

Miss Florence Kelley, Factory Law Reporter, Baltimore in Address.

Miss Florence Kelley, chief inspector of factories and tenement houses, addressed the meeting of the Men's Club of the Michigan Street Place, No. 24 Michigan street, last evening on the subject of "The Factory Law in Illinois."

The factory law of Illinois, Miss Kelley said, passed in the senate house of the state in 1887, was defective in more than one respect, and needed very much to be replaced by a better one. It would be expected at the next Legislature, at any rate, to replace a law now everywhere with factory laws of modern times, that of Illinois was defective. It especially left no provision regarding the employment of children other than that of the law for work. Certainly, after the age of 14 the children were not at all provided for in the law, neither as to hours of work, nor nature of occupation, nor their general welfare.

Miss Kelley said that eighty-four manufacturers in Chicago had been prosecuted during the last year for employing children under 14 years of age. When the owners of the factories themselves were clever enough in evading investigation. Facts in the case were really hard to get at. Child workers could frequently be almost impossible in helping to bring the transgressing manufacturer to reason. There were, however, many responsible and conscientious manufacturers, and these kept the law.

Miss Kelley pointed out as the chief defect in the factory and tenement law that it did not extend to the department stores also, where children are largely employed. She thought it should include various other employments for child-labor—setting of papers, for instance—in order that all children might be brought under supervision and saved from ill-health, early punishment, and ruin.

Miss Kelley spoke most earnestly on the sweat shop system, the evil of which she stressed in connection with the tenement house problem. She pointed out the degrading consequences and the waste of human life following in its trail. She asked those present to attend the mass meeting in Central Park, Third street Sunday, which will be held against the sweating system.

REV. MR. HILL added a few words, saying that he thought it a sign of something better that the churches and ministers were beginning to interest themselves in social problems. He said the minister had a religious duty to teach the people the facts of life and to study the theories, and at least the true methods for the amelioration of human life. He had treated hospital in-laws to such to solve marriage, and to teach it an unprincipled practice as well as a bloody compromise.