Fourth, that most of the existing collegiate institutions and their feeders were based upon the classic plan of teaching those only destined to pursue the so-called learned professions, leaving farmers and mechanics and all those who must win their bread by labor, to the haphazard of being self-taught or not scientifically taught at all, and restricting the number of those who might be supposed to be qualified to fill places of higher consideration in private or public employments to the limited number of the graduates of the literary institutions. The thoroughly educated, being most sure to educate their sons, appeared to be perpetuating a monopoly of education inconsistent with the welfare and complete prosperity of American institutions.

Fifth, that it was apparent, while some localities were possessed of abundant instrumentalities for education, both common and higher, many of the States were deficient and likely so to remain unless aided by the common fund of the proceeds of the public lands, which were held for this purpose more than any other.

Upon these points and some others I had meditated long and had delved in more or less statistical information, convincing to myself but not the most attractive for a public speech, as I have often found such data, indispensable as it is to the basis of most of our legislative measures, less welcome than even very cheap rhetoric interesting to few and entertaining to none. Discreet legislators cannot get on without reliable facts.

Questions

1. What was the "classic plan of teaching" and how was the Morrill Act to democratize higher education?
2. What is the land-grant institution(s) in your state?

17-5 On Child Labor (1877)

The U.S. transition to an industrial economy was a painful one for many who were involved. Children were initially exploited, and sometimes exposed to very dangerous working conditions. The practice shocked contemporary observers, however, and child labor was eventually proscribed by law. The following selection is from a correspondent for the *Labor Standard* (May 17, 1877) who described the breaker room in the Hickory Colliery, near St. Clair in Pennsylvania's coal country.

Source: "On Child Labor" originally appeared in the *Labor Standard*, May 17, 1877.

In these works 300 men and boys are employed; and when I went through the buildings and through the mine I saw them all. Among all these 300, although I was with them for hours, I did not hear a laugh or even see a smile.

In a little room in this big, black shed—a room not twenty feet square—where a broken stove, red-hot, tries vainly to warm the cold air that comes in through the open window, forty boys are picking their lives away. The floor of the room is an inclined plane, and a stream of coal pours constantly in from some unseen place above, crosses the room, and pours out again into some unseen place below. Rough board seats stretch across the room, five or six rows of them, very low and very dirty, and on these the boys sit, and separate the slate from the coal as it runs down the inclined plane. It is a painful sight to see the men going so silently and gloomily about their work, but it is a thousand times worse to see these boys. They work here, in this little black hole, all day and every day, trying to keep cool in summer, trying to keep warm in winter, picking away among the black coals, bending over till their little spines are curved, never saying a word all the live-long day.

I stood and watched these boys for a long time, without being seen by them, for their backs are turned toward the entrance door and the coal makes such a racket that they cannot hear anything a foot from their ears. They were muffled up in old coats and old shawls and old scarfs, and ragged mittens to keep their hands from freezing, and as they sat and picked and picked, gathering little heaps of blackened slate by their sides, they looked more like so many black dwarfs than like a party of fresh young boys. The air was cold enough and the work was lively enough to paint any boy's cheeks in rosy colors; but if there was a red cheek in the room it was well hidden under the coating of black dust that covered everything. These little fellows go to work in this cold, dreary room at seven o'clock in the morning and work till it is too dark to see any longer. For this they get from $1

to $3 a week. One result of their work is the clean, free coal, that burns away to ashes in the grate; another result I found in a little miners' graveyard, beside a pretty little church, where more than every other stone bears the name of some little fellow under fifteen years of age.

The boys are all sizes and ages, from little fellows scarce big enough to be wearing pantaloons up to youths of fifteen and sixteen. After they reach this age they go to work in the mine, for there they can make more money. Not three boys in all this roomful could read or write. Shut in from everything that is pleasant, with no chance to learn, with no knowledge of what is going on about them, with nothing to do but work, grinding their little lives away in this dusty room, they are no more than the wire screens that separate the great lumps of coal from the small. They have no games; when their day's work is done they are too tired for that. They know nothing but the difference between slate and coal.

The smallest of the boys do not get more than $1 a week, and from this the pay goes up to $2 and $3. Some of them live several miles from the colliery, and are carried to the mine every morning in the cars and back again every night, the company charging them ten cents for each trip and deducting the fares from their wages at the end of the month. Sometimes, after the boys have got to the mine, they find that some accident has stopped the work; then they have nothing to do for the day and get no pay. In this way, I am told, it is no unusual thing for a boy to find, at the end of the month, that his indebtedness to the company for railroad fares is some dollars more than the company's indebtedness to him for labor; so that he has worked all the month for a few dollars less than nothing.

Question

1. The correspondent seemed to invite consideration of broader moral and social concerns. What were they?

17-6 Studies of Factory Life: Among the Women (1888)

Lillie B. Chase Wyman

Lillie B. Chase Wyman wrote her article on factory workers in Rhode Island in response to a statement that it was "very much needed . . . for rich men to find out how poor men live." Poor women and children needed a voice, too, as this excerpt makes clear.

Source: Lillie B. Chase Wyman, "Studies of Factory Life: Among the Women," *Atlantic Monthly* 62 (September 1888), 320–321.

Two years ago, a ten-hour law was enacted in Rhode Island. Philanthropists and workmen urged the passage of the bill. They were concerned about the health of the workwomen, the undermining of whose strength involved not only suffering, but the weakness of the next generation. The manufacturers, so far as they took any action, opposed the law. Some of them were sure their business would be ruined, if it went on to the statute book. Others were merely afraid that financial disasters would be the result. The women themselves were not consulted, and, according to the fashion of the republic, had no part nor lot in deciding their own destiny. Various sorts of men, workmen, manufacturers, and legislators deliberated together about woman's flesh and blood, considered her maternal capacities and her muscular strength, and compared them with the exactions of business and of machinery. She stood and waited—or rather she worked and waited—their decision that sixty hours a week in a factory was enough for her and for her little children. The bill passed, and there was no financial collapse.

There is a young girl working in a thread factory in the State who was much pleased to have some more leisure time. She was taking a Chautauqua course of reading with her mother. She lives some distance from the mill, and so does not go home to dinner. Under the new arrangement she had an hour's recess at noon. She carried her book as well as her lunch, and employed the extra moments in reading. She was anxious to obtain a complete copy of the Iliad, having read some portions of it in the prescribed course, which made her desire to know the whole poem. She read translations of some of the Greek plays, and was glad to have the opportunity to borrow a version of the Electra of Sophocles; and when she returned it, she said she liked it better than any of the others she had read. This girl is, however, unique in my experience. She is a Protestant, of English parentage. From childhood on she has shown an