

Child-Labor Question Finds Many Able Exponents

CIVILIZATION SOULD

FORBID CHILD LABOR

(First Prize)

Dear Aunt Laurie:

WHEN I see anything about child labor I usually think of the cotton mills in the southern states, for the reason, I suppose, that more young children do daily work there than at any other place in the United States.

I am most seriously opposed to child labor, and I think that there should be an established law prohibiting such. It does not seem natural that such a civilized country as is ours should allow its small morsels of humanity to eke out their lives by confined factory work.

The place for all children is, not a factory, but a school in which they may receive education, and where they may be helped in making themselves honorable men and women when they will have reached their maturity. However, as long as there is no law compelling child labor to be stopped, many miserly parents and guardians will continue to send helpless children out to slave themselves to death, merely to increase the family's hoard of money. But what is money compared with the life and soul of a child? Nothing.

What harm does factory life do a child? Take a picture of a group of hard-toiling factory children and you will be able to see at once the harm. Sad looking and hollow eyes above sunken, pinched cheeks look at you. Crushed spirits can be seen in the expressions on their aged-looking faces that ought to make every one feel pathetic enough to work hard to get a prohibitory law. Factory life injures a child both morally and physically. While slaving for a few insignificant dollars the child misses his education, his right to childish play; he usually has poor associates. None of this tends toward bettering a child.

The factory is usually poorly ventilated. This often causes consumption and other diseases that depress and shorten lives. Such is bad enough for grown people, but worse for children. One thing I think we ought to observe, that children can be children but once during their lifetime; and that they have a right, or should have the right to be children in spirit and action. They most certainly should not be allowed to ruin their youth.

Now, on the other hand, what good does factory life do a child? None that I can possibly think of.

Then why, I ask, if labor does the child so much harm and no good, does not our nation stop child labor? Does it not wish to act for the good of the child?

HELEN M. FERGUSON,
3246 Emmett street, Grade B10, L. A. H. S. Age 15 years.

LABOR IN MODERATION

IS NOT INJURIOUS

(Honorable Mention)

Dear Aunt Laurie:

"Should children labor?" My answer is, "Yes, to a certain extent." A little work will not hurt any one, and if children are not trained to work when they are small, when can they be trained?

Child labor employment in factories, where there is heavy lifting to do, is altogether a different thing. These greedy "big interests" who control the factories do not bother themselves about righteousness. They hire children because it is cheaper and force them to do hard work which should require a man. This is where the wrong side of child labor comes in. The government should take steps at once to stop this existing wrong.

Such great men as Lincoln and Garfield worked when they were boys. They were born of poor parents and had to work on the farm with their fathers to help earn the daily bread. They couldn't go to school very often, as there were very few schools in those days. But during every spare minute they studied and strived hard to get an education. And they had to work for it themselves; there was no experienced teacher standing by them to answer questions as we children have nowadays. And yet they were none the worse for working; for as a result they attained the highest position in the land, the chief executive of the United States.

A little work on the part of children is no more than right, and it makes them more considerate of others' rights.

ARTHUR NOBLES,
824 East Twenty-seventh street; Twenty-eighth street school, grade A8; age 13 years.

PREMATURE WORK IS UNSAFE

Dear Aunt Laurie:

You have asked us to discuss the question "Should Children Labor?" If a nation is to live and advance its children must not be crushed under premature labor. Those character-forming years when children's minds are open to impressions should be spent in training for strong capable men and women.

Though the child is a genius in some line of work his art is forgotten and unharvested in the humdrum of the labor he has been unwillingly pushed into. All originality, initiative and

CURRENT TOPICS CONTEST

A prize of \$1.00 will be given each week for the best paper discussing topics which have some definite present day interest.

This contest is open only to pupils who are advanced to the eighth grade or higher in either public or private schools and academies.

All papers submitted must be in the form of a letter to the editor of this paper and must be not less than 200 nor more than 300 words, written in ink upon one side only of the paper.

Papers must be signed with writer's name, grade of school and address, and the number of words should be placed below the signature.

All work submitted must be strictly original and entirely the work of the person who signs and submits it.

Topic: "What I Think About Woman Suffrage." Papers upon this topic must reach this office not later than Thursday, April 7, for publication April 17.

Topic: "The Panama Canal Exposition. What City Should Have It." Papers for this contest must be received at this office not later than Thursday, April 14, for publication April 24.

Topic: "Should California Be Divided?" Here again is a subject upon which there will be variety of opinion, and some strong arguments brought forth in each division of the subject. High school boys ought to make this the subject of some lively informal debates, to bring out all sides of the subject. Letters on this topic must be in this office not later than Thursday afternoon, April 21, for publication May 1.

Address "Aunt Laurie," Herald Junior, The Herald, Los Angeles.

talent is lost in entering work before one's choice is formed.

Because juvenile labor is cheap efficient men must work at low wages to compete. Each working child is a cog in the great trust wheel. Since the youngsters are ignorant and clumsy at their work poor products are manufactured, bringing loss and even danger to merchant and consumer.

But above all, girls and boys' very souls become sordid rubbing elbows with the world. Home influence is lost, education and religion neglected and conscience forgotten in the lust for gain. These things would be avoided if the child went into the world with pure ideals taken from a childhood at home.

Where would the race be if each generation became weaker physically? That would happen if children left the air and sunlight to drag through filthy factories and strain their growing muscles with impossible tasks. Unsanitary conditions in the fields of labor are allowed because children don't complain.

Summing up the effects of child labor we have greedy, dishonest corporations, poor products, low morals in laborers and employees, weak constitutions, loss of talent, low wages and consequently misery of the poorer classes and unsafe, unsanitary working conditions.

Therefore I say no child under 16 should labor at more than the natural tasks of happy childhood.

BEATRICE WALDO MARTIN,
Long Beach high school, grade 10.
Postoffice box 386.

POOR AIR AFFECTS HEALTH

Dear Aunt Laurie:

I think children should not labor. It is wrong to send small children to the factories as they do in New York and other large cities. It spoils their health in the close rooms with many people in them. They do not get enough air, and breathing foul air makes impure blood, which means poor health.

Most of them live in the tenement districts and cannot get very much fresh air at home. They usually have parents that are not very good people and make the children earn the living.

I have read many articles on child labor, and I think they ought to make a rule not allowing the factories to employ children. From 35 to 40 per cent of the children work in factories. There are many of them foreigners, coming here and going to live in the tenements. The children will work cheaper than adults. I think they are much like slaves, as they are not allowed to speak if spoken to or any other way while working. Many of them are so small that they have to stand on boxes and old chairs to reach their work. They assort the yarns and braid them. Not all the children working are employed in factories. Some are messenger boys, office boys and such. Of course the factory life is hardest and unhealthiest.

MAY PALMER,
Grade E8. Age 11 years. 1426 Mesa street, San Pedro.

INFLUENCE IS INJURIOUS

Dear Aunt Laurie:

In a thickly populated city there are generally at least two classes of girls. The first class is the rich class. These girls have nothing whatever to do in the way of work and become indolent. The only thing they do is to enjoy many pleasures, such as theater-going, for themselves.

The other class I have in mind is the class composed of people who lead a directly opposite life. They live in slums and never know what real pleasure it. They are generally found in factories from morning till night, day in, day out. They are sick and under-sized because their lungs are filled with the dust and lint of the factory. The rooms in the factory are poorly ventilated and work is carried on in

dark rooms. These circumstances never make a healthy body.

Neither of these classes is one to which a mother would wish her child to belong. Children should always be given a good chance to play. But they should be educated, not only by a school education, but also educated in useful arts.

I do not think that children should labor in factories, and such places, Aunt Laurie, but they should be useful.

KATHLEEN HARNETT,
B11, L. B. H. S. Burnett.

FACTORY WORK INJURIOUS

Dear Aunt Laurie:

"Should Children Labor" is a very important question. All children must have a certain amount of time for play. Children also should be made to do a little home work, but they should not be allowed to go to factories to wear their souls, brains and life out in the continual drudge, drudge of the factory.

A child, if sent to the factory while in childhood loses all life and spirit. They don't have time for the play they should have.

A child, if it must labor, should be given a work which would give it some time for rest and plenty of fresh air and sunshine. Agriculture is the best labor for a child. This work gives exercise, plenty of air and sunshine, and yet serves the purpose in the question of money.

If children are made to work in factories while young, it spoils them for their future life and happiness. When they are in the factory they have bad lights and consequently, when they grow older, bad eyes; they have no good air, which is the cause of bad lungs; then again the dust, threads, metals and all sorts of unhealthy things are taken into the body while working and this helps to make the future as well as the present life more miserable.

When going into a factory you shorten your life just a few years; you cut out your chances for a good education and then you miss chances of having a good business in later years.

As I said at the beginning, there is nothing so good in this world as a little work of some kind for every child. It will teach them how to do work and so start them out in the world.

HELEN MACE,
R. F. D. No. 1; Box 305 E. H. J. C. No. 2, grade 9. Long Beach.

OCCUPATION IS DESIRABLE

Dear Aunt Laurie:

"Child Labor" is a subject upon which a great deal can be said. Children should have something to do to occupy their minds. In doing this they don't have any time to be thinking of evil.

Agreat many of the boys and girls who are now in the reform schools, and even young men who have been imprisoned for wrong-doing, would no doubt be in their homes if they had had certain tasks assigned them by their parents.

"Child Labor" is oftentimes carried too far. For instance, the great slums in New York. It is a great sin and pity for the poor little children to have to spend the best part and perhaps their whole lives in such places.

A great many are born in the slums and die there. Some of them are made to work before they are hardly out of their babyhood. They are never healthy after being penned in these places for so long a time.

I think "Child Labor" is a very good thing if it is carried to a certain extent and no farther.

CONSTANCE RUTHERFORD,
Anaheim, R. F. D., No. 3. Box 12. Grade 6; age 11.

Try in the writers' contest, Constance. This Current Topics work is for the older boys and girls particularly.

ALL LIVES DEMAND

A SHARE OF AMUSEMENT

(Honorable Mention)

Dear Aunt Laurie:

The topic for this week is "Should Children Labor?" If that question should be asked of me I should answer it emphatically, "No!"

It is the business of every state to see to it that the development of the child as a future citizen is not imperiled by making children work at too early an age. We cannot rob children of their play without at some time paying the penalty. When children are robbed of playtime they too often reassert their right to it in manhood, as vagabonds and criminals. Today we have a compulsory education and a factory law prohibiting the employment of young children. The laws are different in different states, but the youngest that they are allowed to work in any state is 12 years. I think that this is too young an age.

Of course I do not mean to say that children should not work at all; but what I have in mind in speaking of child labor is the regular employment of children in factories, which undoubtedly brings ruin to the child himself, as well as to our civilization.

Child labor is a new evil. It was brought into existence by the factory system, and it can and ought to be checked.

Think of a child being deprived of going to school and sent to a factory to work! What does this mean to the individual and to the nation? To the child it means that he is to be weakened morally as well as physically. He is weakened morally, because by working he cannot study and learn as if he were going to school; physically because he must breathe those terrible odors of gases, smoke, etc., in the factories.

Now, let us see what this means to the nation. It means that there will be that many less good citizens, and that many more criminals. In plain words, child labor means to the nation the decline and destruction of our American civilization and good government. For are not our boys of the present to be our citizens of the future?

Therefore let us protect the children of today that they may be of use and service to our nation in later years to come. CLAUDINA PESQUEIRA.

San Fernando; San Fernando high school, grade 12.

WORK MAY IMPAIR HEALTH

Dear Aunt Laurie:

Children should not have to work. The place for them is in school. Their youth ought to be used to develop the particular talent that exists in every boy and girl. After they have completed the work in which they are most interested there is still plenty of time left for them to change the huge air castle into real and worthy art. "Haste makes waste."

The question now is, Why do they have to work? It is not the fault of the parents, as far as they can see. It is the fault of the government. But it is the fathers that build the government; therefore it is their fault that conditions force child labor. How can the government be bettered? The cause of all the trouble is that the fathers vote the wrong ticket at election time.

What party holds the best platform? Who is it that has reduced the former child labor of fifteen hours down to nine hours? It is the union men, or organized labor, that have had the pluck and energy. They are not going to stop at nine hours. They intend, and will carry it to a finish—that is, to where the boy or girl may continue in school, and not have the feeling that those at home are suffering because he or she is taking from their mouths and backs what rightly belongs to them. Organized labor stands for Socialism. It is the duty of every woman in the United States to work continually for Socialism. It is the only political party that favors woman. It is woman's right to vote so that she can protect her children, and by so doing better the country in which she lives. HAROLD F. THORNTON.
763 East Fifty-first street.

In reply to your postscript, Harold: One of the essentials in writing is to tell your story briefly. It is also one of the hardest things for a writer to do to cut down his own compositions.

HARD WORK DESTROYS YOUTH

Dear Aunt Laurie:

Should children labor? No, I do not think they should.

If the children of today are permitted to work, slave their lives away pent up in a dark, hot factory, what will it result in? Will it raise the standard of the nation? Will it make a better, healthier race of men and women? Will it destroy the crimes and vice that now occur in all large cities?

No, never! It might better the nation of today, but what of tomorrow? And are we willing to have our nation bettered by using the lifeblood of the children to do so? Let us hope not. No, it could not make a better race of men and women. The poor waifs who now toil daily under the massive