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Book Review



In the book *Twenty Years at Hull House*, Jane Adams reveals the story of the Hull House foundation and points out all the difficulties, which she and her cofounder Elen Gates Starr had to face. In addition, there are a lot of facts from Adams's life, beginning with her childhood and finishing with maturity. Therefore, the book is partially autobiographical; hence the facts from author's life are organically interwoven with the information considering the Hull House.

The story begins with the description of Adams's childhood, which seems to be not very cloudless. Her mother died when she was a baby, and her father ventured to marry for the second time only when Jane was eight. Besides this, little Jane had some problems with spine, so she had to take much effort to go through all these. As for education, Jane entered the seminary at Rockford when she was seventeen. Having become an adult, she did not lose such character qualities as sympathy, kindness and a sense of responsibility. Probably, that explains her will to organize a new settlement movement.

Firstly, Hull House was aimed to shelter immigrants. Since Chicago was a place where a great number of immigrants lived, Jane together with her friend Ellen decided to establish a new settlement house there. The personnel of Hull House consisted mainly of women and it contributed to the fact that the new settlement movement was associated with women's one.

Actually, they started with providing people with the most required items. One of such things was food, and it pushed to opening a public kitchen, which was planned to become a coffee house in the future. Also there was Children's House, where immigrant mothers and their children could get help in case they needed it.

From the very beginning, Hull House enjoyed great popularity and that



it is why the further extension and development became necessary. More and more people came there, and among them were not only immigrants, but also people who had no place to go.

First of all, the territory where people could live became larger. Later on, a school, library, theatre, an art gallery, music school, and post office appeared there. Moreover, people who resided there began to organize some clubs and in such a way they shared their interests and spread their knowledge and skills to each other as well as to other people.

What is more, Hull House cooperated with different social organizations, such as the League for the Protection of Immigrants, the Juvenile Protective Association and many others.

I should emphasize, that by the end of 1907, there were 13 large buildings, which comprised Hull House. So, this settlement was like a little town where people had an opportunity to live, work, obtain education and develop in different directions.

No doubt, that it was a great idea to found such a settlement where people who had no place to go, could feel at home. I was moved, when Adams told about old people who lived in Hull House. One elderly woman was trying to depict sounds with colors, another - beautifully told about ancient manuscripts. The author underlines that despite being homeless people who lived at Hull House acquired beautiful minds and even more beautiful souls.

In conclusion, I can say that by writing this book Jane Adams, probably, wanted to share her experience of creating such a settlement. Moreover, it is vividly stated that if you have a good idea, it is worth trying to put it into practice. And one more thing is the fact that we should not be afraid to start with something small. If we have an irresistible desire to achieve the aim and we make attempts for this, sooner or later our plans will certainly come true.

