

31 SWEET GIRL GRADUATES 35 YEARS AFTER

The 1872 Class of the San Francisco Girls High School has met every year since in Reunion.

AND THOUGH SOME OF THEM ARE GRANDMOTHERS NOW, ONLY FOUR ARE MISSING

It is not uncommon for girl graduates to hold class reunions. But when a class of High School girls meet in annual reunion year after year for thirty-five years their alumni association becomes unique. Thirty-one girls graduated from the San Francisco Girls' High School in 1872. Twenty-seven of them are preparing to meet in celebration of the thirty-fifth anniversary of the day when they wore white dresses and read essays. The four missing members of the now famous class are dead.

By Mary I. Connell

HOW many of the girl graduates of this year of grace, 1907, will be able to collect their scattered numbers and have a class meeting in 1942, thirty-five years from now? Yet the class of 1872 from the San Francisco Girls' High School is preparing to hold its annual reunion, having kept up the custom for that number of years. The "girls" of '72 are grandmothers now—some of them—but they have not lost their class feeling nor the merry spirit of their school days. That explains why they look so young and why they have such jolly times when they meet every year around a bountiful lunch table. It is the heart that counts, and not the years.

They were thirty-one in number when they left their alma mater, and in all these years death has claimed but four. It was a strenuous year for the high school when in 1869 a class of one hundred and odd juniors clamored for admission, while the little brick building on the corner of Bush and Stockton streets could accommodate but a third of that number in addition to the middles and seniors. That old building belonged to a type of schoolhouse now obsolete, and consisted of an assembly room on the ground floor, with three small recitation-rooms above. Ellis H. Holmes was principal. Mrs. C. R. Beals, teacher of belles-lettres; Miss E. A. Cleveland, mathematics; Miss S. A. Barr, science, and Madame Virginie Brissac, French. Of this faculty none are now among the living. Miss Cleveland and Mrs. Beals having passed away during the year 1906.

As space and teaching force were inadequate to the handling of 100 new pupils, quarters for the overflow were found in the basement of the Temple

Emanuel, on Sutter street, and some additions were made to the faculty. Nevertheless it was a trying junior year. Going to school in a church, with pews for desks and a total lack of furniture and apparatus has its drawbacks. Various expedients were tried for equalizing conditions for the class as a whole, but some part of it was always in a state of discomfort. Sometimes the teachers were running from building to building for the recitation periods; sometimes the classes. Part of the time divisions A, B and C used to take turn and turn about in packing books and baggage and moving up to the main building, to stay a week. It was small wonder that conditions proved too much for one-third of the class, who dropped out at the close of the year. Better days appeared to be at hand, for a new High School building was ready to house the students in 1870, and the class of '72 hoped to finish its career without further migration. Vain hope. In 1871 the school moved again to the corner of Bush and Hyde streets. At the present day one can with difficulty recall how inconvenient the location was thirty years ago. The old Sutter street horse cars were the only ones which came within nine or ten blocks of the place. The next nearest were the old horbails, which stopped at Dupont and Sutter streets. (It was Dupont street, and not Grant avenue, in those days.) Larkin street was a desert of sand, with a few scattered houses at intervals of blocks. Most of the pupils had long distances to walk, as the car lines were remote and transfers unknown.

Platt's Hall on Montgomery street was for many years the scene of the annual graduation exercises, but in 1871 a change was made to Union Hall, then the largest in the city. White Swiss was the regulation attire and every girl wanted as long a train as possible. On the following night came the class party, and then indeed it was felt that girlhood had been left behind and life had really begun.

The eyes of the present day would not look with favor on the dress of that period, especially for young girls. Neutral colors were in vogue and the regulation "best dress" was of black grain silk made with elaborate flouncing and full overskirt. A woman of 50 would not today wear a costume then considered suitable for a girl of 18. It was the era of excessive trimming, thirty yards being sometimes required for a costume. Every variety of ruffle, pleat, puff and panier was seen, sometimes several varieties upon one garment. This elaboration of effect extended to all parts of the costume.

Hair dressing was complicated. Braids, puffs, curls and coronets were worn, and if necessary were added to the natural hair. Girls of that day looked older than their years.

It was before the date of the co-ed and the woman's college, and a high or normal school graduation was as far as the ambition of most young women extended. Most self-supporting girls outside of a few trades taught school, as other avenues of employment were not open. No one had a vision of the vast army of femininity to be engaged some decades later in the struggles of business life.

A singular oneness of spirit had always marked the class of '72, even in school days. Many vicissitudes had united the thirty-one who remained to-

gether until May 29, 1872, the occasion of the "eight annual commencement," as the programme of exercises stated. Their names were: May Anderson (now Mrs. English), Lizzie Barton (deceased), Bessie C. Bunker, Addie L. Chapin (now Mrs. Charles L. Sleeper), Ella A. Clark (now Mrs. L. Connell), Mary E. Donnelly, Gertrude Gallagher (now Mrs. G. E. Hall), Carrie M. Give (now Mrs. Joseph H. Merrill), Fannie Hare, Minnie F. Harris (now Mrs. A. K. Hollis), Fannie E. Hawley (now Mrs. Cook), Emma W. Healey (now Mrs. Parkes), Theresa Herman (now Mrs. M. Regensburger), Abbie A. Hillman (now Mrs. G. Studley), Lizzie Hutchinson (deceased), Marie E. Kaplan, Susie E. Kelly (deceased), Nellie M. Kelsey (now Mrs. French), Matilda E. Lipman (now Mrs. Enkel), Mary M. Millan (now Mrs. McKenzie), Josephine Miller (now Mrs. Tantau), Carrie E. Pinkham (deceased), Hannah Phillips, Elsie B. Quint (now Mrs. B. L. Digges), Pauline Raphael (now Mrs. Henry Myers), Anita A. Sack (now Mrs. Larkin), Katie M. Simmons (now Mrs. Hare), Franc E. Steuart (now Mrs. Blood), Alice St. John (now Mrs. Smitten), George A. Traver.

To Miss Ella A. Clark belongs the credit of originating and successfully starting the annual reunions. Miss Clark, ably seconded by Miss Donnelly, has undertaken and kept up the work, sending out notices, keeping track of addresses, and gathering statistics. The reunions have been entirely social and are utterly devoid of formality. Picnics and outings have been greatly favored. Several picnics have been held at Cordones Creek, in North Berkeley, and not a few in Golden Gate Park. April 21, 1906, had been chosen as the date for a picnic at the latter place, and arrangements were all complete for the annual gathering, but the stirring events of the days preceding made a postponement inevitable. Individual members of the class have frequently acted as hostesses in their own homes and have presided at luncheons which were brilliant social affairs. Mrs. Alice Smitten has twice invited the class to her beautiful country seat, Crespi Wood, in San Mateo County, and Mrs. Josephine Tantau has also entertained at Ferndale, her charming Santa Clara home. Miss Clark, Mrs. Sleeper and Mrs. Merrill have given luncheons in Berkeley, and two years ago Mrs. Henry Myers was hostess at an elaborate function in her beautiful home on Washington street, San Francisco, while on other occasions Mrs. Regensburger, Miss Donnelly, Miss Gallagher, Mrs. Studley and Mrs. Hollis have done the honors at their respective homes. The hostess last year at Pied-

mont Park was Miss Bunker. In 1904, Miss Clark gave a trolley party, and on a few occasions hotel or restaurant breakfasts have made a pleasant variation.

If it were asked how these annual reunions have been kept up for so many years, the explanation would lie in the good feeling existing between members of the class and to an entire lack of formality. Husbands and children have always been made welcome, and teachers from the old high school days have received special honor. A large proportion of the class is always present, and few absentees fail to send letters. There have been many travelers among them, and chatty descriptive letters from various points in the United States and Europe are nearly always a part of the programme.

Of the twenty-seven living members of the class twenty have been married, and of these eight are widows. Most of the bachelor members are engaged in teaching. Time has, on the whole, dealt gently with them, and the happy and prosperous looking matrons who now surround the table do not look as if thirty-four years lay between them and graduation day. As was remarked on the last occasion, the annual gatherings have now taken on a sacred character. The friendships begun in school days have grown firmer with the years, and there is no reason to believe that its strength will ever diminish or that the custom of yearly meetings will languish for want of interest. The following poem was composed by Mrs. Gertrude Gallagher Hall for the anniversary of 1883:

How many years did you say? Eleven?
Oh, please! strike off some six or seven.
And come a little nearer the truth; yet, say,
There are faces here unchanged by a day—
The same light shines in the earnest eyes,
The same ear, girlish and laughing guise;
These voices are echoes of girlish days;
These ways are reflections of girlish ways.
And she who points to that brave little lad,
Who calls her "Maumie" and she who has said,
Who smooths the tangled curls, with pride,
Of the little maiden who clings to her side,
And tells of her recent tin wedding, and shows
How tight and thin her wedding ring grows,
And tries to display some furrows of care,
Why, she was always a cut-up, we know;
She's joking, she's joking, she can't fool us so.
And yet we know that the hand of time
Is almost full on the dial of years.
And the decade just passed beyond recall,
Is the title page of life to us all!
And because life's lessons are hard to learn,
And harder still with each page we turn,
And because its motto is surely brief,
A little of joy and much of grief,
Something of happiness, much of pain,
The web of loss and the wool of gain;
I look on these faces, dear and true,
And think of the histories woven through,
Of the undercurrent that each can hear,
Unknown to even the friendliest ear,
Through thoughts like these the past appears,
And the mist of years is the mist of tears.
Yet pledge we all who are here today,
All! All! For there is not one away.
They are here, all here, the absent and dear;
They are here in our hearts, and in spirit here,
And clasping hands as with pressure of old,
Not one is missing, not one is cold.
And she who has left us, she, too, is here;
We feel it, who know her presence is near.
She who once stood with us, side by side,
And is now as wise as the heavens are wide.
For, if one has studied the realms of mind,
Till the brain was tired, the eyes were blind,
If one has scaled the summit of bliss,
When she felt the warmth of her first born's kiss,
If another has sounded the depths of woe,
Learning all that a suffering heart may know;
If one has watched hope's rainbow spread,
And another has watched where hope lay dead,
Yet she alone knows more than these—
She has followed the veriest mysteries.
So are we akin to the wonderful land,
Reaching up and clasping a spirit hand;
And, humbly grateful that we may be
So linked to the strange eternity,
We give God thanks that our years eleven
Are joined, in her, to the cycles of Heaven.



THE CLASS REUNION IN BERKELEY IN 1891

CHILDREN OF THE "SWEET GIRL GRADUATES" AT A REUNION PICNIC

ELLA A. CLARK

ALICE ST. JOHN-SMITTEN

MINNIE HARRIS-HOLLIS

ADDIE CHAPIN-SLEEPER

JOSEPHINE MILLER-TANTAU

BESSIE C. BUNKER

FRANC STUART-BLOOD

EMMA HEALEY-PARKES

CARRIE GOWE-MERRILL

MARY McMILLAN-McKENZIE

LIZZIE HUTCHINSON

MRS. CHARLES SLEEPER (ADDIE CHAPIN) WHO IS NOW A PROUD GRANDMOTHER.

MRS. JAMES POLLOCK (EMMA HEALEY)

HELEN HOLMES THE ACTRESS WHO WON FAME IN "THE VIRGINIAN" DAUGHTER OF MRS. SMITTEN (ALICE ST. JOHN)

ANITA SACK-LARKIN

NELLIE KELSEY-FRENCH

MATILDA LIPMAN-ENKEL

FANNIE HARE

HANNAH PHILLIPS

MARY E. DONNELLY

CARRIE PINKHAM-PARDON

GERTRUDE GALLAGHER

PRINCIPAL ELLIS H. HOLMES

STURIE KELLY

GEORGINE TRAVER

MARY CONNELL

MARY ANDERSON-ENGLISH

LIZZIE BARTON

THERESA HERMANN-REGENSBURGER