

SHEDDING THE YEARS AT YALE AND PRINCETON

Illustrations by REGINALD MARSH



At your left—Wives of classmates will not reunite for a darn. Above—The alumni parade. At your right—There are usually more grads than beds at the club

An Old Yale Tradition Now Is Imperiled as Wives of Grads, Accompanied by an Avalanche of Class and Near-Class Babies, Plan to Filter in

By FAIRFAX DOWNEY

THOSE days approach when we who have sat in the seats of learning at Yale University or have been there for a time as "preferential standees," as they say on the subway, feel the stirrings of an impulse to return to New Haven. Doubtless others are animated by promptings toward college reunions, while even Harvard men are dragged by some inexplicable fascination back to the scene of crime. In fact, the migratory urge toward collegiate pilgrimages may be said to be almost universal.

According to Dan Chaucer, whose old English we learned at Yale to make as good as new, it was in the month of April with "his phoebes sots" that folks liked to go on pilgrimages. Apparently, after several pilgrimages had been called on account of rain—because of those very showers sung by the poet—the preference shifted to June, which, people expected, would be dryer. Their expectations have been more than realized.

The Secret of Yale's Hold on Its Grads

But that only emphasizes the point that these pilgrimages still are enthusiastically made. And no alma mater beckons more attractively to her sons than does Yale. The secret of this supremacy need no longer be withheld. Now it can be told—must be told ere it is lost. It is this: It is, or rather has been, a tradition that a Yale man does not bring his wife to a reunion.

The secret has been well kept, although it has been as an open book. The very diplomas given out each year have revealed it. These documents are inscribed with the graduate's name, which is plain enough, and the word "Yalensis," which is Latin for "Yale." They then go on to admit in that dead tongue that the recipient is a Bachelor of Arts. Nobody ever reads any further. If any one did he would know what the arts are. They begin with the art of reading Latin and end with qualifying the graduate for an art which he only may begin to practice when he no longer is a bachelor.

And that is—the art of leaving his wife home when he attends a college reunion. For years, for centuries, it has been successfully practiced at Yale.

It is a paradox that June, the month of matrimonial unions, should also be the month of college reunions, but it is a state of affairs that need be of no inconvenience, save to the foehardy gentleman who attempts to take both loops in the same June. A much more pronounced paradox is the business of taking a spouse, having acquired one, to one's reunion the following year. That is what must have been meant by old Noah Webster, Yale '78—class of 1778—when in his widely read dictionary he defined a paradox as "A sentiment seemingly contradictory or opposed to common sense, but that yet may be true in fact."

Just the other day in as public a forum as a class luncheon a classmate for whom we entertained respect as a soldier and a jurist inquired in his best commanding and court voice:

"Who's going to take his wife to our reunion this year?"

A sudden, shocked silence descended on the table. A fork, clattering to a plate, broke the tension. Features relaxed in relieved smiles. That question must be only rhetorical. Or it was but a jest. Our classmate was only waiting for some one to answer his cue and ask, "Who, indeed?" and then he would flash out with: "Well, isn't this our sesquicentennial?" Thereupon the gathering would dissolve in bursts of innocent merriment.

Sombody returned the cue, but nothing happened. Great heavens! The man was in earnest!

Then—pandemonium. When he could make himself heard our classmate increased the tumult by demanding neatly:

"I wouldn't have a wife I couldn't take to a reunion!"

Neither would we, we rebutted, and sought refuge in the classics by quoting somebody in "Hamlet" who said that somebody else swore he "could summon spirits from the vasty deep, and so could I. But would they come?" We could all, we pointed out, go through the formality of inviting our wives to accompany us to the reunion, but would they come? Not if we knew it.

The luncheon broke up in a fruitless discussion and a schism, and there the matter most unsatisfactorily rests.

We suspect that it was a brand-new wife that caused this damage, as they are the most dangerous element operating against the old Yale tradition, unless it be class babies, against whom we previously had warned.

The class baby is the first male heir born to any member of the class who has graduated. This infant, clad in the uniform of his father's class, is brought to the triennial reunion and placed at the head of the column of grads marching to the baseball game. The offspring is permitted to hurl the baseball into play on the diamond. This custom is not pernicious in itself except that for the rest of the year the child, puffed up with his moment of glory, will be hurling things at all the bric-a-brac in the home.

But by reason of numerical superiority alone wives are entitled to a more serious consideration as reunion threats than children. The eventuality must be faced that some of them will be among those present at New Haven this June. How, then, to cope with them after they have gained a foothold? There's the rub. That spirit of carefree camaraderie, born of the precious association of college days that links their husbands, naturally is not possible to them.

"Member that time," one grad greets another, "you insisted on sleeping in the arms of Hanc Statuam, and you wouldn't leave till Bill and I carried you back to Van?"

Yes, the grad remembers, but his wife wants explanations. It must be carefully and laboriously diagrammed for her that Hanc Statuam is an iron statue of somebody or other on the campus, and in indulging in such familiarity with it you only were following a quaint custom which is a senior privilege at New Haven. And even at that it never is quite clear to her why her husband was carried and why he was put in a van.

The Man Whose Memory Works Too Well

It's the same way with the subject of those parties at the Lawn Club, which some thoughtless bachelor classmate mentions to you and your wife as a subject for reminiscence. You used to be the champion fusser of the class in those days, he opines. He'll never forget the time you and he went to call for those girls to take them to the club dance, and he happened to look in the mirror in the room where you were helping your girl on with her cloak and—ha! ha! ha!—he saw you kiss her. Did you know she still was living here in town? Had you been out to see her? Of course not. You had other plans. That girl probably had forgotten all about you. As for you, she'd gone completely out of your head until he happened to mention her. That's why you never had spoken of her to your wife.

And let the soft pedal be placed upon the joyous recalling of that ambitious attempt to drink a beer in every saloon in New Haven. How many saloons were there? You can't remember; that was quite some time ago. Your wife thinks it was a very silly trick, anyway. You could have looked the saloons up in a classified telephone directory. Of course—that's the way you'd do it if you were making any such census to-day.

No, the old college memories had best stay buried in the presence of wives. The only alternative seems to be the isolation of wives, and even after such a difficult matter has been effected, it is apt to fail miserably. Only too often wives of classmates will not reunite for a darn. The conversation is bound to worry along somewhat after this fashion:

What Can He See in Her? That's the Question

"Is this the first time you have been to New Haven?"

"Yes, and I wasn't sure I could come this time. I hesitated about leaving my baby."

"Oh, have you a baby? I have two!"

This tack is good for half an hour, but after that time the wives leave each other to look for their husbands, each wife wondering what the other's husband sees in her.

But if the inevitable is faced and the mixed reunion is accepted, such conversation as the following may be expected around the table, laden with near-beer and tea:

First Wife (to husband's roommate)—So you were Freddy's roommate in college, I'm his little roommate now. (Business of snookay-ookums.)

Second Wife (to husband)—Will, why don't you reminisce with the boys. Remind them of that time you dashed down the football field, shaking off the mean tacklers and making a touchdown, alone and unaided, for old Yale.

Third Wife (to her husband)—And you, Rob, must recall for them the time you won your Phi Beta Kappa key and put to shame all the mentally lazy big fellows with just "Y's."

Fourth Wife (to all)—Now's the time for John to tell us about that funny Skulls and

Bones society he's in. Come on, John dear, Tees up.

Fifth Wife (convivially)—Up with your cups and glasses, boys and girls, and let's all join in singing that old college favorite, "Here's to Dear Old Yale, Down the Field, Down the Field."

And so on, with a horrible time being had by all. It will be agreed that few measures can be too radical, looking toward the elimination of such untoward incidents.

The Unfortunate Graduate with Wife may arrive and register at the university Saturday, June 17. He may, but there is no reason why he cannot stall off until Sunday, when occur the following events to which he may safely send the wife and count on her being pretty well tied up all day.

11:00 A. M.—Baccalaureate address by the president.

5:00 P. M.—Organ recital.

8:00 P. M.—Twentieth anniversary meeting of "Yale in China," with addresses.

For Monday, June 19, the following should hold her: 10:30 p. m., meeting of the Alumni Advisory Board; 12:30 p. m., annual luncheon of the Yale Law School Alumni Association; 1 p. m., luncheon of the Yale Corporation and of the Alumni Advisory Board; 2:15 p. m., meeting of the Yale Corporation; 4 p. m., class day exercises; 10:30 p. m., promenade of the senior class. At this last some senior who wants a job in the office of the U. G. W. W. (Unfortunate Graduate With Wife) may be induced to promenade with the wife.

Train Schedules Provide A Glorious Opportunity

The polls are open for the election of two members of the corporation on Tuesday, June 20. The U. G. W. W. may send the wife to the polls with a fraudulent proxy, which may cause her apprehension and jailing until Friday, June 23, the day of the boat races.

At that date the U. G. W. W. may explain to the wife that one always watches the boat races from an observation train, on board which he will at once place her, promising to join her later. If he uses a little finesse the train he puts her on may be the train for home.

Marty on White House Dinners

By ROBERT B. PECK

THEM White House dinners that the President dishes up for the main push in the steel business must be worth eatin'," said Marty McMahon, the retired bartender. "Lotsa fellas has talked to that mob before an' said, 'Why doncha lay off the twelve-hour shift?' an' got nothin' but a steely glare."

"Some o' them has kept after them, at that, an' pestered 'em so that they brought out a lotta figures to show they'd gone into the whole business an' you couldn't make steel without you worked your men—or a good part of 'em—twelve hours a day."

"If it was a preacher or somebody else that they figured was worth slippin' the oil to they might talk real sympathetic about the twelve-hour shift an' say they aimed to get rid of it just as quick as they could an' had been tryin' to for years, but it just couldn't be done."

"Then the President invites 'em all to the White House an' says he don't mean no harm an' he don't want to butt in on another fella's lay, but what about this twelve-hour shift in the steel mills, an' they all look at him kind of admirin' an' say that's a fine idea an' they'll look into it right away."

"Now, they mighta just been slippin' him a superior brand of oil; you can't always tell about them boys. They're pretty slick when they lay themselves out to be. Or they mighta been full o' green turtle soup an' thought just at the minute that it was a grand idea an' then changed their minds the next mornin'."

"Or they mighta looked around the table an'

seen that all the boys was there an' figured on the level that if they all done it it could be done all right."

"So it looks from the outside like the chances was about one to two that they really was goin' to try to work three shifts a day, instead of two. Anyhow, they said they'd appoint a committee to look into it, an' it's a cinch they'll do that."

"When the committee reports, why, most anybody can dope out whether they was full o' turtle soup or good resolutions."

"I worked many a twelve-hour shift behind the bar, but you wouldn't catch me workin' no one-hour shift even in one o' them steel mills. I seen one o' them once. The mill I seen had its floor all laid out like a freight yard an' every little while along would come a troop of kettle cars on one o' the tracks, every kettle full o' boilin' steel."

"When the cars wasn't runnin' over the floor this furnace or that was splittin' sparks that would burn a hole clean through you if they hit you, an' every once in a while one o' 'em would hiccough an' steel would come boilin' out all over the floor."

"Up overhead all the time they was hoistin' big bundles of rail an' scrap iron that woulda made you look like a waffle if you was underneath when they let go their hold."

"I wouldn't a-stood in the door lookin' in fer twelve hours, let alone workin' inside where you had to be dodgin' scaldin' steel an' sparks an' twenty-ton bundles o' steel rails. A nice, quiet job tendin' bar on Tenth Avenue just suited me."

At Princeton Things Nowadays Are Different Somehow, but the Old Spirit (Singular, Printer) Calls the Sons of Old Nassau to Renew Their Youth

By HARVEY H. SMITH

THERE is a universal human trait of constantly lamenting the fact that times are not what they used to be. Ask a survivor of the old regular army about the army of to-day; ask a business man about his business, a farmer the condition of his crops, a golfer how he's hitting them, a politician about politics—ask any one anything which contrasts the present with the past and they'll all unite and shout:

"Things ain't what they used to be."

Princeton graduates are no exception. In fact, they're the loudest shouters of the bunch when it comes to anything connected with the university. An undergraduate may believe that this year's crew, football, baseball and debating teams, professors, petting parties, Princetonian board, lecturers, customs, proms, club members, freshman class, double chocolate marshmallow jiggers, the proctor, senior singing, chaperones, Phi Beta Kappa elections, styles in golf hose, the dean's disposition, the verdure of the foliage, the service on the Pennsylvania Railroad, the quality of the food served at Commons, the credit extended by the local merchants and the paving on Nassau Street are the best ever. He may be thoroughly convinced of all and each of these things and willing to back his belief with his dad's last Liberty bond, but give him just fifteen minutes with a couple of old grads and they'll have him so certain the old college has gone completely to the bow-wows that he'll consider it his bounden duty to pack up his duds and go back home to the farm.

And it was ever thus, even in the days when Princeton was the College of New Jersey, situated in Elizabethtown, and the grads went back to reunion armed with muskets and powder horns. During the interim of taking pot shots at lurking redskins the oldest among them doubtless recalled the good old days. And now we who have been out of college but five years tell the present generation of the glorious days when we were students, and we in turn are silenced by tales of the "golden '90s." And surely the students of the "golden '90s" had to listen to stories of the "diamond '70s" and the "radium '60." Should we attempt to tell an undergraduate that Don Lourie plays football like a schoolboy compared to Bill Moore, some grad who went to college when more thought was devoted to Greek and Latin than to petting proclivities is sure to pipe up and tell us that any one who never saw Johnny Poe skirt an end or "Big Bill" Edwards buck a line doesn't know what real football is.

The Advantage Possessed By the Oldest Grad

Consequently, I look forward some day in the far distant future to being Princeton's oldest living graduate, not for the honor of the longevity, but because there will be no one to say:

"Pshaw, Smith, when I was in college"—Speaking specifically of reunions the grads have probably always proclaimed that they were not what they used to be, but since the enforcement of prohibition their wailings have had added sincerity, and have been received with increasing credulity, for, the critics of Scott Fitzgerald to the contrary notwithstanding, beer was most instrumental in making reunions successful.

There was a time when the president of any number of breweries facing a deficit could go before his board of directors about this time of the year and say with a smile:

"Remember, gentlemen, there is still the Princeton reunion."

But no longer is this true. Occasionally a class secretary will announce to his classmates that he has effected a coup de grace, that the

class will have real beer at reunion, but the whole breweries now have to go alone. The foaming cup has given way to cases of Clicquot Club, and perhaps it is for the better. The present reunions are like the present Fourth of July. Every one had a better time when there were firecrackers and fireworks, but there was always the following day of reckoning.

Prohibition Was to Spell The Reunions' Doom

It was said that prohibition would spell the reunions' doom, but they still continue each year and the thousands of grads continue to come back, and probably have just as good times as they ever did, but in a different way. Early on Friday preceding the baseball game with Yale they arrive, old grads and young grads, and as soon as they set foot on the campus the cares of business and the worries of domesticity are forgotten. For three glorious days they are boys again, revelling in their regained youth. Czars of business, regular tyrants in their offices and dignified members of the bar carry on like kids at a circus. It takes the younger grads longer to lose their dignity, but once lost they are as carefree as their elders.

Each of the younger classes has a distinctive costume, the older classes contenting themselves with buttons and hat bands. The youngest class always wears sailor suits, and the others attempt to get something which is original, ornamental and practical. The choice is up to the reunion committees, and they are constantly between the devil and the deep sea. One man writes: "Whatever you do, don't have a costume like the one we had last year." Another man writes that last year's costume was the best ever. "Be sure to have one like it this year." And so it goes, the poor committee pitting it both ways.

"Have you any suggestions?" the committee asks early in the spring.

"Yes—have plenty of beer." "Cut out the beer." "No more entertainment like last year." "More entertainment like last year." "A good class dinner." "No class dinner." "Worthwhile speeches." "We don't come back to listen to speeches."

The committee worries along somehow or other and provides something in the way of costumes, refreshments and entertainment which is regarded with approval by one-third of the class, with indifference by another third and with outspoken condemnation by the remainder.

Upon the class secretary, however, falls the task of seeing that every one is provided, welcomed and made to feel at ease. There are actually men who dread returning to Princeton, fearing that they will not be remembered. They feel hurt if no one comes up and greets them the glad hand. So it falls to the secretary to act as official host for the class. The men who were "big" in college tax his memory, not at all. He knows them all by their first names, but the men who hid their lights under the covers of Euclid or in the chemistry "lab" often fail to register with him, and he finds himself unable to pull an Addison from He cannot say:

"Of course, I remember you perfectly— you are 'Long John' Parker, the man who won the Herodotus and won the Axel Nevin Golf prize. How's the family?"

No; it takes a super-secretary to remember the names of every man in his class and associate them with the physiognomies which confront him at reunion, so like as not the well-meaning fellow is apt to remark:

"Hello, old man; I don't recall your name."

Continued on page five