

FERNSIDE'S GOLDEN JUBILEE

A gold link is often a very delicate and lovely thing in itself; but when joined to others of the same kind, it becomes truly significant. This is what the Golden Jubilee of "Fernside" was the bringing together of many individual links of friendly interest from many different periods in the history of the House. Each of these was at its own time important in adding to the rich atmosphere, which from the first has set "Fernside" apart; and it is these links all together that make up "Fernside" as it is today, a constantly growing circle of friendly relationships.

The opening of "Fernside" on June 24th, 1939 was simultaneous with the celebration of this fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the House. Old and new hostesses, girls, and directors came to spend the weekend, and every bed but one was occupied. Many other of the friends of "Fernside" came to tea, or supper, or The Party, so that the House and Playhouse were full to overflowing most of the time.

Tea on Saturday afternoon was very gay and offered a welcome opportunity for meetings of old friends and the usual reminiscences. Several townspeople came in to offer their good wishes. The Council members in period dress served, and Mrs. Malcolm Taylor poured.

On Saturday evening, everyone met in the Playhouse for what might be said to represent a typical Thursday night show. It was in the form of an historical sketch of the years at "Fernside", which attempted to show how "Fernside" happened to be started, how it grew, and what it steadily came to mean to those connected with it. Several incidents were acted out quite extemporaneously by whatever hostesses were on the spot, each scene having first been described by Miss Mira Wilson as reader of the script. The following episodes were included:

Miss Allen and her Shawmut Club,
Meeting of the girls in the South Station,
On the Stagecoach,
The Fire at "Fernside,"

Miss Allen Covering the Office Couch,
A Ball Game, and a Modern Group Reminiscing.

Highlights of this performance, for the actresses at least, was the stagecoach scene; for the coach, a somewhat wobbly couch, with wheels

Artistically attached in front by Miss Trowbridge, proved extremely
Temperamental, and the passengers arrived at their destination none too soon.

This historical presentation was originally given as a Thursday night's program in 1930 and written by Miss Esther Reed and Miss Louise Steele, hostesses at that time. Thus it seemed a closely-knit part of "Fernside", more so perhaps than if it had been newly written for the Jubilee. It was revised for this occasion however, by Miss Ruth Harrington and Miss Steele. In it, Miss Eleanor Adams took the part of Miss Allen; Mrs. Henrietta Riese was Sanderson, the coachman; and Mrs. Lovell, the beloved housemother of today. It is interesting that on both occasions of its having been given, Miss Helen Newell could take her own part as the wearer of the "red bow" in the South Station.

There were additional remarks between scenes by Mrs. Allen and Miss Eleanor Allen of Princeton, and Miss Harriet E. Johnson who told of incidents they remembered that had not been included in the sketch.

On Sunday afternoon, there was a concert in the Playhouse. There were violin, vocal, and piano selections given by old friends, which everyone seemed to enjoy. Following this musical, tea was served at the House; and later Miss Eleanora Adams entertained by giving in her dramatically amusing way an account of her visit to the Coronation.

Sunday evening there was a buffet supper in the Playhouse (the dining room never would have held us all!), followed by the Birthday Party and that marvel of marvels - the Golden Jubilee cake,

given for the celebration by a dear friend of "Fernside" and made at the Women's Educational and Industrial Union. Miss Sara Comins was the toastmistress for this occasion, and Mrs. Malcolm Taylor, as niece of Miss Allen, "Fernside's" foundress, cut the cake and gave the first toast. She spoke naturally and beautifully of "Auntie", and of her great love of people, of her zeal and boundless energy, and of her tireless efforts through the early years to make "Fernside" what it has become.

Mrs. Mooney was next, representing the Shawmut Club girls of the very first year, contrasting the life of that time with the life at "Fernside" as she found it when she returned with her own daughter so many years later.

Doctor Bassett followed her, speaking in place of Miss Fitzpatrick who had to leave.

The fourth speaker was Miss Mira Wilson, who told of "Fernside" in the years that she had known it. She paid tribute to Doctor Bassett, who next to Miss Allen has done more for "Fernside" than any other one person. Miss Nora Ryan spoke appreciatively for the girls of Miss Wilson's period.

Representing the more recent hostesses, Mrs. Everett C. Batchelder told how great an inspiration the spirit of "Fernside" can be to all of us.

The last speaker was Veronica Moran, who spoke in behalf of the new girls of today. She, too, emphasized the unique quality of "Fernside" - the pervasiveness of its friendliness, the warmth of its kindness, and the comfort of its strength to frayed nerves and tired minds and bodies.

Many letters full of a love for "Fernside" had been received from former loyal hostesses and guests who could not be present; these were mentioned at this time and excerpts from some of them were read, one from Sara Riggs MacNeal, a one-time hostess now in far-off Turkey. The sum of about one hundred dollars, contributed by the girls, through their dime-strips, in honor of the Jubilee, was presented by Mrs. Lovell and happily accepted by Doctor Bassett.

After group singing of the familiar songs that never grow old, the Party came to an end with the singing of the "Fernside" evening hymn.

Happy after such a satisfactory celebration, the group straggled up to the House. Again there could be heard the usual, dear sounds - groups on the grass trying to decide which was Jupiter, Mars, Venus; laughter and gay banter; the clang of the pump; an occasional squeal when the water spilled out of a pitcher; feet on the side porch; a slam of the screen door; a shade that went up instead of down; friendly good nights. Then with the quiet tones of Taps, the same peaceful hush of hills and valley settled on the fine old House that bravely would face the morrow and the second fifty years.