

who strives for the best in the future of this republic. Mr. Spargo says in his preface:

"A word of personal explanation may not be out of place here: I have been privileged to know something of the leisure and luxury of wealth, and more of the toil and hardship of poverty. When I write of hunger I write of what I have experienced—not the enviable hunger of health, but the sickening hunger of destitution. So, too, when I write of child labor. I know that nothing I have written of the toll of little boys and girls, terrible as it may seem to some readers, approaches the real truth of its horrors. I have not tried to write a sensational book, but to present a careful and candid statement of facts which seem to me to be of vital social significance."

Mr. Spargo may not have strived for the sensational, but no man or woman in whose breast lingers one spark of human sympathy can read that book without a shudder of horror. And he who reads the book and does not resolve to do a part in ridding the country of this gigantic evil is not a citizen upon whom the country may with safety rely. Mr. Spargo touches the real point when he says that "it is a strange fact of social psychology that people in the mass, whether nations or smaller communities, have much less feeling and conscience than the same people have as individuals. People whose souls would cry out against such conditions as we have described coming under their notice in a specific case, en masse are unmoved." That has all along been the chief obstacle in the warfare against the evil of child labor. The sight of one underfed child would instantly arouse sympathy in the breast of the beholder; the indisputable fact that tens of thousands of children were starving made no impression.

Mr. Spargo's investigation included almost every branch of industry in the country, and his study brought him into contact with the evil of child labor in its most hideous aspects. Bearing in mind that he makes the declaration that what he has written "does not approach the real horrors" of child labor, the following extracts from "The Bitter Cry of the Children" may serve to give the readers some faint idea of the giant evil which Senator Beveridge's bill aims to destroy and against which the aroused conscience of a nation must fight if it would wipe out this crime against childhood—a crime that is fraught with the gravest menace to the future of this republic.

"Some years ago," says Mr. Spargo, "in one of the mean streets of Paris, I saw, in a dingy window, a picture that stamped itself indelibly upon my memory. It was not, judged by artistic canons, a great picture; on the contrary it was crude and ill drawn and might almost have been the work of a child. Torn, I think, from the pages of an anarchist paper, *La Revolte*, it was, perchance, a protest drawn from the very soul of some indignant worker. A woman, haggard and fierce of visage, representing France, was seated upon a heap of child skulls and bones. In her gnarled and knotted hands she held the writhing form of a helpless babe whose flesh she was gnawing with her teeth. Underneath, in red ink, was written in rude characters, 'The Wretch! She devours her own children!' My mind goes back to that picture; it is literally true today, that this great nation in its commercial madness devours its babes."

After careful investigation Mr. Spargo declares: "It would, I think, be quite within the mark to say that the number of child workers under fifteen is at least 2,250,000." And this in the United States of America!

"Capital has neither morals nor ideals," says Mr. Spargo. "Its interests are always and everywhere expressible in terms of cash profits. Capital in the United States in the twentieth century calls for children as loudly as it called in England a century ago." He then arraigns the greedy capitalists by the unequivocal assertion that "whatever advance has been made in the direction of the legislative protection of children from the awful consequences of premature exploitation, has been made in the face of bitter opposition from the exploiters."

In the New York legislature, during the session of 1903, the owners of canning factories of the state used their utmost power to have their industry exempted from the humane but inadequate provisions of the child labor law, notwithstanding that **BABIES FOUR YEARS OLD WERE KNOWN TO BE WORKING IN THEIR FACTORIES.** The northern owners of Alabama cotton mills secured the repeal of the law passed in 1887 prohibiting the employment of children under

fourteen years of age for more than eight hours a day.

Describing a visit to a flax mill in Paterson, N. J., Mr. Spargo says he tried to get speech with some of the child workers, but was able to do so with only one. She said she was thirteen years old, but Mr. Spargo declares that she could not have been more than ten. "If she was thirteen," says Mr. Spargo, "perhaps the nature of her employment will explain her puny, stunted body. She works in the 'steam room' of the flax mill. All day long, in a room filled with clouds of steam, she has to stand barefooted in pools of water twisting coils of wet hemp. When I saw her she was dripping wet, though she said she had worn a rubber apron all day. In the coldest evenings of winter little Marie, AND HUNDREDS OF OTHER LITTLE GIRLS, must go out from the superheated steam rooms into the bitter cold just in that condition."

"I shall never forget my first visit to a glass factory at night," continues Mr. Spargo. "It was a big wooden structure, so loosely built that it afforded little protection from the draughts, surrounded by a high fence with several rows of barbed wire stretched across the top. I went with the foreman of the factory and he explained to me the reason for the stockade-like fence. 'It keeps the young imps inside once we've got 'em for the night shift,' he said. The 'young imps' were, of course, the boys employed, about forty in number, at least ten of whom were under twelve years of age." The working hours of these "young imps" was from 5:30 p. m. until 3:30 a. m. After watching these boys at their work Mr. Spargo says he could readily understand why the employers preferred to hire boys for that particular work. He says: "IT IS DIFFICULT TO GET MEN TO DO THIS WORK, BECAUSE MEN CAN NOT STAND THE PACE AND GET TIRED TOO QUICKLY!"

Mr. Spargo tried his 'prentice hand as a "breaker boy" at an anthracite mine. There are thousands of boys so employed. Their duty is to sit over the long chutes and pick out the slate from the running coal. They are enveloped all the time in a blinding cloud of coal dust. Mr. Spargo thus describes his experiment:

"I once stood in a breaker for half an hour and tried to do the work that a twelve-year-old boy was doing day after day for ten hours at a stretch for sixty cents a day. The gloom of the breaker appalled me. Outside the sun shone brightly, the air was pellucid, and the birds sang in chorus with the trees and the rivers. Within the breaker there was blackness, clouds of deadly dust enfolded everything, the harsh, grinding roar of the machinery, and the ceaseless rushing of the coal through the chutes filled my ears. I tried to pick out the pieces of slate from the hurrying streams of coal, often missing them; my hands were bruised and cut in a few minutes; I was covered from head to feet with coal dust, and for many hours afterwards I was expectorating some of the small particles of anthracite I had swallowed. I COULD NOT DO THAT WORK AND LIVE—BUT THERE WERE BOYS OF TEN AND TWELVE YEARS OF AGE DOING IT FOR FIFTY AND SIXTY CENTS A DAY!"

"In New Jersey and Pennsylvania," says Mr. Spargo, "I have seen hundreds of children, boys and girls, between the ages of ten and twelve years, at work in the factories belonging to the 'cigar trust.' Some of these factories are known as 'kindergartens' on account of the large number of small children employed in them. It is by no means a rare occurrence for children in these factories to faint or to fall asleep over their work, and I have heard a foreman in one of them say it was 'enough for one man to do just to keep the kids awake.' Often the 'factories' are poorly lighted, ill-ventilated tenements in which work, whether for children or adults, ought to be prohibited. Children work as many as fourteen or sixteen hours in these little 'home factories,' and in cities like Pittsburg it is not unusual for them, after attending school all day, to work from 4 p. m. until 12:30 a. m., making 'tobies' or 'stogies' for which they receive from eight to ten cents per hundred."

Patrons of the "cigar trust" should ponder over these amazing statements. Their truth is beyond question.

Mr. Spargo declares that he has seen children six or seven years old at work in New York canning factories at 2 o'clock in the morning. In Oxford, Md., he saw a tiny girl seven years old who had worked for twelve hours in an oyster-canning factory. And there are nearly 300

such canning factories in Maryland, all of them employing young children.

"In the sweatshops and, more particularly, the poorly paid home industries, the kindergartens are robbed to provide baby slaves," says Mr. Spargo. "I am perfectly well aware that many persons will smile incredulously at the thought of infants from three to five years old working. 'What can such babies do?' they ask." Then Mr. Spargo proceeds to answer that question by citing specific instances he has seen where mere babies were engaged in work. "Take the case of little Annetta Fanchina, for example," he says. "The work she was doing when I saw her, wrapping paper about pieces of wire, was very similar to the play of better favored children. She was compelled to do it, however, from early morn till late at night, and even denied the right to sleep. For her, therefore, what might be play for some other child, became the most awful bondage and cruelty." What can four-year-old babies do? Mr. Spargo has seen them, not a score, but hundreds, driven to work. "They pull basting threads that you and I may wear cheap garments; they arrange the petals of artificial flowers; they sort beads; they paste boxes. They do more than that. I know of a room where a dozen or more little children are seated on the floor, surrounded by barrels, and in those barrels is found human hair, matted, tangled and blood-stained—you can imagine the conditions, for it is not my hair and yours that is cut off in the hour of death!"

But even the most copious extracts from Mr. Spargo's book will not suffice to picture even faintly the awful horrors of child labor as he has seen it. He declares that he saw, hundreds of times, conditions that he dare not attempt to describe in a printed book, conditions revolting in their beastiality; conditions that are rearing a generation of criminals without even a faint knowledge of decency or morality. And to this end the greed for gold is driving this great republic. Mr. Spargo's book should be read by every patriotic man and woman in America, and having read it they should set forth, determined to wipe this crime from the calendar. Senator Beveridge should have the support of the great American people in his warfare against this evil. It is an evil that must be eradicated, and that soon, for already its deadly effects are showing upon the body politic. It is not enough to say: "Oh, there is no danger that my child will ever be subjected to such conditions." That was the plea of the first murderer, but it was not effective.

IN THE RAILROADS' GRIP

The Chicago Tribune published recently the following dispatch from Washington:

"That the country is in the monopolistic grip of the railroads is established more clearly than ever by an investigation which Commissioner of Corporations Garfield is making into the effect of water transportation on railroad rates. The suggestion that such an investigation should be made was advanced in a resolution offered last spring in the house of representatives, but no action on the measure was taken, the railroad interests being strong enough to prevent its consideration. The commissioner of corporations decided, however, that the matter was one of sufficient importance to engage the attention of his experts and for several weeks past there has been quietly under way an inquiry into the relations of railroads with canals and steamship and canal boat lines. The facts unearthed demonstrate that the railroads have their hands upon the water transportation, both inland and coastwise, and that a working arrangement even exists with ocean steamship companies. The ability of railroads to maintain non-competitive rates and to discriminate between different sections of the country thus becomes apparent. In accordance with instructions given by Brigadier General Alexander Mackenzie, chief of engineers, engineer officers in charge of river and harbor works reported that the improvements made generally had resulted in a reduction of freight rates. But this reduction was due to better facilities at railroad terminals which the improvements enabled. In some places reports show that in summer shipments by water are 25 to 50 per cent less than by rail and that in winter, when boats can not run, railroads increase their rates. But wherever a gain to the people is apparent it is offset by the fact that the railroads own, either directly or indirectly, much of the canal and river transportation, and control coastwise lines and even are interested in ocean lines, or, when ownership or control is not possible, competing water lines are established."

Education is proceeding rapidly, and the rail-