

PROVIDING YOUNG GENIUS WITH BED AND BOARD

New Plan Projected by Florence McMillan, New York Pianist, for Housing Music Students—The Strides Made by the Club After a Year's Work—Two Apartment Houses Transformed into Dwellings

GENIUS, in former days, was accounted to have its best and most fitting habitat in the confines of a garret. And there, uncultivated and alone, it was presumed to thrive, mushroom-like, into a healthy maturity.

But that was in the past, when garrets were tabooed by the bourgeoisie and gladly apportioned to the impecunious and struggling musician or artist. Not so now. Under present living conditions, in New York, garrets are at a premium, to be afforded only by the opulent. Genius has thus been thrown willy-nilly, out of its accustomed lodging place and would have to go a-begging on the street, were it not for those ever-present and thoughtful souls who busy themselves for the good of others.

Each winter thousands of aspiring music students, talented lights of America's backwoods and hinterland, come thronging to New York, thirsty for study. Before the war, when the city could prepare for these young visitors, and rows of houses sprang up miraculously overnight, so small a swelling of population was hardly incommensurate. With the straitened housing conditions, a serious question as to the living quarters of music students has arisen. In the city, beyond boarding houses, most of which are filled to capacity, there are only two recognized homes for women students—the Three Arts Club and the Studio Club. In fact, the last few seasons, to the writer's personal knowledge, hundreds of students who have come to New York to study, have been forced to return to their homes, because they were unable to find quarters.

Realizing this condition, last year, a group of men and women, headed by Florence McMillan, well-known pianist and coach, and including Mrs. Lila Haskell Burdick, Mrs. Clarence Burdick, wife of the attorney of MUSICAL AMERICA, Winifred Richardson and Clara Dubois, started a movement for the housing of women students, and attempted an experiment which proved so successful that the first year has seen further plans for a rapid enlargement of the work.

The first experiment included the buy-



1



2



3

No. 1—The Parnassus Club, a New Home For Students in New York. No. 2—A View of Two of the Students Rooms. No. 3—The New House, Bought to Extend the Club.

Photo by E. F. Foley, N. Y.

house was opened on September 1st for students. The rapidity with which the club has filled and the long list of waiting applicants, has proved its need. Besides which, the experiment has been counted a success in every way.

Any Students Accepted

Although the greater number of students are musical, students in any art are accepted, as well as a limited number of business women. It has been found that the mingling of students in all branches is a particularly fortunate side of the experiment. As practicing is permitted only in one portion of the building, and the practicing schedules of music students are definitely assigned, literary and college students are able to pursue their work uninterrupted by the strains of Clementi.

In the administration of the house, only the most necessary restrictions are made. The club is in fact a self-governing body. The girls elect officers at large and these, with chosen representatives from each apartment (the unit of government), and floor, determine the proceedings for the members. To supervise the work a staff of experienced and capable women have been chosen including Eva Woolfolk, Mrs. Gilbert Coleman, Ethel Sliter, Mary Frances Frazer and Georgiana Munroe.

Applications for membership in the club are received at any time and are considered in the order of receipt. Board and room are provided for the girls at prices ranging from ten to fifteen dollars a week, the privileges of the house being withdrawn from any member who proves herself unworthy.

Beyond the very splendid work of providing living quarters for the students in New York, the club has become a social experiment of much interest, and one which extended further, might give a broader aspect to professional artists of all sorts. Here are mingled young women entering upon practically every type of work, who, constantly thrown together in friendly relationship, have had the occasion to experience edifying and very helpful companionship. In the case of music students, for instance, though a large part of the students are from the Institute of Musical Art, there are other students from innumerable studios, and the constant and frank comparison of methods which goes on among the girls, can hardly fail to be helpful. Entertainments, parties and "shows" are given by the girls frequently, the various "floors" vying for honors; this season, the writer was authoritatively informed, the "third floor" carried off the full measure of honors. Another interesting item is the weekly Sunday evening meeting, when there is playing or singing by the girls, an address by one of the members or an outside guest or a round-table

ing of six-story elevator apartment house on 115th Street, near Riverside Drive, not far from the Institute of Musical Art and near Columbia University. A consultation with Frank Damrosch secured his assistance and advice, and his promises of assistance. And Mr. Damrosch, also requested, further started the organization on its way, by naming the house and its future inmates—the Parnassus Club.

Alterations were made on the entire house—all the apartments were turned into living quarters, and the ground floor was turned into reception rooms for the girls, a dining room, and offices, and the

"Scenes from Childhood" opened the evening and Chopin's B Minor Sonata closed it. In between were an Intermezzo and Rhapsodie of Brahms, the "Westminster Abbey" and "Fileuse" of Gabriel Grovlez, Arthur Hinton's "Passing of Summer," "Fireflies," and "Country Dance," Palmgren's lovely "May Night" and his impressive "The Sea" and a "Bohemian Caprice" of Smetana. As encores the pianist gave Schumann's "Nachtstück" and a Chopin waltz.

Intelligence and taste always lend a distinction to Miss Goodson's playing. There is little to be said of it now that has not been repeatedly chronicled in the past and the years of her absence have robbed it of none of its characteristic qualities. Her success last week was most decided in pieces which, like Brahms's C Major Intermezzo, Grovlez "Fileuse" and her husband's "Fireflies" demanded fleetness and delicate charm. There were commendable features in her Schumann, though it was not predominantly emotional and the "Childhood" episodes were surveyed rather through the spectacles of a "grown-up." On the other hand Miss Goodson did nothing better than the commanding introductory bars of the *largo* in Chopin's sonata. It had the ring of a lofty invocation.

H. F. P.

GOODSON'S RETURN AWAKENS DELIGHT

Eminent English Pianist Given Warm Welcome After Long Absence

Heartily welcomed by a large gathering Katharine Goodson was heard in this city for the first time in four years at Aeolian Hall, Monday evening, Feb. 16. The eminent English pianist has for many years occupied a place all her own in the affections of American music-lovers by virtue not only of her artistic gifts but her rarely ingratiating personality as well. There are but three or four other women pianists in whom the public takes similar pleasure. That her long absence had diminished her popularity not in the least became clear the moment she stepped on the stage and the repeated displays of enthusiasm during the recital emphasized this point.

Miss Goodson's program placed the weightier matter at either end, the lighter in the middle. Schumann's



Florence McMillan, Originator of the Club

session. When the plan was first formulated it was thought to have only music students, but the committee in charge and Dr. Frank Damrosch, deemed it far wiser to open the house to other workers so that students might profit by the broadening of constant association with young women in different types of works.

So the ideal conceived only last season by a small group has been richly fulfilled. The interest in it has grown apace. And now the six-story building has proved far too small for eager entrants. Another house has already been bought on the same street, this time an eight-story elevator house, which is to enable the extension of the Parnassus Club and the receiving of the hundreds of other would-be members.

Has Housed 100 Girls

The club, this year, has provided for the housing of about 100 girls, and there has been a constant and long waiting list. The purchase of the new house will provide for more than 150 new students, and it is hoped later on to further extend the system by the purchase of more houses.

Once again, hereby, New York, has proved itself a city wherein the old order truly changeth. If the bourgeoisie has stepped into sacred ground and taken possession of the garrets and attics, their own newest and most up-to-date houses are being taken from them, and turned into Parnassian dwellings to make way for aspiring young genius.

F. R. GRANT.