



VALENCIA street—Old Valencia street! What glorious times the name recalls to the children of the pioneers—what halcyon days!

Pretty frocks, lovely faces, gay equipages, rippling laughter. The old San Jose Railway depot, the Willows, the dance halls, the stately mansions of the McCoppins, the Lapidge, the Judsons, the Swifts, the Benedicts, the Bernal Hacienda, the—

Shade of St. Patrick who could ever not remember it? The saloon back of the Swift place, or the Camino Real, with its inspired and inspirational inscription:

"E PLURIBUS UNUM; ERIN GO BRAGH!"

In those days, San Francisco high society massed itself in brave battalions around Rincon Hill; but the instinct of wanting a country home—then still undeveloped back East—induced many of the wealthier families to establish such homes for themselves down the peninsula.

To reach those homes they had to travel up through the Mission to Valencia street and so along to the Camino Real—the Royal Road—to the old Southern Capital. Or, in later days, when Peter Donahue, George Newhall and Francis Pioche had built the San Jose Railroad, to the depot that stood where the ruined debris of the old cable car power house now clutters the corner of Market and Valencia streets.

There, foregathered the elite of the city, the beauty, rank and fashion that drove up in their splendid equipages to take the train or meet it, or bid goodspeed to some friend or relative en route to some pleasant home at San Jose or elsewhere on the peninsula.

On the block now occupied by the San Francisco Baseball Club between Fourteenth and Fifteenth streets, and running back to Guerrero, stood the mansion built by Cortland S. Benedict, where also resided the Judsons and the Lynchs—Michael Lynch, the gallant and popular Captain of the old Volunteer Fire Department, and one of the most popular San Franciscans of his day.

McCOPPIN HOME AT CORNER OF SEVENTEENTH

Frank McCoppin, who subsequently became postmaster of San Francisco, lived on the corner of Seventeenth and Valencia from 1864 to 1874, during which period he distinguished himself as Mayor of the city and the original promoter of Golden Gate Park. The chateaus of his hospitable home was the daughter of the former Alcalde, James Van Ness, whose regime in the later '50's had such a beneficial effect upon the civic destinies of San Francisco.

In 1874 McCoppin sold the place to James W. Phelan, and it was the home of our present Senator when he was Mayor of San Francisco. It was a fine old mansion, rather spoiled—by an aesthetic point of view—by a cast-iron menagerie of deer and other animals that were planted about the lawn in putatively life-like attitudes, after the fashion of the atrociously minded beauty experts of the early Victorian era.

Nowadays there is no Phelan mansion, no cast-iron deer. A vividly up-to-date oil station occupies the corner; grass and blocks of shattered masonry show where the house once stood.

Another famous mansion of those good old days was that of Captain Lapidge, a nephew of the great Lord Nelson. This, with its grounds, filled the block between Eighteenth and Nineteenth streets, from Valencia to Guerrero, where now only a row of inconsiderable stores and business places faces the thoroughfare.

Where the Mission Promotion Association building now stands,

and all thereabouts, was then the favorite promenade and rendezvous of the Mission district. It was where they bought their frills and furbelows, and met their very best and only—or their second best and only's, as the case happened to be—and arranged subsequent merry rencontres as they whispered those soft nothings, which were natural to the environment and balmy climate of Valencia street in the earlier stages of its development.

The balminess of climate still remains, but in other respects it is not now easy to identify the part by the architectural landmarks that survive in that section of the city.

RAILWAY DEPOT LONG FORGOTTEN

The railway depot was forgotten long ago, and may not be identified with the newer Southern Pacific local depot at Twenty-fifth street and Valencia. The promenade and the erstwhile popular rendezvous of the old Mission are now very matter of fact and everyday places.

The clang of the street car and the honk of the horn fret the ear where aforetime one heard only the clink of harness and the clippety-chippety of mettled steeds on the hard high road. The Mission does its promenading and its rendezvousing on Market street and other thoroughfares remote from Valencia street—a bank, a factory, the home and hall of the Knights of Pythias, the Hall of the Carpenters, a picture theater, horse and feed emporiums, the decorous parlors and chapels of undertakers look down on the earnest pavements where aforetime fashion and frivolity were the keynote.

And Valencia—the man after whom they named the street—his very identity is forgotten.

Yet he was a useful man in many ways. He was Jose Ramon Valencia, a soldier settler of the Spanish regime, and he remembered all the plots and boundaries of the old Spanish concessions in those parts, and by his knowledge—generously and freely given—helped greatly to establish titles in the old days.

When McGowan escaped the Vigilantes in 1857, it was Valencia who helped him to elude his pursuers. But Valencia never lived on Valencia street.

The real Spanish corner of that thoroughfare used to be the old Bernal Hacienda that stood with ever-open door on the site now occupied by St. Luke's Hospital.

There it was that the guitars tinkled and the gallants sang soft love songs to delightful senoritas—who wore high tortoiseshell combs in their hair and black lace mantillas over their shoulders, and had indescribably beautiful eyes in the brave days of yore. There it was that the Guerreros and the Vallejos and the Noes and all the other Dons would foregather to discuss the destinies of the Americanized country and the glories of the departed days.

SONGS OF OLD SPAIN AND OTHERS

There they lilted songs of Andalusia and Old Castile, while from up the road, by the Camino Real, at the sign of the "E Pluribus Unum; Erin Go Bragh!" rang glorious and full throated on remotely non-Spanish brogues the then popular melody, "Beautiful Isle of the Sea."

Because at that whilom popular caravanseral of the hybrid name, strong men gathered from far-away and far-away, and brought with them songs and pastimes wholly alien to the softer south. "Putting the rock" was a great game with them, as was the "hop, step and a leap," and quoits played with horseshoes.

Less vigorous, but equally enthralling allurements were to be

had for a consideration when "The Willows" opened at Seventeenth street, opposite the McCoppin residence, and all San Francisco gathered thither to see the animals and watch the Blondins and other "artists," brought thither for their amusement at enormous and duly advertised expense.

MODERN GROWTH MADE END OF "THE WILLOWS"

Utilitarian times—the growth of the vaudeville and delinquency of the gardens—brought an end to "The Willows." The exigencies of the real estate market uprooted the willows themselves and filled in the lake they encircled. Even the ghosts of the good padres who pitched their camp there before they built the Mission Dolores haunt the place no more. There is no "place within the meaning of the act" whereat they could do their haunting. At least, it is unthinkable that a Spanish missionary of the old regime should haunt a modern San Francisco apartment house. It simply wouldn't do. And that is what stands where aforetime wept the willows by the headwaters of the Mission creek.

But pass down a few blocks and find real memories, and the haunts of ghosts—some still alive, all pleasant and wise, or pleasant and beautiful.

Here it is at the Horace Mann Intermediate School—drab and gray and rather moth eaten to look upon, no doubt; but still the old Valencia School, as it used to be, and the abiding place of countless joyous memories.

SOME WHO LEARNED AT VALENCIA SCHOOL

Lottie Crabtree—dig the world ever hear of our "Lotta"?—Frank Green, the City Chemist; Mayor Ralph Jr.; Walter B. Coffey; Robert E. Cowen, the bibliographer; James M., otherwise "Jim," Brophy of Morosco's and the old Grand Opera House; Jessie Bartlett Davis; Phoebe Davies, who married Joe Grismer. In every walk of life they shone brightly, did those old-time boys and girls of the Valencia school. And, across the street, watching the other boys and girls, working and dreaming, the Klumpke girls, the daughters of John G. Klumpke, the big real estate man of that day, developed the genius that made them the four most remarkable sisters in the world.

Anna, the painter, friend and heiress of Rosa Bonheur, whose chateau at By, near Paris, she converted into a hospital at the outbreak of the war; Augusta, the doctor, now one of the great rheumatism and cancer specialists of Europe; Dorothea, the astronomer and mathematician, discoverer of exploded stars and authors of books amazing in their scientific profundity; and Julia, the youngest, singer of songs and dreamer of dreams, a divine violinist, now instructor at a South Carolina conservatory.

There was Matilda, who was also a sweet musician, but she is dead; and William, the boy, who went to the front for France at the outbreak of the war, and has no doubt carried himself there to the credit of California and Valencia street.

MEMORIES OF ROMANCE OF DAYS LONG GONE

Thus up and down that now rather prosy looking thoroughfare, with its garages and its ball ground and its hay and horse markets and other modern industries, there is still some nuance of the romance of other days.

You cannot notice it much from where the Klumpkes lived, because the big gray modern schoolhouse is in the way; but down at St. Luke's—where aforetime sank the Spanish cavaliers—you can feel some of it by watching the sunset effects upon the green-clad hills of the Mission across the way.

But even there you will listen vainly for the rich Milesian voices recalling "The Beautiful Isle of the Sea" from their less afflicted trusting spot by the sign of the "E Pluribus Unum; Erin Go Bragh."