

THE COTTON MILL SOUTH
THE VILLAGE, MILL AND CHILD.

Mr. Goldsmith Takes Up the Allegation of Cruelty and Inhuman Conditions and Presents the Real Situation as He Saw It—No Doubts That Mill Villages Are Better and That Mill Owners Are Actively Engaged in Making It Better is Incontestable—The Absurd Stories of "Fatigue Houses" and "Night Work"—The Actual Extent of the Labor of Children—About 1,500 Between 10 and 12 Years of Age Do Work in the South Carolina Mills—Why This is Allowed by Law—Some of the Worst Evils in Present Situation—But Improvement is Seen Everywhere.

The printed page has weight with most people. Black letters stamped upon white paper have compelling authority. They are the vehicles for the communication of serious or disagreeable stories. Probably average memories are more retentive of evil than of good report, not from any inherent malice in human nature, but because evil, being less common, shocks us, and thus produces a profounder impression than good. From the time I began to plan my trip South until the present moment, no New England acquaintance of mine who has expressed to me an opinion or made inquiry concerning the Southern factory situation has failed to comment or interrogate regarding some painful phase of it.

While in South Carolina a gentleman in whose veracity I have confidence, president of a leading cotton factory, told me that a national official, given to informants, about the affairs of the nation, sent one of his chosen investigators, a woman and a physician, to that State to look into the matter of abuses in connection with the cotton mill industry. Being well done, and with a view to facilitate her undertaking, she made an extensive tour. On returning to the national capital she reported to the high official. Whereupon, so goes the story, he had her informants of broad generalities. "Those smooth-talking Southerners have been bamboozling you." The report of her investigations has never been published.

CIVIC FEDERATION TESTIMONY.
If, after reading these articles, anyone should doubt the fairness of my presentation of the case I recommend his reading an article in the National Civic Federation Review of New York for August, 1907, entitled "Welfare Work and Child Labor in the Southern States," by Miss Gertrude Beeks, secretary of the welfare department of the National Civic Federation. Of her the editor of the Review says, in an introduction to the article: "Miss Beeks not only frankly criticizes where the employers are at fault, but also tells of their remarkable beneficent efforts. The conditions of Miss Beeks are superior in appearance to some of the ordinary country towns of the country in which they are located. One of these is fine, thick hedge along the streets and the green of the lawns, large maples and water oaks or shade, and abundant shrubbery and flowers in the yards.

Surface drainage is the rule, though a few of the corporations have recently put in rolling lawns. The villages are better in appearance to some of the ordinary country towns of the country in which they are located. One of these is fine, thick hedge along the streets and the green of the lawns, large maples and water oaks or shade, and abundant shrubbery and flowers in the yards.

Some investigators into the conditions of the Southern mills and their surroundings have complained of the unwillingness of the management to receive them, or grant them perfect freedom for the pursuit of their undertaking. In an introduction to the article that reticence and even suspicion on the part of managers under such circumstances is only natural. Manufacturers have their own industrial secrets. They are usually willing to admit the representatives of the government statisticians, but these are under bond of secrecy. Manufacturers cannot tell what motive brings seekers after their secrets. Their usefulness on the part of manufacturers is universal. I found it the same in Philadelphia and New York. Here in New England the premises of the factories are guarded by the police. Entrance into mills is refused to all persons not properly introduced. In addition to this natural prudence, a certain sensitiveness has been developed among the mill owners. An account of hostile criticism was the reward of their first courtesies extended to inquirers. Speaking from my recent experience there, I not only claim that I had not the slightest difficulty in entering mills, but that I was inclined to go, but my belief is that the presidents and superintendents of them will welcome any properly introduced person whose candor and fairness are guaranteed. Everywhere I was met by cordial goodwill and the words, "We are glad to see you, and we shall try to show you everything. Our conditions are not perfect, but we believe in showing how they came about and will give us fair treatment."

OVERWHELMING INDICEMENTS MADE.
Here are some of the current opinions as to the sanitary conditions of the mill villages. They live in houses not fit for beasts. "The mill village is a section to be shunned like the plague." "Shantytown, vile, dirty, down-trodden." "Tuberculosis is of frightful prevalence. When an autopsy is held, the lungs are not only filled with lint, but this atmosphere he breathes and fairly eats until his lungs become diseased." "Over me vermin has run, I have killed them on my neck, and I have killed them on my face." "One doctor told me he had amputated the fingers of more than a hundred babies." The factory "early carries hundreds out of life, disease rots the remainder."

This looks like a serious, indeed, almost overwhelming, indictment. Most of the statements, too, are from a woman, a society woman, as she herself tells us, and to prove it she informs us she has been in the mill. Finding that she had been wearing, to the value of \$447, to put on a \$9.45 outfit before beginning her experimental work as a wage earner.

All built and owned by the company. They have their own fire department, police department and militia company. In the latter the officials take great pains to select them from their statement, superior to any in the States.

Factory villages are not conspicuously beautiful, according to my own view, based upon those which I have seen. I do not select them as places of resort for pleasure. The houses are built on one model; they are painted the same color throughout any given village. The painting is ordinarily done once three years. As a rule, they are new, painfully new, for all connected with the mills is usually of recent creation; the trees and shrubbery are young, the streets are unpaved, the road or path of the clay or sand which constitutes their surface is not agreeable to the eye, and in appearance they are generally cheap looking. All this goes without saying, however, could it be otherwise at the beginning of an industry? Everything was to be done, and done quickly and economically. It was cheaper to build after one model than after a dozen.

THEY DENOTE PROGRESS AFTER ALL.
Without maintaining them, that these villages are as good as the ideal place of residence, let any one visit a tenement which, from his note of the difficulties of each situation, and let him observe what has been done to improve their appearance. Afterward let him go to the houses and surroundings in particular, and see the villages formerly lived, and then let him make comparison. Also let him consider the mill villages of South Carolina, with their yards, lawns, broad streets, pastures, ball grounds, parks and their various institutions, in comparison with the slums of our crowded cities of the North, or the five or six-story wooden tenements in which from twenty to fifty families exist in some of our manufacturing centers here. It is needless to state the inevitable conclusion which will be reached.

On this point Miss Beeks wrote: "The premises are extremely neat in the cotton mill villages, and that only in the homes of the new arrivals from the primitive districts are the interiors of the cottages unclean."
MAKING LIFE MORE WHOLE-SOME.
The management of every mill which I visited is engaged in rendering the village more healthy, the conditions of life more wholesome and agreeable, and the education of the people more general and thorough. At one factory gardeners were engaged setting out 4,000 rods of privet hedge, at another trees were being set out, and the president of the mill told me that he usually spent about \$500 a year on shade trees, hedges, grass and flowers. The older mill villages are attractive to the eye. I recall these in particular, which are superior in appearance to some of the ordinary country towns of the country in which they are located. One of these is fine, thick hedge along the streets and the green of the lawns, large maples and water oaks or shade, and abundant shrubbery and flowers in the yards.

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THE STATUS OF TUBERCULOSIS.
As to the "frightful prevalence" of tuberculosis, there seems to be no ground whatever for believing that there is more disease of any kind in the mills or mill villages than elsewhere in the same localities, except that epidemics can be rapidly spread there because of the mingling of the people in the factories; but this can be said of all manufacturing centers, wherever any kind of factory buildings exist in the same buildings. The statement as to lint filling and choking the lungs cannot be substantiated. If it could, it would not show that any particular cotton mills are hurtful in this respect, but that all are. If they had been so deadly on this account, would not our philanthropists here in New England have discovered the evil in our own mills?

A FACTORY IS A DIRTY PLACE.
I found that the air in the Southern mills was not worse than that in those of New England with which I am acquainted. The same methods of manufacturing and ventilating are common to them all. There are thousands of people within a few miles of Boston who spend some fifty hours a week in cotton mills, and who, so far as I am able to ascertain, receive no injury from their occupation. That work in a cotton factory is confining and tedious, that the atmosphere is full of dust, that there is a certain amount of machinery running, particularly in the weaving rooms, none will deny. A factory is a factory everywhere; not a drawing-room, nor a lawn party. People go there to work. They are paid to work. Many other occupations are disagreeable, some painful, some dangerous, but most people must do so, and most of them engage in the easiest and most pleasant work in the cotton mills do so because they must, not because they like the career, and they are incapable of doing much else. Experience teaches that, both here and in the South the factories do not crush and destroy, but that when discipline and develop, and that when the social, religious and intellectual opportunities keep pace with industrial progress, the children of the first operatives frequently obtain elsewhere what to them seems better employment than the factory affords.

Not many of the Southern mills keep records of vital statistics, but an editorial in the Journal of the South Carolina Medical Association for March, 1908, commenting on one of the older mill villages of the Piedmont which contains little short of 3,000 inhabitants, and which I had the pleasure of visiting, says that during the last four years the average death rate has been five persons per thousand, according to the statistics of the

president. In another large village near this one, where statistics have been kept by the management, the rate has been six per thousand for a number of years.

THE "AMPUTATION" STORY.
As to the "amputation of the fingers" of more than one hundred babies, already mentioned, I hardly know what to say. Does such a statement need to be denied? Does it seem necessary to believe that babies work in mills? Does any one who knows how carefully modern cotton mill machinery is constructed, how entirely all the parts of the mechanism are covered, with a view to insuring the safety of the employes, credit such a statement? I had such stories as this in my mind during my weary miles of tramping through mills. I looked out for the fingerless, armless, legless, generally mutilated and deformed, and generally about whom I had heard so much. I kept my eyes open in the mills. I assure you, as well as in the schools—where I saw plenty of children old enough to go to work on the streets and playgrounds.

In general I found the toll: a condition for lack of adequate ventilation and sanitary service, although in most cases there is ample provision for the safety of the employes. To remedy the defects, the unremitting care of the management will be necessary, as the operatives themselves are unaccountably careless. Elevators are not provided for the help. While they would be a great asset to the girls and the boys, the probability is that they would not be extensively used, as all desire to wait until the last moment and enter the mills with a rush, in such numbers that a regular, steady stream of service could not take care of them.

One common nuisance that ought to be abated is that of the great steam whistles in the morning, and the work in the factories regulated. They can be heard far from the mills. At a painful early hour in the morning—4:30 at this season—they blow, and some of them keep this up for as much as five minutes, until a person unused to the noise becomes fairly frantic at such useless and wasteful distraction of nerves. This all of which is needless and the result of mere custom.

AS TO VERMIN.
The statement as to vermin being present in the homes of operatives is doubtless true. There are several species that are familiar to the inhabitants of the mill villages, and those situated in the lowlands, where the climate is warm and damp. These pests are inevitable in warm climates among the uncleanly, whether in city, town or country houses. The manufacturers therefore are largely considered responsible for their presence in the villages attached to the mills, though they could do much to improve matters by carefully plastering all cottages, keeping the walls clean and disinfected, and the cottages as well as vacated, and encouraging the people to use an abundance of boiling water, soap and insect powder. In a number of the villages the walls of the houses are plastered with a good mud composition that is entirely satisfactory, and which, because of its hardness, may be readily and repeatedly washed.

I am convinced that the statements purporting to show that work in cotton factories produce the so-called mill pallor, anaemia, general listlessness, and other ailments, are wholly erroneous and contrary to the facts. I go even further and assert that, in the main, those who come from north localities in South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia and Alabama, to work in the mills, live in the villages attached to them, gain steadily in health and strength from the moment of taking up their new occupation and life.

THE HOOK WORM DISEASE.
The one chief ailment from which Southern mill operatives, in common with many other classes of laborers, suffer has not received proper consideration hitherto. I allude to the distressing and destructive uncinariasis (hook worm disease), which probably creates greater havoc in the Southern States than all other diseases combined. The government is about to issue an exhaustive bulletin on this subject. An article from the Journal of the South Carolina Medical Association, by William Weston, M. D., a well-known and experienced practitioner of standing and much experience, appears elsewhere in this issue.

Weston says further, in response to a communication addressed to him on this subject:
"1. The anaemia which I have observed in the cotton mills and other manufacturing establishments is almost entirely due to the hook worm (hook worm), and not to malaria, or to the inhalation of lint, etc., as is claimed by many."
"2. Even without specific treatment, in fact, the anaemia of the workers after removing from the country districts to the mill villages, because the means of the further infection is removed, the hygienic conditions are better, and the homes and better in the mill villages than in the country."
"3. I have not found any cases that appeared to have originated in the mill villages."
"4. From an economic standpoint, the disease is easily cured, and I believe it would pay the managers of manufacturing establishments, which the disease is well suited to, offering for it treated at the expense of the establishments."
A score or so of companies are now taking steps to carry out these suggestions, by building dispensaries, and employing physicians and thoroughly trained nurses for the free treatment and care of their operatives.

LABOR OF WOMEN HARMFUL.
Public attention has been centered upon the labor of children in cotton mills to such a degree that the labor of women has been overlooked. In my opinion, cotton mill work is more harmful to married women and mothers than it is to boys, or even girls, of twelve years and upward. It is true that to the latter constant labor in a cotton mill means possible loss of educational opportunity; but to the former it frequently means loss of health, as well as constant opportunities for domestic and maternal ministrations. Thirty-seven per cent. of South Carolina operatives in 1900 were women, according to the United States census taken that year. However lamentable this may be, it ought not cause us to lose sight of the fact that 43 per cent. of the operatives of Massachusetts were women in 1908, according to the statistics of our State Bureau. The percentage of women operatives had decreased in South Carolina with every advance in wages, while it seems to be about stationary here in Massachusetts. We of New England have just cause to regret the fact that 43 per cent. of the cotton mill operatives of Massachusetts are women, because in many of our counties the population is so antiquated and lacking in those automatic devices which minimize the strain upon human muscles and nerves. In this respect South Carolina

is as far in advance of us. Many of our women work in the spinning-rooms. The most exacting machine in the cotton mill, and, in fact, and I look the task of the woman, are the spindles. Massachusetts factories contain about two million and a half out of about eight million of both kinds of spindles. In North Carolina, on the other hand, there are only about four thousand mule spindles, out of a total of somewhat less than four million in the State.

As bearing on the hours of labor, our writer uses the following phrase: "The nourishment provided for these thirteen-hours-a-day laborers." **THE 60-HOUR-A-WEEK LAW OBEYED.**
However long the hours of labor in cotton factories during the past year, they were not more than a day, a day, or a week, in South Carolina, by a law enacted in 1907, and now operative. Entering into or enforcing a contract for longer hours was a misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment for not more than thirty days. This does not include mechanics, engineers, firemen, watchmen, teamsters, yard employes or clerical force, but it does include all others in the manufacturing departments. The common practice throughout the State at this season is to run from 6 a. m. until 12 m., and from 1 p. m. until 6 p. m., for five days a week, and from 6 a. m. until 12 m. on Saturdays. All the mills distribute the 60 hours per week in such a manner as to give a Saturday half-holiday, and a Sunday holiday. The automatic looms are permitted to run during the noon rest hour, as they stop of themselves if a thread breaks. Since this is the case a few of the operatives ordinarily return to work after a rest of 15 or 20 or 30 minutes. This is doubtless the origin of the story that mills run during the noon hour.

In answer to my inquiry as to whether the 60-hour law is violated, I was informed that the law would be too obvious and easily proven, and too generally opposed to the will of the operatives, even if managers were inclined to break it. A South Carolina mill which I visited spent more than \$30,000 for the betterment of the people of his village said he thinks there is no mill in the State which would dare to violate this law, for the reasons which I have given.

MILLS DO NOT RUN AT NIGHT.
None of the mills that I saw run at night. So far as I was able to learn, not above half a dozen South Carolina mills have ever attempted to run at night. The operatives oppose night work, and the manufacturers do not wish to pay for the night product is always inferior, the machinery needs rest, and there is a tendency to neglect the care of the machinery when two different shifts have control of it. Thus far I have found a whole family of misstatements regarding the working of men, women and children at night.

A well-known writer and publisher put out a pathetic story of a little child working in a cotton mill, and needing to be forced back to the machines. It happened that one of the mills which I visited was the scene of this supposed tragedy. I went to the mill, and asked him what he had to say. He answered: "I have been connected with this mill from the day in which the ground was broken for more than twenty years ago. I am willing to make oath that no mill of my company has ever run a single night, and I can produce dozens of operatives, now living in the mill villages, who have been in the beginning, and who would be glad to substantiate this statement of mine."

THE STATUS OF CHILD LABOR.
Probably 1,700 Children Between the Ages of 12 and 14 Working in the Mills of South Carolina—The Difficulties of the Situation.
I am now prepared to take up the matter of child labor, the discussion of which has been postponed until this time with the thought that all the previous information which has been set forth regarding the mills, and the conditions of the people, and hours of labor in general, would aid to a better understanding of the position of children in Southern mills.

The only child labor law that would completely cover the case would make it a misdemeanor with penalty to admit any child to a mill, on any pretext whatsoever, who is not 12 years or some other stipulated age. As it is, parents may take advantage of the exceptions provided by the law, as likewise the managers, if they will, and the names of those whose names do not appear on the pay rolls may be found in mills helping the older members of their families, who, as they are paid by the piece or sold to other mills, are in no way in their names. Besides, this law like all others similar to it takes up the matter at the wrong end. Only by compulsory education and a child labor law can the matter be regulated uniformly and fairly. A compulsory education law applies to all children, and operates among the farmers, miners and factory employes alike. South Carolina has not a compulsory education law, and the inspection of factories and other manufacturing establishments that comes within the provisions of the law, no registration of births, and hence commonly no way of establishing the age of any person.

MILL OWNERS FAVOR COMPULSORY EDUCATION.
It will be interesting to know in this connection that the Cotton Manufacturers' Association of South Carolina has a long and complete compulsory education law, (1) the registration of births; (2) a marriage license and registration law, which does not exist to-day; (3) and the raising of the age at which a person may marry. Many manufacturers are opposed to the employment of very young children, certainly of those under 12, on economic as well as moral grounds; yet they find it difficult to accomplish any considerable result without a compulsory education law. Numerous cases exist where managers who refused the request of parents to employ their children lost the services of the families, as they at once went to another mill.

THE CHILDREN AT WORK.
In my tour through those Southern cotton factories which I visited, I saw children in every mill, usually employed in all the manufacturing departments, save the spinning rooms. The girls were engaged in spinning, and the boys in the same occupation, or in sweeping, doffing or stitching. In a few children who seemed to me to be under 12 years of age, in one spinning room I saw perhaps 25 girls and boys who appeared to be between 12 and 14, and possibly a few under 12. In one of two mills I saw no children, but in the other I saw a few under 12. The great difficulty is to ascertain the age of any child. A parent who is willing to put a young child below the legal age is in overlooking any little refractoriness of conscience, and makes the child 12 years old, no matter when it was born. This is equally true in Massachusetts, if one may judge by appearances, since some very young-looking children are employed in our cotton mills here.

A few managers keep vital statistics of their mills, and will not employ children under age, if they know it. I know of one case where each head of a family who comes into the village, or who is called on to send the children to school until they reach the age of 12.

FARMERS OPPOSE COMPULSORY EDUCATION.
That there has been abuses of child labor in South Carolina, I do not doubt. That a considerable number

of children working in the mills there are under 12 years of age is admitted. It is claimed, however, that they are working according to the provisions of the law, owing to their needy condition. On the other hand, the people of the State are awake to the painful possibilities of child labor. Conditions are improving each year. The necessary laws, to which I have alluded, are being urgently demanded all over the State. The compulsory education bill has been opposed by the farmers' representatives, on the ground that it will take the white and the negro children alike out of the fields and put them in schools, and to the law providing for factory inspection, on the ground of expense. A birth registration law, which is sorely needed, will bear fruit only after some years; but one will doubtless be passed within a year or two.

The presence of children in schools which will be fully exhibited in my next article on welfare work and prohibition, will be the result of fully enforcing the condition of mill children in South Carolina is being constantly improved.

THE LAW AND ITS EXCEPTIONS.
An enactment of the General Assembly of South Carolina, which became effective in May, 1905, stipulates that "no child under the age of 12 years shall be employed in any factory, mine, or textile establishment, or in any other place where labor is required, after provided." If the law had omitted the words of the exception, though its rigid enforcement would have been a source of much hardship. The exceptions are in the cases of children under 12 years and over 10, whose widowed mothers or totally disabled fathers are dependent upon the earnings of the child, or of orphans who must live by their own exertions. This law, lame as it is, has improved the situation to a marked degree. Still, there are probably as many as a thousand to 2,000 children, between 10 and 12 years of age, working in the cotton factories of South Carolina. This is an estimate only, based on the statistics of the State commissioner, but a fair one, I think. The State does not claim that all those children have presented certificates from magistrates, stating, upon the oath of parents, guardians, or persons, standing in loco parentis, that they come within the provisions of the exceptions noted above. This may be true! I trust it is. The difficulty, however, is that the law is weak, and that it takes up the matter in the wrong way.

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NEW SKIN REMEDY
CREATES BIG STIR: DRUG STORES CROWDED WITH BUYERS.
For several weeks past Jordan's and other leading drug stores in this city have been crowded with persons desiring a supply of possum, the new cure for eczema. This is the drug which has created such a stir throughout the country since its discovery one year ago. For the convenience of those who use possum for pimples, blackheads, blotches, red nose, sores, herpes and other minor skin troubles, a special 25-cent package has been prepared, in addition to the regular two-dollar jar, which is now on sale at all leading drug stores. In serious cases, possum stops the itching with first application and proceeds to heal, curing chronic cases in two weeks. In mild skin troubles, results show after an overnight application. For a free experimental sample, write direct to the Emergency Laboratories, 22 West Twenty-fifth street, New York City.

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Kelly's Special Corn (best)..... 2.50 3.75 6.50
Kelly's Copper Distilled (bottled in bond)..... 2.50 3.75 6.50
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Miss Templing (Sweet Maryland)..... 2.50 3.75 6.50
1 gallon 4-year-old Kentucky Rye..... 2.50 3.75 6.50
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2 gallons Old Kentucky Rye..... 4.00
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5 gallons Apple..... 6.00
6 gallons of other above..... 8.00
If goods named in list are desired in glass bottles, add 25c on 4 gal. package. Copper Distilled (bottled in bond) on which for orders outside of Virginia, the Carolina, Georgia and Alabama, Maryland and District of Columbia, add 40c for 4 quarts. For 5 quarts, and \$1.00 for 6 quarts.

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