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Alice Hamilton at twenty-four, the year she graduated from medical school (1893).

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HAM
A Life

Barbara

A Commonw
Harvard U
Cambridg
and Lon

Hull House's major figures, she became Alice Hamilton's closest friend.[7]

One of Jane Addams' greatest strengths was the capacity to enlist the talents and loyalties of such women. It was not just that she drew them to her. Convinced that a settlement must be a place for enthusiasms, she permitted residents to find the sources of their own creativity. Impartially she nurtured specialists in factory inspection, child labor, juvenile delinquency, and birth control. At once visionary and pragmatic, she refused to be bound by traditions, even those she had created. She was remarkably unpossessive and allowed, even urged, her residents to leave when she thought they could do more good—or find greater happiness—elsewhere. Yet she did not spare herself if she thought she could be helpful.[8]

Always Miss Addams or J.A., even to longtime associates, she inspired intense loyalty in the most individualistic. Neither authoritarian nor sentimental, hers was a charismatic leadership compounded of moral authority, intellectual integrity, and an indefinable quality that made others want to live up to her expectations. Her sadness, mirrored in her eyes, haunted those who knew her well or met her for the first time. After hearing her speak in the spring of 1897, Alice Hamilton described Jane Addams as "having looked upon the misery and sin of the world and having accepted them as an inevitable burden which she must bear with no hope of ever reforming them." Addams' spiritual loneliness set her apart from her colleagues, but they found her neither solemn nor unapproachable. She was without illusion or personal pride, and she had none of the love of martyrdom of some farsighted people.[9]

By 1897 Hull House had become a genuine neighborhood center, a channel for social action in city and state, and a model for reformers throughout the nation. Already the most famous American settlement, it accommodated some twenty-five residents, three-fourths of them women, and received several thousand visitors each week. It harbored a kindergarten and nursery, a cooperative boarding house for working women, a gymnasium, theater, music school, and art gallery; it also offered adult education classes ranging from Greek art and Dante to English composition and mechanical drawing. Open to speakers of the most radical stripe, the settlement early earned a reputation for radicalism and for godlessness as well. Some enterprises, like the dances and the Coffee House (which offered cheap and nutritious food as well as sociability) were thought to provide more salutary entertainment than public dance halls and saloons, institutions that most res-

idents found alarming. O
playground, proved so use

Alice Hamilton's encou
were the most important o
at Hull House "satisfied e
excitement of new experie
and for the sense of being c
my enthusiastic loyalty." /
appraisal ignores the diffici
at Hull House in reconcili
finding her own, authentic

25 To Agnes Hamiltor

Dearest Agnes,

This is only a beginnin
lucky it will succeed. It is
I can't remember. Last nig
and rested while she talke
have her but I had plannec
you to write to me again. I
back with me. Last week
had expected, and this we
you. And I am not at all
and show you things as I
much better. As soon as
coming. You simply must
Mrs. Kelley I am growing
very uncomfortable, howe
and asking me if I thought
added "I hope not, for I
urged Miss Addams very
why, she said "Oh well.
them in Fort Wayne that I
had better have you in Hu
miserable. For of course I
wrote me, you and Kather

and what things not to buy, then I am less like you than ever, for I don't even know whether I believe in not buying sweaters' clothes. So I sat there and felt like a miserable hypocrite and wished you were here to do the things they will expect me to do. Mrs. Kelley I find approachable and I can enjoy talking to her very much, but Miss Addams still rattles me, indeed more so all the time, and I am at my very worst with her. I really am quite school-girly in my relations with her; it is a remnant of youth which surprises me. I know when she comes into the room. I have pangs of idiotic jealousy toward the residents whom she is intimate with. She is—well she is quite perfect and I don't in the least mind raving over her to you, because by January fifth you will be just as bad as I, every bit.

This is a typical evening here. Here in the back parlour I am sitting at the table and opposite to me is Miss Johnson, who is the street-cleaning commissioner.[a] She is having a most killing time interviewing an old Irishman who wants a job from the city. He has brought his wife with him and she is scolding him for saying he is sixty. She says he is only forty-five, although she insists he fought at Balaclava. Miss Johnson wants to know when his birthday comes, and his wife says "Say the fourth of July, it sounds well." Now they are having a fuss about his naturalization papers. He says he never had any, his wife says they were lost in the snow out in Utah when Brigham Young was dedicating the temple. At the other end of the table sits Miss Brockway, the sweet little girl who is engaged to Miss Addams' nephew.[b] Mrs. Kelley is lying off on the sofa. In the front parlour are Mr. Deknatel and Mrs. Valerio.[c] Mrs. Valerio speaks Italian and she and the man with the queer name—he is our mournful widower—are taking the names of the people who are registering for classes. Miss Addams is on the sofa with a very nice North End man, a friend of Miss Anderson's. They are looking over plans for an addition to the coffee-house. Miss Watson, Mr. Swope, Mr. Ball, Mr. Hooker, Miss Pitkin, Miss Gyles and all the others are managing classes and clubs in various rooms.[d] In a few minutes a certain Dr. Blount is coming.[e] It is a she-doctor and a socialist. I met her some time ago and she it is whom Miss Addams destines to help me in some scheme for the amelioration of the condition of the Italian "neighbors." Then at nine o'clock we are to have a residents' meeting, to divide up the duty of tending the door and showing people over the house.

Dr. Blount has just gone. We went up to Miss Addams' room and discussed a scheme which I haven't time to expound to-night. The

chief part of it is that I need
Meantime I am to take a cla
Do please help me with th
Mr. Cox' which she said sh
in New York, but I am sur
them by writing to the Art
Norah insisted that all were
opinion. Last night I interv
It is not to be started unless
nice-looking shop girls, a t
fat Jew, who looks like an

Well, here it is five minut
sheet and haven't said one w
think it played a very smal
something about it.

It gives me a big tugging
ocean to-night. Write again
heathen among many elect

a. Amanda Johnson, a graduate
inspector of the nineteenth ward fo
ment was the culmination of Jane

b. Wilfreda Brockway, a native
garten; at Jane Addams' instigatio
was John Linn, a former resident
secretary.

c. Frederick H. Deknatel, presi
charge of the Boys' Clubs at Hull
his wife. He remained a loyal supp
trustee. Amelie Robinson Valerio
as an inspector for the Chicago De

d. Lulu Watson had charge of
graduate of MIT, lived at Hull Hou
for the Western Electric Company.
and also worked with the Boys' Cl
George Ellsworth Hooker, who
resident who specialized in civic a
missions, he was for a time an edi
Wallace) taught evening classes an
graduate of Rockford College who
the gymnasium; she was also on th

particularly, but I shall mind meeting and speaking to Judge Landis, more than to any one person I can think of this minute. Once I had to dine with an old villain of a doctor whom I knew to be cruel, neglectful, lying and utterly callous to anything but the interests of the company he was working for. That is the only time I can remember feeling a pharisaical desire to draw my skirts away from contamination, but I shall feel with Judge Landis that I do not want even to look him in the eye and I shall hate to touch him. I have known some of his victims too well.

Elisabeth Gilman is looking after the O'Hare crusaders in Baltimore and trying to rope Clara in to help her.[a] Clara and Margaret had a lovely and much-needed holiday down in Virginia and were motored all the way back by Frances Howard so they did not have the fatigue of driving themselves. Margaret wrote that she spent all the first days sleeping or lying out in a sunny part of the beach. She looked so very badly after the school fuss that I was really shocked and I shall be much relieved when June is here and school closing. Mr. Simpson writes that the freshet was way beyond the usual line and washed away the steps of Norah's studio and all Peg's roses. She will have to choose a higher place for them. But worse than the flood was a wind which blew down my beloved crab apple tree, the one up under the elm against the terrace, a lovely thing which threw itself back against the hillside and was the center of the view from my attic window. I cannot bear to think it is gone.

This is the end of a long day at the typewriter and my shoulder is aching and I must stop.

With loads of love and with rememberings to Mrs. Bradford and the Lewis'.

Yours ever
Alice

a. Elisabeth Gilman, a Baltimore reformer and socialist, was a cofounder of the Maryland Civil Liberties Committee.

IN NOVEMBER 1922 Gerard Swope, who had recently become president of the General Electric Company, raised with Harvard's new School of Public Health (to which the industrial hygiene program had been transferred) the possibility of conducting a survey of health conditions at G.E. Cecil K. Drinker, professor of physiology, and Roger

I. Lee, professor of hygiene a
school, took charge of the neg
Swope into a large-scale study
The Administrative Board of
Lee as the person who should
plans independently with Han
to make a preliminary investig
that this survey would not tak
plated by the school. Later tha
whether the work could be dc
he only knew himself of Dr.
very highest regard." The foll
the conversation and promise
negotiations than he had in tl
included Hamilton, Lee, Cecil I
a chemical engineer who spec
visited the G.E. plant in Sche
week later Hamilton received
investigation.[26]

68 To Clara Landsberg

Dear Clara:

The meek do inherit the ea
This letter from Gerard Swop
back at once, for it is an impo
to you and not to Margaret,
worthy. It came yesterday an
surprise he said at once "That'
that I had supposed it was a m
have the inquiry put into its ha
upset when it appeared that I
was true, but that I had playe
"and I don't mind saying that
Now it's plain that Mr. Swope

business with what you do during your free time, it is for you to decide that yourself." Which shows a change of attitude as great as that of Dr. Lee who used not to know of my existence and now defers and flatters and is most honeyed. Dr. Drinker told me that things were to be quite different from now on, that Dr. Lee had put me on the executive committee and I would always be consulted. I said "Well, great is the power and glory of the General Electric Company" and he got red and stammered and then laughed and said "Well. Maybe. After all that's the way Roger Lee is."

I have just come back from showing these letters to Dr. Lee. As soon as I came in his secretary was sent to hasten tea and toast an English muffin expressly for me, the things not being quite ready yet for a committee meeting which was to follow. Then he read the letters, laughed genially and said that that was what he had understood all along. I said that I did not at all understand it, that I could see no use of two investigations and that if Mr. Swope accepted our report of Schenectady and consented to the scheme of having us do all the other plants, it would surely be foolish for me to carry on a separate investigation. I said, however, that the only answer I had made to Mr. Swope was that I should be glad to see him when he comes and that I was showing him, Dr. Lee, the letters as a protection to myself so that there could be no misunderstanding. At that he almost grovelled in his anxiety to reassure me that such a thing was impossible—Joe Aub having told me that Roger Lee thought I had deliberately double-crossed them. So here I am, with all kinds of kudos, with the whole thing back in my hands again, and with never a suspicion of fight or unpleasantness. If I had so planned it, instead of blindly blundering along it could not have come out better. I have gone over it so often in my mind and been tempted to do something to vindicate my rights, even to write Gerard and tell him please to see that I was given a proper share in the thing, but now I am so thankful that I decided not to do one single thing which could appear underhanded to them and over-touchy to Gerard. Dr. Drinker told me this morning when he came up to beg me to try to get the bigger plan across, that if I went in on it during my free time I must of course ask a proper salary. I had made up my mind to do that but I was glad to have the suggestion come from him.

It really was nice to have a letter to show which had this intimate, personal tone. At all the meetings Dr. Lee and Dr. Drinker would go on about their interviews with Gerard, of the manner of man he

seemed to be, of what one
said never a word, being
intimacy. But to a man lik
nobility.

Whichever way it comes
over and it is a relief, for
Her letter in answer to mi
deal about the many years
interest and evidently has
rest is bitter and assumes t
whom feelings do not coun
interested in all you write
news we ever get.

I cannot find my letter fi
same as yours. Miss Addam
visiting some of the people
and kept the letter open to
and quite free from asthm
they sailed from Marseille
course if I had gone I sho
in an even more unsatisfa
status is entirely changed.
Schenectady showed them
with and both Drinkers co
three could go to the plant
So it would have been a m

I am glad January is end
stop and I can catch up w
month. Along in the middl
and Bryn Mawr, all amou
bother. Bryn Mawr must

WHEN SWOPE met with a
ruary 8, he requested that
sachusetts, but mentioned r
at dinner he asked Alice I
possible, saying that "he w

program as Dr. Lee had put up to him, till he knew more about actual conditions." Swope insisted that Hamilton receive $25 per day plus expenses. She thought it was too much, but bowed to the "temptation to earn large gobs of money." (The income helped compensate for the severing of her connection with the Department of Labor under the Harding administration.) Swope never pursued the matter with the Harvard group, and Hamilton later reported that "he does not seem to have taken them seriously at all." Working as a consultant for G.E. for ten years, she found the company's health program admirable, but considered the work tame. Going from mercury mines in California to G.E. factories, she observed, was "like going from a strikers' mass meeting to the meeting of an infant class in Sunday School."[27]

Alice Hamilton was an active member of the advisory council of the Workers' Health Bureau (WHB), a New York City–based organization that from 1921 to 1928 sought to increase union interest in and responsibility for workers' health. Headed by Grace Burnham and Harriet Silverman, the WHB surveyed health conditions among workers, distributed literature about industrial diseases, and established a workers' health clinic. Its affiliated union locals contributed a per capita membership fee, but these funds were never sufficient to support the ambitious program to which the directors aspired. Though she considered the WHB "violently prejudiced on the side of labor, so that it cannot see straight," Hamilton tried on several occasions to raise funds for the organization from the American Fund for Public Service, popularly known as the Garland Fund. Managed by a group of prominent radicals and liberals, among them Roger Baldwin, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, and Norman Thomas, the Garland Fund had as its top priorities the support of organized labor and farmers and the protection of the rights of minorities. Although the board did not act favorably on the request for funds in Hamilton's letter to Lewis Gannett of February 26, 1923, it did assist the WHB over the years, mainly with emergency funds to help cover the organization's deficits.[28]

69 To Lewis Gannett

Dear Mr. Gannett:

Last week I went to New
authority on industrial pois
aminations made by the W
Union.[a] We met at their o
assembled in the 62nd Stre
found. I think it was the m
dressed. There were somet
Hayhurst said to me, it w
something that sanitarians h
arousing the interest of the
lems.

I want to urge very strong
ers' Health Bureau with gen
can get on its own feet. If i
suppose you might think yo
it, Mrs. Burnham and Miss
greatest usefulness and have
they showed me the installa
that they had spent $7000 or
for $4000. The meeting the o
are in making contacts with
experience in this sort of w
any class can be so vitally in
sacrifice an appreciable sum
meeting was greatly helped c
trade could be linked up wi

The gist of the whole matt
to be distributed to unpopul
agree. What I want to impr
Health Bureau has a task at
unions in this country were
might ask them to stand on
against disease, but as you k
rights and they need their m