



The Spirit of Youth and City Streets (Illini Book)

Jane Addams

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We may either smother the divine fire in youth or we may feed it, Jane Addams writes. Suffused with Addams's abiding compassion, tempered with her pragmatism and humor, and shot through with anecdotes of her own experiences with young people, *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets* is a level-headed assessment of the challenges facing urban youth and the most effective ways to meet them. When this book was first published in 1909, Addams was the most famous woman in America. A celebrity and a spiritual leader, she was widely regarded as practical, realistic, and endowed with a special insight into the problems of urban America. *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets* - her favorite of her own books - establishes Addams as an accomplished writer as well as a reformer. In this compact volume she examines the causes for the discontent of youth in the city, chiding educators for their persistent blindness to youth's most obvious needs. Addams argues for the importance of providing direction and focus - for example, through public recreation, practical education, and experiences in the arts - for the pent-up energies of young men and women. disaffection and alienation in an industrial world. At the same time, she rejects the hereditary explanations for delinquency that prevailed in her day. Allen F. Davis's introduction provides a biographical profile of Addams and a commentary on her importance as a writer and a social activist.

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