

**A STUDY OF THE
POPULATION OF
MANHATTANVILLE,
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OF MANHATTANVILLE

BY

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of the region, with housing conditions and home life, with business interests, social activities, political organization and general ethical tendencies. It is obvious, therefore, that the present study is but a fragment of a complete investigation of neighborhood life. Its subject is a matter of sufficient interest and importance in itself, however, to merit presentation without the background of the various social institutions, which would undoubtedly make the sketch more vital and convincing. We have ventured, accordingly, to present a study of our neighbors, as illustrating the forces that are moulding the city.

Finally, it was believed that such an analysis of the conditions of neighborhood life might furnish material for a scientific program of social education in the school. A general outline of such a system was published by the writer in *Charities and The Commons* for September, 1906. The plan in brief is, to train the coming generation for effective citizenship by consistently developing their ability to observe and analyze the facts of the social life about them. Beginning with the institution closest to the child, namely, the Home, the instruction would proceed to consider local industries, civic control, and, finally, agencies for general culture. In this way the child at each stage in his educational career would be put in touch with those social organizations that most immediately affect his welfare. Thus the citizen and worker might become intelligent as to those local conditions that largely control his choice of occupation and political allegiance.

In such reading of the social book it is obvious that the neighborhood offers the pages most intelligible to one who would decipher the significance of a volume so vast as that presented by our great metropolitan

centers. The neighborhood displays cosmopolitan tendencies modified by local traditions. It shows urban conditions in scope as large as the mental vision, naturally provincial, can focus in one glance. The neighborhood thus forms the natural medium in passing from the limited circle of the home and school into the larger life of the local community and the national society of which it forms a part.

We have chosen for analysis a group of people who, because of a certain seclusion and historical continuity in the development of their neighborhood, may be said to be as homogeneous as any typical aggregation in a large city. At the same time the various influences to which the section has been subjected, and the different elements of which its population is composed, make it representative of the forces by which our cosmopolitan centers are evolved. Moreover, the fact that this is an old community, which is gradually being absorbed in the larger metropolis, lends an added interest to the description of its social economy. A few more years and the distinctive marks and neighborhood associations of Manhattanville will have been obliterated and replaced by the more commonplace economy of a section of New York. It is therefore worth while to attempt to define the characteristics of its inhabitants before they are swallowed up in the masses that are swarming over the island.

It is obvious that such a local group is not self-contained. It has manifold and intricate relations with the urban community about it. But this is true to a greater or less degree of every social group. It is equally true that every well-defined center of population is composed of individuals who, because of certain characteristics, react upon their social environment in a def-

nite way. Types are thus evolved in response to the peculiar stimuli of the social situation—types that can be distinguished by traits or mannerisms often peculiar to the group. Local expressions, traditions, fashions, standards of life thus differ almost from street to street in certain quarters of our cities. Upper Fifth Avenue and lower Third are socially distinct regions. So is Hell's Kitchen different from Cherry Hill; and even Morningside has not the same mien as Washington Heights. It is to be regretted that these finer variations have not been more systematically observed, analyzed and classified by our sociologists. A body of information upon important aspects of the psychology of social groups might thus be organized which would be invaluable for the development of a valid theory of social motives.

All neighborhoods are not to be dealt with in the same manner, as every successful politician and canvasser knows. The springs of conduct have their sources deep in the underlying strata of racial, economic, religious and cultural formation of which our social world is built up. And yet too many legislators, reformers and educators attempt to control, to incite and to elevate portions of our commonwealths and classes of the people as though they were all of one constitution and temperament. This seems to be an error in tactics that involves a waste of energy. There appears to be room, therefore, for more careful study of the habits and mind of the people in any obvious social group. We are coming to see that only by understanding collective human motives can we wisely attempt to satisfy and direct them.

This study was begun in the autumn of 1904, and was continued for two years, while the writer was a resident in the neighborhood. It was resumed after two years'

absence, when the shifting of population had made obvious changes in the social situation. It is clear, therefore, that the section could not be described both as it was, say in 1905, and as it is to-day. Much of the statistical data could not be obtained for the present time, because no comprehensive census more recent than that of June, 1905, has been made. It seemed wisest, accordingly, to give a picture of the region as it was at the former date, illustrating the social tendencies by changes that have since occurred. The main purpose after all is to define, if possible, the characteristic "flavor" of the little community that is so rapidly being absorbed by the advancing tides of urban life. This is perhaps more essential than locating the total number of foreign households at the date of publication; and does not greatly differ from the retrospective procedure in any investigation based upon government statistics. Moreover, we are convinced that some such interpretation of official returns for considerable numbers is more satisfactory than an attempt at instant accuracy by means of personal canvass.

Even in such a limited presentation of facts, contributions from many sources have been used. The study in the main is based upon a transcript of the returns of the Federal Census of 1900, obtained through the courtesy of the Tenement House Department; and upon the Board of Health enumeration of 1905, secured through the kindly offices of the Registrar. Lesser sources are noted in the text, as are also works of reference from which suggestions have been obtained.

The writer wishes to express his indebtedness especially to Professor Giddings, with whose help and direction this much-interrupted study was pursued. To Dr. K. H. Claghorn, of the Tenement House Department,