

CHILD LABOR.

The legislature of 1895 made no change in the factory law, the child labor provisions of which are, therefore, the same as in previous reports, and apply only to children engaged in manufacture; the employment of children in offices, laundries, and mercantile occupations being still wholly without legislative restriction. The good effects of the law become more manifest each year, as well as the urgent need of extending it.

The percentage of children to total employés has fallen conspicuously in the brief time during which the law has been in force. In 1893 the percentage was 8.5; in 1894 it was 6.2; in 1895 it is 4.5. During the panic of 1893, when the total number of employés fell to its lowest, and but 76,224 persons were found at work by the inspectors there were 6,456 children under 16 years of age. In 1895 there were 8,624 children, while the total number of employés found at work rose to 190,369. In 1893 there were 85 children under 16 years of age in the thousand employés; in 1895 the number had fallen to 45 in the thousand.

The standard of size and health of the children employed has visibly improved everywhere outside of the sweatshops; and the change in this respect is conspicuous when a comparison is made with the children employed in laundries and department stores where the minimal age is not yet prescribed by law.

The prime object of the child labor sections is the prohibition of the employment in manufacture of children under 14 years of age; a secondary object is to weed out the diseased, deformed and conspicuously undersized children. There is no provision in the statute for limiting the employment of illiterate children, or for safeguarding life, limb or health of those who have reached 14 years; nothing to indicate that it is intended to restrict the number of children between 14 and 16 years of age. When a child is equipped with the age affidavit and health certificate, there is no farther power in any officer of the State to regulate the nature of the employment selected for the child.

Comparison of Children with Males over 16 Years.

Trades and Occupations.	Males over 16 years.	Children between 14 and 16 years.	Per cent. of children.	Males over 16 to 1 child between 14 to 16 years.	Children to 1,000 males over 16 years.
Food	28,569	1,640	5.7	17.4	57
Garments	10,177	2,178	30.2	4.9	202
Glass	2,186	707	32.3	3	323
Leather	2,588	74	2.9	35	29
Metal	65,439	1,304	2	50.2	20
Paper-boxes	409	302	73.9	1.3	739
Printing	7,072	335	4.7	21.1	47
Wood	26,182	1,421	5.4	18.4	54
Miscellaneous	7,853	663	8.4	11.8	84
Total	151,075	8,624	5.7	17.5	57

Comparison of Children with Total Employés.

Trades and Occupations.	Total employés.	Children between 14 and 16 years.	Per cent. of children.	Total employés to 1 child between 14 and 16 years.	Children in each 1,000 of total employés.
Food	34,860	1,640	4.7	21.3	47
Garments	29,479	2,178	7.4	13.5	74
Glass	2,965	707	23.8	4.2	238
Leather	2,837	74	2.6	38.3	26
Metal	69,856	1,304	1.9	53.6	19
Paper boxes	1,532	302	19.7	5	197
Printing	9,765	335	3.4	29.1	34
Wood	28,174	1,421	5	19.8	50
Miscellaneous	10,901	663	6	16.4	60
Total	190,369	8,624	4.5	22	45

The children found at work in factories and workshops in 1894 and 1895 were distributed as follows:

Distribution of Children.

	1895.	1894.	Increase.	Decrease.
In sweatshops	1,307	721	586
in factories (8) with more than 100 children each	1,331	1,189	142
in all other places	5,986	6,220	234
Total	8,624	8,130	728	234
Net increase	494

The following table shows that there are still employers of large numbers of children who find it profitable to comply with the requirements of the law, filing affidavits, wall records, registers, etc., and employ an increasing number of children from year to year.