

*Elizabeth G. Evans*

*Subject: Subj. 100*

Mrs. Evans of Boston whom I met at Mrs. Deland's called to see me about the subject in which she is interested. She says that for a long time she has been troubled by the fact that she was a stockholder in various corporations which she believed to be engaged in more or less questionable practices. She had taken up with her friends the question of whether it would not be possible to form a union of stockholders who, when they had any reason to believe that the concerns in which their investments were placed were employing child labor, bribing legislators, etc., etc., would employ counsel to bring the matter up with the directors. She has had this on her conscience for some two years. She has come to the time when she feels that something must be done and she is trying to interest a few stockholders in order to form an organization, a stockholders' league, something like the Consumers' League. She tells me that Florence Kelly in Boston the other day at a meeting of the Consumers' League, after hearing a great deal of praise of Massachusetts, rose to say that there was still something for Massachusetts to do; that to her knowledge a large amount of capital in Massachusetts was invested in producing what is called dwarf machin-

ery, that is machinery for the use of children only. It is used in the cotton and other mills of the south, that is, while Massachusetts people are abusing the South for employing child labor, they are making money out of furnishing machinery to the southern mills for use by these children. Mrs. Kelly told a story of a girl coming to her with a white face, here in N.Y., after one of her talks, and saying "I am a southern girl; I have a small income. Several years ago I read Jacob Reiss's story of "The Other Half". I decided to come here and devote myself to teaching among the poor. My savings were invested in southern mills. A few years ago my directors were paying me 30%; they soon made me a present of twice the amount of stock I had and paid me 15%. Afterwards they made me a present of still other stock and paid me 12%. I didn't understand what this meant. I think my business is to go back to the south to labor." She says that many of the Massachusetts mills have southern branches which employ children and

those Northern mills have, it is believed, instructed their southern agents to fight the legislation relieving the situation of women and children. She owned a certain number of shares in a northern mill with a southern branch. She believed this branch had been fighting good legislation. The manager assured her "he had not but that it was impossible for him to fight for the legislation because as he said it would encourage other objectionable legislation and thus encourage the Labor Union." She has talked to the Bishop of Lawrence about this, who tells her that many years ago in Lawrence he appealed to the mill-owners to pay their men weekly. At that time the men went seven or eight weeks without pay. The owners refused saying that the men would only use it for drink. The Bishop told them "You will pay every week of your own accord, or you will be forced to pay." They since have been forced to pay by the Union. Mrs. Kelly says that when she has gone to managers or directors of concerns in which she had stock asking for an explanation of this or that thing they have said "It is

said; "If you are dissatisfied, sell your stock." She has refused on the theory that she ought to keep the stock and force a betterment of conditions. This is a theory on which the Stock-holders League would be organized. She is to furnish me information as it comes to her, particularly specific cases. I am to try and see Mrs. Kelly as soon as possible. She tells me one of the ministers with whom she has talked about this matter, speaking of his respectable parishoners who refused to consider the methods of the corporations in which they were interested declared them as being "gospel-hardened."