



The Battle with the Slum

Jacob Riis

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The Battle with the Slum Jacob Riis

Jacob A. Riis (1849-1941), pioneer of social documentary photography and journalism, occupies a singular position in the history of social journalism. Jacob A. Riis spent his life bringing to light the societal effects of urban decay and poverty in 19th century America. Here is presented his 1901 book "The Battle with the Slum", an arresting account of New York City's blighted areas. His exploration of the squalor found in Lower East Side tenements was groundbreaking. In the 1880's, up to 335,000 people lived within one square mile, making it the most densely populated place on earth. 10 to 15 persons occupied one room, creating rampant disease, hunger, and crime. By writing such captivating reportage on the conditions, public attention eventually lead to political action. Written with a literary eloquence rarely seen in journalistic writing of the time, "The Battle with the Slum" turns a documentarian's eye upon the roots of poverty in America.

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