

# CHILD-LABOR.

BY

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No evil is hopeless when its extent is known and its corrective is rigidly applied. Nearly a century of hard fought legislation was needed to cure the abuses which followed when the English factory system ushered in and abnormally utilized a new industrial force, the toil of the child of both sexes. Gradually has arisen and triumphed the important principle that the moral and physical well-being of the community demands restriction within reasonable limits of the labor of women and children. The factory acts of England dating from 1802 to 1878 assert the right of the State to control industrial organizations that sap the vitality of the mothers and children, so precious to our social integrity. Each successive enactment throttled crimes of the employing class against the poor, the feeble, the young—crimes whose magnitude was exposed by formal commissions of inquiry appointed by the British government. For seventy years the history of English legislation is blackened by the record of the sufferings of baby humanity in mines, chimneys, mills and workshops.

So complete, so far-reaching have been the reforms secured by philanthropists and progressive lawmakers that to-day the English factory system is the model for the civilized world, and its effects may be taken as a test of restrictive and opportunity-creating enactments. Within a single decade after half-time

for children was instituted and education was made the condition of their employment, it became rare to find an operative of either sex under twenty years of age who could not read and write. The general intelligence of the laboring class was rapidly developed. As a result of the educational acquirements, of the short time clause for all earners and the prohibition of night and overtime work for women, the increased social welfare of the masses was apparent in rise of wages, greater production of wealth per capita of population, fall in prices, and diminution of pauperism and crime. The last thirty-five years having witnessed the most strenuous efforts ever made in Britain for popular education, the English laborer has relatively progressed more than his trans-Atlantic prototype. During this constructive period for public or board schools, the number of children attending has increased forty-two per cent. in England and less than twenty-five per cent. in the United States, where the free system was already in vogue.

The criminal calendar shows that in 1878 convictions for crime were as 1 to 900 of the population of the United States as against 1 to 1,880 in Great Britain. In 1885 they had fallen to 1 in 3,272 in England, but remain unchanged here, being in 1887 still 1 in 930 of population.

Conditions in Germany, despite compulsory education and universal factory inspection, are less promising. The United States consular report for March, 1889, notes in 1887 a greater percentage of young persons employed, due to the more flourishing industrial situation. In Saxony alone, where the most highly organized factory inspection system prevails,

there was an increase during one year from 19,953 to 24,111, or over 20 per cent. of juvenile employes between fourteen and sixteen. Besides, 685 boys and 14 girls from fourteen to sixteen, and 465 boys and 8 girls from twelve to fourteen were engaged in the Saxon mines. In every one hundred workers the proportion of boys from fourteen to sixteen rose from 3.9 per cent. to 4.4 per cent.; of girls, from 3 per cent. to 3.3 per cent., while 2.1 per cent. are boys from twelve to fourteen. The number of factories giving occupation to children from twelve to sixteen years of age was 5,607 in 1887, against 4,987 in 1886. Sixty per cent. of the young workers of Baden are engaged in the cigar industry. Inspectors testify to constant violations of the regulations governing the employment of children. The consular report for July, 1889, makes manifest that during 1887 the concentration of children from twelve to fourteen in manufacturing pursuits has increased, 10,652 of them, or 1,000 more than the year before, appearing in industrial establishments. The great number of juvenile workers and the rapid rise in a single twelve-month of the percentage of those under sixteen "call loudly for interference in the interest of the health and morality of the people." All young persons in Germany toil ten full hours a day.

The expansion of American industries invites a phenomenal resort to machinery, and along with it the utilization of Child-Labor. Diversity of laws in various States and the absence of regulations in others bring about in different sections widely divergent conditions. The inspection system, the rigid administration of educational and protective acts, the liberal policy of some progressive manufac-

turers, all combine to produce in favored centres industrial prosperity and high standards of comfort and intelligence. In other localities the inhumanities attending uncontrolled Child-Labor in Europe are in milder form repeating themselves on the free and bountiful soil of this republic. Annually millions of dollars are devoted by Americans to foreign missions, while at home children—some of whom are almost babies—under hard task-masters earn without schooling, without religion, without sanitary homes, without rest or recreation, the money that keeps a roof over them in wintry nights. Young children, who love play and hate work, who would like to be warm and well-fed, but rarely are; who are sworn at in the shops if they laugh, and beaten, perhaps, by a drunken father if their day's pittance does not suffice to buy his dram. In one box factory alone ninety little girls, two-thirds of them under fourteen, most of them plainly only from ten to twelve, toil for such a trifle as will keep no human being in food. Here, especially in vacation, troop the small feet in worn shoes. Some girls and boys are glad to leave dull homes for the excitement of a crowd; others seek work for sadder reasons—mother is ill and cannot wash, or lame Johnny needs a new crutch. A ragged maid of twelve found sobbing at a shop door gasped out: "Pa 'll lick me sure because I've made so little this week," showing two shining quarters in her pudgy palm. One wee vixen, discharged for trifling, wept and begged so piteously to stay that the foreman, imagining that the loss of her place would ensure a whipping at home, relented. Tears then changed to smiles, and the small culprit confessed to a neighbor that her parents objected to her working, but she "loved the fun."

Dismal fun, to creep in the black night or gray dawn from the wretched pallet, donning the old outer garments while half asleep, gulping down the meagre breakfast, tramping in snow or slush or icy wind under the winter stars, rushing breathlessly lest the shop be closed at seven and the tardy ones docked. Fun, to sit or stand silent, breathing foul air, in rooms bare and cold or suffocatingly hot. Fun, to swallow a cold lunch washed down by pernicious tea when hot meats may be steaming in home kitchens. Fun, to count and plan how the week's dole shall be spent, and then to be told that the work is all wrong and will not be paid for. Fun, to hear only harsh command or stern rebuke, to drag through weary afternoons, then hurry in the dark to squalid tenements and huddle torpid with chill and drudgery around a stove none too warm with its scanty coals.

Worse than physical hardship, more blighting than cold or ill-treatment, is the inevitable insight of the childish mind into duplicity and vice. A gradual hardening of the sensibilities ensues from constantly hearing words unfit for the ears of youth and witnessing the degrading acts and ugly passions which are too frequent in some work rooms where the sexes indiscriminately mingle. Little beings that should be sheltered by mother's love are early taught the alphabet of sin. They often learn to cheat, deceive, lie and swear. When this sentence was submitted as a reading test: "Do you do all your own sewing?" an innocent-faced lamb thus rendered it: "Do you do all your own swearing?"—oaths being more familiar than industry. So soon as these mites of humanity can manage in the school-room words of one or two syllables, a mercenary parent

may barter their future development for a little silver. The lazy father desirous of living on the earnings of his offspring is deterred neither by human instincts nor human laws. He breaks the law; worse, he makes the child break a higher law, swear to an untruth, and declare itself thirteen or fourteen as legally required when the least observant eye can see that such little bones and wizened face have not struggled to the light during ten neglected years. "Do you wish to know her real age or her factory age?" slips unawares from the mother's lips. As soon as immigrants enter the borders of the United States, the initiation into falsehood begins, to hasten prospective gains from the labor of early youth. "How old are you?" a child was asked. "J'ai douze ans, madame." "How long since you came from Canada?" "La semaine dernière." "And when you left Canada how old were you?" "A Canada, madame, je n'avais que dix ans."

The extent, the economic bearings, and some of the evils of Child-Labor in the United States, may best be shown by an analysis of conditions in those industries where it chiefly prevails.

To study threatening tendencies without favor or prejudice, to search out their causes and warn of their effects surely conduces to suppression or control. A social and economic wrong, however, which strikes at the safety of the home, the family, the future manhood and womanhood of the republic, it is difficult to treat dispassionately. Most writers on Child-Labor insensibly exaggerate without designedly misrepresenting. Reforms are never compassed, they say, by looking on both sides; and in a somewhat warped temper, but longing only to do

good, they cite extreme cases or bolster up sweeping assertions by extracts from the earliest reports of trades-unions, boards of education and labor bureaus,—reports compiled in the first stages of factory legislation when conditions were at their worst and the results of restriction unapparent. In fact, up to the last two years little other information has been accessible. Misled by incomplete statistics rather than disingenuous or blind to improvements chronicled in various States, many eloquent special pleaders would have it believed that, as respects Child-Labor, America is “going to the dogs.” From such conclusions the writer dissents. Though here and there the horizon be dark, the outlook is not discouraging. While the truth should be proclaimed, one fact must constantly be borne in mind—that the wretchedness and abuses which undeniably exist pertain to but a segment of the industrial world. Thousands of kindly employers of high integrity furnish to millions of prosperous and contented men and women the unstinted wage which builds up happy homes. The economic salvation of the majority of those who ply the needle and tend the spindle is more imperiled by the competitive method and their own want of skill and persistence than by the factor of childish toil. Indeed, the better class of manufacturers and proprietors shrink from gains won by the sweating brow of fragile youth. And more: multitudes of untaught children who work, work of their own free will, preferring manual tasks to irksome brain effort. If at home, they would not be at study. What a plea, what an impeachment of the policy of the State is the crowding of willing victims into our shops and mills! An impeachment of school sys-



tems that ignore the productive, the creative faculties; a plea for manual training unhampered by the caprice or narrowness of the individual employer. Valuable educational development without the reproach of childhood's ruin might be wrought from properly regulated juvenile labor; whereas at present it is a crime against humanity, at which statistics hurl serried columns and denunciators their thunder. Affecting possibly one-fourth of the whole industrial body, its turpitude and hurtful consequences must neither be glossed over nor evaded, since without control by the state such evil growth soon spreads. Actual facts fully justify an appeal for the scientific direction of Child-Labor or, in existing phases, for its rigid restraint if not total exclusion.

Most respectable of the occupations which very young boys and girls follow are, perhaps, mercantile pursuits. The surroundings of children employed in dry-goods shops as salesgirls, wrappers, bundle-boys and cash-runners apparently involve no serious or undesirable results. The rooms are tidy, the work light, the garments—however shabby—are generally clean, the air of the little ones indicative of comparative comfort. The greater the comfort the more heinous the wrong. If a widowed mother can afford to keep her child decent, a little extra effort would maintain it at school. Why, then, should parents except as a last resort shut off their offspring from the advantages of education, and decree ten or twelve hours of toil in a crowded apartment, frequently in a damp basement? Even the best shops, from circumstances claimed to be beyond control, often cut off the workers from sunshine and poison them by the mingled contamination of ceaseless gas-

light and odors from ill-kept toilet rooms. The pittance of \$1 to \$2 a week gained by the child goes many times to buy finer clothes for older sisters or rum for an idle parent. Among the foreign population especially, at the earliest age when children can be slipped on any plea into employment, they are taken from school and condemned to shop life in order to swell the aggregate family earnings, to pay off a mortgage on the home or to increase the bank account. A large proportion of houses owned by workingmen represent two or three times as many children robbed of tuition and unnaturally tasked. Well-clad little girls in ruffled aprons often cannot read intelligently words of one syllable, such as *name, age, home*. Most of these toilers confess to having ceased study when in the primary or second reader, and in a few years the last vestige of instruction is forgotten. Hence thousands of boys and girls from fifteen to twenty-one cannot read at all, having been forced to work too young. As time passes the less inclined is the child to make up for lost schooling, shame preventing attendance even if opportunity offers. Its labor thus begun with a view of tiding over some crisis when the father was ill or unemployed, however anxious the parents may be to retrieve the occasion, no day ever comes when the welcome earnings of the helper can be spared, and once in the treadmill the daily round continues.

Sanitary conditions in dry-goods shops which cater to "cheap" trade often violate every law of health. The children engaged there stand or run all day, no seats being allowed. Their scanty lunch is eaten in some cases in underground basements, and the time

allotted for dinner and rest may be shortened to twenty minutes. Obligated to remain at night as late as any other employé, their working hours not infrequently exceed the legal limit; and in States where no safeguards for minors are provided, the length of daily service depends on the whims or rapacity of the proprietors. On Saturday and during busy seasons or just before holidays, night work is added to the already intense strain. From one to three weeks before Christmas the children serve till 9, 10, 11 o'clock P. M., usually without extra pay; sometimes a light supper is furnished. This protraction of labor involves a scrap of cold bread and tea snatched between whiles—two cold meals of innutritious food for a growing child whose early breakfast was probably hurried and poor, yet who for fourteen hours a day must stand in stuffy air among surging throngs. In the better shops escorts home are provided, but as a rule, released at 10 or 11 P. M., the little ones scurry alone down gruesome byways or thoroughfares alight with sin. Is not father at the grog-shop and mother too tired to act as protector? In groups or singly the girls scud through the darkness, often stopped, insulted or enticed by men. Think of it, parents, who kiss your pampered darlings of nine and ten years in rosy slumber, tucked away at 8 o'clock in the soft, warm bed after a day of romp, wholesome food and wisely managed study! On Sunday mornings the writer has seen at their homes scores of cash-girls and boys heavy-eyed, listless, dragging their tired limbs or asleep in the stupor of exhaustion. Where are the graces, the joys, the innocence of childhood? Haggard, prematurely aged, debased looking faces of

the waifs in the poorer dry-goods trade answer—not where Child-Labor reigns. What is the sequel of the misspent years sacrificed to parental avarice or intemperance? Instead of the red cheeks and rounded limbs of healthy youth we behold pallor and glazed eyes, stunted bodies and narrow chests, stooping shoulders, early decay and death, or lifelong invalidism.

The moral atmosphere even of some of the finest shops is none the purest. If clean-hearted on entering, the cash-child is apt to become early familiar with vice. The writer has observed little girls of ten and eleven acting as a go-between in intrigue for older youths and maidens; has heard talk among the small children that revealed a prurient knowledge of immoral practices; and in halls, on stairways and around toilet-rooms, has witnessed improprieties of behavior among girls and boys of tender age that indicate distressing depravity. In cheaper shops presided over by rougher men who naturally attract a lower grade of employés, these evils are emphasized. Now and then the proprietor himself is charged with debauching the smaller girls. While assertions of this character are often false and always difficult to prove, the books of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children record enormities of the most startling nature, and prosecutions occasionally take place. The fatherly attentions of unctuous sexagenarians who pretend to a laudable interest in the little bodies under their control, are known to savor of rakishness. Liberties and privileges that might be allowed an old man are taken with all a young man's enjoyment of them; and such insidious approaches a girl of ten or twelve is too

ignorant or too intimidated to repulse. A home-bred child whose employer was accused of immoralities with two very young girls in his workroom assured the writer that the two victims were "little toughs" forever throwing themselves in the man's way. When questioned as to his behavior to herself, she replied: "Oh, he's always catching hold of me in the hall and inviting me to his office. But the fore-lady says he don't mean right, and I stay away." While one wretch like this may be exposed, a score ply their infamy undetected.

Wherever fines are imposed, the cash child whose pay is smallest bears the largest proportion of the loss. Whatever system prevails in the establishment is applied with more severity to the little one from ten to fourteen than to the clerk of a higher grade so useful that he might not easily be replaced. If the "cash" resents a fine or injustice, a hundred mothers are clamoring outside with eager substitutes for the place. Nobody befriends the small child, hears his excuses, or listens to his grievances. The bundle boy or cash girl is the scape-goat for all sins. In the writer's own experience, mistakes resulting from the gross inattention of sales-women at the counters are glibly charged upon the wrappers or the cash runner. Floor-walkers tyrannize, clerks terrorize. The mite of humanity who was late because she had to run to the grocery for milk or for the reason that her mother failed to get breakfast is "docked" just in the same way as the young lady whose evening revels made her sleep too soundly next morning. From wages of \$1 to \$2.50 a week the sum of five and ten cents a day for being a quarter of an hour behind hand is a very large restitu-

tion for lost time and a heavy percentage from the meagre earnings. In a few shops the fine is a cent for every minute one is late. The cash girl at \$1.20 forfeits for ten minutes' tardiness, one-twelfth of her week's pay; the \$15 saleswoman forgoes but the one-hundred and fiftieth part of hers; yet this is justice! Even at Christmas when crowds are so dense that the clothes of shoppers are almost torn off, the "cash" is in some places fined twenty-five cents for the loss of a badge. Occasionally change dropped in transit through the little weak hands is deducted from the wages. For such accidents dismissal usually follows, though an expert thief among the customers may have been the culprit.

Imprisoned during all the growing years away from sunshine; subjected to the negative evils of cold, weariness, poor food, undue excitement; stunted physically and perhaps degraded morally, the child-worker is either too worldly wise, or else from helplessness and ignorance the victim of imposition. In some States mercantile establishments, being out of the pale of factory inspection, are thronged with children. Apparent comfort in their surroundings repels inquiry, and the wickedness of such child-sacrifice goes unrebuked. The worse the tone of the shop and the lower the pay, the younger are the children who flock there.

In large factories for shirts, overalls and underwear, girls from ten to fourteen are utilized as runners, turners, packers, basters and also as machine operators. Put early even at a power machine, the child not exceptionally strong breaks down in a few years. High speed and nervousness induced by the presence or often by the escape of

steam are no less injurious than the stooping posture and the dragging weight of heavy goods. Errand girls climb stairs incessantly. At noon they buy lunches for the older women, and the order often includes beer. This the child must seek in the neighboring saloon, with whose mysteries she soon grows familiar; the beer itself becomes a welcome treat, and thus the seeds of intemperance are sown. Less exposed in these factories than in retail shops to the demoralizing influences of men, little girls are, however, far from safe. In big buildings let out in floors, unless the discipline is rigid, the boys from one department mingle on stairs and in hallways with the girls from another room, profanity and vulgar jests prevailing.

But the Moloch of little women is the tailor shop. Sent there in vacation at nine or ten years of age to learn the trade, when school opens the child usually prefers work to study and is allowed to remain; or the mother values fifty cents a week above the daughter's future and compels her to stay. The tailor's home is usually a "back shop" high up in attics filled with men and women, the air dense with tobacco smoke, foul from reeking closets common to both sexes and stoves red hot for pressing irons. In such an atmosphere the hours of childhood pass, the little creatures often held to their task by the fear of an angry father who goads their tender strength to the highest productive point. From 7 to 6 o'clock and sometimes in busy seasons until 8 o'clock at night, girls only nine years old baste and stitch in the stuffy room of a tenement, perhaps the kitchen of the tailor's abode. The crying of a baby, frying of meat, smoke of vile pipes, the stench from

unwashed human bodies, dirt and squalor are the background, where a grim, silent "boss" with ever ready curses for a word spoken or a glance straying from work is the *deus ex machina*. A girl now fifteen relates that at thirteen she and younger companions worked with men and boys in a "slop shop" which consisted of a space divided off by a partition six feet high from the back part of the room where the family of her "boss" lived and slept. The opening for egress from front to rear had neither door nor curtain. Here all the workers were compelled to remain on one side of the partition while on the other side the wife of the master brought a child into the world. The men and boys laughed at the moans of the sufferer and made vulgar jokes as the final moment came.

The manufacture of corsets gives employment to many children of tender years, some of the processes, as boning, for example, requiring little skill. Kindred work on dress shields and bustles yields a pittance eagerly sought. Piece work prevails, the supply often gives out, and then only a few cents a day can be earned; yet for the dole of seventy-five or eighty cents a week the child is taken from school and its whole development arrested. The majority of these little damsels are of foreign parentage and manifestly under fourteen, many appearing no older than nine. Numbers have not made their first communion, a ceremony that takes place usually about the twelfth year. From three to thirty tyros may be encountered in every bustle shop; and as conditions are supposed to be more comfortable and factory inspection is consequently rarer in these than in mills, the children sometimes work two or three years be-



fore an age certificate is demanded. By actual test, the majority cannot read words of one syllable; others being aliens speak no English and are illiterate besides. In some shops, the morals are low. The writer has seen at 6 o'clock scores of children from ill-managed corset manufactories behaving on the street like little demons, cursing, throwing sticks and fighting boys.

The veriest pandemonium ever beheld, however, was a hosiery factory in the West where most of the girls were under fifteen and some under thirteen. The din, rudeness, unabashed profanity and depravity made a never-to-be-forgotten scene. It was ascertained from themselves and boastfully related that the employés of this shop spent Sundays at dance halls and theatres and frequented night picnics in couples or with men, remaining out till four in the morning. Into such company young children ten and twelve are launched.

Thousands of girls run knitting-machines, some in well-arranged factories where the workers are better placed than at home, others in poorer quarters. The prices for knit hosiery and similar productions have been so reduced by competition with convict labor that except in the best lines grown women can no longer support themselves. Swarms of diminutive figures stand at the whirring machines ten hours a day for a trifle that would scarcely maintain a well-fed dog. Some of the tiny maids are deeply interesting despite their dirt and rags. The writer was often mistaken for an inspector discharging children under age, and because of this misapprehension had great difficulty in securing a talk with the children. They hid in the

closets and under the stairs, and, when followed, were usually ready with falsehoods as to their real age in order to escape the imagined penalty of dismissal. One brave little girl had courage to tell the truth. Slight and delicate, she looked barely ten, and earned about \$1.50 a week. After answering readily all questions she burst into pitiful weeping, and between her sobs told a sad story, afterwards verified in every particular, of her mother with uncertain employment, three little sisters, aged grandparents, one of them blind, and nobody able to work. "So, as I am twelve, could read very well and had been to school five years, my mother thought I might help her a little. We have been so much better off since I came here. Oh, don't send me away!" In proof of her words she rendered intelligently difficult sentences, and was made happy by the assurance that she should not be dismissed.

To excuse the small wages, children in some knitting factories are for two or three years called learners; but the trade can be acquired in three months, though quickness is gained by practice. The knitters, big and little, often have to pay for broken needles, and in some shops they bear the expense of repairing machines. Most of the workers stand all day, singing while they knit, the pipe of childish voices revealing from the street the nature of the work going on inside the building.

Candy manufacturers employ many children under the age of thirteen and a large contingent are under fifteen. Piece work prevails and in some cities is so poorly paid that older girls avoid the business, often only the forewoman and a few picked assistants being over sixteen. Italians abound in the choco-

late factories, a race beautiful and engaging, but generally untaught. Chewing-gum packers are quite as young, sometimes worse paid and equally illiterate. Some have never been to school since their ninth or tenth year, drifting from shop to shop, working a few weeks in one and another and earning from 75 cents to \$3 a week. All the laborers here except two or three forewomen are usually under fifteen, from thirty to ninety children being employed by each firm. Those of much the same class, sometimes more ignorant and uneducated, are found in scores in most ink and blacking manufactories.

However handsome and well equipped are some paper-box establishments, the rule is that when a house is tumbling down and has become such a wreck that few companies will insure it, the box manufacturer pounces upon the structure and adds to the dirt of years the refuse of his shop day by day until the trash is a foot deep over the unsafe floors. The ceilings are low and begrimed, the light not unfrequently inadequate. Each worker is then provided with an oil-lamp whose smoke and fumes combine with the odors of the glue-pot and neglected water-closets to make the close room more hurtful. Piles of inflammable paper and stacks of boxes await but a spark to kindle a fire that would sweep the building before the dazed inmates could rush to the dark and dangerous stairs, only to find the way barred by packing-cases. In such death-traps thousands of children labor. The lame and humpbacked choose box-making as light work permitting them to sit. Their distorted figures and pain-marked features stand out sadly in the dim light behind long tables piled grotesquely with box-shapes. So few blooming

cheeks and bright eyes, such wan visages, so much deformity, so many little waifs with hard and sin-stamped faces, so much dirt, so many rags, that one might fancy a demon, sweeping over the slums of a great city, had snatched up all the small, the ill, the weak, the wretched, and set them against this shadowed background at unending toil.

Even the printing-press is no guarantee of just economic conditions, since into the book-making art abuses creep.

Dishonest binders on pretence of teaching young children the trade, make them work two, four, eight, even thirteen weeks without pay; and the ‘learners’ receive but a pittance for the succeeding half year. This practice has no connection with apprenticeships. When the parents insist on fairer wages the children are all discharged and a new group is engaged, deceived by specious promises and defrauded as long as they in turn will submit. Flourishing establishments could be mentioned, built up in this way. The employer knows the children to be under factory age and uses this fact to silence the demand for proper remuneration. Professing to favor the family by permitting the little ones to work, he in reality grows rich from their unrewarded toil.

The condition of juvenile laborers in pencil factories and establishments where frames for umbrellas and pocket-books are made, or other metal work is done, is sometimes neglected. In the pencil manufactories the task is light and the pay fair. The moral tone in one of the largest of these is so low, however, that a respectable child soon desires to leave because of the vile language used. Girls apparently of eleven and twelve have been seen as they emerge

from the shop to attack each other on the street, to swear like troopers and to enter rum saloons unabashed. In such employments as making tinware, buttons, frames for umbrellas or satchels, children tending presses and cutters are not unfrequently hurt by machinery insufficiently guarded. Almost every worker in such industries has the end or joint of a finger cut off or the whole hand mutilated. In dress-steel or corset-steel shops the violation of law is often flagrant and wages are small. Hundreds of young girls have testified that they began work in these factories at nine and ten years of age and in many large cities scores of children of pitiable appearance toil there. One manufacturer in Brooklyn refusing access to his establishment, a search on Sunday in the surrounding tenements revealed many of his employés ranging from ten to thirteen years old, who volunteered a sad story of ill-treatment and low pay. Another notorious concern in New York is lodged in a rookery unsafe to life and limb. At the noon hour around the sink were children obviously under twelve; and the State inspector soon after sent home nearly thirty girls below the legal age. In still another shop of equally unenviable fame, the children were so intimidated by foreman and employer that no true answer as to age could be obtained. Fully a third of the seventy or eighty at work were evidently too young to be lawfully employed.

In type foundries and toy manufactories the danger that besets the little toilers is insidious—nothing less than lead poisoning. The pallor of many wretched creatures tells its own tale. Engaged on that portion of the work which is most injurious,

rubbing type, the children continually breathe the lead dust. Some suffer acutely from painter's colic; others fade, growing weaker and weaker; others have sharp attacks which pass and permit them to resume their task; all are injured, though perhaps not manifestly. Varying with the size of the type foundry, from three to twenty little ones are on the pay-roll. This unskilled labor is also utilized in painting toys and tins, the same dread effects ensuing.

Packing houses where oysters, vegetables and fruit are canned, use Child-Labor largely. From the perishable nature of the commodities hands are wanted on the instant and whole families respond, even the infant of two weeks lying beside its mother while she works. Around Baltimore, for example, babies of three and four years of age shell peas and pick strawberries, their pay being "lumped" with the mother's. In one household were four workers ranging from three to eight years old. School children seek employment at packing in vacation, and during May, June and October they abandon study in order to can fruit. While the season lasts the hours are painfully long. Not uncommonly a woman comes to work at four in the morning and remains till eight at night, her brood beside her in cramped positions without change or motion, breathing the air exhaled by six hundred pairs of lungs, and the emanations of as many bodies unused to soap and water. Indescribable is the assemblage; every tongue is heard; oaths in all languages resound, and tobacco adds its poison. Women of eighty, yellow, tottering and emaciated are carried there and propped against the wall; babies scream, hungry and tired children

fret. At least one-fifth of these workers are less than twelve years old; and the occupation being intermittent, the gain is often small.

Microscopic wages of the seamstress in tenements are partly due to one form of Child-Labor—that of the infant who from the age of four or five sews on buttons or pulls out bastings, or turns seams, or makes passementerie to assist its goaded mother. The woman with two or three helpers under ten years old works cheaper than her solitary competitor; and the attics and basements of all large cities hide away hundreds of puny frames and benumbed intellects stultified by ceaseless toil. One Sunday in a Mott street tenement five children under twelve were found making cheap neckties during ten hours a day to aid the eldest sister; and little boys of five years old have been seen sewing buttons on “slop shop” trousers. The crooked bodies and mental weaknesses of the offspring of the poor are, reputable physicians assert, directly traceable to such unsuitable tasks and the life-long deprivation of air and sunshine.

The healthiest adult continuously employed at tobacco suffers from its poison. In time every fibre of the frame becomes affected; extreme nervousness is induced and lasting maladies like St. Vitus Dance supervene. Physical weaknesses are increased, incipient ailments develop. Digestion is disordered, heart action impaired, strength sapped; the mind is excited, often the passions are inflamed and the moral sense deadened. While a large body of virtuous, intelligent and respectable men and women make a good living by the tobacco industry, it cannot be denied that wretched conditions often converge there.

In the vitiated atmosphere of factories shut tight against air or moisture, heated by steam to the excessive temperature demanded by some processes of manufacture, the room reeking with human breath and the air dense with the dust of the plant, thousands of young children are seething. To a strong man unaccustomed to such surroundings the temperature is trying. Drenched with perspiration, he sneezes, coughs, stifles from the impalpable brown powder that pervades hair and raiment, irritates throat and nostrils, makes the eyes smart, the lips burn and sets every nerve a-quiver. Yet here sit the workers all day on a low hard bench without a back, or else flat on the filthy floor. The quarters where tobacco is stripped from the stem are sometimes located in a damp basement, musty with mould or lurking miasma; sometimes in lofts on which the sun beats unsparingly, sometimes in spacious, tightly closed rooms furnished either with benches along the walls or "pens" thickly placed about the floor. These pens are just what the name imports—spaces from four to six feet square boarded off by partitions varying in height. Within each pen are a low bench, a pile of tobacco leaves, and from one to three workers. Sisters may be "partners," or an old woman and a young child, or a mother and two little ones, often a boy and girl alone together. The indignity of being penned off like cattle is not diminished by the presence of overseers, who, while sometimes intelligent and kind, are as often ignorant, tyrannical, profane. The mere sight of these dirty, brutal creatures ordering the daily lives of helpless women and young children kindles disgust and indignation.



The rules of the factories where so many small beings congregate vary from the utmost severity to complete and pernicious freedom. As to air, ventilation, comforts, the larger establishments range through every degree of badness to excellent accommodations—from disused warehouses out of repair to handsome structures built expressly for the manufacture, fitted with conveniences and mitigating the inevitable drawbacks to the trade. The latter edifices are usually provided with good dressing-rooms and sometimes a lunch room apart, broad stairways and fire escapes, plenty of windows seldom raised, and as an especial luxury chairs with backs. No such praise can be ascribed to tobacco factories in the more crowded quarters; dens devoted to this purpose because unfit for other use. True, the occupants reside perhaps in a hovel, and their rags expose the filthier skins of creatures no longer sensible of shame. The poison of the weed and the degrading conditions in the poorer work-rooms invite a class excluded from respectable places—besotted hags trembling on the brink of an unholy grave, debauched women, hardened and hungry, children from the street, offspring of crime, homeless and friendless if not already vile. This type of the working girl represents the lowest ebb of fortune, womanhood brutalized and revolting, childhood stamped with hereditary sin and disease, bereft of decency, without restraint. Even into the better factories a few such outcasts slip, and moral plague-spots they are, however disguised under genteel garb or repressed by decorous rules. The dilapidated mendicant telling a pitiful story and employed out of charity may

demoralize every young girl within reach. So is smirched the spiritual cleanness of the little toilers—sometimes strikingly beautiful and, strange contradiction! to the end unspotted from the world—who throng the tobacco, cigarette and cigar factories as “helpers” to mother, grandmother and sister, their names not appearing on the books, their earnings swelling the elder’s fund. Exposed to the evils of nicotine absorbed at every pore, innocent creatures from seven to twelve years of age also risk the worse misfortune of moral contamination. From these surroundings the little ones drift to other tobacco factories where pay is higher and regulations are more respectable; but so hardened, perhaps, is their moral cuticle that no prudish scruples can be expected of the comely maiden of seventeen who at ten years old was versed in every form of vice.

In some of the rooms of tobacco centres where the leaf is stripped from the stem are constantly employed young children whose work counts for the older person responsible for their presence. Many of these unfortunates are from seven to nine years old, and labor during the full factory hours. Certain overseers connive at the practice and if questioned glibly declare that the children are there only “for the morning;” yet the yearly earnings of the adult they accompany are more than one hand could make. The many infantile figures grouped about give to some stripping rooms the appearance of day nurseries, notably in those factories where colored women are employed.

Sallow faces, skin begrimed with tobacco dust, hair matted, garments stained—these are the sign manual of the average tobacco stripper. The chil-

dren wear their saturated garments into the street, covered by that pathetic badge of thriftless poverty, a blanket shawl, telling its tale of rags and penury, better raiment sent to pawn, drink absorbing the last nickel. The little ones carry all the filth of the day's occupation into their home, into their bed even, for they generally sleep in the clothes worn at work. By night as by day the same fumes are breathed, and if the child lives to maturity, at thirty she is a broken down, nervous, diseased old woman. The extent of this exposure of childhood to injurious toil may be imagined when it is remembered that, except in the dry goods and textile industries, more workers from seven to fourteen years of age are employed at tobacco than in any other pursuit. In many localities over thirty-seven per cent. of the wage earners are young children, girls being more numerous than boys.

Since the physical organization of the female is of greater delicacy and more easily affected by unfavorable environment, the stronger is the likelihood that the shattered constitution of the girl-worker will bequeath to generations yet unborn the scourge of inherited blood poison and the moral curse of racial depravity.

Of the facts about cigar-making as carried on in some tenement houses the public has but faint idea. The background of the worst tenement-house practices cannot in common decency be plainly represented. A block seething with human life, four, five, six and eight floors in each house; a second building rearing its squalid front behind the first and a third behind the second; from eight to fifty families in one dwelling, from six to sixteen persons in each family; about two hundred souls herded into a space 14x40

feet, five stories and more, toppling skyward. Steep, often winding stairs in absolute darkness; sinks and closets contaminating the air at every landing; bedrooms 8x8 feet—mere dark cuddies, with only a square hole opening upon the black, unventilated halls, and each cuddy slept in by from two to eight persons, irrespective of sex. The kitchen is the living, eating, washing, cooking, sleeping and working-room, where dirty children, cats and dogs disport. Here is brought tobacco for the whole household to work up, and every family in the huge structure must engage in this occupation or be turned out of their home. Parents and older sons and daughters roll cigars while the younger prepare the weed, even the school children being compelled to work in the afternoons and far into the night. Pale and feeble little souls of six and seven strip the stems during hot summer days. The writer beheld a baby girl of five years seated on a dirty lounge strewn with tobacco leaves from which she was made to tear out the midrib, the parents working at a table beside her. In other tenements infants crawl in leaves scattered over the floor to dry, playing with and sucking them. Tobacco is spread out in bedrooms, on the soiled bed itself, on the kitchen table. Children delve in it, roll in it, sleep beside it. The dust seasons their food and befouls the water they drink, and the hands of the mother are seldom washed when she leaves the cigar table to prepare meals or nurse her babe. In the cellar of the building the discarded stems rot, breeding pestilent vapors. Day after day, year after year, children are born into this poisoned air, take it in with mother's milk, wilt and die in it, or live through puny, wailing infancy into

abnormal childhood, predestined to nervous excitation, disease and depravity.

In the workshops of the North and West, especially in the tobacco industry, the child is confronted with the temptation to use beer and other intoxicants. Errand-boys and girls who bring lunches and beer therewith are always rewarded with a share, and the writer has seen children despatched to the beer saloon at all hours, a glass foaming before more than half the wage-earners. In a soap factory in Ohio where girls of sixteen and younger form the greater part of the employés, the proprietor expressed the gravest fears as to the future of his workers from the fact of excessive beer drinking. Though it was forbidden in the workroom, many girls frequented the nearest beer saloon and nearly half their wages were spent for this indulgence.

Three-fourths of the woolen yarn manufactured for trade and a large percentage of the yarns spun for conversion into cloth is made by children under sixteen. The yarn mills about Philadelphia alone employ thousands of juveniles, many being obviously below the legal age for admission. Little spinners have spent their whole lives in the spinning-rooms, accompanying their elders on pretence that no one was at home to care for them, and working all day to the extent of their feeble powers, but smuggled away when the employer passes. The youth and immaturity of those who declare themselves eligible for employment give the lie frequently to sworn statements. The writer has often met little girls in the factories who still talk baby talk, yet their hours of labor are as long as for the stoutest adult. The Saturday half-holiday involves beginning work at 6

or 6.30 A. M., and mothers admit that their children must be pulled out of bed in the morning. Eye witnesses in Rhode Island recently told the writer that tender creatures of nine and ten are dragged to the gates actually asleep, falling if unsupported, and in this condition are thrust into the mill to begin eleven or twelve hours' toil. Crowell, in the *Andover Review*, July, 1885, makes substantially the same statement. Even in enlightened Boston, the largest of its great cordage factories lately worked overtime for months, employing meanwhile children under legal age.

The use of Child-Labor in the Southern mills will be discussed in connection with a review of labor laws of the individual States.

Is the sanitation of the factory better than that of the tenement homes of many workers? An affirmative answer is scant praise for factory conditions, inasmuch as farther than in most tenements disregard of sanitary measures cannot go. But the employer who gathers under one roof throngs of men, women and children to toil for hire, reserves that control of his premises which, to a certain extent, landlords resign. Provision for the comfort and health of employées devolves then on him; a provision which he sometimes faithfully makes, oftener neglects, too frequently shirks altogether. Grant that many mills and shops present cleaner and in every way better quarters than the earners ever saw before, where their health and habits improve. Responsibility is not thus, by the good deeds of some exploiters of labor, vicariously shifted from the niggards who refuse the common decencies of life, or from that other large class who have "never thought

about" giving separate toilet facilities to the sexes. Where Child-Labor is utilized the shops are rarely properly equipped; and as it is not uncommon to find a score of little beings of both sexes thrust off alone under a stripling of seventeen or eighteen years, without the restraining presence of any woman or other adult, the risk to youthful morals is as serious as the inroads made on health by the prevailing neglect. Through filthy practices of the lowest immigrant population and want of care even among operatives of the better class, the water-closets in more than half the work-rooms are, if not disgusting, at least offensive and unsanitary; and the number provided is inadequate.

Structures on which hundreds of thousands of dollars have been expended are grossly defective as to drainage, closets and sinks. Mills otherwise models as to management emit from their tower toilets sickening odors. In scores of large shops which the writer has visited, it is scarcely exaggerated to say of the stench from the closets, that "it almost knocked one down." Smaller, more crowded work-rooms sin quite as frequently, presenting besides conditions fatal to modesty. Closets for the two sexes generally adjoin with but a thin partition between, or the one box-like affair is used indiscriminately by males and females. It is unusual to find these conveniences placed away from the working quarters, or screened in any manner, and a single one must often suffice for a hundred men and women. In some buildings the retiring-rooms disfigure the landings and the odors penetrate the whole edifice; again, the cellar or basement becomes almost a cess-pool. Hand in hand with the criminal negligence of

employers goes the almost equally criminal indifference of the workers who, from fear and ignorance as well, seldom complain to the health authorities.

In textile mills and tobacco shops the temperature is very high, and the children employed there work in many States eleven and twelve hours a day, with the mercury ranging over 100° all the year round. Windows are tightly closed and oils and dyes add their fumes to the heavy atmosphere. In many shops red-hot stoves roast those near by, while on the outer circle of workers blow icy draughts from open hatchways. From the all but universal overheated room the operatives go too thinly clad, perhaps, into the piercing cold without.

Exposed to such bad air and other noxious influences, young, delicate, underfed boys and girls spend ten to twelve hours daily. Is it any marvel that they succumb to every ailment? Weaker, whiter, thinner they grow; the little throat is tied up in soiled flannel, the cough is tighter, or the blood-poison breaks out in sores. On some cold morning a slim figure is absent from its wonted perch. "How we do miss Maggie! Sure, that young one was light on her feet!" the stitchers say, remembering the errands she ran for them, the stairs she climbed. Another day and the forewoman, grave but with suppressed importance, hands round a hat into which the dimes and quarters rain to pay for an humble burial. Poor Maggie is dead!

So, in this utilitarian age, is the cry of the weak and helpless too often drowned by the loud demands of the strong. The heathen and benighted are at our door, employed at tasks which are "grinding down life from its mark." Homes are empty,



families are disintegrated, education is rejected, physical deterioration of the race is going on, manhood and womanhood are degenerating and poverty tends to grow more widespread and extreme, as an outcome of the abuse for mammon's sake of nature's laws of development and healthful living.

The census of 1880 showed that in ten years the number of children at work had increased fifty-eight per cent., while the number of adult males employed increased twenty-four per cent. Of 9,472,159 who work for wages in productive industries, 1,118,356, or 11.8 per cent. are under fifteen years old. By the Massachusetts census of 1885, the whole number of children under fifteen at work in 1875 was 13,265. In 1885, the whole number under fourteen at work was 3,040, 1,907 being males and 1,133 females, including 11 under ten years of age. The number at work in 1876 without twenty weeks' school attendance constituted 64.95 per cent. of all the children at work, while in 1885 they only constitute 46.02 per cent. of all the children at work, a gain of 18.93 per cent. for education. The factory laws of Massachusetts having been in operation longer and more rigidly enforced than are the enactments of any other State, it would be indeed disappointing if despite such safeguards the evil has increased which these laws were framed especially to abate. In the Fall River district, September, 1887, 261 children between the ages of twelve and fourteen were employed, and 1,659 between fourteen and sixteen, with probability of enlarging the number under fourteen by those completing the amount of compulsory school attendance. One inspector mentions that in January the number under fourteen in his

district was about 300, the number between fourteen and sixteen about 950; but in October there were only 200 under fourteen, and 1,000 under sixteen, a gratifying recognition of the statutes. The law requiring minors to read and write English has swelled the attendance at evening schools. More than one inspector complains of the frequent violation of the regulations by a young child presenting the certificate of an older one, or by the issuing of certificates on the statement of parents without seeing the applicants. In 1888 Fall River employed less than one per cent. of mill operatives under fourteen, and 4.8 per cent. between fourteen and sixteen, or 5.5 per cent. under sixteen. New Bedford had 2.1 per cent. under fourteen, 4.6 per cent. between fourteen and sixteen, or 6.7 per cent. under sixteen. Personal researches, however, and the corroboration of well-informed observers, indicate that these figures from the report of the Chief Factory Inspector are optimistic. Children were probably hidden out or smuggled away, or otherwise escaped the lynx-eyed detectives. George Gunton says: "I have myself known parents who actually changed the ages of all their children in the register of their family Bible, dating their births uniformly two years earlier in order to evade the law and get their children into the mill two years earlier." This corresponds with the writer's experience in scores of families where the fraud was patent. The father and mother of eight children deliberately and collusively falsified the ages of six in order that the two youngest might appear within the legal limit. One slight, diminutive creature declared to be sixteen was, in her short frocks, knee pantalettes and baby aprons,

an absurd refutation of the statement. The writer has overheard groups of children in Massachusetts trading in certificates, and, guided by one who could read, conferring as to what girl or boy would best suit the description therein required of the rightful owner—"blue eyes, light hair," or "dark eyes, black hair."

The very fact of these plots and precautions, however much it makes for infant depravity, proves that strictness in administering the statutes bars thousands from work who might otherwise be sacrificed in a temporary crisis or to parental greed. Despite the care of the authorities, all nationalities force their offspring prematurely into mills and shops. From personal knowledge of the circumstances of families so sinning, the writer attests that the martyrdom of youth is often unnecessary and results only in extravagance at home, or laziness and intemperance on the part of the child's natural guardians. Some of the unemployed are from preference unemployed—a floating, degenerate manhood—sinking so low as to shirk making a livelihood, and overburdened even by carrying to the work-rooms the dinner-pails of the toiling children. The increased stringency of the factory laws is positive evidence of their violation. Parents still borrow and trade in certificates; the older sister or brother gives them to the younger; Canadians returning home sell them to those who remain. French Canadian children being all of much the same type of features and coloring, among that nationality the trick is harder to detect. Those who are ill or have found another task turn over the certificates to their family successor or neighbor, and the overseer, though suspicious, not under-

standing their language, cannot prove the imposture. The overseers state that they have repeatedly discharged children from the mill to go to school, and in a week's time have heard of them employed in another mill, duly armed with certificates from parochial schools. On the borders of the States children from Massachusetts work under age in Rhode Island, and children from Rhode Island work unrebuked in Massachusetts.

Compulsory school attendance in Rhode Island now covers twelve weeks, yet thousands of children of legal age do not attend school a single day. The truant law, says the last Report of the Board of Education, is not enforced, the negligence of parents and the selfishness and indifference of employers resulting in its being in many places utterly disregarded. The officers are restricted in the honest discharge of their duty. Appointed by the party in power, they serve or cater to the interest of friends. In many towns their compensation is insufficient and they become employers of those very children whom they are sworn to send to school. By the Rhode Island census of 1885, seventy-two children from seven to nine years old worked in three occupations, sixty-three being in manufacturing establishments when the census was actually taken, and kept out of school in order to work. In eight occupations, 7,938 children from ten to fifteen years of age labored, of whom 5,367 were of native born fathers and 2,572 of foreign born fathers. The whole number of children employed was about 8,000, whereas the whole number of gainful workers in manufacturing, mechanical and mining industries was 71,883. Over eleven per cent of the working

population were under fifteen. Of 3,527 absentees of the employed class returned in the census as deprived of school privileges, eighty-five per cent. were of foreign born fathers, and fifteen per cent. of native born fathers.

The factory and school laws of New Hampshire combine to secure its juveniles immunity from labor till elementary education is assured. Despite the honorable co-operation of many New England manufacturers with such legislation, evasions and violations are common in New Hampshire as elsewhere. Youngsters from twelve to sixteen work the year round in the face of school requirements, and a large proportion, according to the unguarded statements of their mothers, can neither read nor write. The Irish are as prone as the French Canadians to enslave the child to toil, and as glib in overstating its age. Both nationalities patronize parochial schools where sometimes the English language is not taught, and from which certificates are more readily obtained by nominal attendance than in public schools under State supervision. In vacation, too, pupils under the legal age drudge at the expense of needed rest and play; and a good job thus secured prevents return to study. Intelligent and humane overseers forbid this wrong, but some overseers are neither intelligent nor humane, and others yield to the coaxings of valuable adult operatives who make their own continuance dependent on the employment of their children as "small help."

By the Report of the Commissioner of Labor for Maine, 1888, the percentage in cotton mills of children under fifteen is 3.7 per cent; in all industries, 2.5 per cent. Minors from fifteen to sixteen consti-

tute nearly five per cent. of all operatives, minors under sixteen are seven per cent. of all employed. In sister cities, however, where two large cotton corporations aim to retain no minors under sixteen, among six out of thirty families visited by the writer, children from twelve to fifteen years of age are working in the mills, some without ceasing for the sixteen weeks' school attendance which is obligatory in the State. The mothers being prolific, heirs succeed each other rapidly, and in one family with two adult workers, sons sixteen, fourteen and twelve are operatives, the boy twelve having already worked two years. In this household three children, eleven, nine and seven years of age attend no school. In another city there is a typical case, a suspicious gap occurring between the girl nine and the youngest worker thirteen, whose appearance and that of his three elders justifies the conclusion that the age of these wage-earners has been set forward at least two years. The girl said to be sixteen weaves, the boy fifteen tends railway heads, a sister fourteen spins, and the thirteen-year-old is a "roping boy," all having been steadily employed for the past twelve months. In another family, besides the father and three older operatives there are engaged without intermission in the mills a son sixteen and daughters fifteen and fourteen, each suspiciously childish looking and all illiterate, the parents hoarding the earnings of untaught offspring. Yet the State wisely but often vainly ordains that "except during vacation no child under fifteen shall be employed unless during the year next preceding he has attended school sixteen weeks; and no such employment shall continue unless such child in each and every year

attends some public or private school for at least sixteen weeks.’’

The report of one inspector to the Board of Education of Connecticut, April 1889, shows 1,341 instances of absence from school and 145 children illegally at work. Such violations of law on the part of employers are due to a “carelessness clearly criminal.” In answer to the query “Are there cases of hardship to individuals or families?” (from the operation of the Child-Labor law), and “Is the limit, viz., thirteen years, too high?” the proprietors promptly said “No;” at the same time they hire children under age because “the families to which these children belonged were poor and needy.” Yet the employer receives full compensation in the services of the minor for all wages paid, while the child is being robbed of the opportunity for education. Similarly persons who take children from asylums, county farms and reformatories and make them work, often neglect to give them tuition. The real motive appears in the reply of these sham philanthropists when told that the law requires schooling for the little ones: “If we have to send the child to school we cannot afford to keep him.”

In fifty towns and 157 establishments in Connecticut, by the same report, there were engaged 471 children between thirteen and fourteen, and ninety-four in violation of the law. Forty-one children under thirteen were employed illegally. When the misfortune or shiftlessness of parents has resulted in poverty, the burden falls upon young children. Not infrequently large numbers of the industrial community would be hopelessly in debt except for this resource. When the barest margin on which

life can be supported for a family of six or seven people is \$400 a year, and the father earns but \$300 or less annually, the difference must be made up by pressing the child of poverty into the lists of competition. The State allows the children of its working citizens to be deprived of privileges enforced upon the heirs of the richer classes.

In the iron and steel industries, between 1870 and 1880, the employment of boys increased from 2,400 to 7,700, or 216 per cent., while employés over sixteen increased seventy-eight per cent. The relative rate of increase for Child-Labor as compared with that of men and women in manufactures and mechanical occupations was for Illinois, 177 per cent.; Maine, 164 per cent.; Maryland, 160 per cent.; Iowa, 127 per cent.; Ohio, 116 per cent. The census of 1880 shows that 10,000 children under fifteen are among the 65,000 textile employés of Pennsylvania. In the eastern part of the state, says a competent authority, villages built up by the tobacco trade are in shocking sanitary condition, and the numerous young children employed are without mental or moral training. Girls and boys of thirteen years are in the habit of visiting liquor saloons after work hours. Intoxication is no rarity among the girls even, and one of fourteen years was known to have had a species of delirium tremens. In 1882, in the anthracite coal regions of Pennsylvania, 24,000 of 87,000 employés were boys, and 4,115 were only fifteen or less.

The report of the Inspector of Factories for Ohio, 1889, is less detailed than that for Massachusetts, the division of employés being simply into males, females and minors, giving no clue to the age of



the minors. In the summary we find that 396 "changes" were ordered as to employing minors under twelve. Since each order represents probably from two to twenty children less than twelve years of age, it is evident that Child-Labor is not discontinued in Ohio. The inspector remarks: "If the evils and extent of the employment of children were not so glaringly outrageous and far reaching, it would seem that twelve years was a ridiculously low age to set at which children might be legally employed in factories and workshops. But the fact that the age was made twelve was adequate proof that many younger than that were employed, and their employment had become a disgrace to the State, and injurious to its future citizens." The causes, he thinks, for the prevalence of the evil are, first, the plea of poverty or need on the part of parents working upon the employer's sympathies, and second, the competitive system of doing business, which compels a manufacturer to resort to the same nefarious methods as his rival. He points out that since the productive energies of the world have been enhanced a hundred fold, children should have greater intellectual advantages; yet every machine is constructed with a view to lessening the number of adults and increasing the number of juveniles in the industrial market.

The letting of pauper children to the English manufacturers to be herded together, goaded, starved, and worked sixteen hours a day, was stopped by the intervention of Lord Ashley. In our own day and country the Ohio Inspector reports a hundred boys contracted for from St. John's Orphan Asylum, Brooklyn, by the glass manufacturers of Findlay and

Fostoria. Striplings of twelve, delicate and dwarfed, were boarded in frame buildings close to the manufactory, working in two shifts from 7 to 12 A. M. and 5 till 10 at night. Food and lodging were furnished for the first six months, and for the next six months \$1 a week additional was given. The children had neither schooling nor apprenticeship, but, helpless and of tender years, were actually purchased with gold and enthralled in "pens of bondage for the waifs of the world."

The report for 1888 of the Factory Inspector for New York State admits the impossibility of preventing false affidavits being made to evade the regulations protecting children from premature labor. Sometimes real want, oftener the ignorance and cupidity of parents, aided and encouraged by grasping employers and perhaps by a notary without regard for his oath of office, are responsible for foisting child workers upon the world. Unscrupulous proprietors bluntly say that they do not care how young a child is so long as the parent is willing to swear to its being thirteen, and thus relieve the employer of responsibility. Attention is called to the fact that Child-Labor, following on the adoption of machinery, has prevented mankind from obtaining the full benefit of labor-saving inventions.

In many establishments in New York City children only are confessedly employed. One bustle-spring maker, the report shows, has four males and forty-two females, three of the males and forty-one of the females being under sixteen. In a pencil manufactory half the females are minors, and 21.5 per cent. are under sixteen. In a flax mill again, half are under twenty-one and over 12.7 per cent. are less

than sixteen. A prominent silk factory employs 23.5 per cent. of labor under sixteen years of age. In one of the best managed and best arranged candy factories in New York 73.6 per cent. of the employés are under twenty-one and forty-seven per cent. are under sixteen. Such statements may be indefinitely multiplied from the thousands of establishments in New York City mentioned by name in the report. Until recently the bulk of the inspection there has rested on a single official, and as one consequence of this inadequate force, young children, and girls oftener than boys, are, whenever possible, crowded at low wages into pursuits formerly the resource and mainstay of adult laborers.

Between 1870 and 1880 the increase in the employment of children in New Jersey was one hundred per cent., whereas adult male labor increased forty per cent. By the Report of the Inspector for New Jersey, 1888, one firm making worsted goods is credited with one hundred employés, fifty of whom are under sixteen years; another employs thirty-three per cent. and another forty per cent. of labor under sixteen years of age. The silk mills use from twenty per cent. to forty-eight per cent. of children under sixteen. In a shoe factory with twenty-one employés, ten are under sixteen; in a brick and tile company, over twenty-eight per cent.; in a cracker factory, sixty per cent., and as many in a manufactory of brass frames; in a button-hook factory, fifty-one per cent.; in a braid mill, thirty-three per cent., and in canned goods factories, thirty-five per cent. In one glass manufactory twenty-seven per cent. of the operatives are boys under sixteen; in two others, thirty-four and thirty-seven per cent.;

in a glass shade factory, thirty-three per cent.; in glass bottle factories, forty-three to forty-four per cent.; in glass tube works, eighty-seven per cent. The flax mills employ from fifteen to twenty per cent. of operatives under sixteen. The inspectors report 136 children discharged—seventy-eight girls under fourteen, fifty-eight boys under twelve.

Few of the Labor Bureaus of the Western States have made any investigation as to Child-Labor. Missouri is now going somewhat into the subject, backed by factory laws which are good so far as they reach, but frequently ignored and in some localities a dead letter. The indifference in the West to this growing evil is matter of remark and regret; and to students of social abuses it is exasperating to find the pages that might contain pregnant facts relating to human lives devoted to statistics concerning turkeys and geese. The Commissioner for Wisconsin furnishes few data as to Child-Labor except tables on apprenticeship, which show that trades are entered much earlier than formerly. The weight of testimony indicates that apprentices are taken mainly for profit and receive but desultory instruction. In tinware, candy factories, wood-work, brick-yards and other industries, child-labor is declared to be employed; but no definite figures are given.

In Illinois, 13,500 or nine per cent. of all employés are said to be children. In the tobacco industry, 500 or thirty-seven per cent. of the whole are children; also ten per cent. of employés in lumber and woodenware industries; and girls work in tile and brick-yards. The Report of the Bureau of Labor for 1886 exposed a system of fines prevailing in the principal trades of Chicago and other localities, that bears especially

hard upon the juvenile workers. The Department of Health of Chicago protests against "the immoral and degrading influences of mingling the sexes (in the workrooms), thereby preparing many of them (the children) for lives of shame, misery and possible penal servitude." The practice is also censured of presenting certificates in which the age of the child is without doubt falsely represented.

The Commissioner of Labor for California found the law shamefully violated "which prohibits telegraph and telephone companies from sending minors to houses of ill-fame." Many telegraph messenger boys were delivering messages and running errands for people of questionable repute; bringing meals to their rooms; going to an opium joint and purchasing opium; being sent to whiskey mills for liquor, to cigar stores for tobacco; and even hired "to allure victims to those dens of iniquity by delivering letters of assignation." The manager or superintendent of one of the telegraph companies was arrested for violation of law, and after some litigation, that section of the penal code is now enforced.

Of the former slave-holding States Louisiana and Maryland have elaborate factory laws and Georgia has just placed upon her statute-books a provision tending to shorten the hours of cotton-mill operatives. In Louisiana the employment of boys under twelve and girls under fourteen in factory, warehouse or work-shop is prohibited, and no child under fourteen is allowed to labor in the aforesaid or dressmaking or millinery establishments unless it shall have had four months' schooling in the year next preceding. The poor little dressmaker's drudges

are thus for the first time protected. The superintendent of police is charged with the enforcement of the act; and the law having recently gone into effect with all the thoroughness of a new broom, comparatively few children were found working in the New Orleans factories in March, 1887.

Kentucky has no efficient protection for its juveniles. In the tobacco industry girls of nine years and illiterate are sometimes seen, and many young children work who are not recognized on the pay rolls, but are said to be merely "helping" the mother, though imprisoned as effectually as if bound by contract for service and wages. The ignorance and absence of attempt at education are in many instances lamentable; indeed, the illiterate earners thirteen and fourteen years old proceed from families often in comfortable circumstances and owning their home.

Virginia<sup>1</sup>, the Carolinas, Alabama and Tennessee throw over the toiling children in their mills not even the shadow of a protective law. In Georgia, while the working hours for cotton and woolen manufactories alone have very lately been equalized, and in country districts curtailed, all measures looking to the dismissal from factories of the hundreds of quite young children who plod through eleven and twelve hours dreary confinement are from various causes defeated. The chief obstacle to such reform has been that a clause materially shortening the hours of labor in factories was hitherto tacked on to the original bill. In the legislative session of two years ago, a bill prohibiting the employment of children under ten years old failed to

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<sup>1</sup>The legislature of Virginia has passed a Child-Labor bill and the governor has signed it.

pass—a significant commentary on the tender age of many workers. Yet, within fifteen minutes walk of the capitol, in two large cotton mills, delved fully one hundred pale, dwarfed, goblin-like, infantile creatures, without a ray of learning and every gleam of intelligence fast being extinguished by drudgery—children trebly weakened by descent from mothers and grandmothers whose strength and youth were ground out by the same remorseless machinery in a life-time of similar toil. Beings they are with white skins, but more unlettered than the African; with precious minds and souls unawakened by a touch of ambition or spirituality, brutalized under the fierce spell of money-makers, who are enchanters as deadly as Circe. Some of the little girls are so young that their speech is a baby lisp—dragging life's burden under goad and spur, while still in body, intellect and utterance they are veritable infants, who ought to be mothered and petted. Lord Shaftesbury's careful measurements proved that in the British Isles children in mills walked or trotted twenty-five to thirty miles a day. Although the working hours in New England are now less than when those facts were presented, conditions in many Southern and Western factories offer a parallel, the increased speed of improved machinery adding to the disadvantages of the "cracker" or "hoosier" operative. The little one is awakened at early dawn and stands all day. In the country mills of some States the hours are still inexcusably long, oftener fourteen and fifteen than the present Georgia limit, eleven. Even during ordinary working time of sixty-six hours a week, the Saturday half holiday throws twelve or thirteen hours into five consecutive days; and the making up

of lost time, not exceeding ten days, involves continuous strain.

The fact that strikes seldom occur and few complaints are heard does not argue that no abuses exist. In an isolated community they remain unchallenged from ignorance, long sufferance and hopelessness of effecting beneficent change. Under just such conditions, in truth, the largest number of helpless children are sacrificed. At one country mill a combined grocery and liquor shop is the only structure except the tenements. On its shackling porch at 10 o'clock one bright winter morning lounged twelve able-bodied men, whittling sticks, squirting tobacco juice and gossiping; while five others, with their hands in their pockets, surrounded one butcher's cart. In the neighboring factory, deafened by the whirr of machinery, stifled by heat and dust, stunted in body and torpid in mind, barefooted, wan, dirty, ragged and woe-begone, were over a score of children from seven to thirteen years old, who had never been at school and worked from "sunrise to sunset," as the defunct statute provided, every week day in the year.

Of 304 white operatives interviewed in Georgia mills, forty-one, or over eleven per cent. were twelve years old or younger, many being only eight or nine; while 206, or over 56.5 per cent. began work at eleven years of age or less, the majority at eight and nine, and some spinners at four and five. Of fourteen spinners selected at random in one factory, the oldest was nineteen, the youngest was eight. In Athens 35 out of 41, in Columbus 51 out of 73, in Macon 30 out of 37, in Augusta 91 out of 113 operatives entered the mills at thirteen or less. In the



same cities respectively 10, 13, 11 and 16 children were only thirteen years old or younger at the time of the inquiry, as appears in detail from the table.

## BEGAN WORK.

	4 years.	5 years.	6 years.	7 years.	8 years.	9 years.	10 years.	11 years.	12 years.	13 years.	Total.
— Spinning mill.....	..	..	..	2	4	2	2	1	3	..	14
Athens.....	..	..	..	2	6	6	7	5	5	4	35
Columbus.....	..	2	1	5	6	8	10	4	12	3	51
Macon.....	..	..	..	2	6	9	5	3	4	1	30
Augusta.....	1	..	5	8	12	17	16	8	12	12	91
Total.....	1	2	6	19	34	42	40	21	36	20	221

## PRESENT AGE.

— Spinning mill.....	..	..	..	..	1	1	..	..	1	3	6
Athens.....	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	..	4	4	10
Columbus.....	..	..	..	..	1	..	1	4	3	4	13
Macon.....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	4	4	11
Augusta.....	..	..	..	..	1	..	2	2	4	7	16
Total.....	..	..	..	..	3	2	4	9	16	22	56

The seeming discrepancy between the number registered as beginning work at from four to twelve years old and the total number within those age limits recorded as actually employed, is less paradoxical than it appears, and by no means indicates the exclusion from Southern mills of little ones too young to labor. As many infantile toilers work there as when those now adults first touched the heavy frames with baby fingers. These children are, however, disclaimed as regular employés, and are considered only helpers to some older person, their names not appearing on the pay-rolls and they themselves being unavailable for the purposes of a

statistical inquiry. In nearly all the factories small, woe-begone beings were counted. Out of 800 operatives in one corporation, at least one-sixth were less than thirteen years of age. Augusta employs comparatively few children so young, its group of factories presenting, perhaps, the best mill conditions in the South, except one Athens establishment. In some localities of Georgia, three generations work side by side—grandmother, mother and child—not one of whom has ever been at school, or can read or write a syllable. In country corporations the abuses as to hours, youth and ignorance are aggravated. The whole community is engaged in one or two mills. "Hands" being scarce and valuable, when vacancies occur two or three unskilled children are added to the force from sheer inability to find a substitute. Working mothers take their babes rather than leave them alone, and little mites under four years old enter the factory at sunrise and are shut up there till the quick coming night prevails that usurps twilight in Southern latitudes. As soon as they can toddle the small souls learn to "piece ends" and doff. Accidents under such circumstances are inevitable, but employers mitigate the suffering by unusual kindness.

Inseparable from conditions of this character is a degree of illiteracy among the white industrial population of the South astounding as it is deplorable. To those who have made no study of the subject it seems incredible that every second girl or woman in textile occupations neither reads nor writes. Onerous indeed is the present burden of taxation upon a comparatively impoverished people, educating separately in their midst an inferior race, few of whom are taxpayers;

yet more and better schools are urgently needed to elevate the poor whites. The illiterates referred to are native-born Southerners—not the negroes or the pauper Europeans who flood our great cities and among whom education is not expected. Over fifty per cent. of native Virginians, South Carolinians, Georgians and Louisianians employed in mills cannot both read and write, while thirty per cent. cannot write their name. It may be stated in the most conservative form that, varying with locality, from sixty-six to seventy-eight per cent. of the white factory operatives are wholly unfitted for any pursuit presupposing elementary instruction. Only from twenty-two to thirty-four per cent. read fluently and write legibly. Can a higher standard be demanded of districts where there are often no schools, or schools open but two or three months, and among a population that works in spinning-rooms at six, seven, eight and nine years old?

In default of factory laws, the babes are hurried into the daily round of toil, and in the absence of compulsory education the teacher presides over half empty benches while the boy helps father plough, the girl aids mother to wash and the six-year-old carries water to the men. A majority of the women and children seen in the Southern mills had never entered a day school, the Sunday school having furnished teaching to many of those who read. To have attended school two weeks or two months is a source of great pride, and one little spinner looked happy as she boasted of having been to school three times. In the Southern manufacturing centres as in the New England village, a few corporations provide tuition for the children of their operatives. Neglecting these

advantages, parents harness their progeny to the treadmill so soon as infant labor can be made available. So meagre is the general information among this unlettered folk that many operatives do not know where they were born. An Atlanta child repudiates city and State, vowing she "wur borned in Fulton" (county), while Athens girls own "Clarke" only. In Virginia, particularly, the county absorbs the State, and the birthplace is given as "King Wilum" or "Chaesfield," the suggestion of Virginian antecedents meeting emphatic denial. To collect nativity or age statistics among the poor whites is made doubly difficult from the prevailing ignorance of locality or time. The period chiefly impressing itself on the mind is that at which work began.

A little girl of twelve commenced labor at seven, dimly recollecting school at five or six years, but learning nothing. Another aged eleven began toil at nine and was at school three months. A maiden fifteen, working when eleven, cannot read or write and had no teaching. A child of eleven already employed a year had two scant sessions of fruitless tuition, but is illiterate and ignorant where she was born, though still residing in her native city. A girl of twenty whose mother was dead, aided by a sister eleven years old, supported a family of six. The sister worked at eight years old and the father only does "their gardnin'," the garden being a patch not much larger than a bed-quilt. The elder reads a little, but cannot write; the younger never was at school. Another victim twelve years of age began toil at eight, reads monosyllables, is unable to write; with two other children she maintains the household, the father refusing even to bring their dinner

to the mill. An infant of eight summers began factory life at five years old and has worked in two towns; there are three employed in the family besides herself, and she uses snuff which her mother provides. One poor little waif cannot speak plainly. She commenced to spin before her seventh birthday, and says: "A picnic I be twelv' yur ole." Never taught anything, her parents with six children all living in one room, this child is barefooted, ill, torpid and snuff-soaked.

The five principal cities of Georgia, justly priding themselves on their excellent municipal school system, furnish scores of further illustrations. Among minors the average illiteracy is slightly less than among adults, whose youth was spent in chaotic *post-bellum* days before even the present defective educational organization came into being. In other than textile occupations throughout the South, such as box-making, sewing, book-binding, the younger workers have felt the benefit of city schools. The facts as to illiteracy here presented, however, are not facts of twenty years ago, but of to-day. No hope exists of improvement anywhere without more and better teaching, and laws rigidly enforced to keep young children out of mills and workshops. Were an educational qualification inserted into the factory regulations as a premium upon school attendance—as, that no child under thirteen shall work who cannot read and write legibly—in anxiety to profit at the earliest moment by the earnings of their brood, parents would compel attention to study. As a gauge of public sentiment it is disappointing to find that whereas the bills which failed four years ago and this year in the Georgia Legislature made twelve

the age of exclusion, the equally unsuccessful bill of the intervening session named ten—most impressive testimony that hundreds of souls under that infantile mark are struggling for existence in the mills, neglected, ignorant, broken in health and blighted in mind, if not demoralized in character.

A habit largely conducive to the sallow complexions, puny bodies and shattered nerves of the whole mill population of the South is the universal use of snuff, which extends to children of five, six and seven years. Whatever the advocates of tobacco may contend, the inertness, lack of endurance and degraded aspect of the Southern "cracker" are in a measure due to this filthy and pernicious weed. Careful inquiry proved that most of the women and girls learn in the factories to dip snuff and chew and smoke. Among females to borrow and lend snuff is a sign of good fellowship as "treating" is with men. Every lank, chalky, saffron-hued child with black rings about her eyes had also the tobacco-stained lips. In the Maine mills where the practice is prevalent, it is termed "scouring" and "rushing;" in Georgia, "dipping" or "lipping" is the phrase, the last act involving the filling of the mouth with snuff as with tobacco, instead of its moderate use as a dentifrice. The overseers make no effort to stop the custom, some even advising it. Many mothers share their weekly package of the powder with daughters of six and upwards, but oftener the little ones obtain it on the sly, indulging only at the mill away from the maternal eye.

Among cotton operatives in Virginia the ignorance is as dense as in Georgia, and some factories present even more striking groups of illiterates than any one

Georgia manufacturing town. Out of thirty-three employés eight are just fourteen years old or less; four of the eight are totally illiterate, and only one can read a simple sentence readily. The small workers contract the snuff habit as soon as they enter the mill. In some tobacco factories of Richmond much younger and quite as ignorant labor is employed.

“Side by side with the cracker,” well-educated girls are working in Charleston, S. C., but notwithstanding this superior element mitigating the general illiteracy, forty girls out of a pay-roll of 150 were unable to write their names in an establishment where probably half the employés are minors. The record of the cotton, duck and jeans mills of Missouri, Cincinnati, Kentucky and Maryland is nearly as discouraging as regards the benighted status of the native-born operative, the employment of children and the lack in country districts of educational facilities. Minors of twelve years old are at work in the cotton mills near Baltimore in defiance of the laxly administered factory laws of the State. Among forty-eight employés in one suburban factory, thirteen, or over twenty-seven per cent. are illiterate and thirty-two began work earlier than their fourteenth year—two at the age of eight, four at nine, six at ten, five at eleven, ten at twelve, five at thirteen.

In the textile industries the illiteracy even of educated New England is considerable. Massachusetts, as revealed by the census of 1885, had among her 3,040 working children under fourteen years of age 413 illiterates—13.59 per cent. Those of native birth constituted 5.27 per cent. of the native born

children at work, and those of foreign birth represented 28.57 per cent. of the foreign born children at work, 19 being Irish, 248 French Canadian and 11 from the Western Islands. As regards the whole population ten years old and over, the native born illiterates were 1.29 per cent. while the foreign born were 21.5 per cent. of the foreign born population. The illiterates constituted but 1.03 per cent. of the population ten years and over born in Massachusetts.

Of minors between fourteen and sixteen employed in mills who could not read and write the English language, Fall River in 1887 had 1,526, New Bedford 433, Taunton 86. Few children under fourteen in the State, says one inspector, fail to write their names or read easy reading; but, between sixteen and fourteen years, twenty per cent. in some factories cannot read or write any language, while the percentage is much larger of those who have no education worth calling such. Scores write their names who are not able to pen another word or to pronounce dissyllables, the law not having reached such cases soon enough. The report for 1888 calls attention to the lack in small towns of evening schools for illiterates. As a consequence of such conditions in Massachusetts, the illiteracy of children in the immigrant population the writer knows to be widespread and lamentable. Households resident there for years have two or three workers under sixteen and illiterate, besides several younger children loafing at home on various pretexts. Whole families are losing their identity from inability to spell their name, nor is it uncommon to find a large circle of adults and children, not one of whom reads or writes any language.



The Rhode Island census of 1885 notes 2,370 illiterates from ten to fourteen years of age, or 8.3 per cent. of the population from ten to fourteen. Of these illiterate children, 1,357 are native, 1,013 are foreign born. The population of native parentage did not improve in this respect from 1875 to 1885. The proportion of native illiterates to total native population rises from 2.2 to 2.4, and that of native illiterates to total illiterates rises from 12.5 to 13.2. American-born children of foreign parentage thus lower the standard of native intelligence. The strip-ling who works eleven hours a day—and extra time when helping weavers strive for premiums—loses the saving influence of schools. In the *Andover Review*, July, 1885, Mr. Crowell states as regards Rhode Island: “The writer has noticed that it is not exceptional for the mother of a family to have her child a few years old at work with her in the factory; and the children are dragged out of bed in the morning.”

Of 1,514 children between fourteen and sixteen employed in Connecticut, twelve per cent. cannot read or write; and if the same ratio holds good for the entire State, 2,000 children of advanced age are illiterate. The school registers prove that a majority of the juveniles do not attend school after fourteen, while many leave at twelve or thirteen. If the instruction of olden times excelled the present, was it not because school days continued till the pupil was old enough to comprehend and appreciate what he learned?

The report of the Inspector for New York State, 1888, ascribes to the employment of children large responsibility for the vast number of unemployed adults and the rather increasing than waning illit-

eracy in certain sections. Children in the Empire State work when they ought to be at school. The fact that parents must sign and swear to a certificate gives opportunity to observe how many who have passed their majority are incompetent to sign their name, and a considerable portion of these were born in the United States or were brought here at an early age. Their offspring are little superior in respect to education.

Good but unthinking people urge that children are better off working than running the streets and acquiring evil habits, as if home discipline or home attractions would not prevent their running the streets! Were compulsory education laws enforced the youth of the land would be at school under training of mind and conscience. The discipline of the teacher fits them better for all duties of life, and overseers are emphatic in testifying to the greater ease with which juvenile workers who have had school advantages can be managed than those accustomed only to a resort to brute force. "A child who has not been taught to obey rightly will never be able to command rightly, either themselves or others." "Overseers pronounce the labor of a child under fourteen undesirable and unprofitable, but parents, ignorant and selfish, or ignorant and vicious, insist upon children earning something at an age when they still belong in the nursery." The policy of employing Child-labor for the advantage of the manufacturer, though to the detriment of the human being, says one Commissioner of Labor, "makes man subordinate to the dollar, takes no account of life and its enjoyments, usefulness and possibilities, and destroys all the nobler aspirations."

Stress must be laid on the sorrowful truth that many children are engaged at tasks too great for their physical strength, becoming consumptives in consequence or suffering serious bodily harm. Most factory inspectors recommend that the age of exclusion from mills be raised to fourteen or fifteen, while physicians are unanimous in saying that any strain or continuous exertion is especially hurtful to girls under fourteen. Restraint and confinement at an age when all the muscles and the faculties should have fullest freedom and care is the most dangerous element of Child-labor. Do not the wrecks of humanity, everywhere visible in street and workshop, attest the hardship of early toil? Those years when mind and body are susceptible of the healthiest growth are spent in a monotonous round of indoor drudgery which undermines the constitution, stunts the intellect, debases the higher nature. The State should have a worthier pride than that of endeavoring to make its machinery the most productive at the lowest possible cost.

These wise thoughts of Mr. Connolly, Inspector for New York, embody the experience and conclusions of the writer, who, from personal observation in twenty States of over 100,000 working women and individual talks with 12,000, has become acquainted with the forerunning signs of every form of early death ascribable to over-work in youth. Consumption sweeps the ranks of mill operatives with a positive ferocity. Girls of thirteen to fifteen fade away in feebleness and pain, pierced by the icy winds, overheated in steaming rooms, ill clad, badly nourished and overtasked. Two or three sisters follow each other quickly to the grave before reaching woman's estate, victims of fatal lung maladies or poisoned by typhus. The

managers of working girls' clubs find it necessary to provide a refuge for members doomed to dissolution at fifteen, sixteen, and twenty years, in whom the seeds of disease were sown by premature toil.

Nor are such scourges the saddest phase of protracted and unguarded Child-labor. The New York Report of Factory Inspectors for 1888, dwells on the distressing "tale of children crippled for life by machinery, which they should not be permitted to approach, much less control. Their bleeding, mangled arms, legs and bodies are terrible witnesses of the cruel system which makes their play-time the time of toil and danger. 'Carelessness,' say the manufacturers. Carelessness not of the children, but of the lawmakers to permit the helpless little ones to be dragged or driven into these grinding mills of destruction; worse than carelessness on the part of employers who see child after child crushed between the champing dies of the power presses, and yet take no step to prevent recurrence of these accidents.

"What care they for the battalions of cripples turned loose upon the world? But the law, the government, should care. It is its most sacred duty to step in and save the weak and helpless from being deprived of their limbs. No child should be employed around a machine or factory where natural lack of foresight or caution will lead it into danger. \* \*

\* A child is not supposed to be endowed by nature with a cautious, discriminating disposition or a thorough knowledge of the dangerous qualities of machinery. When an employer, in order to obtain the benefit of a cheaper class of labor, hires children to do work which men alone should do, he ought to

be made to pay dearly for whatever loss the child may suffer. \* \* \* It is wrong from any standpoint, moral or legal, to employ a child at a machine where, should he turn his head to the right or left, or neglect to press his foot upon a lever, the loss of an arm or finger is the penalty."

In *The Christian Union*, May 2, 1889, discussing "Factory Conditions in New York City," Miss Clara Potter says: "In an excellently ordered card factory, of which the girls have no complaint to make, a young friend of mine saw a companion's hand taken off at the wrist and drop to the floor by the press she was working at." Girls state privately "the firm don't like it if you make much of a time about such things." Miss Potter continues: "In a large pencil factory, where children are employed to feed the pencils into a machine which smoothes and shapes them, great dexterity is needed to prevent the fingers from being caught. Constantly children lose a finger, a joint, or the end of several fingers, but no notice is taken of these accidents nor are the little ones paid while suffering from injuries and unable to work. They are employed at their own risk."

Said the bookkeeper in large print works lately to the writer: "We boiled a boy the other day." In response to a shiver of horror, he went on: "His work took him inside one of our big machines in which colors are set. The steam was turned on without anybody looking to see whether he had come out at the proper time. He was missed later, and at last found within, dead. It is supposed he fell in a fit."

While the law providing that casualties shall be immediately reported is by no means universally

complied with, eighty-four children under sixteen years old actually employed in manufacturing establishments figure in a list of 614 accidents sent in to the authorities in New York. This number is over 13.5 per cent. of the whole. Yet children under sixteen do not form 13.5 per cent. of the employés of miscellaneous manufacturing establishments, including many planing and rolling mills, and other industries in which chiefly adults are engaged. The figures show conclusively a greater liability to accident on the part of children. Among the injuries noted in Ohio, a girl fourteen lost a finger, a boy thirteen one hand, and another fourteen had a broken arm and sprained ankle. Out of eight casualties in factories in New Jersey four were fatal—two to boys and two to men. Although less than half as many boys as men are employed, their death rate is equal. When it is considered that not half a dozen States require factory accidents reported, the extent of the unrecorded suffering and mutilation throughout the Union may be conceived. Massachusetts alone has an Employers' Liability Act of any efficacy. Elsewhere human life is cheaper than the small cost of protecting it. In a Philadelphia mill employing many children under thirteen, were great holes in the floors of the only passage-way between the jarring looms.

Stairs are often rotten and hatchways unguarded. The sole exit from factories is too frequently a difficult flight of steps leading for five or six stories directly to the elevator shaft or winding about it, and this, if protected at all, protected by a single rail. A fall there means death. Fire leaps up these shafts and cuts off all egress. Doors are sometimes locked and the custodian of the key is beyond reach

for hours. While the law compels places of amusement to be amply furnished with devices for safety in case of fire, yet workrooms in which are spent the daily lives of hundreds have but one narrow door at each landing and perhaps the only stairs are blocked with packing-cases. In broad daylight the writer, carefully groping her way up and down steep, absolutely dark and often broken steps or about obstructed passages, has shuddered at the thought of a panic or alarm which would inevitably cause several hundred mortals—and among them little children—to surge into this narrow space and fight for breath and life over the bodies of the frail and helpless. It has happened repeatedly, too, that when a proprietor would attempt to show his fire-escape outside a window, not even a man's strength could open the rusty window-fastenings; but his crestfallen look was no guarantee that the defect would be remedied. So, an elevator cable that might be strengthened for five dollars breaks and hurls as many souls into eternity. It is useless to dwell upon such palpable horrors. One who walks in manufacturing districts with open eyes is confronted on every side by maimed, disfigured, crippled victims.

Not only homely industries bear the print of tiny fingers, but some amusements are lurid with the life-fires of youthful humanity. In burlesques, pantomimes, extravaganzas and spectacular displays, striking features of the performance are small boys and girls, the most promising ornaments of humble hearthstones. Though the toil is gilded, it is toil nevertheless. Hundreds of children are forced to live under incessant strain, early entering upon shams and excitement, keeping unnatural hours,

subject to exacting rehearsals, cut off from school advantages and their light fantastic attire endangering health. The study-time of theatrical children is irregular even where, as in some London schools, the sessions are arranged not to conflict with their engagements. In New York, where teaching is not compulsory, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children is interfering to some extent with such child-sacrifice; and in England recent writers have shown up the evil without yet having abolished the continuous service of young children in dramatic exhibitions.

The Fourth Annual Report of the United States Commissioner of Labor, "Working Women in Large Cities," gives many interesting facts regarding the youth of the average female producers amid industrial centres. This investigation represents 17,427 women, employed in 343 industries. The average age in 22 cities is 22 years 7 months, the concentration being greatest at 18 years. The average age at beginning work is 15 years 4 months, the concentration being greatest at 14. By cities, the summary of present age shows that (discarding the large quota of learners or unpaid helpers), very nearly 10 per cent. of the workers in our shops are under sixteen years of age. In Atlanta 14.8, in Baltimore 11.4, in Chicago 14.3, in Charleston 6, in Cincinnati 13.3, in Cleveland 10, in Louisville 9.4, in New York 14.9, in Philadelphia 8.3, in Richmond 11.9, in St. Louis 12.5 per cent. are under sixteen years of age. The youngest children are employed in a great centre like New York or Chicago, and the tendency to utilize them is more marked in Western and Southern cities than in Eastern and Northern, a



decided reaction of public opinion in this direction controlling the abuse in New England and the progressive Middle States. With less diversity of industry, Richmond and Atlanta employ a relatively larger number of juveniles. No factory laws have hitherto regulated conditions either in Virginia or Georgia, whereas, in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois, despite factory laws the number of children engaged is large. The summary by cities as to age at beginning work discloses the fact that 28.3 per cent. began work under fourteen years. In Atlanta 39.3 per cent., in Baltimore 27, in Chicago 29, in Charleston 22, in Cincinnati 38, in Cleveland 22, in Louisville 31, in New York 32, in Philadelphia 33, in Richmond 33, in St. Louis 33 per cent. entered the factories under fourteen years of age. Over 64 per cent. began work under sixteen years old. Taking the same cities, respectively, in Atlanta 55 per cent., in Baltimore 61, in Chicago 61, in Charleston 39, in Cincinnati 72, in Cleveland 63, in Louisville 64, in New York 72, in Philadelphia 69, in Richmond 60, in St. Louis 68 per cent. began their apprenticeship to toil before the age of sixteen years.

When regarded from the point of view of the limited education which could have been acquired by 28.3 per cent. of future industrial mothers condemned to labor before they were fourteen, and of the 64 per cent. whose schooling ceased long before they were sixteen, the outlook is not hopeful for the character or the homes of our workers, both so deeply influenced by the standard as of intelligence of the mother. In a graver aspect are figures impressive which indicate that the physical development of

wage-earning girls has been and is now being impaired by the early age at which toil commences. Is not deterioration of the forces suggested by the fact that while 93.8 per cent. were in good health, 4.7 per cent. in fair health, and over 1 per cent. out of health at beginning work, at the time of the investigation only 83.5 per cent. were in good health, 13.6 per cent. in fair health, while 2.7 per cent. were out of health?

The period from seven to fourteen is the most vital in the growth of the child. If confined at arduous mechanical pursuits during this impressionable season of youth, its activities must be cramped, its size stunted, its moral nature insensitive. Yet 28 per cent. of our female workers were immured in shop walls during those critical years. The interval from fourteen to sixteen is often the most dangerous in the development of womanhood; that when, as all physicians, educators and students of social science testify, the establishment of those sexual functions essential for the perpetuation of the race must not be imperiled by any undue strain either of mind or body. Yet 36 per cent. of our young women have entered upon difficult and exhausting labor at this crucial epoch in their lives. If the years from twelve to fifteen inclusive be taken, 58 per cent. of our girls have been put in the tread-mill when work was calculated to be most hurtful to them. Degeneracy of the human species must ultimately revenge this wanton defiance of physiologic laws. Physical deterioration of womanhood is an evil against which the State should provide; and physical deterioration has already followed the crowding of millions of females into ill-ventilated workshops at weary drudgery from ten to fourteen hours a day.

Whatley Cooke Taylor, in a paper for the Social Science Congress, 1882, contends that infant mortality varies in strict accordance with the density of population, and is not injuriously affected by the employment of mothers in mills and manufactures. His researches, however, leave out of consideration the important question as to the occupation of the mother previous to marriage. It has been the writer's observation, with scarcely an exception, that infant mortality in communities where the mother had been employed in gainful pursuits from early childhood far exceeds the normal rate. Commonly two children die during infancy or extreme youth where one survives. Childless parents of the industrial class have again and again said of their babies: "All mine are in the graveyard," or "We've buried more than half of ours." Of nineteen infants born to a French Canadian couple, nine died before reaching their second year. Whole families fade away for want of stamina before the age of ten. On the part of mothers, repeated abortions—as many as four to seven in rapid succession, and entailing great suffering and domestic chaos—testify to constitutions so undermined by toil and insanitary conditions as to be unable to bear the ordeal of pregnancy; and this among a population too simple and ignorant to contravene the laws of nature. The travail of child-birth is woman's most trying heritage. If this travail is undergone for naught; if the courage and health of our mothers ebb away through bringing into the world still-born or puny offspring whose weak life flickers out in the first few years of existence, then is maternity not a blessing but a degradation, a thwarted and violated function; and wifehood

is the brand of an infertile passion, the scape-goat for unholy lust. The children who persist despite hideous tenement-house influences and congenital weakness are a shambling, crooked-bodied, narrow-chested, often scrofulous race, physically morbid, morally misguided, craving stimulants and predisposed to crime.

One consequence of trading in Child-labor as in any other commodity is the congestion of population in cities. From country and village homes, wholesome, however poor, entire families are dragged to the industrial centre for the pittance their toil will bring. Not only are workers thus condemned to the ten and twelve hours' dreary round at machinery or tasked in close, dusty rooms, but growing babies, toddlers, romping school-youngsters are immured among tenement hovels. In little crowded rooms sunshine is shut out and life is quenched. Exposed to unimaginable evils in the alleys and courts of the poorer quarters, if health remains intact, character and purity are often wrecked.

Under the present competitive system, it is hard, well-nigh impossible for a man with seven or eight children less than fourteen years of age to keep away hunger, far less to provide clothing or education. His neighbor, perhaps, has an equal number of boys and girls able to work, any one of whom earns as much as the father of the helpless family, and all of whom can afford to accept lower wages. Under the existing industrial organization the head of a household not gainful is driven to labor for the earnings accorded a boy of fifteen or sixteen. One family is used as a club to kill the others. The working classes have to some extent begun to regard their

offspring as so much capital. Capable and intelligent handicraftsmen have said to the writer that they deem a man a fool who selects the trade of a skilled mechanic where his children cannot aid him, instead of making himself useful in a cotton mill till he places all his boys and girls to advantage there, and then living in idleness on their gains. Except among skilled artisans, saving has become impracticable for households dependent on the earnings of one man. Standards of living being higher, debt must be contracted; and where heirs come fast, the future strength and gainfulness of the child is discounted. "We'll pay off when the young ones are big enough to work," promises the thoughtless mother, year after year behind hand, and regardless that her boy's labor means fatal competition with the head of some other family destitute as this one. Yet workmen declare that children put early at toil in factories are already broken down and useless at the age of twenty.

A natural result of the almost universal employment in lieu of the universal education of children thirteen and fourteen years of age is that there are hordes of idle adults all over the land whose places the little ones usurp to the detriment of both. Not less suggestive is the fact that laborers working for lowest wages are sometimes drawing the highest incomes. They can afford to take less pay because they have helpers, and the pittance of \$4 to \$5 a week dwindles beside the aggregate earnings of their brood by prolific foreign mothers. Not only is the man thus in receipt of from \$1,000 to \$1,500 a year able to beat down his worthy rivals below the already narrow margin for existence, but as a father

he is deposed from his rightful position in the domestic circle, and is scorned and ignored by the swaggering boys or froward girls who displace his labor. The sanctity of the family order is destroyed. All bonds are loosed, authority is a dead letter, respect and reverence for age disappear, the home has no hold upon its members. Such policy leads to the gradual extinction of the male operative.

It is uncertain how long, on this great Western battlefield of labor, civilization will struggle with greed and inhumanity. Noblest institutions grow in lands moistened by ancestral life-blood. A deep and holy meaning pervades the classic fable of the crimson drops that flowed when Æneas plucked the leaves from over the grave of Polydorus. Emancipation of childhood may have to be won in another age by the arms of workers in whose veins still circulate the life currents drawn from suffering hearts that beat and bleed to-day. But reformers have sounded the alarm, watchers are awake. In some States the factory laws have done their work, and the evil of Child-labor is surely decreasing. Public opinion is getting a philanthropic twist. Manufacturers of the better order scorn to profit by the toil of feeble and driven little ones. Employers who still resort to such unhallowed methods to swell their gains slink more and more into byways, hiding their wickedness from the light of day. That the employment of small children is now deemed wicked is a great step in reform. Ten or fifteen years ago the practice was unblushingly carried on and needed no defence; to-day the exploiter who builds up a great business by grinding cheap labor is distinctly on the defensive. He must

forsooth trump up hypocritical reasons for dealing in human lives—as, that the family are needy or the girl who lives at home wants pocket money; or else to divert attention from his low wages he flaunts forth some catch-penny benevolent scheme.

Profit-sharing, too, the entering wedge for a juster economic dispensation, discourages incompetent and irresponsible Child-labor.

That men of honor and probity fear no investigation of their attitude upon this grave issue is shown by the fact that thousands of employers not only voluntarily consented to an “inquisitorial” examination from the general government which had no jurisdiction over their affairs, but in the main furthered its effort to obtain an insight into the condition of working women, as shown by the Fourth Report of the Department of Labor. Even proprietors forced by narrow margin of profits to secure the least expensive producers are eager to free themselves from a necessity so unpleasant to themselves and so menacing to society. Large corporations, which formerly utilized “help” of all ages now forbid Child-labor within their walls, a rule violated often without the knowledge of the officials. Other monopolists, less conscientious, who once controlled the lawmaker and prevented legislation protecting labor and circumscribing their own powers, are overborne by public clamor for ordinances more just and humane.

In Athens, Ga., one mill refuses to employ children under twelve, though no factory laws forbid; and similar regulations mark the higher grade of establishments in all industries. Chicago has signalized herself by appointing five women factory inspectors, a

guarantee that Child-labor will henceforth be bitterly fought. Philadelphia possesses two female inspectors; New York is striving for a large number. The establishment by a majority of States of bureaus of labor whose function it is to report industrial phenomena, is another hopeful sign.<sup>1</sup> Unjustly criticised as neglecting this particular branch of economic inquiry (since taking a census is out of their power, and nothing short of aggregates can be of value in Child-labor investigations), yet the very existence of these bureaus is a standing threat to the grasping and culpable proprietor. At any moment he may be pilloried for public scorn, even though beyond the reach of the nemesis of the law. The Employers' Liability Act of England is being copied as our factory regulations become more efficient, and in time safeguards will be thrown about all occupations which endanger human welfare. The landlord, too, must be held accountable for the sins which lie at his door, that tenant manufacturers may have fair play in the endeavor to promote the comfort of employés.

In support of these propositions, to show that such conclusions are far from optimistic, the testimony may not be inopportune of men every day brought face to face with the industrial situation, able to substantiate their assertions by a formidable array of

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<sup>1</sup> At the seventh annual convention of chiefs and commissioners of bureaus of statistics, a committee was selected to name important subjects for investigation. This committee recommends that Child-labor be considered, and that, contemporaneously with the Federal census of 1890, each bureau shall ascertain and report the facts for its State as shown by the census, and all other facts relating to Child-labor which might result from separate investigations. The scope of the proposed inquiry is broad and exhaustive.



facts. The Massachusetts Factory Report for 1887 states that in textile industries the prohibition concerning the employment of minors under fourteen is observed more strictly than in many other occupations. Several inspectors coincide in declaring that the number of children so engaged is on the wane. Rather than be annoyed by keeping within the provisions of the statute, employers are refusing to hire workers under sixteen. The Massachusetts Report for 1888 is more emphatic and more encouraging. Mr. Dorn, Inspector for Ohio, "has noticed the growth of public feeling in favor of further restricting the employment of children and of compelling their regular attendance at school."

In 1888, the Board of Education of Connecticut reports 1,173 children dismissed from work for being under thirteen years of age. The same authority, April, 1889, declares that children are not generally employed under thirteen in establishments enumerated in the act; that the Child-labor law is easy of administration and has accomplished its purpose of preventing the toil of the young, though "parents are persistent and mendacious;" that three years' observation supplies evidence of its benefits to children. The greed of parents is restrained, the rights of minors respected, the advantages of school extended. Good results are already apparent from the enforcement of the statute in New Jersey.

One New York inspector thinks that the trouble of posting Child-labor notices and obtaining affidavits is so annoying that there is probably thirty per cent. less Child-labor in the State than three years ago, despite growth of population. Observers at Cohoes in 1885 counted 1,500 children, ragged, dirty, piti-

able, filing out of the gates of one corporation. An observer there in 1889 saw relatively few children who were certainly under the legal age. Many Western States are adopting compulsory-education laws—always an obstacle in employing Child-labor. In Chicago, from 1881 to 1882, the increase of Child-labor was sixty-eight per cent. The admirable Report of the Department of Health of that city, however, furnishes abundant proof of the efficacy of factory laws and inspections; the number of boys and girls working in factories has thereby been reduced from 9,000 in 1884, to 2,802 in 1888, and this in the face of a phenomenal bound in population and manufactures. A higher authority than any heretofore cited is Hon. Carroll D. Wright, U. S. Commissioner of Labor. In his address before the convention of labor commissioners at Hartford, June, 1889, he says: “Everything that has come under my observation, so far as facts are concerned, tends to show that Child-labor is on the decrease. This is absolutely and certainly so in the commonwealth of Massachusetts. \* \* \* From 1875 to 1885, the reduction in the number of children employed between the ages of ten and fourteen years was from the neighborhood of 8,000 to about 3,000, \* \* \* while for children under ten, there is practically no employment at the present time. Data from other localities, while meagre, indicate the same general tendency—not so rapid, but yet a tendency to reduce Child-labor. \* \* \* Should the Eleventh Census show that a very much greater number of children are employed in 1890 in the factories of the country than were so employed in 1880, it would not indicate an increase in the employment of Child-labor, unless

the facts showed that there was an increase in the same localities, *pro rata*, of course, to the population, because where the factory system springs up anew, or meets extension, Child-labor might be employed to a large extent and thus show an increase in the aggregate, while, as a matter of principle, it is on the decrease. \* \* \* In 1874, I took the ground that \* \* \* I would not allow a girl under sixteen years of age to be employed in any kind of factory or workshop, and I said, further, that if she could be free until she reached the age of twenty, mankind would be the gainer."

The world does not move backward. You cannot get a chicken again into the egg-shell. An abuse clearly controllable is an abuse half conquered. The need of the hour is less the need for new laws than for the enforcement of those which exist but are overridden. Uniform factory regulations should be adopted. If some States refuse to shorten hours or restrict the employment of children while other States adhere to a more progressive policy, in the latter all industries will be driven out in which Child-labor is available. Although in some respects such a result is desirable, a better remedy would be the universal prohibition, except within certain limits, of the child as a factor of industrial life; for in those pursuits in which wife and children work the ratio of wages for man is lowest.

Stricter inspection of mills, workshops and stores is imperative. Rightfully to carry out laws affecting female minors, the appointment of properly qualified women inspectors is indispensable; but incompetent females would lower even the present efficiency of the factory enactments and discredit

the whole system. Every State in the Union should rouse and care for the physical and moral welfare of its youth. Though women and children are not yet in many localities engaged in gainful pursuits, the rapid development of our industries and the introduction of the factory system may in the near future cause the employment of all available muscle and intelligence. Preventive laws are easier to administer than reformatory laws. The evil of Child-labor should never be allowed to rear its repulsive front; for, once harbored or dallied with, it is difficult to extirpate.

No factory regulations permitting in any form the toil of boys and girls deal broadly or effectively with the issue unless they also provide for the previous or simultaneous education of the worker. Among States where compulsory school attendance is aimed at, the varying periods of from twelve to twenty weeks should be harmonized and a uniform period adopted. The State being interested in securing intelligence and faculty in its future citizens, compulsory teaching ought to become universal. The English half-time plan, half-day work, half-day school, produces excellent results and affords a lighter task to double the number of children, thus distributing earnings more widely.

Germany and France, the most enlightened of peoples, compel their youth to be taught. The day when every American child from seven to fourteen years of age shall be required to attend school, or, if employed, to alternate work with study, will witness the dawn of a new era of industrial prosperity.

Not only is compulsory education in early years essential, but it might even be continued to more

advanced age. The limit at which labor may begin could with advantage be placed at sixteen years. Cases of hardship would follow at first, and must follow so long as the conditions of our civilization remain as at present. It is not only a sign of impotence, but further, it is irrational and absurd to decree that children of a certain age *shall* attend school, without providing means by which the law can be fulfilled. Might it not be the soundest policy, and not necessarily pauperizing, for the State to help the needy family as an actual investment—a means to an end? Education is the child's outfit, and while obtaining it he must be supported. His services in after years repay the State, which, unless so much capital be used to develop his intelligence, may be forced to expend double to curb his vice.

Manual training, industrial schools, where aptitudes are stimulated and arts of self-maintenance are taught, do more than evolve faculty and round character. They make better workmen than our shops ever produce in this epoch of specialization of labor. Industrial training which the child obtains by turning a crank, pressing a lever, or washing glass bottles ten hours a day for wages, improves neither his handiness nor his perceptions. On the contrary, the automatic processes of machinery too long continued tend to stupefy and degrade. A wiser alternative would be that the State should pay destitute parents an equivalent for the services of the child while educating it in devices that forever after will render poverty less likely. By scientific instruction at the plastic age to rescue young lives from the deadening effects of petty toil, to change the whole existence from helpless incom-

petence and almost certain despair into a useful, happy career, based on mastery of self-supporting arts, should be the aim of all legislation and the ambition of every man who loves his kind.