

# THE EVILS OF CHILD LABOR

Speech of Geo. V. Hanks of the Branch Normal in the State Oratorical Contest.

The conditions that surround the young child who enters the confines of the modern industries are such that it will take the best and strongest characters to deal successfully with them. The Anglo-Saxon race may long be indifferent to unjust conditions—even to the degree of permitting great and uncorrected wrongs to exist; but when once their sleeping conscience is aroused by persistent agitation, and the criminality of such is impressed upon the people then no power in the body politic can stay their anger, not even the all-mastering power of wealth. The employment of children as a means of cheap labor, is a triple crime. One of measureless proportions against helpless childhood; a crime against republican institutions, whose success depend so largely upon the moral and mental rectitude of its citizens and a wrong against sturdy, honest, manhood.

In the coal belt of Pennsylvania, known as Anthracite, there are employed inside and outside of the mines, approximately, 150,000 persons, and of these, 19,564, were rated as slate pickers; 3,148 door-boys and helpers; 10,894 as drivers and runners; but of all the people employed as slate pickers, 90 per cent were children varying in age from 9 to 19 years; 30 per cent of the drivers and runners, are of age varying from 10 to 17; and all of the door-boys and helpers are children. In other words, a total of 24,023, or, nearly one sixth of all the employees of the coal mines in this district are children.

The risk to lives and limbs these little fellows are daily running, is enormous. They are forced to bend over chutes, where the coal is pushed, until they get curvature of the spine. Again, in what is known as the "breakers," they are often injured by falling pieces of coal, and in the varying temperature of the slate pickers room, they contract heavy colds which often lead to pneumonia. The dust and gaseous air they breathe is very irritating to the lungs which in turn super-induces tuberculosis, and possibly, active consumption.

While the boys are busily engaged in the mines, the girls are employed in the other industries, such as the silk hosiery, underwear, and knitting mills. In the nine counties of Anthracite there are 11,216 "females" employed, ranging in age from 11 to 16. They work 10 hours each day at an average wage of 47c. The danger here is as great as for the boys in the mines for in manipulating the machinery, the girls are often maimed for life. Here there is a high per centage of Dorsal curvature of the spine, as well as broken down insteps which produce flat footedness.

Hard and dangerous as the situations of the child born in the shadow of the coal belt are, the conditions in the southern cotton mills of Alabama are even more deplorable. In this one state alone the frequent occurrence of accidents is appalling.

Statistics show that 20 per cent of the children, from 9 to 16 years old, who are employed in the mills, are maimed for life in some part of their body. One doctor alone states that he amputated over one hundred "babies" fingers mangled in the mills. The children are forced to work 16 out of the 24 hours, and this, mind you, at an average of from 75c to \$1.58 per week. So frequent are these accidents that when application for work is made, the applicant must sign a contract that in case of injury the company will not be held responsible, and the parents and guardians sign for minors.

The physical debasement of the mill-child is indisputable. None look healthy, and there is a horrible form of dropsy among them. The lint from the cotton gets on their lungs and forms an excellent medium for tuberculosis, and the varying temperature of the super-heated mills with the cold night air, causes them to take a heavy cold which develops pneumonia, and this disease, if not causing death, brings on active consumption.

Hardly less graphic and revolting are the home industries in the tenement houses of the large cities. Here in these places, which serve as a home by night and factories by day, in a foul, stagnant, atmosphere, where a fresh supply of air and the light of the sun never have a chance to penetrate; here under such unhygienic environmental conditions, a family of eight or nine, will be at work from daylight till dark. In these home industries cigars, flowers, artificial hair, clothing and willow plumes are manufactured. Children are set to work at these articles as soon as they are old enough to tie a knot in a string; children who should be at play in the yard, instead of cramping their little bodies over a task for hours incessantly.

Here is where the real crimes against society and nature are committed. It is in these places, where the unnatural or helpless father, to meet economic needs must sacrifice his babes daily in order to eke out an existence. There is no law to control these industries and the moral, mental and physical degeneracy of the child are in monstrous proportions to their unprofitable labors. It does not take a prophet to foretell the harm to the eyes, spine and nervous system of children of 3 and 4 years who are constantly bent over and huddled in the most twisted shape possible for their supple bodies to assume. The curse of this crime lies, not only in the danger to life and limb of the child, but his moral welfare is undermined; his mental perceptions are deadened; and when these are joined by the physical wreckage, then the process of degeneration is complete. This gravest danger, moral degeneration, comes from the street trades carried on by both boys and girls. Through this means they are brought into the very heart of the underworld, where they become as familiar with the corruptness of the dwellers there as they do with their own hard lot. In these trades of the young boys and girls there is marked lowness of vitality, dullness, and breaking down of parental control. Since the children are on the streets at all hours, careless habits are developed, which often lead to

moral ruin of both boys and girls. They are the only children who work that are not protected by law. In Chicago none under the age of 16 may engage in labor in the factories, mills and departmental stores; those under 14 may work at the street trades; and the ones between 14 and 16 may be admitted to the manual tasks if they can get certificates from the school board. Employment certificates were issued to over 20,000 children last year, an increase of 8,000 annually since 1904. The records show no such increase in the school numbers, therefore, it is but logical to conclude, that each year a larger proportion of the children go to work as early as the law will permit.

A condition which soon opens to our young people such varied and unwholesome situations and temptations, is such that the state can no longer afford to let it exist. What will become of the future American commonwealth if we do not check this wholesale slaughter of the child? It can be likened to the rapid disappearance of a vast forest, where all the young saplings are cut down leaving only the old weather beaten trees to decay. Who will be the defenders of our dearly bought liberties, when we have nothing but these little dwarfs? A state is as strong only as its weakest point, and America's pre-eminence in the world's influence is maintained by virtue of her having cared for her sons and daughters, and profusely instilled into their minds, sound principles of human liberty. History repeats itself, and let us be careful we do not repeat the downfall of Rome. The decline was due to her moral corruptness, child labor and the mental degeneracy of the growing generations. Therefore, we must read aright the book of the past and protect our future. This problem is an economic evil that is not properly sensed by the average man and woman of today, and it is one for the cure of which an army of brave and fearless men and women, can affect without the horrors of a French revolution; and in the battle ranks of these warriors who are to fight this curse against civilization, none but the strong and true can enlist. If we but listen closely enough, we can hear these pre-mature dead, rise upon the silent darkness of past wrongs, and call us to the battle for their freedom. None but cowards hesitate to answer that call. Young men and women of America shall we not make up this cause and give our life's best efforts to it? The babes are calling to us form out the darkness of suffering.

"How long" they say, "How long, O cruel nation, Will you stand to move the world on a child's heart, Stifle down with mailed heel its palpitations, And tread onward to your throne amid the mort? Our blood splashes upward, O, our tyrants! And your purple shows our path; But the child's sob curseth deeper in the silence Than the strong man in his wrath."

How One Got In.  
St. Peter sittin' at de gate;  
Nigger passin' by—  
St. Peter up an' sez to him:  
"How did you come ter die?"  
"Go ax de man whut helt de gun A-p'inin' at dat roos";  
Go ax de dog whut helt my foot  
An' wouldn't turn hit loose!"  
"An' so," St. Peter sez to him,

"You wuz kotehed in de ac'?"  
Dat nigger turnt an' looked at him,  
An' spon's; "Hit is a fac'?"  
"Down in de pit den you mus' go Fer stealin' uv dat hen!"  
Dat nigger scratch his haid right hard—  
St. Peter had him den!  
But dreckly liftin' up his arms,  
He floot 'em on his side,  
An' 'sactly like a rooster crow  
Three times out loud he cried.  
St. Peter hung his head in shame—  
He 'membered uv his sin—  
An' grabbin' up a great big key,  
He let dat nigger in!



Benny Bull-Bill Feathers is a solemn looking dog.  
Harry Hound-Yes; he's a melancholy Me.—New York Globe.

**Assessment Notice**  
Cedar Electric Company. Principal place of business, Cedar City, Utah. Notice is hereby given that at a meeting of the Board of Directors, held on Wednesday, the 29th day of January, 1913, an assessment of ten (10) cents per share was levied on the capital stock of the corporation, payable to J. H. Arthur, Secretary-Treasurer, on or before April 15th, 1913, at his office, 30 South Main Street, Cedar City, Utah. Any stock upon which the assessment may remain unpaid on April 15th, 1913, will be delinquent and advertised for sale at public auction, and unless payment is made before that time will be sold on May 15th, 1913, to pay the delinquent assessment, together with the cost of advertising and expense of sale.  
J. H. ARTHUR,  
Secretary-Treasurer of said Company  
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**Notice of Stockholders' Meeting.**  
Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the stockholders of the Southern Utah Publishing & Printing Co. will be held at the company's office in Cedar City, Utah, on Monday, May 5th, 1913, at 8 o'clock p. m. of said day, for the purpose of considering the matter of consolidating the printing and publishing business of said company with the printing and publishing business of the Excelsior Publishing Company of Cedar City, Utah, and taking such action for or against such consolidation, as may be deemed for the best interest of the company.  
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