coppersmith

SECOND WEEK

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. Personnel manager sent for me at 10 A.M. to say they are setting my hourly base wage at 2 F (actually, it will be 1.80 F). *Removing cardboards.* Violent headache Tuesday, work goes very slowly and badly (Wednesday I managed to do it quickly and well, tapping very vigorously and accurately with the mallet—but terrible eyestrain).

Thursday. From 10 A.M. (or even earlier?) until about 2 P.M., *metal polishing* on the big fly-press. Work had to be done over again, after it was completely done, by order of the foreman, and in a way that was *uncomfortable* and dangerous.

Order to do it over again justified, or bullying? In any case, Mouquet had me do it over in a way that was exhausting and dangerous (I had to duck every time in order to avoid being struck full on the head by the heavy counterweight). Pity and mute indignation of neighbors. Furious with myself (for no reason, since no one had told me I was not hitting hard enough), I had the idiotic feeling that it wasn't worth the effort to pay attention to protecting myself. Still, no accident. Set-up man (Léon) very annoyed, probably with Mouquet, but not explicitly so.

At 11:45, observe. . . .

Afternoon: no work until 4 P.M.

From 4 to 5:45. . . .

Friday. Stamping press—*washers*. The tool formed them and made a hole (⊙). Worked all day. Made the rate, in spite of having to replace a spring—the spring was broken. First time that I worked all day on the same machine; great fatigue, although I did not go at top speed. Error in the count, corrected at my request by the woman who came after me (very nice!).

Saturday. 1 hr. drilling holes in brass ferrules placed against a very low stop that I didn't see, which made me borch 6 or 7 (a new woman who had never worked before did the job successfully yesterday, according to Léon, who bawls you out every chance he gets). Didn't make the rate—but no reprimand for the botched pieces, because the count is right.

¾ hr. for cutting small brass bars with Léon.
Easy—no blunders.

Break for cleaning machines.

Made the rate on 1 voucher (for 25.50 F).

A woman who was fired—tubercular—had several times botched hundreds of pieces (but how many times?). Once it was just before she fell very ill, so she was forgiven. This time, 500 pieces. But on the evening shift (2:30 to 10:30 P.M.) when all the lights are out except the portable lamps (which give no light at all). The drama is complicated by the fact that the set-up man (Jacquot) is automatically considered partly responsible. The women I'm with (Cat and others who have stopped working—one of them the Tolstoy fan?) are on Jacquot's side. One of them: "You've got to be more conscientious *when you have to make a living*."

It seems that the woman had refused to do the order in question (probably for painstaking and badly paid work)—"work that was too hard," someone says. The foreman had said to her, "If this isn't done by tomorrow morning. . . ." It was probably thought she had botched the work on purpose. Not one word of sympathy from the women, even though they know the disgust you feel facing an exhausting job, knowing you will earn 2 F or less and be bawled out for not having made the rate—a disgust that illness must increase tenfold. This lack of sympathy is explained by the fact that if one woman is spared a "bad" job, it is done by another. . . . One woman's comment (Mme Forestier?): "She shouldn't have talked back. . . . when you have to make a living, you have no choice. . . . (repeated several times). . . . Then she could have gone and told the assistant manager, 'Yes, I was wrong, but even so it's not completely my fault; it's hard to see very well, etc. I won't do it any more, etc.'"

"When you have to make a living": this expression originates partly in the fact that some of the married women aren't working for a living, but to be a little better off. (That woman had a husband, but he was unemployed.) A great deal of inequality among the women workers. . . .

Wage system. Below 3 F per hour you don't make the rate. Vouchers on

which you didn't make the rate are adjusted every two weeks in a little committee made up of Mouquet and the timekeeper. . . . (The timekeeper is pitiless. Mouquet probably defends the women a little.) They set arbitrary values on these vouchers—sometimes 4 francs, sometimes 3, sometimes the amount of the hourly base wage (2.40 F for the others). Sometimes they pay only the amount actually made by deducting anything over and above the hourly wage from the bonus. When a woman thinks she is the victim of an injustice, she goes to complain. But it's humiliating, since she has no rights at all and is at the mercy of the good will of the foreman, who decide according to her worth as a worker, and in large measure capriciously.

The time lost between jobs either must be marked on the vouchers (but then you risk not making the rate, especially on small orders) or is deducted from your pay. So you end up with fewer than 96 hours for the two-week period.

It's a form of control; without it you would always be marking down shorter periods of time than you actually spent.

System for estimating hours beforehand.
Story about Mouquet: Mimi's sister goes to find him to complain about the pricing of a voucher; he abruptly orders her back to her work. She goes away grumbling. Ten minutes later he goes to find her, asks "What's the matter?" and takes care of it.
"Not very many dare to fall below the minimum rate."

THIRD WEEK

Jobs:

Monday, 17th, morning. At the small fly-press.

Polishing all morning—ting—didn't make the rate.

The memory of my adventure at the big fly-press makes me afraid of not hitting hard enough. On the other hand it seems you mustn't hit too hard. And the voucher calls for a speed that seems fantastic to me. . . .

End of the morning: washers from metal bars, with Robert's heavy press.

Afternoon—*stamping press*: pieces very difficult to position, at .56 per hundred (600 from 2:30 to 5:15); ½ hr. to reset the machine, which was out of adjustment because I had left a piece in the tool. Tired and fed up.

Feeling of having been a free being for 24 hours (on Sunday), and of having to readapt to slavery. Disgust at being forced to strain and exhaust myself, with the certainty of being bawled out either for being slow or for botching, for the sake of these 56 centimes. . . . Augmented by the fact that I am having dinner with my parents—Feeling of slavery—

The speed is dizzying. (Especially when in order to throw yourself into it you have to overcome fatigue, headaches, and the feeling of being fed up.)

Mimi beside me—

Mouquet: don't use your fingers. "You don't eat with your fingers. . . ."

Tuesday, 18th. Same pieces—500 from 7 A.M. to 8:45, all botched.

From 9 to 5, work in pairs, paid by the hour; iron bars 3 meters long, weighing 30 to 50 kilograms. Very hard, but not nerve-racking. A certain joy in the muscular effort . . . but in the evening, exhaustion. The others look at me with pity, especially Robert.

Wednesday, 19th. No work from 7 A.M. to 11.

11 to 5, *heavy press cutting washers* out of a bar of sheet metal with Robert. Didn't make the rate (2 F per hour; 2.28 F for a thousand washers). Very violent headache, finished the work while weeping almost uninterruptedly. (When I got home, interminable fit of sobbing.) No blunders, however, aside from 3 or 4 botched pieces.

Advice from the warehouse keeper—illuminating. Pedal only with your leg, not with your whole body; push the strip with one hand and hold it in position with the other, instead of pulling and holding with the same hand. Relation of work to athletics.

Robert quite severe when he sees that I botched two pieces.

Thursday, 20th, and Friday, 21st. Stamping rivets at the light press—.62 per hundred—made 2.40 F per hour (more).

(Pleasant warning from the foreman: if you botch them, you'll be fired.) 3,000—earned 18.60 F. Even so, didn't make the rate: 3 F minimum. No blunders, but slowed down by irrational scruples.

Riveting: assembly work. Only difficulty is doing the operations in order. Example: I absentmindedly botched two because I did the riveting before I had assembled everything.

Thursday, payday; 241.60 F.

Saturday, 22nd. Riveting with Ilion. Work pleasant enough—.028 per

piece. *Made the rate*, but did it by going at top speed. Constant effort—not without a certain pleasure, because I am succeeding.

Probable wages: 48 hrs. at 1.80 F = 86.25 F. Bonus: for Tuesday, if I worked at 4 F per hr., 17.60 F; for Wednesday 1.20 F; for Thursday and Friday .60 × 15 (approx) = 9 F; for Saturday, 1.20 × 3.5 = 4.20 F. Therefore:

17.60 F + 1.60 F + 9 F + 4.20 F = 32.40 F. That would make 86.25 F + 32.40 F = 118.65 F. Perhaps out of that a deduction corresponding to the job on which I botched 500 pieces.

Actually I had a bonus of 36.75 F (but $\frac{3}{4}$ hr. was deducted, that's 1.20 F). So 4.35 F more than I had thought. Undoubtedly an adjusted voucher—probably Monday morning's polishing.

Made the rate on one voucher (for 12 F).

FOURTH WEEK

Laid off (week between Christmas and New Year's Day). I caught cold—had some fever (very slight) during the week and some terrible headaches; when the end of the holidays and the time to go back to work came, I still had a cold and was, above all, worn out with fatigue.

Young unemployed workman encountered on Christmas Day. . . .

FIFTH WEEK

Wednesday, 2nd. 7:15 to 8:45 A.M.: *cutting pieces out of a long metal strip*, at the large press with Robert. 677 pieces at .319 per hundred. Put down 1 hr. 10 min. Held up at the beginning by lack of oil. Difficulty cutting the strip. Pulling it. Took out pieces too often. Earned 1.85 F; at the hourly wage they ought to pay me 2.10 F. *Difference of .25 F.*

8:50 to 11:45 A.M.: *holes for connectors* with the little fly-press (name?). Slow in the beginning because I drove the tool in too deeply. Kept the piece in place too long—and looked from the wrong angle. 830 pieces at .84 per hundred. Earned 7 F; didn't make the rate, but by only a little. Actually 2.30 F, put down for 2.80 F.

For the morning: 1 hr. to make up.

1:15 to 2:30: had no work, put down only 1 hr.

2:30 to 4: *stamping press*. *Cambered pieces* cut out in the morning;

600 at .54 per hundred, so earned 3.24 F. Put down 1 hr. 20 min. (15 min. less and I would have made the rate).

4:30 to 5:15: *furnace*. Very hard work; not only intolerable heat, but the flames come up to lick your hands and arms. You have to control your reflexes or botch . . . (one botched!). There are 500 pieces (the remainder to be done Thursday morning), paid at 4.80 F per hundred. So 24 F for the lot.

I have 8 hours.

In addition to that, in the course of the day I have 3 hrs. 40 min. + 1 hr. 15 min. + 1 hr. 20 min. = 6¼ hrs. 2¾ hrs. to make up. Must keep track of this. Tomorrow I will probably not do more than 3½ or 4 hrs.

Furnace. The first evening, about 5 o'clock, the pain from the extreme heat, exhaustion, and headaches make me completely lose control of my movements. I can't lower the furnace damper. A coppersmith jumps up and lowers it for me. What gratitude you feel at such moments! Also when the kid who lit the furnace for me showed me how to lower the damper with a hook, which made it much easier. On the other hand, when Mouquet suggests I put the pieces on the right so as to pass less often in front of the furnace, my chief reaction is to be annoyed for not having thought of it myself. Every time I burned myself, the welder threw me a sympathetic smile.

Made the rate on 3 vouchers (2 furnace, 1 riveting) for 24.60 F + 9.20 F + 29.40 F = 63.20 F.

Thursday, 3rd. 7 A.M. to 9:15: *furnace*. Clearly less hard than the day before, in spite of a violent headache from the moment I woke up. Have learned not to expose myself so much to the flames, and to run fewer risks of botching. Still, very hard. Terrible racket of mallet blows a few meters away.

Earned 24.60 at the furnace. Put down 6 hrs. Took 3 hrs. (therefore 8.20 F per hr.).

9:15 to 11:15 (or 11:30?): spent the day drilling. *Riveting* fun: putting rivets in stacks of thin metal plates in which holes had been drilled. But inevitably didn't make the rate on the voucher. Put down how much time? Probably 1¼ hrs.—or ½, or ¾? In any case, below my hourly base wage (probably a difference of more than 1 hr.).

11:30–3 o'clock: ate lunch at the Russian restaurant. Riveting fun and easy. 400 pieces at .023 = 9.20 F. Put down 2½ hrs. (at 3.70 F

per hr.). On resuming work at 1:15, suffering from a crushing headache, I botched 5 pieces by putting them wrong side up before doing the riveting. Fortunately the young drilling foreman came to take a look. . . .

Done at more than 3 F per hr.

3:15–5:15: *furnace*. Much less arduous than yesterday evening and this morning—made 300 pieces (tempo of 7.35 F per hr.).

Friday, 4th. 7–8:30 A.M.: *cutting pieces out of brass strips* at the large press. Took my time, learning how before I started. Meditated on an exasperating mystery: the last piece cut out of the strip was notched; now, the one that came out notched was the seventh. Simple explanation given by the set-up man (Robert): 6 of them were still left in the die. Put down 1¼ hrs. 578 for .224 per hundred. Earned 1.30 F! *Difference between that and the hourly base wage = .95 F.*

8:45–1:30 (standing): *polishing*. A small order, marked 10 min., then 300 pieces at .023. Earned 6.90 F. Put down 2¾ hrs. (or 2½?). 2.40 F. or 2.70 per hour. Work with the polishing belt, tricky. Did it slowly and, apparently, *badly* (didn't catch on to the knack); nevertheless, pieces not botched. But M—t made me stop, and turn over the remaining 200 pieces to another woman.

Furnace. Totally different place, although right next to our shop. The foremen never go there. Relaxed and brotherly atmosphere, no more servility or pettiness. The smart young man who serves as set-up man. . . . The welder. . . . The young Italian worker with the blond hair . . . my "fiancé" . . . his brother . . . the Italian woman . . . the husky fellow with the mallet. . . .

At last, a happy workshop. Teamwork. Coppersmiths' shop, tools: mainly the mallet. They bend pipe elbows with a little hand machine, then make fine adjustments with the mallet; so knack is indispensable. Numerous calculations, needed for measurements—they assemble boxes, etc. Work by twos or more, most of the time.

	Hours min.	Sous
Wednesday, went to a meeting of the 15th Socialist and Communist section about Citroën. Confidential.	1¼	1.85 F
	2½	7.
	1	1.80
	1¼ ± ¼?	3.25
... 6	6	24.60
No workers from	1½	(?) 1.

Citroën, apparently.

Not much reaction about it at the factory. 2 women: "Sometimes you're upset, but with good reason." That was all. Warehouse keeper: "That's the way it is. . . ."

In the coppersmiths' shop, one worker had on his table the pamphlet distributed the night before.

	6½	9.20
	1¼	1.30
	2¾	6.90
5 min.	[¼] 10 min.	?
5 min.	1½ 25 min.	2.45
	1¼	1.30
	7¾	29.40
	¾	2.10
	31(½) 20 min.	92.15
	(1 hr. ahead, perhaps 1 hr. 25 min.?).	Hrly. wage 1.80 F in 30½ hrs. = 54.60 F; bonus: 37.55 F; that makes a little more than 3 F per hr. (.65 more).

1:30-3:05 (standing): *with the set-up man from the back (Biol?)*. Large pieces. Position the piece while pushing down; tighten with a movable bar; pedal; loosen the bar; tap a lever to free the piece; pull it out forcibly. . . . 1 F per hundred! Put down 1 hr. 25 min.—244 pieces. Earned 2.44 F. Set-up man rugged and very likable. I had already helped him cut some sheet metal, with great enjoyment. Didn't make the rate, but it was because the timekeeper made a mistake.

Difference between what I earned and the hourly base wage: .25 F.

3:15-4:50 (approximately): *sheet-metal boxes*. Apply oil, place around a shaft, stamp; the tool forms them. Put the solder on the correct side. Exhausted from having spent all day and the day before standing up; movements slow. Great pleasure in thinking that this box had been made by my teammates in the coppersmiths' shop, soldered. . . . During this job, a collection was taken up for a woman who is sick. Gave 1 F. Put down 1¼ hrs. Earned? Made 137 pieces, .92 per hundred—earned approximately 1.30 F. However, the foreman said nothing. *Difference between what I earned and the hourly base wage: .90 F.*

Saturday, 5th. 7-10 A.M.: furnace. Hardly difficult at all. No headaches, made 300 pieces at a leisurely pace. Earned 29.40 F for the lot of 600. Put down 7¾ hrs. Worked at a tempo of 4.90 F per hr.

10-11 A.M.: *cardboards* (continuing). Easy. Only one stupid mistake you can make: cram. I did it! Bawling out from Léon. 50 centimes per

hundred. Did 425. Earned 2.12 F. Put down ¾ hr. Paid at 10 o'clock; 1.15 F; amount over the hourly base wage: 36.75 F.

Total of differences between what I made and the hourly wage: .25 F + 1 F + .95 F + .25 F + .90 F = 2.50 F (it won't bankrupt the factory . . .).

SIXTH WEEK

Monday, 7th. 7-9:30 A.M.: continued the *cardboards*. Did 865 of them from 7 to 8:45 A.M. (1¾ hrs. at 50 centimes per hundred); I ought to have done 1,050 of them. Then went to clip the ones that were too large, which is why Bret put me down for ½ hr. (actual time).

From 9:15 to 9:30 worked on clipping them. Put down ½ hr. on the 1st voucher (so 1¼ hrs. for 680 pieces), that is, for 3.40 F; therefore 2.72 F per hr.; *didn't make the rate*. Put down 1 hr. 10 min. on the second voucher for a few more than 700 pieces; *MADE THE RATE*. Total time: 1 hr. 10 min. + ½ hr. + ½ hr. = 2 hrs. 10 min.

9:30-10:20: 1 hr. of *work paid by the hour* (sheared off ends of long precut strips for Bret).

10:20-2:40: *polishing* at the press (with the nice set-up man from the back) the large pieces out of which I had cut little tongues on Friday from 1:30 to 3 (another woman had cambered them in the meantime). .80 per hundred! Did 516 in 2 hrs. 50 min. Put down 2 1/2 hrs. Earned 4.15 F, that is, officially 1.65 F per hr. Difference between what I made and the hourly base wage for 2½ hrs.: .37 F.

2:45 to 5:15: *press to shape into ovals* small pieces that are going to be soldered. .90 per hundred. Very easy. (The timekeeper must be crazy!) Made 1,400 of them; so earned $1,400 \times .90 = 14 \times 90 = 12.60$ F. Actual tempo: 5.05 F! Put down ½ hr. + ¾ hr. + 2¼ hrs. [3 orders] = 3½ hrs.; tempo there is 3.60 F (more to do).

Total hours: 2 hrs. 10 min. + 1 hr. + 2½ hrs. + 3½ hrs. = 9 hrs. 10 min.; that is, 25 minutes ahead (that is, 1 hr. 25 min. or 1 hr. 50 min.).

Total earnings: 3.40 F + 4.15 F + 12.60 F = 20.15 F; add to that 1½ hrs. paid by the hour (between 4.50 F and 6 F). (The whole day at 3 F per hr. would be 26.25 F; but for the polishing voucher on which I didn't make the rate they owe me more than on 1.80 F.) Say 25 F in 8¾ hrs. Exactly 2.88 F per hr.

Tuesday, 8th, morning. 7:30-11:15: 1,181 pieces planished at the stamping press. Accident at 7:15: a piece stuck in the tool jams it. Set-up

man (Ilion) composed and patient. Only 25 botched pieces. Not my fault; but from now on I'll be careful with this machine. 2 3/4 hrs. 5.30 F (.45 per hundred). *Didn't make the rate.* (While it was being repaired, spent 1 1/4 hrs. turning a crank to cut out cardboards. The woman working with me was raising the crank too soon and accused me of turning too quickly. . . . 515,645. Work paid by the hour.)

11:15–3:40: *large press* with Robert; removing rough edges—easy. C 280–804—put in 2 1/2 hrs. (just *made the rate*; didn't have the voucher except at the end). Robert, a bit curt earlier, became very nice, patient, and concerned about helping me understand my work. The warehouse keeper must have spoken to him. Robert is decidedly likable. Importance of a set-up man having human qualities.

3:45–5:15 and [incomplete in the original text]

Wednesday, 9th. 7 A.M.—1:30 *cambering on the machine operated by buttons.* The tool was jamming—oil every piece—(by the way, the foreman spoke to me in a nice tone of voice that he rarely uses)—long job—62 per hundred; but the rate probably doesn't mean anything. Did 833—put down 6 hrs. total. Work not too boring, thanks to the feeling of responsibility (I was studying how to avoid the jamming).

1:30–3:30, *drilled holes at the stamping press* (pieces like the ones I planished the time the foreman made me start over). At first the stop was set wrong. Ilion doesn't worry about it much—takes his time correcting it—sings snatches of songs. I worked slowly because I was being careful to check everything (I was afraid of not placing the pieces correctly against the stop). *Hrs.?* Put down 1 1/4 hrs.—*didn't make the rate.*

3:45–5:15 *riveting with Léon; steel caps wrapped in paper.* Easy; just pay attention to positioning the washers correctly (countersunk hole on top). Worked at the required tempo, i.e., uninterruptedly. But worked very slowly in the beginning (curb that tendency in the future).

6 vouchers, made the rate on 4 of them. Worked on average at a tempo of 2.88 F.

Uneventful day. Not particularly hard. Feeling of silent fraternity with the rugged set-up man from the back (the only one). Spoke to no one. Nothing very instructive.

I feel much better about the factory after being in the workshop at the back, even though I am no longer there.

A woman drill operator had a clump of hair completely torn out by her machine, despite her hairnet; a large bald patch is visible on her head. It

happened at the end of a morning. She came to work in the afternoon just the same, although she was in a lot of pain and was even more afraid.

Very cold this week. Temperature varies greatly according to where you are in the factory; there are some places where I am so chilled at my machine that my work is clearly slowed down. You go from a machine located in front of a hot-air vent, or even a furnace, to a machine exposed to drafts. The cloakrooms aren't heated at all; you freeze for the five minutes it takes you to wash your hands and get dressed. One of us has chronic bronchitis, serious enough that she has to apply cupping-glasses every other day. . . .

Thursday, 10th. (Awakened at 3:30 A.M. by intense earache, had chills, felt feverish. . . .)

7–10:40 A.M.: continued—fast tempo, in spite of feeling ill. An effort, but after a while a mechanical, rather degrading sort of happiness—botched one piece (no bawling out). Toward the end, bureaucratic incident: 10 washers short.

The bureaucratic incident is very funny. I report the shortage of 10 washers to Léon who, displeased (just as if it were my fault), sends me back to the foreman. The latter curtly sends me to Mme Blay, in the glass cubicle. She takes me to the storeroom managed by Bretonnet (who isn't there), doesn't find any washers, concludes from that that there aren't any, returns to the cubicle, telephones the office from which she thinks the order comes; they refer her to Mr. X. She telephones his office, where they tell her that he has gone to Mr. Y.'s office, and they won't go and get him. She hangs up, laughs and fumes (but still good humoredly) for a few minutes, and telephones Mr. Y.'s office, where they give her Mr. X., who says he has nothing to do with that order. Laughing, she tells her tribulations to Mouquet, and concludes that there is nothing for it but to work with the quantity they have. Mouquet calmly approves, adding that they are not equipped to make washers. I go to tell this to the foreman, then to Léon (who bawls me out!). While I am doing my voucher, someone apparently made a fresh search of Bretonnet's storeroom; Léon brings me about fifteen washers (still bawling me out!) and I proceed to do the 10 remaining pieces. Of course, all this bureaucratic rigamarole represents so much time for which I am not paid. . . .

In the meantime—the foreman and Léon have a slight row about finding a machine for me.

10:45 to 11:25, *annealing* at Léon's furnace—25 pieces—had to

remain continuously in front of the furnace (small, however) in order to watch. Discomfort from heat tolerable. Put down 35 min.—.036 the piece; worked for .90 F.

11:30 to 5 P.M., *holes in large and heavy baffle plate* (.56 per hundred; price capriciously set). C. 12190, B55—213 pieces—put down 4 hrs.

Drama—a little cowardice on Léon's part ("I don't intend to be responsible for somebody else's mistakes"). He goes with my worst piece to the foreman (his rage—) —The foreman—who contrary to his usual habit is rather kind—comes to look and discovers that the stops are inadequate. He orders them changed. Léon installs a continuous stop at the back. I turn out another defective piece, fooled by the old stop. Léon storms and goes to the foreman. Fortunately, I then make a good one. I continue, trembling. As a last resort, I get the warehouse keeper, who explains it all to me gently and in a luminous fashion (instead of gripping the piece, support it from underneath, and push steadily forward with my thumbs; slide it along the stop to make sure it is there). Mimi, who had come to my assistance earlier, hadn't been able to help me, except to advise me not to worry so much.

Tremendous distance between the warehouse keeper and the set-up men—especially Léon, who is the least competent.

I tell Mimi, showing her the price: "It can't be helped, I just won't make the rate." She answers, "Yes, *since they don't want to pay us for badly made pieces*, there's nothing else to do" (!).

Friday, 11th. 7–8:05 A.M.: same job, made 601 pieces, that's 5.04 F. Put down 1½ hrs. *Made the rate.* Worked at almost 4 F per hr., officially for 3.40 F.

8:15–10:15: *contacts*: drilling small copper bars while you set them against the stop; no difficulty. I ask Ilion what they are for; he answers me with a joke. Robert, on the other hand, always gives me an explanation when I ask him a question, and shows me the plan; but the warehouse keeper had to speak to him. As for Léon, when I look at his orders, he bawls me out. Why? Hierarchy? No. He thinks that I am trying to fix it so that I have the best jobs. In any case, it's not comradeship.

9C 412087, B 2, 600 at .64 per hundred = 3.84 F. Put down 1¾ hrs. Didn't make the rate. At the end, slight tiff with the shearer (I refuse to do some pieces over, which turns out to be unnecessary anyway).

10:45–11:30—*Robert's large press.*

11:45–5:45—*shearing and drilling copper strips* (with Léon). Second drama. —After 250 pieces have been done, Léon notices that the holes aren't centered (I had noticed nothing). Fresh shouting. Mouquet turns up, sees my disconsolate expression and is very kind. As soon as Mouquet shows up, Léon—who doesn't give a damn since he is released from responsibility—will say nothing further. As for me, instead of realizing that the exact placement of the holes apparently doesn't much matter, I stop at every piece to see if it is against the stop and constantly compare it to the model. Léon bawls me out again, but this time with good intentions, evidently not being able to understand that it is possible to be conscientious at the expense of one's pocketbook. I speed up a little, but at 5:45 have done only 1,845 pieces. Paid .45 per hundred; so earned 4.50 F + 3.60 F + 20 centimes = 8.30 F, which is barely 2 F per hr. Would have to make up more than 1½ hrs. There are 10,000 pieces.

Léon is doing me a great favor by giving me this job. It really is a large order. Still, even on the last day, when I was used to the job, and going at top speed because I was anxious to make up for my lost time, I barely made the prescribed 3 F. True, I was slightly ill. But the work is still very badly paid.

Saturday, 12th. —Same job. Go as fast as I can. Find some ways of working: first, put the strips in straight (Léon had adjusted the supports badly). Then slide the strip along the stop with a continuous movement. At first I made 800 pieces in a little more than an hour, then slowed down because of fatigue. *Very hard.* Back-breaking work that reminds me of digging potatoes—right arm constantly extended—pedal slightly stiff. Thank heaven, it's Saturday!

Couldn't catch up. Made 2,600, that's 9 F + 2.70 F = 11.70 F in 4 hrs. Far from catching up, I'm still about 30 centimes (that's 60 pieces) under the prescribed speed. And I gave it all my strength. . . . True, went to sleep too late.

Did in all: 4,400.

Afternoon and Sunday painful: headaches—slept poorly, my one night [worrying . . .].

SEVENTH WEEK

Monday, 14th. —Same job. Go even faster—developed greater continuity

in pedaling. Ended up making 10,150, that is, 5,050 in the course of the day, or

$$22.50 \text{ F} + 3.75 \text{ F} = 26.25 \text{ F in } 8\frac{3}{4} \text{ hrs.}$$

Barely 3 F per hr. (to hell with the 60 centimes).

I'm exhausted. After all that I'm still not caught up, for I ought to have done the 10,000 pieces (45 F) in 15 hrs., and it took me $16\frac{3}{4}$.

At 5:45, I shut off my machine in the dejected and hopeless state of mind that accompanies total exhaustion. However, it was enough just bumping into the singing boy from the furnace who has a nice smile—running into the warehouse keeper—overhearing a more cheerful than usual exchange of jokes in the cloakroom—these little displays of brotherly feeling put me in such a joyful frame of mind that for a while I no longer feel the fatigue. But at home, headaches.

Tuesday, 15th. 7–7:30 A.M.: same job—finished (about 200 were left). Put down a total of $17\frac{1}{2}$ hrs. Didn't make the rate, but the last 200 were above 2.50 F.

Wandered about a little, to no purpose.

8 A.M.: *collars* with Biol. Very large press (stamping press)—very heavy pieces (1 kg.?). There are 250 of them to do. Paid 3.50 per hundred. Have to oil each piece and the tool every time. Very hard work; I have to stand, and the pieces are heavy. Not feeling well; earache, headache. . . .

Incident with the belt, Mouquet–Biol.

First incident, in the morning; Biol and Mouquet. The machine's belt was adjusted before I worked on it, but incorrectly, it seems, for it rides over the edge. Mouquet orders it shut off (Biol was at fault to a certain extent; he should have shut it off before), and says to Biol, "The pulley has shifted, that's why the belt rides off." Biol, eyeing the belt thoughtfully, starts a sentence: "No . . ." and Mouquet interrupts him: "What do you mean, No! I say Yes! . . ." Biol, without a word of reply, goes to find the guy in charge of repairs. As for me, fierce desire to slap Mouquet for his peremptory manner and his humiliatingly authoritarian tone of voice. (Later I learn that Biol is universally regarded as a sort of half-wit.)

Second incident. In the afternoon, all of a sudden the tool stamps a piece and I can't remove it. A little rod preventing the bar on top of the tool from coming down had slipped out of its hole, and I hadn't noticed it. So the tool had gone too deeply into the piece. Biol speaks to me as if it were my fault.

Tuesday at 1 P.M., leaflets from the unitary syndicate³ were passed out. Accepted with visible pleasure (which I share) by almost all the men and not a few of the women. The Italian woman smiles. The singing boy. . . . People hold the leaflets in their hands ostentatiously, several reading them as they enter the factory. Idiotic content.

Story overheard: a workman made some bobbins with the hooks a centimeter too short. The foreman (Mouquet) told him, "If they're fucked up, you've had it." But luckily *another* order called for exactly these bobbins, and the worker was kept on. . . .

The effect of exhaustion is to make me forget my real reasons for spending time in the factory, and to make it almost impossible for me to overcome the strongest temptation that this life entails: that of not thinking anymore, which is the one and only way of not suffering from it. It's only on Saturday afternoon and Sunday that a few memories and shreds of ideas return to me, and I remember that I am *also* a thinking being. The terror that takes hold of me when I realize how dependent I am on external circumstances: all that would be needed is for circumstances someday to force me to work at a job without a weekly rest—which after all is always possible—and I would become a beast of burden, docile and resigned (at least for me). Only the feeling of brotherhood, and outrage in the face of injustices inflicted on others, remain intact—but how long would all that last? I am almost ready to conclude that the salvation of a worker's soul depends primarily on his physical constitution. I don't see how those who are not physically strong can avoid falling into some form of despair—drunkenness, or vagabondage, or crime, or debauchery, or simply (and far more often) brutishness—(and religion?).

Revolt is impossible, except for momentary flashes (I mean even as a feeling). First of all, against what? You are alone with your work, you could not revolt except against it—but to work in an irritated state of mind would be to work badly, and therefore to starve. Cf. the tubercular woman fired for having botched an order. We are like horses who hurt themselves as soon as they pull on their bits—and we bow our heads. We even lose consciousness of the situation; we just submit. Any reawakening of thought is then painful.

³ *Confédération générale du Travail unitaire*, the Communist-dominated trade-union federation.

Jealousy between workers. The conversation between the tall conceited blond workman and Mimi, who was accused of having hurried so as to be there at the right time for a “good order.” Mimi to me: “You aren’t jealous. You’re wrong not to be.” However, she says she isn’t—but she may be anyway.

Cf. incident with the redhead Tuesday evening. She claimed a job that Ilion was in the process of giving me, arguing that she had stopped before me (but she had an order started, only it was interrupted; she didn’t tell Ilion that until after I had gone away . . .). The job was bad (.56 per hundred, setting pieces against a stop so flat it’s almost impossible to see if it’s really there). However, I had to force myself to give it to her, since I was between one and three hours behind. But I’m sure that when she saw that the job was no good, she thought that was the reason I gave it up to her.

The same redhead, at the time of the layoffs, didn’t much like the idea that single women with kids should be exempted from being laid off.

I don’t find anything else to do. Robert refuses me one job because, he says, I would botch half of it. So I just go and chat with the warehouse keeper, quite content in one sense, for I am exhausted.

Tuesday evening of the 7th week (January 15) Baldenweck diagnoses me as having otitis. I go to rue Auguste-Comte⁴ on Thursday and remain there the 8th and 9th weeks. The 10th, 11th, and 12th weeks (until Friday) I am at Montana in Switzerland, where I see A.L.’s brother and Fehling. I go back to rue Lecourbe⁵ Saturday night (February 23). Return to the factory the 25th. Absent a month and ten days. Had asked for a leave of 15 days beginning the evening of February 1. Took 10 days more: 25 days. As of February 24th, have worked a total of 5 weeks (counting only days actually worked).

Was off 6 weeks.

THIRTEENTH WEEK

(40 hr. week; quitting time 4:30, Saturday off)

Monday, 25th, 7–8:15 A.M. (approx.): time without work, spent with Mimi and Eugénie—Louissette’s friend, etc.

After 8:15: *stamping rivets* at the light press. Same work as Thursday

⁴ The street on which Well’s parents’ apartment was located.

⁵ The street in the factory district where Weil was renting a room.

and Friday of the 3rd week, except that only one side can go against the stop, which makes it necessary to look at each piece, and slow down. I can’t go fast. I do a total of 2,625 pieces, that is, almost 400 per hour (allowance made for the fact that I lost 10 min. drawing my pay at 11 A.M.). The first hour I can’t work; my hand trembles with nervousness. After that I’m all right, except for the slowness. But I work without tiring. Besides, I don’t have the voucher.

If I were no more debilitated and fatigued than this every day, I would not be unhappy at the factory.

Tuesday. Rivets again. I have the voucher: .62 per hundred, like the other time (when, however, either side could go against the stop). I do the remainder at about 500 per hour, that is, 3 F, but don’t make up the time lost the day before. At noon, return home gripped by extreme exhaustion; hardly eat anything, can barely drag myself back to the factory. But once I start work again, the fatigue disappears, replaced by a sort of gaiety, and I leave without feeling tired. Finish the screwthreads between 3:30 and 4 (ord. 406367, b. 3). There are 6,011 of them. So I did 3,375 in more than 7 hrs. (even so, that’s less than 500 per hr.), that is, 21 F. Total 37.20 F. Put down 13³/₄ hrs.

From 4 to 4:30: washers, as usual with Jacquot, at a hand press. Necessary to support them with my hand to feed them into the die. Mouquet wants to do a set-up that is easier to use; Jacquot can’t do it because there aren’t any blocks of exactly the right height, and only makes me lose time. 110 washers.

Wednesday. Finished 8:10. 560 washers in all, at .468 per hundred; earned 2.60 F! Mimi follows me (I hold her up a little), complaining bitterly about the voucher in a rather tired voice [c. 406246, b. 1].

Put down 1¹/₂ hrs.

Foil. At first I think I won’t be able to do it, but I manage very well. Jacquot, very gentle, had told me to tell him if I couldn’t do it. Mistake on the price: 2.80 per hundred, but it means for 100 packets of 6, that is, for the whole order! At least that’s what Mimi says. I had never hurried before. Finished at 10 A.M., earned exactly 2.80 F! Put down 2 hrs.—ord. 42512, b. 2.

Conversations when there is no work. Louissette’s friend had an abscess in her throat—was out 5 days—came back: “Kids don’t ask you if you’re sick”; worked two days, out again; came back after the abscess burst. She’s

always cheerful. She's becoming irritable, she says, can no longer stand her kids tearing around when they play, etc.

Mouquet said to her, "Your hair is as long as your body." She was really mortified. Would have liked to tell him off. "You can't answer back." Mimi's sister does. Once she went to find him to complain about a voucher; he abruptly ordered her back to her job; she went back, but didn't stop complaining. Fifteen minutes later he went to find her and straightened out the voucher. . . . "When the job isn't going right, it's better to speak to him than to a set-up man or to Chastrel; and at times like that he's very nice." But angry sometimes; and he's factless. They quote one of his mortifying remarks (to Mimi's sister): "You've never been hunting?"—Eugénie interrupted her work and comes to tell me excitedly that she saw circus animals at the Porte de Versailles (2 F admission); that she petted the leopard. . . .

Woes of the young unskilled worker: he had 2 years of Latin, 1 year of Greek, 1 of English (he naively brags about it), is an office worker by profession (he is very proud of that), and has been demoted to being an unskilled laborer! "You have to obey these assholes who can't even sign their names!" And you even get bawled out by them. "If that's working-class comradeship! . . ." After that smiles are exchanged when he passes by. He is perhaps 17. Rather pretentious.

Léon isn't there (hurt his arm). Indescribable relief. Jacquot replaces him, relaxed and altogether charming.

Riveting at the large fly-press. Difficult—the pieces don't all go right. One botched piece, which makes Jacquot look solemn. The count is wrong; work with the quantity given! (108 pieces, I think, instead of 125.) Paid .034 per piece, that is, 3.65 F total (1 hr. lost). And I finished at 2:45! Put down 3 hrs. Then spent ¾ hr. when there was no work at Bretonnet's (cutting scrap); finally some *cardboards* that I finished at exactly 4:30, with Jacquot, at a press that can be hand- or foot-operated, as you like. Jacquot nice, as usual (got a packing case for me, etc.). The young unskilled worker comes and bothers me. Price not marked, but didn't make the rate.

Earned these 3 days: 37.20 F + 3.60 F + 2.60 F + 2.80 F + 3.65 F + (admit it!) 2.50 F = 52.35 F!!! That is, 17.43 F per 8-hr. day, that is, an average of 2.20 F per hour! Below the official hourly base wage!

In the late afternoon, working on my cardboards, headaches. But at the same time a feeling of having physical resources. The factory noises, some of them now meaningful (the mallet blows of the coppersmiths, the sledge

hammer . . .), simultaneously give me profound moral joy and cause me physical pain. Very curious sensation.

Back at my place, headaches worse, vomiting, don't eat, scarcely sleep; at 4:30 decide to stay home; at 5 A.M., get up. . . . Hot compresses, headache powder. Thursday morning, okay.

Thursday. "Terminal strips with airgaps." Ord. c 421346, b. 1, .56 per hundred. 1,068 pieces, that is, 6 F. Finished at 9:05 (?), put down 2 hrs., *made the rate* (the only one).

"Baffle with the movable finger" with Robert—pieces that I think at first will be difficult to position; but then I realize the tool positions them as it comes down, and it goes faster. 510 pieces, .71 per hundred, that's 3.50 F. Finish at 10:45, put down 1½ hrs. [that's 2.30 F per hr.]. Ord. 421329, b. 1.

No work (scrap). Bretonnet puts down ½ hr.

Rail clips at the shearing machine (with Jacquot), (standing, one foot on the pedal, at the press where I made the large 40-kg. bars with Louisette). Ord. 421322, b. 1. .43 per hundred, it says 350 (I learn the next day there were more; I hadn't counted). 1.50 F. Put down 35 min. Finished at 11:45; this morning earned 6 F + 3.50 F + .90 F + 1.50 F = 11.90 F in 4¾ hrs.; that's exactly 2.50 F per hour.

Afternoon: cut out cardboards by the hour with Mimi's sister; I turned the crank. Very pleasant, no jerks like the time before. Put down 1¼ hrs.

At 2:30 put on *Terminal Connectors* by Jacquot (parts for electrical motors, says the warehouse keeper). C. 421337, b. 1—616 per hundred, piece work.

The difficulty was to put the pieces against the stop so that the 2nd right angle is made. If they weren't flush against the stop, the piece was botched. Jacquot explains it to me in a nice way. I set to work confidently. I succeed several times. One piece, too wide, doesn't fit into the hollow of the die, and since it isn't held in place, backs up. Charel,⁶ right behind me, tells me (not too roughly) to put them against the stop more carefully. I succeed with a few more, then botch another one. Not only are some pieces too wide, but others are too narrow, and they slip because the stop is rounded-off through use. I show Jacquot; he says to put the wide ones in sideways. I call him over again; he speaks to Charel, tells me to continue and, if it doesn't work, to tell Charel. I try again, then go to Charel, holding a botched piece. He says, "That one's had it. You have to put them against

6 S W drops the "s" from Chastrel's name for the rest of the journal.

the stop." I try to explain. He says, not getting up, "Get on with it, and try not to keep on doing things like that." I immediately call the warehouse keeper over, who says, "It doesn't work right, obviously, although I could make them all turn out." He tries putting them in with his finger and holding them when the tool comes down . . . and also borches quite a lot of them! He thinks about that for a long time, calls for a guy from the tool shop who tells him that the stop is worn (I had seen that right away!), removes the die, proceeds to file the stop, and resets the machine. I continue the finger method (dangerous!). It works better, but still not well. I go to find him again; he's with Mouquet, who comes to look, gives an order to widen the die a little and set the tool lower so there's no chance of my hand passing under it. It works until 4:30. . . . A little over 100 pieces done, and about 40 borched.

I was paid 66.55 F for these 4 days (4 F withheld for Social Insurance). But the last 2 were paid at the hourly base wage: for me, 14.40 F per day (1.80 F per hour). I made 12.95 F over the base wage for the first 2 days.

28.80 F + 12.95 F = 41.75 F. Where the devil did they get that? There was the period when there was no work (1¼ hrs., that is, 3.25 F?). And what else?

Friday, March 1st. Do my terminal connectors. Finish at 10:30; made 2,131 in all, that is, about 2,030 this morning in 3½ hrs. (that's 580 per hour, at .616 per hundred!). Earned in all 13 F. Explain to Chatel that I lost 2 hrs. the afternoon before; he mutters, "2 hours!" and puts "time lost" on the voucher . . . but not *how much!* I put down 2 hrs. and 3½ hrs.

No work until 11:45.

Argument between Dubois, Eugénie, and the redhead during the period of no work.

Annealing at the small furnace after lunch; it goes all right; that is, I don't lose my presence of mind when I take out the pieces. Hard, because I am continuously in front of the furnace (not like at the big one). Interrupted at 2 o'clock because . . . the pieces are supposed to be laminated cold!!! I put down only my time on the voucher. Put down ¾ hr.

Wait for Robert a good twenty minutes. Another woman, too. . . .

On the advice of the warehouse keeper, went to ask Delouche for permission to stay until 5:15. Granted. The same afternoon went to the tool shop. The foreman didn't see me.

"*Handles*" at the shearing machine, c. 918452, b. 31. With Robert.

300 to do, at .616 per hundred, that is, 1.85 F for the lot. I didn't think about the price, the required speed, and I took my time doing them, being very careful each time to place the rounded end of the piece right against the stop. Some bars were twisted and were difficult to hold against the stop. Took much too long; finished at 3:25 (but had begun late). Put down 1 hr.

Terminal Connectors. The same kind. Still .616 per hundred—final operation is making them V-shaped. With the button-operated machine with plierlike jaws. Often slowed down by the difficulty of disengaging the piece from the tool; otherwise, easy to put in.

The piece bends slightly while the tool is making it V-shaped. I show it to Jacquot (who had told me, however, that I needn't look at the pieces); he shows it to Chatel; both discuss it solemnly, then Chatel says that it will be planned (but how?) and orders me to continue. I continue at a very comfortable pace, much too slowly. Did only 281 pieces! 1,850 remain to be done in *at most* 3¼ hrs., which means, allowing for losses of time, at a tempo of 600 per hour. Essential!

If I put down 1 hr. Friday for the terminal connectors, I've lost ½ hr. But better, if possible, to lose 1 hour than not make the rate on my voucher. ¼ hour lost (if cleaning counts as ¼ hr.).

But no; actually the rate is .72 (buttons), and in 5 hrs. I made 15.30 F. 4 hrs. left, and to catch up I would have to do 460 an hour. I should have to do only 425 in 1 hr. If on Monday I do only 425 per hour, in order not to fall below the rate I still lose 20 min. Friday.

But no, again; there's ¼ hr. for machine cleaning. So have to count only ¾ hr. Friday, and have to make up only 5 min., negligible. So still have 4¼ hrs. Have to finish by 11:15.

Much less tired than I feared. Even moments of euphoria at my machines, such as I had not had even at Montana (delayed effect!). But still have trouble eating.

FOURTEENTH WEEK

Monday, 4th. Acute headaches Monday when I got up. As ill luck would have it, the turning thing that makes the infernal racket is going all day long right next to me. At noon, can hardly eat. Still, I work fast, and without headache powders.

Terminal Connectors. Don't finish until 11:45, but not my fault; over ½ hr., I'm sure, was lost in the morning (even much more) due to the

machine. "With the buttons," says Jacquot, "it never works right." I persuaded him to set up the pedal, though that's more dangerous. It doesn't work any better; I have to call him again. On Mouquet's order, he resets the buttons. Still doesn't work. Little Jacquot loses his patience. . . . At 11:10, starts to disassemble the machine—broken spring. But when he re-assembles it, it doesn't work at all. He gets very rattled. . . . The shift foreman, when I hand him my voucher (for I gave up finishing the pieces, since what had been done was more than the count) is sarcastic about J.

Afternoon: no work for ½ hr. Then 2 orders for *terminal strips*, 520 each, at .71 per hundred (c. 421275, b. 4). I lost some time at the beginning extracting the pieces, counting them—also positioning them, for I took some unnecessary precautions—and pedaled inefficiently (not all the way down; stiff pedal). 1st order finished at 3:15. 2nd began at 3:25 (I lost 5 min. waiting, not having noticed Jacquot had the machine ready); done at a hellish rate, my maximum, finished at exactly 4:30. I made 3.60 F per hour on it. Put down 1 hr. 20 min. for each order. 4½ hrs. + ½ + 2 hrs. 40 min. = 7.40 F. Earned Friday and Monday: 12.30 F + 1.35 F + 1.85 F + 14.40 F + .90 F + 7.80 F = 39.60 F. Of that, 21.20 F for Monday. Put 1 hr. for Friday and 4½ hrs. for Monday.

Friday, I saw Biol's heavy machine being set up (not ready). The warehouse keeper told me, "Don't take that, it's too hard." I found something else. On Monday I see Eugénie doing that job all day long. Am conscience stricken. If I had *wanted* to be available for it, I probably could have. And I know how hard it is; I did it—or something like it—the last afternoon I had oritis. At 4:30 she is visibly exhausted.

Jacquot and the machine.

The warehouse keeper, the draftsman, and the "universal tool."

The tool shop and its foreman.

What did happen with the machine? (idiot, not to have observed more attentively).—When I pressed the buttons, the tool sometimes came down twice; the shift foreman, seeing that, said, "It shouldn't do that" (that was all!). Later, it did the same thing again, only the 2nd time it stayed down! Jacquot raised it and I continued. . . . until the problem began again. He finally had me stop. Ilion, who passed by, told him that the "finger" (the

spring) of the large wheel is broken. It's true. But it seems there was still something else wrong. It's clear that for little Jacquot the machine is a strange beast. . . .

Tuesday morning. 3 orders similar to those of Monday afternoon.

1) 600 at .56 per hundred, small pieces difficult to take out, put down 1¼ hrs.

2) 550 at .71 per hundred, put down 1 hr. 20 min.

3) 550 at .71 per hundred, put down 1 hr. 20 min.

Very tiring over an extended period of time, for the pedal is very stiff (cramps). Jacquot charming as usual.

Afterward, came across Biol (which made me long for the heavy pieces that had made me conscience stricken); he set me up at the "piano," where I then spent the whole afternoon, except for the period from 2:45 to 3:45 when there was no work. The 2 orders paid .50 per hundred; one was for 630, the other for 315.

For time, put down 2 hrs., then ¾ hrs.

Total: 1¼ hrs., 1 hr. 20 min., 1 hr. 20 min., 2¾ hrs. = 6 hrs. 40 min.;

I would need 1 hr. 20 min. of time when there was no work; I think I have 1 hr., which would make 20 min. lost.

At 4:30, very tired, so tired that I leave right away. In the evening, acute headaches.

At the "piano" at first had a great deal of difficulty due to my fear of not putting the pieces properly against the stop. By the end of the afternoon, it went a little better. But my fingertips were bleeding.

Wednesday morning. Still piano (630 pieces). Went even better, except for sore fingers—still, took over 1½ hrs. Put down 1 hr. 20 min. Immediately afterward, Robert had me do a 50-piece order (c. 421146 27) (Paid?). Nice enough to give me another voucher for an order of 50 of the same, which he had already done because it was urgent. Difficulties: some of the pieces don't fit against the stop. He makes me put them aside so he can do them himself. Slowed down by severe fatigue and headaches, I spent ½ hr. on the two orders. Afterward, the "piano" again; the same 630, to do again in another way. I try to go quickly and narrowly miss botching some; for all that, I no longer let my fear of botching hold me back too much (although Biol told me that I mustn't lose a single piece,

because the count may be short, or exact). I count the pieces again while I'm redoing them. The first time, had found 610. Now come up with 620, give or take a few. The woman who had done them before said she had found 630. The 2nd time I say that the count is right, to have done with it. How do they expect you to keep a decent count at a rate of .50 per hundred? Put down 1 hr. 20 min. Afterward, Robert reprimands me. 2 orders marked 25 minutes each (what?).

Finished all that (including filling out the vouchers) at 11:15. I tell the foreman I finished at 11:05; he fills in a voucher saying I stopped at 11 o'clock, in return for which I didn't claim any time lost this morning. He reprimands me for having filled in all my vouchers at the same time.

Afternoon, no work until 2 o'clock. Then covers: 200 at 1.45 per hundred! So I should do the job in less than an hour. But they are heavy, they have to be taken out of a packing case, and you work the pedal 4 times for each one, and there are 2 operations.

First you position them then you turn them over. The 2nd operation like this:



is like this:



then you turn them over. So, you do them all set up the 1st way, pedaling twice for each one, then set up the 2nd way, the same thing—so you have to pedal 800 times. But they are not that easy to position. The screws have to go through the holes, etc. I got the voucher only after the 1st operation was finished. I often had the feeling that I wasn't going as fast as I could. Still, I was exhausted. In the late afternoon I felt for the first time really crushed by fatigue, just like before leaving for Montana; the feeling of sliding back into the condition of beast of burden. Stuck it out, however; had a conversation with the warehouse keeper, visited the tool shop.

Thursday. Continued with the same pieces until 8 A.M. Put down 3 1/2 hrs.; the truth (forgot to note down the order). Afterward, c. 421360, b. 230, rail clips at 1.28 F per hundred. Finished at 9:45. Put down 1 hr. 10 min. (was there a 1/2-hr. interval when there was no work? I no longer know). Worked with Jacquot, at the small hand press. Jacquot's smiles as usual charming.

Afterward, no work until 11 A.M. During the interval, felt the full brunt of fatigue, waited for the job to be given me with a sickish feeling. During

the periods of no work the women get angry at frequently losing their turn to get a job for orders of 100 pieces (especially Mimi's sister). Jacquot came, bringing an order for 5,000 pieces; it was my turn. It was for cutting washers out of metal strips, with uninterrupted pedaling. Price .224 per hundred (more or less). I very much wanted not to fall below the rate. I set to work singlemindedly. Jacquot gave me only one bit of advice: don't let it jam, for fear of breaking the tool. Fatigue and the wish to go fast made me a little nervous. When I began I didn't insert one strip far enough, which forced me to start the 1st pedal downstroke over again, and I botched one piece (one botched piece out of 5,000 isn't much, but if it happened with every strip, it would be a lot). It happened several times. Finally, on edge, I inserted the strip again, this time too far; it slid over the stop and instead of a washer out comes a cone. Instead of calling Jacquot right away, I turn the strip over but, unaware of the mistake that I've made, I again overshoot the stop (at least it's very likely that's what happened), and another cone falls out and, immediately after it, the "grenadier" of the tool (?). The tool is broken. What upset me most was the curt and harsh tone in which dear little Jacquot talked to me. It was a rush order; the set-up, which was perhaps difficult, had to be done over, and everyone was on edge because of similar accidents that had happened on preceding days (and perhaps the same day?). The shift foreman, of course, bawled me out like the sergeant-major that he is, but as it were collectively ("it's unfortunate having women workers who . . ."). Mimi, who sees me looking desolate, comforts me gently. It's 11:45.

Afternoon (acute headaches). No work until 3:30. 500 pieces, cutting rings out of metal strips again (what rotten luck!), but at the small hand press. Fear of beginning again makes me horribly nervous. Actually, I more than once slide the strip a little over the stop on the 1st pedal stroke, but nothing happens; each time I tremble. . . . Jacquot found his smiles again (I have to send for him because the machine behaves capriciously—refuses to start, or works n times in succession for one pedal stroke), but I haven't the heart to respond to them.

Incident between Joséphine (the redhead) and Charrel. It seems she was given a very poorly paid job (at the press beside mine, the one with the buttons opposite the foreman's office). She complained. Charrel gave her a first-class bawling out, saying very vulgar things, it seemed to me (but I couldn't make out the words very well). She made no reply, bit her lips, swallowed her humiliation, visibly repressed a desire to cry, and, proba-

by, an even stronger desire to answer back furiously. 3 or 4 women witnessed the scene in silence, only half keeping back their smiles (Eugénie among them). For if Joséphine hadn't gotten this bad job, one of them would have had it; so they were quite pleased that Joséphine got the bawling out, and say so openly, later, during a period when there is no work—but not in her presence. Conversely, Joséphine would not have minded the bad job being palmed off on someone else.

Conversations during the period without work (I ought to take them all down). On houses in the suburbs (Mimi's sister and Joséphine). When Nénette is there most often there is nothing but jokes and confidences that would make a regiment of Hussars blush. (Cf. the woman whose "friend" is a painter [but she lives alone] and who boasts of sleeping with him 3 times a day, morning, noon, and night; who explains the difference between his "technique" and another's—who gives out she is aided financially by him, and "deprives herself of nothing"; as far as I understood, the time she doesn't spend making love, she spends cooking and eating.)

But there's more to Nénette than that—when she speaks of her kids (the boy is 13, the girl 6)—of their studies—of her son's liking for reading (she speaks of it with respect). The last few days of this week, in which she had no work a lot of the time, she has been serious in a way that is unlike her; she is obviously wondering what she will do to pay for the kids' schooling.⁷

Argument revolving around Mme Forestier. There is talk of taking up a collection for her. Eugénie declares that she will contribute nothing. Joséphine also (but she probably doesn't give too often), and adds that Mme Forestier went through the factory to say hello to everyone (the same day I came back) because of the collection. Nénette and the Italian women, who used to be great friends of hers, won't give anything either. Apparently she has done some injury, not to them, but to several others (?).

The Italian woman is ill. My 2nd week, she had asked for leave and Mouquet refused; but there were only 2 of them, and there was no work. She has 2 kids; her husband is a brickmaker (unskilled work) and earns 2-75 F per hour. So she can't take care of herself. She has a bad liver, and headaches that the din of the factory makes unendurable (I know about that!).

⁷ Met her in the metro when I was at Renault. She told how a week earlier she had been ill, hadn't been able to inform them and no longer dared to return to Alsthom—(what does she have to lose? But . . .). Certainly an impulsive act. . . . A look of pained compassion when I told her I was at Renault. (Note of sw)

Friday. Period of no work. I don't spend the time, as I would have a few weeks earlier under such circumstances, trembling at the idea of blunders I will perhaps make. Proof that I am a little more sure of myself than before.

Ilion calls me (what time?) to notch covers for use on metros. They have a right side and a wrong side. I have a lively fear of absentmindedly doing the wrong one. 149 covers (voucher for 150) at 1-35 F per hundred. I don't really try to go fast, too afraid of botching, for here even one "messed up" piece would matter a lot. One thing to watch out for: the tool failing to penetrate and the notch not coming out. A great deal of time lost in manipulation; there are 3 tool carriages. My count came to 147 covers; the foreman was in a state and made me spend ¼ hr. doing the count again (but this ¼ hr. won't be on the voucher, but considered a part of the period when there was no work), ord. 421211, b. 3. Finished at 9 A.M. No work until 10; tired, apprehensive, I would have liked the time without work to have lasted all day. At 10 A.M. I was called to remove cardboard from magnetic circuits (work that I had done at the end of the 1st week). I saw that there were enough to last until evening. Considerable relief. I used the technique discovered the last day I had done it (many little taps of the mallet) and worked well and quite quickly (more than 30 pieces per hour; on the first days I had done 15, and Mouquet had estimated the value of my work at 1.80 F per hr., since he had told me that in 5 hrs. I had done barely 9 F worth of work). No fear of making blunders, so I was relaxed. Nevertheless (and although I had eaten at noon at a restaurant), toward the middle of the afternoon I felt myself overcome by very great weariness, and welcomed the notice that I was laid off.

FIFTEENTH WEEK

Laid off (from March 8 to March 18).—Headaches Saturday and Sunday—state of almost total prostration until noon Wednesday; in the afternoon, in magnificent spring weather, went to Gilbert's bookstore from 3 to 7 P.M. The next day went to Martine's, bought a textbook on industrial design. Friday afternoon, prostration. Didn't sleep that night (headache); slept until noon. Saturday saw Guilhéneuf (at the place where he works) from 2 to 10:30. Sunday uneventful.

SIXTEENTH WEEK

Monday, 18th. Washers out of a strip until 7:50 (?). With Léon, who has returned (my dear little Jacquot is back being a worker again). . . 336 per hundred. 336 pieces. Still fearful. Made the same blunder twice, which fortunately passed unnoticed; I became aware of it only after it had happened the 2nd time. I turned the strip over after the 1st pedal stroke; the hole that it drilled wasn't in the middle of the strip, because you support it from behind. This resulted in some bent pieces, which I hid, and the tool was probably none the better for it. Very slow work, no concern at all for speed. Put down 40 min.

Planishing the same washers on the small fly-press, which allowed me to dispose of a botched piece that had slipped by me. Ord. 907405, b. 34, .28 per hundred. Finished at 8:30, put down ½ hr. (so lost 20 min. in all), earned .95 F! My hourly base wage. . . I hadn't really tried for speed.

Planishing shunts at the small fly-press c. 420500. Had done 796 pieces by 2:15. Put down ¼ hrs. Paid 1.12 F per hundred; earned 8.90 F (barely over 2 F per hr.). Chatel had me hit 4 or 5 times per piece (2 on one end, 2 or 3 on the other). I told him, when I handed him the voucher, that under these conditions I hadn't been able to make the rate. He answered in the rudest manner, "Not make it at 1.12 F!" That didn't bother me, considering his lack of competence. I don't know if he put something on the voucher; surely not. I should have hit it fewer times. . . I tried to go fast, but I constantly found myself lapsing into daydreaming. Difficult to control the speed, since I wasn't counting. Tired, especially when leaving for lunch at 11:45 (ate at "Prisunic"; relaxation; moments before going back inside delightful; the Fortifications, the workers. . . Am a slave again in front of my machine).

In the entranceway I saw shunts like mine, connected in series to contact fingers on one side and to metal coils on the other.

No work from 2 to 3 p.m.—theoretically.

Stamping sockets out of bezels with Robert. C. 406426. 580 pieces at .50 per hundred; so 2.90 F. Put down 1 hr. 10 min., tempo 2.45 F per hr. Actually done from 2:30 to 4:10, that is, 1 hr. 40 min. But lost some time trying to use pliers on the first 100 and, at the end, gathering up the pieces. There again I attained an uninterrupted tempo only momentarily, and then fell back into daydreaming. Counter as a means of control; after having made 40 or 45 pieces in 5 min., I made 20 the next 5 minutes, when I started daydreaming.

No work from 4:15 to 4:30.
Total: 40 min. + ½ hr. + ¼ hrs. + 1 hr. + 1 hr. 10 min. + ¼ hr. = exactly 8 hrs.

Back at my place (at 5:30) feeling great. Head full of ideas all evening—however, I suffered—especially at the fly-press—much more than the Monday after Montana.

Does the meal at "Prisunic" have something to do with my feeling so good in the evening?

Tuesday. No work until 8:15.

Riveting contact fingers with Léon, until late afternoon. 500 at 4.12 F per hundred, c. 414754, b. 1. For switches. Equipment for streetcars. At first very slow; Chatel had frightened me, and I dreaded making some mistake. There must not be any botched pieces, and I botched the 1st one. There were 4 parts to assemble: the contact, 2 terminal strips, and a packet of 10 pieces of foil (but some packets had only 9). You had to pay attention to the two holes of unequal size in the large terminal strip—position the smaller hole seam side up, and in the direction of the cutting. Did the first 70 in 2 hrs., I think. . . . Afterward, never stopped daydreaming. Reached an uninterrupted tempo only in the afternoon (fortified by lunch and loafing), and only by continually repeating to myself the list of operations (iron wire—large hole—seam—direction—iron wire. . .), not so much to keep myself from making a blunder as to prevent myself from thinking, which is the condition for going fast.

I profoundly feel the humiliation of this void imposed on my thought. I finally manage to go a little faster (at the end I'm making more than 3 F per hr.), but with bitterness in my heart.

Wednesday. Same until 8:30, put down 7¼ hrs., earned 20.60 F (in 8¼ hrs., that is, 2.50 F per hr.).

I don't achieve the "uninterrupted tempo" again; I ought to have finished in 8 hrs.

Polishing the same pieces until 3:45, put down 5¼ hrs., earned 13.50 F. C. 414754, b. 4. .027 per piece. It's what I did the week I was at the furnace; Mouquet took that job away from me as badly done, and in fact I was handling it badly. So I begin in a state of apprehension. I go very, very slowly at first. Catsous leaves me to myself. The 1st discovery I make has to do with the direction in which the piece must be turned: in the one in which the belt would carry it, but while pulling it in the reverse direction. In this way the piece and the belt stay in contact (at least I imagine that's

the reason). The 2nd (made a long time ago, but I apply it here) is that a hand should do only one operation at a time. So I push with my left hand and pull with my right; as for turning the piece, I don't have to do it, the belt does it. As for the tempo, I start out at a comfortable pace; then, realizing I'm going extremely slowly, I strive for the "uninterrupted tempo," but reluctantly and with a feeling of annoyance; also I feel no pleasure at all at having mastered a trick of the trade. At noon, I eat a quick lunch at "Prisunic," then go sit in the sun across the street from the aircraft plant. I remain there in such a state of inertia that I arrive at the factory in a sort of half-dream, not in the slightest hurry, at 1:13 or 1:14.... They were locking the gate!

4-4:30 riveting, see next day.

Paid 125 F (4 F of which in advance). The week before, 70 F. That's 192 F for 32 + 48 = 80 hours... so exactly 2.40 F per hour....

Conversation with Pommier—knows all the tools.

Evening: headaches and very bitter weariness in my heart. I don't eat, except for a little bread and honey. I take a bath to help me sleep, but the headache keeps me awake almost all night. At 4:30 in the morning a great need for sleep comes over me. But I have to get up. I resist the temptation to take a half-day off.

Thursday. All day: riveting armatures—had done 700 by 4:30 (in 8¾ hrs.)—in high spirits going out at noon—exhausted after the meal. Evening: too tired to eat, lie stretched out on the bed; little by little a very sweet lassitude—delicious sleep.

C. 421121, b. 3—.056 per piece—800 pieces. Put down 14¼ hrs.

Mind empty all day, without resorting to tricks as I did in the riveting, by an effort of will kept up without too much difficulty. And yet I had gotten up with a bad headache that nearly made me stay home. I'm encouraged by the fact that this is a "good job," although it's hard. And also—especially—by a sort of sporting spirit. Work really *uninterrupted*.

Tool shop (Mouquet comes here...).

Italian woman and Mouquet.

"4 sous... an hour—that's not enough for you in this time of unemployment?"

Ilion's reflections: "The boss will always be rich... You always have to go too fast, that's why there isn't any work..."

About a "J.P." who passes by: "and to think how highly these guys are regarded"—

Friday. Finish riveting. But some rivets are missing (to tell the truth, there were some in the grooves of the machine). 8:15 to 8:45, 50 extension pieces at .54 per hundred, c. ? (I'm sure it's 413910), put down ¼ hr. Cardboard washers, not timed, job-voucher no. 1747, ord. 1415, put down 2 hrs. (took 2¼)—covers. C. 412105, b. 1, .72 per hundred (but-tons), 400 pieces. Put down 3½ hrs. (I didn't finish them by quitting time, but Charrel is finishing them). Lost 1 hr.; the day before I had picked up 3 (made up for slowness), 2 left.

Machine wrecked by Ilion (in the process of setting it up, he broke something).

The warehouse keeper: "The set-up men don't know how to use the brakes." "They don't know how to set the buttons. It's always too short, so that the valve... (?)." "

Monday. Until 8 A.M. finished *magnetic circuits*, order 20154—only 25 left. I work with ease, without hurrying, without being slow for all that. Put down 1 hr. I have 6 hrs. in all (the voucher wasn't passed).

"*Extension pieces*" (4-sided boxes to put in a forming block). Ridiculous price (.923 per hundred), 50 pieces! C. 413910, b. 1. I put down ½ hr. Finish at 9:45. You musn't put them in two at a time, Mimi tells me. You have to oil all of them.—Then?

Until 10:45, *foil* with Léon, next to Eugénie who is putting in rivets. C. 425537, b. 2—200 packets of 6—2.80 F per hundred. I go fast (the Wednesday after Montana, it took me 2 hrs. to do 100 packets!). So earned 5.60 F. I put down 1 hr. 50 min. (made the rate). Again I almost achieved the uninterrupted tempo.

Cutting pieces out of metal bars at the press where I spent one Wednesday with Louise. Put the piece right at the stop, hold it exactly parallel... I don't go fast. That lasts until 1:50 P.M. Apparently I put down too much time by mistake: 1 hr. 40 min. C. 4009194, b. 97—346 pieces at .88 per hundred! (I think I did 360, but Friday Catsous will tell me that there were only 330!). I work without making any attempt at speed; tired and discouraged by the price, also having an excuse in the fact that the pieces are hard to get out.

Scrap from 1:45 to 3:30 (so 1¾ hrs.).

Same pieces—making them triangular, on the *same* voucher. Profound disgust, which slows me down.

Finished at 4:30—put down 3¼ hrs. in all.

Tuesday, ¼ hr. scrap.

Conversation while doing scrap; Souchal vulgar. One day Joséphine summoned him to come . . .⁸ her, got Mouquet to force him to do it. Mouquet is fair, but capricious. Adjusts the vouchers you haven't made the rate on sometimes one way, sometimes another—not according to how hard the work is!

"*Bimetallic strips*" (pieces tricky to place against the stop: die almost flat) with Léon; C. 421227, 2,100 pieces with the buttons, so at .72. Put down 6¼ hrs. Same machine on which I made the terminal connectors the 2nd time, and that Jacquot hadn't been able to fix.

½ hr. scrap (lost 40 min. yesterday and today).
Pommera (Jacquot and the machine for the terminal connectors). Set-up men and machines.

Wednesday, ½ hr. scrap.

Piano from 7:30 to 8:15. C. 15682, b. 11, then c. 15682, b. 8, both at .495 per hundred. 180 pieces for the 1st, 460 for the 2nd. Put down 25 min., then 1¼ hrs. Lamentably slow. The woman whose friend is a painter came to . . . me⁹

Riveting, "lower support assembly." C. 24280, b. 45—200 pieces at .10 F (used to be .0281) (temporary price for the Souchal order) from 9:45 until Thursday morning. Put down 6¼ hrs. in all. Did 75 pieces in the morning, that's another 7.50 F. VERY violent headache that day, otherwise I would have gone faster. I went to bed feeling all right the night before, but woke up at 2 A.M. In the morning, wanted to stay home. At the factory, every movement hurts. Louise, at her machine, sees that I'm not well.

A woman drill operator: her 9-year-old is in the cloakroom. Is he coming to work? "I wish he were old enough," says the mother. She tells how her husband has just been sent home from the hospital where they could do almost nothing for him (pleurisy and serious heart disease). There is also a 10-month-old girl. . . .

Thursday, ¾ hr. scrap.

C. 428195, b. 1, put down 2 hrs. C. 23273, b. 21—198 pieces (all counted) at 1.008 F per hundred (time? 2 hrs. I think). Washers: 10,000 at 7.50 F, put down 1½ hrs. for that day; lost 1¾ hrs.

⁸ Word unreadable in text.

⁹ Sentence unfinished in text.

Machine with arms. Two levers, one of which is for safety and prevents the other from coming down; I didn't understand its purpose; the warehouse keeper explains it to me [cf. Descartes and Tantalus!].

Friday. Finish washers in a hurry. Sifting through them, I notice many are botched. I pitch out as many as possible; nevertheless am very afraid. I put down 10,000, although there were already some missing in addition to the ones I pitched out, and 2½ hrs., which makes the rate on the voucher.

8-9, scrap.

9 to 10:30, pieces that are easy to do. C. 421324, voucher for 500; there are only 464; Robert makes me pass the voucher. Paid .61 per hundred. Put down 1 hr. (didn't make the rate), for I think I lost over ½ hr. watching Robert struggling with a machine. The valve no longer opened (Pommera came later; a part was missing, a locking wedge). He was there when I came; didn't stop for me. The problem happened again several times. The woman worker (for once) seemed a bit interested (I don't know her); a slightly disheveled brunette, seems nice.

10:30 to 4:30, scrap (lucky, for it's indescribably restful; in the afternoon, I even end up sitting down)—*annealing*, with only 200 pieces to do, at Léon's furnace until 2 P.M. Put down 50 min., .021 per piece; so earned 4.20 F (but was the annealing done correctly?). I don't dare put down more than 50 min., and don't take the time to work it out. It comes, alas, to 5 F per hour. Will they lower the price on the voucher because of me? I would have done better to have waited and put down at least 1 hr. In any case, lost in all 25 min.

Chatel charming—I am left in total freedom—I am treated like someone condemned to death. . . .

Nénette is suddenly serious. "You're going to look for a job? Poor Simone." She herself is laid off the following week. "You can't make it." I tell Louise what I think of that; she replies that Mouquet refused to exempt Nénette from the lay-off. Mme Forester had been exempted 2 years ago, but on orders from above.

Monday. *Annealing* plates (bobbin stops) until 9:10. 200 at .021 [421263, b. 21].

Spindles: 180 at .022 [928494, b. 48], put down 1¼ hrs. and 1 hr.

Fly-press, calibrating (like the 2nd day?) [22616, b. 17, 2 vouchers], 116 pieces at .022 per hundred—2 operations, one difficult, the other easy! Put down 50 min. (finished at 11:30).

Vouchers on which I made the rate

Vouchers on which I didn't make the rate

Scrap	Numbers	Price	Time
1 hr.	421121 (armatures R)	44.80 F	14 hrs. 15 min.
	24280 (support R)	20 F	6 hrs. 15 min.
1 hr.	15 min. ?	7.50 F	2 hrs. 30 min.
	45 min. (washers I)	4.20 F	50 min.
	15 min. (furnace L)	76.50 F	22 hrs. 110 min.
1 hr.	30 min. 30 min. 45 min.		23 hrs. 50 min.
	forgot:		50 min.
1 hr.	15 min.	5.60 F	1 hr. 50 min.
2 hrs.	30 min. 240 min.	82.10 F	25 hrs. 40 min.
7 hrs. (60 x 4)			
7 hrs. + 4 hrs. = 11 hrs.			
12 hrs.			

What vouchers *should* I have made the rate on? The ones for planishing (but . . .)—the sockets; the fingers (if I had adopted a good system right away . . .); the polishing, if it had not been only the 2nd time; the piano—(there it was because of headaches); The Δ pieces (demoralized by the dismissal notice).

In the future: find the *system* for safely obtaining the highest speed right away. Afterward, aim for the *uninterrupted tempo*.

short: 20 min.

But if 3 F are added for the circuits (?) and 5.50 F for the covers, and perhaps 1.50 F somewhere else, that's 10 F, I'll get 167 F for 65 hrs., that is, about 2.55 F per hour. . . .

If I get 1.70 F for these 65 hrs. and 32.50 F for the 11 hrs. of scrap and the 2 hrs. of cardboards, and 15 F for the 5 hrs. of phasing circuits, that will make 217.50 F in all, minus the deduction for Social Insurance!

Add 6 F for the foil to the 167 F; that's 173 F. Perhaps 223 F in all, of which 209 F would be for this two-week period.

On the whole, I haven't made any appreciable progress in the area of wages.

Number	Price	Time
907405 washers L	1 F 12 [didn't make it for reason ψ!]	40 min.
Same planishing L	.95 F	30 min.
420500 pl. shunts L	8.90 F	4 hrs. 15 min.
406426 sockets R	2.90 F	1 hr. 10 min.
414754 fingers L	20.60 F	7 hrs. 45 min.
Same —(pol.) Q	13.50 F	5 hrs. 15 min.
413910 covers I	.27 F	15 min.
412105 covers I	2.88 F	3 hrs. 30 min.
413910 covers I	.46 F	30 min.

4009194 drilling L	2.90 F	3 hrs. 15 min.
421227 bimetallic strips L	15.12 F	6 hrs. 15 min.
15682 piano B	.89 F	25 min.
Same B	2.30 F	1 hr. 15 min.
428195 machine with arms L	2.80 F (?)	2 hrs.
23173 —I	2.14 F	2 hrs. (?)
421342 —R	2.83 F	1 hr.
	80.55 F	35 hrs. 300 min.
		40 hrs. 5 hrs.
to be added:		
1415	? 2 hrs.	
	(work voucher 1747)	
	80.50 F	
	82.10 F	
	162.60 F for 65¾ hrs. of work	

157	64
290	—
340	2.45
20	66
	163
	310
	460
	440
	24
	2.4766



Small pieces: 421446, 150 pieces out of 400 at .62 per hundred, i.e., .90 F in all—put down ¼ hr.—severe cramps—infirmity.

Leave at 2:30 after having tried in vain to stick it out. Prostration until about 6 P.M., later not tired.

Tuesday. Terminals, 240 at .53 per hundred [409134, 409332].

Profound satisfaction that the work is going badly. . . . Mouquet.

Washers: 421437, b. 1—.56 per hundred, 865 per piece, put down 1¼ hrs., terminal-connector press 2.

Gear guides [12270, b. 68]: 1.42 F per hundred, 150 pieces, Robert's press (but he's on leave, it's with Biol)—they are bars that you cut by pedaling twice in succession, because the cutter isn't the proper length. They're not flat. If you put them in this way  they go in easily, but they're almost impossible to get out. This way,  very hard to put in but they can be gotten out. Biol recommends the 1st way, Pommera (very scornfully, for him) the 2nd—Mouquet comes—orders me to do it the 1st way, but gives me a wrench for getting them out (Pommera brought it; Mouquet said, "I'm going to show her"). At first I handle it clumsily. He has to remind me of the principle of the lever. . . .

Perhaps for the first time, I come back at 1:15 with a feeling of pleasure—also due to the way Mouquet spoke to me.

I enjoy doing a hard job, one that "doesn't go well." At 1:15 I tell Pommera that work that doesn't go well is much less boring. He says, "That's true." I skin my hands (one bad cut). Tempo not a problem, since the voucher doesn't matter. I notice that I effortlessly assume the "uninterrupted tempo" in front of Mouquet. But once he has left, no. . . . It's not because he's the foreman; it's because someone is watching me and waiting for me.

SCRAP: 2:30 to 3:15.

Piano: 344 sheet-metal pieces at .56 per hundred [508907, b. 10], put down 50 min.

Guides (?): 40009195, 1 hr.

Late afternoon, not tired. Go to Puteaux in beautiful sunshine, a cool breeze—(metro, collective taxi). Come by bus as far as rue d'Orléans. Delightful—go up to B.'s. But get to bed late.

THE MYSTERY OF THE FACTORY

1. *The Mystery of the Machine*

Guihéneuf: the machine is a mystery for the worker who hasn't studied mathematics. He doesn't see a balance of forces in it. So he has no confidence in regard to it. For instance: the turner who, by trial and error, discovered a tool for rolling both steel and nickel, instead of changing the tool to shift from one metal to another. For Guihéneuf, it's simply a cut; he just does it. The other goes about it with superstitious respect. It's the same thing with a machine that doesn't work. The worker will see that this or that needs to be done . . . but often makes a repair that, while enabling it to work, dooms it to wear out more rapidly, or to develop a new hitch. The engineer, never. Even if he never uses differential calculus, differential formulas applied to the study of the resistance of materials allow him to form a precise idea of a machine as a fixed play of forces.

The press that wasn't working and Jacquot. Clearly the press was a mystery for Jacquot, and so was the reason it stopped working. Not just as an unknown factor, but in itself in some way. It doesn't work. . . . Like the machine refuses.

What I don't understand about presses: Jacquot and the press that stamped 10 times in succession.

2. *The Mystery of Manufacture*

Of course, the worker does not know how each piece is used: (1) how it is combined with other pieces; (2) the successive operations carried out on it; (3) the ultimate use of the whole.

But there is more: the relationship between causes and effects in the work itself isn't understood.

Nothing is *less* instructive than a machine.

3. *The Mystery of "Knack"*

Circuits from which I had to remove the cardboards. In the beginning I didn't know how to separate them by tapping with the mallet. Then I did some reasoning about the principle of the lever, which was quite useless. . . . After which, I knew how to do it very well, without my ever realizing either how I learned or how I go about it.

Essential principle of manual skill in machine work (and elsewhere?) badly expressed. Each hand should do only *one* simple operation. For

instance, work on metallic strips: one hand pushes, the other presses toward the stop. Sheet-metal plates: don't hold with the hand; let them rest on the hand, apply pressure in the direction of the stop with the thumb. Polishing belt: apply pressure with one hand, pull with the other, let the belt turn the piece, etc.

Changes to be Desired

Different kinds of machine-tools side by side in the same shop. The set-ups nearby. The *lay-out* of the factory aimed at giving every worker a view of the entire process (that obviously assumes the abolition of the system of set-up men).

Specializations that degrade:

Of the worker—of the machine—of parts of factories [of engineers?]

Organization of the Factory

Shortage of stools, packing cases, oil cans.

Whimsical timekeeping. And it's the worst-paid jobs that are the most fatiguing, because you exert all your strength to the extreme limit so as not to fall below the rate. (Cf. the conversation with Mimi, Tuesday, 7th week.) You exhaust yourself, you kill yourself for 2 F per hour. And not because you are doing a job that demands that you kill yourself; no, only because of the capriciousness and carelessness of the timekeeper. You kill yourself with nothing at all to show for it, either a subjective result (wages) or an objective one (work accomplished), that corresponds to the effort you've put out. In that situation you really feel you are a slave, humiliated to the very depths of your being.

Pommerera respects the timekeeper (Souchal); excuses him by saying that his job is impossible, caught as he is between the management and the women. He says that when Souchal is pushing the women, they buckle down right away. There is also the issue of false timing; a voucher that makes the rate can never be corrected afterward.

For each job there is a limited—a small—number of possible mistakes, some of which can break the tool, and others botch the piece. As far as the tool is concerned, only a few possible mistakes exist for each type of job. It would be easy for the set-up men to point out these possible mistakes to the women, so that they would have a little confidence.

Notice whether or not the presses are *specialized*. Try to establish a nomenclature—planishing press—Biol's stamping press.

Foremen and bureaucrats:

G . . .

X. Comes from the corps of Maritime Engineers.

"A manager is a machine for taking responsibility," "no profession more stupid than that of manager." "A good manager must above all not be a good technician. Just know enough that he can't be made to swallow a lot of nonsense."

D . . .

X. Department of Civil Engineering.

At first manager and managing director. Has now trained a manager to spare himself work.

Became the head of the company *totally* ignorant of manufacturing technique. Felt lost for 1 year.

Mouquet (fore-
man).

Timekeeper
(Souchal
short, dark).

Mme Biay (?).

M. Chanes.

. . . press foreman.

Catsous — drilling machines.

The most interesting one is clearly Mouquet. Timekeeper an obnoxious type, vulgar, they say, with the women—always tends toward what is most base—he sets times almost at random—I never spoke to him. Pommerera doesn't think badly of him.

Mouquet and the pieces I spent 5 days on at the beginning taking out cardboards.

Mouquet—sculptural, tormented head—something monastic—always tense—"I'll think about it tonight." Saw him cheerful only once.

Set-up men:

Ilion (foreman)—Léon—Catsous—Jacquot (back being a worker)—Robert—Biol.

Female workers:

Mme Forestier—Mimi—Mimi's sister—Tolstoy fan—Eugénie—Louissette, her friend (young widow with 2 kids)—Nénette—redhead (Joséphine)—Cat—blonde with 2 kids—separated from her husband—mother of the burned boy—the one who gave me a roll—the one who has chronic bronchitis—the woman who lost a child and is happy not to have any at all, and "fortunately" lost her 1st husband who had tuberculosis for

8 years (that's what Eugénie says!)—Italian woman (by far the nicest)—Alice (by far the least likable)—Dubois (Oh, Mother! if you could see me!)—the one who is ill, lives alone (who gave me the Puteaux address)—the screw-cutting machine operator who sings—screw-cutting machine operator with 2 kids and the sick husband.

Mimi—26 years old—married for 8 years to a young construction worker (knew him from Angers), who put in 2 years at Citroën and is now unemployed, although he's a good worker. At Angers she worked in a textile mill (11 F per day!). At Alsth. for 6 years. Took 6 months to acquire a fast enough tempo "to earn her living"—in the course of which she very frequently wept, thinking she would never make it. Worked another year and a half in a state of constant nervousness (fear of doing badly), although she was working quickly and well. Only at the end of 2 years did she become sure enough of herself "not to worry."

One of her early reflections: (I was telling her I was exasperated by my ignorance of what I was making); "They take us for machines . . . others are here to think for us. . . ." (Exactly what Taylor¹⁰ says, but she says it with bitterness.)

No professional self-esteem. Cf. her response Thursday of the 6th week.

Incomparably less common than the average.

Nenette (Mme A., about 35 years old [?]). Has a 13-year-old son and a 6½-year-old daughter. Widow. Almost all her conversation consists of jokes and confidences that would make a barracksroom blush. Extraordinarily vivacious and full of vitality. Good worker; almost always makes over 4 F. In the shop for two years.

But—enormous respect for education (talks about her son "always reading").

Her rather vulgar cheerfulness disappears the week she is almost constantly without work. "You have to count every penny."

Talks about her son: "The idea of sending him to the shop—I can't tell you what that does to me" (however, a superficial observer could think she is happy at the shop).

Joséphine.

Eugénie.

¹⁰ Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856–1915) was an American engineer who developed a system of "scientific management" to increase efficiency and production in factory work.

Male workers:

The warehouse keeper (Pommeray).

History: born in the country—family of 12 children—herded cows when he was 9 years old—got his certificate of studies when he was 12. Before the war never worked in a factory; worked in a few garages—never served an apprenticeship, or had any other technical or general education than what he got for himself in night courses. Served in the war (already married) as a platoon leader in the mountain light infantry (?). At the time lost the little money he had scraped together, and as a result had to work in a factory when he returned from the war. I don't know what he did the first 4 years. But afterward he was a set-up man on the presses for 6 years in another factory. And for the last 6 years, he's been keeper of the tool warehouse at Alsthom. Everywhere, he says, he's had an easy time. Nevertheless, he hopes I won't stay with the machines as long as he did.

Work:

He hands out the tools listed on the order (anybody could do that).

Sometimes he changes the order, noting down other tools that allow, for instance, 3 operations to be replaced by 2, which saves the firm money. He has done that several times. (You have to be awfully sure of yourself!) As a consequence, he has the confidence that comes from knowing that he is indispensable, and that no one would dare bother him.

Education:

Technical: knows the lathe—the milling machine—machine-setting. Explains marvelously well how something has to be done (unlike the set-up men).

General? Expresses himself extremely well. But what else?

Violinist—tall blond—boy at the furnace—one who reads *l'Auto*—nice guy at the drilling machine—little fellow who set me up at the furnace—young Italian—my "fiancé"—guy in gray at the shearing machine—young metal shearer. Bretonnet—new unskilled worker—boy from air transport—2-man team for repairing machines (. . .) [Biol's machine, Ilion's machine].

Δ ET

Worker solidarity? No mass solidarity (except Louisette . . .).

Give them the feeling that they have something of their own to give.

Worker delegates, protection against threat of being fired.

Duties?

Safety.

Organization of part-time work.

Demands.

Commendations

How to deal with these additional concerns? . . .

2 suggestion boxes

Popularization,
prepare . . .

1 for the *benefit of the firm.*
1 for the *benefit of the workers*

Worker control over the bookkeeping?

Account book? Technical and organizational innovations?

Lectures?

Bonuses to combat waste?

Technical innovations.
Waste.

Recount the bureaucratic incident.¹¹ . . . Liaison.

“Capitalists’ trap”: modernization of machinery. One owner updates machinery that has been amortized; others *have to* do the same, even though theirs isn’t amortized (because they calculate using a particular cost, not a general one). The next time, it’s the first one’s turn to suffer. . . .

Naiveté of a man who has never suffered. . . .

LOOKING FOR WORK

Monday. Alone. To Issy—Malakoff. Tedious—nothing to report.

Tuesday (in the rain)—with a woman (who tells me about her 13-year-old boy whom she is keeping in school. “Without it, what can he become? A martyr like the rest of us”).

Wednesday—(glorious weather) with 2 metal fitters. One is 18 years old. The other, 58. *Very* interesting man, but extremely reserved. To all appearances, a real man. Living alone (his wife walked out on him). A hobby, photography. “They killed the cinema when they made it talk, instead of letting it remain what it really is, the most beautiful application of photog-

¹¹ See above, p. 167.

raphy.” Reminiscenced about the war in a peculiar tone of voice, as if it were a life like any other, just a harder and more dangerous job (artilleryman, it’s true). “The man who says he has never been afraid is lying.” But he doesn’t seem to have felt fear to the point of having been inwardly humiliated by it. On work: “They have been asking more and more of the trained workers for some time; you almost have to know engineering.” Tells me about the “developable surfaces.” You have to find the dimensions of a flat piece of sheet metal out of which you will then make a piece full of curves and broken lines.

[*Try to find out exactly what a “developable surface” is.*]

He failed a test once, as far as I understood, because he failed to multiply the diameter by π .

At his age, he says, you are disgusted by work (work used to interest him passionately when he was young). But the problem isn’t the work itself, the problem is taking orders. The jail. . . . “You would have to be able to work for yourself.” “I would like to do something else.” He was working (in the “Mureaux”),¹² but half-expects to be kicked out for not having made the rate (he is timed). Complains about the committees that set the times. “They can’t understand.” Argument with the foreman over some pieces to be made in 7 min.; he took 14; the foreman, to show him, made one in 7, but he says it was a bad piece (so it’s mass-production metal-fitting?).

Speaks of his past jobs. Some cushy ones. Was a machinist in a textile mill. “That was a dream.” Spent his time “doing work on the side.” Obviously didn’t even notice the miserable lot of the slaves. Affects a certain cynicism. However, obviously a man of feeling.

All morning, extraordinarily free and easy conversation among the three of us, on a plane above the miseries of existence that are the dominant preoccupation of slaves, especially the women. After Alsthom, what a relief!

The young one is also interesting. While we were passing Saint-Cloud, he says, “If I were up to it (he is not, alas, because he is hungry . . .) I would like to draw.” “Everyone is interested in something.” “For me,” says the other one, “it’s photography.” The young one asks me, “And you, what do you like to do?” Embarrassed, I answer, “Read.” And he: “Yes, I can see that. Not novels. You would rather read philosophy, wouldn’t you?” Then we talked about Zola and Jack London.

¹² Industrial district on the left bank of the Seine.



Both, obviously, have revolutionary tendencies (“revolutionary” very inaccurate word—rather, they are class-conscious and have the spirit of free men). But when it comes to national defense, we no longer agree. However, I don’t insist.

Total comradeship. For the first time in my life, really. No barrier at all, either in the difference of class (since that has been removed) or in the difference of sex. Miraculous.

EASTER SUNDAY

On my way home from the church where I had (foolishly) hoped to hear some Gregorian chant, I come upon a small exhibition where you can see a Jacquard loom *in operation*. I—who had so passionately and vainly contemplated one at the Institute of Arts and Crafts—hasten to step in. The operator, who sees that I’m interested, explains it to me (as he finishes, he does 2 Claquesin picks . . . I intrigue him very much). He does everything: punches the card (according to *the card* pattern, not from the design of the fabric—he says he could work out the pattern of the card himself (?) and also read the pattern of the fabric from the card (?); however, when I ask him if he could read on the card *letters* to be woven into the fabric, he says—and more hesitantly—yes, but not easily). Set-up of the machine (which means arranging all the threads without making mistakes—extremely meticulous work)—and the weaving, done by throwing the shuttle and treadling; the treadle is heavy because of all the needles and raised threads, but he says he’s never tired. I finally understood—more or less—the relationship of the card, the needles, and the thread. He says there is a Jacquard loom in every textile mill, for the patterns; but he thinks that practice is going to disappear. Extremely proud of his knowledge. . . .

SECOND SHOP, FROM THURSDAY APRIL 11 TO TUESDAY MAY 7, CARNAUD, BASSE-INDRE WORKS, RUE DU VIEUX-PONT DE SÈVRES, BOULOGNE-BILLANCOURT

1ST DAY. Gautier’s shop. Oil cans [afterward, gas masks] (shops highly specialized). Some conveyer belts and a few presses. They put me at a press. Stamping pieces  to turn them into . The dot determines the position—small press, light pedal; it’s the dot that gives me trouble. You have to count (not knowing how the count is supposed to be checked,

I count conscientiously; I’m wrong). I arrange them in order and count them by 50s, then do them fast. I go faster, although not as fast as I can, and do 400 per hour. In general I work harder than at Alsthom. In the afternoon, fatigue, made worse by the suffocating atmosphere, saturated with odors of paints, varnishes, etc. I wonder if I will be able to keep up the pace. But at 4 o’clock Martin, the foreman (a handsome young man with an affable manner and voice), comes to tell me quite politely, “If you don’t do 800, I won’t keep you. If you do 800 in the 2 hrs. that are left, I will *perhaps consent* to keep you. There are some who do 1,200.” I go faster, seething with rage, and get up to 600 per hour (by cheating a little on the count and the position of the pieces). At 5:30 Martin comes to get the count and says, “That’s not enough.” Then he puts me to work setting out another woman’s pieces; she doesn’t give a welcoming word or smile. At 6 P.M., in the grip of a cold and concentrated fury, I go to the foreman’s office and ask outright, “Should I come back tomorrow morning?” Quite surprised, he says, “Come in, just in case; we’ll see. But you have to work faster.” I answer, “I’ll try,” and leave. In the cloakroom, I’m surprised to hear the others gossiping, chattering, without seeming to feel the same suppressed rage that I do. However, they get out of the factory fast. Until the bell rings, they work as if they had hours to go; the bell no sooner begins to ring than they all rise up as if they were activated by a spring, run to punch out, run to the cloakroom, exchange a few words while they slip on their wraps, and run home. In spite of my fatigue, I am so in need of fresh air that I go on foot as far as the Seine; there I sit on the bank, on a stone, gloomy, exhausted, my heart gripped by impotent rage, feeling drained of all my vital substance; I wonder if, in the event that I were condemned to live this life, I would be able to cross the Seine every day without someday throwing myself in.

The next morning, at my machine again. 630 per hr., desperately straining for all I’m worth. Suddenly Martin, who comes over with Gautier behind him, says, “Stop.” I stop, but remain seated in front of my machine, not understanding what is wanted of me. This gets me a bawling out, for when a foreman says “Stop” it seems you have to be immediately standing at attention, ready to pounce on the new job he is going to give you. “Nobody sleeps here.” (Indeed, in this shop, not one second in a 9-hr. day is not spent in work. I have not once seen a woman raise her eyes from her work, or two women exchange a few words. No need to add that in this place the seconds of the women’s lives are the only things that are

economized on so carefully; in other respects, waste, waste to spare. No foreman that I've seen analogous to Mouquet. In Gautier's shop, their work seems to consist primarily in pushing the women.) They put me at a machine where all I have to do is thread in some thin, flexible metallic strips, gilded on the bottom, silvered on top, taking care not to put in 2 at once, and going "at full speed." But often they are stuck together. The 1st time I put in 2 (which stops the machine), the set-up man came to fix it. The 2nd time I tell Martin, who puts me back at my 1st machine while the 2nd one is being fixed. Nearly 620 per hour. . . . At 11 o'clock, a woman with a nice smile comes to take me to another shop; I am put in a large light room next to the shop, where one workman is showing another how to varnish with a spray gun. . . .

[I forgot to note down my impression the 1st day, at 8 A.M., when I arrived at the hiring office. In spite of my fears, I am—as an unemployed worker who has finally found a job—happy and grateful to the shop. I find 5 or 6 women whose dejected looks astonish me. I ask questions, but no one says much; finally I understand that this shop is a convict prison¹³ (frantic pace, cut fingers in profusion, no scruples about laying off workers) and that most of the women have worked in it—they had either been thrown out of work last fall or had wanted to escape—and are returning with suppressed rage, chafing at their bits.]

The door opens 10 min. before the hour. But that's a manner of speaking. A small door in the gate is opened ahead of time. At the 1st bell (there are 3 at 5 min. intervals), the small door is closed and half the gate is opened. On days of pouring rain, it's quite a sight to see the herd of women who have arrived before the gate "opens" keep standing in the rain next to that small open door waiting for the bell to ring (reason: thefts; cf. dining-room). No protest, no reaction at all.

A lovely girl, strong, radiant, and healthy, says one day in the cloak-room, after a 10-hr. day: I'm fed up with working all day long. How I wish it were Bastille Day so I could dance. Me: You can think of dancing after 10 hrs. on the job? Her reply: Of course! I could dance all night, etc. (laughing). Then, seriously: it's been 5 years since I've danced. You feel like dancing, and then you dance over the washing.

Two or three melancholy women with sad smiles are not of the same common type as the others. One asks me how it's going. I tell her that I'm

¹³ *Bagne*, i.e., a place of confinement at forced labor.

in a quiet corner. She, with a gentle and melancholy smile: I'm glad! Let's hope it will last. And she repeats it once or twice.

In this kind of life those who suffer aren't able to complain. They would be misunderstood by others, perhaps laughed at by those who are not suffering, thought of as tiresome by those who, suffering themselves, have quite enough suffering of their own. Everywhere the same callousness, like the foremen's, with a few rare exceptions.

In the varnishing shop. Observed 5 workmen. The carpenter—my truck-driver pal—the "guy from downstairs" (tin-plating), who is co-foreman. The electrician, former seaman in the reserves (whose brief stay was like a breath of sea air for me and my pal). The mechanic (alas, barely saw him).

[Note: separation of the sexes, contempt of the men for the women, and reserve on the part of the women toward the men (in spite of the exchanges of dirty jokes) is much more pronounced in workers' circles than elsewhere.]

Women: the former metal shearer who had salpingitis 7 years ago (in '28, at the height of the boom) and couldn't get herself taken off the presses for several years—ever since then her reproductive organs completely and irrevocably destroyed. Speaks with much bitterness. But it didn't occur to her to change her job—although she could have done it easily!

LOOKING FOR A JOB FOR THE 2ND TIME

Fired Tuesday May 7. Spent Wednesday, Thursday, Friday in the dismal state of prostration caused by headaches. Friday morning, it was all I could do to get up in time to telephone Det.¹⁴ Saturday, Sunday, rest.

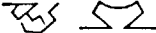
Monday, 13th. In front of Renault. Overheard 3 men conversing whom I at once took to be trained workers. One, who listens with a knowing air (fine face) was hired, so not seen again. —Old workman, skilled worker on presses, tanned working-man's face—but intelligence degraded by slavery. Old-style Communist. The bosses run the confederated trade unions. They choose the leaders. In bad times, the leaders go and tell the boss, "I won't be able to hold them back unless. . . . One of them told me so himself!" And then they tell the workers, "Strikes don't succeed when

¹⁴ Auguste Deroeuf, a friend and managing director of the Alsthom Company.

there is unemployment, you're going to suffer," etc. In short, he harps on all the stupidities invented by well-protected bonzes.

The 3rd, young construction worker, trade-unionist tendencies (worked at Lyon), a good sort.

Tuesday, 14th. Morning: inertia. Afternoon, Saint-Ouen (Luchoire). The job was taken. . . .

Wednesday, 15th. Go to Porte de Saint-Cloud, but by the time I telephone Det., it's too late to go to Renault or Salmson. Go to Caudron. In front of the gate, a half-dozen trained workers, all with references in aviation: aviation carpenters, metal-fitters. . . . Again the same old story: "They won't find any trained workers like the ones they're asking for. They don't make them any more. . . ." It's still about the same thing: the developable surfaces. As far as I can understand there are two types of test: the "dove-tail"  (more or less), which has to fit *exactly* into a piece of sheet metal you are not allowed to file; and the developable surfaces. It seems the metal-fitters have something of the artist in them.

The one I got to know well. On the surface, all brawn and no brains. Marvelous references. A letter of recommendation from the Institute of Arts and Crafts (where he was apprenticed until age 19): "Machinist who is a credit to his trade." Lives in Bagnolet (his own little shack??), which complicates his finding a job; gives this as his reason for refusing to work more than 8 hrs., but I don't think that it's the only one. You work 10 hours at Renault. Too much for him. With the train, etc. "On Sunday you can stay in bed and rest" (so the money doesn't matter). Adds: "5 hrs., that's enough for me." Was a foreman more than once (references to prove it). "But," he says, "I'm too much of a revolutionary. I could never give the workers a bad time." The error of interpretation that he makes in regard to me, his attitude afterward. On parting: "You don't hold it against me?" Is going to come to see me at my place. But was not in front of Renault the next morning. . . . The day after, a knock. I'm in bed, don't open the door. Was it he? I'll never hear of him again. . . .

Another day, in front of Gévelot—the guy with white hair, who intended to go in for music before the war. Says he's an accountant (but makes mistakes in simple arithmetic)—looking for a job as an unskilled worker. Pitiful failure. . . . We wait from 7:15 to 7:45 in a light rain, after which "no hiring." At Renault, the hiring is over. An hour's wait in front of Salmson.

Another time at Gévelot. The women are let in. The guy doing the hiring (head of personnel?) is vulgar and callous; in another connection he also bawls out a foreman, who answers very humbly (pleasure to see that). Looks us over like horses. "That one's the strongest." His way of questioning the 20-year-old who 3 years earlier had left because she was pregnant. . . . With me, polite. Takes my address.

The one who, mother of 2 children, said she wanted to work because she was "bored at home" and whose husband worked 15 hrs. a day and didn't want her to work! Indignation of another, also mother of 2 children, very unhappy at having to work (outside Salmson).

Another time (?) met the young girl who said, "The fall of the franc will mean hard times, they say so on the radio," etc.

Another time, trip to Ivry. "No women." Headaches. . . .

Another time, outside Langlois (small shop), in Ménilmontant, at 7 A.M. (advertisement)—Wait until 8:30. Then to Saint-Denis, but it's too late.

Return to Saint-Denis. Hard to walk like this when you're not eating. . . .

Again at Luchoire in Saint-Ouen before 7:30 (it's the same day on which, in the afternoon, I will be hired at Renault).

During the final week I decide to spend only 3.50 F per day, transportation included. Hunger becomes a permanent feeling. Is this feeling more painful than working and eating, or less so? Unresolved question. . . . Yes, more painful, on the whole.

RENAULT

Milling machine operator.

Wednesday, 5th. Day I was hired, from 1:30 to 5 P.M. The faces around me; handsome young worker; the young construction worker; his wife.

Terrible emotional state, the day I was hired, and the next day setting out to confront the unknown; in the metro early in the morning (I arrive at 6:45), extremely apprehensive, to the point of being physically ill. I see people are looking at me; I must be very pale. If ever I have known fear, it is today. I imagine a shop with presses, a 10-hr. day, brutal foremen, cut fingers, heat, headaches. . . . The woman who used to work on presses whom I talked with in the hiring office didn't help to raise my spirits. When I arrive at shop 21, I feel my will grow weak. But at least there are no presses—what luck!

When, 3 months earlier, I had heard the story of the milling machine cutter that had *gone through* a woman's hand, I told myself that with such an image in my memory it would never be easy for me to work on a milling machine. However, at no time did I ever have any fear to overcome on that score.

Thursday, 6th. From 8 A.M. to noon, observed¹⁵—from 2:30 to 10 P.M., worked. 400 the first 2 hrs. 2,050 in all; lost 1½ hrs. or more because the set-up man made a mistake. Exhausted when I left.

The disadvantage of being in the position of a slave is that you are tempted to think that human beings who are pale shadows in the cave really exist. For instance: my set-up man, that young bastard. I need to resist that. [I got over it after a few weeks.]

Dickmann's idea. But if the workers develop other resources for themselves, and through work that is *free*, will they submit to these speeds for slaves? (If not, so much the better!)

Those who tell me not to work myself to death. One is (I learn later) the foreman of another gang, way at the back of the shop. He's very nice, has a real goodness, whereas Leclerc's (my foreman) comes more from never giving a damn. Later, on the rare occasions that I have to speak with him, he's always particularly nice to me. One day, he throws me a look while I am miserably decanting some heavy bolts into an empty packing case with my hands. . . . Never forget this man.

The foreman and the crank. He says, "Try like this," though it's obvious that it's going to come off.

Friday, 7th. Exactly 2,500, exhausted even more than the day before (especially after 7:30!). Philippe has some fun watching me. . . . By 7 o'clock have done only 1,600.

The young girl in the metro—"no heart for it." Me, either. . . .

Saturday, 8th. 2,400, cleaning. Tired, but less so than the day before (2,400 in 8 hrs., that's only 300 per hr.).

Tuesday, 11th. 2,250, 900 of them after 7 o'clock—didn't have to push myself too hard—only a bit tired when I left. Finished at 10:10.

Wednesday, 12th. Power failure (how wonderful!).

Thursday, 13th. 2,240, finished at 9:30 (*more pieces*)—1,400 of the

¹⁵ SW was then part of the shift that worked from 2:30 to 10 P.M.

above before 7 o'clock, 840 after (only 330 of them had been done by 4 P.M.). Violent headaches. Exhausted when I left. But not aching anymore. . . .

Friday, 14th. 1,350 and 300 others. Not tired.

Saturday, 15th. 2,000, finished at 8:40, cleaning; barely time to finish. Not too tired [this 1st week, packing-case problem not too great a source of anxiety thanks to the others being nice about it].

[*Sunday.* Headaches, didn't sleep Sunday night to Monday.]

Monday, 17th. 2,450 (1,950 by 8:35)—tired when I left, but not exhausted.

Tuesday, 18th. 2,300 (2,000 by 8:45)—didn't speed up—not tired when I left—headache all day.

Wednesday, 19th. 2,400 (2,000 by 8:35), very tired. The little bastard of a set-up man tells me that I have to do more than 3,000.

Thursday, 20th. Going to the shop is extremely painful; each step an effort (morally; returning, it's a physical effort). Am in that half-dazed state in which I am the victim designated for any harsh blow. . . . From 2:30 to 3:35, 400 pieces. From 3:35 to 4:15, time lost because of the set-up man in the cap—he made me do my botched pieces over—Large pieces—slow and *very* hard because of the new way the handle of the vise is set up. I turn to the foreman for help—Discussion—Go back to work—Mill the end of my thumb (there's the harsh blow)—Infirmary—Finish the 500 at 6:15—No more pieces for me (I am so tired I am relieved!). But they promise me some. In the end, I don't get them until 7:30 and then only 500 (to complete the 1,000). [The blond guy is afraid that I'm going to complain to the foreman.] 245 by 8 o'clock. Do the 500 large ones, in a great deal of pain, in 1½ hrs. 10 min. to set up the machine. This set-up uses another part of the cutting tool; it works! I do 240 small pieces in exactly ½ hr. Free at 9:40. But earned 16.45 F!!! (no, large pieces a little better paid). By the time I leave, I'm tired. . . .

1st meal with the women (snack).

The set-up man in the cap: "If he lays a hand on your machine, send him packing. . . . He destroys everything he touches. . . ."

He orders me to move a packing case with 2,000 pieces in it. I tell him, "I can't budge it by myself." "That's your problem. It's not my job."

Apropos of the pieces they made me—the beginner—wait for: "The

foreman said that if you had to wait, you should be compensated for it out of the wages of the woman who made you wait.”

Friday, 21st. Got up very late—just barely ready in time. Painful going to the shop—but, unlike the previous times, pain much more physical than moral. Still, I’m afraid of not being able to do enough. Again the feeling of “let’s stick it out today anyway. . . ,” as at Alsth. As of last evening, I’ve been at Renault 2 weeks; and I tell myself that I probably can’t last more than 2 weeks. . . .

Once I’m at the shop, I have 450 pieces to finish, then 2,000; it goes all right, no counting. I begin at 2:35, do the 450 by 3:40. Then continue at the uninterrupted tempo by fixing my attention on each piece and obsessively repeating in my head, “I have to. . . .” I don’t think there is enough water; lose a lot of time looking for the bucket (which was where it was supposed to be!). Then I pour in too much water; it overflows. Have to get it up, find sawdust, sweep. . . . The guy from the automatic lathes kindly helps me. At 7:20, lose a lot of time (15 to 20 min.) looking for a box. I finally find one, full of metal shavings; I go and empty it; the set-up man orders me to put it back. I obey. [The next day, one of the women drill operators tells me that it belonged to his wife, and says, “I certainly wouldn’t have put it back.” The drill operators are likable; a group apart.] Way at the back of the shop (21 B) I find one; a woman objects to my taking it. I give in again (wrongly!). I give up. I continue, and when I have no more than about 500 pieces to go, empty them partly onto the machine, partly into a sort of basket stuck into the machine behind me, and put the 1,500 finished pieces into the box thus emptied; time consuming and very difficult operation without help. Finally finished at 9:35. Rush to find 75 more, just to beat my record by a little. Thus: 2,525. Return to rue Auguste-Comte. Sleep on the metro. Separate act of will for each step. Once home, very cheerful. Went to bed, read until 2 A.M. Woke at 7:15 (teeth).

Saturday, 22nd. Magnificent weather. Beautiful morning. Don’t think about the job except on the way there; then, painful feeling (but feeling less like a slave). The other woman hadn’t come. I take the box of 2,000 (minus the 75) [heavy!]. Begin at 2:45. By 3:45, have done perhaps 425 (which would make 500). A change of machine. Easy and well-paid job (3.20 F per hundred), but more dangerous cutter. Do 350 (that’s 4.20 F). Finished about 5:05. Lose 10 min. Come back to my machine; begin again at

5:15. Speed that comes automatically, without artificial obsession, effortlessly, and merely by maintaining the “uninterrupted tempo”; did 1,850 by 8:30 (i.e., 1,350 in 3 hrs., or 450 per hr.!). 1 every 8 sec. Cheerful meal (however, the “fat woman” not there). Feeling of relaxation; Saturday evening, no foremen, free and easy. . . . Everyone (except me) dawdles until 10:25.

On the way home—I dawdle listening to a band play. Fresh air delightful. Wide awake in the metro, even some energy for walking. Tired, however. But on the whole, happy. . . .

Monday, 24th. Slept badly (itching). Morning, no appetite, violent headaches. Feeling of pain and anxiety on leaving for work.

On arrival, catastrophe: since my co-worker hadn’t come in, the box the pieces drop into was stolen. I lose 1 hr. finding another (it has to have holes). I start on the job; worn cutter. A new set-up man (in gray), in the shop 1 week, replaces it for me (of his own accord!). At the time, he notices that there is a little play everywhere. In particular, the ring that holds the cutter “has been shot for at least ten years.” He is surprised that “the two pals” (!) hadn’t replaced it. My machine is “an old crock,” he says. He seems to know something about what he is doing. But as a result, I start the job at 4:30. Discouraged, exhausted (headaches). Do 1,850 pieces in all (in 5 hrs., that’s less than 400 per hr.). In the evening, I again lose time looking for a box, and then, not finding one, decanting pieces into a basket taken from the next machine. And the box into which almost 16,000 pieces have dropped is so heavy to handle that I have to empty it into another. Back home (A.-C.), tired, but not overly so. Mainly disgusted at having done so little. And dying of thirst.

Tuesday, 25th. Awoke at 7 A.M. Lengthy and tiring session at the dentist’s—toothache all morning. Almost late. Hot. Have difficulty climbing the stairs when I arrive. . . . Find my new co-worker (Alsatian woman). Again have to look for a box. . . . Take one near a machine. Its owner arrives, furious. Take instead the one that contained the pieces to be done, emptying it (200 were left). So I’m back where I started! Find another one. Go and fill it, by shovelfuls, at the lathe. Bring it back (heavy!). Then (at 2:55) go to the infirmary (I have a beginning abscess caused by a metal shaving). When I’m back, I find my 2,000 pieces emptied out near my machine (the box taken back by its 1st owner in my absence). I go looking again. Appeal to the foreman opposite the elevator. He tells me, “I’ll see

that you're given one." I wait. . . . Bawls me out because I'm waiting. Go back to my machine. My neighbor gives me a box. At that moment, my foreman (Leclerc) turns up. Starts bawling me out. I tell him my pieces were emptied out in my absence. He goes and has it out with my neighbor. I gather up the pieces. Cutter change. Result: start the job at 4:05! With a disgust that I suppress in order to go fast. In spite of everything, I would like to do 2,500. But I have trouble keeping up the speed. The 200 left over from the other carton go quickly (in 20 or 25 min.). Afterward, it slows down.

Results of this system of multiple set-up men: about 6:30 the cutter cuts badly; the set-up man in gray changes the position of the cutter—manipulates it—changes the position again—and, I think, puts it back in its original position. . . . By 7 o'clock, I must have made 1,300 pieces, no more. After the break, another search for a box, juggling pieces for lack of a box. At 9:35 or 40, finished carton (therefore 2,200). Do 50 more. . . . I had had the cutter's position changed at 9:15 by the young set-up man (Philippe); he had made me wait a good ¼ hr. And as it was I had called him too late. 2,250, consequently. Mediocre. . . . Going home, have to force myself to walk, but not, however, step by step.

Didn't maintain the "uninterrupted tempo." Hampered by my finger. Also over confident.

Absolutely have to find a permanent solution to the box problem. And first of all, propose to the woman who operates the lathe to give us 1 out of every 2? She's never given any, she says. But we're never given any either. When we were looking for boxes for 500, it was different. Now it's for 2,000. . . .

Wednesday, 26th. Tired in the morning—not much more courage than what is needed for the day's work. . . . low-grade feeling of despondency—headaches—discouragement—fear, or rather anxiety (in the face of work, my box, speed, etc.)—muggy thunderstorm weather.

Go to the infirmary. "They'll open it for you when it needs to be opened, and without asking your opinion." Work. Suffer from my arm, from exhaustion, from headaches. (A slight fever? Not in the evening, in any case.) But by going fast I manage not to suffer for a few successive intervals of time lasting from 10 min. to ¼ hr. Pay at 5 o'clock. Afterward, I've had it. I count my pieces, wipe my machine, and ask to leave. Go and find Leclerc (foreman) in the office of the shop foreman, who puts me down for insurance.

Wait ½ hr. outside this office, because no one checks. See how complicated the deliveries are. The camaraderie of the foremen.

Leaving the dentist's (Tuesday morning, I think—or rather Thursday morning), and getting on the W bus, strange reaction. How is it that I, a slave, can get on this bus and ride on it for my 12 sous just like anyone else? What an extraordinary favor! If someone brutally ordered me to get off, telling me that such comfortable forms of transportation are not for me, that I have to go on foot, I think that would seem completely natural to me. Slavery has made me entirely lose the feeling of having any rights. It appears to me to be a favor when I have a few moments in which I have nothing to bear in the way of human brutality. These moments are like smiles from heaven, a gift of chance. Let's hope that I will stay in this state of mind, which is so reasonable.

My comrades, I think, do not have this state of mind in the same degree. They haven't fully understood that they are slaves. The words "just" and "unjust" have probably retained a meaning for them, up to a certain point—in this situation in which everything is injustice.

Thursday, July 4th. Don't return to my milling machine, thank heaven! (Occupied by another woman who seems to be working *very* hard. . . .) Small machine for smoothing holes drilled in screw-threads. 2 kinds of pieces (the 2nd: nails). 1,300 of the first kind (1.50 F per hundred), 950 (?) of the 2nd (.60 F per hundred). Then 260 pieces polished on the polishing-belt (1 F per hundred).

Friday, July 5th. Tomorrow a day off; how wonderful! Slept badly (teeth). Morning, session at the dentist's. Headaches, exhaustion [also worry, which doesn't help matters. . . .]. Only 3 more weeks! Yes, but 3 weeks means *n* times 1 day! But I have courage for no more than 1 day, just 1. And that's by gritting my teeth with the courage of despair. Last night the young Italian said to me, "You're losing weight (he had told me that 10 days ago); you go to the john too often (!)." That's how I feel *before* going to the job.

At the end of my strength, seeing the women nearby (machine noise ear-splitting. . . .) preparing to wash their machines, and at their instigation, I go and ask Leclerc if I can leave at 7 o'clock. He answers curtly, "You're not going to come in to do 2 hrs., dammit!" In the evening Philippe orders me to wait I don't know how long, to annoy me. But I, seized by disgust. . . .

One could say that by virtue of some convention fatigue doesn't exist. . . . Like danger in war, no doubt.

Following week: Monday 8th to Friday 12th.

Monday, Tuesday. Began carton of 3,500 pieces (brass?) at 7 o'clock.

Wednesday. 8,000 pieces, or almost, in the course of the day. Finished the carton from the evening before (at 10:45). Do carton of 5,000 (began again at 11:45). Finish at 6 o'clock [dinner with A]. Exhausted. They were easy pieces (I don't know exactly what they were; brass, then steel, I think). "Uninterrupted tempo."

Thursday. Exhausted, dead tired from yesterday's effort, go very slowly.

Friday. Hairnet. Wife of the Italian.

Evening: R.P.¹⁶ meeting—Louzon doesn't recognize me. Says my face has changed. "You look tougher."

NOTEWORTHY INCIDENTS

The set-up man in gray (Michel) and his scorn for the other two, especially the "nitwit."

The bad set-up that breaks the cutter; incidents. The nitwit setter had done a set-up that only half worked. Several times the machine stops while I am bearing down on the cutter. That had happened to me once before, and I was told, "It isn't tight enough." So I go find the setter and ask him to tighten it. At first he doesn't want to come. He says that I'm bearing down too hard. Finally he comes. Says, "It isn't there (pointing to the tightening blocks of the cutter) but there (pointing to the pulley and the belt of the milling-spindle shaft) that it's working too hard (???)". Goes away. I continue. It doesn't go well. Finally a piece gets jammed in the mounting, breaks 3 teeth. . . . He goes to find Leclerc to get me bawled out. Leclerc bawls *him* out for the choice of the mounting, and says the cutter will still work. ½ (or ¼) hr. later L. comes back. I tell him, "The cutter stops sometimes." He explains (in a disagreeable tone of voice) that the machine is delicate, and that I am probably applying too much pressure. He shows me how to work—failing to notice that, at most, he is going at a tempo of 600 per hr., if that! [i.e., 2.70 F] (I have no way of timing him . . .). But

¹⁶ The journal *La Révolution prolétarienne*.

even this way, the cutter slows down the moment you apply pressure. I point this out to him. He says it doesn't matter. A time comes when the cutter stops completely, and doesn't start again. I call the set-up man, who is ready to bawl somebody out. My neighbor says, "It's too tight." It happens once more; the machine, in the process of turning, automatically tightens the shaft if a certain bolt that is supposed to keep it from tightening isn't tight enough.

You loosen by turning in the direction opposite that of the cutter.

Difficulty (for me) of conceiving how the machine works, whether I have it in front of me or not. . . .

What are the possible reasons for the cutter stopping? (Did the shaft also stop? Forgot to notice.) Some play, either in the cutter or in the piece. (That was what happened in this instance.) Too much resistance is set up if you ask the machine for more work than it can put out (was that what the nitwit meant?) [but what determines how much it can put out?].

To be studied: notion of the power of a machine.

Chartier's letter. Saw and plane. Perhaps it's different for the machine. . . .

Find out how the machines are driven by one motor. If they are arranged in order of heavy and light power needs.

Wednesday, 17th. Returned to work—weather cool—less suffering (moral) than I might have feared. I find myself again compliant under the yoke. . . .

No job. Pay a visit to the automatic lathes (Cuttat), which I had studied during the 4 days of vacation.

Until 8:30, wait for oil.

4 × 10 steel screws 7010105 | 041916 | cutter 1.

5,000 at 4.50 F, that's 23.50 F.

? little series given by Leclerc, which Michel in ¾ hr. couldn't even set up.

He comes after Michel has been laboring over the set-up for ¾ hr. "Who gave you these pieces to do?" I retort, "You!" He is nice. Orders me to change pieces; ¾ hr. lost, not paid for it! Michel says it could have been done. . . . He will set them up on another machine (that of the young girl whom I tease about him). Apropos of this, conversation with him about Leclerc. Does he know all about machines?—some yes, others no. Michel tells me he was shift foreman for 2 months, lost the job because he was too

much of a nice guy!—"But Leclerc isn't mean" (I say). Michel thinks he won't stay. But he was already there when the young Spanish woman came, a year and a half ago.

C 4 × 8 steel screws (7010103) 043408 | cutter 1.
5,000 at 4.50 F, set-up 1 F, that's 23.50 F. |
I don't finish them.

Thursday, 18th. Finish the C 4 × 8s.

Brass screws (740657 *twice* || 1417 (!), large special saw: 127 | 2).

100 (!!) at .0045, i.e., 1.45 F.

Brass fittings | 6005346 | 027947, one 1.5 cutter (?).

600 at .045, i.e., 2.25 F + .45 F = 2.70 F (cutter in backward!).

New set-up man (skilled worker? check this). He asks "what that's for," has me get the drawing, which takes a long time and doesn't help much. . . .

Earned yesterday and today (18 hrs.) 23.50 F + 23.50 F + 1.45 F + 2.70 F = 51.15 F.

Not 3 F! 2.85 F! I'll be paid that, for both the week before the 19th, and the Thursday and Friday before that (in all 7 + 7 + 9 + 10 + 9 + 10 + 9 + 18 = 79 hrs.).

The C 4 × 8 steel screws: to begin with, I do a package of 1,000. Go to Goncher's shop for the rest: not ready. He comes within an ace of bawling me out (although I'm the one who would be justified in complaining). I go back there in the afternoon for the remaining 4,000, but take them in 4 or 5 lots and have a long wait each time. That gives me the opportunity to admire the Cutrats. . . . the young set-up man, I think, finally noticed that I have no objection to this sort of waiting.

INCIDENTS

Set-up man changed. The fat incompetent guy left Tuesday afternoon. (Find out what became of him.) Replaced by one who, it seems, comes from another part of the shop. Not the don't-give-a-damn type. Nervous, with feverish, jerky gestures. His hands tremble. I feel sorry for him. He spends 1 hr. doing a set-up for me (for 600 pieces!), and still gets the cutter in backward. (It works anyway; copper, fortunately.)

Try to do the set-up myself—don't know which *side* of the rings. (They are made up of 2 hollow cylinders with different diameters.) I could easily

observe which side the next time the set-up is disassembled. . . . The real difficulty is muscular weakness; I can't loosen it.

Conversation with Michel. Leclerc's technical competence? "For some machines, not for others." Not a worker. Not mean—"will be thrown out"—

He had given me some pieces that don't work well on this machine.

Friday, July 19th. Steel locking set screws, 7051634 | 054641 | cutter 1.5.

1,000 at 5 F, that's 6 F (difficult to get the set-up, and still less than satisfactory).

7 plugs (small | 7050846 | 041784 | cutter 1.5

3,000 at 5 F, i.e., 16 F | I try to change 3 set-ups, but . . .).

5 × 22 screws (?) | 7051551 | 039660 | cutter 1.2.

550 (!) at .0045, i.e., 2.25 F + .235 F + 1 F = 3.50 F (nearly).

Ring set-screws | 7050253 | 45759 | cutter 1.

500 (!) at .005, set-up 1.75 F, i.e., 3.75 F.

6 F + 16 F + 3.50 F + 3.75 F = 29.25 F.

In 9 hrs., i.e., 3.25 per hr. (27 F + 2.25 F: exactly!). But in reality 8 hrs. (an hour for cleaning), which makes more than 3.50 F! exactly 3.65 F. But it's true that I had done a good portion of the steel screws the night before. . . .

Saturday. Violent headaches, distressed state, afternoon better (but weep at B's . . .).

Sunday. Italian art.

Monday, 22nd. Finished pieces from Friday (10 to 15 min.). Set up the machine myself for the 1st time (except for the centering, which I couldn't completely do, had to call and wait for set-up man [beret!]). Then I change the mounting, not the cutter; but call the set-up man—the one in glasses—for the centering (which he doesn't do), but spends an infinite amount of time adjusting the depth of the cut. He finished at 10:30; I then did a carton of 1,000 pieces (earned 5.70 F in 3 hrs. . . .). New carton of 1,000. The small ones with the "convex side" in red copper. Some get stuck in the mounting; I break 2 teeth. . . . By noon, have hardly made a start on a new carton of 2,000 (brass). Earned 1 F + 3.70 F + 1 F + 5 F + 1 F = 11.70 F. When I finish the carton, will have 20.70 F. *Must* still do an additional 2,000. . . .

Circular pipe-plugs—red copper, 6002400.

1,000 at 3.70 F + 1 F, i.e., 4.70 F.

Same, smaller, 1,000 at 5 F + 1 F, that's 6 F.

Afternoon.

Brass screws, 705700 | 0 | 079658 (cutter 0.8).

2,000 at 4 F + 1 F, i.e., 9 F.

Plugs (large) 6002400 | 071844.

1,000 at 3.70 F, i.e., 4.70 F.

Same, 071848.

1,000 at 3.70 F, that's 4.70 F.

Brass screws 70500 | 379652 | cutter 0.8.

Just started.

Earned: 4.70 F + 6 F + 4.70 F + 4.70 F + 1 F + 9 F = 30.10 F.

Leclerc sends for me after I finished 071841 and was just starting 848.

Begins by bawling me out because I'm doing these pieces without speaking to him about them. Asks for the number. I bring him my notebook! Looks at it and becomes very kind.

Tuesday. Do the screws, 2,000 at 4 F.

C 4 X 8 steel screws | 7010103 | 043409 | cutter 1.

5,000 at 4.50 F = setting 1 F, i.e., 23.50.

23.50 F + 8 F = 31.50 F (in 2 days 61.60 F, i.e., 2 X 30.80 F, i.e., 3.08 F per hr.).

Earned in 3 days 29.25 F + 30.10 F + 31.50 F, i.e., 90.85 F, that in:

28 [29] hours

28 X 3 = 84

[29] = 87]

28 X .50 = 14

28 X .25 = 7

84 + 7 = 91.

So I made on the average 3.25 F....

C. 4. 8. Began them at 11 o'clock—until 5. Cutter bad after ¾ hr. (smokes). Nevertheless, it's after 2:30 before Michel changes it. [It's my fault: why not have it changed sooner? Fear of getting bawled out....] Michel says that it worked backward (?). The 2nd cutter, although installed by him, doesn't hold up (it's the new saws—too big, says my neighbor, for the number 1 cutters [1]).

—Bawled out for the broken cutter (tales of the Span. woman about how a beginner feels). Changed at 4 P.M. Afterward, I last until 6 P.M.

(broke 2 teeth). Hard, working with a bad saw. But then, gives me an excuse for not transforming myself into an automaton....

Wednesday. Woes of the young Spanish woman (her pieces—her cutter—the new set-up man—Leclerc).

Last night the saw—put in at 6 P.M. by the set-up man in the beret—had worked loose by 7:15. I had told him about it in passing. I find it loose again. I call him. He keeps me waiting—bawls me out. I was applying too much pressure, it seems. I'm almost sure I wasn't (for the broken saw had given me the jitters). I tell him so. Keeps on bawling me out (figuratively speaking, since he doesn't raise his voice). This incident sends a chill into my heart for some time, since I asked only to think of him as a comrade.... At 10 o'clock, a new saw, also installed by him. That takes him about 20 min. Suddenly, the motor at the back stops. We wait until almost 11. [I had finished the 5,000 from the day before (and found a box for them) by 8:30.] I learn that today is payday, not tomorrow as I thought, which fills my heart with joy, for I won't have to go without eating.... So at noon, I don't hold back at all (pack of cigarettes—compote...).

At 3 o'clock, disastrous incident: I break a tooth on my saw. I know how it happened.... Exhausted, I'm thinking about my weariness at the M—. About Adrien—his wife—what Jeannine told me, that Michel is forcing her to work herself to death—about what Pierre ought to feel about it—about Trotsky's youth ("What a shame"...) and, from there, about his choice between populism and Marxism—Exactly at that moment I insert a piece that doesn't fit into the mounting (shaving or burr), I hear down on the cutter anyway... *ótoroi*!¹⁷ I don't dare change it, naturally—The Spanish woman advises me to ask Michel for help; I speak to him, but he won't come in the late afternoon. I keep the same cutter until 7 o'clock. Luckily it holds up—but needless to say I treat it with extreme caution! About 5 o'clock it comes loose again. I don't dare call anyone, of course! I tighten it, and do 200 or 300 pieces (or a few more?) that are not centered at all. Then I finally make up my mind and succeed in centering it myself! (but with the help of a previously made piece).

Pay: 255 F (I was afraid I would hardly get 200) for 81 hrs.

Night: didn't sleep.

Thursday. Again ½ to ¾ hr. with the saw. Then Michel changes it for me,

¹⁷ "Alas" in ancient Greek.

at the same time as the one on the machine he is setting up. I do the mounting myself, but can't do the centering. In desperation, end up by asking the set-up man with the glasses for help. It's done by 9 o'clock. —Morning painful—My legs ache—I'm totally fed up. . . . (These C 4 × 8 pieces are exasperating, with the constant danger of breaking the cutter, the necessity of preserving a totally vacuous state of mind. . . .) 3 false alarms, and at 11 o'clock—a gesture, a word had attracted my attention—catastrophe: broken tooth. Fortunately, what I have to do next calls for a 1.2 cutter. If only, afterward. . . .

At noon, a piece that jumps loosens the cutter.

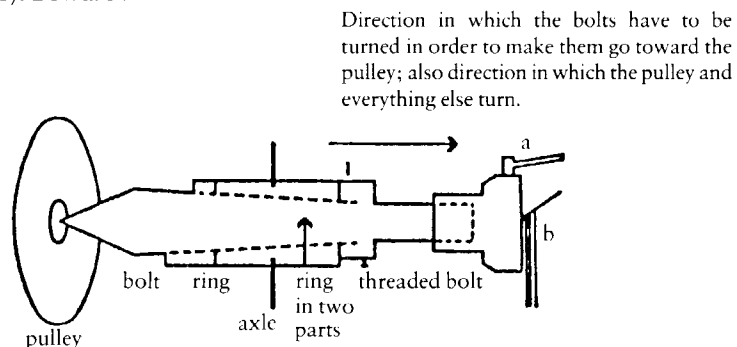
I again realize that I have a moral obligation to get hold of myself, if I don't want to end up with a bad conscience. And I pull myself together.

At 1:30 I tighten the cutter and center it myself [which I hadn't been able to do the day before] thanks to the decision, made at lunch, to go about it carefully [I use a previously made piece]. The set-up man in the beret watches good-naturedly and, when it's done, completes the tightening. Finished at 2 o'clock. The same one sets up the new pieces for me. Done at 2:30.

2:30–4:30, it doesn't work—Michel—his explanation, conversation with him. Set-up man in beret fixes it.

4:30–6:30, I do the rest of the 2,000 (I had done perhaps 200 of them).

Go look for a job. Leclerc as nice as can be. . . . Am especially worried about my cutter, as this job is to be done with cutter 1—some steel C 4 × 10s. At 7:30 proceed to change .8, 1.5, and the no. 1 with the broken tooth. It works. So here I am with a beautiful new cutter. . . . But I still have 5,000 of these filthy pieces to do (not completely identical, however). Beware!



The cutter's deviation is in the direction indicated by the arrow; the result of the cutter's being mounted on a cone is that the groove not only stops being in the center, but becomes progressively less and less deep, or even stops being made at all.

Reason: not tight enough at the end—or worn cutter—or the worker is applying too much force.

Too much force: since the cutter is moving more slowly than the pulley and the shaft, everything happens as if the cutter were turning in the reverse direction (?).

Other phenomena when it's out of adjustment:

The cutter stops because the rings around it have loosened (or because they haven't been tightened enough, or because you're applying too much pressure).

The cutter stops (along with the shaft and the pulley) because the shaft is too tight at the end (*b* tightens automatically because *a* isn't tight enough) [always because the adjustment is faulty].

Today, I think one of the causes was that the mounting was not tight enough, so that the cutter had to drive down and work at the same time; hence too much force has to be applied.

At noon a joy. The NO vote, by which the workers duly and officially, etc. . . . have Saturday off.

Night: the eczema that had left me in peace for two weeks recurred with a vengeance.

Earned yesterday and today 45 F + 2 F + 12 F (?) = 59 F . . . (or 58 F). Less than 3 F per hr. . . .

Friday. I have the pieces brought up to me that "Beret" was looking for last night. During this time I estimate—250 extra. Leclerc says to do them—I begin at 8:15. Did 200 by about 10:30. Have the cutter changed. Must wait . . . begin again at 11:15. Did less than 3,000 in the course of the morning (i.e., 14 F, or less—not more than 3 F per hr.!). *Very hard work.* But doesn't leave me morally crushed as on the day before. Physically, however, I'm not feeling as well. After lunch (ate for 5.50 F in the hope of fortifying myself) it's much worse. My head swims—I work mechanically. Fortunately these pieces don't jump like the C 4 × 8s. . . . I really think, for 2 or 2½ hrs., that I'm going to faint. Finally, I decide to slow down, and feel better. Finished after 4 o'clock (4:15 or 4:30). Leclerc tells me not to mark down the extra 250 anywhere, that I wouldn't be paid (they must be missing from another lot, he says . . .). Gives me a "cushy job" (the long

brass screws at 4 F). Time to set them up, 5 o'clock. At 5:30, stop working to wash the machine (quitting time at 6:30). The hour, on the whole, relatively pleasant, except for early moments of rushing and anxiety.

Conversations with the set-up man in the beret who, it seems, is beginning to take an interest in me.

C 4 × 10 steel screws | 7010105 | 041918 | cutter 1 | 5,000 at 4.50 F.

End of pay period is Monday.

Total hrs.: 8 hrs. + 10 + 10 + 10 + 10 + 9 + 10 = 67 hrs.

Earned to date 90.75 F + 47 F + 12 F + 23.50 F = 173.25 F, nevertheless, to make 3 F per hr. . . .

It would mean earning 4.50 F per hr. Monday. . . . The 4,000 at 4 F will come to 18 F (2 cartons). 27 F to go. . . . Would have to do the 4,000 in 3 hrs. *at most*. And afterward do another 5,500 . . . practically impossible!

Sunday night. Back at my place at 11:40. Go to bed. Not being able to sleep, realize about 12:30 that I forgot my apron! After that sleep even less. Get up at 5:15; at 5:45 telephone home;¹⁸ go by metro as far as Trocadero and back (40 min. in all, in the rush hour). Also, tired and headaches.

Monday. I must get out of here this evening or tomorrow. I have a headache. Don't finish the 4,000 until noon . . . (and I even spend another ¼ hr. on them from 1:30 to 1:45).

The machine is out of adjustment again, as on Thursday. The cutter, however, is brand new. Lucien (red beret) tells me again (more gently) that I'm applying too much pressure. But I'm sure it's really because he didn't tighten it enough. Anyway, since, without my having noticed it, the cutter was already out of adjustment Friday afternoon, so much so that a number of pieces weren't even touched by it, I have to lose time sorting and doing pieces over. I also lost a good quarter hour (at least) by going with the Spanish woman to get a bucket full of lubricating soap for her new machine; it was too heavy for her to carry by herself, and the worker whose job it was to give it to her made her wait. And afterward, on top of all that, Lucien's reproaches lowered my morale and speed. I know that if it happens again things will go badly. And as always when I don't singlemindedly strain every fiber to reach the rapid cadence, I slow up. Anyway, for all that it came to 4 × 4 = 16 F + 2 F (?) for doing the set-up (2 cartons).

¹⁸ I.e., her parents' home on rue Auguste-Comte. Since she went only as far as Trocadero, her mother may have met her half way.

Brass screws (7050010 | 4,000 at 4 F |. Then 400 pieces (out of 1,000; Span. woman does the other 600). I won't get the carton for them until Wednesday.

Steel locking screws | 774815 | 000987 | 400 at .50 F per hundred | set-up 1.25 F | cutter 1.2. I do them on the Spanish woman's small machine; she has been put somewhere else. The machine setter in glasses did the set-up while I was finishing my brass screws. A little before noon, although I didn't know at the time that he was preparing that machine for me, he ordered me to change the cutter and get the pieces—this in an authoritarian tone of voice that brooked no reply, which I obeyed in silence, but which, by quitting time, was enough to have made rise in me that flood tide of rage and bitterness that when you live a life like this is constantly there deep within you, always ready to overwhelm you completely. I pulled myself together, however. He's incompetent (unskilled worker, says the Spanish woman?), that's why he needs to lord it over people.

I begin the screws at 1:45. The machine is new to me. I spend, I think, almost 1 hr. at it (the Spanish woman will do the 600 in 20 min.!). Afterward, I go ask for a box. A waste of time. (There aren't any.) A young man comes for the 400 pieces. I go tell Leclerc that there's no box. Someone I don't know (gray smock) is talking informally to him, as far as I can make out, about a bawling out that he, Leclerc, is risking. He seems displeased to see me there (that's understandable), and his displeasure makes me forget to ask him for some pieces. Later, he's strolling about in the shop; I don't want to risk getting myself snapped at, as happened the other time, so I don't approach him; and I lose more than ¾ hr. (also by going to look for the lathe set-up man who gave me the 400 pieces, to find out if there are any more, but I don't find him).

Leclerc finally gives me some C 4 × 16s.

C 4 × 16 steel screws | 7010111 | 013259 | 5,000 at 4.50 F | put down 1 hr. | cutter 1.

On the other hand I do finally have Michel set up my machine. It's 3:30, past the time for handing in the card. (There's a deadline; you can hand them in only until 3 o'clock.) So instead of catching up on my lost time (and that's the main reason I was anxious to come today) I add to it. The thought of this lowers my morale and speed. For what I make from now on counts in a two-week period that I won't complete; so what difference does my hourly average make? I'm depressed by my headaches and I'm going—without noticing it—very, very slowly. I won't get these pieces

finished until noon tomorrow (and even then not completely), which comes to 15 hrs. of work (or even more). $18 F + 3.25 F + 23.50 F = 44.75 F$. But in order to make 3 F per hr., I would have to have earned 45 F in these 15 hrs.

3 o'clock deadline.

Tuesday. Finished the $C 4 \times 16s$.

M.P.R. screws, in Gorger's area (automatic lathes).

M.P.R. screws with large hexagonal heads (\odot). You have to place them so that the groove is perpendicular to the two parallel sides: (\oplus). Otherwise the piece is ruined. Very hard steel. While you're placing them, you risk turning them. All afternoon (and $\frac{3}{4}$ hr. the next day) I do only one carton of 1,400 (5 F per 1,000 + 1 F for set-up, i.e., 8 F), with one interruption for 1,000 large brass screws on the machine beside me, for which I don't have the box, but which I'm sure didn't pay more than 4.50 F maximum. That is, in $6\frac{1}{4}$ hrs. (or longer?) earned $8 F + 4.50 F = 12.50 F$. That's disgraceful! 2 F per hour! It's a good thing I'm telling them I'm sick Wednesday morning.

Collection taken up for a pregnant worker.¹⁹ People give 1 F, 1.50 F (me 2 F). Discussion in the cloakroom (it had been done a year ago, for the same worker). "Well, every year! It's a great misfortune, and that's all there is to it. It can happen to anyone. —When you don't know, you shouldn't. . . ." Spanish woman: "I don't feel that this is a good reason to take up a collection, do you?" I say "Yes" with conviction, and she doesn't pursue it.

When I left Monday night intending to report sick the following morning, I was careful not to eat more than a sandwich bought at 7 o'clock, and a glass of cider. Woke up at 5:30 (on purpose). I ate a roll Tuesday morning. The same at noon. 3 rolls in the evening, and went on foot to the Porte de Saint-Cloud, plus an espresso coffee to make me sleep. But the result of this diet was to put me into a state of euphoria! . . . Only I was extremely slow on the job.

Wednesday morning. Finish the carton of 1,400 M.P.R.s. I do 200 out of the new carton—5 F or 5.80 F? I go very, very slowly, but feel, through a damned spirit of contradiction, singularly joyful and in top form.

Leclerc and Gorger [foreman of the automatic lathes], the cartons of 1,000 brass pieces. Leclerc: "If you want to stop, stop."

¹⁹ Probably to pay for an abortion.

Earned $27.50 F + 1 F + 1 F + 4 F (?) + 1 F + 7.50 F (?) = 37 F$ or $40.60 F$ | theoretically in $11\frac{1}{2}$ hrs. [$34.50 F . . .$].

Monday-Tuesday. $C 4 \times 16$ screws | steel | 5,000 at 4.50 F + set-up 1 F | cutter 1, 7010 III | 013252, anchoring flanges.

M.P.R. screws, steel, 4,000 at 5.80 F + set-up 2 F 1.5 | 747327 | 046-543.

Steel stop pins, 2,000 at 4.50 F + 2 F (?) | 7050129 | 099937 | cutter 1.

$23.50 F + 23.20 F + 2 F + 9 F + 2 F = 59.70 F$.

$37 F + 59.70 F = 96.70 F$ in $11\frac{1}{2}$ hrs. + $20\frac{1}{2}$ hrs. = 32 hrs. $32 \times 3 = 96$.

So in terms of the 3 F minimum, I'm up to date, but barely . . . and there would be 12 F to make up from the other 2-week period! Episodes: Gorger . . .

Michel . . .

Any child can see through Juliette's little tricks . . .

Monday, in a bad way. Going back to work infinitely more painful than I would have thought. The days seem an eternity to me. Heat. . . Headaches. . . These $C 4 \times 16$ screws disgust me. It's one of the "cushy jobs"; I would have to do it quickly, and I can't. Barely finished, I think, by 3:30. Prostration, bitterness at stupifying work, disgust. Fear also, all the time, of the cutter coming loose. Nevertheless, it happens. The wait to have the cutters changed. For the 1st time I succeed in changing a cutter myself, with no help at all, and Philippe says that it's right in the middle. A victory, better than speed. I also learn, after another bad experience, to adjust the tightness of the screw and handle at the end myself. Lucien sometimes completely forgets to tighten it. . . . The M.P.R. screws. Michel warns me. He doesn't set them up, but "spectacles" does it. I do the M.P.R.s a little faster than before, but still very, very slowly.

Wednesday. Steel stops, cutter 1.5.

C 001268	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 009182 \\ 097384 \\ 097385 \end{array} \right.$	1,000	at 4.50 F (2 set-ups)
		—	
		—	

Round pipe plugs in red copper 10 C.V. cutter 1.5.

C 002400	{	071853	1,000	}	3.70 F
		50	—		
		47	—		

$4.50 F \times 3 + 3.70 F \times 3 + 3 F \dots$

$13.50 F + 11.10 F + 3 F = 27.60 F$, worked 10½ hrs. So am short 4 F.

Thursday. Steel lock bolts 8 C.V., cutter 1.

737887 | 084097, 3,000 at 4.50 F, set-up 1 F.

Round pipe plugs in red copper, cutter 1.5.

$13.50 F + 3.70 F + 5 F + 3.80 F + 4 F = 30 F$. Am short 1.50 F. So am short 5.50 F in all. Maybe it's been compensated for by the week before.

Episode of the "stops." Michel, Thursday morning.

Humid Wednesday and Thursday. Delightfully cool Thursday evening. Good. . . .

The stops had been begun the day before at 5 o'clock. On that Tuesday when I thought I was going to faint, when the weather was so humid, when my whole body felt on fire, when I had such a headache. . . . Juliette says to me, "1.5 cutter." I remove my number 1 cutter, proceed to change the 2 cutters and hand one to Philippe, saying simply, "That's a number 1."

At Renault.

Lange: foreman—former set-up man—stickler for order and neatness, apart from that. . . . Scowls, etc.; foremen treat him with respect. With me, nice enough.

Roger: (replc. Leclerc); drilling machine set-up man.

Philippe: boor; lathe set-up man.

Protruding Eyes . . . : tall blond, another lathe set-up man.

Spectacles . . .

Male workers: Armenian, milling machine operator next to 1st machine, mild-mannered worker who jokes about "women going to war." Italian who replaces him (likable).

Women: Bertrand—another neighbor (Juliette)—beginner—woman who flirts with Michel—the tall brunette with 2 kids—old woman who works on the lathes—Italian's wife—drilling machine operator. . . .

Shift foremen:

Fortin: such a nice guy . . .

Gorcher: automatic lathes, comedian, likable.

Leclerc.

Foreman across from elevator—tone of superiority in his voice intolerable.

Michel.

Lucien.

Gained from this experience? The feeling that I do not possess any right whatever, of any kind (take care not to lose this feeling). The ability to be morally self-sufficient, to live in this state of constant latent humiliation without feeling humiliated in my own eyes; to savor intensely every moment of freedom or camaraderie, as if it would last forever. A direct contact with life. . . .

I came near to being broken. I almost was—my courage, the feeling that I had value as a person were nearly broken during a period I would be humiliated to remember, were it not that strictly speaking I have retained no memory of it. I got up in the mornings with anguish. I went to the factory with dread; I worked like a slave; the noon break was a wrenching experience; I got back to my place at 5:45, preoccupied immediately with getting enough sleep (which I didn't) and with waking up early enough. Time was an intolerable burden. Dread—outright fear—of what was going to happen next only relaxed its grip on me on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. And what I dreaded was the *orders*.

The feeling of self-respect, such as it has been built up by society, is *destroyed*. It is necessary to forge another one for oneself (although exhaustion wipes out consciousness of one's ability to think!). Try to hold on to this other kind.

One finally gets a clear idea of one's own importance.

The class of those who *do not count*—in any situation—in anyone's eyes—and who will not count, ever, no matter what happens (notwithstanding the last line of the 1st verse of the *Internationale*).²⁰

Det.'s question (working-class solidarity).

Problem: objective conditions that allow men to be 1) nice guys and 2) productive.

One always needs to have some *external* signs of one's worth for oneself.

The main fact isn't the suffering, but the humiliation.

²⁰ "We have been naught, we shall be all."

Hitler's strength is perhaps founded on that (whereas stupid "materialism" . . .).

[If trade unionism brought about a sense of responsibility in everyday life. . . .]

Never forget this observation: in these rough beings I always found that generosity of heart and aptitude for general ideas were directly proportional to one another.

An obviously inexorable and invincible form of oppression does not engender revolt as an immediate reaction, but submission.

At Alsthom, I rebelled only on Sundays. . . .

At Renault, I had arrived at a more stoical attitude. Substitute acceptance for submission.

■ *War and Peace*