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CHILD LABOR UNDER CAPITALISM.

BY MRS. HYLTON DALE.

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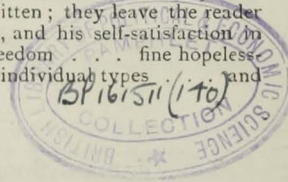
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CHILD LABOR UNDER CAPITALISM.

The Industrial Revolution and Child Labor.

AT the end of the eighteenth century England ceased to be predominantly agricultural and became the most important manufacturing country in the world.* Child Labor being regarded by the manufacturers as absolutely essential to the speedy piling up of fortunes, the morality of which no one questioned, it was universally employed in the cotton mills and factories which suddenly sprang up in the land. Manchester, specially the seat of the cotton trade from its earliest days, was the greatest employer of Child Labor, and became wealthy and populous. In ten years—from 1780-1790—the population almost doubled, owing to the inrush from the country of people, who were tempted by high family earnings to barter their infinitely healthier existence on the land for life in crowded slum cities. A positive majority of the workers in the cotton mills were young children.

Until the middle of the eighteenth century spinning and weaving had been done in cottage homes with the simple hand looms which had altered but little from primitive times. But with the introduction of elaborate and costly machinery into factories the work changed its character. New methods, new buildings, new modes of life superseded those of the rural life of the English peasantry. The latter at first refused to allow their children to work in the factories and mills which had been built by their streams and rivers from which was derived the water-power which worked the machinery. The parents at first considered it derogatory and degrading work for young people. But to procure the cheapest form of labor was considered not only justifiable but almost a mandate from heaven. The wealth that poured into the country, notably into the pockets of the manufacturers, was regarded as a reward from God for industry and self-help. Unfortunately in the workhouses of London and other large towns manufacturers easily found the cheap material they required. Shoals of unwanted children of all ages, even as young as five and six, were transported from workhouses and sent as parish apprentices to remote districts wherever their labor was wanted. The parish authorities, whose callousness was equalled by the manufacturers, were only too anxious to be rid of the burden of rate-supported children, and they actually stipulated—so little did humanity and pity rule their hearts—that a due proportion of feeble-minded children must be taken as part of the contract. As far as is known no further interest by the overseers was shown in the fate of these hordes of victims of ungoverned industrialism.

* *The Industrial Revolution*, by Arnold Toynbee; *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*, by W. Cunningham; *Capital*, by Karl Marx.

No one can tell how many thousands died unknown and untended over a long series of years. No records were kept. It was no one's business to see after such children. Employers for the most part regarded their apprentices as of less value than their machines, which at any rate were kept clean and carefully preserved. The masters themselves were frequently men of low type, with little or no education, who had often come from the ranks of manual labor themselves, and who were intoxicated with their own sudden wealth. They had little sympathy for the class from which they had sprung. Children worked side by side with adults and for the same length of time. They worked all day and sometimes all night; they were cruelly beaten if fatigue overcame them at their work; they worked in bad air without ventilation or sanitation, and with no regard to cleanliness or decency (the two sexes being herded together at night in huts); they received no personal care morally or physically, no education, no love. Many were living skeletons, some almost gibbering idiots. They died off like flies from various diseases, especially pneumonia, fostered by the sudden changes of temperature from damp heat in the mills to cold outside. Malignant fevers decimated them from time to time, and of those who survived many were in poor health, ignorant of the commonest things, and destitute of all education, secular, religious or moral.*

The work in the mills was, perhaps, not in itself hard. It consisted of piecing together the broken threads of cotton, of removing obstructions from the machinery, and of cleaning its parts. But accidents were not infrequent. And the children of all ages stood at their work the whole day through (often from twelve to fifteen hours at a stretch, with one and a half hours' interval for meal times), under pitiless taskmasters.

The conscience of society gradually became aroused to the evils of the system when the sins committed upon the hapless children reacted upon itself. When infectious fevers, originating in the dens where the little apprentices festered, were caught by children and adults outside, it was brought home to people that some foul wrong existed somewhere.

In 1784 the Manchester magistrates requested a committee of medical men, led by Drs. Percival and Ferriar, to investigate an outbreak of fever in the Radcliffe cotton factories. Dr. Percival, F.R.S., President of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, had had his attention specially called as a medical man to the evils and ravages of disease among the Poor Law apprentices in the town.

The first report, from which all subsequent factory legislation sprang, was that presented in 1796 to the Manchester Board of Health by Dr. Percival on the abuses and cruel conditions of life under which all the operatives, and especially the children, lived and died. It was resolved by the Board to invoke the aid of Parliament to establish laws "for the wise, humane, and equal government of all such works."

* *Life of Robert Owen*, by F. Podmore; *History of Factory Legislation*, by B. L. Hutchins and A. Harrison.

Robert Owen.

On the Board sat Robert Owen, cotton spinner, embryo philanthropist, and pioneer of factory legislation. He and his two partners subsequently purchased the cotton mills of New Lanark belonging to David Dale (whose daughter Owen married), and who was one of the few instances of a humane and enlightened master of that period. Owen carried on the work at New Lanark in the same humane spirit as his predecessor, and instituted a series of reforms in Child Labor. He raised the minimum age of the workers to ten, and refused to take any more Poor Law apprentices, preferring to gather in as employes children who lived at home with their parents. He established infant schools where children from one year old were kept in a very superior crèche and kindergarten combined. In his schools for older children he established co-education, and had dancing, military drill, natural science, botany, arithmetic, geography, history, singing and music taught. He allowed no punishments of any kind. The whole atmosphere of his schools was one of love. He, more than any educationist before or since, recognized that children are like plants, in that they want more than care and attention ; they want love.

The First Factory Act.

In 1802, Sir Robert Peel the elder, himself an owner of cotton factories, inspired by what he knew of his own mills at Radcliffe and the report of the Manchester Board of Health, introduced and got passed the first Factory Act known as "The Health and Morals of Apprentices Act." By this Act the hours of labor were limited to twelve a day, and the children were forbidden to work at night. They were to go to church once a month, and were to be taught reading, writing and arithmetic. Girls and boys were not to sleep in the same apartment. The factories were to be ventilated and periodically whitewashed. All this seems little enough to the modern sense, but it called the attention of right-minded people to the subject, and raised a standard of humanity which has never been lowered, and from it came, slowly it must be confessed and after fierce struggle, all subsequent factory legislation.

Employment of "Home" Children.

One result of this Act, which dealt solely with Poor Law apprentices, was the substitution for them of children who lived at home, on whose behalf the law had not interfered. The evils of excessive work were now transferred to the "home" children, and continued to be borne by them for many long and weary years. Steam power, after 1802, having replaced water power, factories were built in towns, and, as the children lived with their parents, many of the ghastly and horrible outrages on health and decency disappeared. But the hours of work were just as terrible. Seven was the age at which children began to work in the mill, but cases of even six and five were not uncommon, and they worked twelve hours a day—thirteen hours at a stretch with an interval for dinner

only, breakfast and tea being snatched while at work. No seats were provided, and the children stood the whole day through. Many had to clean the machinery on Sundays.

The Cotton Mills Act of 1819.

In 1819, through Robert Owen's influence and ceaseless endeavor, Sir Robert Peel the elder got passed the Act known as the "Cotton Mills Act" of 1819. Although shorn of all the chief provisions dear to Owen's heart, for which Sir Robert Peel himself had striven, "The Act of 1819," as Mr. Podmore says in his life of Robert Owen, "marks the first and the most important step in the long procession of Factory Acts. Under it for the first time the State assumed the rights of parent and guardian to the children of the free, and took upon itself to prescribe the hours of work and the general condition of their labor."* This Act referred solely to cotton mills. The minimum age of employment was fixed at nine. The hours of labor were to be twelve per day. No provision was made for education, although this had been most strenuously urged by Owen.

The Acts of 1833-44.

It was not until 1833 that provision was made by the Act of that year for the appointment of paid Government inspectors. The hours of children's work were restricted to nine per day. But this Act failed to work satisfactorily, and the Act of 1844 was passed, enacting (1) that children from eight to sixteen must not work without a medical certificate; (2) that factories were to be inspected and registered; (3) that children under thirteen might only work half time. Extensions and amendments of this Act were made in 1867, 1874, 1878, 1883, 1891 and 1895.

The Coal Mines Regulation Act.

In 1887 the "Coal Mines Regulation Act," amending the statute of 1872 (which had replaced that of 1842), forbade girls and women and boys under twelve to work in any mine below ground and forbade it for boys from twelve to sixteen for more than ten hours a day or fifty-four hours a week.

The Factory and Workshops Act of 1901.

But the twentieth century has seen the most vital changes of all, the most important respecting Child Labor since Robert Owen pleaded nearly a century ago, viz., the consolidation and amendment of all the previous Acts into "The Factory and Workshops Act of 1901."

Child Labor To-day.

It comes as a surprise to the majority of present day people to learn that Child Labor still exists all over Great Britain, and for the most part to a highly injurious extent. This is more flagrantly the case in Yorkshire and Lancashire, where the "half time system" is

* *Life of Robert Owen*, by F. Podmore, p. 208.

in full play. According to the Report of the Board of Education for the year 1906-7 there were no fewer than 82,328 of these half timers or "partial exemption scholars"—to give them their official name. In 1904-5 the number was 80,368, and in 1903-4 it was 78,876. So the numbers are increasing.*

The three areas in which the largest number of "partial exemption scholars" are found are the Administrative County of Lancashire, with over 11,900, and the West Riding of Yorkshire and the County Borough of Bradford, each with over 8,000. All three areas show an increase in the number of these scholars in 1905-6 as compared with 1904-5. The County Boroughs of Oldham, Sheffield and Burnley also show noticeable additions to the number of "partial exemption scholars."

These half timers are children over twelve years of age who have obtained a labor certificate, and who are then allowed by the law to be sent to work half a day in mills or factories, provided that they are sent to school the other half of the day. Employment in the mill has to be either in morning or afternoon shifts, or on the alternate day system. One set of children begin work at 6 a.m. or 6.30 a.m. and go to school in the afternoon; the afternoon set go to work in the mill at 1 p.m. and end at 5 p.m. or 6 p.m., and attend school in the morning. A child may not be employed in the same shift either morning or afternoon for two consecutive weeks. No child may be employed on two successive Saturdays, nor on any Saturday if he has worked for five and a half hours on any day in the previous week. The maximum time for work for half timers is twenty-seven and a half hours a week.

Many of the children on the first shift rise at 5 a.m. (Mr. J. C. Clynes, M.P., states that he rose about 4.30 a.m. as a half timer); and sometimes they have to walk a mile to the mill in all weathers and be there by six o'clock. They have half an hour for such breakfast as they can afford. At mid-day they walk home to their dinners. At 2 p.m. they are in school.

Is it any wonder these children are worn out and that they fall asleep over their desks; or that the merciful teacher lets them sleep? The education that they receive is of very little use, whilst the injury done to their health by their double work is often irreparable.

Miss Clementina Black, President of the Women's Industrial Council, states: "I shall never forget the impression made on my mind by the peculiar mixture of pallor and eagerness on the faces of the little half timers the first time that I ever went over a weaving mill. The place was light and airy and the work was not hard, and the management considerate; but as to the children, any London doctor or any woman accustomed to the care of children, would have thought their appearance unhealthy and their expression of face abnormal."† Miss Black adds: "Labor in childhood inevitably

* See also the *Report on the Employment of Children in the United Kingdom*, by Constance Smith (British Association for Labor Legislation).

† *Sweatea Industry*, by Miss Clementina Black, p. 122.

means, in nine cases out of ten, decadence in early manhood or womanhood; and the prevalence of it among ourselves is perhaps the most serious of national dangers. It is an example of that most cruel form of improvidence described by the French proverb as 'eating our wheat as grass.'

Bradford, a pioneer town as regards its admirable arrangements for the scientific feeding of the necessitous children at school, is one of the principal offenders in the sin of the half time system.

Miss Adler, a member of the Education Committee of the L.C.C. and Hon. Sec. of the Committee on Wage-earning Children, recently made personal enquiries at two manufacturing centres in the north of England, one having over 5,000 half timers, the other 800. She said the appearance of the children was sickly and pallid owing to the fact that the processes of cotton and wool spinning have to be carried on in a humid and warm temperature. All authorities whom Miss Adler interviewed stated that the children lost 50 per cent. of their education; and she added that "teachers consider their whole moral tone is lowered, and that there is a visible deterioration which is most heart-breaking."*

Is there any plea that can be urged for the continuation of such a system? Yes, there is. This is what the Right Hon. H. O. Arnold-Foster (late Secretary of State for War), writes by way of opposing Socialist reform: "The great cotton industry of Lancashire, the wool and worsted industry of Yorkshire, and many other industries in a less degree, *are at the present time dependent on Child Labor*"; and he gives, as a plea for its justification and absolute necessity—exactly as Nassau Senior did three-quarters of a century ago: "The minute margins of profit and loss" owing to competition; adding: "The fierce competition of the world, especially in those countries in which Child Labor and long hours are prevalent, has to be met."† No statement could be more condemnatory of our present social system based on competition.

Inspectors, managers, teachers, members of education committees are agreed as to the evils resulting from children working during the years that they attend school. Nor do the parents' necessities compel such child-slavery. All who have studied this question testify that, as a rule, it is the children of men earning good wages who are sent to the mills as early as the law allows, in order to gain a mere pittance of 2s. 6d. for twenty-six or twenty-seven hours work a week. One penny an hour is the usual rate of wages for a half time child working at the textile trade in Yorkshire. It is not the very poorest parents who are the greatest exploiters of their children. It is to be noted that all these children and their work come under the jurisdiction of the Factory and Workshops Act; and that, accordingly, their lives for the most part are deliberately regulated and controlled by the State.

* *Child Workers and Wage Earners*, by Miss Adler.

† *English Socialism of To-day*, by the Right Hon. H. O. Arnold-Foster, pp. 99, 100.

Children not under the Factory and Workshops Act.

As regards children whose work does not come under the jurisdiction of the Factory and Workshops Act, and therefore escapes Government inspection, they may be classed as those employed (1) in shops, or by shopkeepers as errand boys and girls, and carriers ; (2) in domestic work ; (3) in street trading ; (4) in agriculture ; and (5) in various miscellaneous industrial employments at home or abroad.

The Parliamentary Committee of 1903 came to the conclusion that there were in England alone (apart from the half timers) 200,000 children thus employed as wage earners. It can easily be seen how such uninspected Child Labor may be exploited, and how extremely difficult, and, in many cases, how impossible it is to super-vize and prevent its abuse.*

In London the half time system has been abolished, but there is very little else upon which the Metropolis can be congratulated as regards Child Labor.

Child Labor in Domestic Work.

The abuse of Child Labor in ordinary domestic work is the most difficult of all to control. Miss Bannatyne, a school manager and Acting Warden of the Women's Settlement at Southwark, stated before the Inter-Departmental Committee of 1903 that children are often absent from school one or two days a week on account of domestic employment. The casual labor is bad for the boys' character, and the long hours unfit them for school work. The girls suffer from drudgery in their own homes, which she saw no way of preventing. But if the half days could be prevented and the attendance at school more regularly enforced, she believed that whilst much Child Labor would be prevented it would not affect the family income to any appreciable extent. Thus, a stricter attendance must be enforced at school.

"Ay! There's the rub." If regular attendance at school were really enforced, the parents, knowing the law could not be evaded, would accept the situation. It would be an enormous gain all round ; first, to the children, who are now overworked, and whose education is spoilt by irregular attendance ; secondly, to the managers and teachers, many of whom are unceasingly worried over this question ; and thirdly, it would be a great saving of expense, as a large staff of attendance officers has to be kept under our present system to compel the parents to send their children regularly to school.

Even in the special schools for mentally defective children in Bermondsey, the writer has found cases of girl children who are such pitiful little drudges at home that the officer of the N.S.P.C.C. has had to be sent to "warn" the parents, with the result that the children are worked less hard, but only, it is feared, when closely super-

* The Government has appointed an Inter-Departmental Committee to enquire into the working and result of the half time system. The Trades Union Congress at Nottingham in September, 1908, passed a resolution urging its abolition.

vized by the officer. Another little girl in a special school gets 1d. a week and her tea for going after school to help a neighbor in domestic work and nurse the baby. (This penny she deposits regularly every week with the teacher for her own boot fund).

Of play, so absolutely essential to the proper physical and mental development of childhood, many of these children have next to none. They are old before their time and incapable of joy, and are weighed down by the responsibility of life.

Child Wage-Earners in London and the Provinces.

Miss Adler gave evidence before the Inter-Departmental Committee on Employment of School Children in March, 1901.* In the summary of evidence it is stated that: "For the purposes of the present enquiry Miss Adler had caused about 4,000 London cases and 3,000 cases in the provinces to be investigated. Those employed are about 10 per cent. of the total number of children. Miss Adler put in very voluminous tables, from which it appeared that out of 107 London schools containing 42,097 children, 3,897 were employed—633 in domestic work, 136 as barbers, 723 errand boys or girls, 1,227 in shops, 341 milk carriers, 386 street hawkers, 451 in other miscellaneous employments. Out of 3,527 cases in which the hours were clearly specified, 2,652 worked less than thirty hours a week, fifty-three worked over fifty hours in addition to school. The figures show that it is not the most needy parents who employ the children excessively. Some cases are very extreme; as, for instance, a girl employed sixty hours a week at trouser-making. Saturday work is often excessive. In the provinces returns were collected from some schools in twelve towns, showing out of 67,865 children that 3,049 were employed. The nature of employment and hours worked were much the same as in London, and many cases of excessive hours were to be found. In London the street traders were about one-tenth of those employed. In the provincial towns they amounted to nearly one-fourth of the total employed. Of the employments, domestic work, that is, going in to clean knives and boots, is the least harmful. Street selling is always bad."

Wage-Earning Children in Hoxton and Bermondsey.

In March (1908) the writer accompanied Miss Adler in her inspection of wage-earning children at a boys' school in Hoxton and at a girls' school in Bermondsey. They found 15 per cent. of the boys in the Hoxton school were wage earners. They were employed as errand boys to take out bottles, parcels and papers; at a tea shop, at a coal shop, at an upholsterer's, at a barber's. As street sellers they sold laces, salt, pot-herbs, vegetables, blacking. One "picked over green stuff" for a greengrocer; one ran errands for a maker of doll's arms; one looked after a crippled boy; one helped at a whelk and mussel stall; one made capsules, one cardboard boxes, one sticks; whilst one covered steels.

* Minutes of Evidence taken before the Inter-Departmental Committee on Employment of School Children in 1901, pp. viii. and 70-73.

At the girls' school in Bermondsey some ran errands, some minded neighbor's babies, some sold vegetables in the streets, or helped at coster stalls, some played with neighbors' children, some sold alone in the streets, which is illegal. The boys' occupations are the most varied and interesting. Those of the girls' are often very heavy, tiring and dreary. "Bright girls," Miss Clementina Black truly says, "are put to work far too soon, and they become apathetic, listless women at thirty-five who might be fifty."

Mrs. Hogg's Report.

Nine years have passed since the evils of Child Labor were brought officially to the notice of our rulers, and that by a woman. Mrs. F. G. Hogg (Secretary of the Education Committee of the Women's Industrial Council), made a special study of the subject and organized a deputation to Sir John Gorst, then Vice-President of Committee on Education, respecting it. A Parliamentary enquiry was instituted, and the facts brought to light were so terrible and unexpected that Sir John Gorst in the House of Commons called it "a perfectly sickening document which threw a lurid light upon the social conditions of a large part of the population." One manager stated: "Without exaggeration I can truthfully assert that there are to-day in our National and Board schools thousands of little white slaves."

This Parliamentary report stated that 144,000 boys and 34,000 girls worked regularly for money out of school hours, but nothing was said of casual or seasonal work. Of the children regularly at work, 131 were under six years of age, 1,120 between six and seven, 4,211 between seven and eight, 11,027 between eight and nine, and 22,131 between nine and ten. One little boy peeled onions twenty hours a week for 8d. a week. A milk boy received 2s. a week for twenty-eight hours labor a week—less than 1d. an hour. One boy received 6d. for twenty hours work a week. A little boy engaged in pea-picking received 3d. a week. A little girl under six carried milk for thirty-five hours a week for her parents, and earned no wages. Another under six was a nurse girl who worked for twenty-nine hours a week for 2d. and her food. A boy of ten worked seventy-two hours a week for a farmer for 3s. A newspaper boy worked 100 hours a week, including Sundays (over fourteen hours a day), and received 3s. 6d. a week and his meals. One girl of twelve was employed before, between and after school for six and a half hours a day for 3d. a week. Another girl of twelve got 9d. a week and her food for carrying out parcels for six and a half hours daily during the intervals when she was not at school. A greengrocer's boy of twelve started for the London market every day at 2.30 a.m. He returned at 9.30 a.m. and then went to school!

One would have thought that after such revelations as these were officially made known to Parliament it would have bestirred itself to remedy the evil. But the usual delays occurred.

The Inter-Departmental Committee on the Employment of School Children, formed in 1901, represented three of the great

Departments of State—the Home Office, the Board of Education, and the Board of Trade. As a result of this, in 1902, a Bill to deal with Child Employment was introduced, but, as Sir John Gorst says,* “was not proceeded with, the time of Parliaments being occupied with subjects more interesting to the governing classes. It was introduced again in 1903, and, by great good luck, became law on January 1st, 1904; but in 1906, in most places, in spite of the Act of January 1st, 1904, the deliverance of over-worked children is still a long way off. The local authorities belong, to a very great extent, to the governing class, and are not much under the influence of working-class opinion.”

The Need for a Socialist Party.

Sir John Gorst winds up his chapter on “Overworked Children” thus: “The story of this attempt at reform illustrates the impotence which threatens our social system, and the incapacity of the governing classes to carry out the simplest measure of social reform, even one which does not affect their interests, and on the necessity for which they themselves are agreed. It seems to justify the people in revolting against the parties into which the governing classes have divided themselves, in forming independent labor parties and in endeavouring to take the regulation of Society into their own hands. The present holders of power, according to the view of the rising party of the people, have had their opportunity; they have failed to avail themselves of it, and the carrying out of necessary reforms must now pass into other hands.” Moreover, as Sir John Gorst adds: “Had the counsels of women been more sought after and attended to, many of the lamentable blunders that men have made in the treatment of children would have been avoided.”

Bye-Laws to be Framed by Local Bodies under Act of 1903.

After all these delays, the Employment of Children Act of 1903 conferred powers on the London County Council and the councils of other counties and boroughs to frame bye-laws to regulate Child Labor. Mrs. Alden, M.D., states:† “The Act contains regulations which, if they were enforced, would have great value. The failure to enforce the regulations is due largely to the laxity of local authorities, who have neglected to frame bye-laws, and who have failed in some cases to put into operation even the statutory provision of the Act.”

Bye-laws were framed by the London County Council in 1905, but only now, in 1908, are they at length to be enforced. The employment of children under eleven is forbidden. If attending school, children are only to be employed in industrial work at home between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m., or on other days between 9 a.m. and 12 noon, and between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m., or on Sundays. Three and a half hours are to be the maximum of work if attending school, and eight hours a day when the school is not open. If attending

* *The Children of the Nation*, by Sir John Gorst.

† *Child Life and Labor*, by Mrs. Alden, M.D., p. 110.

school they are not to be employed outside the home between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., or before 6 a.m. or after 8.30 p.m. Street trading is regulated for all children under sixteen. Girls under that age are to trade only when accompanied by a parent or guardian. Boys under sixteen are to wear on the right arm a badge provided by the Council. On Sundays children are not to be employed for more than three hours and between the hours of 7 a.m. and 1 p.m.

But the enforcement needs more officers than are at present employed. A school attendance officer recently told the writer that in addition to his ordinary visiting (he has 3,200 children to look after), owing to these bye-laws, he has to be out in the streets until midnight on Saturdays in order to prevent children being employed beyond the legal hour—8 p.m. in the winter and 9 p.m. in the summer months.

In a return to the House of Commons dated June 25th, 1907, it is stated only sixty-six local authorities in England and Wales (out of more than 300), twenty-six in Scotland and five in Ireland had framed bye-laws.

The Prevention of Cruelty Acts.

The Act of 1894, among other useful provisions for the protection of children, made their employment in theatres or other places of entertainment conditional on the obtaining of a magistrate's licence, to be granted only when the magistrate is satisfied that the child is physically fit for the work and that proper provision has been made for its health and kind treatment. This Act has been amended and extended in the Act of 1904 and the Children's Act, 1908. The dangerous training of acrobats is subject to regulation.

The Education (Provision of Meals) Act, 1906-7.

This Act authorizes the levying of a halfpenny rate, if necessary, for the feeding of necessitous children, by any county, borough, or urban district council in England and Wales which is an education authority under the Education Acts of 1902-3. The Act, being permissive, has, in London, lamentably missed fire so far. Although members of the London County Council were moved to tears in the autumn of 1907 by Mr. Crooks' eloquent speech on behalf of the feeding of poor children, a majority of them voted against the levying of the halfpenny rate to buy food, for fear of placing additional burdens on the ratepayers. The London County Council, so far as concerns the feeding of necessitous children, contents itself with co-operating with private agencies and charitable societies, which are, in many cases, far from satisfactory. In Bermondsey the children have often to be given a penny by the head teacher and sent to the cook shops, as no provision can be made for them at the schools. The food provided by the caterers is often most unsuitable for children, especially for those who have delicate stomachs. Even if parents are able to provide food for their children in the slum districts, it is often of the most unwholesome kind, such as fried fish (bought cold), eels, meat pies, coarse parts of meat (especially pork), bloaters, cheap jam

and bread, vinegar and pickles, whilst tea is a universal drink. (The tea being more of the nature of a "stew" can hardly be called tea at all.) Milk porridge, bread and milk, and milk puddings are almost unheard of, whilst macaroni is unknown. The children's taste is vitiated by the strong flavored viands which they are given; and at first it is often difficult to get them to eat food suitable for their age and delicacy. Children fed at home are not infrequently sick over their desks in school. It is, of course, far easier for many parents to buy cooked food than to cook in their own poor rooms, with an impossible firegrate, no oven, no water supply, no sink, and no dustbin for vegetable refuse. To cater properly for the children, a system such as that prevailing in Bradford must be organized. In the matter of feeding the children England expects every city to do its duty at least as well as Bradford.

In the Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration in 1904, Dr. Eichholz, one of H.M. Inspectors of Schools, estimated the number of underfed children in London at 122,000, or 16 per cent. of the whole.

Up and down the United Kingdom there are at least as many children at school hungry as in London. Dr. W. L. Mackenzie, Medical Member of the Local Government Board for Scotland, said that in the slums of Edinburgh a large proportion of children were half starved. Dr. Kelly, Roman Catholic Bishop of Ross, stated in 1904 that in the South of Ireland it was commonly the case that children came to school underfed.

Medical Inspection under Section 13 of Act of 1906-7.

This Act provides for the medical inspection of all school children. But though medical inspection is of the utmost importance, it is of little use without medical treatment and proper feeding. It is believed that half the children in the mentally defective schools are thus defective, or backward, owing to improper feeding or semi-starvation. Their brains are anæmic, their eyes are often sore, their ears deaf, their teeth ache, their heads and bodies are verminous. Such children, when grown up, swell the ranks of the unemployed and unfit, and will continue to do so until the scientific feeding of school children is undertaken.

There is no more instructive reading respecting the physique of children than the *Report by Dr. W. Leslie Mackenzie and Captain A. Foster on a Collection of Statistics as to Physical Condition of Children attending the Public Schools of the School Board of Glasgow*, which was issued by the Scotch Education Department.

This Report gives the results of the most extensive investigation ever undertaken in Great Britain as regards the physique of the children. The heights and weights of children in seventy-three schools in Glasgow were dealt with. Returns were obtained for 72,857 children in seventy-three schools, which were divided into four social groups, representing, among other things, the distribution of one, two and three or more roomed homes.

At each age from five to eighteen the weight of the children was found to be uniformly below the standard of the average of the

population as ascertained by the Anthropometrical Committee of the British Association. Up to the age of fourteen the children were distinctly below the standard.

Boys and girls in Group A, the poorest districts, fell very much below the anthropometric standard. At the age of ten the boys' average weight was 10·8 pounds below the standard, and the average height 2·9 inches below. At thirteen the average weight was 11·1 pounds below the standard, the average height 3·1 inches below. The facts were practically parallel with regard to the girls.

As surely as boys or girls came from Group A, the one-roomed group, the children were always on an average distinctly smaller and lighter than the children from the two-roomed group; and those from the two-roomed group were smaller and lighter than children from the three-roomed group; and those from the three-roomed group than the children from the four-roomed group. The Report says: "The numbers examined are so large, and the results are so uniform, that only one conclusion is possible, viz., that the poorest child suffers most in nutrition and growth. It cannot be an accident that boys from two-roomed houses should be 11·7 pounds lighter on an average than boys from four-roomed houses and 4·7 inches smaller. Neither is it an accident that girls from one-roomed houses are, on an average, 14 pounds lighter and 5·3 inches shorter than the girls from four-roomed houses."

Now, many of these undersized children are employed as wage-earning children. It is fair to assume that if as comprehensive a report were made of children in London as in Glasgow, the results would be equally startling.

Pernicious Effects of Street Trading.

As regards street trading, all the witnesses before the Inter-Departmental Committee and all inspectors, managers, members of education committees, and clergymen, are agreed that its influence on children is entirely pernicious. Mr. Chilton Thomas, who was for ten years Hon. Manager of Father Berry's Roman Catholic Homes at Liverpool, stated: "The more we have to do with street trading, the more baneful we find it. Would that it could be abolished. I do think the street trader is such a social leper that he ought to be kept quite apart from the errand boy who has some sort of trade for his after life." In 1892, Mr. Chilton Thomas said they had a home for these street trading boys. He had 3,000 of them pass through his hands; but they had to shut up the home, as they found it did not do the boys a bit of good without regulations by the City Council (now in force in a measure), and without the care of parents or guardians. He also said the hours of labor on Saturday were terrible.

As regards street trading for girls, Miss Florence Melly, formerly a member of the Liverpool School Board, stated: "Our day industrial evidence would go to this, that no girl remains good after fourteen years of age who has had street trading. 'Chip girls' and 'step girls' should be included, as they go from house to house and come in contact with anyone who opens the door."

Mr. Alderman Watts, Chairman of the Sub-Committee of the Watch Committee of Liverpool, said: "To have a pleasant looking child in the streets is flying in the face of the greatest possible danger. I have a strong opinion that if girls are kept out of the way of temptation during the earlier period of their lives, they will grow up respectable women; but if the temptation is thrown in their way, as it must be in the street, the danger is very great indeed. Liverpool a few years ago was, perhaps, one of the worst cities in this respect—as bad as London, in fact—but you will not find it here now. The death rate," Alderman Watts continued, "amongst children is abnormal and awful. Children cannot be exposed in the streets or elsewhere without very serious danger to their lives. Nine out of ten of little girls are of delicate frame."

Mr. Alderman Rawson, Chairman of the Watch Committee of Manchester City Council, said: "We are quite certain that the trading by girls in the streets leads to loose life. We have illustrations to that effect of a very painful character. The selling of newspapers and matches by girls in the streets is often a mere cloak for solicitation. There are girls that come from homes so bad, from parents so dissolute, that we believe the selling is simply a pretence, and that parents send them out knowing it is a pretence."

So much for the efficacy of parental control, guidance, and care under certain conditions of life. All the Councils of Liverpool, Nottingham, Birmingham, and Manchester were in favor of the total prohibition of street trading for girls.

But why only for girls? Sir Lambert Ormsby, President of the Royal College of Surgeons in Dublin, bore witness before the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration in 1904 to the miserable physique of the little street traders in Dublin and the frequent cases of pneumonia among them in the children's hospital, the death rate being quite abnormal.* And there is a consensus of opinion that it is from street trading boys that spring most of the unemployed, the casuals, the loafers, the gamblers, and many others who form the most difficult problems of modern society.

As a matter of fact, it is found that child labor and unskilled labor go hand in hand. For, in the first place, child labor is itself unskilled labor, and unskilled labor of a kind very attractive to certain employers. It is cheap; fresh supplies are always ready to hand; and, most important of all, it is intelligent unskilled labor, at any rate until the training of the school has lost its effect. Secondly, it leads to a supply of unintelligent unskilled labor. The child who is working cannot be learning, and the child whose mental development is checked is the child who becomes in later years the laborer too stupid to employ except at the lowest wages. Finally, even if he could escape from this dreary fate, he has no desire to do so. The bent has been given to his tastes; he has been taught to regard earnings, and not prospects, as his sole goal in life, and to sacrifice the last for the sake of the first. †

* *Juvenile Wage Earners and their Work*, by Miss Adler, p. 4.

† See *The Town Child*, by Reginald Bray, L.C.C.

As regards the general employment of children, the Head Master of the Anglesea Place Board School of Bristol declared that the evils of employment have shown themselves over and over again in the following ways:—

1. The boys are often late for school, some habitually so.
2. They come to school utterly worn out.
3. There is a grave moral deterioration.
4. Their mental power is diminished. It is very rarely a wage-earning boy does his school work well. The injury done to children is very great.*

In the Michael Faraday School in Walworth, Mr. Marshall Jackman said that, out of 227 wage-earning boys in his school, only 61 were in really good health. Dr. Thomas, the Medical Officer of the L.C.C., examined 2,000 children in schools, and he found that, out of 384 wage-earning boys, 233 showed signs of fatigue, 140 were anæmic, 131 had nerve signs, 63 per cent. showed nerve strain, 64 were suffering from deformities from the carrying of heavy weights, 51 had severe heart signs, 27 had severe heart affection, and 72 per cent. of barbers' boys were anæmic. †

Mrs. Pankhurst, at one time a member of the Manchester School Board and member of the Board of Guardians, stated that wage-earning by children was "demoralizing," and that "it would be distinctly an advantage to the parents in the long run that the children should be withdrawn from these employments. The more intelligent artizan does not believe in sending out his children to work for wages. . . . It competes with adult labor."

Child Labor in Agriculture.

In the agricultural districts the attendance at school is constantly evaded. It frequently happens that the local magistrates and county councillors are landlords or farmers, who must have cheap labor, even at the expense of the children's well-being. The children are employed in milking and tending cattle, in picking up stones off the land, in weeding, in picking strawberries (often at 3 a.m. in the season in all weathers), in hop picking, and in minding and leading horses. The work is extremely fatiguing. There is still in this twentieth century a wearing struggle between the educationist and the child exploiters, although it is not as bad as it used to be. In certain country districts 75 per cent. of attendances—instead of 95 per cent.—is still considered high.

The Childrens' Act of 1908.

But there are signs everywhere now of the awakening of the public conscience to the infamy of Child Labor. Although this Act does not deal directly with the labor question, there are, under it, to be established Juvenile Courts, in which all charges concerning the welfare of children will be heard, including applications for committal to industrial schools and reformatories.

* Report of Inter-Departmental Committee, Appendix No. 32.

† Barbers' shops in London are now, by bye-law, barred to boy workers.

The Immediate Reforms to Work for.

The evils disclosed are grave. Leaving aside for the moment all schemes of social reconstruction, what immediately practicable reforms will bring prompt, if only partial, remedies? There is a vast amount to be done by mere administration of the existing law. It may safely be said that no local authority yet makes anything like full use of its powers under the Education Acts, the Shop Hours Acts, the Children's Act, etc. An enormous amount of good would result if members of education committees and of town or county councils could be induced merely to put the existing laws fully in operation. But amendments of the law are urgently required. In agreement with practically all those who have studied the question, we recommend:—

1. That for children under five for whom adequate home care is not available, there should be a sufficient provision of small day nurseries, under the administration of the local health authority, where these infants can remain all day, either gratuitously or at fees representing only the cost of the food supplied.
2. That attendance at school of all children between five and fourteen be rigorously enforced (the poorest parents being adequately assisted to enable them to let their children attend), an adequate supply of suitable efficient schools being everywhere provided under due public control, including special schools for sub-normal children of various kinds, "open-air" schools and vacation schools.
3. That children in attendance at school be not permitted to be employed for hire under any pretence whatever.
4. That in order to ensure the welfare of the coming generation of citizens the responsibility for the care and maintenance of children of school age, being destitute, be transferred from the Poor Law to the local education authorities.
5. That it be made obligatory upon the local education authorities to organize throughout the whole year a system of providing, at the expense of the rates and under direct public control, suitable meals of a simple kind for all children found at school in an underfed condition; such meals to be provided under skilled and salaried supervision with the amenities of civilization.
6. That it should be made obligatory for every public elementary school to have attached to it a "Children's Care Committee" of members whose duty it should be to take cognizance of every child attending school in a neglected or necessitous condition; to visit its home and discover what is amiss; to afford such friendly help as may be required; and to bring to light any cases of ill-treatment which call for criminal prosecution.

7. That in all cases in which a child is provided for by what is now Poor Law relief, reports should be obtained upon its adequacy and the character of the home; and that where it is not considered expedient to grant to the parent enough for the full maintenance of the child, or where the child is found, in fact, to be suffering from lack of nourishment or lack of care, the child be sent to a day industrial school, where it will receive meals and care during the whole day.
8. That where it is found that the parents are of such vicious life and character as to be wholly unfit to have the care of children, the guilty parents should be criminally prosecuted for their neglect, and the children sent to residential schools, so as to secure their proper upbringing.
9. That the minimum age at which children may leave school to be employed in industry at all be raised at once to fourteen, and as soon as possible to fifteen (as in Switzerland).
10. That in view of the need of securing effective technical and domestic training for all boys and girls, the "half time" provisions of the Factory and Workshops Acts be extended for all industries up to the age of eighteen, no boy or girl under eighteen being allowed to be employed in industry for more than thirty hours per week.
11. That provision be made for the compulsory attendance of boys and girls between fourteen and eighteen at technical institutes for a combined course of physical training, technical education and continuation classes, absorbing the thirty hours per week which they will no longer give to their employers.

LIST OF BOOKS, Etc., RECOMMENDED.

- ADLER, Miss NETTIE.—Child Workers and Wage Earners. *Journal of the Society of Arts*, June 12, 1908. Bell. 6d.
- ALDEN, MARGARET, M.D.—Child Life and Labor. Headley Bros.; 1908. 1s. n.
- BRAY, REGINALD.—The Town Child. Unwin; 1907. 7s. 6d. n.
- GORST, Sir J. E.—The Children of the Nation: how their health and vigor should be promoted by the State. Methuen; 1906. 7s. 6d. n.
- SMITH, Miss CONSTANCE.—The Employment of Children in the United Kingdom. Twentieth Century Press; 1908. 6d.
- Report of the Proceedings of the International Congress for the Welfare and Protection of Children, held in London, July 1902. King. 2s. 6d. n.
- Employment of School Children. Report of Interdep. Committee. Cd. 849, 1902. 3d.
- Street Trading. Report of Interdepartmental Committee. Cd. 1144, 1902. 1s. 8d.
- Royal Commission on Physical Training, Scotland. Vol. I. Cd. 1507, 1903. 1s. 1d.
- Interdepartmental Committee on Physical Deterioration. Vol. I., Report. Cd. 2175, 1904. 1s. 2d.

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