1935-05-31

Manuscript: Jane Addams - for Pen & Brush Talk

Tarbell, Ida M.

http://hdl.handle.net/10456/39508

©Allegheny College. All rights reserved.

All materials in the Allegheny College DSpace Repository are subject to college policies and Title 17 of the U.S. Code.
Jane Addams - Notes for Pen & Brush Talk

The death of Jane Addams has given me an almost overwhelming sense of personal obligation, obligation for what she has done for the humanizing of our democracy, the practical enterprises she has initiated and carried on for realizing social ideals, the immense impulse she has given to the world to find a way out of its poverty, its wars. Miss Addams was a woman.

It is hard for me to speak of her as I would like and you of this generation will not understand my strong feeling, perhaps without a word as to the way I was thinking and feeling the when she first appeared on the American scene. I was at that time in my philosophy a pronounced social Democrat, a follower of the new humanitarian economic science. So many things had happened in my girlhood and young womanhood to drive me towards humanitarianism, the conviction that we must somehow escape from the old economics which did not concern themselves with men, which hitched themselves on the theory of the survival of the fittest. It was a kind of a devil take the hindmost, and the devil certainly did take them the world over.

Great revolts had come in my girlhood. It is hard for the radical-minded of today who are inclined to think they have discovered the different radical ideas to believe that back in the '50's the New York Tribune - at that time most of them were pronounced socialists - of the Fourierist school, the school that tried to philosophize on their notions.

It is hard to remember that Karl Marx published a series of articles there expounding his doctrines. We are apt to forget today
that International Working Men's Associations which was a great communist league then as now kept the General Consul from landing in New York in the '70's.

That is, I was brought up as a child in a society in which the reverberations, even where I lived, back in Northwestern Pennsylvania, were brought to us as Marx notions - the notions of the different socialistic schools. In the '70's New York was a fighting ground for these ideas. We have never had anything like it in these times.

Then, too, we had all been mightily disturbed about 1880 by the publication of Henry George's "Poverty and Progress." The great point in it, which got over to my mind and I think to a great many of us who had been stirred by the new ideas of a socialized humanitarian democracy, was that while we were getting enormous progress which was perfectly obvious - life was being made easier in many ways, people were getting a look in as never before - enormous poverty went along it and that the concentration of land in a few hands had a great deal to do with it. There was no getting around George's arguments for this and most of us seized eagerly upon them.

Where most of us stuck, however, in those days was on his scheme of a single tax. I never did see the single tax working very well, but that is not saying it wouldn't work - I am only expressing my opinion, the way it affected me, I never have seen! But you can see how a young woman of twenty-two already having socialistic notions in her head, already calling
herself a philosophical anarchist, whatever that might mean, for you see the anarchist were must stronger then than now. They wanted $\#$ to do away with all laws and let us have a free for all show.

You see all these things stirred us and then came along Bellamy in this period. - the trust was scaring us all out of our social wits - as a laboratory experiment for the future economic society, the Great Trust. The thing, however, that had gotten hold of me by this time most was the conditions of great masses of people, the people that we call the poor and the obvious fact that we were doing very little about them. In my time the care of the poor was concentrated largely in the churches, in the county relief, and when there was nothing else to do with people there was the poor house which the public sustained. (We had been invaded by a new industrial system by which a small, local agricultural society were taking care of their derelicts). It was utterly inadequate, of course, for anything like the industrial society. There / poor houses enough to take care of the poor, and the whole country was alive with tramps - not a dangerous body often, not nearly so dangerous as now - not organized as today were into gangs. And if they travelled together they / rather a social, easy-going lot. They were tolerated everywhere. In my home town there were people who heartily disapproved of this way of getting bread and butter, who kept turn stiles in their back yard. My family thought that outrageous. I was brought up with
the idea that the coffee pot should always be kept up to twelve o'clock on the stove and that there should be bread, if it was a little dry and doughnuts, even if they were the leavings-over of a fresh batch - we liked ours fresh in the morning. These should always be kept ready for a tramp. Nobody was turned away from the Tarbell door hungry. My father had a theory that we ought to say to them, "Now if you will go out and do so and so in the garden or the yard you will pay for your breakfast. We'll give it to you first, but you must pay for it." But my father was usually away at the time the tramp came around and my Mother never had the heart to do it. She would more likely go and cut a fresh pie and give him a piece. So it was - the Tarbell house always had a white cross which in those days meant you'll get a feed here. It was equivalent to that sign "Eat" that you find around, particularly in the West on cheap eating houses.

Something in my mind must be done about it and I was very lively. I had become by this time the Managing Editor of the Magazine called "The Chautauquan" and I used all my influence to get into it reports of everything that was being done - we were gradually segregating the social and economic problems concerned with the poor. And another thing that attracted my attention was the experiment started in 1884 in London. It may be called an experiment. I think of the lowest depths. I remember that we had an article on Toynbee Hall in the Chautauquan. I was a great reader then of all kinds of social experiments, oddly enough - no I think not oddly enough given my attitude. All my political an individualist reading in those days was The Nation - Lawrence Godkin - the most political pungent and honest of all economic life. I followed him there, but he was an opponent of most of these humanitarian
enterprises on the ground that they were socialistic, so this left me a socialized Democrat.

It was on this kind of soil — and when I talk about myself I am talking about thousands of young people in the country — this kind of soil that Jane Addams planted her first seed.

She was twenty-six or twenty-seven when she and a friend, Ellen Starr, Southern Illinois woman suddenly appeared in Chicago — at least it seemed suddenly to those on the outside — took a place on the West side, the slums of the city then, a Hall called Hull House and there established a settlement on the lines of Toynbee Hall. As I gathered from the enterprise they had gone down to live among the poor in order to understand better what their problems were and try to find out practical means to meet these problems. Their intent at that moment what you might say to be local. They wanted to improve the neighborhood, to see if they could not by understanding their problems make the life and conditions of these people more tolerable.

It was wonderful how that idea took hold, not only of observers and reporters like myself, but from people who threw themselves into settlement work. Settlements began to appear all over the country — there were over a hundred by the end of the nineteenth century. I remember I kept close track of everything I could hear about Hull House. In three or four years after it was established I went out to look at Chicago — certain things which interested me — one was the town of Pullman our first great industrial town — a very beautiful place in those days. The other was to call on Francis Willard at that date the most beloved woman in the country, that is in public life.
And the third was to look at Hull House. I didn't see anything but the outside that particularly impressed me except one thing - you were shown around and shown carefully if they happened to be in operation and you were not disturbing anybody, and one class I saw was a group of women from the neighborhood, foreign women speaking no English, were being encouraged to work at their native handicraft, embroideries and weavings. I remember how happy they were and how I was told that generally in that neighborhood the women who worked at her foreign craft was laughed at by her neighbors, that it was something un-American. And Hull House had realized what a contribution to our own craft and art the saving of these women's skill might produce. It was the beginning of an interest in foreign craft work which well you know what it is today. And it was a tremendous life-saver for some of these women.

Well, Hull House after that dropped out of my consciousness. I was living abroad; I came back to go on the American Magazine and became tremendously engrossed in two or three long pieces of work; my interest in social development was not by no means dulled, indeed all the work I was doing intensified it, but it kept me from any practical look at things. Hull House was perhaps a little over twenty years old when I went out to Chicago to do a magazine article on the big traction strike which was then going on. It was a piece of work for which I was not prepared and which I took very seriously. And now I said it my chance to go to Hull House - you see I had met Miss Addams occasionally and knew she was kindly disposed to me - to see just
how far they had carried out those original purposes. It was there that I learned to know Jane Addams - as I say I was six weeks in the house, working very hard, but living with the family as they were called, free to go about and stick my nose into everything. My first strong impression was what Hull House had come to mean to Chicago. When they first settled down their idea was to first get acquainted with their neighborhood - no work, but gradually a few women, perhaps first a few children, then an occasional man came to realize that these women who lived so quietly there, went about them, were not there to exploit in any way, they didn't want to convert them to anything, didn't want them to join anything, they had just come to be their friends. Almost unconsciously to themselves the people had begun to drop in, would ask advice and in trouble would come and talk it over. One thing Miss Addams and Miss Starr learned is that you could not live among the poor without spending your influence and efforts into the social, economic and political institution which controlled their lives.

Here was a boy who had been arrested and whose Mother was distracted. Well somebody from Hull House, if she heard about it, would go to court to see that he got a fair deal. Well, now in the small courts in Chicago at that time the appearance of a lady was looked upon with suspicion. When it came to be a quiet, well-mannered and an entirely determined lady who if they tried to shove her out went up higher and still higher until she had them scared out of their boots, it was found that justice could be done. They never asked anything but justice. If the law had been broken then they must suffer for it. But while a boy was suffering they kept an eye on him. When he came out there was a kind lady saying, "Now see here let us find something better to
do than this mean thing you have done and for which you have had to suffer. It was never laid up against him that he had been in jail.

They found, too, the injustice of certain city ordinances, the neglect of the quarter, by street cleaners we will say, and it was not long before the City Hall of Chicago like the Petty Courts, began to be acquainted with the ladies from Hull House. They came down to say, "We pay our taxes in that quarter, we have a right to clean streets, or we have a right to this or that protection." The City Hall learned that the ladies from Hull House were there to see that their neighborhood were properly dealt with. Now that meant not simply going to court, it meant higher up. It meant going out and getting acquainted with the good citizens of the town who were powerful and who had been indifferent or ignorant, who had a kind of an idea that you gave so much money it was all done. One by one they were converted to feel that they must do something about it.

Then, too, I saw there had developed in twenty years in Chicago in Hull House particularly extraordinary women, a group of women who were dealing in a most practical and friendly, tolerant, and understanding fashion with these problems. There was Julia Lathrop who was dealing with children, the laws, their education. It was she who established our Children's Bureau. There was Alice Hamilton who was learning of the horrors of the occupational diseases, neglected by factories because they did not know how to handle them and because they were rather of the opinion that they couldn't be handled. She trained and educated herself to know
how these things could be overcome. And today she is our
great authority on occupational diseases.

Then there was Florence Kelly, as valiant an old war
horse as ever walked the face of the country, who was out after
the intolerable conditions in many factories. She believed in law,
legislation and she got herself elected through the efforts of
Hull House as the first factory inspector of Illinois and the
way she put standards into different factory managers is
something to delight a soul. There was a woman of whom I grew
very fond, the most militant woman - Mary McDowell, the friend of
the laborer and a friend of the strikers. There never was a strike
in Chicago but that she was not in the middle of it.

That is, I found that all kinds of educational, political,
civil problems were being studied and patiently worked out
and there had come to Chicago a great body of people, not only
in Chicago but all over the country, great bodies of people who
looked to Hull House for initiative and counsel, direction in
handling these problems. They were doing an enormous amount for
child labor problems; old age insurance laws. The idea of unemploy-
ment insurance which was being embodied into some kind of a social
security were all in those days on the cards at Hull House.

It was a breeding ground for social experiments and
social advancement.

But what interested me most, I think, was the way
Chicago, the people in that neighborhood and Chicago itself, felt
about Hull House. I think there is no question that people as
a whole felt very strongly that it was their trust friend, more
strongly than they did about any other agency or churches in the city.

I remember one instance that impressed this upon me — the story of the woman with amnesia.

Another thing that I was greatly impressed by was the way Miss Addams, herself, had become a counsellor and a friend to liberal-minded, whether in economic, social or political life. The industrialists in Chicago came to talk over with her the possibilities of getting their industry on a higher basis. The liberal-minded not only of this country but of the world came to talk over things. We had no visitors from abroad in those days, writers, social leaders, industrialists, politicians who did not include Hull House in their itinerary and if possible a talk with Jane Addams. It was very interesting to see how our own public men came to her. I remember of her telling me once about William Jennings Bryan when he was in a bad jam politically wanting to become a candidate for the President as usual and not having a definite issue which could make paramount as was necessary for him to give her his opinion about making his issue the ownership of railroads, telegraphs, etc.

She and Roosevelt, Theodore, always got on very well together and in 1912 when he ran on the famous Bull Moose she was the candidate for Vice-President. I remember that Roosevelt was shot at at the beginning of his campaigning at Milwaukee, injured not seriously, but injured. She immediately went to see him and she told me how he said with humility quite unusual with him, "I don't really know anything about the things in which you are interested, but I believe in them and if you will expound them I will back you up."
It was like his saying to another social-minded man, "You tell me what you want, I can be a good sounding board for your ideas."

She was always consulted, I think, in these things. Wilson consulted her about his Fourteen Points it is certain and she is reported to have said when he asked her, "How can I get these over to the people?" to have replied, "It is too late, Mr. President, you only could have gotten these over before the declaration of war."

It was Jane Addams, herself, that I was particularly interested in in the life in Hull House. She was just like a fine, quiet, matured mother of a family. She was an excellent housewife. She looked after all the appointments of the house, unobtrusively. I remember after I had been at Hull House this time of going back to my Connecticut home and sending her a big pewter platter - they had a good deal of pewter in their big sitting room. I was there later and she took me in to show me where she had placed it and one of the people said, "Well, you should have seen Miss Addams fussing with that platter, to get it just where she wanted it."

She had extraordinary social qualities, so unobtrusive and yet so penetrating. The way she would direct a table conversation, keep all emotionalism, vituperation out of it and of course handling the problems that they did and having constantly a range of different radical views on hand, vituperation and emotionalism the easily broke out. She would have nothing to do with it; nothing was
too serious you couldn't afford to spend yourself in that way, you must get down to the bones of your trouble and then work with patience and wisdom and shrewdness and cunning, if necessary - she was extremely cunning in her manoeuvring for the thing which you knew was right and just and the effect that that policy had on the people who worked with her and who got things done is in evidence of course by the list of people already mentioned that begun their careers at Hull House, done their great work particularly these women I have spoken of.

She was always humorous.

Story of Galsworthy at Tucson.

She was a gallant figure. When you consider that Jane Addams began life as an invalid - spinal trouble - she had to lie on her back as a young woman, that she had frequent break downs, that in these later years she had eight major operations, something of her physical bravery as well as mental and spiritual can be reckoned. She was so quiet in all these things and she would go through all her pain and suffering and periods of disable-ment to carry on her intellectual and spiritual life. She was one of the best read woman that I have ever known, read persistently and she did that interesting thing she read serious and good books with interesting friends. Out at Tucson - describe group and the reading.

It was about the time that I was in Chicago I think that Miss Addams published a book called the "New Ideals of Peace," the basis of her non-combatant pacifism. It is a noble and stimulating book. In it she sat down her beliefs; she looked
for universal peace by international arbitration with good. She believed that there were in the minds and hearts, particularly of the masses of people, impulses towards kindliness, co-operation - impulses entirely contrary to those impulses that lead to war.

She saw a growing goodwill among men, a growth of the number of men of goodwill and she believed this could be internationalized and that an internationalization of goodwill would lead ultimately to international arbitration which would take the place of war.

Her analysis of these impulses toward and against war in the daily life of the people, the relations in our public life, in our industrial life are very acute. The recognition of children and its effect on this goodwill, on the entrance of women into public life. She believed she saw what were known as the War virtues of the late war: hope. She expressed in this book the only hope there is for a peaceful world and that is whether or not there are impulses sufficient, a world sufficient of these in man. She believed there was. But when one believes strongly such a thing and puts it down they are very apt to see it almost as an accomplishment, to forget the long road to realization.

I have an idea, though I am not sure about this, that Jane Addams had come to feel as a good many of us felt - I among the others - that the organizations for arbitration and peace in this world are too strong to permit a great war. And when the great war came it was a body blow. She could not go along with Mr. Wilson's decision; she was bitterly disappointed in him. That is, she was not willing to accept a certain inevitability, fate, destiny - call it what you wish - the working forces that are
And if she had gone things would have been different on the Peace Ship, I am quite convinced of that. Moreover, things would have been different when she got to Europe. Henry Ford would not have been carried off on a stretcher I think. He and Jane Addams would have had the thing in their hands and would have wisely and conservatively conducted things.

And it is interesting to me that even after the long time and the public ridicule she had to stand that she would say not so directly to me, "I should have gone if I had gone in the hospital."

She was very remarkable in how she was always willing to go along in whatever it cost her with the underdog, with the underdog and the man or woman who had some kind of an enterprise which seemed to her to harmonize with her general idea. She didn't want to lose anything.

I had a little episode with her in France which distressed me greatly where I think probably I misjudged her; I never quite analyzed my own feelings. It was in the Spring of 1919 and she and Lillian Wald had come over in the interest of German children - they were to be sure starving, and for it was right something should be done. It was like Jane Addams to look after the case of the down and out, the defeated, the humiliated. Well, I had just come back to Paris from Lilll. Now you know Lilll had been an occupied town for four years. I was greatly impressed in the devastated regions with how much worse the children who had had to live in the occupied towns were off than those that had been trapped and had to live in or near the trenches. The latter had to live outdoors, practically; they ran the danger, of course, of being
killed by shells which every now and then fell. But they lived in the open air or in the earth; they had the food of the soldiers; they had no instructions; they had none of the implements of civilized life. I saw a group of children that had been reared in the trenches and had to be taught at the end how to use a handkerchief. But in the towns it was worse; they lived in cellars, they had scanty food of the people that were trapped; they had no fuel; they had no light. It was amazing the way they had been stripped of all the appliances of civilized life, that is as far as the 

[redacted]

were concerned. The children all had some kind of terrific intestinal disturbance and I had gone up to see what the Red Cross was doing about this, and I was tremendously disturbed. When I came back I was talking with Jane Addams about them and to my great discomfort she seemed utterly uninterested. She said, "Think of the German children?" But I said, "Miss Addams I do think of them, but why not think of these children, too?" She said, "Think of the German prisoners in France." Well, I said, "The German prisoners in the devastated area are getting their rations that the refugees are; they are getting the ration of the English soldiers, and that is more I fear than the French and English prisoners."

Well, you know it made a rift between us for a little while. But it couldn't stand long with her, in my mind, she was too great a person. And nothing ever stood against me with her. There are many reasons to believe this in the last few years. And it is a great sorrow to me that I did not more consciously and persistently now seek her - she had so much to give, was so great.
To be in her presence was like being in the presence of something great. Read what Walter Lippman said about her this morning, if you haven't read it, and if you have it bears re-reading. I in anything I could say is/that she has gone I feel like repeating Edwin Markham's words about Lincoln -