

PROFESSIONAL REVIEW.

"WINDOWS ON HENRY STREET."*

"Windows on Henry Street," by Miss Lillian D. Wald, is the continuation of the story of "The House on Henry Street" since 1915, and those who are already acquainted through that absorbing book with the story of the foundation of that New York Settlement, will eagerly welcome its continuation in the present volume, written at the House-on-the-Pond, Saugatuck, Connecticut, and Miss Wald tells us in her foreword that "a protracted illness and slow convalescence have given her unusual detachment from administrative duties, affording opportunity to relate her experience and observations over an eventful period."

The Real Significance of Settlements.

Describing why the book was written, Miss Wald says that "settlements appear frequently in current fiction and in serious publications, but there seems to be limited comprehension of their real significance. . . . The New Oxford Dictionary has perhaps most simply and clearly defined the settlement as 'an establishment in the poorer quarter of a large city, where educated men and women live in daily contact with the working class for co-operation in social reform.' But 'settlement' in this sense is a comparatively new word; it is probably unavoidable that sentimentalists and romanticists should see only the outer expression and never realise how simple and logical and yet how significant is the impulse of live-minded people to come together for spiritual adventure."

"Newcomers to a settlement are often surprised by the natural simplicity of the household, the happy relations that grow out of this kind of living together. At Henry Street, our experience has been rich in the fellowship that is inevitable in a united company. The recognition and the beauty and pleasures of friendship thrive well when the tie that binds is coloured with the deeper and more significant purposes of life. Men and women differing widely in their philosophy live together harmoniously, respecting the convictions of all who gather around. Part of the week's usual routine is a 'Residents' Meeting' at which some question of current importance is frankly presented and discussed. A vote on the majority opinion is never taken."

Respect the First Essential to Sound Human Relations.

Miss Wald holds that "intelligence, disinterestedness, and respect for people will show how best they can be served. Stagnation is sure to follow an inelastic programme or a belief in a single road which all of us must follow.

"I hold," she writes, "to my faith that the first essential to sound human relations is respect. No one who has that sense of respect will patronise, or insult, or feel alien to, human beings. It is not only good common-sense, but the basis for friendship and understanding that endure. . . . It is rare indeed to find an experienced settlement worker who does not feel kinships with all peoples. In thought and practice we live internationally. In such an atmosphere one cannot feel alien to any people. I was not surprised when a young negro, wishing to thank me for a kindness, said simply, 'You have been a mother to me!' With this security in human kinship astonishing riches are unfolded—old traditions, old arts, and new ideas, brought from other lands by other people."

The Negro Colony.

"The coming of the Negro Colony to our neighbourhood has often given us very rare delights. The coloured man who took care of our furnace for many years, and who was

truly religious, called on us at frequent intervals for co-operation in organising a congregation.

"Frederick's congregation first met in a little old store, with dingy paper hanging in strips from the walls. After the place had been cleaned, in preparation for the first service, Frederick arranged for a loan of Henry Street sheets to drape the tattered walls. His opening remarks at that first service have never been forgotten:—

"Bretheren an' Sisters, dis am jus' a simple church meeting-house, but we never would 'a' had this if it hadn't a been for the settlement, which is our bes' frien'. But it's ours, and I'se glad to see you all here. I didn't ask the President of the United States to come, for he wouldn't a' come. I didn't ask the Governor of New York to come, fer he wouldn't a' come. I didn't ask the Mayor [Jimmy Walker] to come, fer he's busy wid udder t'ings. But I did ask Jesus to come, an' He's here!"

The Happy Home Life.

Describing the happy home life often found in the neighbourhood of the settlement in spite of unfavourable conditions, Miss Wald writes:—"The gaiety, the humour and the happy home life frequently found under hard conditions have not changed with the many changes in our neighbourhood. In a shabby, tumbling wooden house near us live a deserted wife and her three boys. The father has established another household, and his earnings are divided between the two families. Despite the danger of the roof falling in, the rooms are always scrupulously clean, and some treasures from Bohemia that the mother has preserved give colour and atmosphere. The eldest son, now twelve years old, takes the responsibility of protector, tender with his mother, careful of his two brothers. The sweetness of that home and the fineness of the lives lived there can scarcely be exaggerated."

People who Crossed our Threshold.

Referring to the people who have crossed the threshold of the settlement Miss Wald divides them into "those who have become part of the very texture of the house, those who have tarried but a little while, those who have come from far away lands, and those who have come because word had reached them that they might find in this place help and surely sympathy. We have had a continuity of family life, developing a fellowship rich beyond description or appraisal. Varied are the occupations of the residents, though the first requirement for eligibility is not the candidate's vocation but his interest in social progress and his participation, at least to some degree, in efforts in that direction. And of course, a sense of humour."

First in the procession is placed Florence Kelley, for twenty-five years an inspiration, and often a prod, but always brilliant, even at the breakfast table. "She goaded others with the whips of her wit, her quickness, her bottomless sympathy, her readiness to act wherever new danger menaced the child or the people whom she believed were imposed upon by out-dated legislation or other discriminations. She was responsible for great 'ethical gains' through legislation. . . . She was intolerant of superficiality, of selfishness, of inaction, and her tongue could be very sharp. Once I was trying to apologise for a woman who had disappointed those who had expected much of her, saying, 'Well, she had an open mind.' 'That's what I object to,' flashed Florence Kelley. 'It's open top and bottom.'"

And here is a reference to dear Lavinia Dock, who at one time was a resident and worker at the settlement. "Lavinia Dock, pioneer nurse, pioneer suffragist, has shared in almost countless measures that have increased the nurse's education and opportunities. An educator herself, her *Materia Medica* has gone through repeated

* Little, Brown and Company, Boston.

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