



Where 600 working girls live.

with us more than five years, many have remained for longer periods, while at least one who came when the doors were first thrown open is with us still.

"People are always asking me if the house pays its running expenses. Yes. Now that the property is paid for and there is no mortgage interest, we have a small profit. This is put right back into the house. Last summer we did over nearly one hundred rooms, renewed much of the furniture, and put by one thousand dollars toward a fund of twenty thousand which will be needed to install new machinery at the end of twenty years.

"Another question that is continually coming to me is if the Franklin Square House is a philanthropy. Only in so much as the purchase of the property. The guests pay their way, and pay for what they get; but at the same time they get a great deal for what they pay. Probably most of the girls here feel as do the students of Wellesley, Radcliffe, and other similar institutions,—grateful that intelligent philanthropy has provided advantages that they could not enjoy under private enterprise, while at the same time they are allowed to contribute toward these advantages all that they can afford to pay.

"I freely concede that such institutions as the Franklin Square House are only palliative. But while we are waiting for that far-off millennium when every girl can attend school without the need of "working her way through," and every employer shall pay wages so ample that every working girl can have a safe and comfortable living place, let us not forget that there are thousands and tens of thousands of girls who must live not on what they ought to have, but on what they can get.

"Recently the generosity of a friend made it possible for the corporation to purchase the property on the corner of Washington street. That gives us the entire block facing Franklin Square. This spring we expect to begin an addition sufficiently large to double the capacity of the house. We aim to have this addition contain principally single rooms. The greatest demand is for low-priced single rooms, and we are planning to meet it as far as possible. Our annex will be ten stories high, with a roof garden; fireproof, of course. Though the halls will not be so wide nor the rooms so large as in the old house, they will be thoroughly comfortable, sanitary, and sightly."

**M**ANY of the unique features in the management of the Franklin Square House are due to the invention and kindly understanding of Miss Castine C. Swanson, the director or superintendent. Four years ago, before she had passed her twenty-fifth birthday, Miss Swanson came to the house as assistant superintendent. Though she found a considerable number of vacant rooms, applicants had to be turned away because they could not afford to pay for such expensive quarters. Realizing that it would be unfair to let large rooms with two windows for the same price charged for small rooms with one window, the young assistant superintendent set to work to solve the problem.

The result is that now rooms are all let according to the salary or income of the applicant. A girl earning more than ten dollars a week is not given one of the lowest-priced rooms. Those are reserved for lower-paid wage earners. This plan for allotting rooms has proved so satisfactory that similar hotels all over the world have adopted it.

The next problem Miss Swanson attacked was that of the employees of the Franklin Square House. It seemed unethical to her to look out for the comfort and well being of the employees of other people, while neglecting those at home. After a few months she managed to get a large parlor furnished in which chambermaids, waitresses, and other help receive their visitors. She also had the library opened to them on the same terms as to guests of the house. Next she established the rule of giving them half of each national holiday. On these days guests are asked to volunteer in serving tea. This arrangement has not only pleased the help, but has come to be looked upon as a social opportunity by the guests.

All sorts of calamities were predicted for the house three years ago when, because of the resignation of the superintendent, Miss Swanson was left in full charge. She had just passed her twenty-fifth birthday, and those

who had not had an opportunity to watch her work in the house closely declared she was much too young and inexperienced. The trustees spent a year looking for a better woman for the position. It proved a record year for the house, and prosperity, general peace, and content among the guests and the help. At the end of the year Miss Swanson was unanimously chosen superintendent.

A little more than twenty years before she had landed in America as the baby daughter of Swedish immigrants. In those twenty years she had climbed from the steerage of an ocean liner, working her way through college, to the head of this great woman's hotel.

**O**NE of the chief reasons for my success," says Miss Swanson, "is that I have been both a working girl and a girl student. I paid many of my own expenses while taking my college course. Because of that experience I believe I understand both the girl students and the working women. It has always seemed to me an ideal arrangement, having both classes together. The working girls are unconsciously an encouragement to the students, and the students to the working girls.

"Most of the girls who come here as students expect to earn their living, even if they haven't already begun. Coming in touch with the girls who are already in business, they learn to look at the problems of life in a practical way. The working woman almost unconsciously thinks of her mental improvement. During the last winter I organized a musical club, and many of the most helpful members are women who are employed. At Christmas we did some social work, and here again my ablest assistants were the working girls. This is a work that we hope to take up more extensively as time goes on; for Dr. Perin and the entire corporation are anxious to have the Franklin Square House a power for good in the neighborhood.

"During the winter we have weekly entertainments, to which the neighborhood is invited. While the admission is by ticket only, all that is necessary is for persons wishing to attend to step into the office and ask for tickets, as many as they can use. After these entertainments there is dancing in the private ballroom, to which any visitor properly introduced to the management is welcomed.

"Yes, many people are surprised at our not having a long list of strict rules. Why should business women and girl students who are old enough to be trusted away from home be watched? We have had no difficulty in keeping out what is known as the undesirable class. In the first place, only women with some definite employment are taken on a permanent basis. In the second, if these unfortunate women did get in they wouldn't stay very long, for the simple reason that they wouldn't feel at home.

"Though there are many young girls living here, we have no rule about their coming or going. Of course I keep a watch over the inexperienced ones, that I may be able to offer suggestions if they appear to be in danger of mak-



Castine C. Swanson, the superintendent.

ing mistakes. It is very seldom that I have to do anything more than have a little chat with a girl in my office. I try to get her point of view, then make her see mine. I get them to see why for their own sakes as well as for the sake of the house they should avoid even an appearance of evil.

"We have no trouble about guests staying out late; though there is no rule against it. The elevator stops running at ten o'clock, and that seems sufficient to get them in before that time. None of us seem to be willing to climb stairs these days. Though the front door is closed at eleven, one of the two night watchmen is always on hand to open it at the sound of the bell.

"The house has never been so full as during the last twelve months. Not only have all the permanent

rooms been filled, but frequently we have been forced to put beds in the green room and in several of the private parlors, as well as use the empty wards in the hospital to accommodate transients."

**W**HEN Dr. Perin proposed forming a "resident council" of twelve guests to advise with the management about the various problems of the house there was a torrent of warning against such an unheard of innovation. Managers of various hotels assured him that the less he allowed the guests to meddle with the affairs of the Franklin Square House the better would be his chances for success. As this was one of the features of his dream, Dr. Perin persisted. As a result the resident council is now one of the established features. The members are all permanent guests, elected once each year by the permanent guests. They advise with Dr. Perin and Miss Swanson, make suggestions, and though they do not hesitate to find fault both the president and the director believe them to be helpful.

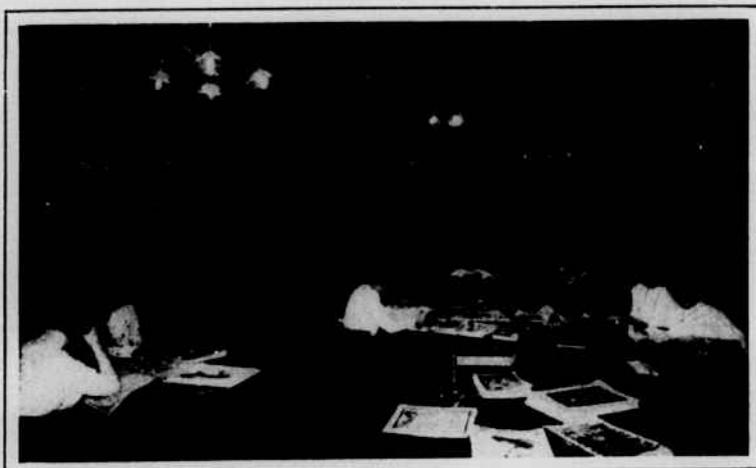
The hospital is one of the unique features which so far has been more talked about than used; for the general health of the house has been uniformly good. The resident nurse is always on duty to give her services, and a physician makes calls as often as necessary. All of this is without extra cost to permanent guests, and medicine is sold at cost.

The fact that no girl is allowed to "go broke" is one point in the management that is a continual cause of surprise to social workers. When a girl loses her place another is found for her. If she gets without money before this permanent position is secured, work in the house is given her, something that will enable her to keep even, not fall behind in her board. Unless the girl tells her trouble, even her roommate knows nothing about it.

The provision for reception rooms in which the guests can receive their friends is unusually generous. Besides a large and handsomely furnished public parlor, a commodious writing room, and a comfortable reception room, there are twelve private parlors. These may be reserved by simply asking at the central office, naming the date and hour. Each guest is entitled to have a parlor reserved once each week.

The ballroom may be reserved in the same way. When a reservation of the ballroom is reported to Miss Swanson she invites several of the older guests to act as chaperons. Besides a piano, there is an orchestrelle with three hundred records in the ballroom. Almost every evening some of the girls dance for an hour or two after dinner. The private dining room may also be had free of charge by any guest wishing to entertain.

During the present season an unusual number of weddings have taken place in the Franklin Square House. Girls without homes of their own have preferred to be married in the public parlor, or Haynes



One end of the library and reading room.

Hall, rather than go to a church or the home of a friend. Dr. Perin performs the ceremony, and as a rule a meal is served to the wedding party in the private dining room.

**T**HE cost of room and board for women wage earners at the Franklin Square House ranges from four and a quarter to nine dollars a week; for students who are not also wage earners, from five and a quarter to ten. Table board for everybody is three dollars a week. Four and a quarter dollars a week means two in a medium-sized room. Nine dollars means a large room with private bath for one person. The same room when used by two is six dollars each, room and board.

Board means three hot meals a day. For breakfast there is a choice between a cooked and uncooked cereal, meat and eggs, or fish and eggs, two hot breads, tea, coffee, and milk, cream for coffee and tea, and all the butter desired. Lunch is a choice between two soups, a meat or fish, two vegetables, two kinds of bread, tea and coffee, butter, and a dessert. Dinner is a choice between two soups, a meat or a fish, two vegetables, a salad, two kinds of bread, tea and coffee, butter, and a dessert.