

E. W. Roberts

Seven years ago a youth of seventeen walked into the Pacific Garment Company's factory and asked for a job.

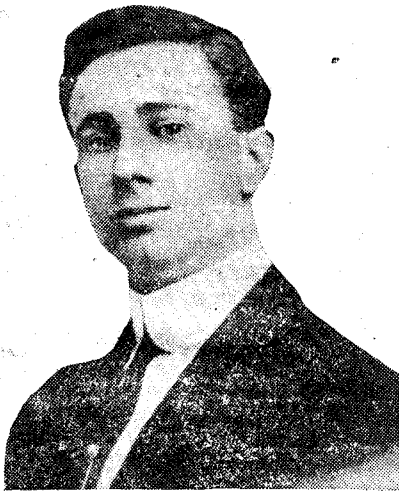
"We need a six-dollar-a-week roustabout," they told him, "but kid, you look too good for the job!"

A vision of a sick father and young brothers and sister flashed through his mind.

"I'll take it," he replied promptly, and pulled off his coat and went to work.

Today "Ed" Roberts is at the head of his own garment factory, the Roberts Manufacturing Co., and the only real competitor of the factory whose floors he once swept.

You pass frequently a certain inconspicuous stairway, 5721½ Pasadena avenue, a few doors from the office that sends out this paper. You do not know that its busy hum of machinery comes from the only ready-made dress factory on the Pacific coast. An electric motor is running eighteen sewing machines. Twenty-five skilled workers are turning out dresses of unique design. Large shipments go out to various points in California, Washington, Nevada, Oregon and Arizona.



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As an errand boy, he saw things to do and did them without being reminded. With quick willingness he made himself useful wherever he saw a chance and made himself indispensable to the business. His promotion was rapid. It was not long before he was taking a thorough course for himself in designing.

Three years ago he opened his own business in Highland Park, with a capital of \$175, and optimism and hard

work for assets. The first week he had to draw on both for he failed to make enough to pay his help. Today through sheer push and pluck, he works with a \$3,000 equipment. He handles a pay roll of from \$1,200 to \$1,400 a month. And every cent represents his own unaided efforts.

Bullock's and Robinson's are finding him out with large orders, as well as the Broadway Department store, and Hamburger's. Perhaps the clever breakfast suit you admired down town was designed and made here.

For Ed Roberts is his own designer. A row of hooks the length of the room is filled with original patterns, labeled and mysterious, appearing orderly only to the initiated.

An electric cutter carefully carves the pattern chalked on the goods, and cuts 200 thicknesses with as much ease and accuracy as ten. A knife does the work, moving up and down 4200 time a minute. This little tool alone cost \$300 but saves its cost many times over.

A hem stitcher, a double needle machine for stitching uniforms, a pinker for raw edges, a finishing machine for inside seams, all do the hand work of hours in a few seconds, while three pressers are busy getting garments ready for the market.

Many a practical garment is turned out—riding outfits, khaki suits, nurse and waitress uniforms, breakfast and sport suits, middy blouses and summer and silk dresses as well.

Two salesmen on the road and one city salesman pour in orders as fast as they can be filled.

His mother proves to be an invaluable assistant, giving up a position as assistant buyer at Bullock's where she also sold goods since her widowhood made it necessary.

When Ed—for his friends find it difficult to call him else—drew his first six dollars, an old man asked him for money to buy food. With impulsive generosity he tossed him a nickel and a dime. Later he found he had parted with his first gold piece instead of the nickel.

"Mother," he grinned, "that fellow can eat a long time on my five dollars."

A fortune lost could not have looked larger to some. But Ed Roberts the good loser makes Ed Roberts the good winner as well, and will keep the dollars from obscuring the humanity that's in him as he climbs on up the ladder of business success.

LUELLA RICE.