

ly they stumbled upon "a hospitable old house" near Halstead and Polk Streets, that seemed as if made for the purpose. A one-time prosperous home it stood well back from the street, was surrounded on three sides by piazzas, and was equipped inside with several fireplaces—all of which quite overshadowed the rather commonplace fact that the building had served successively as a second-hand store and a house for the aged.

On the 18th of September Miss Addams, Miss Starr and Miss Mary Keyser moved in, and merrily and enthusiastically went on the work of papering, painting and re-furnishing. Then the actual work of the "settlement" started. From the fact that the house had been built in 1856 for Mrs. Chas. J. Hull, it was decided to call it "Hull House."

Inside, when all was in order, "Hull House" looked inviting indeed. Its environments—the cause of its establishment—offered room for improvement enough to suit the most ambitious settlement-worker. Dirty streets, insanitary conditions, smells, a very deficient garbage-system, tenement-houses overcrowded with people,—these spelled Opportunity, and opportunity enough to last, as improvement in such city quarters goes, for more than a decade or two. But the young women were prepared to begin in a small way and to advance slowly. It was found that the inhabitants of the locality were chiefly Irish and Germans; later these gave way before an influx of Jews, Italians and Greeks; but among all the inhabitants of Hull House found warm hearts and an eagerness to take advantage of the chances for improvement which the new settlement center offered them.

From the beginning there was no attempt to "talk down" to the people. The aim was rather to supply them with opportunity and lead them to self-development. To be "friends," not mentors of the people was the ideal held by the rapidly-increasing faculty at Hull House.

During the first weeks Miss Starr organized a reading-club for young women, starting with George Eliot's "Romola." . . . At the conclusion of the book, an old lady who spent ten days at the House, gave five readings from Hawthorne. She had once lived at the famous Brook Farm, as a pupil of the Ripleys, and had come to visit Hull House because she wished "to live once more in an atmosphere where idealism ran high." . . . So, quite naturally, facility after facility offered, and the reading courses, combining as they did sociability and serious study; became an assured success.

Rapidly other classes were inaugurated, among them a kindergarten conducted by an enthusiastic young teacher, in the drawing-room, every morning. In connection with the latter a story may be told that will well illustrate the class of homes with which Hull House came frequently into touch. "One day at luncheon," says Miss Addams, "this young teacher gayly recited her futile attempt to impress temperance principles upon the mind of an Italian mother to whom she had returned a small daughter of five sent to the kindergarten in 'quite a horrid state of intoxication' from the wine-soaked bread upon which she had breakfasted. The mother, with the gentle courtesy of a South Italian, listened politely to her graphic portrayal of the untimely end awaiting so immature a wine-bibber; but long before the lecture was finished, quite unconscious of the incongruity she hospitably set forth her best wines, and when her baffled guest refused one after the other, she disappeared, only to return quickly with a small dark glass of whisky, saying reassuringly, 'See, I have brought you the true American drink.' The recital ended in seriocomic despair, with the rueful statement that 'the impression I probably made upon her darkened mind was that it is the American custom to breakfast children on bread soaked in whisky instead of light Italian wine.'"

Rapidly, as the years went on, clubs of all kinds were organized at Hull House,—boys' clubs with classes in



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technical work, men's clubs with opportunity for debate on all sorts of subjects, cooking classes, sewing classes, even dancing classes, literally set afoot in the gymnasium, to prevent, in so far, patronage of the public music and dance halls.

Nor was the work of the faculty at Hull House confined to the building itself. It reached out to all sorts of district needs. "From the first," says Miss Addams, "we were asked to wash the new-born babies and to prepare the dead for burial, to nurse the sick, and to 'mind the children.' " This last may seem rather an imposition on the busy folk of Hull House, but the value of even "minding the children" becomes evident enough on further acquaintance with the subject. "The first three crippled children we encountered," says the writer, "had all been injured while their mothers were at work. One had fallen out of a third story window, another had been burned, and the third had a curved spine due to the fact that for three years he had been tied all day long to the leg of the kitchen table, only released at noon by his older brother who hastily ran in from a neighboring factory to share his lunch with him." Eventually, to meet this problem, a day nursery was established at Hull House and kept up for sixteen years.

As time went on and the scope and practical nature of the work became known, donations began to come in, and before long it was found that it was

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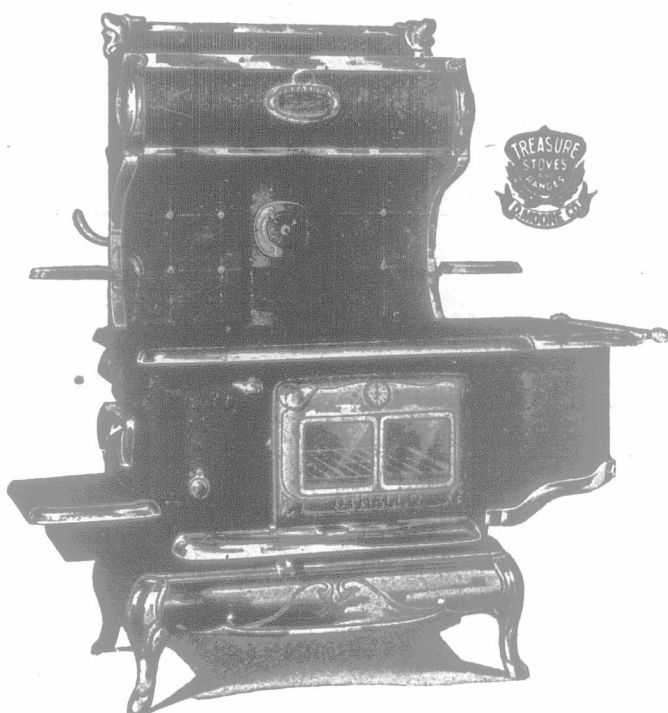
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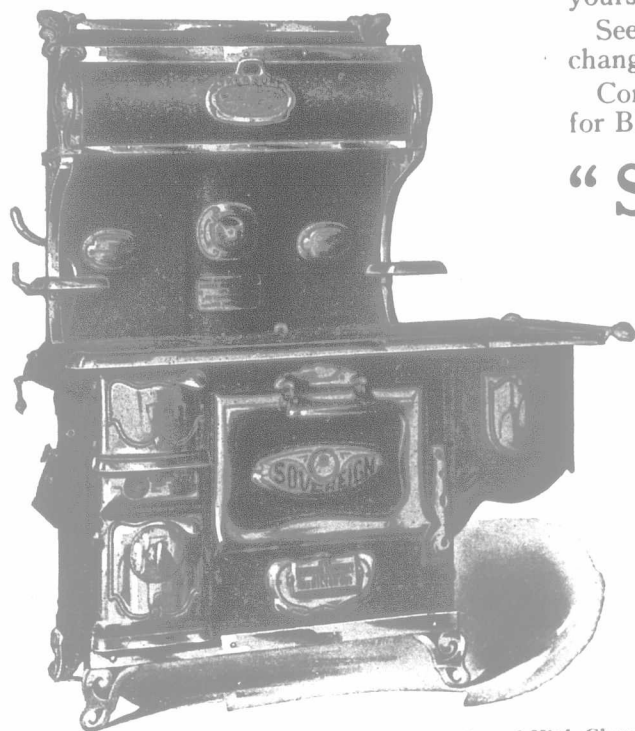
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