

SOCIAL SETTLEMENTS FROM AN ECONOMIC STANDPOINT.

In 1897 I visited Hull house. My observation then, together with the information gained from the residents, and perusal of all available literature concerning the subject, would furnish a somewhat extended treatise upon this typical social settlement. No American settlement has been the subject of more articles and reviews in the periodical press than has Hull house. And yet a visitor there sees no ostentation, but instead the greatest simplicity and modesty on every hand, and, unless he has prepared himself to see and question intelligently, he will surely fall far short of comprehending the mission of this now powerful institution.

Hull house is one of the landmarks of West Chicago, situated at the intersection of Halsted and Polk streets, in what is now the nineteenth ward. The house was built by Charles J. Hull, in 1856, for his family residence—a substantial, roomy, two-story brick building. But the day has long since passed when the Hull family inhabited it, and trees and lawns surrounded it. In the years following it was used as a Washingtonian home, as a home for Little Sisters of the Poor, and as a tenement house. Then in 1889 the initial step of the social settlement was taken, the tiny seed was sown from which the tree was to grow, when two young women, Miss Jane Addams and Ellen Starr quietly took up their abode in three rooms of the Hull house and began their personal neighborly service.

The district chosen for the beginning of this great work was in the notorious nineteenth ward with its population of fifty thousand. The residents of Hull house have put into graphic form a few facts concerning the section of Chicago east of the house. These maps, which have been given to the public, are similar to Charles Booth's maps of London, showing in colors the nationalities and wages of the inhabitants. The minuteness of the survey presents a photographic reproduction of Chicago's poorest quarters on the west, and her worst on the east of the river, as well as an illustration of the method of research. Agnes Holbrook, a resident, tells us that the manner of investigation has been painstaking, and the facts set forth as trustworthy as personal inquiry and intelligent effort could make them. Not only was each house, tenement and room visited and inspected, but in many cases the reports obtained from one person were corroborated by many others and statements from different workers at the same trades and occupations, as to ages and unemployed seasons, served as mutual confirmation. In recording the nationality of each person, his age and in case of children under ten years of age, the nationality of his parents, and his attendance at school, were taken

into account. All under ten years of age, who were not pupils in the public school, and who were not of American extraction, were classified with their parent as foreigners. This third of a square mile which is mapped out, included east of the river a criminal district which ranks as one of the most openly and flagrantly vicious in the civilized world, and west of the same stream, the poorest and probably most crowded section of Chicago.

Mortality Among Children Large.

Eighteen nations are represented in this small district of Chicago. They are more or less intermingled, but the decided tendency to drift into little colonies is apparent. It will not be necessary to attempt here a description of the crowded tenements, the uncared for streets and alleys, and the unsanitary condition in general. For that we need but to read the report of Mrs. Kelley, a Hull house resident, who conducted a special investigation of the slums. But in order that we may better picture the surroundings of the two women pioneers at Hull house, I quote a paragraph from the report of a resident:

"One hears little English spoken, and the faces and manners met with are very foreign. People are noticeably undersized and unhealthy, as well to the average observer as to the trained eye of the physician. Especially do the many workers in the tailoring trades look dwarfed and ill-fed; they walk with a peculiar stupid gait, and their narrow chests and cramped hands are unmistakable evidence of their calling. Tuberculosis prevails, and deformity is not unusual. The mortality among children is great and the many babies look starved and wan. The bent figures stitching at the basement windows proclaim that the sweater is abroad in the land."

The interpretation of the motives which actuated Jane Addams and Ellen Starr in their founding Hull house settlement will lead to the consideration of the principles underlying all social settlements. We have here the result of an evolution in philanthropy. No doubt there is a general misapprehension of the motives of the founders and sustainers of the noble social settlement. Indeed it would be a surprise if the attempt at realization of such lofty ideals were more than vaguely comprehended in the comparatively brief space of time since social settlements were begun. It is crudely supposed that a woman, or a company of women, going voluntarily into an ignorant, impoverished and alien community must be actuated solely by motives of charity and self-sacrifice, or by a pious longing to give and be given for righteousness' sake, taking credit and great satisfaction for their praiseworthy efforts to save the lost and convict the sinning. This was partly true of much philanthropic work of the past. The lives of

noble, saintly men and women have been spent in alms giving, administering relief to the sick and needy, and spreading the gospel. History teems with the names of martyrs in the cause of charity and religion.

Nations have legislated to provide money for the poor. Study the poor laws of England, and what lesson do we learn? The moment it is understood by the idle and shiftless in the community, such as we find in one of our modern cities, that they can, on the ground of desolation claim a certain amount of support, while still remaining at large and enjoying the pursuits of liberty, the door is opened to a perfect flood of pauperism and consequent vice. Not only that, but a premium is at once put upon laziness, and the wages of self-respecting workers are dragged down by the competition of those who are eking out their earnings by receiving public support.

Ely, in his chapter on expenditures for the poor and unfortunate, says:

"If the dependent poor are treated better by the state than the independent poor are treated by society, thousands of the latter will join the former. Discouraged by the fact that by their utmost exertions they get less than they could receive by no exertion at all, they naturally choose the latter. Early in this century, when the industrial revolution had produced great suffering in England, a system of relief was adopted which pauperized thousands and immensely aggravated the difficulty. An allowance was given to each laborer in proportion to the size of his family. If he earned enough to meet the legal requirements, he received nothing. If he earned less the balance was paid by the community. If he was out of work, the community paid his wages, and so forth. The law was long ago repealed, but the mischief it had wrought is by no means eradicated yet."

Motive of the Founders.

The founders of the Hull house, who were women of liberal training, had studied deeply into the history of charities and disavow any claim of being a charity organization. Even the term philanthropy is objected to, and, in fact, Hull house settlement and the university extension in East London are so unlike many efforts that have borne the name philanthropy that one does not wonder at their disowning it. To state the matter in the simplest way, the residents of Hull house are occupying the position of helpful neighbors in an unfavored community, and are ready both to give and receive help. They feel the bond of common kindred and fellowship in the unity of a common life. They do not assume to stand upon any higher plane; they come to be taught as much as to teach, humbly to ask and receive as well as to offer and bestow. They see that we are never on the terms with a man on which we can do him the highest good, until we are as