

III.

WAGE-EARNING CHILDREN.

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IN a discussion of child-labor in Chicago, it may simplify matters to point out, at the outset, what things are not to be looked for. Thus, there is in Chicago virtually no textile industry; and the cotton-mill child of Massachusetts, or the carpet-mill child of Philadelphia, has no counterpart here. There is no industry in which, as in the spinning and weaving of silk, the deft fingers of young children have been for generations regarded as essential. With the large exception of the cigar, tobacco, and paper trades (including both the manufacture of paper boxes and the printing and binding industries), and with the further exception of the utterly disorganized and demoralized garment trades, the industries of Illinois are essentially men's trades. The wood, metal, and food industries employ a heavy majority of men. The vast army of fathers employed in transportation and in the building-trades demand, and as a rule obtain, wages sufficient to support their young children, who are therefore not crowded into factories. As the work of factory inspection in the State is of extremely recent date, and the inspection records are of less than a year's standing, it is impossible to trace the growth of child-labor in Chicago. Its status has, however, been carefully investigated during the present year.

The census of 1880 gave the total number of wage-earning children in the United States in all occupations and industries as 1,118,258. The census of 1890, in sections devoted to "Statistics of Manufactures," gives returns upon child-labor in this division of industry, some of which will be used in this essay. Before any of these are quoted, the reader must be warned that census figures upon the employment of children are invariably too low. They are here used merely as a basis for comparison. (The method by which statistics of employees are gathered, leaves it possible for employers and parents to make false returns concerning children.) Inclination and interest prompt both to "raise" the age of the child at work; and most employers are so far ashamed of the practice of employing children, that each returns less than the actual number. All persons who have been officially engaged under municipal, State, or national authority, in gathering statistics of the employed, know that this is true.

In the census bulletin upon manufactures of 1890, the total number of employees in the United States, of both sexes and all ages, is given as 4,711,831; the total number of children as 121,494, or a little more than three per cent of all employed. In census reports, "children" are all males under sixteen years, and all females under fifteen years. The table giving manufactures by States shows that it is not where labor is scarce, but where competition for work is keenest, that the per cent of children is largest in the total number employed. Thus, 5 children are credited to Wyoming; 9 to Arizona; 1 only to Nevada; while Pennsylvania has 22,417; New York, 12,413; Massachusetts, 8,877.

Certainly the older and densely populated States report on a greater number of establishments and employees; but that does not affect the comparison between States as to the ratio of children to adults. For example: the Nevada report is upon 95 establishments, employing 620 persons, only one a child; while Pennsylvania's report is upon 39,366 establishments, employing 620,484 persons, of whom 22,417 — or about one in 23 — are children.

CHILD-LABOR AND THE ILLINOIS LAW.

The Illinois Bureau of Labor Statistics, established in 1879, which has issued seven biennial reports, has never furnished any information relative to the employment of children in the State. The Workshop and Factories Act was enacted by the Thirty-Eighth General Assembly, and received the signature of Governor Altgeld on July 1, 1893. It provided for the appointment of an inspector, assistant inspector, and ten deputy inspectors, five of whom should be women; and it requires an annual report of their work, to be submitted to the governor of the State on December 15. From the first official report, which covers the five months between July 15 and December 15, 1893, the statistics used in this paper concerning working children in this State are taken.

The census of 1890 reports 20,482 manufacturing establishments in the State, and gives the total number of children employed in them as 5,426. In five months' work in 1894 we found 6,576 children in 2,452 establishments employing 68,081 persons, or about 1 in $10\frac{1}{2}$ so employed, a reason for once more challenging census figures; although in our work girls under sixteen,

as well as boys, are counted children. It will be remembered that the census returns place girls over fifteen years among adults, but reckon boys as children until sixteen years.

The sections of the Illinois law regulating the employment of children are the following :—

§ 4. No child under fourteen years of age shall be employed in any manufacturing establishment, factory, or workshop within this State. It shall be the duty of every person, firm, corporation, agent, or manager of any corporation employing children, to keep a register in which shall be recorded the name, birthplace, age, and place of residence of every person employed by him, them, or it, under the age of sixteen years ; and it shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation, or any agent or manager of any corporation, to hire or employ in any manufacturing establishment, factory, or workshop, any child over the age of fourteen years and under the age of sixteen years, unless there is first provided and placed on file an affidavit made by the parent or guardian, stating the age, date, and place of birth of said child ; if said child have no parent or guardian, then such affidavit shall be made by the child, which affidavit shall be kept on file by the employer, and which said register and affidavit shall be produced for inspection on demand by the inspector, assistant inspector, or any of the deputies appointed under this act. The factory inspector, assistant inspector, and deputy inspectors shall have power to demand a certificate of physical fitness from some regular physician of good standing in case of children who may appear to him or her physically unable to perform the labor at which they may be engaged, and shall have power to prohibit the employment of any minor that cannot obtain such a certificate.

§ 5. No female shall be employed in any factory or workshop more than eight hours in any one day, or forty-eight hours in any one week.

§ 6. Every person, firm, or corporation, agent or manager of a corporation, employing any female in any manufacturing establishment, factory, or workshop, shall post and keep posted in a

conspicuous place in every room where such help is employed, a printed notice stating the hours for each day of the week between which work is required of such persons ; and in every room where children under sixteen years of age are employed a list of their names, ages, and places of residence.

An immediate good result from the enforcement of § 4 was that several hundred children under fourteen years of age were taken from the factories after the opening of the school year, September 1. In Chicago, a daily report of these children, giving their names, ages, and places of residence, was forwarded to the compulsory department of the Board of Education, that truant-officers might see that the children did not go from the factory to the street, but to school. In "hardship" cases, where there was extreme poverty in the child's family, appeal was made for the child by the inspector to the School-Children's Aid Society, or some kindred organization.¹ Before the law of 1893 took effect, children seeking work in Chicago secured from the city Board of Education permits, the purport of which was that, for reasons deemed sufficient, the child was granted permission to work under fourteen years of age. As these permits were secured on the mere statement of child or parent, false statements were common ; and we therefore found hundreds of children in factories who ought to have been in school. The law of 1893 applying only to workshops and factories, the Board of Education still issues permits for children under fourteen years of age to work in other than manufacturing occupations.

A second good result from our system of handling

¹ No good result having followed these appeals, they are no longer made [1894].

affidavits, and the requirements of the law regarding office registers and wall records, is that the number of children employed between the ages of fourteen and sixteen years is somewhat reduced. Many children to whom age affidavits were issued in the first months of our work, were found to have been employed two, three, and four years, although not yet sixteen. To-day no employer in workshop or factory in Chicago wittingly puts to work a child under fourteen years of age, and some employers are refusing to hire any boy or girl who has not passed the age of sixteen. They "will not be bothered," they say, with employees who come under §§ 4 and 6 of the law.

THE WORKING CHILD OF THE NINETEENTH WARD.

(The Nineteenth Ward of Chicago is perhaps the best district in all Illinois for a detailed study of child-labor, both because it contains many factories in which children are employed, and because it is the dwelling-place of wage-earning children engaged in all lines of activity.)

The Ewing Street Italian colony furnishes a large contingent to the army of bootblacks and newsboys; lads who leave home at 2.30 A.M. to secure the first edition of the morning paper, selling each edition as it appears, and filling the intervals with blacking boots and tossing pennies, until, in the winter half of the year, they gather in the Polk Street Night-School, to doze in the warmth, or torture the teacher with the gamin tricks acquired by day. For them, school is "a lark," or a peaceful retreat from parental beatings and shrieking juniors at home during the bitter nights of the Chicago winter.

There is no body of self-supporting children more in need of effective care than these newsboys and boot-blacks. They are ill-fed, ill-housed, ill-clothed, illiterate, and wholly untrained and unfitted for any occupation. The only useful thing they learn at their work in common with the children who learn in school, is the rapid calculation of small sums in making change; and this does not go far enough to be of any practical value. In the absence of an effective compulsory school-attendance law, they should at least be required to obtain a license from the city; and the granting of this license should be in the hands of the Board of Education, and contingent upon a certain amount of day-school attendance accomplished.

In this ward dwells, also, a large body of cash-children, boys and girls. Their situation is illustrated by the Christmas experience of one of their number. A little girl, thirteen years of age, saw in an evening paper of December 23d last, an advertisement for six girls to work in one of the best-known candy stores, candidates to apply at seven o'clock the next morning, at a branch store on the West Side, one and a half miles from the child's home. To reach the place in time, she spent five cents of her lunch money for car-fare. Arriving, she found other children, while but one was wanted. She was engaged as the brightest of the group, and sent to a down-town branch of the establishment, at a distance of two and a quarter miles. This time she walked; then worked till midnight, paying for her dinner, and going without supper. She was paid fifty cents, and discharged with the explanation that she was only required for one day. No cars were running at that hour,

and the little girl walked across the worst district of Chicago, to reach her home and her terrified mother at one o'clock on Christmas morning.¹ No law was violated in this transaction, as mercantile establishments are not yet subject to the provisions of the factory act.

Fortunately the development of the pneumatic tube has begun to supersede the cash-children in the more respectable of the retail stores; and a movement for extending the workshop law to the mercantile establishments would, therefore, meet with less opposition now than at any previous time. The need for this legislation will be acknowledged by every person who will stand on any one of the main thoroughfares of Chicago on a morning between 6.30 and 7.30 o'clock, and watch the processions of puny children filing into the dry-goods emporiums to run, during nine or ten hours, and in holiday seasons twelve and thirteen hours, a day to the cry, "Cash!"

In the stores on the West Side, large numbers of young girls are employed thirteen hours a day throughout the week, and fifteen hours on Saturday; and all efforts of the clothing-clerks to shorten the working-time by trade-union methods have hitherto availed but little. While the feeble unions of garment-makers have addressed themselves to the legislature, and obtained a valuable initial measure of protection for the young garment-workers, the retail-clerks, depending upon public opinion and local ordinances, have accomplished little on behalf of the younger clothing-sellers.

In dealing with newsboys, bootblacks, and cash-child-

¹ Incidentally it is of interest that this firm was one of the most liberal givers of Christmas candy to the poor.

dren, we have been concerned with those who live in the nineteenth ward, and work perhaps there or perhaps elsewhere. We come now to the children who work in the factories of the nineteenth ward.

The largest number of children to be found in any one factory in Chicago is in a caramel works in this ward, where there are from one hundred and ten to two hundred little girls, four to twelve boys, and seventy to one hundred adults, according to the season of the year. The building is a six-story brick, well lighted, with good plumbing and fair ventilation. It has, however, no fire-escape, and a single wooden stair leading from floor to floor. In case of fire the inevitable fate of the children working on the two upper floors is too horrible to contemplate. The box factory is on the fifth floor, and the heaviest pressure of steam used in boiling the caramels is all on the top floor. The little girls sit closely packed at long tables, wrapping and packing the caramels. They are paid by the piece, and the number of pennies per thousand paid is just enough to attract the most ignorant and helpless children in the city.¹ Previous to the passage of the factory law of 1893, it was the rule of this factory to work the children, for several weeks

¹ The affidavits of the children afford an astonishing collection of unpronounceable names, Polish and Bohemian combinations of consonants, interspersed with Smith. As there is rarely an English-speaking child in this factory, the prevalence of the Smiths was a matter of perplexity, until it transpired that notaries, troubled by the foreign orthography, suggest that the children call themselves by a more manageable name. This widespread custom greatly increases the difficulty of prosecutions for violation of the factory law in establishments in which the employees are drawn from the foreign colonies. And in the caramel works, with its polyglot population, the work of fitting the affidavits to the children is as laborious as it is absurd.

before the Christmas holidays, from 7 A.M. to 9 P.M., with twenty minutes for lunch, and no supper, a working week of eighty-two hours. As this overtime season coincided with the first term of the night-school, the children lost their one opportunity. Since the enactment of the factory law, their working week has consisted of six days of eight hours each; a reduction of thirty-four hours a week.

HEALTH.

It is a lamentable fact, well known to those who have investigated child-labor, that children are found in greatest number where the conditions of labor are most dangerous to life and health. Among the occupations in which children are most employed in Chicago, and which most endanger the health, are: The tobacco trade, nicotine poisoning finding as many victims among factory children as among the boys who are voluntary devotees of the weed, consumers of the deadly cigarette included; frame gilding, in which work a child's fingers are stiffened and throat disease is contracted; button-holing, machine-stitching, and hand-work in tailor or sweat shops, the machine-work producing spinal curvature, and for girls pelvic disorders also, while the unsanitary condition of the shops makes even hand-sewing dangerous; bakeries, where children slowly roast before the ovens; binderies, paper-box and paint factories, where arsenical paper, rotting paste, and the poison of the paints are injurious; boiler-plate works, cutlery works, and metal-stamping works, where the dust produces lung disease; the handling of hot metal, accidents; the hammering of plate, deafness. In addition to diseases incidental to trades, there are the conditions

of bad sanitation and long hours, almost universal in the factories where children are employed.

The power of the Illinois inspectors, so far as they have any power to require that only healthy children shall be employed, and these only in safe and healthy places, is found in § 4 of the Workshop and Factories Act, the last clause, already quoted. What may be accomplished under this section is indicated by the following report concerning medical examinations in the inspector's office, made for the boys by Dr. Bayard Holmes, of the College of Physicians and Surgeons; and for the girls by Dr. Josephine Milligan, resident physician at Hull House:—

During four months 135 factory children were given medical examinations in the office. The inspectors required these children to secure health certificates because they were undersized, or seemed to be ill, or were working in unwholesome shops, or at dangerous occupations. They were children sworn by their parents to be fourteen years of age, or over.

Each child was weighed with and without clothing; had eyes and ears tested; heart, lungs, skin, spine, joints, and nails examined; and forty measurements taken.

Of the 135 children, 72 were found sufficiently normal to be allowed to continue work. Of the 63 refused certificates, 53 were not allowed to work at all, and 10 were stopped working at unwholesome trades, as tobacco-stripping, grinding in cutlery factory, running machines by foot-power, and crimping cans; these were advised to look for more wholesome work.

Of those to whom certificates were refused, 29 were undersized, otherwise normal; i.e., the parents had

probably forsworn themselves as to the children's ages. Certificates were refused because of defects to 34, or $26\frac{1}{10}$ per cent of the number examined.

Several diseases often exist in the same child. There were 14 children with spinal curvatures, 12 with heart murmurs, 6 with lung trouble, 24 with enlarged glands, 25 with defective sight, 6 with defective hearing, and 56 with defective teeth.

The examination of girls resulted as follows:—

From sweat-shops, 30 examined: 5 had spinal curvature; 1, an organic lesion of the heart (mitral insufficiency); 2, irritable hearts; 2 were anæmic, and of these 1 had also incipient phthisis.

From tobacco factories, 11 examined: 1 had spinal curvature; 1, enlarged glands in neck and axilla; 2, defective sight.

From baking-powder factory, 8 examined: 1 had spinal curvature; 1, enlarged glands; 2, defective sight and slight deafness; 1 had sore hands from using crimping-machine; 1 had mutilated forefinger from a swedging-machine.

From feather-duster factories, 7 examined: 2 had enlarged glands in the neck.

From gum factory, 4 examined: 1 had spinal curvature.

From candy factories, 16 examined: 2 had diseases of the skin.

From bookbinderies, 4 examined: 1 was anæmic; 1 had enlarged glands in the neck.

From necktie factory, 1 examined: heart murmur.

From yeast factory, 1 examined: normal.

From cracker bakery, 1 examined: undersized, otherwise normal.

From box factory, 1 examined: had organic lesion of the heart.

From popcorn factory, 1 examined: anæmic.

Total number of girls examined, 85; certificates granted, 50; certificates refused, 35.

The examination of boys resulted as follows:—

From sweat-shops, 6 examined: 3 had spinal curvature; 1, hernia; 2, enlarged glands.

From cutlery factory, 12 examined: 5 had enlarged glands; 3, tuberculosis; 2, spinal curvature.

From tobacco factories, 9 examined: 4 had enlarged glands.

From metal-stamping factories, 10 examined: 2 had enlarged glands; 1, bronchitis; 1, tuberculosis; 1, spinal curvature; 1, syphilis.

From picture-frame factories, 3 examined: 1 was anæmic and had enlarged glands; 1, tuberculosis.

From candy factories, 2 examined: 1 had skin eruption.

From cracker bakery, 1 examined: had phthisis.

From photographic enlargement shop, 1 examined: was anæmic and scrofulous.

From glass-sign shop, shoe-shop, cabinet-shop, organ-factory, 1 boy in each: found normal.

Not working, 2 examined: found normal.

Total number of boys examined, 50; certificates granted, 22; certificates refused, 28.

This record, formed in four months by volunteer work done by two busy physicians in the intervals of private practice, indicates an appalling deterioration of the rising generation of the wage-earning class. The human product of our industry is an army of toiling children, undersized, rachitic, deformed, predisposed to consumption, if not already tuberculous. Permanently enfeebled by the labor imposed upon them during the critical years of development, these children will inevitably fail in the early years of manhood and womanhood. They are now a long way upon the road to becoming burdens upon society, lifelong victims of the poverty of their childhood, and the greed which sacrifices the sacred right of children to school-life and healthful leisure.

Of the reckless employment of children in injurious occupations the following are examples:—

Jaroslav Huptuk, a feeble-minded dwarf, whose affidavit shows him to be nearly sixteen years of age. This child weighed and measured almost exactly the same as a normal boy aged eight years and three months. Jaroslav can neither read nor write in any language, nor speak a consecutive sentence. Besides being dwarfed, he is so deformed as to be a monstrosity. Yet, with all these disqualifications for any kind of work, he has been employed for several years at an emery-wheel in a cutlery works in the nineteenth ward, finishing knife-blades and bone handles, until, in addition to his other misfortunes, he is now tuberculous. Dr. Holmes, having examined this boy, pronounced him unfit for work of any kind. His mother appealed from this to a medical college, where, however, the examining physician not only refused the lad a medical certificate of physical fitness for work, but exhibited him to the students as a monstrosity worthy of careful observation.

The kind of grinding at which this boy was employed has been prohibited in England for minors since 1863, by reason of the prevalence of grinders' phthisis among those who begin the work young. And no boy, however free from Huptuk's individual disabilities, can grow up a strong man in this nineteenth ward cutlery, because no officer of the State can require the walls to be white-washed, and the grinding and finishing rooms to be ventilated with suction pipes for withdrawing steel and bone dust from the atmosphere, as it is the duty of the English inspectors to do in English cutleries employing only adults.

Joseph Poderovsky, aged fourteen years, was found by a deputy inspector running a heavy buttonhole machine

by foot-power at 204 West Taylor Street, in the shop of Michael Freeman. The child was required to report for examination, and pronounced by the examining physician, rachitic, and afflicted with a double lateral curvature of the spine. He was ordered discharged, and prohibited from working in any tailor-shop. A few days later he was found at work at the same machine. A warrant was sworn out for the arrest of the employer; but before it could be served the man left the State. This boy has a father in comfortable circumstances, and two adult able-bodied brothers.

Bennie Kelman, Russian Jew, four years in Chicago, was found running a heavy sewing-machine by foot-power in a sweat-shop of the nineteenth ward where knee-pants are made. A health certificate was required, and the medical examination revealed a severe rupture. Careful questioning of the boy and his mother elicited the fact that he had been put to work in a boiler factory two years before, when just thirteen years old, and had injured himself lifting heavy masses of iron. Nothing had been done for the case; no one in the family spoke any English, or knew how help could be obtained. The sight test showed that the boy did not know his letters in English, though he said that he could read Jewish jargon. He was sent to the College of Physicians and Surgeons for treatment, and forbidden work.

If health certificates are granted to wage-earning children merely *pro forma*, upon the representation of the employer or the child, the object of the law is nullified. The physician who grasps the situation, and appreciates the humane intent of the law, will always find time to visit the factory and see under what conditions the

child is working. Otherwise his certificate may be worse than valueless, and work a positive injury to a child whom the inspectors are trying to save from an injurious occupation. Thus, a healthy child may wish to enter a cracker bakery; and unless the physician visits it, and sees the dwarfish boys slowly roasting before the ovens, in the midst of unguarded belting and shafting, a danger to health which men refuse to incur, he may be inclined to grant the certificate, and thereby deprive the child of the only safeguard to health which the State affords him. Similar danger exists in regard to tobacco, picture-frame, box, metal-stamping, and wood-working factories.

The following example of the reckless issuance of certificates is of interest here, the child being a resident of the nineteenth ward, employed in this ward, and receiving the certificates to be subsequently quoted from physicians living and practising in this ward:—

Annie Cihlar, a delicate-looking little girl, was found working at 144 West Taylor Street, in a badly ventilated tailor-shop, in a building in the rear of a city lot, with windows on alley, and a tenement house in front. The bad location and atmosphere of the shop, and the stooping position of the child over her work, led the inspector to demand a health certificate. Examination at the inspector's office revealed rachitis and an antero-posterior curvature of the spine, one shoulder an inch higher than the other, and the child decidedly below the standard weight. Dr. Milligan indorsed upon the age affidavit: "It is my opinion this child is physically incapable of working in any tailor-shop." The employer was notified to discharge the child. A few days later she was found at work in the same place, and the contractor produced

the following certificate, written upon the prescription blank of a physician in good and regular standing: "This is to certify that I have examined Annie Cihlar, and found her in a physiological condition." A test case was made to ascertain the value of the medical certificate clause, and the judge decided that this certificate was void, and imposed a fine upon the employer for failing to obtain a certificate in accordance with the wording of the law. The child then went to another physician, and obtained the following certificate: "To whom it may concern: This is to certify that I have this day examined Annie Cihlar, and find her, in my opinion, healthy. She is well-developed for her age; muscular system in good condition; muscles are hard and solid; lungs and heart are normal. The muscles of right side of trunk are better developed than upon the left side, which has a tendency to draw spine to that side. I cannot find no disease [*sic*] of the spine." The sweater, taught by experience, declined to re-engage this child until this certificate was approved by the inspector, and the inspector of course refused to approve it.

DANGER OF MUTILATION AND DEATH.

Not always, however, does the illiteracy of a physician afford an opportunity to have a certificate issued by him declared worthless. If the certificate formally meets the requirement of the law, the child must be left at work, no matter what the effect upon its health, present and future. The same is true where inspectors have tried to save children from danger to life and limb, by requiring health certificates for them when found working amidst dangerous machinery. There is in the Illinois

law no provision for the safeguarding of machinery; and if a physician issues a certificate to a child merely because it is for the moment in good health, with no knowledge of the dangerous occupation of the child, the inspector, under the present law, is powerless. An example is afforded by a stamping-factory of this ward. The inspector called the attention of the head of the firm to the danger to which employees were subjected, because of unguarded shafting and machinery, and required a health certificate for every minor employed there. A week later a deputy inspector went to this factory, and found twenty-five health certificates, in proper form, on file. One of these certificates was already superfluous. The boy for whom it had been obtained had been killed in the factory the day before. Within two years two boys have been killed outright, and several mutilated in this factory. The last boy killed had lost three fingers at his machine only a few months before his death.

One machine used in the stamping-works consists of an endless chain revolving over a trough filled with melted solder. In this trough cans are kept moving in unbroken procession, revolving as they go. At each end of the trough stands a boy with a little iron poker, made for the purpose of keeping the cans in their places and pulling them out at the end. But the poker is not always quick enough, and the boy's hand is apt to get into contact with the melting fluid. In preparation for this danger the lads wrap their hands before beginning work; but this precaution is only good for minor burns, and the real danger to the child is that he may lose a hand outright. This machine has been superseded in the stamping-works of more progressive manufacturers

by a self-actor, which may be made free from danger to an employee; but this is expensive, and children of the class employed at the stamping-works are so thoroughly defenceless by reason of poverty and ignorance of the laws and language of the country, that the company finds it cheaper to use the old-fashioned machine, and take the risk of damage suits, than to pay for the more modern solderer. The metal-stamping trade, like the candy, paper-box, and garment trades, is without organization, and the children employed in it suffer accordingly. This company employs a large body of recently immigrated Russian and Bohemian men, boys, and girls, many of whom are wholly illiterate; and even if they can read their own language, this is of little avail for reading the terms of the contract, printed in English, under which they are employed, or the card of directions which each one is required to carry in his or her pocket, in order that the company may prove, in case of injury to an employee, that notice of the danger had been given, and that the injury was therefore no fault of the company, but solely due to the recklessness of the boy or girl.

Of the rules printed on these cards, one reads as follows:—

11. All employees are strictly forbidden placing their hands under the dies; and all employees, other than those whose duty it is to repair or clean machines, are strictly forbidden to place their hands or any part of their body in contact with or within reach of those portions of the machinery intended to be in motion when the machinery is in operation, or in contact with, or in reach of the shafting; and this applies to machinery in operation and not in operation. It is dangerous to disobey this rule.

For middle-aged men, self-possessed and cautious, able to read these rules and ponder them, it would still be a

grewsome thought that the penalty of violation may be instant death; but where the employees are growing lads, many of them unable to read at all, and all at the age when risk is enticing, and the most urgent warning is often a stimulus to wayward acts, what excuse can be offered for supplying machinery lacking in any most trifling essential of safeguard? Yet these rules themselves announce that the surroundings of these boys are so fraught with danger, that a whole code of fourteen rules and regulations is needful to protect the pockets of the company in the probable event of injury to the children. There are other wealthy corporations and firms in Chicago to-day holding contracts with the parents or guardians of employed children, and with casualty insurance companies, releasing the employers from liability in case of accident to the child. Does any one suppose that an employer would hold such contracts unless accidents to children in his employ were numerous, and might be made costly?

Ingenious safeguards are a part of the construction of machinery in modern plants; but many factories are operated without such improvements, and expose employees, old and young, to constant danger of death or mutilation. Even where the latest patents in safeguarding are found, accidents are possible if operators are careless. In a factory where accidents are of almost daily occurrence among the children employed, we are told, "They never get hurt till they get careless." This is no doubt true; but if it be offered as an excuse for the mutilation of children, it is an aggravation of, rather than an excuse for, the crime against the child. To be care-free is one of the prerogatives of childhood.

MIGRATION OF THE CHILDREN.

Nothing in our work has been more of a revelation than the migratory method pursued by the children, which forever disposes of the only argument in favor of child-labor that before seemed valid; namely, that the work afforded a sort of industrial education for the boy or girl who must depend upon manual labor for livelihood in adult years. They talk with insufficient knowledge who say it is an advantage to boys and girls to work because they have "a steady occupation," a "chance to learn a trade." The places where boys and girls are learning trades are the exception. The places where fortunes are being built up by employing them in droves are the ones where most of them are found working. In these the condition of work and wages is so unsatisfactory that employment in them is a mere makeshift. One place will be no better than another, and one change will follow another. It is not a trade that is learned in the great workshops where child-labor is the foundation of a company's riches. What the child does learn is instability, unthrift, trifling with opportunity.

On Aug. 23, 1893, an inspection of a candy factory showed 80 children employed under sixteen years. Their affidavits were examined, 63 of them were found correct, and were so stamped; and 17 children unprovided with affidavits were sent home. On September 8 another inspector found 71 children at work in this factory, with 65 affidavits awaiting inspection, only one of which had the stamp of the previous inspection. The 70 children were a new lot, and all but one of those at work there two weeks before had flitted off to other

work. In the same factory on September 11, three days later, — and one of these a Sunday, — a third inspector found 119 children at work, and, of course, another lot of affidavits, requiring the employer to make new wall records and a new office register. This candy manufacturer now aims to employ only girls over sixteen years. He will find plenty of them anxious to obtain work; but he cannot get them at four and one-half cents an hour, which is the average wage of the little children employed in this trade.

It is a matter of the rarest occurrence to find a set of children who have been working together two months in any factory. They are here to-day and gone to-morrow; and, while their very instability saves them from the specific poison of each trade, it promises an army of incapables, to be supported as tramps and paupers. The child who handles arsenical paper in a box-factory long enough, becomes a hopeless invalid. The boy who gilds cheap frames with mercurial gilding, loses the use of his arm, and acquires incurable throat troubles. The tobacco girls suffer nicotine poisoning; the foot-power sewing-machine girl is a lifelong victim of pelvic disorders. But the boy or girl who drifts through all these occupations, learning no one trade, earning no steady wage, forming no lasting associations, must end as a shiftless bungler, Jack-of-all-trades, master of none, ruined in mind and character, as the more abiding worker is enfeebled or crippled in body.

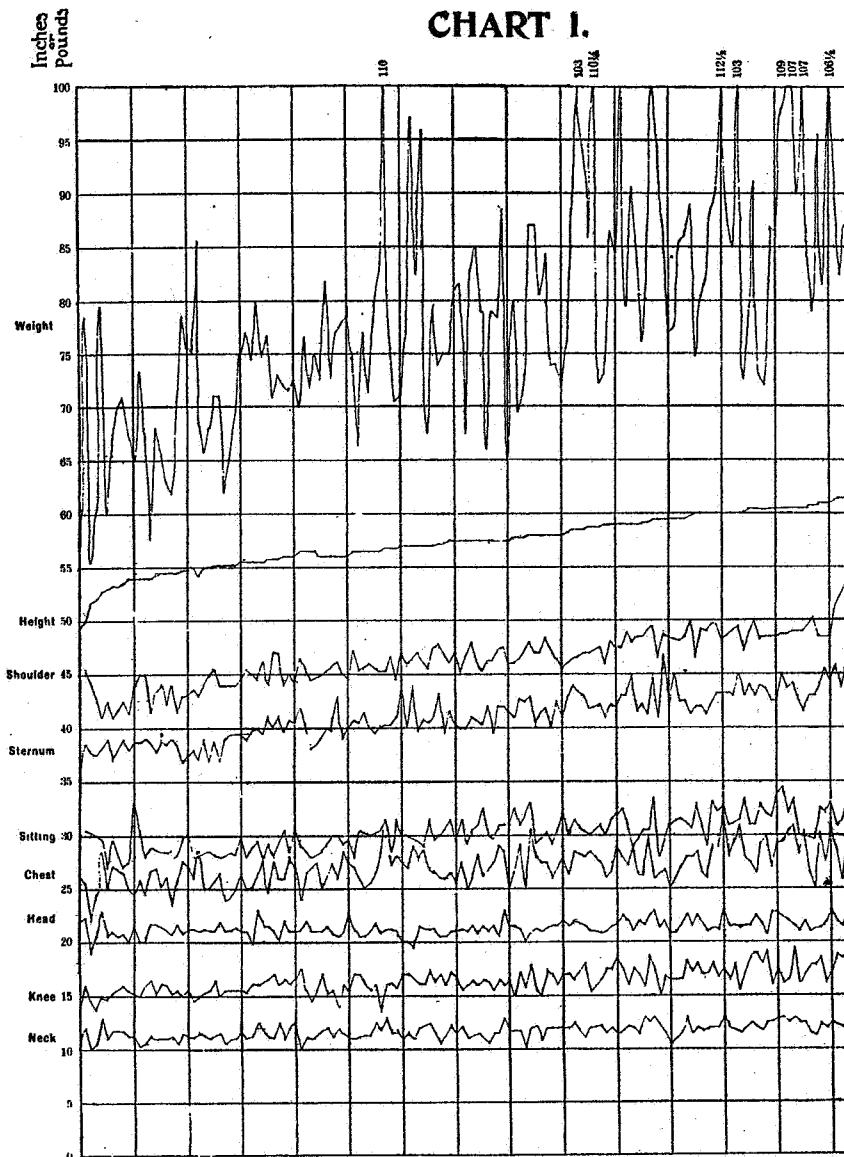
There are factories in which dissolute adults are employed among children, and sow their moral pestilence unchecked; where petty bosses tempt young girls to evil courses, and the example of trifling favors shown

one weak girl who yields demoralizes many more. There are factories where the very sanitary arrangements expose children to temptation and to disease, and the rules violate their natural modesty. There are factories in which children are worked into the late evening hours, and then turned out unprotected, to seek their homes by streets where the immoral side of life is at such hours openly flaunted, and vicious lures draw the unwary feet of tired boys and girls down to moral death. There are factories in which the entire roll of female help is made up of young girls, and these girls are grouped at work with men so vile that the presence of a woman of mature years scarcely serves to check their ribaldry. There are factories where one of the hourly occupations of little boys and girls is to run to a beer saloon with the pails of the older workmen. These are mere outlines of what the factory inspector sees and knows of the environment of a child in the class of factories owned by employers who batten on child-labor.

CAUSES AND REMEDIES.

While it is true, as has been shown, that the industries of Illinois are essentially men's trades, yet there are here, as in all American industrial communities, occupations employing almost no men, trades known as "baby-trades." These are the candy, the tobacco and snuff, and the paper-box trades. Although in the wood and metal trades, thanks to the powerful organizations of men, the number of children relatively to men is small, yet certain branches, and certain factories within these branches, employ children in peculiarly injurious ways.

It has been found in the case of the cutlery and stamping works that some of the children working for wages are orphans and half-orphans, but a large majority are the children of men employed in industries without strong labor organizations, such as laborers, lumber-shovers, or employees in the garment trades. In an incredibly large proportion of cases, the fathers of young wage-earning children not only do not support the family, but are themselves supported by it, being superannuated early in the forties by the exhaustion characteristic of the garment trades, or the rheumatism of the ditcher and sewer-digger, and various other sorts of out-door workers; or by that loss of a limb which is regarded as a regular risk in the building-trades and among railroad hands. Long years of consumption make hundreds of fathers burdens on their younger children. Some of the children, however, principally Italians, Bohemians, and Germans, are sent to work by their parents out of sheer excess of thrift, perhaps in order to pay off a mortgage upon some tenement house. In hundreds of cases during 1893-1894 the children left school and went to work because the father, previously the sole support of the family, was now among the unemployed. This is a lasting injury wrought by every industrial crisis; for the children so withdrawn from school are ashamed to return, after prolonged absence, to a lower class; and, having tasted the excitement of factory-life and partial self-support, are unfitted for anything else. The growth of child-labor during these months has been very marked, the demand for children increasing in the universal effort to reduce expenses by cutting wages; so that it was a matter of common



MEASUREMENTS OF 154 DEFECTIVE CHICAGO FACTORY-CHILDREN—14-16 YEARS

The above charts were made by Bayard Holmes, B. S., M.D., from measurements taken in 1893-4, in the office of Mrs. Kelley, State Factory Inspector, of Illinois.

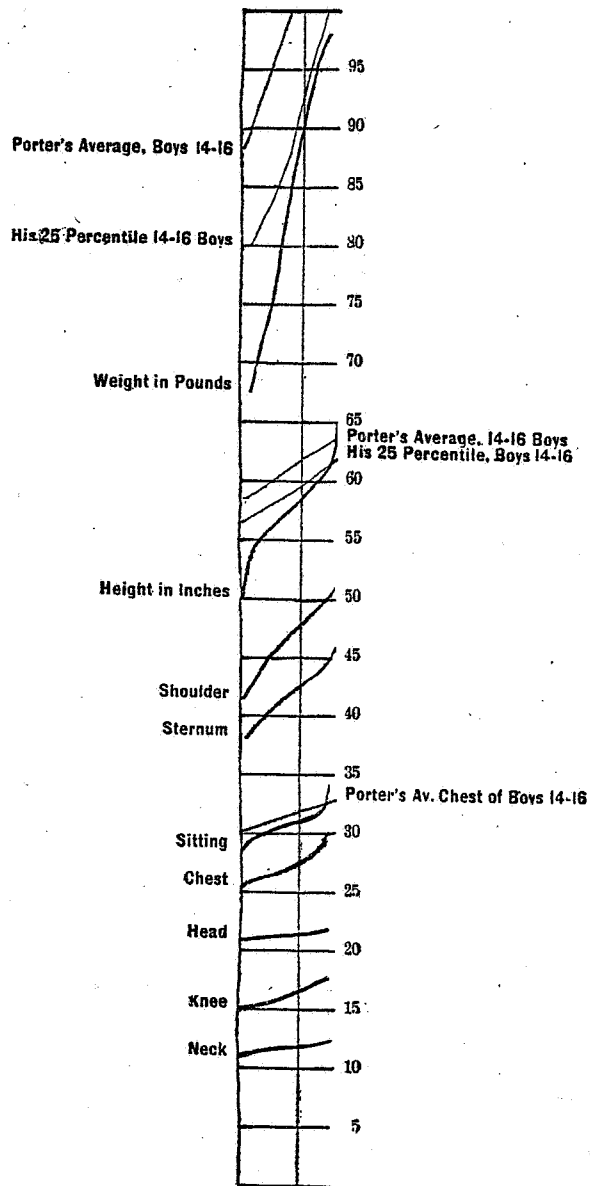
CHART I.

The first fifteen squares in each row, reading from left to right, contain the measurements of ten children each, the sixteenth square contains four. The measurements of the individual child are found directly over each other.

CHART II.

Porter's averages were made on 30,000 school children of St. Louis. The measurements of the individual child are found directly over each other.

CHART II.



SUMMARY OF CHART I.

remark that in any given trade in which children were employed, that factory was busiest which employed fewest adults. In general, however, it remains true, that in the industries of Illinois there is no need in the nature of the work to be performed for any characteristic quality of children. The presence of the children in the industries is more by reason of poverty of their families than of any technical requirements of the industries themselves. Everything done by children under sixteen years of age could be quite as swiftly done by young people between sixteen and eighteen years. As has already been indicated, the question of child-labor in Illinois is primarily a question of the wages of the fathers of families in the unorganized trades; and, secondarily, it is a consequence of the premature disablement of the men upon whom the support of the children would normally fall.

Where a trade is well organized, few children are to be found at work in it. But where a trade is in the hands of women, it is never strongly organized; and the women neither keep the children out of the shops nor demand and obtain wholesome conditions of work. This is conspicuously true in the garment trades, in which women and children outnumber the men by two to one; while hours are longer, sanitary conditions are inferior, and the amount of work required disproportionate to the strength of the workers, to a greater degree than is true in any other occupation. If no child under sixteen were employed after to-morrow, there would be a marked difference in certain limited trades in which the labor of fourteen-year-old children abounds. But it is doubtful whether there would be a perceptible rise in wages,

because of the total lack of organization among the girls between sixteen and twenty with whom the children have hitherto competed, and who would merely be somewhat increased in number in consequence of the discharge of the children. It is for the sake of the children themselves that they should be removed from the labor market and kept in school, far more than for the sake of the effect that they have upon the condition of the adults with whom they compete.

If, however, we take this ground, that the prohibition of child-labor is a humanitarian measure, to be adopted in the interest of the children themselves, we must then be consistent, and make provision for them, so that they shall not suffer hardship worse than that from which we aim to shield them. We have seen that the trades in which children abound are the most injurious and least suitable for them. The wages paid children range from 40 cents a week to \$4.00 a week, taking the whole 6,576 children together.

In some cases, undoubtedly, in which a young child is withdrawn from work by the law, an older brother or sister steps into the place thus left vacant. But this compensation does not always take place in the same family, and the deficit would have to be made good in many cases. Why should this not be accomplished by means of scholarships in the upper-grade grammar schools and manual-training schools, just as the scholarships are provided to-day in universities and theological seminaries? Would not such provision be vastly cheaper in the end than the care of the consumptive young grinders? or than the provision which will be inevitably required for the support of the cripples turned

out by the stamping-works? or than the maintenance of the families of those who will be superannuated at thirty-five, because they are now allowed to do in the clothing-shops the work of men, in the years when they ought to be laying up a store of energy to last a normal lifetime?

The key to the child-labor question is the enforcement of school attendance to the age of sixteen, and the granting of such ample help to the poorest of the working children as shall make our public schools not class institutions, but in deed and in truth the schools of the people, by the people, for the people. Only when every child is known to be in school can there be any security against the tenement-house labor of children in our great cities.

The legislation needed is of the simplest but most comprehensive description. We need to have: (1) The minimum age for work fixed at sixteen; (2) School attendance made compulsory to the same age; (3) Factory inspectors and truant officers, both men and women, equipped with adequate salaries and travelling expenses, charged with the duty of removing children from mill and workshop, mine and store, and placing them at school; (4) Ample provision for school accommodations; money supplied by the State through the school authorities for the support of such orphans, half orphans, and children of the unemployed as are now kept out of school by destitution.

Where they are, the wage-earning children are an unmitigated injury to themselves, to the community upon which they will later be burdens, and to the trade which they demoralize. They learn nothing valuable;

they shorten the average of the trade life, and they lower the standard of living of the adults with whom they compete.

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