

GIRLS' COMMUNITY HOMES BANISH PRUNES AND THE BLUES



MISS DAISY NIRDLINGER OF ST. LOUIS

Reasonable Liberty Is Found In Institutions That Are Now Taking the Places of Dismal Boarding Houses—The Rules Are Simple and the Charges Only \$3.00 a Week to Girls Earning Less Than \$10.00 Per Week

RULES OF GIRLS' COMMUNITY HOMES.

Here are some facts about the community homes for girls, now becoming a national movement.

There is but one rule: "Be charitable in your speech about your fellow guests"—the other rules being formulated by the girls themselves.

Each Miss has her own bed and place for her clothes.

Everything has been done to remove anything that might give a "boarding house atmosphere."

The girls pay an average of but \$3 a week for clean rooms and excellent board, and no girls making more than \$10 a week are admitted.

The girls dictate their own menus. They sit four at a table. Their food is of the best. They are allowed to do their washing in the basement.

They have parlor with player piano and games, reading room and dining room in which to entertain guests.

In the big flower-covered yard are trysting places between rose bushes, and spooning is encouraged, each girl being allowed to have as many callers as she desires and no restrictions placed on her as to her hours.

By a Member of the New York Settlement Workers' League.

When systematic sociology was taken up in the United States for the first time, the most serious problem that confronted the workers was the girl who makes less than \$8 a week.

While in many states minimum wage laws were passed this did not materially clear the situation, as the minimum established averaged about \$6 and no girl could comfortably support herself on this sum.

The social workers thereupon realized that the unmarried working girl was a problem to which they should devote their entire time to as it was manifest that she was subjected to greater temptation than any class with which they had to deal.

The idea presented itself of having these girls band together in homes and in Y. W. C. A. quarters, but this met with only partial success. The majority of girls refused to live in the homes and while the Y. W. C. A. homes have been successful still there are many girls who would not live in them.

The girls beside wanting a home atmosphere also desired freedom from undue restraint as to the hours they must keep and a place where they might entertain callers. Even the best of girls objected to the religious homes. While the majority of them were of some faith and often visited church on Sunday they objected to a sort of religious espionage that meant bed at 9 p. m., after night prayers. They also objected at censorship of their hours, beliefs, habits, choice of young men escorts, etc. It was therefore apparent that to reach the young woman living alone in the world, some other plan must be adopted.

NEW PLAN LAUNCHED.

After years of experimenting along this line with but slight success, a plan has just been adopted that seems to solve all the objections of the girls and give them homes that they actually learn to love. In several cities charitable women have fitted up houses where the girls may live under their own rule at \$3 a week for room and board.

In St. Louis, one of the first cities to adopt this new plan, a three-story brick house with a large yard filled with roses, plants and shrubbery, was selected. The first day it was occupied by ten girls who left behind them memories living some of them four in a room and eating where best they might.

Expecting to find many hampering rules, the girls found but one—be charitable in your speech about your fellow guests. A simple rule indeed, but one if enforced would spell success for the home and prevent the small and petty quarrels that seem constant where a number of girls come together. The question of other rules and regulations was left entirely to the girls. In fact, they are a self-governing aggregation of young business women.

There are seven bedrooms in the home, each with three or more windows. Each girl has her individual bed and plenty of space for her possession. But downstairs is where they found the greatest conveniences, for three rooms are given over to their collective use. One is a parlor with a player-piano and many rolls of music. Another is the library with a reading table, magazines and books. The third is the dining room, where the girls sit four at a table. Each room is furnished neatly and harmoniously.

Throughout the home everything has been done to get away from the boarding house idea. There is no "snooping" of a landlady about the halls ready to prey upon the girl who has an electric iron under her bed of the Miss who does her week's



MISS JANE ADDAMS

washing in the bathtub. There is no one to scold the girl who comes home late and has to ring the doorbell because she forgot her latch-key.

The girls are seated four at a table, again to get away from the boarding house idea. Think of the difference between having to rush to a long table where a dozen others are seated, trying their best to eat everything in sight before you get there, and sitting comfortably at an individual table with three other girl companions.

A REAL ATTRACTION.

But here is the real attraction of the home—the rule that should win any young girl's heart and make many desirous of living in such a home. The girls may have as many beaux as they want to call on them at any reasonable time they shall appoint. When the parlor fills, the late arrivals may sit in the library and if overflows others may have the dining room to themselves. But better than all for love-making are the trysting places in the yard—chairs placed between rosebushes, swings and benches.

Of course, the home believes in spooning. It is necessary and it leads to matrimony. After all that is the whole idea of the venture—to

keep the girl pure and innocent until she is lead away by some desirable young man to her own home. And so love-making is encouraged, not by word of mouth, but by giving the girls broad privileges and arranging those handy little trysting places beneath the rose bushes. The settings are such that it seems that little D. Cupid himself had been permitted to arrange this important part of the girl's home life.

What could be more romantic than a pretty girl seated beneath a rose-bush, the scent of the flowers, the beauty of the maiden and the soft rays of the moon inspiring love. It was a wise designer that thought of such things as an adjunct of such a home—a motherly woman that perhaps some 30 or 40 years ago sat beneath the rose bushes on some old-fashioned farm and heard the words of love.

The trysting plan has worked successfully, and the beaux of the cities have been attracted by the many desirable features of this home. For every girl living in the city by herself, with parents either dead or far away, there is some lonesome young man, living alone in a rooming house and longing for such companionship as one may find with the sweet girls of these community homes.

Again there is no harsh restric-

tion on the lovers. There is no landlady going about slamming doors and remarking that it is high time that young girls were abed, all because the light in the parlor is burning and the gas meter in the cellar is patiently recording the amount.

NO HARSH RESTRICTIONS.

There is also the absence of that bane of all romance—little brother Willie, who either sits in the parlor and tells his sister's secrets or hides beneath the lawn bench and the next day uses evidence obtained in this place of concealment in inducing his sister into giving him a quarter to go to the picture show.

The majority of the girls living in these homes work in department stores and earn less than \$10 a week. In fact, girls making more than that amount are barred as they would be a wise investment for them to board at such a home and pay but \$3 a week. The girls in the home may save by doing their own washing in the basement, which has been fitted up with all necessary appliances, including an electric washing machine and wringer.

The food served in the girls' home is of the best, for it is apparent that girls who work hard all day must be well nourished. Supplies are bought in quantities at wholesale prices.



MRS. HELEN GOULD SHEPARD

The menu is changed daily and an attractive feature that distinguishes the home from boarding houses is that the girls may dictate their own menus and have just what they want. Could anything be more ideal than to be allowed to dictate in your boarding house just exactly what you desire to eat?

Imagine how quickly the first council of girls at one of these

homes would place an eternal ban on prunes, rice pudding and cabbage. Imagine how quickly they would elevate fresh fruit and vegetables, ice cream and pies to honor places on their menus.

A sample breakfast menu at one of these new community homes is: cereal, egg any way you want it cooked; home-baked bread, coffee, tea or cocoa. For dinner, soup, one

kind of meat, three kinds of vegetables and dessert. Sunday's dinner includes roast meats with dressing, mashed or baked or creamed new potatoes, salad, ice tea, coffee and ice cream.

THE DAILY DIET.

Sunday is a great day in one of these homes. One of the most attractive features is that girls may sleep as late as they want and then be assured of getting breakfast, imagine living in a boarding house and longing to sleep late, only to be awakened and told that in 15 minutes breakfast will be over. Generally this call comes about 7:30, just when a maiden who has been at the dance the night before is longing for undisturbed rest.

On arising the girls go to the kitchen and prepare their own breakfast. The big meal is served in the afternoon and the girls prepare their own luncheon in the evening, the latter rule allowing them to eat when they are hungry.

During the summer months dances are held in the parlor to the music of the player piano, while candy pullings in the kitchen are winter prospects. A reading club already has been formed by the girls and each night those who have not been calling, sit about in the library and sew while one of their number reads. Those who wish to write find plenty of material in the library.

Mrs. L. Burg is the "mother" in the first home tried in St. Louis, having been affectionately awarded that name by the girls. And Mrs. Burg is a real mother to the girls. Notice, she has the title of "Mrs." showing that she is qualified to manage the home, having the maternal knowledge that will benefit these girls. And to them she acts as a mother, not prying about and snooping as might the proprietor of a boarding house, but always loving and kind, keeping secrets in her heart and becoming confidential with the girls only when the opportunity is offered by her confidants opening the conversation.

Many a time she has an opportunity to offer to these girls the harboring bosom of a mother. The girl who has been censured by the door-walker, the Miss who has been little or disappointed—her bosom is the storehouse for all these little confidences and her most pleasant duty is that of finding a way out of the difficulty for the girls.

And how proud she is of her girls. How it pleases her to see them well dressed and recognize the glances of admiration in the eyes of boy admirers who call at the house. She aids the girls in buying materials and making dresses, she aids in remodeling and keeping these dresses in repair and she is in many ways a mother to them.

It is planned to have many more such homes in big cities and the thing now lacking is the amount necessary to rent and furnish such places, they becoming self-supporting on the small rental of \$3 a week paid by the girl boarders.