

Inside the Orphanages of San Francisco

8. Ladies' Protection and Relief Society



THE GIRLS LEARN NEEDLEWORK EARLY



MRS. EATON, FOUNDER OF THE SOCIETY

lett. She was there in an instant and their fears were soon allayed. "Earthquakes and fires do not prevent children from being hungry. Something to eat had to be furnished. Fortunately plenty of bread was on hand and the morning milk had been delivered."

All of which shows that dependent children learn to be helpful and stoical. There must be some compensation in the losses and sorrows that come to them in the years when other children are being coddled.

This "Family" Changes
There is no institutional family in this city which changes as often as does that of the Ladies' Protection and Relief society, and for two reasons—first, because there is so much temporary relief given; and, second, because the managers of this home are committed, both in theory and practice, to home finding as conducted by the children's agency of the Associated Charities.

This home has made it possible for many a stricken mother to keep her children together by being assisted in their care through a time of stress. The matron contends that some of the very best work done in the institution is the temporary assistance given deserving mothers. By taking care of children for a few weeks or a few months these mothers have had an opportunity to readjust their lives. An equally far-reaching good comes with the care of children whose mothers have to go out to service. They pay for their little ones according to their income, but never more than \$10 a month is charged.

Being fully convinced of the benefits of boarding children out, or putting them in homes where they can get an education and personal attention, all available boys and girls in the home are placed by the agency. All reports of visiting done in the interest of children are filed at the home, so the managers know at all times the exact conditions under which their charges are living. The placing out of these children frequently means adoption for them.

The Ladies' Protection and Relief society has always been foremost in adopting new and better solutions for their problems. They never have kept children when their interests have been better served elsewhere; they have cooperated with other institutions and with due consideration have taken up every new method calculated to improve the condition of the children, whose futures depended upon what was done for them during the formative years. After a radical change in administration one woman of honored years said that she thanked God that she was still able to change her mind. This came after her first opposition to the innovation.

It is now several years since the society has availed itself of the machinery of the children's agency, but it is interesting to note that as far back as 1838 Miss Anna W. Beaver, at that time recording secretary, emphasized the policy which is now dominating the handling of the children. In the report in question she said in part: "It has been the steady policy of the society to make the time spent in the institution as short as the circumstances of each case demanded. Those entered by parents who have been obliged by stress of poverty or illness to separate themselves from their children have been returned as soon as practicable, while others have been sent to homes, principally in the country, and some have been adopted. That this is the course best for all concerned, parents as well as children, no one will deny, and we are, moreover, enabled to offer the benefits of the home to the largest number of those who need them."

"We have tried to combat the idea that this home is in any way a reformatory institution, or one in any case intended to relieve parents of their proper responsibilities. There have been many children

reared in the institution because they have not been available for adoption and because parents who did not really desert them proved peculiarly unfit to be trusted with them. But a determined and persistent endeavor on the part of the managers has brought many parents to a realizing sense of their duties and has forced them to contribute something toward the support of their offspring.

The days go on very comfortably and happily for the children of the home. There is always a busy morning of chores and breakfast before the children start for school, in charge of an attendant. As they have to cross car tracks and walk some distance, they can not go alone. The babies remain at home and have the most inviting kindergarten quarters—a large, sunny room. Every window frames a little of the attractive garden, which belongs exclusively to the small children. These little people have a dining room to themselves. When they are 6 years of age they are transferred to the larger dining room. Nothing better illustrates the real spirit of the home than seeing the children of all ages trooping in from school at noontime for dinner. There is a hurried "slicing up" of the boys and girls as they come to the dining room just as soon as they are ready. There is no time for formalities at that hour because dinner has to be eaten, the dishes cleared away and the return made to school within the hour. If these children were coming into their individual homes instead of into an institution they could not appear less happy or less afraid. They smile at the matron as they pass in and talk merrily as they go, showing how easy the discipline of the home rests upon them. They are governed with scarcely a realization of the fact.

Sewing and Sloyd Work
In the hours after school there is always plenty of play, but there are hours for sewing and mending and cooking for the girls, with sloyd for the boys. A flourishing vegetable garden is a matter of great concern to the children, but not of more interest than the bars and trapezes and ring swings which they enjoy through the generosity of Raphael Weill. He gave \$500 to be invested for some comfort or pleasure for the children, and from the genuine fun it has brought them, surely no wiser investment could have been made.

Miss McGladdery's 38 years as matron were concluded last year. She now lives peacefully in retirement and her pleasure is found in the doing something for deserving children of the home. A weekend at "Miss McGladdery's home" across the bay is one of the very best things that can come to any child in the home. Miss McGladdery's place is being splendidly filled by Miss Edith Wallbridge, recently from the east, who has had many years' experience in just such work. She is cheerful and brisk and has gained the absolute confidence of the children.

To her nothing is more tragic in the life of a child than the absence of the pleasures and the experiences that are traditionally theirs, and she tries to see to it that there are no little broken hearts in that home.

Last summer Miss Elizabeth Ashe took large groups of the home children to Hill farm, that delightful country

There never has been a year since 1853 when the managers of the San Francisco ladies' protection and relief society have felt it incumbent upon them to have a rechristening, albeit the name gives only the remotest idea of the scope of the society's work. The name is an old and honored one, and it would be a brave person who would ask to change it, a proceeding which, of course, would involve reincorporation. On the cover of the semiannual reports of the society, below the corporate name, appears this explanation:

"For orphans, half orphans and other children in need of a home."
This does not mean that there are no "ladies" in the home. Just at present there are three old ladies living comfortably in an annex. That side of this pioneer benefaction has had to be minimized, because of the greater demand for the care and protection of children. The articles of incorporation leave this way clear for this. One of the bylaws says:

"The object of this society shall be to render protection and assistance to strangers, and to dependent and destitute women and children. For this purpose it shall establish and have under its supervision a 'home,' where information, protection and aid will be afforded to such women and children, resident or strangers."
The term "institution" must have been regarded by the organizers of the society 56 years ago as it is today as a most unsympathetic designation. The word "Home" is and always has been emphasized in the bylaws by a capital and quotation marks. Every reference to the abiding place of the society in and out of reports is always as a "home." Because it handles children in large numbers and under the same roof it has to receive the classification "institution," but an investigation of it shows that it is well entitled to the name "Home."

One Girl's Distress

The organization of this society came out of a "present need" and because there was a good woman at hand to act. It appears that one day Mrs. Eaton, wife of Colonel Eaton of the United States army, was sitting at her window, when she saw a young girl running up the street in a frightened manner as if she were being pursued. Mrs. Eaton immediately went to her rescue. The girl said that she had come to California expecting to meet her brother when she landed from the steamer. He was not at hand, inquiry failed to locate him, and some one, under the guise of good faith and friendliness took her to a house which the girl soon discovered was one of ill repute. When she ran up the street in which Mrs. Eaton lived she had just escaped from that place. In Mrs. Eaton the girl found a friend indeed. But, better still, many another girl reaped the benefit of the effort immediately put forth by Mrs. Eaton. Looking into conditions obtaining for women landing alone in this city, Mrs. Eaton discovered that there was work for some one to do. She headed the movement. The society was organized in 1853 and incorporated in 1854. Many of the persons who found shelter under the protection of this organization were women with their children who had reached this city a little ahead of or behind their schedule time and who were not met by their husbands, perhaps away in the mines, or by women and children who were on their way to join relatives or friends in other counties.

For almost five years the work of this society was conducted on the "boarding out plan," the one approved now by many students of philanthropic work. Then the managers seemed to think that the concentration of the work in one home would be more advantageous. Accordingly a house was rented at the corner of Second and Tehama streets. The first "family" it housed was composed of 35 women and children. Mrs. H. O. Strong was made matron. As late as 1859, the solicitude for women who came "by sea" was still a phase of the work of the society,

the fact being indicated by the following extract from a report: "Through the courtesy of Williams, Dimond & Co., contribution boxes have been placed on the various steamers that company leaving this port. A letter to each captain was sent accompanied by a package of reports. Small contributions have been regularly received through this means, and we have felt, moreover, that strangers arriving by sea and needing the benefits of the home may be thus apprised of its existence."

But the years brought distinct changes and there was so much more need for temporary as well as practically permanent care for neglected and deserted children, that fewer women and more children were taken. In the early days there were no deserted children, but with the complexities of the growing city that most tragic of all problems—the dependent child—had to be handled.

The Gift of Horace Hawes

The responsibilities of the society increased so rapidly that efforts were made to secure a permanent home. Toward this end the late Horace Hawes offered the society what is now the block bounded by Geary, Post, Franklin and Van Ness. In the light of the city's growth, it is almost impossible to believe that the members hesitated about accepting the land because it was "so far out." Mr. Hawes, who was able to foresee the future, assured the ladies that they could make no mistake in accepting it. And so it was that the society came into possession of this valuable property.

Without the two wings, the present home was constructed in 1863, but it was "so far out" that the members used to go early and stay late on the day of the managers' meeting, once a month. Some of the ladies used to go on horseback. The all day session with lunch is still the way in which the business of the home is dispatched. Entertainments and various other means to supplement the income marked many of the early years of the existence of the society. Residences built on Van Ness avenue frontage of the property, and some on the Post street side, insured a good annual return on the investment. This with the judicious investment of legacies, combined with the money given by the state toward the care of its dependent children, has placed this home beyond the need of calling upon the public, as many charities are obliged to do. Very material additions were made to the rent income after the calamity, but when the cost of repairs to the home was balanced against that, the gain was not material. The home, and also the residences on Van Ness avenue, were very badly injured by dynamiting done in the immediate neighborhood to prevent the spread of the fire. Briefs of the financial reports for the years 1907 and 1908 tell their own story:

TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1907
Presented January 9, 1908

Receipts—	
Cash on hand	\$20,640.00
Donations	128.33
Immater. relations	3,877.20
Rent	5,096.09
State aid	45.00
Annual dues	2,465.53
Miscellaneous	141.59
Total	\$76,664.66
Disbursements—	
Food	\$6,768.44
Water	610.15
Fuel and lights	1,439.48
Clothing	2,532.50
Payroll	3,229.42
Furniture	2,823.28
Taxes	2,809.03
Repairs	1,297.48
Telephone	81.85
Laundry	1,103.87
Miscellaneous	253.23
Express	63.00
Dues from San Francisco Savings Union for bonds	15,000.00
Drew from Bank of California	5,200.00
Total	\$57,042.97
Balance on hand	19,621.69
Total	\$76,664.66

TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1908

Receipts—	
Balance on hand	\$19,621.69
Donations	235.00
Legacy	1,000.00
Immater. relations	4,468.58
Rent	5,999.97
Rent account	88,917.90
State aid	4,302.01
Dues from San Francisco Savings Union for bonds	63.00
Miscellaneous	96.34
Total	\$69,274.67
Disbursements—	
Food	\$7,069.32
Water	396.93
Fuel and lights	1,484.41
Clothing	3,229.42
Payroll	10,561.94
Furnishings	1,605.86
Taxes	2,197.11
Repairs	2,613.62
Investments	18,590.00
Telephone	84.15
Laundry	253.45
Improvements	153.37
Christmas account	153.37
Miscellaneous	626.98
Total	\$50,065.08
Balance on hand	19,179.59
Total	\$69,274.67

In 1905 the total annual income was \$42,144.70. In 1906 it jumped by reason of the advantageous renting of the property to \$57,251.59. In 1907 the total receipts amounted to \$76,644. The falling off commenced in 1908 by reason of the change in the business center, as shown by the total receipts of \$59,274.67. The income will be still less from now on and before long will come a readjustment of the properties.

An effort was made after the calamity and before necessary repairs were made to secure a desirable but less valuable site within the county, but without success. So the children of the home who were in Alameda were returned to the old place. The value of the property suggests the sale of it, but on the other hand the convenience of the place for emergency work and for parents to visit the children bring a well defined hesitation about disposing of it. When Horace Hawes gave the land to the society it was with the condition that it should not be disposed of for 25 years. He held that an institution which had survived that length of time might well be regarded as permanent and any sale of the property could only be for the good. When the question has been raised as to a change of location the managers think of some of the struggling fathers who pay something toward the care of their children and who after working all day come to the home and tiptoe through the dormitory that they may look at their little ones asleep.

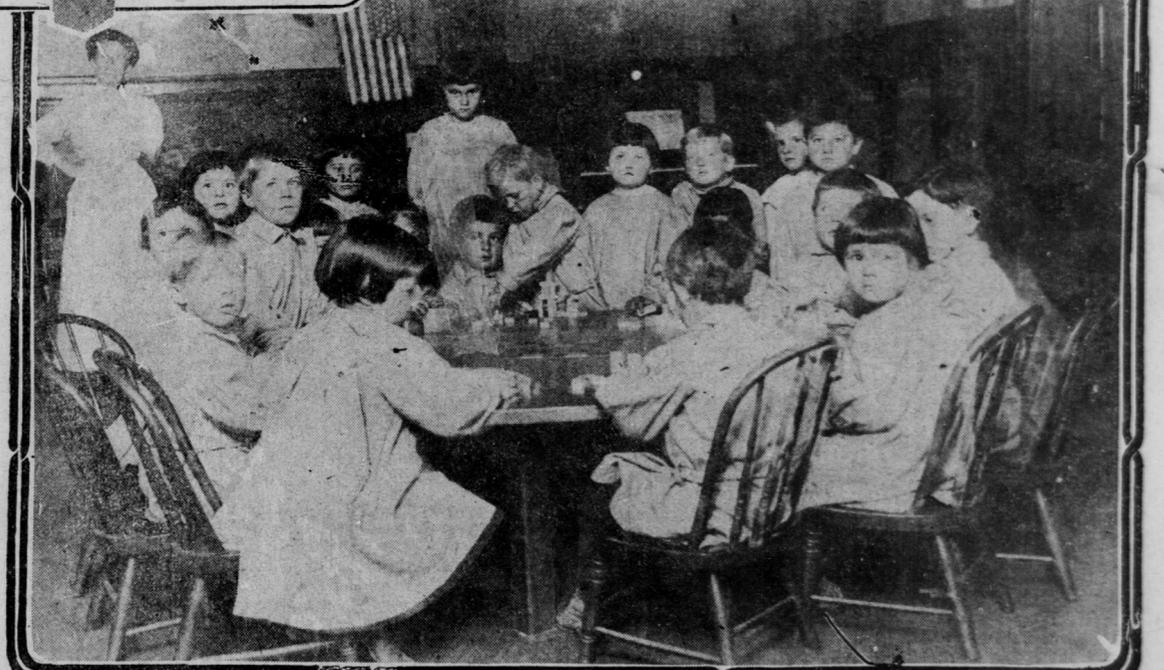
Withstood Disaster Well

Built in the days when honest mortar was used to bind honest bricks, the old home stood the earthquake remarkably well, but there were not many yards of plaster left on the walls. Stories of that time of calamity are getting to be taboo, but there is a deep human interest in what happened in such a place as the home. The following extract from a report by the matron, Miss M. McGladdery, who for 38 years mothered the family at the home, gives a picture of the children when the trouble came: "Nearly all were quietly asleep when they were awakened by the falling of plaster and the swaying of the building. I went out into the hall, fearing a panic among the children. The night nurse was the only one in hysterics. But people of strong nerves have been known to give way under terrifying circumstances. The swaying of the building was so awful it seemed as if at any moment we might be entombed. "Strange to say, all the older children were calm and remained in bed, covering their heads with their blankets. One boy, however, ran out into the yard. I asked him how he happened to escape. He said: 'When the first brick fell I thought it was time to get.' The chimney fell on this boy's bed."

"The babies, however, did not fare so well. The tanks had broken loose and the water drenched them. They stood with their little bundles of clothes in their arms, calling loudly for Miss Ar-



SOME OF THE YOUNGER BOYS AND GIRLS



IN THE PLAYROOM



A CLASS IN DARNING



NOW I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP

annex of her Telegraph Hill settlement. Those who remained in the city made "short trips into the country," after the manner of people who can plan their comings and goings. Every week during the seven weeks of vacation they had an outing. When the circus came to town the home children enjoyed it to their hearts' content. Recently they had an "outing" at Hale's.

Many of the managers have, as individuals, added material comforts to the home, and the Young Women's auxiliary is always busy with something to make the children happy as well as to make them more capable. Miss Lydia Hopkins is one of the most active members of the auxiliary. Quite recently she took her class to her home and made the occasion one long to be remembered.

The Ladies' Protection and Relief society conducts an absolutely nonsectarian home. The children attend neighboring churches, just as they do the neighboring schools. There are no bolts and bars for the children; they have the greatest freedom and seldom abuse it. Everything is done to make them happy while they must be there, but the greatest effort, which, after all, is the best, is to get them returned to their parents or out in homes, which will take the place of those they should have had. The present managers are: President, Mrs. S. W. Dennis; vice president, Miss Kate F. Hutchinson; recording secretary, Mrs. H. D. Keil; corresponding secretary, Mrs. P. B. Corvally; treasurer, Mrs. Charles W. Willard; managers, Mrs. Paul Austin, Miss A. W. Beaver, Miss Chonita Boral, Miss Alice Brown, Mrs. L. Curran Clark, Mrs. Charles Clayton, Mrs. P. B. Corvally, Miss Eleanor Davenport, Mrs. J. H. Deering, Mrs. S. W. Dennis, Miss Margaret Foster, Mrs. Timothy Hopkins, Miss Kate F. Hutchinson, Mrs. Hugo Keil, Mrs. William Kohl, Mrs. E. W. Newhall, Mrs. J. E. Roy Nickel, Mrs. E. B. Pond, Mrs. Milan Soule, Mrs. J. R. Sims, Mrs. A. P. Talbot, Mrs. George P. Thurston, Mrs. Charles W. Willard; honorary managers, Mrs. L. S. Adams, Mrs. N. P. Cole, Mrs. N. G. Kittie, Mrs. J. A. Robinson, Mrs. C. S. Wright; trustees, Charles R. Bishop, Horace Davis, J. S. Hutchinson, Hugo D. Keil, George E. Newhall.

The next article in this series will tell of the orphanage presided over by the Salvation Army.