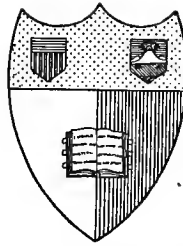




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CLUB MAKERS AND  
CLUB MEMBERS









# CLUB MAKERS AND CLUB MEMBERS

*By* T. H. S. ESCOTT

AUTHOR OF "SOCIETY IN THE  
COUNTRY HOUSE," "MASTERS  
OF ENGLISH JOURNALISM," ETC.

WITH TWENTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO

SIR EDWARD LETCHWORTH, F.S.A.

THE GRAND SECRETARY OF FREEMASONS,  
HIMSELF A CLUBMAN OF THE BEST TYPE: ONE OF  
THE OLDEST AS WELL AS THE MOST VALUED AMONG  
THOSE FOR WHOSE FRIENDSHIP THE PRESENT WRITER IS INDEBTED  
TO A CLUB LIFE OF MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY.

IN GRATEFUL MEMORY OF  
A COURTESY THAT NOTHING COULD RUFFLE,  
OF AN AMIABILITY THAT NOTHING COULD ALIENATE,  
AND OF KINDLY OFFICES SUSPENDED BY NO VICISSITUDES,

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED BY HIS  
GRATEFUL AND ATTACHED

T. H. S. ESCOTT.



## PREFACE

THIS volume is at least true to its title in that, unlike the several excellent club histories, from John Timbs to Major Arthur Griffiths and Mr. Ralph Nevill, all now standard and universally accessible works, it does not aim at bringing together interesting, and now more or less familiar, details concerning club structures, within and without, the cost of their erection, the fines or subscriptions paid by their members, their scale of coffee-room prices, and the profit or loss of their conduct.

The object throughout has been, for convenience' sake in chronological order, not invariably observed by those who have already treated of these matters, to trace and illustrate the connection of the club system generally, and of certain institutions in particular, with the representative personages as well as with the social, political, intellectual, and moral tendencies or characteristics of the period during which they grew up. Throughout these pages club makers and club members are alike portrayed as types of their time, and the incidents in which they figure or in which they have any concern as reflections of national life and manners.

The preparation of such a work could, therefore, necessarily receive less assistance than might be supposed from the instructive labours already accomplished by others in the same field. Still less could the present enterprise have been carried through without the help of those who in past years, by their interest in the writer as well as their exceptional knowledge of the theme, promoted the plan of the work and supplied him with many of the hitherto unpublished materials embodied in it. The author's first debt is to the late Lord Avebury, and among others with whom he had been privileged from earliest youth

intimately to associate : A. W. Kinglake and Abraham Hayward, Sir M. E. Grant-Duff, the late Markham Spofforth, and the first Lord Ashbourne. Of those happily still living, his obligations are equally great, and in some cases perhaps greater (putting the names in alphabetical order), to—Sir C. H. Acland, Bart., Mr. J. T. Agg Gardner, M.P., Mr. Balfour, Mr. F. Elrington Ball, General Sir Henry Brackenbury, G.C.B., Emeritus Professor Ingram Bywater, Mr. Alan S. Cole, Mr. Bryan Corcoran, the Hon. Hew Hamilton Dalrymple, the Rev. A. L. Foulkes, Mr. Moreton Frewen, the Rev. W. P. Greswell, Professor John Hales, General H. D. Hutchinson, Sir Courtenay Ilbert, G.C.B. (and through him the several parliamentary officials named at the proper places in the chapter “The Best Club in London”), Mr. C. N. Jackson, Fellow and Tutor, Hertford College, Oxford, Viscounts Knollys and Knutsford, Sir H. Austin Lee, Mr. Barton Mills, Major H. P. Molineux, Mr. R. E. Prothero, M.V.O, the Lord Reay, the Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell, Mr. J. H. Seabrooke, Sir Bruce M. Seton, Bart., Mr. J. Ashby Sterry, Sir G. O. Trevelyan, Bart., Lord Weardale, Lord Westbury, Sir John Willoughby, Bart.

Nothing has been more valuable, more courteously or generously forthcoming than the information which could alone be imparted by certain club secretaries and officials. Nor can I exaggerate my indebtedness to the secretaries of the United University Club and the Oxford and Cambridge, Mr. E. O. Pope and Mr. W. Woodstock ; Colonel C. Russell of the National, or the secretaries of the Kildare Street Club, Dublin, and the New Club, Edinburgh ; or lastly to the secretaries of other clubs mentioned in this book for their kindness in supplying materials for illustration.

T. H. S. ESCOTT.

WEST BRIGHTON,  
*September, 1913.*

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THE CLUBS OF PALL MALL.  
*(From an engraving by Shelter Boys.)*



# Club Makers and Club Members

## CHAPTER I

### THE CLUBMAN IN THE MAKING

Club foregleams in classical times and lands—Themistocles as a club product—Alcibiades and others as club managers—Aristotle at the Athenian Club—Cicero as a Roman club type—The first English clubman—The founder of the Court of Good Company at work and play between Westminster and St. Paul's—Tit for tat with the club Mæcenas, Sir Henry Somer—The prototype of the nineteenth century, Sir Henry Anderson, at Stone's—Was John Lydgate expelled from, or Chaucer a member of, the Court of Good Company?—The first clubman's solace of penitence and song in poverty and old age—Sir Walter Raleigh crowns his career of adventure, of high favour in Court and camp, with the fame of the second club founder—What he took from and did for the Mermaid men—The Mermaid rehearsal of his Free Trade deliverances—Ben Jonson as club founder in the Middle Temple—The Apollo Ben—Social and intellectual notorieties sealed of the tribe of Ben—Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, Sir John Suckling, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Sir Kenelm Digby, Aubigny, Portland—The Apollo after Jonson's death.

CLASSICAL Athens and Rome had no clubhouses. It is no baseless fancy to discover in both the presage, if not the actual trace, of a club system. There was no Attic structural equivalent for the Carlton or the Reform, but there were several Athenian prototypes of Grillion's and "The" Club. Something might be said for describing Themistocles as the earliest personal product of club life. The Athenian companionships and the Athenian dining societies combined to create a socio-political agency faintly foreshadowing that afterwards represented by our own Brooks's or White's. Ten

years after Themistocles and half a century in advance of the most brilliant among Athenian clubmen, Alcibiades, the highly descended and wealthy Cimon, reorganized the existing societies and created at least one new in the interests of aristocracy and sport. The son of Miltiades, he had himself won three Olympic races with his four-horse chariot. The Attic organizations, now, for the sake of convenience, loosely called "clubs," during the fifth and sixth centuries B.C. were generally anti-democratic, and the case of Themistocles, to a great extent kept together by this collective support, was an exception. The naturally conservative tendency of these bodies showed itself a generation after Cimon, when the aristocratic wire-puller of the period, the son of Melesias, called, like the historian, Thucydides, successfully employed the club machinery to oppose the rise and thwart the policy of Pericles.

Athenian politics on the personal side were always a game of conspiracy and intrigue in which the leaders and followers alike were equally ready, as might suit them best, to round on their friends or to play into their opponents' hands, and cursed their ill luck if they could not at the same time be running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. The politics of the old Greek communities, when not raised by patriotic sentiment to a higher level, were apt to be as much honeycombed by corruption and intrigue as is the Greek party system of to-day. The cabals and coteries, whether primarily political or social, which at least anticipated the functions of clubs, were manipulated with unscrupulous adroitness as secret agencies for rigging the political market, nobbling the Judicature, and influencing the election returns. Between 450 and 350 B.C., the orator Andocides and Alcibiades, having first dazzled the democracy by the brilliance of their intellectual displays, aimed at making themselves masters of the State through supporters largely picked up at the public dining-table of fifteen or twenty

persons. To each of these messes admission was by ballot, one black ball sufficing to exclude. Every one on entering accepted the rules he found in existence, and expulsion was the punishment for their violation. The wire-pullers of classical Athens thus worked a socio-political machinery, undoubtedly possessing something of a club character. These little companies, singly and collectively, were recognized as having, not only their intellectual as well as their social and convivial attractions, but also their personal and moral temptations.

Thus Epicurus and others hostile to Aristotle's memory charge him with having, when a young man, squandered his patrimony on these co-operative banquets, and with having learnt at them too fastidious a taste in cookery. There is no more evidence to support this view than there is the notion that the well-groomed, well-dressed, short-haired chief of the Peripatetics was also clean-shaven. On the other hand, one cannot doubt that to the polite training of the Athenian dining-clubs Aristotle owed something of the agreeableness and tact which afterwards commended him to Philip of Macedon as well as to his pupil, the young Alexander, and which made him a favourite with Hermias, the "tyrant" of Atarneus. The characteristics of the Greek dinner groups were inherited by the corresponding institutions in the first and second centuries of republican Rome. Their very name was identical with the French *cercle*. Writing to Atticus appreciatively about the *circuli* in which he himself figured so conspicuously, Cicero, with his praise of their wit-sharpening qualities, mentions that their talk had become much freer than when he joined them. Analogous reunions were planted and adorned by forgotten clubmen at other Hellenic centres than that of Athens, notably in Sparta, as well as in Phœnician cities like Carthage. But in those

<sup>1</sup> Ad Atticum, Bk. II, 18: "Sermo in circulis et in convivis est liberior quam fuit."

cases even the researches of Doctors Grenfell and Hunt have not yet thrown any light on the personalities of individual clubmen, still less have identified any members of the group known by tradition, with anything like the distinctness with which, as has been seen, there stand forth a succession of Greek club products or habitués from the Themistoclean to the Periclean period.

The present survey concerns itself not so much with institutions as with individuals. We must therefore be content to have made the personal acquaintance of the Athenian clubman as he undoubtedly once might have been met with under the shadow of the Acropolis, and of his Italian successor as some three hundred years later he existed at Rome.

Where shall we find the earliest authentic specimen of the club maker with his club company in England? The answer can be given without a moment's hesitation. Among all his contemporaries he is to be recognized at a glance in our mediæval Anglo-Saxon rhymer, Thomas Hoccleve. Of Hoccleve's birth, parentage, and family we know nothing. With the man himself we shall easily make ourselves as intimate as if he still wrote and revelled amongst us in the flesh. Antiquarians have quarrelled among themselves over the discovery of natal neighbourhood in his name, plainly, according to some authorities, a corruption of Hockliffe, a Bedfordshire village near Woburn on the Watling Road. Nothing of the sort, comes the rejoinder. Obviously the first syllable of our prehistoric clubman's patronymic proves him to have been born in the valley of the Thames. Every one knows Cleve Lock and Mill above Streatley. Higher up still, on the Berks side, a little stream called the Ock joins the Thames at Abingdon. Thomas Hoccleve, therefore, must have first seen the light in the same district as did the Rugby headmaster's eldest son, Matthew Arnold, at Laleham. All this, we are presently told,

is mere moonshine. "There be salmons at Macedon and at Monmouth," says Fluellen. Similarly, the last letters in Hoccleve being those that indicate several Somersetshire, Gloucestershire, or Wiltshire villages, make it certain that the poet's family came from the west.

Then there are the Hocks to be considered. Though Devonshire may have its Hockridge and Norfolk its Hockwold, a beautiful little Northumbrian hamlet, Hockwill, nestles under the Allendale Hills. From so many claimants to the honour of having given the earliest English clubman birth and name, it would be invidious to make a choice. The poet's period may, however, without offence, be deduced from his writings.

The French victories of Henry V and the Duke of Gloucester's regency during Henry's absence are commemorated by Hoccleve in a poem which also, during these events, incidentally fixes the poet's age at fifty-three. The national incidents recorded belong to 1421-2. Hoccleve, therefore, would have been born about 1368-9.

Like many other notable club figures at all periods, he, who in order of time stands at their head, belonged to the Civil Service. His poem on the regimen of princes came out in 1411-12. Then, he tells us, he had been twenty-four years in the Privy Seal office. That he entered the department before he was twenty, is further shown by the mention of his name in the Privy Council proceedings and ordinances, 1386-1400. His Government place was one of those generally filled by a clergyman. At first, therefore, his idea probably was to earn his living as a Government clerk until he should see a chance of a benefice good enough to justify him in taking orders. The failure of that expectation, disgusting him with himself, his patrons, and with his life generally, betrayed him into a disordered and dissolute existence. He soon became a

Bohemian of the most inveterately irregular and self-indulgent sort. If the Church had taken him, he might have sobered down. As it was he had no thought but of securing the jolliest of good times in his bachelor chambers at Chester's Inn, near Middle Temple.

Eventually he married—for money, not love, and only then when failing health, growing years, and an empty purse made him feel the need of some one who would be nurse as well as wife. Marriage, however, may have chastened but did not at once or entirely put an end to the violent delights of single life. The escapades and devilries of that roaring time are written in his *Male Regle*, 1406. In that poem are recited the carousals and caresses at Westminster immediately after office hours, if not in the leisure intervals of his clerkly day. A little later came the heavier hilarities on the eastern side of Temple Bar, at the Paul's Head tavern. That Hocclevian haunt stood beneath the same roof as, and formed a part of, Paul's brewery. Afterwards it grew into St. Paul's coffee-house. The London alehouses had begun to increase and multiply in and from 700. The particular one called after the cathedral stood on Ludgate Hill between St. Paul's Churchyard and Doctor's Commons. The Thames was the highway on which the mediæval clubman passed from the Westminster cooks and taverners to his eastward rounds, the chief point in these being his Court of Good Company, presently to be visited.

Clubman or pothouse patron, he denied himself nothing, and stood treat to every one when he was flush of money, as he generally contrived to seem. He paid the boatmen so well that directly they saw him coming they began to fight who should have the double fare invariably coming from his ever-open purse; for he was, they all agreed, "a verray gentilman." Hence their unfailing salute when-

ever he appeared, "master" or "squire"—the title then significant of good station by birth or office. So, too, with the serving men or women, especially the latter, at his various houses of convivial call; the drawers had only to fill "Master" Hoccleve's cup to be sure of a vail whose value set their mouths watering. As for the girls, he regaled them on sweet wine and wafers before kissing them, beyond which, he tells us, a natural shyness would not let him go. Hoccleve's and his friends' club companies resemble those of classical antiquity in being what were once called "ordinaries," but are to-day known as *table d'hôtes*. It is his connection with the most famous on fourteenth-century record of these that justifies his description here as the earliest in the long line of English clubmen.

The Court of Good Company held its meetings close to the Middle Temple, perhaps in that very Chester's Inn, the Middle Temple's property and our poet's home. Its most highly placed frequenter was Sir Henry Somer, Chancellor of the Exchequer. This personage was a typical forerunner of the patron supplied by the titled or official classes to London's bohemian coteries. One of his successors flourished during the second half of the nineteenth century, and still lives in a vanishing generation's memory. During the later sixties and the earliest seventies Stone's coffee-house, Pantion Street, Haymarket, a sort of modern Will's or Button's, retained an historic reputation for chops, steaks, and other items of honest English cookery, as well as for the excellence of its sherry and the soundness of its bitter ale. The place had been brought to notoriety by the favour of Douglas Jerrold and of the *Punch* men belonging to his generation. The Mayhews frequented it as long as there were any of them left, for a long time visiting it, both for the midday meal and later for what one of its habitués called the "sherry and bitters" period of the day,

newspaper writers of all degrees on their way westward from Fleet Street, together with countless of the camp followers of the stage and press. The patron of this mixed company was a certain Sir Henry Anderson, member of the Council of India, who regularly gave the place some of the afternoon during the progress from Whitehall to Queen's Gate.

Anderson's mediæval predecessor at the Court of Good Company, the already mentioned Somer, not only sometimes made merry with the wits whom Hoccleve had formed into a club, but helped to furnish forth their feasting-table with none of your Frenchified kickshaws, but with wheat for bread and perhaps a capon or a buck for principal dish. Professor W. W. Skeat has successfully performed an accurate chronological calculation to show that a Court of Good Company dinner, to which Somer in this way contributed, actually took place on May 1, 1410.<sup>1</sup>

The high official who deigns to grace the table and augment the menu of bohemian gatherings has seldom erred on the side of prodigality. Sir Henry Somer was no exception to the rule. For his thriftiness he had some excuse. Apart from his official salary and fees, he seems to have had nothing.

Some years later, indeed, he made money on the commission for founding King's College, Cambridge; but at the beginning of the fifteenth century, while president of the Court of Good Company, he only preached what he was obliged to practise in impressing the necessity of thrift. His henchmen at the club grew restless under the reiterated advice; hence, in or about 1408, Hoccleve's metrical reply to Somer's warning that "our club in the Temple" should start a fresh system. "Once," the poet continues, "you tell us, we were moderate. So, you now add, we ought to be again, or at least to have no outrageous

<sup>1</sup> Hoccleve's *Works* in English Text Society (to which I am indebted for the Hoccleve details here given), vol. i. p. xiii.



waste." To this counsel and criticism the Court of Good Company clubmen answer through Hoccleve that their expenditure is their own affair, and that they do not desire to involve their distinguished chairman in it. Then comes a remonstrance: "Let Sir Henry, if he will, refuse to promote from his wealth to our and his own enjoyment; but because he is virtuous and mean, let him not be vexed with his humbler and less self-righteous friends, when they only remind him of a contribution, not in money but in kind, to their next meeting, unsolicited in the first instance by them but volunteered by him. At our last dinner the clubmen, now put on their defence, inform Sir Henry, strict limits of expense, perhaps at his instance imposed by the steward, were religiously observed all round. But why waste more words over the matter? You wish us to take you for our pattern, well and good. We will only eat what you tell us, and will have no more wine drawn than you think fit. *C'est tout*," Hoccleve winds up, "let us be as dull and as thirsty as even you could wish. But, to come to the point, because you are a skinflint, you need not mock us with false promises or break your word about sending us six great nobles<sup>1</sup> to buy wheat in addition to paying your own score. Be at least a man of honour; give us what you said and yourself too at our next merry meeting."

It is a mere guess to speak of any other distinguished person besides the two already named as belonging to this the earliest, as well as least known, of London clubs. It is a slur upon the memory of Hoccleve's contemporary brother bard, John Lydgate, to say that the Court of Good Company either blackballed or expelled him. Chronologically it would have been

<sup>1</sup> This coin, minted during the reign of Edward III. (1344), was, like the half-noble, stamped with a ship; in it was seated the King with a sword in his hand signifying his defeat of the French off Sluys, June 24, 1340. The noble retained its circulation till Queen Elizabeth's reign.

possible, but the known facts quite dispose of the traditional report. Hoccleve and his club associates were Londoners, Lydgate was not. Born in 1370 at a place near Newmarket, of the same name as his own, he chiefly passed his life in the Benedictine monastery of Bury St. Edmund. His journeys between his native Suffolk and Paris and Oxford, at both of whose Universities he studied, no doubt took him through London. Here on one occasion business detained him longer than he wished. The man of law whom he consulted at Westminster neglected his business because his client could not pay the fees. Lydgate therefore lost no time in returning home.

The idea of any personal connection between the club and the poet of *Canterbury Tales*, though not disproved, is rendered extremely improbable by dates and the absence of any authentic record. Let the calendar speak. Chaucer was Hoccleve's senior by at least a whole generation. Hoccleve's club days reached their prime during 1407-8. By that date Chaucer, who died 1400, had been eight years in his grave.

To return to Hoccleve. His earlier manhood had been full of heat, noise, disorder, and debauchery. Advancing years bring the inevitable reaction. The old age which was a regret pathetically laments the youth that had been a blunder. No element of bitterness is wanting to the autobiographical retrospect taken by him who had so long been the life and soul of our club in the Temple. He had been, not only a sinner but a fool, neglecting the wise man's caution, that he who giveth to the rich shall surely come to want.<sup>1</sup> Among all those who at the Court of Good Company had laughed at his jokes and revelled at his cost none had a thought for him now. The trials of age and poverty were not, however, allowed to destroy his spirit, to silence his muse, or to permit her indulgence only in vain regrets and picturesque

<sup>1</sup> Proverbs xxii. 16.

but unprofitable recollection of the lost chances and misspent money which, if properly managed, would have secured material comfort or spiritual peace in his declining years. Ill at ease as he was, he contrived to produce his best verses when within a measurable distance of death. Neither pathos nor anything but superficial humour had been the note in his earlier poetry. Both depth of feeling and beauty of expression characterize every line of his address to the Virgin, for which Chaucer sometimes received credit. "But then, the worst is that I do believe." Something like Byron's bitter confession wells up as a refrain in all the metrical outpourings of his heart by this earliest of English clubmen during his last days. Throughout his disordered youth and his self-indulgent manhood Hoccleve had consciously sinned against light, grace, and the capacity for better things. Proportionate to that neglected knowledge was the bitterness of his subsequent remorse. Placed at last by circumstances beyond the temptations which in earlier years had not only mastered him, but which he had courted, he now finds himself in an agony of evil thoughts or of unavailing remorse. For deliverance from these and for guidance to his soul's health, his prayer is made with the earnest self-abasement of a doomed criminal, or with something like the despair of a lost spirit. His appeal to the Virgin includes one to the Apostle John, as well as to the three persons of the Trinity :—

"Unto you twain (Mary and John) do I my soul commend,  
Help me that I may my life amend.  
Be in my heart, both now and evermore,  
And of my soul now wash away the sore."

These may well have been the last words from the pen of the poet clubman who founded the Court of Good Company.

Hoccleve's face, figure, and bearing, as seen in the

accepted portraits, were undistinguished and typically Anglo-Saxon. There can be no greater contrast than between the fifteenth-century creator of the Court of Good Company and the club founder next to be met with after an interval of about 150 years. Sir Walter Raleigh still stands forth not only as one among the most important figures of English history, but as nearly the most handsome and winning man of his time. The dark olive complexion, the keen black eyes, and the finely cut features, were the outward signs of the Celtic strain, manifested in the same type of physiognomy by another western celebrity, Sir John Eliot. Like Eliot, too, Raleigh was a well-born man in virtue of the descent, which he shared with his half-brother Sir Humphrey Gilbert, from Sir Richard Grenville.

During the years when he established the company in which we are now to find him he was still under fifty. Into that space of time he had compressed his most memorable or fortunate travels, as well as the really stirring and brilliant episodes in his course of adventure beyond the four seas.

Born at Hayes Farm (not manor), near indeed, as reference-books say, to Sidmouth, but still nearer to the now thriving little watering-place Budleigh Salterton, he had cut short his terms at Oriel to fight for the Huguenots in the French war, and did more than merely win his spurs in the battles of Jarnac and Moncontour. The complete man, exemplified more than a generation later by Lord Herbert of Cherbury, was also the favourite ideal of Elizabethan courtiers; it had been lived up to by Walter Raleigh while an Oxford undergraduate, during his continental experiences, and especially throughout his stay in Paris, where he was at the time of St. Bartholomew's massacre on August 24, 1572. Few provincial accents cling more closely, as was illustrated by our nineteenth-century Archbishop Temple, than that of Devonshire.

Walter Raleigh not only made no attempt to lose it, he gloried in it. The fine ladies and gentlemen of the English queen's Greenwich Court, as well as Elizabeth herself, sometimes rallied the favourite on his West of England pronunciation. So did his special literary intimate, Ben Jonson. Raleigh's reply, in a more studiously Devonian dialect than ever, was that he thought it preferable to the Gallic affectations of voice and phrase which were just then the vogue. From infancy Raleigh's two enthusiasms had been for books and the sea. Millais's painting, "Raleigh's Boyhood," exhibited in 1870, was executed at Budleigh Salterton, whither he had gone for the purpose of transferring the true local tints to his canvas; it represents the future Mermaid Club's founder exactly as he was often seen on the Salterton beach, eagerly taking in the tale of oceanic enterprise in all latitudes poured forth by some weather-hardened and sunburnt sailor. Naunton, the historian of the Elizabethan Court and, till Mr. Edmund Gosse, Raleigh's most authentic biographer, describes him as "an indefatigable reader." The ruling passion for salt-water and for pen and ink governed his whole life, and explains his appearance among our club-makers.

By 1600 Raleigh's travels were at an end. As scholar and courtier, not less than soldier and sailor, he had won European fame. Nor was it only that his accomplishments and exploits had made him the ornament of palaces and camps. He was equally successful with the pen, and in some poems then universally read had happily hit off peculiar turns of thought and expression then the fashion. The same popularity waited on his prose *Discovery of the Large, Rich, and Beautiful Empire of Guiana*. This book was subsequently called by Hume a parcel of the grossest and most palpable lies ever imposed upon the credulity of mankind. Later exploration, especially of the Venezuela district, has refuted Hume

and vindicated Raleigh. Raleigh, therefore, united in himself the personal qualities and distinction which, two centuries earlier, divided between Hoccleve and Sir Henry Somer, had resulted in the foundation and maintenance of the Court of Good Company. For a similar undertaking, at the date now reached, Raleigh's social pre-eminence, wide and various connection, would have made him single-handed more than sufficient. There was, however, volunteered to him in his task co-operation more illustrious than any that ever fell in Hoccleve's way; for his unsolicited colleagues and counsellors were Francis Bacon and Ben Jonson.

The friendship of these three, founded upon mutual sympathies of intellectual power generally, was in a special degree cemented by a common attraction to the same masters of style. Lucan and Tacitus were the Latin favourites of each. Raleigh's prose, in strength and animation, never rivalled the force of those stinging judgments—pithy and pessimistic generalizations condensed into a phrase—whose mastery Tacitus owed to his oratorical training. Raleigh's prolixity and involution were the faults of the time rather than of the writer. At his best, like Ben and Bacon, he shows a family resemblance to the classical models studied by all the writers of the Mermaid group; while his historical summaries and personal estimates of affairs bear the same Tacitean stamp as is impressed on the Essays and *Henry VII* of Bacon. "But for the Mermaid meetings," said Ben Jonson, "Raleigh would never have put such good matter as he did into, not only his *History of the World* but his vindication of oligarchic government, contained in *The Cabinet Council* and *The Three Discourses*. The club at least made the best wits in England an inkhorn for his pen. Take, for instance, what he says about the Punic War; on two successive club nights he had it from me much as he afterwards wrote it down. Selden, Cotton, Carew, Donne, and others of our

Bread Street company," Ben would pleasantly add, "could tell the same tale."

The ecclesiastical wit and historian Thomas Fuller, presently to be met with elsewhere, drew on his imagination for his well-known account of the Mermaid celebrities. The one trustworthy picture of their club life is to be found in Beaumont's descriptive epistle to his old Mermaid crony, Jonson. This shows how seriously the members took themselves and their meetings, and how completely the club seemed to them a career in itself. The infinite pains they lavished on the preparation of good things had results brilliant and numerous enough to make the fortune of two more such companies. The club he took so large a part in founding may, therefore, well have given Raleigh a clayfield out of which to make his literary bricks. On the other hand, he brought to it—if not in sparkling talk yet in worldwide knowledge and shrewd suggestion—at least as much as he took away; for it was on a Mermaid club-night that he gave Richard Hakluyt the idea of editing, with a full commentary, *Peter Martyr's Discovery of the New World*. This task, performed, not only on Raleigh's instance but at his money-cost, traced the course of transatlantic speculation or discovery from prehistoric times, and brought together within easy compass the beginnings of American history.

During his London time Raleigh led a double life. On duty about the Court or as Member of Parliament for Devonshire (1585-6) and Cornwall (1593-4), he took his ease and pleasure at the Bread Street gatherings. There, having first refreshed himself by a literary chat with Jonson, he next talked politics or State philosophy with Selden, Cotton, and Donne.

The earliest of our Empire-builders, Raleigh was also the first of Imperial Free Traders. Before communicating them to the King on paper, he had told Selden at the Mermaid how in his travels he had seen

certain countries grow potent with abundance of all things, and yet, though they themselves produced very little, their fountains of wealth never dried up. The reason, he went on to explain, was that these countries added the privileges of smallness of custom (of import duties) to liberty of trade. This he proceeded to illustrate by contrasting Holland with England. Two ships freighted with a cargo of wine are bound, one for London, the other for Amsterdam. In England the custom duties amount to £900; in Holland, to less than £650. And so with all other wares and merchandises. Those nations that keep their duties low draw all the world to traffic with them. Thus the small duties received by the Dutch customs are so numerous and collectively so valuable as to exceed in one year the amounts that make their way to the English Treasury in two years.

Though the exact spot has not been fixed even by conjecture, Hoccleve's Temple club, the Court of Good Company, met, beyond doubt, in the City. Two centuries later the club course, like the course of Empire, had begun to make its way westward. Sir Walter Raleigh and the Mermaid brethren in 1600 chose for the scene of their reunions some of the old Hocclevean haunts. In or about 1616 the survivors of the Mermaid men provided Ben Jonson with a nucleus for the Apollo. This society for several reasons marks an era in club development, and gives Ben himself a place among club founders as well defined as belongs to any of his already mentioned predecessors, or as will be filled by the most notable of those who come after him in the club succession. In the first place, the Apollo, by the topographical advance in a direction opposite to the Mansion House, brought its members an entire stage nearer the limits of modern clubland than had yet been done; secondly, it gave them, if not a house, at least a room, probably a complete floor, that was all their own. The house immortalized by the Apollo



stood between the Middle Temple and the Strand end of Fleet Street. Kept by a favourite tapster of the time named Wadlowe, with the sign of the Devil Tavern, it was a fashionable resort during the first Stuart's reign. The Apollo chamber, however, was scarcely less apart from the rest of the dwelling than if it had been beneath another roof.

The evolution of the club may be summed up in a sentence as the progress from a house of call to a centre of interest, a school of character, and a social training-ground. As this line of advance is followed, the representative club of the period will be found a monument, a reflection, and an epitome of the virtues, vices, the social forces or foibles, and tendencies which mark the time. So, to some extent, of course, it was with the mediæval Court of Good Company. The conditions, however, under which that was gathered together, lacked a feature so essential to the conception of the modern club as a settled domicile. That, it has been seen, was forthcoming in the case of the Apollo, whose situation and equipment bring us as near to the modern club as we shall get before the nineteenth century. The club decorations and fittings, arranged under the founder's own eyes, inspired the members with a pleasantly proud affection for their common home. They went, in modern phrase, to the club, as well as to meet each other. Charles Montagu (the first Lord Halifax) and Matthew Prior, who lived near enough to the Apollo period to know its traditions, present this aspect of the place in their joint work *The Hind and Panther Transversed*, a parody of Dryden's "Hind and Panther." The Apollo company also exemplified the social and intellectual fusion noticeable both at the Court of Good Company and the Mermaid, and pre-eminently a club attribute. Its members, as will presently be seen, were supplied by classes and interests as numerous and as different as those combined within the joint-stock palaces of Pall

Mall or St. James's to-day. It was not, therefore, as it has been called, a mere mutual admiration society. On the club nights, which were its house dinners, it of course constituted a collective proof of its founder's ascendancy in the realm of letters more complete than was again witnessed till Dryden, fifty years later, held his court at Will's. Ben Jonson, however, was not so absorbed by the homage he received as to shrink from the presence of rivals near his throne, but courted comparison with greater intellects than his own, and pitted himself against them. In 1620 he had celebrated Francis Bacon's completion of his sixtieth year by some verses, forcible as well as flattering, and too well known to be quoted here. In return, the Lord Chancellor honoured his panegyrist with the hospitalities of his country seat, Gorhambury, on the same day that the most rising young man of the time, Thomas Hobbes, was of the party. Bent on giving all possible *éclat* to the club which was then his most recent creation, Jonson induced his Gorhambury host and fellow-guest to assist at its proceedings. Now, too, there was sealed of the tribe of Ben the most industrious of seventeenth-century translators of Spanish, Thomas Shelton, whose literary fortune was made by his attachment to the ambassadorial suite of Howard de Walden, afterwards Earl of Suffolk. In Spain he picked up enough of the language to English the first part of *Don Quixote* (1607), two years after its first appearance. The speed (forty days) and the success with which this had been done made Shelton's reputation. The colonial and Imperial interest personified by Raleigh at the Mermaid had also their representative at the Apollo in an Archbishop of York's son, a notable traveller for that time throughout Europe and in the Near East. George Sandys, after a short time at St. Mary's Hall, Oxford, had been known for his handsome person, well-knit figure, bronzed and thoughtful face, in the chief



BEN JONSON.

*(From the picture by Gerard Honthorst.)*



European capitals before visiting Egypt, Turkey, and Palestine. Reappearing in England, he published his *Travels* in 1615, dedicating them to Charles I. Recompensed for this by the treasurership of the Virginian Company, Sandys subsequently moved the Government to take over the colony in 1624, when having examined its resources and needs, proposed a scheme for its better plantation. There his work beyond the seas ended. His later life was divided between courtiership and literature. At the Apollo we see him in that part of the room where Lord Herbert of Cherbury discusses faith, philosophy, and politics with Falkland of Great Tew, and sometimes contributing to the conversation. In another recess of the Apollo chamber Ben Jonson's special protégés, Cleveland, Herrick, Marmion, Suckling, Carew, grouped themselves round the great man's second in command, Alexander Broome, to say pleasant things obsequiously intended to reach the master's ear. Sir John Suckling, though as a writer his pupil, had no need of Jonson for his patron. He was, indeed, himself the chief social personage of the club. An old "Westminster," as well as a Trinity fellow-commoner, he had scarcely been called to the Bar at Gray's Inn in 1626, when he became, by his father's death, an Eastern Counties' territorial aristocrat. A Court favourite, and a figure in the best continental circles of his time, this dapper little man, with the bright, round, red-haired head, with eyes as sparkling as his wit, filled the same place of distinction and popularity at the Apollo as has since been done at other literary clubs by members uniting accomplishments and tastes of the pen with wealth, position, and personal charm. It was not, therefore, with Suckling a case of being a "lord among wits and a wit among lords."

The Apollo's personal composition was not less rich in social than in intellectual distinction. The third Earl of Pembroke, as William Herbert, the reputed

W. H. of Shakespeare's "Sonnets," Sir Kenelm Digby, Sir Henry Morison, all men of birth as well as fashion, had brought into the club certain men-about-town of wealth and station—some, like Mr. William Cartwright of Gloucestershire, an ancestor of the existing Cartwrights of Aynho, Oxfordshire, literary and theatrical by taste as well as performance; and others, such as Aubigny and Portland, bearing patronymics to modern ears charged with ducal associations, merely well-dressed, well-to-do, and tolerably intellectual loungers. These were the men with whom the great Ben, when in a genial and chatty humour, would discuss the vicissitudes of the literary calling, and dilate on personal grievances never aired before his fellow-writers. Neither about the profession of letters, his paymasters, or his contemporaries, unless his favourite henchmen, had Ben many good words to say. Hear him grumbling in Pembroke's ear: "A scurvy trade and viler wages! My only gains from play-writing have amounted to little more than £200; for, look you," he continued, "the poet who does well in the playhouse makes his profit, not as a writer but as a trader. Shakespeare went partner in the management of the theatres that produced his dramas. In this way he grew rich. I, defrauded of all share in the receipts, am, and shall remain, poor." Then would come an outburst against manager Henslowe, as not only the meanest of employers but the most vicious of men. If Henslowe and his gang were not all knaves, it was because so many of them were fools as well. Purely egotistic and vituperative talk, indefinitely continued in this strain, was too much for all but the most resigned listeners. To that number did not belong a prim little gentleman, speaking with a strong Scotch accent, on his rare visits to London an occasional guest at the Devil's Tavern. Had he not heard it at least once a day throughout those weeks that, doing the whole distance from London both ways on foot, Jonson had

been his guest at his house near Edinburgh in 1619? For the precise Lowland laird, himself also a poet, was Drummond of Hawthornden, who eventually performed for Ben an instalment of the biographical service rendered by another Scot, James Boswell, for an eighteenth-century clubman of nearly the same surname as Ben, Samuel Johnson, like his predecessor, the literary "great Cham" of his period. All that his quiet Scotch home had suffered from his gifted but boisterously convivial visitor was a recent memory with Drummond. Naturally enough, therefore, Jonson's too familiar volleys of invective and sarcasm against the writing tribe generally, and his friends and rivals in particular, caused the guest of the evening, from beyond the Tweed, to whisper to Pembroke, near whom he sat: "Very characteristic, no doubt, and at judicious intervals perhaps interesting; but I did not travel all the way from Scotland to hear in London what my hospitable duties constrained me patiently to listen to at Hawthornden."

One feature of the Apollo, not yet mentioned, curiously presages one among the latest of modern club developments. Ladies of spotless character were on special nights admitted to its social and musical entertainments. Jonson's death in 1637 may have eclipsed the Apollo's gaiety, but did not end its meetings. The tavern, deriving its satanic name from a sign on which St. Dunstan pulls the Evil One's nose, retained its popularity. The society, which made it famous was only dissolved by degrees. Here, between 1663 and 1677, after their learned assemblies at Arundel House, the President of the Royal Society, with Pepys as one of the party, feasted in the room of Jonsonian memory. Here, too, in 1690, a hundred and fifty Whig parliamentary loyalists organized their support of William III on the eve of his Irish expedition. Thirteen years later the place witnessed the sale of the jewels belonging to La Belle Stuart, the beautiful

Duchess of Richmond. During most of the eighteenth century the Apollo chamber did duty for a place of intellectual and literary or fashionable meeting, and in one or other of these capacities was frequented, not only by Addison and Garth but by Johnson himself. After this it was the scene of Kenrick's Shakespeare lectures, in 1774, and of many musical entertainments. Nor had it ceased being used for these purposes till its purchase in 1787 by the bankers Childs. Even then the clubroom was preserved almost intact till its destruction by the fire of 1879.



## CHAPTER II

### SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY CLUBMEN AT WORK

The club and the Commonwealth—Sir James Harrington, the one club founder of the period—How the Rota men were “full of politics” in New Palace Yard, backed their friends, talked Oceana, and settled what to do with Ireland and the Jews—What passed between Sir William Petty and Major Wildman, Disraeli’s soul of English politics 1640-88—The cult of the jumping cat at the Rota and its personal results—How Colonel Cobbet and Sir Richard Willis stood by the King at the Sealed Knot—What the citizens did for trade at the Civil Club—Bryan Corcoran—How the Treason clubmen changed the dynasty and founded a club system—The golden egg of the Bank of England laid in a Cheapside club—William Paterson & Co. at the Wednesday Club talk politics and finance, combine capital and experience to organize the London money market. What were the limits of their insight into the banking system?

THE twentieth-century joint-stock palaces of Pall Mall and St. James’s could not dispense with their City connection. The fusion into its veins of new blood from the Stock Exchange occasionally reanimates a club rumoured to be at its last gasp. Such a revival is the more in accordance with the fitness of things because the earliest club founder on record collected his company within earshot of Bow bells. Once clear of the Middle Ages, however, the clubman’s topographical course uninterruptedly became that of Tennyson’s Orion, sloping slowly to the west. The occidental movement commenced in 1616 with Ben Jonson, when he housed his Apollo company farther from Guildhall than would have been dreamed of by his predecessors. In the year that he opened his club he opened also his war against the City and its doings with a play named “The Devil is an Ass.” The abomi-

nation of funding, denounced by Swift and other Tory writers as subversive of national prosperity and moral character, was a seventeenth and eighteenth-century product. But Ben's stage satire upon the commercial system of his time, its personages and practices, equalled in bitterness, while it exceeded in personality, the ironical scorn heaped by Swift upon the money brokers, the usurers, with all their customers, whom Marlborough's Whig wars had exalted above the aristocracy of land. After the Apollo had passed its prime the club course took a south-westerly direction.

Under the Commonwealth club companies did not flourish. Cromwellianism had parted with its virtue, strength, and spirit, and the national polity of the immediate future had become an open question in 1659. In that year, on the eve of the Restoration, for which everything was now really ripe, though each day brought its new constitutional project from philosophers or empirics, the one club experiment of the republican era was made.

It occurred to an acute and experienced, a practical as well as speculative, politician to promote the discussion, if not the solution, of State problems by reviving the later Tudor and earlier Stuart club tradition. James Harrington (1611-77), the eldest son and heir of Sir Sapcote Harrington, representing a family long settled at Rand, Lincolnshire, bore some resemblance as regards person, character, tastes, education, and social position to the most popular and interesting member of the Apollo, Sir John Suckling.

By a happy accident he had been born, not where his parents lived, but at his grandfather's house Upton, Northamptonshire. To that fact he owed his early tuition by William Chillingworth, and his Oxford course, begun in his eighteenth year, at Trinity College. Leaving Oxford without a degree, but with a well-packed, methodical mind, he made the grand tour on the most extensive scale. His family connection, his

name, and pleasing person carried him everywhere abroad. He watched from inside the working of the old régime in France; notwithstanding its external splendour, apparent strength, and the absence of acute popular discontent, he saw enough to give him a presentiment of its destined collapse. On his return to England, he remarked to his friends at the first meeting of the Rota Club, that the French monarchy existed on a volcano's slope. Before that utterance was made he had traversed Central Europe, and had drawn many conclusions from the relations he observed between the Holy Roman Empire and the subordinate Governments, the Grand Duchies or the petty principalities, which then formed the germs of the modern European system.

After this he studied statecraft under all its manifestations, in its two chief homes, Spain and Italy. When he first brought together his company at the Turk's Head, in New Palace Yard, it was as an aristocratic oligarch who had quite lost the enthusiasm for the Crown which a year or two earlier had caused him, when in Rome, on his audience at the Vatican, not to kiss the pope's toe because he had been so recently privileged to kiss the hand of his only lord and master, Charles I. Before, however, beginning his club career at the Turk's Head, in New Palace Yard, he had ceased to be a royalist at all, and was only a discontented republican. His pattern Constitution had become something between the elective kingship of Poland and the aristocratic republic of Venice. "Brethren of the Rota," he once delivered himself, "you are to know that, whether in the form of a Court or an ennobled class, every State requires for its stability something of hereditary rule. The observations that brought me to this conclusion were completed by what I saw in Holland when visiting the elector palatine during his exile at Arnheim." Three years before the Rota Club came into being Harrington had summarized the im-

pressions gathered during his trip of political inquiry, in *Oceana*. This book contained at once the picture of an ideal polity and, in the sketches of Marpesia and Panopea, a panorama of the British Isles from the point of view both of their actual state and their most pressing needs. The country giving its name to the work was, of course, England. The two others were, respectively, Scotland and Ireland. The last was called the soft mother of a slothful and pusillanimous people. Panopea was, however, from its geographical situation and soil, capable of great development. Here Harrington unconsciously echoed the earlier estimate recorded by Raleigh at the Mermaid. Entirely his own, however, was the notion that Ireland ought to have been planted with Jews on their various expulsions from *Oceana*. Had this been done, the Hebrew aptitude for merchandise, and agriculture combined would have made Panopea what, with good fortune and wise management, she might even now become, a source of wealth and strength to *Oceana*, instead of exhaustion and discredit.

Harrington's conclusions—at least as circumstantially founded as they were emphatically expressed—were discussed by the clubmen while Miles, through a passage kept open for him among the tables, bustled about, filling and refilling his patrons' cups with coffee—the favourite Rota drink without as yet the accompaniment of tobacco.

Of the Rota company, Harrington, if the originator, was far from being the most famous, active, the only travelled, or even the most representative member. From two club comrades, Charles Wolseley, a Staffordshire country gentleman, the collateral ancestor of Lord Wolseley, and Michael Drayton the poet, he had gained much of his intimacy with letters and politics. Still more conspicuous were Andrew Marvell, Lord William Russell, Lord Algernon Sidney, his brother, Lord Lisle, Sir William Petty, and Major, afterwards Sir John,

Wildman. The chief intellectual lights of the place have been called bookmen and theorists. Wildman was a thoroughly practical, entirely unscrupulous, and on the whole successful party manager, the life and soul of his own side, unrivalled in keenness of eye for any sudden chance that could be used to turn divisions in the House and win elections in the country. The great talkers at the Rota made the best political science and the widest political knowledge of the time articulate. Wildman, encouraged by his chief backer, Wolseley, recalled them to immediate business. "By all means," broke in Sir William Petty, "let us be as practical as Wildman urges, and remember that only by taking the line of least resistance can we bring to our side the mutually discordant sections and faiths to be united in our polity." Petty, in addition to being a philosopher, was a clever mimic, and would accompany these words with ventriloquial and facial imitations of the motley groups, Puritan and Royalist, that he referred to. The Rota name and programme were largely suggested by Petty, in whose model State a third part of the Parliament was to retire annually by rotation, no officials were to serve for more than three years, and all voting was to be by ballot. As it became plainer that the Cromwellian system could not last long, the tone of the Rota debates grew less constructive, but also more anti-levelling and contemptuously opposed to "mob rule."

The spirit of Ben Jonson's bitterness against the City plutocrats and money brokers might almost seem to have descended from the Devil's Tavern in Fleet Street to Miles's coffee-house in New Palace Yard. The delight with which Harrington dwelt on his own suggestion of regenerating Ireland through Hebrew industrialists invariably started him on a tirade against the infection of democratic principles with a City taint exactly in Ben's most pungent manner. In principle, of course, Harrington was all for liberty,

equality, and fraternity among citizens. Still, over his coffee at the Rota he never failed to lead the chorus of disgust at the commonwealth of Cromwell for the stinginess of its practice and the meanness of its ideas. "Our republicans," he complained to Sidney, "have such a Jewish, selling humour that they make all men of liberality and taste their enemies. They cut down the woods which, serving us for health and delight, could formerly be seen from the window of the room we are sitting in, to make threepence profit." Turning to Marvell, he added: "Your friends destroy cathedrals and church ornaments because they are idolatrous. Yet, if we worship at all, we must do so in a house; and why, pray, may not the house of God be as proper as our own? Did not the primitive Christians in Jerusalem meet with one accord in the temple?—so far were they from any inclination to pull it down."

The Rota, it will thus be seen, if a political, was by no means a revolutionary club. Its members had ranged themselves against the Court less from any personal quarrel with the King than because of the indifference to the popular welfare shown by his Queen and the entire palace. But they had never fought against him; they accepted the Commonwealth as the one practicable alternative to an exacting and burdensome monarchy, which could not keep faith with its subjects. By 1659 they were repenting what they had done. The Rota men as a class were neither powerful while they lived nor fortunate in their ends. The club itself proved of the mushroom order, to which so many institutions of the same kind since then have belonged. Its meetings were gradually more and more thinly attended, till Miles, the landlord, grumbled at the Rota's monopoly of the place: he could, he said, do much better by trusting to chance customers than by reserving so much accommodation for a set of prating scholars, who ordered little for the good of the house and thought it honour enough

to hear their talk, which he for the life of him could not understand. The Cromwellian collapse and Monck's declaration for a monarchy ensured the Restoration, and by so doing ended the club, which, after a short and not too merry life of four months, held its last sitting in the February of 1660, exactly eleven weeks before Charles II landed at Dover from Breda.

Of the Rota founders or pillars, Harrington, after the new kingship was proclaimed, led for some time the life of a hunted hare. In 1661 he had been imprisoned at Plymouth; shortly afterwards the friendly administration by the jail doctor of an overdose of guaiacum brought on an illness that served as a plea for the captive's removal from the cell to the hospital ward. A short interval of peace was to be enjoyed before he breathed his last. Marrying Sir Marmaduke Dorrel's daughter, he settled down to domestic and lettered enjoyment, disturbed, however, by frequent attacks of gout. Worn out by these, he did not survive a stroke of paralysis in 1677.

Less fortunate than their club chief, Algernon Sidney and William Russell were executed six years later for complicity in the Rye House plot. Far better luck rewarded the wiles of the Rota Club Ulysses. Wildman, after innumerable hairbreadth escapes during this perilous period, finally contrived to evade, not only the headsman but lifelong imprisonment. He no sooner saw the republican game was up than he conspired with Bulstrode Whitelocke against the Long Parliament. That design failing, he turned evidence against Whitelocke and secured his dismissal from the wardership of Windsor Castle. The Restoration came; Wildman sat tight and said nothing. Of his some time associates, a few were ruined by proscription, others were disposed of in a more summary way. Wildman, returning to military service under James II, carried on a secret

correspondence with Monmouth, but, eel-like, wriggled out of the actual rising crushed at Sedgemoor. He went back to the army under William III, was knighted as Sir John Wildman in 1689, only to be informed two years later that the King had no further occasion for his services. How, during the next century, another chief ornament of the Rota, Sir William Petty, profited by his experiences in Miles's coffee-house to found a club of his own will be related in its proper place.

The way taken by Harrington and his friends in New Palace Yard of advancing republican principles was, it has been seen, to satirize and denounce the ill taste and blunders of republican practice. They thus made themselves the instruments of the great reaction whose triumph they all lived to witness in 1660. As a practical consequence, informally if not altogether unintentionally, they confederated themselves with another society of the time founded in diametrical opposition to the Rota. The truth, of course, is that both those who passed for Commonwealth men were equally shy of decisively committing themselves to the royalist or republican side. The Kentish gang—a phrase to be met with more than once in the club story of a later day—at the command of an officer who had served under the Duke of Ormond and had an estate near Maidstone, founded the monarchical coterie, the Sealed Knot, about the same time as the Rota came into being.<sup>1</sup> Like a Cheshire knight of the same faction, Sir William Brereton, the Kentish colonel was so heavy an eater that he could have gobbled up the whole Commonwealth at a meal. Cobbet's social and political henchmen lacked their leader's staunchness and, for the most part, were as ready to swallow their professed principles as their

<sup>1</sup> Both about the Rota men and Colonel Cobbet, who made it his business to counterwork them, most of what is known will be found in "Hudibras" or in Zachary Grey's notes to Butler's poem, Bell and Murray's 1879 edition, vol. ii. pp. 91 (Rota), 344 (Cobbet).



chief was his dinner. Harrington, from Lincolnshire, the Staffordshire Charles Wolseley, and Wildman, the ancestor of the Nottingham squires who eventually owned Newstead, gave something of a North Midland flavour to the Rota. The leading spirits of the Sealed Knot came chiefly from the south and the west. Next to Cobbet, their most adventurous manager and indefatigable intriguer was the descendant of an old Bristol stock, Sir Richard Willis. Alike as partisan and renegade, the true type of his time, he had begun at the Rota by championing Cromwell against his censors and adversaries in the club debates. In fact, all this time he was in the Protector's secret service, reporting to his employer with their names all who disparaged his government, and spying out anything like a Stuart plan of campaign.

Striking unsuccessfully for higher wages, he went over to the Royalists in the hope of picking up something substantial from the poor remnant of their original wealth left by the Commonwealth confiscators to the country squires and nobles who had staked their all upon the Court cause, and had so far lost. Willis had not changed his tactics with his side. Finding he could make a good sum of money down by betraying his old associates, he played a congenial part by turning informer against them. In a manner prophetic of Titus Oates for his model, so highly coloured his account of conversations and designs as to secure the arrest of the Sealed Knot committee only a year before Charles II was proclaimed king. Next, after vainly trying to approach the royal exile at Breda, he flung himself at the King's feet, imploring forgiveness and favour. "No, no!" characteristically replied Charles. "I have pardoned Harry Marten, one of my father's murderers because he was too amusing a scamp to hang. In your case the scamp is plain enough, but where is the amusement?"

The grotesquely named clubs of the Restoration

period have been too often described and in their personal aspects are too little known to detain us here. Shaftesbury alone, in a Chancery Lane tavern, organized the purely political King's Head Club as a support to the Cabal and Court administration when both seemed likely to break down. The social and convivial Club of Kings, consisting of those who bore the "King" patronymic, so tickled the royal fancy as to provoke the remark: "That is quite in my way, and you must put me on the honorary list." All these places were often visited by Roger North, who brackets them together in a lively fashion as Court agencies for parliamentary corruption.<sup>1</sup> The club founders and companies of Charles II's reign were not all of the noisy, convivial kind. One club in particular, now to be mentioned, presaged the era of club respectability which the accession of William III was to introduce. The Great Fire of 1666 left a legacy of ruinous depression and disturbance to traders of every kind, lasting for some years. Why not, it occurred to the most resourceful and energetic of these citizens, employ the mutual assistance and co-operation of the club for restoring the commercial equilibrium that the calamity of three years earlier had so grievously impaired? Immediate action was taken, and before the close of 1669 the project had been discussed and matured by an influential group of tradesmen who, according to the custom of the time, lived over their business premises. Of those descended from the most active among the comparatively early, if not the original, members, one at least, Mr. Bryan Corcoran, of 31, Mark Lane, still (October, 1912) carries on the same business as the two pre-

<sup>1</sup> Roger North, known as a writer from his *Examen* of Kennet's *English History*, was, like so many others of his period, alternately for and against the Court. In the former of these moods, he still admits that in spite of its boisterous bearing, the King's Club, nicknamed the Green Ribbon Club, did much for the defence of liberty and property against popery and slavery, and that the street rows, in getting up which its members emulated the Mohocks, had sometimes a good motive.



**BRYAN CORCORAN, ESQ<sup>r</sup>**

*Many Years Treasurer. Father of half a Century a Member of the Civil Club  
from a Picture in their possession is respectfully Dedicated by a humble Member  
by E. FISHER, 36 LINDENHALL STREET.*



decessors of his own name in the old neighbourhood. To him I am indebted for the interesting, as well as hitherto unpublished, details concerning the club worthies who come next, in the club succession, to the men of the Rota and Sealed Knot.

In the manner already described the Civil Club came into existence on November 19, 1669. It continued to meet during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It was, therefore, at the date of its dissolution, given below, the most ancient of all clubs then going on. Till the eve of the Victorian era, if not later, facts and figures conclusively show that it remained a real socio-commercial power, thanks, no doubt, to the personal influence and official zeal of the best known among its more modern secretaries. That gentleman's picture, a living likeness in oils, still hangs in the Tower wardroom. Of all those ever connected with the club, no one estimated its historic purpose more accurately or laid down with greater precision the principles which had secured its efficiency in the past and would be the guarantee of its usefulness as long as it remained. It was on January 27, 1831, that the Civil Club treasurer resigned his office in a letter constituting the most authentic and instructive of records, so far unprinted, concerning the one considerable City club which continuously held its meetings from the Restoration period down to our own time. "Our fundamental law," the veteran reminds his brethren, "is to deal with each other. If this be done, not only efficiency, but perpetuity must be the club's future." The documentary context shows that only one person in the same line of business at the club's formation was admitted. Retiring members could have their names in the honorary list and were known as gentlemen members. Should they resume their professional activities, their re-entrance was barred if during their absence their place had been filled by some one in the same line as themselves. If not

from the very first, yet shortly afterwards and then without a break into and during the nineteenth century, the Civil Club had its headquarters at the Old Ship Tavern, Water Lane. Thence it migrated to the New Corn Exchange Tavern, Mark Lane. Here its final dinner took place in 1877. Like other societies of the nomadic sort, the Civil clubmen from time to time changed their *venue* to suit the season of the year. The dinners were held quarterly—on the Wednesday before Lady Day, March 25th, on the Wednesday after Midsummer Day, June 24th—in a country tavern near London on the Wednesday before Michaelmas Day, September 29th, and on the Wednesday before St. Thomas's Day, December 21st. Soon after its establishment other than London citizens were gradually admitted to the company. The social or political distinction between the representatives of the new wealth and of the old acres at first, by slow degrees, diminished and then almost disappeared. The Civil Club's personal composition soon attested the progress of the new social fusion. Country gentlemen, baronets of old descent from Westminster, and dandies from St. James's or Mayfair shared with City knights and aldermen the club's hospitalities, first at the Old Ship Tavern, Water Lane, Tower, afterwards at the New Corn Exchange Tavern, Mark Lane. Among the eighteenth-century notabilities who, during the pre-Reform Bill period, took their places at the Civil Club dining-table, was the friend of Charles Fox, Alderman Sawbridge, the earliest advocate for shortening Parliament, M.P. for Hythe in 1769, who died in 1795. To the City he was, as an advanced Liberal, much of what another Civil Club guest, Sir Francis Burdett, was to society. Not that even then its original design was forgotten; on the contrary, its commercial and social expansion went on together. It had, indeed, become to some extent a court of trade appeal. Thus, if in business dealings one member thought himself overreached by another,

he could lay his grievance before the club. The matter was then referred to an investigating committee, whose decision was final. The Civil Club always had its own chaplain, a City clergyman. The last to serve in that capacity was John Thomas, vicar of All Hallows, Barking. Since his death, the only visible surviving monument of the club is a pair of high-carved chairs, reserved for the stewards.

The Civil Club was the last tavern society of its period to meet within the City precincts. At the close of the Stuart era the club progress, carried by Ben Jonson to the verge of the Strand, continued itself in a north-westerly direction to Covent Garden. New Palace Yard had witnessed the gatherings of the Rota critics and censors who helped rather than hindered the programme of the Sealed Knot, matured elsewhere, for the Restoration. The next dynastic change locally connects itself with the enclosure in West Central London, once the garden of St. Peter's Convent, and only changed into something like its existing shape in 1633; a little more than fifty years before, this not yet deserted section of clubland became, at the oldest of its taverns, the meeting-place of the men who, to the tune of "Lillibullero," were about to lift the curtain on the throne of William III and Mary. Historically, as at each stage of this narrative we have seen, the relation of the club to the "pub." was that of the child to the parent. The club doings now to be recorded disclose a certain competition between the two. The truth is that not only tavern and club, but country house also, figured in the arrangement of the plans which, blessed by a Protestant wind, brought the Prince of Orange to Torbay on November 5, 1688.

While the invitation was being signed by the head of the Cavendishes at Chatsworth, eight miles off, in the "Cock and Magpie," a little inn just outside Chesterfield, a Derbyshire gentleman, John D'Arcy, and

other active Whigs belonging to the North Midlands held conferences in the room long known as the Plotters' Parlour. Thither also came Charles II's former minister Danby, after 1688 the Duke of Leeds, Edward Russell, and Compton, Bishop of London, as well as the peer who, in 1694, was to crown his other titles with the Devonshire strawberry-leaf.

Covent Garden, London, had belonged to the Russells since 1552. The emissary to Holland, who superintended the preliminaries of William's departure from the Hague, was Edward, Admiral Russell, the conqueror of La Hogue. The invitation brought by him to William was signed by another member of his family, William, Earl of Bedford, Lord William Russell's father, eventually the first Duke of Bedford, and if not belonging to yet in all the secrets of the body about to be mentioned.<sup>1</sup> Appropriately enough, therefore, in Covent Garden was situated the headquarters of the Whigs who had banded themselves together for the purpose of substituting William III for James II.

The society was called the Treason Club. Its idea had first occurred, towards the close of his career, to the latest survivor of the five members whom Charles I tried to seize on January 3, 1642. He, perhaps not alone of the number, lived long enough to be convinced that constitutional monarchy was better than republican dictatorship. Holles, however, had died in 1680; he, therefore, did not witness the final organization of the company he had done so much to form. James Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, Ashley Cooper, subsequently the second Earl of Shaftesbury, who, after long indecision and many changes, had thrown the weight of his county position and parliamentary influence into the scale against James, William, the fifth Earl Russell and Thomas Wharton, to be created

<sup>1</sup> For all these details of name and incident see Dalrymple's *Memoirs of Great Britain*, part II, pp. 199, etc., and Wiffen's *House of Russell*, vol. ii. p. 291.



in the coming reign the first earl of his name, the progenitor of dukes, and the father of a notorious son, a dishonour and shame to his line, were the leading spirits of the Treason Club.

The men, therefore, just mentioned as its chief promoters and patrons laid the foundation stone of the entire club system of the Whigs, as for that matter of the Tories, who adopted and eventually improved on their opponents' method. The Whig clubman came into existence at the Treason. From him directly descended, in the next century, the builders of Brooks's. The ascendancy of Brooks's caused the Conservatives to construct the Carlton. The counterblast to the Carlton showed itself five years afterwards in the Reform. Not inappropriately, as has been shown, the seventeenth-century birthplace of a society having so many Whig associations as the political club was on Whig territory, Covent Garden.

Of the Rose Tavern, where the Treason Club met, even the ruins have perished more completely than the ruins of Troy. The place used to be in Russell Street, next to Drury Lane Theatre. Its last vestiges only outlived the Treason Club by eight years. Its last dinner patron outside the Treason circle was the diarist Pepys, who, having some time to wait for the opening of the King's Playhouse (afterwards Drury Lane) on May 18, 1688, dined at the Rose all alone on half a breast of mutton off the spit. In 1776 the ground occupied by the Rose was covered by Garrick's new theatre. From the reign of Charles II, however, the house of call chosen by the Treason clubmen had won such notoriety that the revival of its name by later hostilities naturally followed.

The City, however, was still prepared to dispute with Covent Garden the distinction of being a club parent. Friday Street, Cheapside, first won historic notoriety as the thoroughfare containing the "Nag's Head," the scene, according to the Papist fable, of the Elizabethan

communication with the foreign business men whose friendship and confidence he had won while abroad. The coterie, from being domestic or private, gradually assumed a cosmopolitan character. First, one or two foreign birds of passage through London joined in the conversation ; then certain foreign residents were admitted to the little circle. It was therefore arranged that the company should meet so many times every month—always on a Wednesday, the day that had initiated the discussions. So began, and so continued, the Wednesday Club, whose abiding monument is the Bank of England, the development of the National Debt, and the creation of the “fund-holders,” as the lenders to the State were now called. The banking system did not spring, completely equipped, from the Wednesday Club meetings. Safety to the depositor of money, combined with profit to the custodian, the essence of banking as understood to-day, was not definitely in the minds of Paterson and his associates when they founded the Bank of England. The King wanted money for his wars, the bank founders saw their chance of securing the privilege of issuing notes. Hence its original charta and the subsequent increase gradually to the present amount of its capital. On the money then or afterwards advanced to the State, note issues were made without much thought of the depositor. That without such thought there can be no bank stability has been shown by the fact that the Bank of England would have foundered more than once but for the Government being behind it. As it was it actually defaulted, in other words suspended, payment during the Napoleonic wars, when its notes circulated at a discount. Of all the incidents so far effected by club machinery, next to the organic transformation of 1660 and 1688, that just described was the most far-reaching and beneficent. It did more than anything else to promote the commercial operations of the period, and so to improve the humour of the

business classes with the new régime. In short, it was largely due to the financial success secured by the project of the Wednesday Club that the new monarchy suffered so slightly in national regard from the shock given to it by the death of William's queen in 1694.

Thus during the three centuries since Somer's and Hoccleve's foundation of the Court of Good Company, the club in England, as this narrative has now shown, had grown from a private gathering into a national agency. It had helped to organize the literary craft under Raleigh. It had promoted the social and intellectual fusion of classes and interests under Jonson at the Apollo. Fifty-three years later it stimulated the best political thought, checked or advanced the chief political movements of the time, called back a prince from exile, and then, by diverting the royal succession to a new line, created a parliamentary throne. Its influence upon and contributions to the structure of the realm ended with the seventeenth century. Hereafter its activity in State affairs was shown by its connection with the welfare, the public work, the inner life of parliamentary parties, the rise and fall of administrations, the advance or the frustration of legislative schemes. Before following the details of this progress, something must be said about the social aspect of an institution, itself the greatest club of all, to which some of the chief clubs, subsequently to be visited, were in a sense affiliated.

## CHAPTER III

### THE BEST CLUB IN LONDON

The social life of the House of Commons, a typical instance of the progress from pub. to club—Mediæval M.P.'s. taking their ease and food at some of the innumerable taverns adjoining their chamber—The "Cock"—The "Fleece"—Their social-political life and club arrangements—Also "Heaven and Hell"—Germs of St. Stephen's club life in Bellamy's—Bellamy's social arrangements, port and pies—The pie that came too late for Pitt—Improved club accommodation in Barry's new building, but Bellamy's not dead yet—Caterers since Bellamy—St. Stephen's passes from proprietary club to members' club and keeps house for itself—Its kitchen and cellar resources—Its charges—Rise in price for the "four hundred a yearers"—The Labour M.P. and the red mullet not *en papillote*—The House of Commons Club in its prime during the sixties—Its twentieth-century conversion into a "cock-and-hen" club, to the great discomfort of the womanless M.P.—The smoking-room as a link between the Bellamy and Barry buildings—"I don't like smoking" says T. B. Macaulay; "Nor I" says Frederick Harrison—But Sir Walter Scott, Brougham, Eldon, Stowell, and Bulwer Lytton do—The smoker's progress from the "Mermaid" to the House of Commons Club—The "four hundred a yearers" joint-stock palace a reflection of club characteristics of all periods, betting and gambling excepted—The Lords as the second best.

It was Edmund Burke who called the newspaper press "a fourth estate." The originator of an equally familiar description of another estate, now in its social aspect to be considered, cannot be as definitely identified. The expression first became current about 1840; it continued in general use certainly till 1865 and probably throughout the seventies. The underlying idea had been conveyed by the historian of the *Decline and Fall*, during the second half of the eighteenth century. From 1774 to 1782 Edward Gibbon was Member for Liskeard. During those years, in more than one letter, he said of St. Stephen's Chapel, where

the elected of the people sat, "I find it a very agreeable coffee-house." Something of that sort the popular chamber, socially considered, had been, or was in the process of becoming, ever since its independent existence began, and its members had a chamber of their own, originally the Chapter House, separate from the Lords, during the first half of the fourteenth century. We now pass to the stages by which the "very agreeable coffee-house" grew into a completely equipped club.

The earlier pages of this work have shown that the City of Westminster, not less than the mediæval City of London, was honeycombed by eating places and drinking dens of every description. Royal edicts were periodically issued, or other agencies set in motion by successive sovereigns to restrict the herding together of Parliament men with their belongings in the streets and alleys near the kingly building which had grown up under the shadow of the Abbey and which sheltered a monarch till the close of Henry VIII's reign. All the Stuarts, both before and after 1660, aimed at abolishing the cooks and vintners who made their premises a social meeting-place. Vain efforts at suppression only gave new popularity to the taverns in and about the parliamentary precincts, especially those known as Heaven and Hell.<sup>1</sup>

From the fifteenth to the seventeenth century the best parts of Westminster were as fashionable as Belgravia and Mayfair. In Tothill Street, between Broad Sanctuary and York Street, lived and died (1563) "the military pride of the peerage," Lord Grey of Wilton, Sir George Carew, and, as late as 1789,

<sup>1</sup> Both these closely adjoin Westminster Hall, and were well known in Ben Jonson's time ("Alchemist," Act V.) and are mentioned by Butler in *Hudibras*. At Heaven dined Pepys the diarist when Secretary to the Admiralty and a member of Parliament, together with his parliamentary friend and colleague, one Llewelyn (1686). At Hell, without any beds, the night was spent by the members whom Pride's purge expelled from St. Stephen's (Dec. 6, 1648). Afterwards it became the chief house of call for lawyers.

Thomas Amory, an eccentric Irish *littérateur*, always an aspirant but never an actual M.P. Close by Sir Robert Cotton, in Old Palace Yard, had turned his fine mansion, with its matchless library, into a place of meeting, to all intents and purposes a club, for John Pym and his chief supporters. Those for whom there was no room here overflowed into the public houses of call that inherited a political character of their own from Tudor, if not earlier, days. Such were, not only the resorts close to Westminster Hall, but in Tothill Street were the Fleece (No. 70), a favourite House of Commons tavern down to at least 1666, and the Cock Tavern (No. 72), so famous and picturesque as to call for a few passing words. It was probably in existence so late as 1873, the year of its site being occupied by the Aquarium. The entrance to it, in a large courtyard, built round, was up a long flight of stairs. Its rafters and timbers were of cedar. Its parlour was decorated with two ancient oak carvings, one Abraham's arrested sacrifice of Isaac, the other the adoration of the Magi. The same room possessed a table at which, between 1216 and 1272, the workmen engaged on the Abbey were paid their wages. At this table the Commonwealth leaders not only took their refreshments but concerted the policy which ended in the Grand Remonstrance. The places now mentioned were only a few out of many, all equally famous, as their proprietors advertised, for the very good meat dressed in them during term-time, for their tap of home-brewed, and the pick of French or Italian wines, perfectly conditioned, in their cellars.

This is only what was to have been expected from the fact that before the Middle Ages ended a seat at Westminster, from being an evil or a nuisance to be avoided, had become a prize of social ambition. Throughout the Norman and Plantagenet time "goodman Burgess" was taught wholesome lessons of his own significance, especially by the Court ushers, who,

at all ceremonies, warned him off from the places reserved for his betters, sometimes with the lash. He and the body to which he belonged were, for the most part, only a taxing agency to raise the money for wars in which peers and princes reaped the harvest of profit and renown. Under the Lancastrian dynasty, in the fourteenth century matters improved. The shire knights were recognized as at least the equals of the lesser nobility, and whatever social consideration belonged to borough Members in themselves was intensified by their being Parliament men. Whether he were shire knight or borough Member, the elected of the people, if he could not as yet be said to belong to the best club in London, might count upon getting the best of everything and the first call in any house of entertainment where he might show himself. The M.P. affix may not have been universal till the introduction of franking in the seventeenth century. Had the initials been used two or three hundred years before that, they would even then have possessed something of the same commercial value as they were afterwards to have for a company promoter in the City.

From 1790 to 1834 were first distinctly manifest signs of the destined development of social life at St. Stephen's from that of the pub. to the club. "A Members' club" it was not to become till some time after taking its present abode, in the middle of the nineteenth century. A proprietary club, and an excellent one of its kind, it began to be when the earliest of its caterers, Bellamy, entered upon his duties at the House in 1790.

For the Bellamy dispensation at the temporary chamber in the Court of Requests, after the Fire of 1834, the most graphic as well as accurate authority is the young newspaper reporter then laying the foundations of a fame to be established by *Pickwick* three years later and before the parliamentary scenes he depicted while in the gallery were obsolete. The

*Sketches by Boz* contain a living picture of Bellamy's arrangements for the refectory and the creature comforts generally of the honourable and right honourable gentlemen employed in the Westminster manufactory of statute law.<sup>1</sup> When Dickens wrote, the same refreshment-places were used by both Houses as well as by strangers who had come to the debate; and constituents who, happening to be in London, had buttonholed for a frank or some other favour their Member in the lobby often lingered in hope of an invitation to visit the feeding-floor. If so invited, they made the ascent of a narrow staircase leading to a couple of rooms on the right hand with tables spread for dining. Outside the apartment, a little higher up on the way, to the kitchen, was a glass case, behind the window of which stood or sat Bellamy's butler, immortalized by Boz as Nicholas.

This was a sleek, comfortable, elderly man, never seen out of a well-brushed black suit or without a tolerably clean shirt-front, and a voluminous cravat, tied invariably in the same folds. Had he lived into the era of universal authorship he might, if by rare good luck similarly gifted after the fashion of door-keeper White,<sup>2</sup> have recorded his impressions of M.P.'s for some weekly paper, eventually to appear in book shape. During those less literary nineteenth-century days Nicholas, as he served refreshments, would recall how he had cunningly devised drinks that cheered but not inebriated, chiefly consisting of lemon and soda-water, for Sheridan, Perceval, Castlereagh, and Canning.

Solid fare—the staple dishes being chops, steaks, veal, and pork-pies—was taken in a room used for dining. Tea, dispensed by the severe “Jane” and all manner of drinkables, Bellamy's famous port in-

<sup>1</sup> “A Parliamentary Sketch,” *Sketches by Boz*, crown ed., Chapman and Hall, pp. 112-20.

<sup>2</sup> T. Fisher Unwin: *Inner Life of the House of Commons*, Wm. White.



cluded, were habitually consumed in the corridor. This passage from the House of Commons was approached by stairs, at the head of which there always stood a waiter calling out the name of each successive Member in the old phrase, regularly used by Disraeli, "upon his legs." Some of these names would produce no effect, but Mr. Pitt, Mr. Sheridan, or later Sir Robert Peel "upon his legs," cleared the tables and left Nicholas's cold punch-glasses suddenly as unfinished as if the division bell had sounded. When Benjamin Disraeli, as Member for Maidstone, first dined at Bellamy's, 1837, the serving staff still contained an interesting link with the past. "I think I could eat one of Bellamy's pork-pies," was the dying Pitt's latest articulate murmur. The pie had been carried to Putney by Disraeli's waiter. When the man reached the house the lowered blinds told him he was too late, and Disraeli, telling the story in his most sepulchral tones, always wound up with, "Pitt was dead." Other Bellamy reminiscences, till now unprinted, notably those of Mr. Mark Philips, the first Member for Manchester, 1832-47, and his brother Robert, Member for Bury, both in the front rank of commercial Members as well as both expert judges in cookery, bore witness to another famous item in the bill of fare, the excellent cold joints that were never cut till they were cold.

Nicholas, in addition to his skill as a grog-mixer, carved these joints with such consummate skill that every turn of his knife was said to have improved their flavour. Some men, says Dickens, change their politics from expediency, others from conviction. Why was it that Nicholas, who had been staunch for the Grey Government and as stout a champion of reform as Sir Francis Burdett himself, like that worthy and in the same year, 1835, declared himself a Tory? The answer is simple. The new metropolitan Members always dined at home; the Irish Members, after each disposing of more meat than any three English

Members, and swilling themselves with the gratuitously supplied table beer, ordered no wine, and went back to their lodgings for their whisky. Bellamy and Nicholas therefore considered themselves losers by this sort of patronage. It was not only in the dining department of the old House that the Irish Members were at a discount. The stillroom and everything to do with it elsewhere was controlled by Bellamy's chief Hebe, the already mentioned Jane, with a staff of waitresses under her; these, loftily indifferent in manner to all customers alike, singled out for special disdain any in whose speech they detected a touch of brogue. Towards Daniel O'Connell, with his "household brigade," three sons and two sons-in-law, all heavy tea-drinkers, their demeanour was described to me by W. H. Russell, of the *Times*, as one of withering contempt. Notwithstanding the undisguised scorn of Jane and her colleagues, tea remained the favourite beverage of leading representatives from the Isle of Saints while on duty at Westminster. The Irish abstinence from intoxicants was more than compensated by the British capacity for swallowing port. Both as commoner and peer Brougham, in the course of a single debate, more than once put away seven tumblers, without, as his patrons said, turning a hair, though on one occasion in the Upper House he concluded an impassioned harangue by saying, "On my bended knees I implore your lordships not to pass this Bill," suiting the action to the words.

Port-drinking fell off a good deal between 1784 and 1804. The Duke of Montrose, who belonged to Pitt's administration during both those years, said that in 1784 any one Cabinet Minister drank more wine than sufficed for all the Ministers twenty years later. As for the oft-told tale of Pitt's performances in this line, they were matched, if not exceeded, by his colleagues or friends, like Lord Chancellor Thurlow, Lord Gower, the Duke of Rutland, Jenkinson (Lord

Liverpool), and above all Dundas (Lord Melville), equally impervious to the effects of strong drink and Whig arguments. Only twice did their potations indispose either Pitt or Dundas for their work in the House. Both occasions were in 1783, and on one of them Pitt rallied quickly and completely enough for his famous full-dress attack on the peace concluded by Fox as the Duke of Portland's Foreign Secretary between England, the United States, France, Spain, and Holland.<sup>1</sup>

Bellamy's fruit, especially his oranges and pears, were in only less favour than his choicest or heaviest vintages. Orange-sucking was found a great relief and help in debate. On February 7, 1828, during a famous deliverance on law reform, Brougham had his hat beside him full of this fruit, sucking them almost incessantly and in an audible aside, abusing Bellamy, if he came across a bad one. Equally great orange-consumers were Daniel O'Connell and William Cobbett. Joseph Hume, the Radical economist, never entered Bellamy's coffee-room, but devoured immense quantities of Bellamy's pears. As late as 1845 Cobden relates how when Ferrand, the Knaresborough M.P., was on his legs, Colonel Sibthorp supplied the fellow with oranges to suck in an affectionate manner, for all the world like a monkey fondling a bear. Meanwhile, throughout the chamber generally, others were taking their ease or their refreshments much after the fashion of the gallery in a theatre on Boxing Night. While the party leaders were on their legs, their followers lay stretched on the benches munching apples and cracking nuts. Some of Bellamy's men, though invisible in the background, were always near with fresh supplies when wanted. The pleasant practice of relieving the severities of debate with these

<sup>1</sup> The other occasion, described by an eye-witness, Sir N. W. Wraxall, vol. iii. p. 221, was that which prompted Porson's familiar epigram, "I cannot see the Speaker," etc.

little interludes of refreshment in the House itself ended when the elective law-makers changed their old chamber for their existing abode.

Even then, however, the professional caterer did not entirely go out. Bellamy's last official appearance was before a select committee on the House of Commons' officers and fees, 1833. To this body, he explained the prices and the methods which had been criticized by the new economical Members returned under the Grey Reform Act, and openly declaring that they did not get their money's worth. As to the alleged excessiveness of prices, the figures, he said, were clearly put down in a paper laid on the table. A plain sandwich cost a shilling, cold meat with bread and cheese two-and-sixpence, or with salad and tart three-and-sixpence. For table beer, to whatever extent drunk, there was no charge at all. The most expensive meal supplied consisted of chops, steaks, veal pie, tarts, and toasted cheese. This repast, in whatever quantity consumed, was only charged five-and-sixpence a head. "Wine, of course," asked one of the committee, "is an extra?" "Yes! a glass of wine and water or negus costs one-and-sixpence. Port wine and sherry cost six shillings a bottle, madeira eight shillings, and claret ten, and other wines in proportion. Every wine is of the best quality that can be procured."

The coffee-house period of the House of Commons' club life began in the same St. Stephen's Chapel that had witnessed in its parliamentary aspects the King's quarrel with his Parliament. It was interrupted by the fire of 1834. It was resumed directly a temporary structure could be prepared. It had disappeared when, sixteen years later, the Commons took possession of their present home in Westminster Palace. The architect, Sir Charles Barry, undoubtedly contemplated the eventual equipment of the building with all its present conveniences of a first-rate club.

On certain points, such as the dining-floor arrangements, but more particularly the whole question of expense, he differed from the Government of the day. He threw up the business in a huff. His refusal to hand over his plans necessitated the completion of the work by other architects. The Report of the Select Committee of 1870 on the whole subject, supplemented by other official information, renders it possible to describe the existing allotment of space in the present Palace of Westminster, to the various departments of which, like other clubs, the great national club of St. Stephen's consists.<sup>1</sup>

The chief idea of the changes explained in a Parliamentary Report of May 25, 1870, was to make the Peers' and the Commons' dining-rooms as close as possible to each other. To that end a conference-room and tea-room were taken from the popular chamber and a committee-room from the hereditary. At the same time the lobby connecting the two Houses was enclosed with a wainscot-glazed screen and made into a serving-bar. To do that it was necessary to remove the wall of the conference-room. The space thus acquired rendered it possible to perfect the arrangements of the bar by a lift and staircase from below. Simultaneously with this, the Members' and strangers' dining-room became the Members' tea-room, the Members' old dining-room was converted into a news-room, and the former newspaper-room became a reception-room. For the serving-bar, already described, some ground-floor rearrangements were required. What had been the strangers' dining-room was now used in part as a kitchen and in part as a smoking-room. The small dining-room now did duty as a larder.

The crowning addition to the club resources of the

<sup>1</sup> Here I must express my deep obligations to the invaluable assistance generously and graciously given me by Sir C. P. Ilbert, and through him to the good offices of the assistant architect, Mr. P. E. Ridge, as well as Mr. Percy A. Bull, one of Sir Courtney Ilbert's parliamentary staff.

Commons was made in 1906 by Mr. Lewis Harcourt when Commissioner of Works. It was effected by appropriating a room formerly belonging to the Lords, though little used by them. The result was now known as the Harcourt dining-room. Its appointments and decorations cost £4,000 ; it seats with comfort a company of 120 persons, and is principally used for parties in which ladies predominate. After Mr. Harcourt, few M.P.'s have done more than that most indefatigable squire of dames, accomplished of Anglo-Indian statesmen, genially energetic parliamentarian, Sir Richard Temple, in promoting the annexation to feminine empire of the Westminster clubhouse. These picturesque transformation scenes, beginning just a generation ago, mark a novel and decisive stage in the triumphal march of the militant sex to absolute social supremacy. This advance began a good deal earlier than most people may think, and was first assured of ultimate success during the interval between the eleventh and the fifteenth centuries by the troubadours, the tournaments, and the love-courts. The crusades may not have wrested the Holy Sepulchre from the infidel, but they permanently enthroned the daughters of Eve.<sup>1</sup> In England, as elsewhere during the Elizabethan period, woman-worship rose to high-water mark in letters and on the stage. Diplomacy also about this time made itself the handmaid of feminine aggrandisement. Instead of Ministers-extraordinary temporarily accredited to foreign Courts, there were appointed the stationary Ambassadors who still exist. At first the representatives of the British sovereign were not accompanied by their wives. These ladies,

<sup>1</sup> A certain knight, sentenced by his lady love to a course of probationary fighting in Palestine, returned after three years' absence to his mistress's bower. She had advanced to meet him outside, but, as it was pouring cats and dogs, the lover, throwing his mantle over her shoulders, implored her to get back under shelter. "What" she exclaimed, "you have eyes to see at this moment that it rains! You cannot, then, love me." And the poor wretch was promptly sent back to Syria on the chance for redeeming his character.

however, so importunately resented being left behind, and gave the Government so much trouble, that they were eventually bidden to follow their lords in foreign parts with all convenient speed. The earliest of the diplomatic matrons, however, was not English but the better half of Count Olivarez, who represented the King of Spain at the Vatican, and whose son, as Minister to Philip IV, figures in *Gil Blas*. Having ingratiated herself with all the Roman ladies by a series of costly entertainments and precious gifts, the Countess Olivarez roused them into active enthusiasm for the Holy See. The Pope of the period, Sixtus V, was not ungrateful enough to let such good offices pass without a signal mark of his favour. He bestowed upon his fair Castilian ally the title of ambadress, which, of course, after this, could not but gradually become general. Puritanism, with the dove or dull-coloured dress and the exaggerated modesty it enforced, gave the sex something of a set-back, but also permanently ranged it on the side of the Cavaliers or their successors. The feminine eclipse ceased with the Restoration, but the twenty-years wars that opened the nineteenth century and the poets Byron, Moore, Scott, and Wordsworth were needed to reinstate women in something like their place of pride. Queen Victoria's influence as wife and mother, not less than sovereign, gave a tone to the Court and feminized the whole surface of society. In yielding at one point after another to the social pressure of ladies, the managers of the original and genuine St. Stephen's Club have, not more inevitably than appropriately, reflected and led the great movement of their time. The Harcourt dining-room—what is it but the artistically executed monument and the highly decorated symbol of a triumph for which, as has been already shown, full preparations were made at least as far back as the Middle Ages? Every male fortress has in turn fallen before assaults which have known neither check nor pause since, in the

seventies, wives, daughters, or mistresses made it a practice to rejoin their trousered belongings at luncheon in the pheasant covert or grouse moor.

Before this the hunting-field, like the racecourse, had shared the same fate ; and "walking with the guns" went out when ladies wielded the breechloader on their own account. Everything, therefore, was ripe before the twentieth century began, not only for the mixed clubs established during the eighties but for those at which man is only a guest or caller, to be visited hereafter at the proper time.

Meanwhile certain old-world Piccadilly and Pall Mall haunts had practically renounced their claim to the title once bestowed on them by Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, "places where wives, daughters, and other women cease from troubling, and husbands are at rest." Effecting the same victorious entrance at Pall Mall as at Westminster, ladies found tea awaiting them in the bachelors' bower, becomingly prepared for their reception. St. Stephen's, therefore, had no choice but to show its sympathy with the time spirit by averting a siege and yielding at discretion. Tea on the terrace, with ices, and strawberries and cream, popularized during the eighties, created the House of Commons woman, who is no more to be confounded with the she-politician or the genuine political lady than a junior lord with a first minister. The light alfresco refreshment taken on the embankment of the Imperial river, crimsoned by the setting sun, was, of course, only a beginning. The chamber itself had always lacked the space for seating its full complement of M.P.'s. Feminine pressure followed the rearrangement and extension of the Commons area secured by the already mentioned Committee of 1870. In a twinkling there was discovered all the room wanted for attractively assorted and well-contrived dinner companies. It will thus be seen that no other socio-political resort has gone farther towards illustrating and promoting the very,



newest and most revolutionary phases of club life than that famed for its devotion to precedent, the national caravanserai of St. Stephen's. This, domiciled in the palace of historic name, owes the charm of club supremacy not to its members but to the recent expansion and equipment of its premises, after the fashion already described. Such a social and hospitable vogue with outsiders has been secured at no small cost, and has demanded much sacrifice of convenience and comfort from those who are now salaried, the better to perform the people's work beneath the same roof.

Under successive catering dispensations during the nineteenth century's last half, the cuisine, the service, and the appointment of St. Stephen's were those of a first-rate London club. Everything was of the best quality and brought to table in the best style. A couple of decades later came a growing change for the worse. By 1890 the average M.P., on entering its coffee-room, found himself at the mercy of waiters and cooks, with a soul far above diners on a cut off the joint, and exclusively preoccupied with the *soigné* banquets of the Harcourt room. Not that even at Westminster the club managers have permanently neglected Members for visitors.

The Kitchen Committee, even in this second decade of this twentieth century, remains an effective body. The example and tradition of its former chairman, now Lord Pembroke, have not been forgotten by his successors. After him came Lord Stanley, to-day Lord Derby, and Mr. Jacoby. These were accompanied, or immediately followed, by the popular and competent Colonel Lockwood and Mr. J. T. Agg-Gardner, the most judicious and kindly of born Amphitryons, in whom the epicure does not so overcome the altruist as to enable him himself to dine in comfort so long as the minutest wants of those about him are not satisfied. In the great St. Stephen's Club the nominal

dining-room prices are below, not only those of the Bellamy dispensation but of the various contractors who came afterwards. For two shillings the Kitchen Committee never failed to provide a dinner more copious and probably better cooked than could be eaten at any public place, club or pub., between Ludgate Circus and Hyde Park Corner. The price has been raised to two-and-sixpence since the revival of the mediæval wages to M.P.'s. Very critically epicurean are these "four hundred a yearers," especially the Labour Members, one of whom recently addressed a stern reprimand to the Kitchen Committee because the most expensive fish of the season, a red mullet, had not been laid before him in the usual paper covering, or, as he expressed it, *en papillote*.

Apart from those aspects of social life at St. Stephen's just dwelt on, Barry's Imperial clubhouse did not, at once, quite extinguish Bellamy's. Bellamy, indeed, or his later equivalents, went on even after the manufacturers of statute law first occupied their present green-leather benches in 1852. Lucas, of Parliament Street, and Gordon, of hotel company fame, were some of the chief refreshment contractors associated with the present building after Bellamy's day. Such were the stages by which the House passed from its pub. period to the club, and then grew from a proprietary club into a Members' club, with various accessory developments and practical results already set forth. Now, of course, the Kitchen Committee<sup>1</sup> looks after the cellar, the *cuisine*, and the

<sup>1</sup> One office bearing a name of feminine association occurs in the domestic life of the "best club in London." The housekeeper, however, is identical with the Sergeant-at-Arms, nor, as a fact, do women of any kind form a visible part of the establishment. Elsewhere, too, in like manner a feminine name survives the reality. In Westminster Hall, "Alice's," a place of refreshment for lawyers, continued to be so called long after passing into the hands of one John Smith. So, too, under the shadow of St. Paul's, between Paternoster Row and Newgate Street, a tavern, renowned for its beefsteaks as well as for the presence of Fielding, Defoe, and Swift, remained Dolly's Chop House long after its ownership by a male descendant of its original founder, Dick Tarleton, the Elizabethan comedian.

cigars ; under the last head is a stock whose value is seldom less than £2,000, while the contents of the wine-cellar represent more than twice that sum, a prominent item in the list being an immense vat of Scotch whisky.

One of the entries in the foregoing catalogue significantly recalls the progressive recognition by club managers of the tobacco habit. It had come in during the existence of Raleigh's Mermaid Club, but was not popular either then or, a little later, at Ben Jonson's Apollo, though Jonson himself says enough about it in his plays to excuse the conjecture of the great Ben having been in the early phrase a "tobaccoist." James I's loathing for tobacco was shown more practically than in his *Counterblast* by his tax of 6s. 10d. in the pound. Even that, he said, was to let too lightly off a thing the foulness of whose stench could only be compared with hell. The royal sentiments were shared by at least two Members of his first and second Parliaments, Peter Campbell, a Derbyshire Member and Sir Edwin Sandys, who sat for Pontefract. Both of these justified to their constituents their frequent absenteeism from the House on the ground of the tobacco stench in the neighbouring taverns, which they could not avoid entering for their necessary meals. Campbell, moreover, by his will disinherited his eldest son if he could ever be found taking tobacco in any form. Sandys dosed his constituents with statistics to show that the money spent on the noisome weed, by Parliament men alone, meant a loss to the kingdom of £20,000 a year. The pipe, however, became more and more popular till the close, and partly in consequence, of the Napoleonic wars, when it was supplemented rather than replaced by the cigar. The cigarette came a good deal later. Known in England so far back as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's residence at our Constantinople embassy (1716-18), it remained the luxury of a limited class till after the Crimean War.

From this retrospect it will be seen that Bellamy's provision for the club comforts of Parliament required the addition of the smoking-room to the accommodation for tea-drinkers and diners. Sir Walter Scott had used pipes and cigars indifferently. In the next generation Lord Macaulay disliked both as much as does an eminent man of letters in the present, Mr. Frederic Harrison. Other public characters of or about Macaulay's time had different tastes. Another *Edinburgh Reviewer*, Henry Brougham, regularly frequented the old House of Commons smoking-room. So, too, before him, did Stowell and Eldon. The most intellectual and cultivated of George III's sons, the Duke of Sussex, used both pipe and cigars; so did his friend, the eighteenth-century Duke of Devonshire. Two of Macaulay's most distinguished Cambridge contemporaries, Thackeray and Bulwer Lytton, were smokers, while of these the latter gave any spare minutes he could snatch from the business of debate to the upper room which Macaulay detested, but of which he has handed down the best description. It was a large wainscoted place containing tables covered with green baize and writing materials. On a full night it was generally thronged with smokers, and was then a perfect cloud of fume—"the filthiest," he adds, "of all filthy atmospheres, and the vilest of all company, the smell of tobacco so lodging itself in my nostrils that I cannot get it out." Only one apartment, without which no other club would be considered complete, has, at each point of its progress, been wanting to the best club in London: it has never had a card-room. In the Bellamy period bets may have been booked upon any of the innumerable trivialities that furnished at different times an excuse for making them. But beyond this, in the parliamentary precincts, the gambling spirit has not gone. Tobacco and tea have never meant cards or dice.

So much for the club life of the Commons; is it

rivalled or approached by the Lords? The answer can scarcely be, to use the language of Ministers at question time, in the affirmative. The club life of the Upper House only began twenty-five years ago. Later even than that the smoking accommodation was restricted to a small portion of the library. In 1904 the Peers did themselves good service, and paid a just compliment to a charming poet and distinguished man of letters, by making Mr. Edmund Gosse their librarian. Soon after that the smoking area on the library was extended by the addition of two large rooms. These have since been transformed into a very comfortable clubroom; drinks and even light meals can here be served. These conveniences quite recently have been supplemented with two telephones, abundant electric light, the morning and evening papers, as well as the weeklies and other periodicals. On the opposite side of the library corridor there is also now a restaurant, but hereditary legislators, like their spiritual fellows, are men of regular domestic habits, generally managing their debates so as to get home in good time for dinner. Consequently their life at Westminster lacks the full development of those social features with which we have familiarized ourselves in another place.

In one respect, as regards its internal arrangements, the best club in London will always present a contrast to clubs of every other kind. At the party meetings of which the Carlton or Reform has been the scene reporters have so far found no admittance. Before the parliamentary occupation of the existing Westminster Palace the Press had won its final victory. The presence of its stenographers, from only having been connived at, was recognized and arranged for. This provision has been enlarged and improved till the fourth estate at Westminster finds all the accommodation it needs in a club scarcely less complete than that of the third estate itself. In 1883, in addition to the rooms behind the reporters' gallery, there had only existed a very

limited space for refreshment. The same year, however, witnessed the increase of this area by the architect Sir John Taylor, to the extent of four rooms on the first floor and four on the second. The first-floor rooms were now used for smoking and writing off reports ; on the second floor was a dining-room and kitchen. In 1886 further club accommodation was secured for the gentlemen of the Press by placing at their disposal rooms formerly belonging to the Clerk of the Commons. In 1905 the convenience and comfort of the journalists were once more consulted by the First Commissioner of Works, Mr. Lewis Harcourt, who bestowed on the matter not less personal attention than he gave to the Ladies' Dining Room already described.

## CHAPTER IV.

### FROM COFFEE-HOUSE TO CLUB

Other refreshment-houses in the Bellamy period—The club equivalents of their time—Jonathan Swift's club life and activities—Conspirators, convives, and fisticuffs at the "Cocoa Tree"—The "Cocoa Tree's," conversion from pub. to club—Edward Gibbon in its club days—Nineteenth-century slate tables transform it into a billiard club—Its billiard-players and its present shape—Fact and fiction of the October Club at the "Bell" in Westminster—Who joined it, who stood aloof, who named it, and who gave his life to its management—Mat Prior, Speaker Bromley—Small talk and statesmanship at the October Club—How some convivial undergraduates were sent down and founded a rival to the "October" in the "Calves' Head"—The Whig Hanoverian Kit-Cat Club cradled in Shire Lane—But moved to premises formerly occupied by clubmen of a different kidney, the anti-Walpolean Fountain Club, with, for its chief figures, Pulteney, Sir John Hynde Cotton, the Earl of Chesterfield, and Viscount Cobham—The Kit-Cat, why called; from Christopher Cat or from the "old cats and young kits" it toasted—The ladies it toasted—The first clubwoman it created and the big-wigs of faculty it brought into fashion (Dr Garth)—Its summer meetings in the suburbs—Its real creator Jacob Tonson—Its headquarters his private house, chiefly Barn Elms—Its artistic chief, Sir Godfrey Kneller—Its portraits in Tonson's gallery and the name contributed by them to the vocabulary of art—A versatile eighteenth-century bohemian, Dick Eastcourt—Strolling player, London Sawbones, the playgoer's favourite at Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin, and Drury Lane. The ladies' pet the Bumper and Beefsteak founder—The mimic who can take off the whole College of Physicians—Sir Roger de Coverley's "old comical one," and port wine agent—The coffee-house rather than the tavern—True club ancestor—How Canopus of Balliol brought coffee in and taught the Master how to make it—The London chocolate and coffee-houses, culminating in White's.

AT Westminster, as we know, many parliamentary generations passed before Bellamy's supersession of innumerable small houses of entertainment first put the House of Commons in the way of becoming the best club in London. Elsewhere throughout the same period might be seen a similar movement preparatory, in a

like degree, to the spreading growth of the club from the tavern. By the eighteenth century the St. James's quarter had made good a practically exclusive claim to the conventional title of "clubland." Even then, however, coffee-houses, to all intents and purposes clubs, were increasing, and prospered in the City. The newspaper press, notwithstanding the vigorous promise of its infancy, had yet to rival or even supplement these resorts as agencies for circulating news or organizing opinion. Between 1650 and 1710 the London coffee-houses of different kinds numbered not less than three thousand—a total exceeding the allowance of any other European capital. The social facilities, the careful catering of these places, and the exclusion, by a penny entrance fee, of undesirable customers, made them clubs in all but name. Repeated edicts for their suppression had produced no effect. They clustered thickly round the Royal Exchange—amongst them being, not only John's or Jonathan's, the haunt of stockbrokers, in Birchin Lane, a great centre for traffic in Government securities, but Tom's was the haunt of Garrick and his friends, whenever, as frequently happened, financial matters took them East of Temple Bar. At the latter of these two Birchin Lane taverns were rooms specially reserved for the actor-manager, with the citizens who came to meet him, generally known at the time as Garrick's Club. At Tom's also it was that, during his tragic London experiment, Chatterton picked up the odds and ends of news for his topical squibs, tales, and songs.

The steadier and older-fashioned City men always stuck to the Jerusalem, Garraway's, or Jonathan's; a younger and more speculative generation particularly affected other resorts on change, especially Sam's, the headquarters of the South Sea Bubble set. Such passed for Sam's sober habitués in comparison with projectors ready to ensure fortunes to all who would take shares in a scheme for extracting sunbeams from cucumbers,



or in a £2,000,000 loan for buying and fertilizing the Lincolnshire Fens. Close to the national cathedral there existed a kind of Athenæum Club in embryo. Doctors of repute, well-placed professional men generally, and especially benefited clergymen visiting London, always met the very pick of their cloth at Child's, in St. Paul's Churchyard. The Grecian and Nando's, near the Temple, reserved themselves for lawyers. A stone's-throw off, Man's two taverns, on the opposite sides of the street, known as the Old and the Young Man's, attracted gentlemen who combined commercial interests with social aspirations. Farther west, Giles's and Old Slaughter's were the most instructive and entertaining of cosmopolitan haunts, as much French as English being talked at both; while Parliament men and pamphleteers meditating speeches that wanted fresh facts or paragraphs which needed local colour, strained their ears to miss nothing that might fall from the lips of the chattering throng. Covent Garden overflowed with club potentialities. Dryden held his court at Will's in Bow Street. Hard by other coteries were gathered round rival masters of the pen. Addison's social star first reached the ascendant in the tobacco-laden atmosphere of Button's (Russell Street). A Scotsman of any pretence to fashion always had the British or Forrest's, near Charing Cross, for his permanent town address. To continue our south-westward progress, beyond St. James's Palace, at the Pall Mall end of St. James's Street itself, stood the Whig St. James's. Close by was the Hanoverian Tory Ozinda's. The most demonstrative of the Jacobite Tories went to the "Cocoa Tree," first situated in Pall Mall, but, by the early eighteenth century date now reached, removed to St. James's Street. This was Jonathan Swift's favourite haunt for dinner or supper while staying in London,<sup>1</sup> and trying

<sup>1</sup> During his early London days Jonathan Swift was ill-received, knew nobody, and, resenting the slights he received, revenged himself by trying to form a new

to ingratiate himself, at the same time, with the ministerial Tories under Harley and with the Tory malcontents who looked to Bolingbroke. At Bolingbroke's he would dine; with Harley, if that statesman happened to be in a crapulous state, following the overnight potations, he would have tea—a beverage which Harley generally supplemented with a hair of the dog that had bitten him and with some queer displays of temper. These would send the Dean off to the "Cocoa Tree," sometimes for some slight refreshment, but quite as often to sit musing and thinking of nothing, to damn the bad wine and the worse cookery inflicted on him earlier in the evening. His wish for solitude was not always respected, and he occasionally complains of intrusion on him by impertinent puppies in the shape of two Papists, three Jacobites, an Irish lord, an English colonel, and a Tory. "Tolerable wine," he frequently adds, "but all politics and no wit; took a dram for the good of the house and so home to bed in my Bury Street lodgings hard by." Some of his "Cocoa Tree" appearances were connected with more serious, if fruitless, transactions. More than once in his diary, apropos of the Pretender, Swift speaks of having settled the succession as well as of having arranged the manner and time of his landing.<sup>1</sup>

This was the only tavern frequented by Swift which afterwards developed into a club, but by no means the only public house of call in that quarter visited by him. At the "Smyrna," in Pall Mall, on the ground occupied to-day by Messrs. Harrison, he was as regular an habitu  as Goldsmith, Prior, Addison, and Steele. In the social connection of his own. Hence the countless coteries mentioned in his letters and conducted on principles which he had himself framed into rules. Such were the political club, "the Brothers," which, wandering from one tavern to another during the short existence that ended in 1713, met every Thursday, reckoned among its members Arbuthnot, Pope, Gay, and Bolingbroke himself. The last of these was Swift's most loyal ally in all his club experiments, and a regular attendant at Swift's "literary" Scriblerus Club, frequented also by Harley and dissolved, largely in consequence of the personal differences between those two statesmen.

<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Swift's Works, edited by Temple Scott, G. Bell & Sons, vol. v. p. 480.



*Photo]*

*[Pictorial Agency.*

**BOODLE'S CLUB : THE BAY WINDOW.**

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present narrative the "Cocoa Tree" deserves special notice because it belonged to the number of the historic taverns which subsequently grew into clubs. That position it attained between the days of the Dean of St. Patrick's and the historian of the Roman Empire, Gibbon, who, as we already know, saw an "agreeable coffee-house" in St. Stephen's, became a conspicuous figure in several famous club companies of his time. He was also a club founder, and by his own efforts created an exclusive little society, characteristically called by him the Romans. The chief among those who gathered round him in this enterprise were Lord Mountstuart, afterwards Marquess of Bute, Colonel Edmondstone, William Weddal, the Earl of Berkeley, Godfrey Clarke, one of the Derbyshire M.P.'s, the Reverend Palgrave, Major Ridley, Thomas Charles Bigge, Sir William Guise, Sir John Aubrey, the Earl of Abingdon, with his son Peregrine Bertie, George Damer, some time Earl of Dorchester, Sir Thomas Gascoygne, Sir John Hort, and the founder's most particular intimate, Lord Sheffield. This convivial group dined together once a week, and leaving in succession each house patronized on any defect in service or cuisine. Gibbon<sup>1</sup> also sat in the seat of Swift at the "Cocoa Tree," converted since 1745 from a Jacobite tavern into a meeting-place for Ministerialists. As such it was generally called the Government Club. Twenty or thirty of the first men in the kingdom, in point of fortune and fashion, had little tables, covered with a napkin, in a coffee-room, supping upon a bit of cold meat or a sandwich and drinking a glass of punch—such was the Cocoa Tree Club of Gibbon's time. The K.C.'s, lords of the bedchamber, and a host of other frequenters, decorated with stars and garters, when seated there, spoke of being under the palm-tree, because a carved facsimile of that growth

<sup>1</sup> *The Letters of Edward Gibbon*, edited by R. E. Prothero, John Murray, vol. i. p. 89. *The Autobiography of Edward Gibbon*, John Murray, pp. 273 and 406.

had been thrust up through the ceiling of the room. Its company during the earlier years of the "Cocoa Tree's" club period was apt to be noisy as well as madly speculative. The Stuart associations remained throughout as strong as ever, and there are countless stories of the way in which Jacobite horses and carriages used to stop at the "Cocoa Tree" of their own accord. In the same room, at different tables, might be seen the most fashionable of the Pretender's adherents, George Mackenzie, third Earl of Cromarty, with his eldest son, Lord Macleod, even, upon occasions, not as sympathizer but as scornful looker-on, Chatham himself, with some of his family phalanx, Colonel Pitt, Temple, and Lord Cholmondeley. In addition to the statesmen there were journalists. The pugilistic editor, a genuine type of his time, represented by an ex-clergyman, also a future baronet, Edward Bate,<sup>1</sup> had trodden on "fighting Fitzgerald's" toes at Vauxhall. There was an immediate adjournment to the "Cocoa Tree" to arrange for seconds and other preliminaries. By this time Fitzgerald, having his hands rather full of duelling engagements in other quarters, had handed the Vauxhall business over to a companion, Captain Miles. When the gentlemen concerned had assembled in St. James's Street, Miles said it would save much time and trouble if Mr. Bate and himself were to settle the matter then and there with their fists. In one of the clubrooms they went at it hammer and tongs till, less than a quarter of an hour later, in the best prize-ring fashion, the editor had bruised the captain into a jelly.

Clubs, like books, have their fates. A faithfully picturesque mirror of its age in the aspects already described, slate billiard tables had no sooner been introduced in 1827 than the difficulty of securing them in their most perfect form was met between that date

<sup>1</sup> For full details of this personage the reader is respectfully referred to an earlier work by the same author, *Master of English Journalism*, pp. 191-2, T. Fisher Unwin.

and 1837 by the first gentlemen players of the day forming an amateur billiard club in the historic premises at 64, St. James's Street. The proprietorship passed to Mr. Pook. During his day, Faulkner Blair, R. D. Walker, of the Southgate cricketing family, P. H. Lee, Arthur Chapman, Frank Morgan, W. E. Stokes, and the then Marquess of Donegal daily, or nightly engaged each other or played in the regular club sweepstakes, while Christmas marked or, as midnight approached, served an appetising form of sandwich, the secret of whose manufacture was entirely his own. Since then billiards have ceased to be the chief reason for the "Cocoa Tree's" existence, and the club has now its place among the other social caravanserais of the district.

To the Westminster taverns, once famous club homes, the first decade of the eighteenth century added the "Bell" in King Street. "We hope your Majesty is high Tory and High Church," shouted the mob into Queen Anne's chariot as she drove to open her first Parliament. In political quarters the expected reaction from the Whig regime was signalized and stimulated by one hundred and fifty squires co-operating to found the October Club at the tavern just mentioned. Sir William Wyndham Bolingbroke's friend approved the design, and, at the request of William Bromley, afterwards Speaker, the most responsible and important figure in the company, even let his name appear among the numbers, but the club itself was not so much the work of the party chiefs as of the ultras in their rank and file; while these found an indefatigable promoter of their scheme in the clever, bustling poet, Prior, who himself secured the clubroom in the Bell Tavern and decorated it with the portrait of Queen Anne, which was subsequently to adorn the Town Council chamber at Salisbury. "Support you?" Bolingbroke had said. "Why, I expect you to prove only a thorn in my side; but as for your

name, what can there be with less offence in it than that of the month chosen for your first meeting." In this way alone did the title originate. Alike in its spirit and its programme, the new society epitomised and reflected the most characteristic tendencies of the time. To refashion the nation's polity or to change the ruling house had been the animating motive of the socio-political coteries from the Rota or the Sealed Knot down to the Treason. After 1688, club companies on both sides, in the place of making or unmaking a king, occupied themselves in trying to influence the *personnel* and deciding the policy of an administration. In the August of 1711 Queen Anne dismissed the Whigs, replacing them by the Tories, under Harley and Bolingbroke. While these appointments were being made, the rank and file of the incoming party, clamorous for leaders who, in Bolingbroke's phrase, would show them sport, formed themselves, not at Bolingbroke's instance, if perhaps not without his knowledge, into a combination against Harley, which, during the next autumn, grew into the October Club. Harley, who came of an old Puritan stock, had himself been a Whig; after being improved into Toryism, he was still more than suspected of sneaking sympathies with his old friends. His position, in fact, resembled Sir Stafford Northcote's, on his promotion to the Conservative leadership in the Commons when Benjamin Disraeli became Earl of Beaconsfield. Northcote, indeed, had never been a Liberal, nor even a Peelite, but he had served as Gladstone's private secretary; he had learned finance in the Gladstonian school. When he confronted his old chief at Westminster, he was charged with still being under his malignant influence and with being prevented by the memory of ancient ties from fearlessly engaging him in single combat. Hence the Conservative explosion below the gangway and the prominence secured by the Fourth Party during Sir Stafford Northcote's Conservative leadership. What



Lord Randolph Churchill and his friends were to the official Conservatism of 1880-2, the October Club had been some 170 years earlier to the Ministerial Tories of the Harley Government.

In the eighteenth century there existed no hard-and-fast line separating the Jacobite from the Hanoverian Tories. The two factions by imperceptible degrees merged themselves in each other. The October clubmen under Queen Anne were thus the prototypes of Chatham's "boys" or "patriots" in the reign of George I. They had taken Harley for their bugbear because he resisted their dictation. Their rashness in driving things on to extremes against the Whigs, scattering impeachments broadcast, and, if they could, as Swift puts it, getting off five or six heads, made them quite as dangerous and troublesome to Bolingbroke. While these lines are being written (December 4, 1912) the management of the Opposition has largely passed from the Conservative front bench to the Press. So was it as nearly as possible two hundred years ago. The real resistance to Walpole proceeded less from Pulteney and St. John at St. Stephen's than from their organs, principally the *Craftsman*, in the Press. The Tory *Examiner*, having gone to all lengths in personally assailing when Minister, could, upon occasions, show its teeth to Harley and his moderate adherents. Naturally enough periodical writers of the *Craftsman* school found a welcome with the October clubmen. Atterbury, the episcopal pamphleteer, Friend, King (both connected editorially with the *Craftsman*), and Mat Prior had, indeed, helped to form the club.<sup>1</sup> Prior was the more

<sup>1</sup> In addition to those already mentioned other October Clubmen were John Aislabie, Francis Annesley, William Bromley, Robert Byerley, Henry Champion, Charles Cæsar, Sir Robert Danvers, Charles Eversfield, Ralph Freeman, Sir Thomas Hanmer, John Hungerford, Sir Justinian Isham, Packington, George Lockhart, Francis Scovel, Sir Thomas Thorold, John Trevanion, Sir William Whitelock, and Sir Roger Mosten—nearly all Tory names heard of in later politics.

keen in organizing the October men because he had been expelled from the Hanoverian Kit-Cat, of which more will be said presently. He, like Swift, had placed his pen at Godolphin's disposal. Both offers were promptly declined. Prior began as Tory journalist in the *Examiner* with an article immediately answered by Addison in his *Whig Examiner*, a print soon superseded by Mainwaring's *Medley*. In his capacity of club founder Prior made it his business to show how untenable was the conventional distinction between the Hanoverian and the Jacobite Tories. In an address to a preliminary meeting at the "Bell," "all who accepted the old constitution of Church and State, disregarding dynastic labels, should," he said, "be of our company. To ourselves," with cynical frankness he continued, "we may make a contrast between a *de jure* and a *de facto* king. But as subjects it is not for us to choose whether the crown shall be worn by George the Elector of Hanover or George the Chevalier." Prior's fellow-clubmen took the hint, and, no more flying at such high game as monarchs, were content to hunt down obnoxious Ministers.

Meanwhile the staunchest of professed partisans were intriguers to a man, anxious above all things at the same time to secure their position in both camps. The Octobrists chuckled with delight while they watched how vainly Harley searched for evidence against Bolingbroke, implicating him with the Pretender, and how infinitely more damning and numerous grew the signs that the man chiefly comprised with the Stuarts was none other than Harley himself. As a fact, both the Macpherson papers<sup>1</sup> and Sir James Mackintosh's historical fragments<sup>2</sup> free, not only Bolingbroke but any among his most advanced followers in the October Club, from the suspicion of active intrigue to reseal a Stuart upon the throne. In 1713 the shock to Harley's health caused by the

<sup>1</sup> See especially vol. ii. p. 417 *et passim*.

<sup>2</sup> *Edinburgh Review*, 1835.

daggers of Guiscard, a French papist, temporarily disabled him, and left his rival master of the situation. The Pretender importuned him daily with messengers entreating his support on any terms he liked to name. Atterbury, Prior, Wyndham, and the whole force of the October Club only waited for him to give the signal. Even then Bolingbroke's only reply was to insist on the hopelessness of decisive and harmonious action with a body so heterogeneous as the Parliament. Eight Tories, all Jacobites, to one Hanoverian Whig was the October Club's account of national feeling presented by Prior, in 1714, to Bolingbroke. The great man looked at the figures and laughed. "Revise," he said to Prior, "your club estimate by putting down one hundred Tories to forty-eight Whigs."

Matthew Prior, the life and soul of the October men at the "Bell," was a type of the clever, fussy, good-naturedly intermeddling clubman as he may be seen in all ages. A Whitehall vintner's son, he had picked up some classical knowledge and made acquaintances above his own rank under Busby, at Westminster School. On leaving St. John's, Cambridge, and coming up to London, he had been taken up by Montagu, and had helped his patron to write the "Town and Country Mouse," a clever burlesque on Dryden's "Hind and Panther." He gratified his taste for the society of his betters by rubbing shoulders with Atterbury's and Swift's highly placed friends while doing for them the real work of the October Club's foundation. In 1710 the club used him for the dirty work of manipulating the election petitions to increase the already great Tory majority in the Commons, as well as in bringing to light the forgotten millions of the impeached Duke of Marlborough's war expenditure. All this, however, was not only not at Bolingbroke's instigation, but to his extreme disgust. "Tell your October friends," he said to Prior, "their warfare against individual members of it will rather help than harm the Whig party."

The truth is, Bolingbroke had a soul and mind above petty personalities. Even supposing him to have used them for his own ends, he would have heartily despised the methods of the October clubmen. As it was they neither served him for tools nor received the slightest countenance from him. The Scandal Club was the name he gave them in return for their pestilent prying into things they did not understand. In the Harley administration the one undoubted Whig was Shrewsbury; Ormond's Jacobitism was notorious. Therefore, when that position fell vacant, the country squires, in their tobacco parliaments at the "Bell," vowed that the wardenship of the Cinque Ports should go, not to Shrewsbury but to Ormond. On Prior mentioning this, Bolingbroke bade him hold his peace.

The Anglo-French negotiations for the Utrecht congress brought the October Club some distinguished or notorious foreigners as guests, as well as gratified the vanity of the club itself by giving it credit for knowledge of all that was going on behind the scenes. Of course it often deceived itself, and revelled in a glut of mare's nests. Any report damaging to the Whigs generally and Marlborough in particular, the more preposterous the better, after being served up at the October Club, was spread by the club agents, especially Prior, through the town and the country. Such was the story of Marlborough's having, as early as 1708, entertained an offer of a huge French bribe to induce his Government to accept the French peace terms. Prior, though certainly not Swift, had persuaded himself that this precious fiction was fact. He, at least, about this time, told the story to an acquaintance connected with another and an antagonistic association, who, in his turn, passed it on to Addison. "A rancorous and undiluted lie," was Addison's comment. "How do you know that?" came the rejoinder. "From M. De Torcy himself"—the Foreign Minister of the French king, then visiting London, daily closeted with

Bolingbroke, but also privately known by Addison, then in the thick of official circles, and in the way of the earliest and most authentic information. The truth is that as little by its friends as its foes was the October Club taken seriously. Atterbury, Prior, King, like some others of the company at the "Bell," had served the Tory managers in their capacity, not of clubmen but of writers. The use for these had ceased by 1712. The first day of that year opened the Anglo-French diplomatic discussions that were not to end till Bolingbroke's private deal with the French Plenipotentiary beforehand enabled him to enter the Congress-room at Utrecht with the draft treaty in his pocket. About the successive moves in this game of international thimblery, Mat Prior and his fussy club-fellows remained entirely in the dark.

On the other side less important and of worse repute was the Calves' Head Club. Early in the eighteenth century club-founding had become a trade, often adopted by enterprising licensed victuallers as a tavern advertisement. About 1703 some well-born, hard-drinking Whig undergraduates scandalized Tory and Royalist Oxford by uproariously celebrating the anniversary of Charles I.'s death. The heads of their respective colleges and the Vice-Chancellor promptly sent them down. The rusticated lads determined to finish their interrupted anti-monarchical orgy in London. They all belonged to great and wealthy Whig families. This was well known to the host of the "Golden Eagle," Suffolk Street, where the lads put up. He not only gave them of his best, but encouraged them in all those antics which no sooner got abroad than they won their way to the fabulous. The innkeeper, a dissenter himself, invited some of his fellow dissenters, Brownists, Familists, Sweet Singers, Quakers, Anabaptists, and Muggletonians to come in and see the fun. Such a congeries of factions obviously might be turned to account by the Whigs in their bid for popularity.

So the thing began and grew. The Calves' Head secret historian, however, knows nothing of this, and only describes the club-founders as an impudent set of people who have their feasts of calves' heads at several points of the town on the 30th of January in derision of the day and defiance of monarchy.<sup>1</sup>

Proceeding to the Kit-Cat Club, we exchange myth for history. This club took its name from its founder, Christopher Cat (1703-33) kept the "Cat and Fiddle" in Shire Lane, Temple Bar, and won for it the same sort of fame by his mutton-pies as, in Oliver Goldsmith's day, was beginning to come to the "Cheshire Cheese" from its beefsteak puddings. By a lucky chance Cat became the fashion with a little group of London pleasure-seekers. Cat took these customers with him when he went to the "Fountain" in the Strand. When forming them into a club, Cat found a colleague in a much more important person than himself.

This was Jacob Tonson, the some-time stationer's apprentice, who, in 1677, began business on his own account at Judge's Head, Chancery Lane. In conjunction with his brother Richard he published in 1680 Dryden's *Spanish Friar*. Ten years later he obtained, first half, afterwards the whole of the publisher Brabazon Ailmer's rights in *Paradise Lost*. After his removal, in 1697, to Gray's Inn Gate, his publishing connection included, not only Dryden himself but several works of Dryden's editing, as well as Addison and Steele. In 1714 his business increased in size and importance by his Government contracts, which made him, not only a printer of parliamentary votes but stationer and bookseller to the chief public offices. His commercial skill was accompanied with great mental power, real literary taste, sound judgment, and an encyclopædic knowledge which subsequently made Pope describe him to Harley as a perfect image of Bayle's Dictionary—so full of wit, secret history, and

<sup>1</sup> Temple Scott's *Swift*, Bell & Son, vol. ix. p. 256.

spirit. At the same time one of Cat's patrons, this cultivated and pushing trader was fitted above all others to organize a really distinguished club. In this way he became, together with Cat, the Kit-Cat's founder, and, soon afterwards, its secretary. At the sign of Cat's "Fountain" there had also met an association forming a complete contrast to the Kit-Cat. This was the Fountain Club, a Tory institution like the October, but, unlike that, the accredited headquarters of the official Opposition to Sir Robert Walpole. Its invisible presiding genius and its most active patron, though always in the background, was Pulteney. Its most distinguished and energetic manager was Swift. Under his direction the ballots for membership were most severe. After the actual voting he conducted a remorselessly searching inquisition into the personal antecedents as well as the family connections even of those who had been formally elected.

On one of these supplementary scrutinies there were finally rejected several of Walpole's parliamentary opponents because of the mere suspicion that they might be got at and perverted by the detested Minister. Among those weeded out in this way were Manley and Medlicot. Both generally passed for staunch anti-Walpoleans, but in each case Swift's keen vision had detected some secretly compromising speck. Club meetings conducted in this temper could seldom be tranquil or harmonious, and Swift's own account of the gatherings is apt to conclude with the confession that the company could not agree about new candidates and parted in an ill-humour. As time went on the club became an instrument of purely personal hostility to Walpole, and then, because of his palace support, to George I.

The Prince of Wales, then being estranged from his father, the club had the heir to the throne among its well-wishers and, perhaps, occasional guests. At this time it was dominated by the Duke of Argyle, the

Earl of Chesterfield, Viscount Cobham, one of the Duke of Marlborough's officers in Flanders, subsequently, on Walpole's overthrow, a field-marshal, the friend of Alexander Pope, the creator of the gardens at Stowe, and by Sir John Hynde Cotton, of Landwade, Cambridgeshire, whose Jacobitism for years survived that of his party in general. The Fountain clubmen rather over-valued their political power. On February 11, 1742, the Chippenham election affair caused Walpole to resign. "All the club's doing," said the jubilant secretary, in his speech proposing the toast of "our noble selves," at the triumphal banquet. The Tories and the Whig malcontents mustered between two and three hundred strong to speed the parting minister and to welcome the incoming one. This was Wilmington, with Carteret as head of the Exchequer. "Shall I see you at the dinner to-night?" the new Prime Minister had asked of his Chancellor. "I think not," was the answer. "I have never dined at a tavern and don't care to begin now."

To that rule, however, as a patron of letters and art, this accomplished man, the Earl Granville of 1743 onwards, made an exception in favour of the Kit-Cat.

"Kit-Cat wits spring first from Kit-Cat pies" is Blackmore's explanation of the name, but the club's most characteristic custom, presently to be mentioned, made Arbuthnot derive its title plausibly enough from its pell-mell pack of toasts of "old cats and young kits."<sup>1</sup>

This association was coeval with the eighteenth century. Recruited originally from professional wielders of the pen, the pencil, and the paint-brush, by the co-operation already described of a publican with a publisher, its social and conversational repute soon brought it into general fashion. During the summer,

<sup>1</sup> *Spectator*, No. 9.



like so many other societies of the nomadic kind, it met out of town—now at the Upper Flask Tavern, Hampstead, now at Tonson's suburban house at Barn Elms. This, or some other of the publisher's abodes, formed the club's permanent headquarters. The producer of Dryden's, Pope's, and Otway's books was an early and favourable specimen of the modish publisher familiar to a later age. What Tonson's parlour had been to the eighteenth century, that John Murray's drawing-room became to the next, while Tonson's select but cosmopolitan dinner guests founded the hospitable tradition maintained by a long line of successors. The club increased in numbers from 39 to 48.

One feature of its feasts was the celebration of reigning beauties, both by toast and song. Few meetings passed without many glasses being emptied in honour of their Graces of Beaufort, St. Albans, the Countess of Carlisle, Ladies Bridgwater, Godolphin, Monthermer, Sunderland, Wharton, Mrs. Barton, Sir Isaac Newton's niece, and Mrs. Brudenell, these last two being perhaps the handsomest women of their day, and only less celebrated than their rivals because untitled. The annals of freemasonry relate how Lord Donerale's daughter was elected into the crafts. The Kit-Cat also had on its list a member of the then clubless sex in the person of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who, when a child, being introduced to the company by her father, the Duke of Kingston, first received its grave salute and then was solemnly declared to belong to it. As time went on each diner became so much a poet as to celebrate in verse some one whose charms had not yet found the immortalizing bard. Thus, in addition to the names already given, Lady Essex, Lady Hyde, and Mademoiselle Spanheim, were successively promoted to the honour of two toasts each. The best specimen of the carefully prepared impromptu lines accompanying each health is Samuel Garth's

tribute to the perfections boasted by one belonging to the Villeirs family :—

“The God of Wine grows jealous of his art—  
 He only fires the head, but Hyde, the heart ;  
 The Queen of Love looks on and smiles to see  
 A nymph more mighty than a Deity.”

The rhyming Kit-Cat wits sometimes gave a vogue to doctors as well as to ladies. The pet physician and palace attendant, Sir Samuel Garth, was a leading Kit-Cat figure. The only drug in which, like perhaps many others of his cloth, he really believed, was the *vis medicatrix naturæ*. Sitting once at the club between Sir Robert Walpole, an early if not an original Kit-Cat member, and the “wicked” Lord Lyttelton, and the hour being late, he was asked by Halifax whether he had no professional engagements. “Of course,” he said, “I have”—producing his pocket-book. “Ten patients waiting to see me at this moment. But,” he added, “five are really so well that they cannot be made better, and the five really sick have such strong constitutions that I defy all the doctors in London and the pharmacopœia itself to make them worse.” It was not Sir Robert, but that Minister’s son, Horace Walpole, who, during his researches into the ancestresses of Kit-Cat heroines, discovered an ancient Lady Westmoreland to have been the sister of a Kit-Cat toast, Lady Molyneux, who, chuckled the Strawberry Hill virtuoso, died smoking a pipe. At a Kit-Cat dinner it was that Lord Somers, on the suggestion of Halifax, offered a prize for a poem. Hearing that Tom D’Urfey was likely to be a competitor, Somers murmured : “He can have no chance, for when I grumbled the other day of some piecrust being half cold, the cook explained he had put the pies into the oven with some of D’Urfey’s works under them. The poems, he said, were so cold that the dough refused to bake.”

The Kit-Cat member the author of the club’s most enduring, because its artistic, fame, was by birth a

north German, son of a Lubeck Jew. Intended for a soldier, he learned the rudiments of pictorial art in a school for military drawing at Leyden. Conscious of a turn for painting, he soon surprised his friends with a study in oils from the Apocrypha, "Tobit and the Angel." Then came his art apprenticeship to Jacob del Boë at Hamburg, and so many signs of promise as to secure him the chance of study in Italy. Luckily for himself, he soon drifted to England, and first made his mark by a portrait of Monmouth's secretary, Vernon. Established at a studio in what was then called Durham Yard, he began his course as Court portrait painter with Monmouth himself, whom he reproduced on his canvas to the life. The palace changed its owners; Kneller was equally successful in painting them all. His house in the Covent Garden Piazza became as fashionable a haunt as the Kit-Cat Club itself. Kneller's portraits of its members, executed on a scale to suit Tonson's gallery, 36 in. by 28 in., gradually caused portraits of that size to be known as Kit-Cats. From the mutton which, in the shape of Christopher Cat's pies, formed the basis of the elegant and agreeable Kit-Cat the transition seems appropriate to a company built up on the more fortifying and essentially British foundation of the beef-steak. Of the clubs so far mentioned, this and the "Cocoa Tree" alone through many vicissitudes and transmigrations, have preserved their name and in some form or other their existence from Queen Anne to George V.

In 1704 the playgoing taste had been curiously taken at Drury Lane, by an actor named Eastcourt or Estcourt, who rather less than ten years previously had made an extraordinarily successful *début* at the Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin, where he remained for some time. He was not of Irish origin, nor does he seem to have been attracted by any Irish friendship or connection to the Irish capital. He had fortuitously drifted thither on the uncertain tide of adventurous

circumstance. Born (1688-1712), bred, and schooled at Tewkesbury, he had, while a boy, run off with a company of strolling players to escape a whipping for an unlearned Latin grammar lesson. Pursued by his father, he was at last found almost sinking from starvation in a barn just outside Chipping Norton. His mother, a second wife, knew something of a Hatton Garden apothecary. To him, therefore, as a preventive against further escapades, the boy was apprenticed, with the result that he picked up about the same smattering of chemical knowledge which, conveyed to-day by a natural science course in a Secondary School, serves as a preparation for the special training of a general practitioner. With real insight into his business, as well as aptitude for it and industry, Eastcourt might have risen to a place among the doctors of his day. Not that he had ever troubled himself much concerning the theory or practice of the healing art, but he could talk knowingly about the properties of drugs and write down the cabalistic instructions for mixing them in the surgery of the Hatton Garden Sawbones. He was a born mimic. At an earlier social venture, the Bumper, he had kept his patrons in night-long roars of laughter at the combinations of facial play and of professional jargon with which he brought before them, not only the first medicine-man of the time, the already mentioned Dr. Garth, but the personal characteristics common to the whole faculty of which Garth was an ornament. To this effect agree both all the traditions of the time and the specific testimony of Gay, Parnell, Addison, and Steele. In whatever place Eastcourt might for the moment have settled himself and gathered his convivial circle, there were sure to reign fun, frolic, and cheer of the liquid sort so good that his habitués, with Sir Roger de Coverley himself at their head, forced on him liberal commissions to supply their own cellars with his superlative port.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Spectator*, No. 264, Sir Roger de Coverley's letter to Eastcourt, addressed as "old comical one."

There seems no reason for supposing Jonathan Swift to have been a Beefsteak clubman, or to have been formally enrolled in the many societies bearing that or a similar name which long flourished both in London and provincial towns, and several of which survive to this day. The Dean, however, knew Dick Eastcourt well. He liked his society or that of his set so much as to sit by while a bowl of bad punch was receiving justice from Mr. Under-Secretary Rowe, the poet, with whom Swift had dined. These meetings were also graced by Sir Richard Temple, afterwards Lord Cobham, Lord Pembroke, Viceroy of Ireland in 1707, Eastcourt himself, Congreve, and Charles Main, "wondering Main, so fat with laughing eyes," as Gay called him.

Both as club founder and club companion Dick Eastcourt, as he was always known, held a warm place in club memories down to the time of Charles Lamb. The club style that he invented must not be confounded with the sublime society of Beef Steaks. Of institutions called by that name more than one at different periods existed, and they were perpetuated by Henry Irving during his reign at the Lyceum. Through the rest of the eighteenth century and till the close of the first quarter of the nineteenth Dick Eastcourt waited for any Beefsteak successor. He appeared during the seventies in the person of the eighth Duke of Beaufort, the most popular and active among the literary and theatrical patrons of his time both in London and at his seat, Troy House, Monmouth, where E. A. Sothorn (Lord Dundreary) was first introduced to the world of title and fashion. His Grace of Badminton deputed the actual work of reviving the Beefsteak glories to his most loyal, popular, and capable henchman Mr. ("Hughie") Drummond,<sup>1</sup> Claude Hay,<sup>2</sup> and above all Mr. Charles Sugden, him-

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Henry Edward Stirling Home-Drummond.

<sup>2</sup> The 11th Earl of Kinnoull's fifth son, the present peer's brother, born 1862.

self a notable link between the cults of art, society, and sport, the creator of many theatrical parts, and to-day the one player probably living who, as Charles, in "Our Boys," has appeared between five hundred and a thousand times in the same rôle. As in its beginnings with Eastcourt, so throughout its resuscitation, the club now flourishing in Green Street, W.C., has conspicuously reflected the class fusion that created its eighteenth-century, not to mention its later, vogue.

Neither the "Beefsteak," however, nor the "Cocoa Tree," with which, as regards antiquity, it has been coupled here, is by any means the oldest of existing clubs, descended in an unbroken line from a tavern or coffee-house progenitor of Queen Anne celebrity. The nineteenth century sees successful rivals to the licensed victualler in purveyors of non-intoxicating substitutes, like tea and cocoa, for strong drinks. It is to be remembered that the lineal ancestors of these, rather than the traders of alcohol in any form, most prominently co-operated with the greatest among seventeenth or eighteenth century club founders. This can easily be shown. The cosmopolitanism of the famous college in Broad Street dates from an epoch long anterior to Benjamin Jowett; and the Jap undergraduates of his mastership had their predecessors under Charles I., Thomas Lawrence being then Balliol Head, in students imported from a Mediterranean island. One of these Cretans, Nathaniel Canopus by name, had been presented by his father, on returning to England to keep his college term in 1641, with several pounds of coffee, coming to the elder Canopus from his Asiatic business connections. Some of this gift he presented to Dr. Lawrence, who, under his pupil's directions, had it prepared for drinking in the Master's lodging.<sup>1</sup> Of the rest of his coffee

1900-10 Unionist M.P. for Hoxton, at one time Secretary of the Primrose League and Assistant Secretary at Lloyd's.

<sup>1</sup> It was not only the first, but for some time the last coffee drunk by a Balliol Head, for the parliamentary commission issued in 1641 to demolish church

Canopus prudently disposed in return for many free meals to a certain Jacobs, keeper of an eating-house, on the ground now covered by the Great Western Railway buildings. Within a few years English merchants engaged in the same sort of Turkish commerce as Canopus *père* put their hangers-on, mostly Greeks, in the way of emulating the Oxford experiment at various points of the capital.

Such were the beginnings of the social movement that, continuing its course, improving and enlarging its methods, did not rest till it resulted in the club. Of coffee-houses as club progenitors it has already been necessary to say something; and inevitably we have already once reached the Court quarter famous for the coffee-houses chiefly pertinent to this narrative. Only an anonymous reference has been made to the particular institution that for several reasons has a claim to be considered the first prolific parent of the English club. White's is the one specimen of the class to which it belongs, of a place at which, beneath almost the same roof, and always bearing the same name, whether as coffee-house or club, the same class of persons has congregated during more than two hundred years. How this has come to pass will be shown in the next chapter.

ornaments so worried Lawrence that he resigned both his college position and Divinity Professorship, retiring to the Chapelry of Colne, Parish of Somersham, where he died in 1657. A Balliol undergraduate in 1615, Lawrence, from being Fellow of All Souls, had returned as master to his old college in 1637.

## CHAPTER V

### THE MODERN CLUB MODEL CREATED

How Francesco Bianco came to England—Learnt his business—Set up on his own account—And prospered—His removal from Pall Mall to St. James's lays, in White's Chocolate House, the foundations of White's Club.—How he dies and leaves the business to his widow—How she, understanding the spirit of the age, extends it, innovates upon, and makes her house a centre of rank, fashion, and smartness—The typical progress from coffee-house to club—Celebrities of the place in successive stages of its being—How a shrewd Swiss makes a fortune out of it, and defies the cleverest Englishman to do the same in Switzerland—"University and school of vice" under one roof—The long waiting list—The Young club and the Old—Their fusion results in the White's of to-day—White's habitués at all stages of its development—Its king, Colley Cibber—Its leading exquisite, Horace Walpole—Diarist and collector—Revolutionist and courtier—Cibber's opinion of the Rockinghamites as club members—William Pitt balloted in like Chatham, his father—Makes White's a Tory club—And vetoes "pilling"—White's hospitalities—White's play—Chief figures of its gambling-room—Its special games—Its sobering down—King Edward VII at White's.

THE earliest of our English club makers, the mediæval Hoccleve, described his Court of Good Company as "our club near the Temple." The word therefore had been employed in the sense with which we are concerned here long before the date generally given. At the same time this use of it did not become universal till after 1660. The club of the Restoration period, like other things of that time, was influenced by the reaction from the repressive severity of the preceding Puritanism. The institution itself had already found a broader and stronger basis than that of convivial fellowship or even political discussion. During the reign of Anne the permanent domicile had, as we



have seen, generally to be found. The club even in its itinerant and tavern stage was already in a fair way of becoming a school of manners and a centre of interests. These aspects of its existence were first clearly seen and fixed about the year 1697, in the most famous of St. James's Street coffee-houses. The particular member of the class was known also, and perhaps even better, as a chocolate-house, because the founder of the resort now mentioned shrewdly wished to identify his enterprise with the beverage introduced a little later than coffee.

This man's rise and progress might truly be called the romance of a club-founder's life.

Francisco Bianco was one of several Italian exiles whom persecution and poverty had sent to live by their wits in England. Like others of his class, he had a smattering of as many sciences as the *Græculus Esuriens* of the Latin satirist or the fasting Monsieur introduced into Johnson's paraphrase, "London." He knew a good deal of conjuring and sleight of hand, something of music, especially fiddling, and a great deal about cookery, ices, and coffee. Encouraged by Pasqua Rosee's example in that line, after an apprenticeship to the business, he put his little handful of savings into the refreshment business, with such good results that some years later he looked about for a new opening on a more stylish scale. In Bianco's day the "Cocoa Tree" was still a Pall Mall tavern where the Junior Carlton to-day stands. Somewhat to the west of this Bianco found a *restaurateur* on the verge of bankruptcy. He looked at the man's books, saw that the turnover was by no means hopeless, and believed that his connection and methods would make the concern a success. The place therefore started on a new lease of life, really on Bianco's capital, and happily for his partner, as for himself, entirely under his own adroit and enterprising control. For twenty miles round Charing Cross there was no coffee, chocolate, or tea

so good as that served at Bianco's. Moreover, when you got there, you were sure to be amused as well as refreshed. Bianco's clever displays of legerdemain were alone worth what your meal might cost.

The usual payment at the door on going into a coffee-house was, we have already seen, a penny. Bianco's customers had become so numerous that he decided to make them more select by raising the admission to sixpence. At the same time he gave new prominence to the specialities of his cuisine and cellar—ortolans à la Lucullus, macaroni prepared in the most alluring shape, and the choicest Italian vintages from the regal monte pulciano to the Florence wine, lately brought into fashion by my Lord Bolingbroke.

His original partner had now disappeared. Bianco resolved upon a higher flight ; for so favoured an artist of fortune as himself nothing would do but St. James's Street. Here, then, on the eastern side, nearly on the modern site of Boodle's, he made his new quarters in 1693. Four years later he found at a bargain better premises across the road. By this time Bianco had adopted the English style of White, and White's Chocolate House in St. James's Street, even when nominally open, at a price, to all comers, reserved from the first some of its rooms for special patrons. It was therefore in fact always a club. It thus constitutes, in Baconian phrase, a crucial as well as the most interesting instance of club genesis during the successive periods covered by its growth. Under all its proprietors, from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, it has preserved, without a break, the stamp of fashionable exclusiveness first impressed on it by its original creator and those of his patrons who personified the rank, wealth, and refinement of their day. Elsewhere every one smoked. At White's the only form of tobacco allowed was that of the choicest snuff, the method of taking which had been elaborated by the exquisites of the place into a fine art. This was so throughout all

White's chocolate-house days. After its organization into a club had been completed by the rules of 1736, it encouraged newer institutions to restrict within the narrowest limits practicable the opportunities of smoking. Its long resistance to this or any other innovation appreciably helped to rally and strengthen throughout all clubland that prejudice against concession to organic change which had to be reckoned with in the interiors of Pall Mall and St. James's till the Victorian era's close. Even the capricious or unjust severity of White's entrance ballot has had its good side. However hard some of the cases, the oldest of clubs has taken the initiative in making club membership in its way a real distinction. The example has not been unprofitable to institutions of a younger growth. Not, indeed, that it was either possible or desirable for the wholesale rejection of candidates, which during the eighteenth century reached such a height at White's, extensively to be reproduced elsewhere. Such a proceeding defeats its own object, as it actually did at White's, by transferring elections from the body of the club to a committee. This, however, does not diminish the lasting service to the club system rendered by White's in making the mere fact of admission to a particular society no purely conventional honour, but a social credential of definite significance and practical value. Always what in its earlier years was styled modish, White's, upon proper occasions, has, as should be the case with all clubs, shown itself not less comprehensive and cosmopolitan than exacting as regards the antecedents and qualities of those whom it has made free of its company. The drawing-room has often surrendered itself to notoriety, achievement, or personal endowments alone; by force largely of the example now dwelt on the club has performed a wholesome sifting process in excluding aspirants who have not shown themselves satisfactory in the searchlight of entrance scrutiny. Differing from every other club of

the same antiquity in having passed its whole life on or close to the spot where it flourishes to-day, White's possesses a national and historic character, if only because its occupants, conversation, and pursuits have ever made it the microcosm and mirror of the contemporary world outside its walls. Its foremost figures, as one generation has followed another, have been types of their time. Its politics have been those of its period, its small talk was the polite world's commentary, equally in 1739, on the reluctant declaration, by Sir Robert Walpole, of war with Spain, and a little less than a century later, on the cataclysm which must overwhelm Court, Church, society, and country, if the Grey Reform Bill of 1832 were not thrown out.

Here, then, is reason enough for continuing the original founder's fortunes to his end, and for summarising the subsequent vicissitudes, progress, and celebrities of the place of his successors. What has been already said may serve to give a correct idea of a typical club in its making. We are now to make the acquaintance of the men whose co-operation established its vogue. The exact point at which White began was, according to the traditional account, not far from the Pall Mall end of St. James's Street. The latest and the chief authority, Mr. Algernon Bourke, in his official, encyclopædic, and admirably compiled record, connects White's commencement with the east side of the street, exactly opposite Brooks's. There White did so well that within four years of his first settlement in this thoroughfare he recrossed it to provide his patrons with accommodation better suited to their quality beneath a roof rising from where afterwards, in 1765, Arthur's was to be. White himself, therefore, never saw the society he had created in the house it now occupies. That experience was reserved for his former manager and eventual successor, John Arthur. This man, following in his employer's footsteps,

in the coffee-house he had called after his own name, laid the foundations of Arthur's Club.<sup>1</sup>

While still in active business, during the year 1711, White himself died. His death, however, so far from interrupting the operations connected with his name, gave them a fresh impetus. His widow, Elizabeth White, at least understood the club spirit of the age as correctly and as practically as had been done by her husband. Continuing and completing his enterprise, she also greatly enlarged its scope. The rage for fancy balls and masquerades, as for the opera and all amusements of that kind, had then seized the upper classes. For such diversions places could formerly be booked in the club quarter at Sam's and Mitchell's. Determined to keep abreast of the time, Mrs. White secured her 'customers' access to all the gaieties of the town by simply walking across her room to get their tickets at a bureau she had opened on the same floor as that occupied by the rooms allotted to her patrons. To perfect the social and cosmopolitan attractions of her establishment, she added to the English newspapers a regular supply of the most important journals from the Continent. Thus, at every point, White's unique accommodation as a place of public entertainment formed a fitting prelude to the distinction it was uninterruptedly to enjoy as a club during the 176 years that have passed since, in 1697, the finishing touches were given to the representative character testified continuously by its list of members from that day to this.

Of all institutions, none have been more vitally and essentially English than Parliament and the club. The former grew directly, in 1265, out of the victory won

<sup>1</sup> In the proprietorship of this club Arthur was succeeded by his son-in-law, Robert Makreth, who from having been waiter and billiard-marker, rose to knighthood, as Sir Robert Makreth of Cobham and East Horsley, his two Surrey estates, and a leader in all county business. On his retirement from club enterprise, White's passed to the Raggetts, and thereafter through a long line of owners till it reached its present proprietor and analyst.

over a British sovereign by a foreign-bred baron, a French count's son. The latter, as understood in modern times, we have just seen, originated with the venture of an Italian refugee. In little more than fifteen years after White's Chocolate House beginnings, another shrewd and enterprising alien<sup>1</sup> co-operated with White's representative to broaden the basis and crown the superstructure of the club fortunes. About 1712 White's widow entered into a business connection with a new-comer from beyond the seas, who understood the social tastes of the hour not less than did her husband and herself. This was a Zurich clergyman's son, John James Heidegger, who thus came to form an integral part of White's establishment. *Pas d'argent pas de Suisse* runs the old proverb. Heidegger's turn for money-making showed itself in his boyhood. Through many straits, he worked his way into an ambassadorial household, and reached London in 1708. Once there, he enlisted as a private in the Guards. By the age of fifty he had got his discharge and was making himself useful in a hundred odd ways to the gentlemen of fashion and pleasure about St. James's Palace. Mask balls had first acquired an English vogue during the fourteenth century. Frowned upon, and, so far as could be done, put down by the authorities of Church and State, they were revived with immense success under Charles II. Bishops condemned them in their charges, the inferior clergy denounced them from the pulpit, protests were made against them in both Houses of Parliament. By an

<sup>1</sup> Apropos of Heidegger, Mr. Algernon Bourke summarizes this astute impresario's social services in a quotation from Bramston's *Man of Taste* :—

“Thou, Heidegger, the English taste hast found,  
And rul'st the mob of quality with sound.  
If masquerades displease the town,  
Call 'em *ridottos* and they still go down.  
Go on, Prince Phiz, bamboozle all our nation,  
And style thy masquerade a convocation.”

Act of 1724 they were declared illegal. They only flourished the more, till, in 1776, their conductors at Ranelagh could sell their tickets for twenty-five guineas each.

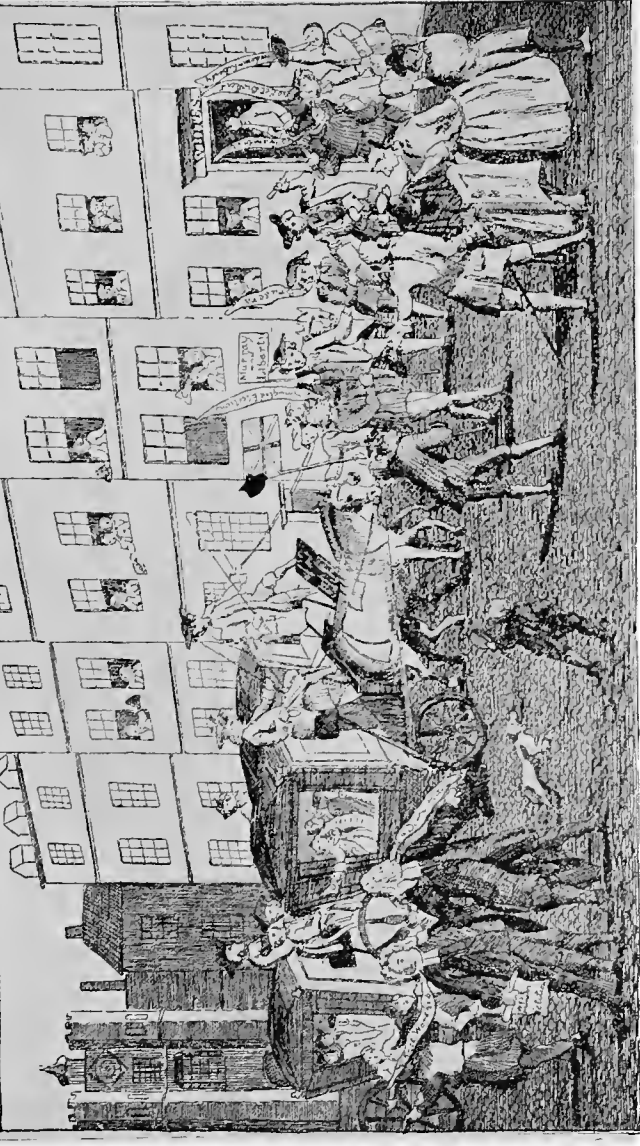
Long before this they had become associated with the opera, whose English birth was signalized by Henry Purcell; his "Dido and Æneas" (1680) seems, indeed, to have marked the transformation of the old English masque into the opera. The ex-private of Guards had now made himself the fashion under the title of "the Swiss Count." His entertainment-rooms became the nursery of the opera in England, and his perfectly legal operatic services were highly useful in connection with the contraband masquerades. Concerned only to save appearances, the Government asked no more of Heidegger than that he should not flaunt the official connivance he enjoyed. That of course exactly suited the "count," by enabling him to charge his patrons fancy sums. It also provided Mrs. White with the means of acquiring everything necessary to equip her establishment as the well-appointed club it was soon afterwards to become. As for the ingenious Swiss, the assistant architect of Mrs. White's fortune, and the creator, from English pockets, of his own, he survived to see the Chocolate House a flourishing club. Dying in 1749 at the age of ninety, he attributed his success to the native aptitude of his race. "I came," he frankly said, "to England without a farthing. I have found how to make £5,000 a year and spend it. Now I defy the ablest Englishman to go to Switzerland, to realize that revenue, or to consume it there."

So far back as 1697, its exclusiveness, and the allotment of private rooms to its most regular and valuable frequenters, had in effect caused White's to enter on a stage of its club existence. Its "master," in other words its proprietor, was the man who had acted as White's manager and who afterwards filled that office for his widow till her death, in 1730. The

White family and name had therefore ceased to have anything to do with the place when, in 1736, Arthur's patrons settled the rules and conditions under which White's Chocolate House became White's Club. Meanwhile a serious accident caused the club's temporary reversion to the tavern stage of its existence. In 1733 the burning of Arthur's earlier premises at the corner of St. James's Place had driven him to Gaunt's Coffee-house, near the Palace end of the street. Here, then, on October 30, 1736, the club's original and only code was compiled by White's legislators and founders. These included both Tories, Whigs, and the most notorious of political nondescripts. Among the first were the Earls of Chesterfield and Cholmondeley. The Whigs were headed by the Duke of Devonshire, the Marquis of Rockingham, and General Charles Churchill, the Blenheim conqueror's brother. Others of the company, such as Bubb Dodington (Lord Melcombe), Sir John Cope, and Colley Cibber, cannot be so easily labelled. Cibber, the literary star of the original members, did not contribute to the literary history of the place as had been done by Sir Richard Steele in its earlier days. A daily visitor during the coffee-house period, Steele questioned, in one of his *Tatlers*, the wisdom of raising the entrance fee from 1d. to 6d., but admits the change will be justified if only the higher charge secures him and others immunity from the common coffee-house curse of bores. Such are the men who make one miss appointments by button-holing all they meet to hear their long-winded accounts of things which they and their victims have seen in print. "The extra fivepence will be well spent," he adds, "if we adopt in St. James's the practice of the City, where, at Lloyd's some one is paid to read from a platform a digest of the last published gazettes, and so men are saved from the amateur newsmonger nuisance." Steel's alleged celebration of White's Club in the "Tender Husband" is imaginary; for the play



The British Patriots' procession through London & Westminster amidst the shouts and acclamations of all true friends of Freedom & Liberty.



ST. JAMES'S STREET AND WHITE'S IN 1751.  
(From an old print, reproduced by permission of White's.)



was written in 1705, while its author died in 1729. But the club's formation, in all its details, was not effected till 1736. On the other hand, by whatever name called, the place abounded from the first in literary associations. Thus Pope knew it equally well, both during its universally accessible and its exclusive period, hitting off in pointed couplets, not only the humours of its inner life but its most familiar figures, especially that of the versatile and sententious writer and talker, who became its oracle :—

“ Or chaired at White's amid the doctors [dice] sit,  
Teach oaths to gamesters and to nobles wit.”

The most graphic and purely personal touch comes elsewhere in *The Dunciad*, and mock heroically describes the enthronement of White's monarch.<sup>1</sup>

The severely select and ultra-fashionable White's by the force of contrast only emphasized its essential character when condescending to incorporate the strange or serviceable representatives of another social world. Colley Cibber, like Heidegger, came from a foreign stock. He was the son of a Holstein sculptor, who had executed sculptures first for several London buildings, afterwards for great country houses, like Chatsworth and Belvoir. During the last of these commissions he brought his son Colley to help him with his implements. The lad pleased the owners of the mansion; a little later, at their instance, he was sent to school at Grantham, and often spent his holidays with his ducal patrons of the Manners family. His schooling finished, the stage-struck youth would be nothing but an actor. Eventually he got an engagement at Drury Lane. He had no sooner established himself in London than his Belvoir benefactors renewed their observation of him, and jealous critics ascribed

<sup>1</sup> *Dunciad*, Bk. I, lines 320-2 :—

“ ‘ God save King Cibber ! ’ mounts in ev'ry note.  
Familiar White's ‘ God save King Colley ! ’ cries ;  
‘ God save King Colley ’ Drury Lane replies.”

his success behind the footlights to the good offices of his great friends. That also perhaps more correctly may explain his appearance from the first among the fine gentlemen at White's.

In those days some of the rooms opened on a pleasant garden looking out upon St. James's Park. On a seat here Cibber held almost daily an informal reception, delighting those who gathered about him with his brisk talk on the drama—its patrons, position, prospects in London as compared with other capitals, and, as will presently be seen, his remarks about politics could be as much to the point as about the play. Whatever the subject, without any pretence at being original, he had, as Lord Chesterfield at White's once put it, the knack of hitting the right nail on the head, while Horace Walpole himself complimented him on his contributions to the cause of theatrical reform. However much he liked the notice of his social betters, he never toadied to them; and the most critical of his fellow-clubmen saw natural dignity not less than easy grace in Cibber's reception of the magnates of the place as they came up to his table, or, if he were sitting outside, approached his bower. Whether in drawing-room or club, no man of Cibber's calling or stamp ever gained his social place without the possession of great qualities and the accomplishment of seriously good work. Lord March, afterwards Duke of Queensberry, best known from his immortality as "old Q," the most worthless of voluptuaries; Sir John Bland, of Kippax Park, Yorkshire, the greatest gamester, whose high play lost him, first his fortune, then his life, complained that, whenever they thought they had Colley to themselves, their hold on him was sure to be disputed by Lord Petersham, afterwards Earl of Harrington, shuffling up with a peculiar gait that won him the name of "Peter Shamble," and trying to decoy him away. Whatever the rank or fame of those about him, Colley's deliverances and sway were bowed to

by all. When men such as those just named had left him, they were often followed by a gentleman of infinite vivacity, as Horace Walpole describes him, one of White's original members, young Wortley,<sup>1</sup> then just contemplating elopement with Miss Ashe, and asking the whereabouts of some quiet corner abroad. That disposed of, Cibber was soon to be seen trying to shake off Lord Granby, a three-bottled noble, who, with a very flushed face, had just entered, and by a calming dose of Colley's counsel was trying to compose himself before calling on Lady Strafford, the wealthiest widow of the season, to whom he was then paying his addresses, and who afterwards was to become his wife. The sovereign power of the pen had been confessed, as the reader already knows, by the mixed, but in every case distinguished, companies to which Ben Jonson gave the law at the Apollo. At none, however, of these earlier resorts were there so many great ones of the earth as encircled "King Colley" at White's. Here he might be seen one moment amid the fashionable and clever knot whose chief ornament was Lord Chesterfield, the next saluted affably by the great Lord Chatham, with soldiers and sailors such as Clive, Cornwallis, Collingwood, and Rodney in the immediate background. The last of these, in consequence of losses at play, had absented himself from White's for a long time; on his reappearance he was greeted first and most cordially by Cibber, who presently communicated to George Selwyn, standing apart in the corner, the true facts about Rodney's re-establishment: "You speak of the hat having been sent round for him. Nothing of the sort. The club did nothing—it was entirely the French Marshal Biron who set him up." To all these a marked contrast is presented by one among the club's most patrician, but least showy, members, Edmund Burke's patron, the Marquis of Rockingham. Agriculturist, sportsman, honest as the

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's Letters (Cunningham, vol. ii. p. 212).

day, and dull as the sky on what the old song calls a hunting morning, Rockingham at White's dramatically personified the opposition of the old drab-coloured, intensely aristocratic Whiggism to the social "smartness" which, even in the eighteenth century, had become the note of the club. One of Rockingham's henchmen had spoken disrespectfully of Colley Cibber's personal appearance—his red hair and not perfectly symmetrical figure. "Let me tell you," anticipating, it would seem, the later vogue of Tory or patrician democracy, "King Colley" took the opportunity of saying, "you Whigs of this club are fish out of water. Shelburne, who has never been of us, we might do with, because, less tied by aristocratic connections, he is nearer Pitt (Chatham), and therefore to the representation of national interests; but mark my words, Shelburne and his personal following, especially Dunning, are Chathamites to a man. To put any one of them in double harness with a Cavendish or Holland House nominee is to court a breakdown. The anti-Rockinghamites, deriving themselves from Chatham, already pass for the people's friends. If the hint is not taken by those whom it concerns, they will become the founders of a new popular Toryism bound some day to hoist with your own petard the old unbending Whig lot. Already Burke, in all but name, is Tory, and when it comes to the point, will break away from the great families and the essentially aristocratic Fox, whom they make their manager."

Not less different in appearance and manner than in occupation and character from Rockingham is one of his club fellows who often attaches himself to him—a little, dandified gentleman whose walk across the room is a military strut, and who makes up by the authority and importance of his manner for his failure in the field. For he is none other than Sir John Cope, who, together with his colleague Gardiner, commanded the army of between two and three thousand regulars,

April 1st 1751

~~Lord Montfort Wages Lord Downes one hundred  
Guineas that Mr Gibber is alive on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April  
1753~~

1st April 1751

~~Lord Montfort Wages Lord Ravensworth  
one hundred Guineas that Mr Gibber is alive  
on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 1753~~

April 11<sup>th</sup> 1751

~~St. Chesterfield wages Sir Stanhope Ten Guineas  
that his L<sup>ty</sup> never makes a bet of above one guinea  
after the 20<sup>th</sup> of August 1751~~

~~25<sup>th</sup> April 1751 Lord Lieutenant Wages fifty Pounds with Mr  
Pelham and fifty with Lord Ravensworth  
that 130 Members of the House of Commons  
die before this day twelve month~~

~~Mr. [unclear] goes to Lord Ravensworth~~

A PAGE FROM WHITE'S BETTING BOOK.

(By permission of the Club.)





that was knocked out of time by the Young Pretender with his handful of Highland volunteers at Prestonpans (September 21, 1745).

Neither a statesman nor a soldier can dispute with Colley Cibber's eighteenth-century pre-eminence at White's Club. His true rival is a gentleman, quietly but fashionably dressed, who totters, rather than saunters, into the place, coming and going with something of the manner of a spirit from another world, silently, abstractedly, yet on most occasions giving a fixed number of minutes by his watch to any members he may honour with a word or a nod. Whomsoever he may observe or ignore, he attracts all eyes towards himself from the moment of his entrance to that of his departure. He is indeed the greatest connoisseur, virtuoso, collector, as well as the most enthralling and epigrammatic diarist and correspondent of his own or any other day. Horace Walpole, a lord among authors and author among lords, a fine gentleman, of trifles and gossip all compact, thinks rebellion and regicide, like full-bodied port, improved so much by keeping as in a century or two to become virtues. To the other curios of his Gothic cardboard house at Strawberry Hill, he has just added, calling it "Major Charta," Charles I's death-warrant. At White's, where he divided supremacy with Cibber and Chesterfield, he was the man of ton, sneering at the ill manners of the Parliament in which he sat, concerned first to pick up all he could about its bets, its scandals, George Selwyn's newest *bon mot*, Miss Chudleigh's latest escapade, and perhaps to put himself on the right track for the fellow to his Madame Maintenon's odd bracelet, or the rapier with which Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, had run through the Earl of Shrewsbury, while the Countess stood by. The then abode of White's was claimed by him as a family mansion; standing at the Piccadilly end of St. James's Street, it had belonged to countless of his personal intimates or connections—amongst them

to the Countess of Northumberland, whose niece Walpole's friend, Lady Suffolk, described as the last to keep up the ceremonious state of the old peerage. When she went out to visit, a footman bareheaded walked on each side of her coach, while a second coach containing her women always attended her. Her daughter-in-law, the Duchess of Somerset, never sat down in her presence without leave to do so. This, so ran Walpole's club talk, was a good school for old Duke Charles (the "proud duke") to imbibe his stately pride.

A born courtier, Walpole resented the magazine's description of him as a learned gentleman. "Do I not," he said to them at White's, "lie abed all the morning, after having played all my life faro, and now loo all night." When he lounged about the club, however, it was to listen rather than to talk, sometimes, indeed, to rehearse his diaries, but more often to collect or verify their most entertaining entries. These, in 1750, talk of the fashionable highwayman McLean, who had frequented White's in its chocolate-house days, giving, when in prison, a horrid idea of us all to the Newgate people, and mention, thirty years later, Rumbold,<sup>1</sup> the last waiter at White's, whose babe will be rocked in a cradle of gems, and Sykes, the last footman who will be made a baronet for being worth some lacs of rupees. Neither, therefore, of these can help Lord North, should he want another loan of twelve millions to enrich Mr. Drummond, his clerks, and livery servants. Let not his lordship therefore reckon on the India Company. Walpole, too, it was who, with an unusually beaming face, imparted to another White's man, George Selwyn, not only the coat of arms he had

<sup>1</sup> This was the episode which suggested to Disraeli one of the most amusing apologies, the facts being as follows. A waiter at White's, Thomas Rumbold, got an appointment in India and eventually became Governor of Madras. Returning, with great wealth, to England, as Sir Thomas Rumbold, he obtained a seat in Parliament, and, according to the conventional account, not, it would seem, confirmed by Mr. Burke, became a member of the club of which he had before been a servant.

devised for the club, but the less familiar crest—issuing out of an earl's coronet (Lord Darlington) an arm shaking a dice-box, all proper.

As to the historic bets at White's, they are to be studied at length in Mr. Algernon Bourke's volume, exclusively devoted to them. This aspect of the club had other commentators among its members, especially Lord Lyttelton, who, "horrified at the devastations of that destructive fury, the spirit of play, trembles lest the rattling of a dice-box at White's in my son's time may shake down our finest oaks at Hagley."

By this time the club had become the resort, not only of the Prince of Wales but of the partisans who encouraged the rivalry to his father, George II. "Crown him! Crown him!" was the cry led by these, and which, taken up by the crowd, applauded the heir-apparent's part in the attempt at extinguishing the fire which, in April, 1733, destroyed the building in which Arthur was then carrying on the club.

Throughout the nineteenth century's second half, perhaps for some time before, Mr. Wallis the wine merchant might be seen on most afternoons receiving, with patrician ease and picturesque dignity, various titled patrons, amongst them generally Lord Winchelsea, in or near his doorway at the corner of St. James's Street, just opposite the palace. This was the exact spot occupied by the above-mentioned Gaunt's Coffee-house, White's temporary abode between the destruction of its earlier home at the corner of St. James's Place and its settlement, in 1755, beneath its present roof. The ornaments of its frontage were not completed till nearly a century later, 1850. Here was soon effected the fusion between the Young and Old Clubs, the school and university of vice, as Gibbon has respectively styled them. Thus the existing White's was born and has so far lived, always on the same spot. Here, too, the original rules of 1736 formally constituting the place a club were revised or confirmed and the

him into thinking there had never been anything between the two before. His Majesty, however, took the thing very lightly, merely remarking, "It isn't the sort of present I should choose for my friends, and I only hope that my enemies' thefts will always be of the same kind." To the leviathans of White's playrooms some other names must be added. Noel Broxholme, one of the few professional men who belonged to the place, the most fashionable physician of the time, had declared gambling in moderation to be beneficial rather than otherwise to the system, but expostulated with Sir John Bland for so abusing a thing not bad in itself, as, in the manner already described, to exhaust both his constitution and his fortune. If Bland's case proved an exception, it was only because others as famous as himself had the resources of a practically bottomless purse. Such were Henry Pelham and his brother, the Duke of Newcastle, both of them among White's most inveterate and extensive gamblers. Each in his time, not only rivalled but surpassed Fox, first at faro, then at basset. Of these games the former, on its departure from London, took ship to New York, there gradually to naturalize itself by finding high, if transient acceptance. Meanwhile, largely owing to Talleyrand's example and influence, whist domesticated itself at White's. Here, as elsewhere, it retained its place till in its turn, whist made way for the universal bridge.

As for White's, it remained the haunt of statesmen, and of sovereigns' sons to our day. It has been said that his late Majesty King Edward VII, when Prince of Wales, proposed joining the club, but never actually became a member of it. As a fact, however, he was not only elected but used it. The restrictions on smoking had not then been relaxed. The Prince, therefore, soon after joining it, retired, and thereafter used only his own Marlborough Club, to be mentioned on a later page.

## CHAPTER VI

### CLUBMEN AND CLUB DOINGS OF THE GEORGIAN ERA

White's associations with its younger brethren—George Selwyn's influence in that direction—Conjectures, experiences, and traditions ready for his admirers—His reforms at White's and efforts in new ventures—The Brilliants—Figures around the whist table—General Scott's light dinners and heavy winnings—The dinner at Brighton that gave birth to Watier's—Watier's military element—"Dan" plays his pranks there—Beau Brummell lends Tom Sheridan a helping hand—How a funeral terminated a good game of whist—Where Georgian and modern clubs meet—Lord Alvanley at the "Alfred"—Sir Lumley Skeffington—Bishops at play—The paradise of Mayfair—Women at the club—A lady clubmaker—With the squires at Boodle's—*Paul Pry*—"Squire" Western and his Essex friends—The work of Boodle's last proprietor—Samuel Johnson's club of clubs—Almack's [the forerunner of Brooks's]—Where Brooks's rivalled White's—Domestic troubles there and how they were settled.

AMONG its several members connecting White's with other clubs of the Regency era none was more conspicuous than George Selwyn. Born in 1719, he went through Oxford at the College, Hertford, afterwards graced by Charles Fox. His birth, breeding, and territorial rank would have sufficed to make him a leader in society. The income derived from the fine Gloucestershire estate, Matson, had been increased by the cash savings of those from whom he had inherited it. His pleasant presence and the gay sententiousness of his talk made him, as clubman, host, or guest, the social heir to Philip, Earl of Chesterfield; and his pungent, pointed sayings owed some of their effect to the listless and drowsy tone of their utterance. Sitting lazily in his chair with eyes nearly closed, he seemed to be more than half asleep, while incessantly on the intellectual alert, and

in reality the most wide-awake of the company. Whatever the occasion or the hour, his repartees were always as ready as his improvisations were original, often audacious, and invariably apt. During 1757 he was dining with the Mayor and corporation of Gloucester when the news came of the failure of the Rochefort expedition undertaken by Hawke and Mordaunt to retrieve the Duke of Cumberland's blunders and prevent the apprehended invasion of England.

"You, sir," respectfully whispered the Mayor to the guest of the evening, "who are behind the scenes, can tell us how it all happened." "Nothing simpler," replied the wag, who now heard of the matter for the first time; "the fact is, the scaling ladders prepared for the occasion proved on trial to be too short." "Bless my soul!" said the unsuspecting dignitary, "how very unfortunate!" Rochefort, it is to be remembered, is an inland town on the River Charente, while the ill-starred expedition had never landed on the French coast.

Selwyn's special distinction was, by his reminiscences or anecdotes, to furnish the most vivid of club links with an historic past. Even his London like his country house, he used to boast at White's, contained the materials for a museum. Beneath his roof in Cleveland Row occurred Sir Robert Walpole's quarrel with Lord Townshend, which ended in the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State seizing each other by the throat. "While writing 'The Beggar's Opera,'" said Selwyn, "Gay called on me to inspect the spot, and later in the same day wrote the scene between Peachum and Lockit, the caricatures of the two statesmen from my traditions, brightened by his imagination."

So, too, with Selwyn's Gloucestershire residence. During the Royalist siege of Gloucester in 1643, Charles, Prince of Wales, and James, Duke of York,

both eventually kings, then boys, stayed at Matson. Recalling that experience to Selwyn's grandfather, James I described the second-floor room, occupied by his brother and himself, adding: "We left the marks of our confinement with our knives on the ledges of all the windows."

Through Selwyn also, a perfect mine of Stuart gossip, descended to modern times the circumstantial statement that Charles I's executioner was neither, as commonly reported, Pride, nor Joyce, nor the hangman, Gregory Brandon, but the last man's son, Richard Brandon. Directly it was over all memorials of the event were sent to the Tower and burnt to ashes. Richard Brandon himself received a hundred guineas on condition of his leaving England and never returning.

All this came to Selwyn from the Duchess of Portsmouth, Louise de Querouaille, seen by him in his boyhood: "At the age of eighty-three," he said, "she retained so much of the beauty that made her Court fortunes as to eclipse the charms of another octogenarian belle, Ninon de L'Enclos. Selwyn's grandfather, a Stuart courtier as already said, had seen Harry Bennet, afterwards Lord Lauderdale, at the Chapel Royal, arouse, with a great shake towards the close of the sermon, Charles II, who always slept soundly during Divine worship, and who, regaining consciousness with a start, once asked aloud, "Where is Nell?" "For," said Selwyn, "he liked the Drury Lane orange girl better than all the duchesses of his harem."

Selwyn's father, in the same Chapel Royal, had witnessed Court incidents of the same kind at a later day. An important member of Sir Robert Walpole's Government, Selwyn *père* had noted the weariness of George I at a service in a language he did not understand, and seen the monarch relieving himself by chatting in French or German with his suite. Younger,

Dean of Salisbury, when George II came, kept that King awake by preaching in German, which he had mastered for the purpose; standing beside the royal chair at chapel, he not only made his Majesty listen but pleased him so well as to be rewarded with the office of Clerk of the Closet.

Such are a few comparatively little known specimens of the minute and long-standing Court intimacy which, added to his turn for epigram, made Selwyn the most entertaining conversationist in an age leisurely enough not to resent narratives of this kind. As a clubman Selwyn was, not merely a member but a maker. Himself a most gigantic club-gambler, he organized the faro-room at the ducal Court of Lorraine, presided over by Stanislaus Leszczyński after his expulsion by Peter the Great from the Polish throne. Selwyn returned to London the most resourceful and tolerant citizen of the world that St. James's Street had ever seen. "Our clubs," he said, "are so deadly dull because they are so idiotically exclusive." By 1780 he could congratulate himself on having made White's for the time an open borough. "A pretty group of Papists, headed by Lord Petre, one Jew, and several Scotsmen, all owe their membership of the club to me. Last night we had a supper party of them, followed by a set at faro, in which poor Parsons held the 'bank,' the punters being Lord Carmarthen, Lord Denbigh, and Lord Essex. The last of these, not having a penny of his own, receives an allowance from his son, which is more than he deserves." Before this particular gathering broke up it was reinforced by the Duke of Dorset and Lord Loughborough, fresh from a tavern club, the *Brilliant*s. This existed chiefly, to judge from Gillray's caricatures, for bestial drunkenness, tempered by extravagantly high play. Afterwards reorganized or revived as the *Eccentric*s, it grew greatly in numbers and distinction, including at different times Fox, Sheridan, Petersham, Melbourne, and



Brougham as well as, before its close, Theodore Hook, who took from it many characters and scenes for his novels.

White's, however, to its warier, who were generally its most highly titled, members was strictly a place of business as well as of pleasure. The early nineteenth-century men-about-town numbered no more cool and long-headed an old soldier than General Scott, one of Selwyn's recruits for White's, the Duke of Portland's and George Canning's father-in-law. His daily dinner at White's was made off a boiled chicken with toast and water. Thus lightly refreshed, he brought, not only a memory of extraordinary retentiveness and an expert's unfailing judgment but an untaxed digestion to the game which Talleyrand had established at the club. Before he played his last card his winnings at whist had reached £200,000. Whist did not become general at White's till after the middle of the eighteenth century, and its club celebrities are reserved for a later page. It is not, however, out of place here to mention that whist had its first club in Graham's, St. James's Street. At Graham's took place the incident out of which grew the action in 1794 brought by Lord de Ros to clear himself of a charge of cheating at the game. It was some of White's whist-players also who, in 1807, were concerned in promoting what passed for the very smartest club of the day.

The future George IV had been having a select dinner-party in his Brighton Pavilion. "What a contrast to our club dinners, with their eternal roasted or boiled joints and poultry!" murmured the epicurean Croesus Sir Thomas Stepney to Sir Philip Francis, of Junius fame, as one fresh delicacy succeeded another at the table. The host overheard the remark, said nothing, but rang the bell and sent for the cook. "Watier," said his Royal Highness, addressing the man, "could you undertake to manage a dinner club?" The answer given may be judged from the

fact that within a few weeks there was taken in Bolton Street a house with the necessary accommodation, as above so below stairs. Intellectual as well as social distinction was given to the club's beginnings by entrance applications from Lord Byron, who pronounced it the most superb institution of the kind ever known; from his former Harrow friend, whose *Vers de Société* were now popular, William Robert Spencer, the third Duke of Marlborough's grandson; and from Byron's future biographer, Thomas Moore. Labourie, recommended as permanent chef by Watier, prepared the opening dinner, at which the chair was taken by the Regent, with his brother, the Duke of York, afterwards William IV, for vice-president. His ultra-fashionable supporters included the finest flower of Brooks's as well as White's. The banquet over, all adjourned for macao, which was thus installed as one of Watier's pet pastimes. Among other habitués of the place were the Duke of York's *aides-de-camp*, the dandy diplomatist, Colonel, best known as Kangaroo, Cooke, brother of Sir George Cooke, as of the beautiful Lady Cardigan, whose son a generation or two later was for ever to connect his name with the Light Cavalry Balaclava charge. The Army contributed two others to this company: Colonel Armstrong, the bravest and gentlest of Coldstream officers, uniquely successful as a military disciplinarian, so gracious, yet withal so resolute, that he had only to hint his wishes rather than give his orders to ensure their immediate execution and to make his regiment a model for the whole service. The other officer's accomplishments were athletic, even acrobatic, rather than social. Colonel Daniel Mackinnon, known throughout the Army as "Dan," admired everywhere for his perfectly symmetrical and powerful figure, was unrivalled alike by soldiers and civilians in every sort of physical exercise requiring muscular strength or skilful and delicate agility. He would amuse his friends, now by jumping over the

dining-table, now by creeping over or under less solid pieces of furniture like a cat. The next minute "Dan" had disappeared from view, presently to be seen scaling the wall till he reached the ceiling—unless, perhaps, he had discovered some trap-door outside leading to the club roof. In that case he had very likely perched himself on the housetop. These were the feats which caused Grimaldi, the greatest of pantomime clowns, to say: "If the Colonel would don motley, and show himself at Saddler's Wells, my occupation would be gone."

Mackinnon also was equally pre-eminent among practical jokers for audacity and humour. His recital at Watier's of one of these freaks gave Byron the idea of the Harem scene in "Don Juan." During the Peninsular War the Duke of Wellington, curious to see the inner life of these places, was allowed by the presiding abbess to make a morning call at a convent near Lisbon. Mackinnon, then on the Duke's staff, determined to be beforehand and see what took place. When the great captain arrived his eagle eye detected the delicately cut features and smooth-shaven face of "Don" among the nuns. This joke nearly brought its perpetrator to a court-martial, but was eventually forgiven.

"See," was remarked a few nights later by one of these prodigious dandies, "what comes of admitting these City swells." This was said in Watier's macao-room, the occasion being a quarrel of Lady Heytesbury's brother, Jack Bouverie, with Raikes, the diarist, son of a Bank of England governor, who had laughed at Bouverie's unconcealed annoyance at a series of heavy play losses. The next minute Bouverie retaliated by making too good a shot at Raikes's head and by a few curses at Raikes's stale jokes. But there the matter ended. The leading figure of the club frequently appears both in Byron's correspondence and verses. This was Beau Brummell, whose Christian name,

George, is given by Byron as William. The Beau's father, himself a valet's son, had, as Lord North's private secretary, risen to wealth and position. He sent his son to his chief's old school, Eton. There the well-looking, attractive, and popular lad, in his studies neither any idler nor a dullard, but quite unrivalled for his graceful person, his bright manner, as well as his prowess both in the playing-fields and on the river, became one of the "bucks" of the place. Leaving school and thinking of the Army, he was brought out in London by the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire at one of her great balls. He soon took unchallenged place as an Admirable Crichton. Great ladies competed with each other in securing him for their drums. Whether at the dinner-table or in the dining-room, his was the form which every eye first singled out. The Prince of Wales, like the rest, found him irresistible, and set the seal on his royal regard by giving him a commission in his own regiment, the 10th Hussars. Shortly afterwards the newly made officer broke his fine Roman nose through a fall from his horse at a review on the Brighton Downs. The only effect of the accident was to throw fresh lustre upon Brummell by bringing slight varieties of nasal fracture into fashion. On an afternoon he monopolized the gaze of all passers-by in the street as he sat in the bay window of White's, attended by the Dukes of Argyle, Dorset, and Rutland, the only members of his set whom he publicly honoured with his company. Brummell, whose conferences with his tailor, Weston, invented the frock-coat, had something of a heart as well as an Apollo-like perfection of figure. He quarrelled with his royal patron rather than countenance his desertion of Mrs. Fitzherbert, but was restored to favour by the superb play, at whist which, while

The Regent had another grudge against Brummell besides that arising out of the Fitzherbert affair, namely for some act of presumption at a ball given by Lady Cholmondeley. Still, the Beau's restoration to favour might have been permanent

the Regent looked on, made him at a single sitting the winner of £20,000 from Harvey Drummond, the banker. Watier's, however, witnessed Brummell's chief exploits at play. An adept in every game, whether of chance or skill, the Beau seemed to have luck at his command.

Finding one night Tom Sheridan<sup>1</sup> among Watier's macao-players, he took up the £10 Sheridan was about to stake, added £200 of his own, and proceeded to play for both. In less than ten minutes the Beau came back with £1,500. Handing half of it to Sheridan, he said: "There, Tom, give your wife and brats a supper and never play again."

While the play at Watier's was of the most wildly speculative kind, White's was increasingly sobering down to whist. Even over that whole fortunes often changed hands. In the same year as Brummell proved Sheridan's good genius, Lord Dudley, Hervey Combe,<sup>2</sup> the brewer, and Tippoo Smith, the nabob, sat down to the whist-table on a Monday afternoon, played on without leaving the table till the following Wednesday, and only then left off because Combe had to attend his father's funeral, taking with him £30,000 he had won and giving Raggett, the then owner, a hundred or two for personally serving the relays of broiled bones and mulled claret with which the gamblers refreshed themselves.

but that his display of some after-dinner excitement at Carlton House caused the Regent to say to his brother, "I think we had better order Mr. Brummell's carriage before he gets drunk." At this dinner there was present also one of the famous Waterloo officers, Sir Arthur Upton. He told the second Duke of Wellington, from whom the present writer had these details, that this and not the popular "Wales, ring the bell" remark caused Brummell's final dropping by the Regent.

<sup>1</sup> Only son of R. B. Sheridan and father of the Duchess of Somerset, the Queen of Beauty at the Eglinton tournament.

<sup>2</sup> Combe, like Brummell, also belonged to Brooks's. Here, while Lord Mayor of London, he lost one night at hazard to Brummell twenty-five guineas. "Quite right, Mashtub," said the Beau, pocketing the money. "In future I shall never drink any porter but yours." "I only wish," rejoined the brewer, "that every blackguard in London would follow your example."

Watier's junior by just a year, the Alfred (1808), in its personal composition and its comparatively sedate spirit, foreshadowed more closely than any other institution of the Regency period the ordinary club product of the Victorian era. The Alfred, too, has another claim to be a link between two widely different epochs, because in 1855 it merged itself in the still existing Oriental. The idea of the Alfred first suggested itself to a little group of fashionable *littérateurs* in John Murray's Albemarle Street parlour. From the windows of that famous room was descried on the other side of the way a house to let. "It would be," the projectors of the club exclaimed with one voice, "just the thing for us." So, too, thought and said a little later a legal gentleman, whose law-books were subsequently described by George Canning as pleasant as novels, and his novels as dull as law-books. This was Plumer Ward, a barrister of the Temple, then in a fair way of rising to a judgeship, and eventually to be known from his *De Vere* and *Tremaine* as the founder of the nineteenth-century political novel. Well connected by birth, he had used all the opportunities of Oxford and London to make influential acquaintances. He had thus succeeded in attaching himself to Canning when the rising Tory star, and had ingratiated himself with the leaders of the Evangelical party then in the ascendant including several bishops. Hence the episcopal element afterwards so conspicuous in the Alfred and the patronage of the club by George Canning himself. With Canning there came George Ellis, of the anti-Jacobin; Hookham Frere, Canning's friend and chief; William Gifford, satirist, translator, editor; while in their train followed a clergyman, William Beloe, whose *Sexagenarian* celebrates the place by the name of the Symposium and those who belonged to it as the Symposiasts.

Heavier guns were not wanting in the illustrious persons of Sir James Mackintosh, Sir Robert Peel, and

the statesman who had served as Foreign Secretary in the Goderich, the Canning, and the Wellington administrations. This was the clever, eccentric Lord Dudley, ever talking to himself, as he muttered clinking the sovereigns in his purse, but, in spite of his odd ways, uniting some of the best brains of his day with an acuteness and readiness of caustic repartee that meant a bad five minutes for those who might presume upon his peculiarities. With him might often be seen a plump little man, with bright, beady, deep-set eyes, to whose drollery, wit, and fashionable vogue the Alfred owed much of the popularity that, before it was ten years old, had in a single twelvemonth attracted to it 354 candidates for six vacancies. This was Lord Alvanley, whose good things are recorded in every jest-book, and whose combination of cynical fun with shrewd common sense and faculty of cosmopolitan anecdote gave him a social position not unlike that afterwards filled by Henry Labouchere, in whose features might also be traced some resemblance to Alvanley's.

Plumer Ward, or Lord Francis Egerton, also brought into the place Samuel Warren, the novelist of *Ten Thousand a Year* and the most inveterate tuft-hunter who ever occupied Temple chambers. One of the countless Warren anecdotes then circulating through the club was this: "I suppose," said a fellow-Templar, looking in upon the novelist, "I shall see you at the Lord Chancellor's dinner to-night?" "Most unfortunate," came the reply. "Mrs. Warren has just presented me with a son and heir and I do not like to leave her. I was about to write an apology to his lordship." "No need of that," said the other. "I know the Chancellor so well that I can easily make your excuses to him." Warren expressed thanks, and the visitor withdrew. The latter had not reached the end of the passage when the novelist ran up to him with the words: "By the by, don't trouble to say

anything to his lordship to-night, for to tell you the truth, I have never been asked." "Make yourself quite easy, dear fellow, for as a fact, neither have I."

Generally speaking, it was not the Alfredian laymen who shed the greatest distinction on the club. Those, however, numbered amongst them a member forming, after Alvanley, the club's most notorious figure. It may be the associations of Brummellite foppery with which Byron surrounded it in "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers"—

"And sure great Skeffington must claim our praise,  
For skirtless coats, and skeletons of plays"—

but the very name Sir Lumley Skeffington raises in most minds an elderly and much made-up dandy. Such, indeed, he was—a padded, bewigged little man, who painted his face, wore stays, and reminded some of a French toy dressed like Robespierre, but others of a walking perfumer's shop in the adjacent Bond Street, by reason of the combination of sweet scents that heralded his approach.

The clerical bard of the Alfred, the already mentioned Beloe, might well claim that its most solid and lasting honour came to it from celebrities of his own cloth. The bishops, whose presence always reminded Alvanley of his Catechism, included Watson of Llandaff, Thirlwall of St. David's, and their more militant spiritual brother, Henry of Exeter (Bishop Philpotts). Not that these, or any one else, talked theology and paraded Churchmanship at the club. In those days the Athenæum and the University Clubs had still to become famous. The Alfred supplied the Episcopal bench with its only social lounge, and at the Alfred it was the card-room that the prelates chiefly affected. Here might be seen, not only the western diocesan already mentioned but Milman, Dean of St. Paul's, Beadon, of Bath and Wells, who loved the game as much as then did most of his clerical subjects and his bishopess, Mrs. Beadon, whom



Mr. Pickwick might have found among the keenly gambling dowagers at the Bath Assembly Rooms, and who recommended the game to her parochial clergy, as a restorative tonic for dyspepsia or weak nerves. Her lord, it was said, on returning from his metropolitan visits, to his Somerset palace, was apt to be called sharply to account if he failed to bring back the latest whist improvements from the Alfred card-room.

Of the Alfred's mitred members, several, though by this time drafted into the Athenæum, survived the incorporation (1855) of their old club into the Oriental. Of that institution, supposing his life to have been spared, Thackeray's Joe Sedley would certainly have been an original member. Among the items in its daily menu, linking its agreeable present with its historic past, are curries, turtle soup and other dishes, still prepared according to the recipe traditionally bequeathed by a certain Pottanco, chef to a line of Indian Governors, before, in 1824, taking in hand the management of the institution then just established beneath its original roof, 16, Lower Grosvenor Street. Various members of the great Anglo-Indian family of Plowden, also, by their frequent presence bridged over the gulf separating the Oriental, in its present Hanover Square home, from the abode of its infancy. During the twentieth century's second decade, to its manifold attractions as a comprehensive place of social reunion, the club adds the special recommendation of being a Mayfair paradise for inhabitants of the Grosvenor Square district in the dead season. The family is out of town, the servants are on board wages, but the head of the house is obliged to postpone his departure, though the only room he finds habitable is his library. Happily for him he belongs to the Oriental. There, within ten minutes' walk of his books and his domestic cigar-box, he finds all he needs in the way of material consolation for his desolate dining-room and closed kitchen. At this point, however, our narra-

tive requires a temporary return to certain eighteenth-century doings.

Somewhere about 1770 ladies of quality were much exercised about a new assembly or meeting set up at Boodle's. It consisted of ladies as well as gentlemen, and the idea originated with Miss Lloyd, the Countess of Pembroke's companion. This coterie soon became so exclusive that in the first few weeks the Duchess of Bedford and Lord March were blackballed. Its members, without exception, persons of as much leisure as rank, met in the morning for talk and to hear the news, dined in the afternoon, found themselves together again at night, sat down to supper, which, like dinner, was always ready as near eleven as might be, and played loo into the small hours.

The institution now described was an epicene offshoot of a club which, as usual, had grown out of a coffee-house. Its founder, William Boodle, a native of Chippenham, had begun with various employments in the Lansdowne family at Bowood. When trying his luck in London he obtained a series of odd jobs from Robert Makreth, as yet only a waiter at White's, but having a practical knowledge of the business and locality highly useful to other beginners in his line. On the other hand, the Wiltshire man from his Bowood associations had the chance of doing Makreth some good turns. Hence the Wiltshire squirearchical element, a conspicuous tradition of Arthur's Club.<sup>1</sup> From the

" . . . Or at Arthur's,

Where over the port of the innermost bin  
The circle of diners is laughing with Phinn,  
When Brookfield has hit on his happiest vein,  
And Harcourt is capping the jokes of Delane."

So sings Sir George Trevelyan, availing himself of a poet's licence as regards name and place, for of Arthur's none of those mentioned were members. Another, but incorrect, version of these lines included Fane. Though Julian Fane was not therefore of Arthur's, the club has always been a favourite with the Fane family. The Indian soldier who raised Fane's Horse, now the 19th Bengal Lancers, was not a member, but there are still at the place those who remember the fine figure and pleasant face of Col. Henry Fane of the 4th Dragoons, a regular habitué of the place up to his death, between ten and fifteen years ago.

same county there naturally came also some of Boodle's earliest and most famous patrons. These were reinforced by a noticeable Hampshire contingent, including the Hampshire squire's son and Hampshire militia officer, afterwards the decadent Roman Empire's historian, Edward Gibbon. More conspicuous than that most insatiable of clubmen, as well as regular in his attendance, was another descendant of a stock belonging to the same county, whose ancestor, a Romsey clothier named Petty, gave wealth to a family indebted for name and high lineage to the Fitzmaurices.<sup>1</sup> The fact of the club's being thus favoured by Lord Shelburne, afterwards Marquess of Lansdowne, sufficed to emphasize its difference from White's, where much has been already seen of Shelburne's rival, Rockingham. Other public men who frequented it, Wilberforce and the Duke of Norfolk, will be met again at Brooks's. The Duke's heavy and indiscriminating appetite had, it was said, a bad effect on the cuisine. Shelburne and Gibbon, both epicures, exercised an appreciably refining influence. Eventually, therefore, Boodle's made good a claim to its original title, the *Savoir Vivre Club*. The

<sup>1</sup> The stages of enrichment and ennoblement here referred to are as follows. Antony Petty the draper, with whom is our present concern, had a son William, whose great abilities were improved by an Oxford course and a cosmopolitan training. Establishing himself in medical practice at Oxford about 1650, he was soon appointed Physician-General to the Irish army, Ireland itself then opening the same field to adventurous talent as was done by India a century later. Under Cromwell he acquired estates in Kerry worth £6,000 a year, kept them at the Restoration, and bequeathed them to his posterity. Sir Wm. Petty, as he had now become, was the father of two children, a son Charles and a daughter Anne. In 1687 he died. His widow became Baroness Shelburne, and his son at the same time Lord Shelburne. This man, dying childless in 1696, was followed in the title by his brother Henry, promoted twenty-three years later to an Earl. Meanwhile the first Lord Shelburne's sister, Anne, had married Thomas Fitzmaurice, Earl of Kerry. The son of this couple, John, inherited the Petty wealth and name. His son, the member and reformer of Boodle's Club, afterwards the first Marquis of Lansdowne, notwithstanding his great position and powers, remained a Prime Minister for only eight months. Why? Not from any inferiority of intellect or address to Pitt and Fox, but simply because he laboured under the disqualification of a peerage, and since Queen Anne's time the House of Commons had become the chamber for the head of the Government.

many-acred gentlemen of the southern and border counties were being educated by such masters of the art of dining to fastidiousness. Boodle's *carte du jour*, from being substantial, became choice. Other influences were impelling the club management in the same direction ; conspicuous among these forces was the most bustling and notable personality at Boodle's, Michael Angelo Taylor. With a face to which port wine had given a fine purple dye, forming a picturesque contrast to his silver-white hair, Taylor emphasized the distinctions he owed to nature by studied peculiarity of costume. His coat of bright blue with buttons as large as saucers, his leather breeches, his white waistcoat, his perfectly snowy, voluminous, and unstarched neckcloth, had attracted notice in the House of Commons before they secured him celebrity at Boodle's Club. Combined with his irrepressible inquisitiveness, these points in his appearance, together with his broad-brimmed beaver hat, might have made him the original of the leading character in Poole's comedy " Paul Pry." He did himself, however, an injustice ; for, notwithstanding the silly trick of asking tiresomely small questions about news, he had enough of sound, practical sense, general information, and aptitude for business to make him, during the years he sat in Parliament, a most useful Member of the House, especially in committees. Such were the qualities that made him a club authority, and not merely a club quidnunc, as well as an organizing entertainer of the Whig rank and file at his house in that part of Whitehall formerly called Privy Gardens. No such fish, turbot and lobsters especially, as graced Taylor's board were ever seen, it was said, outside the Mansion House on Lord Mayor's Day. Michael Angelo Taylor and with him Boodle's Club reached the height of their political importance during the Perceval administration, 1809-12. " The gentleman at the end of the Mall " was the phrase coined by Taylor in the morning-room, and at once adopted by

the Whig party to describe George III, the opposition to whom and to his Ministers found its headquarters for the time at the club. In 1810 the attack on Perceval was being led by Lord Milton, afterwards the fifth Earl Fitzwilliam, and Samuel Whitbread. Between Brooks's over the way, where he consulted with these, and Boodle's, Taylor moved to and fro in a flutter of agitated self-consequence. Whitbread had drafted at Brooks's the amendment to the Address at the opening of the 1810 session; but its purport first obtained club circulation at Boodle's from Taylor's expatiation on the opportunity it would give the Whig chiefs for showing the ruinous price paid by the nation for the privilege of having the Marquis of Wellesley for its Foreign Minister.

During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, territorial exclusiveness and aristocratic prejudice entrenched and fortified themselves as strongly at Brooks's and Boodle's as they had ever done at White's. It was a Boodle's champion, Charles Callis Western, eventually ennobled, but none the less known as "Squire Western," who devoutly thanked his Maker that he had always voted against "that d——d intellect," and always would. This was in reference to George Canning, whom Western, a Whig Protectionist, spoke of as a criminal lunatic. Apart from politics, Western made himself a Boodle's worthy by recruiting the club from eastern county magnates. These gave it as strong an East Anglian connection as that which, in the manner already described, it had of the southern counties. Thanks to Western, Essex now reinforced Boodle's by a Nugent from Gosfield, a Lockwood from Bishop's Hall, and a Howard de Walden from Audley End. These were the habitués whose table taste contributed to revive the popularity of marrow-bones as a club dish. Rivalling White's in continuity of existence on the spot that witnessed its birth, Boodle's also resembles it in antiquity of standing as a pro-

prietary club. This it only ceased to be after the death, in 1897, of its owner of philanthropic memory, W. Gaynor, who generously carried on the eighteenth-century practice of the shrewd business man to whom Brooks's owes its name of financing clubmen short of ready money. Boodle's during the Gaynor dispensation triumphantly weathered many little breezes, as well as one great tempest. The manager's orders against dogs in the hall, against strangers in the dining-room, the spread of tobacco fumes, were the periodical cause of much grumbling and some withdrawals. But the really serious trouble arose from a custom connected with the time-honoured house-dinner. On those occasions the wine bill, according to immemorial precedent, was equally divided among all diners, irrespective of the quality or the quantity of the vintage that each might have ordered. That was very well for the pre-teetotal period. Then set in the general tendency for the club to become a co-operative temperance hotel. The many who drank little or nothing resented an involuntary contribution to those who drank much or anything. Gaynor sided with the malcontents and promised a revision of the long-standing rules. He had not, however, reckoned with his "managers." Chief among these was the eighth Duke of Beaufort, who, with others of the committee, objected to any concession. Gaynor had passed his word. The Duke therefore took his name off the books. Several of his partisans followed, declaring that Boodle's itself was doomed. As a fact, a new era of its prosperity was about to open, and the social stronghold of English squires was never in a better way than at this moment.

Of the great eighteenth-century clubs still existing, Boodle's (1762) is the oldest. Two years later there were made simultaneous additions to the number, each being very different in character from the other. In 1764 Samuel Johnson and Sir Joshua Reynolds erected a lasting monument of their personal influence

by organizing a society entrance into which is as coveted a distinction, after a lapse of 150 years, as when its founders shared the control of the literary and artistic world. While that movement was growing to illustrious maturity in Soho, the mortified aristocratic Whigs were consolidating themselves and recruiting their energies in St. James's for their struggle with George III. Samuel Johnson's unassisted performances as club maker all exemplified from different points of view his own definition of a club as "an assembly of good fellows, meeting under certain conditions." The conditions, indeed, were not very certain after all, and the gathering-place was constantly changed. All that can be known about them is familiar to every reader of Boswell's Life. None of them attained to length of days or celebrity except the institution of which Johnson, indeed, was an essential part, but whose idea, as has been seen, originated with Johnson's most famous friend, rather than with the sage himself. The same idea had been present to the lexicographer's namesake a century and a half before. What Samuel Johnson and Joshua Reynolds did in the case of the society with which we are now concerned had been done at the Apollo, by the Elizabethan dramatist, whose sway over the world of letters was not less absolute than his Georgian descendants. As club makers both those now mentioned aimed at the social fusion of the representatives of intellect and rank. With his own disciples and subjects of the pen at the Apollo, the great Ben made a point of mingling typical favourites in Court circles like Aubigny and Portland. In the same way, among the great Samuel's bodyguard there were prominent a duke's grandson, Topham Beauclerk, and a great Lincolnshire squire, Bennett Langton, both men of fashion and Court connection, as well as birth. Both were original members of "The" Club. With them were associated Edmund Burke, Oliver Goldsmith, Doctor Nugent, and

Sir John Hawkins, Boswell's rival as Johnson's friend and biographer.

To these names have been added James Boswell, David Garrick, William Windham the politician, and Sir William Jones the scholar and orientalist. These two last, however, were born too late to have been admitted into the society till it was five or six years old. When Garrick's readiness to join was first reported to Johnson, the sage merely grunted out, "The puppy! how does he know we'll have him?" If Boswell was taken in, it can only have been because Johnson wished to reward him for declining to belong to another company of which both Reynolds and Johnson disapproved.

A tavern club, "The" Club, has from its beginnings, like Grillion's, always remained. Its earliest meeting-place was at the "Turk's Head," Gerrard Street, Soho. The hour of assembly was 7 p.m., and the night had ceased to be young when the party broke up. By 1774 the membership had grown from a maximum of nine to a minimum of thirty-five. By this time also the weekly supper had been replaced by a fortnightly dinner during the parliamentary session. The club itself had moved to more fashionable quarters, first settling itself at Le Telier's in Dover Street, afterwards at Parsloe's, St. James's. Most notabilities of the time had found their way to it, the latest recruits being Bishop Percy of the *Reliques*; Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph; Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury; Sir Charles Bunbury, R. B. Sheridan, Joseph and Thomas Wharton, Edward Gibbon, Sir Joseph Banks, Adam Smith, Lord Spencer, the Duke of Leeds, and Lord Palmerston, in Bunbury, R. B. Sheridan, Joseph and Thomas Wharton, Garrick, and Boswell—

"Unelbowed by a gamester, pimp, or player."

"That," exclaimed Johnson, on first hearing of Garrick in connection with the place, "is how one ought to sit



in a society like ours. If Garrick does apply I'll blackball him. As a fact, when Garrick's name came up, he had no warmer supporter than Johnson, who made a point of sitting by him at all the meetings up to Garrick's death. The last quarter of the eighteenth century therefore witnessed the justification of Johnson's boast that even during its nonage "The" Club had become so exclusive that the first duke in England could not safely say he would join. As it was then, so it has since continued. The numbers, indeed, have been raised to forty, but by a tacit convention three or four places are always left vacant. Every new member receives on joining a complete list, together with portraits, of those who have belonged to it, while in return he enriches the club archives with his own likeness. Gibbon, admitted to it ten years after its formation, in 1774, drew up the form of notice sent to each candidate on election, apprising him in two or three lines of the honour he had received.

"The" Club's whole subsequent course without a break down to the present moment has verified its promoter's proud prediction that its membership should not be regarded as a distinction to be secured at will. No dining society ever approached its brilliant and sustained fame; and Johnson, who had his full share of the admiration for birth and rank characterizing persons themselves of humble origin, would have exulted in prophetic joy could he have foreseen the names, illustrious for ancestry as well as achievement, that decorate its latest list. The catalogue of 1913 opens with a former Prime Minister, Lord Rosebery, his successors, Mr. Balfour and Mr. Asquith, continues with Lord Lansdowne, Sir Edward Grey, Lord Avebury, Sir William Anson, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Mr. George Wyndham, the President of the Royal Academy, Sir Edward Poynter, Lord Hugh Cecil, Lord George Hamilton, the colonial administrator who wears the title inherited from our greatest poet-laureate, the

second Baron Tennyson, himself the first Governor of the Australian Commonwealth. Art is represented, not only by its official head but by a great portrait-painter, Mr. J. S. Sargent. To literature "The" Club does honour by counting among its members Sir George Trevelyan, Sir D. Mackenzie Wallace, Mr. Arthur Elliot, Mr. G. W. Prothero, Mr. John Fortescue, Mr. Wilfrid Ward and Mr. W. J. Courthope. The scientific research that has become the handmaid of history contributes two members, Sir W. G. Kenyon and Sir E. Maunde Thompson. Legal science personifies itself in Lord Haldane and Mr. Justice Parker. Scientific seamanship sends Sir Cyprian Bridge. The Army has two Field-Marschals, Sir William Gustavus Nicholson and Viscount Wolseley, an honorary member.

The birth year of "The" Club was, as has been already said, that of Brooks's too. And the beginnings of Brooks's have the same touch of personal romance as White's. During the reign of George I, the Duke of Hamilton on the journey from his Scotch to his London palace was accompanied by a favourite valet, William Macall, whose loyalty, discretion, and capacity to profit from promotion his master had long and favourably observed. During this journey occurred the incidents that were to ensure Macall a place of favour among club makers by preparing the foundations of Brooks's. An attack by highwaymen gave him a chance of risking life and limb to save his master. As a consequence, at the end of their travels, the gentleman of the bed-chamber had received the appointment of *major-domo* and deputy steward, at a salary whose amount and regularity more than one ambassador might have envied. He soon discovered and repaired innumerable leakages in the management of the ducal household.

All this made Macall's fortune. He had now capital enough to set up in business for himself upon an increasing scale of enterprise. His first step, on giving up service, was to buy at a bargain the St. James's

Thatched House Tavern, which will be visited later. His next was commemorated by Horace Walpole in a letter to Lord Hertford of March 14, 1765. Almack's Assembly Rooms, then just established in King Street, nearly a century later transformed into Willis's Rooms, had been visited by Walpole on their opening night. The great features of the initial success were the proprietor's Scotch face in a bag wig waiting at supper, with his lady in a sack, making tea and curtseying to our duchesses. Slightly transposing the letters of his name, Macall had christened his new venture after himself, Almack's. That also gave a title to the Pall Mall Club founded by him about the same time, where the Marlborough stands to-day.

Next comes the transformation of the shrewd Scot's *bagnio* into the social and political headquarters of Whiggism. Like Macall, whose club he bought, Brooks had been a gentleman's gentleman. The peer on whose domestic staff he served fell into such difficulties that he had already given notice to many of his servants, and contemplated retiring to Boulogne. "Your lordship," said Brooks with an air of sympathetic but deferential stateliness, "need do nothing of the sort. The fact is, having put by a little money, and seeing what was likely to happen, I found an opportunity of buying up your lordship's debts. I have therefore the happiness, at this moment, to be your only creditor." The unexpectedly relieved peer, as he looked at his benefactor, for the first time noticed a certain natural dignity, improved by aristocratic associations.<sup>1</sup> "Brooks," he said, "you should go into the House of Commons, and I will put you in for one of my boroughs." "Thank you, my lord, but the opportunities you have given me will enable me to serve your connection better by a club."

<sup>1</sup> For these details I am indebted to my dear old friend A. W. Kinglake, who knew the authentic tradition of Brooks's personal appearance, "as aristocratic as a Whig duke's."

For some years Brooks's patrons applied his name or Almack's almost indifferently to the place. In 1778 came their settlement beneath their present roof, which, during the 134 years of their occupation progressively perfected and adorned, has called for very little structural change. Whatever the original purpose of the projector whose name it bore, only in the nineteenth century did the place become a party house of call. The sole and sufficient reason of its being was play.

The London into which Charles Fox had been born thirty years before the creation of the club so closely associated at once with the growth of his parliamentary power and the decay of his pecuniary fortune had become, as Sir George Trevelyan has put it, one great casino. As men laid or took the odds about all the personal possibilities of public or private life, the ministries not yet appointed, about marriages which still had to be made, and about children at present unborn, so they betted everywhere and plied the dice-box or the card-pack in any bun-shop or tea not less than coffee-house or tavern they chanced to frequent. Comparative privacy, as the wagers and gamblers gradually found, could alone protect them from professional sharpers and knaves. Against these, the only guarantees were the club and the preliminary ballot. Such, more than half a century after White's, was the genesis of those institutions among which Brooks's stood by itself. Of the two chambers which were all the club at first contained, the eating-room, as regards size and appointments, was dwarfed into insignificance by the play-room. In the former there might be "tossing up for reckonings," but nothing more. The genius and splendour of the place were displayed in the latter, which was professedly controlled by strict rules. No one could stake on credit or on money borrowed from the players or bystanders. Every one at the quinze-table was to keep fifty guineas before him and not



BROOKS'S IN FOX'S DAY, FROM ROWLANDSON'S DRAWING.

(By permission of the Club and the Proprietors of "Country Life.")



less than twenty guineas at the twenty-guinea table. No limit, however, was placed on the obligations which might be incurred to the club master for food and wine, or for cash advances; nor did any committee call the indebted members to account. The losses thus sustained by Brooks himself permanently impoverished him and perhaps acted as a warning to some of his successors.<sup>1</sup>

Brooks himself had disappeared when Brooks's became the haunt of official Whiggism, not so much as a result of its domination by the Foxites as from its opposition to Pitt, who, as has been already explained, had made his headquarters at White's. For the earliest pillars of Brooks's, though great Whig nobles, were as much men of fashion as political partisans. They included the Dukes of Grafton, Richmond, and Roxburgh, the Earl of Strathmore, and Mrs. Crewe's husband, of "true blue" fame,<sup>2</sup> from 1768 to 1806 Member for Chester, afterwards Lord Crewe. Charles Fox had been admitted to the club in its earliest days at an age when he ought still to have been at school. Like an earlier Whig, Sir Robert Walpole, and like another Brooks's man of his own standing, George Selwyn, he had begun his club life at "Young White's." From White's too he brought (Feb. 28, 1781) the then newly seated Member for Appleby, his great rival, William Pitt. By that time, Sir Joshua Reynolds, an original member, David Garrick, Topham Beauclerk's candidate, Edmund Burke, Edward Gibbon, David Hume, Horace Walpole, and William Wilberforce were all well-established members, while in the year before Pitt entered the Foxites, under Colonel Fitzpatrick, had carried the election of Sheridan against George Selwyn,

<sup>1</sup> In 1782 Brooks was succeeded by Griffin. Subsequent proprietors were Wheelwright with Halse (1846). In that year, too, Banderet followed, and remained master till 1880, when the management was taken over by the club.

<sup>2</sup> "Mrs. Crewe and true blue" was the toast given by Fox at one of this lady's dinner-parties. The hostess promptly responded with "True blue and all of you."

who opposed him less because he was a rival wit than because his father was a player. When the eighteenth century closed the chief noble names of the place were the Earls of Bessborough, Upper Ossory, Romney, and Lord Robert Spencer. From these, in 1796, was formed Brooks's first committee, its number being raised to six by the addition of the only two commoners, Crowle and Miller, each a puissant and representative Whig M.P.

"All men are equal on the turf and under it." And the constantly increasing introduction of City men and traders to the Whig patrician palladium formed a standing testimony to the truth that there is no leveller like play. Throughout the Georgian era the chief centre of Brooks's inner life was the gambling-room. Here fortunes were made, as well as lost, not only during the same season but sometimes in a single night. In 1772 Thynne of Longleat, the third Viscount Weymouth, took his name off the book in disgust at having won only twelve thousand guineas from two months, while, in the same year, between the afternoon and midnight, £70,000 had changed hands at faro alone. During this year, too, Lord Lauderdale at the same game saw £5,000 staked on a single card. So early as 1765, Rigby, writing to George Selwyn, could speak of deep play being removed from White's to Brooks's, and of membership of Brooks's being now of greater distinction than White's. Palmerston's coming Lord Chancellor, reporting his professional progress to the paternal manse in 1822, calls his election at Brooks's "the greatest distinction that has come to our house since we lost our estates in the county of Angus." In this matter "Jock Campbell" fared better than his political chief. For Palmerston, whose parliamentary career started in 1806, had to wait for success at Brooks's ballot till 1830, when, at the age of forty-six, he became Lord Grey's Foreign Secretary.

Long before that the members of Brooks's in their



corporate capacity, had asserted themselves as arbiters of literary taste, not less than bestowers of social honour. In 1797 Canning and Gifford, both first-rate masters and judges of that sort of composition, had been loud in the praises of T. J. Mathias's "Pursuits of Literature," a satire in Popeian couplets on over-rated writers like Parr, Godwin, and especially "Monk" Lewis. The "Monk" complained of the injury in mind, body, and state he suffered from the attack. Canning's approbation of Mathias, followed by that of White's Club generally, determined Fox that Brooks's should take up the cause of Lewis. He therefore got the club to pass a resolution denouncing Mathias's onslaught as the most spiteful and unjust satire that had ever disgraced the literary world.

During the first half of the nineteenth century Brooks's was called upon to pay a heavy price on two different occasions for overdone loyalty to its own plain Whig principles and its tradition of social exclusiveness. Byron never belonged to Brooks's; but the Napoleonic enthusiasm against the Duke of Wellington, animating alike his conversation and his verse, exactly reproduced the prevailing sentiment of the club as Lord Houghton, on becoming a member at the age of nineteen, found this feeling to have been.<sup>1</sup> It was not, however, the suspicion of imperfect patriotism, converting, though that did, many young Whigs to Tories, but O'Connell's relations with the party, which, in 1835, shook the club to its very base. At the Carlow election, in the year just named, a candidate named Raphael declared he had been cheated out of £200 by O'Connell. A committee of the House of Commons having inquired into the accusation, exonerated the liberator at Westminster, but did not entirely rehabilitate him with the English public. The strength of popular feeling against him

<sup>1</sup> "All their wish and hope was against their own country, and pæans would have arisen at Brooks's had the duke been taken prisoner" (*Wemyss Reid's Life of Houghton*, vol. i. p. 19).

may be judged from the fact that the *Times* of November 26th published this couplet :—

“Scum, condensed of Irish bog,  
Ruffian, blackguard, demagogue.”

By this time one of the oldest and most conspicuous Brooksites, Sir Francis Burdett, had renounced his Radicalism and joined the Tories, then beginning to be known as Conservatives. He was also the bitterest of O'Connell's enemies. This was the first serious dispute laid before the committee appointed in 1796. “Either,” said Burdett, “you expel O'Connell, or I resign.” This ultimatum being refused, he at once took his name off the books.<sup>1</sup> His secession was immediately followed by that of Stanley, afterwards, as the fourteenth Earl of Derby, the Conservative chief, by the future Peelite, Sir James Graham, and by sixty Whig peers. Brooks's narrowly escaped disruption. For fifteen years passed before the club regained its normal complement of members. The next intestine disturbance came during the period of Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule. The Liberal Unionists of the place resented the language applied to them by the Ministerial Liberals, and a war of internecine black-balling was only averted through Lord Granville's tactful intervention.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A full account of this episode is contained in Raphael's and Burdett's letter to the *Times*, November 21, 1835, and in the Annual Register of the same year (*Chronicle*, p. 146).

<sup>2</sup> Lord Fitzmaurice's *Life of Second Earl Granville*, vol. ii. p. 294.

## CHAPTER VII

### CLUBS, CLIQUES, AND COTERIES

What brought the Dover House Club into existence—Brooks's offspring becomes its rival—A princely moralist—The pioneer of the club in its modern social aspect—The Guards'—The United Service—Exploits of its two founders in the field—The makers of its homes—Servants' clubs and debating societies—The club as peacemaker—Social episodes in the lives of Gladstone and Disraeli—The poet-laureate of Grillion's—Solitary diners—A peep at Grillion's as it is to-day—Two of its followers who have passed away—The Cosmopolitan and the Breakfast Clubs.

BROOKS'S, like its immediate ancestor and eventual rival, White's, became in turn a club parent. Something may now be said about those who reared its progeny. Among the particular cronies of George IV, whether as regent or king, were Jack (or more fully John Willett) Payne and Banastre Tarleton. Payne, belonging to a West Indian family and born, 1752, at his father's house, Government House, St. Kitts, was sent back to England to be educated for the Navy, first at Greenwich, afterwards at Portsmouth. During the interval of his various commands afloat he acted as private secretary to his particular friend and patron, the Prince of Wales (George IV). Then, joining the Prince's friends in Parliament as Member for Huntingdon, he supported Fox and made himself so useful at Carlton House that, with the rank of admiral, he was rewarded with the treasurership of Greenwich Hospital, where he died in 1803. Tarleton, on the other hand, at no time a professional courtier, was one of those brave officers whom the Prince sometimes did credit to himself by delighting to honour. Under Cornwallis in America

as a cavalry leader he had no equal for dash. A Liverpool merchant's son, he became M.P. for his native city in 1790, and resigned his seat to George Canning in 1812. As a Shropshire squire, he lived in retirement to see the Grey Reform Bill passed in 1832, and died the next year.

In their relations with royalty, the sailor, Payne, and the soldier, Tarleton, opened the gallant list of those who, from George IV to George V, have brought to their niche in the Palace *entourage* a great record in one or other of the fighting services. They were, however, too independent at Westminster to please the party leaders. Their royal friend himself proposed them in the candidates' book and put on a heavy whip to secure their election. Each, however, was rejected. Carlton House lashed itself into furious indignation. The then Heir-apparent vowed that if he could not meet his friends at Brooks's, he would enjoy their society at a club of his own.

Prominent among the Prince's hangers-on at this time was a man with respect to whom it had always been a standing marvel that a pair of legs as short as a dwarf's should safely support a body whose girth approached that of a beer-barrel. A nose resembling a bloated, partially ripe strawberry and deep-sunk eyes, glittering like glow-worms from their cavernous recesses, with a face every line of which showed a combination of humour and cunning, were the other most noticeable features of a man who in a few years had become as well known in St. James's Street as his royal master. The name of the person now described was Weltjie—a shrewd, serene German, who had no sooner entered the royal service than he made himself indispensable either by anticipating his employer's wishes or finding a way to give them effect when others threw up their hands in despair. Already he had delighted the Prince by removing all obstacles from the way towards realizing the pet design of a

seaside palace that a little later was to become the Brighton Pavilion. "Nothing easier, your Royal Highness," was Weltjie's reply, on hearing of the Heir-apparent's purpose, "and I have for some time had my eye on just the position we require." This, it turned out, was the spot afterwards covered by Fenton's Hotel.

Thus, during the winter of 1787-8, on the west side of St. James's Street, within a stone's-throw of Dover Street's junction with Piccadilly, the Dover House Club grew up. The site, owned by the Earl of Dover, who inherited the property from his uncle, Henry Jermyn, was then full of great memories. Not only the ground landlord but Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, and St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, had lived there at a comparatively recent date.<sup>1</sup> The men who composed the Dover House Society seemed for a time in a fair way of emulating if not eclipsing the original Brooksites. For that success more than one reason may be assigned. In Brooks's playroom Fitzpatrick and Lord Carlisle had achieved a notoriety not less than that of Fox, who elsewhere in the establishment remained its ruling personality. In and after 1785 he had fallen out of favour with the Prince by openly disapproving of that august personage's treatment of Mrs. Fitzherbert, in which, however, the fashionable opinion of the time saw less to denounce than might have been expected. At the same time Fox had strained severely the personal allegiance of some of his followers by his coalition with North.

Brooks's new rival was disarmed, however, of its worst dangers to the older club by the presence among its members of royal favourites not so desirable as Payne and Tarleton. Not that the Prince, though to some extent its creator and chief patron, entirely

<sup>1</sup> In the immediate neighbourhood lived and, by his own hand, died (July 6, 1815) Samuel Whitbread, while what was afterwards Ashburnham House had been the abode of Prince Lieven, and Prince Pozzo di Borgo.

dominated the Dover House establishment. He could not, had he wished, have introduced to it men like George Hanger, the "paragon of debauchery"; Lord Barrymore, whose character was condensed into his nickname "Hellgate"; Sir John Lade, with the dress and tastes of a groom, the fit husband of a wife raised from a highwayman's mistress to the back kitchen of Carlton House; the base, bestial Duke of Queensberry; and his eleventh Grace of Norfolk, who scarcely adorned even his sobriquet "Jockey." These, and others like them, were reserved for the amalgam, epitome, and concentration of blackguardism and brutality collected at the Brighton Pavilion. In St. James's Street, however, the Prince's factotum and partner showed his zeal for club respectability and proprietorial self-interest by giving them a wide berth. Thus whenever Barrymore or any other of the gang came up for election at the London club, Weltjie contrived that they should be blackballed.

In addition to their princely and fashionable vogue, Weltjie and his clients profited from the royal presence and conversation. For the Prince's vein was not always one of frivolity and vice. At times he could not only be serious but talk instructively and well. He never forgot either a face he had once seen or a suggestive remark he had at any time heard. Moreover, he united with some crude, unsystematic scholarship a faculty of historical generalization and a knack of turning schoolboy reading occasionally to effective account. His performances in this direction gradually became one of the club's most agreeable traditions. Samuel Rogers, the banker, poet, and universal host, heard from those present on the occasion accounts of the Prince's deliverances, intended to be taken for original, on polite learning and on the various arts composing it. "Of these," he said, "that of persuasion, otherwise oratory, as opposed to the art of reasoning logic, is mischievous, because it withdraws attention

from the substance to the show, from the subject of the discourse to its ornaments. As regards the practical effects of Greek or Roman eloquence we can only guess, because we do not know for certain which speeches were actually delivered and which, like Cicero's masterpiece of abusive personality, his second philippic, were only written. But," continued the critic, "we do know from our nearest continental neighbour the ill result of accustoming a people to oratorical stimulants. The French public, throughout the whole of the revolutionary period, were kept in a continual fever by public speakers without forming a single habit favourable to knowledge or liberty. The tide of words rolls over the mind, leaving it as barren and as impervious to fertilizing forces as the earth when just reclaimed from the sea. Among ourselves," the Prince would proceed, "neither Magna Charta nor the Bill of Rights originated in eloquence. In the English Parliament Burke had no listeners, and the one good law that Fox helped to make, the law of libel, owed nothing to his quickness in detecting the weak points of an opponent's argument which, far more than his flow of words, formed the secret of his power."

At the Dover House, indeed, the Regent showed acumen and industry in playing the candid friend to his sometime favourite Fox, never forgetting, and always taking care to remind others, that Fox, the popular champion, had begun by being the Court mouthpiece, the avowed enemy of the masses, as well as an undisguised foe to the indiscriminate bestowal of political liberty. "Fox," he said, "was fond of quoting Horne Tooke's advice to the various democratic societies, 'If you wish to be powerful, pretend to be powerful.' Nobody," the Prince went on, "knew better than both Fox and Pitt the monstrous exaggeration of the Friends of the People Club." The two rivals, however, played into each other's hands, for while Fox accepted the glaringly false estimate,

Pitt snatched an easy dialectical triumph by arguing against his rival on the premises which that rival had obligingly supplied. So, too, as regards the gallophilism with which Fox had been taunted; it was far more useful to the Tories than to the Whigs, for Pitt never spoke on the subject without making party capital from the exposure of—

“The coward whine and Frenchified,  
Slaver and slang of the other side.”

The Whig leader, too, often supplied the Prince with a subject for remarks on the social and personal ruin brought by gambling. “Fox,” he said, “played piquet and whist so uncommonly well that he might have ensured himself of a good income but for his fatal addiction to games of mere chance, like hazard and faro. But,” continued the Prince, who at times could moralize in strains worthy of a pulpit, “I see, even in this club, signs of the rage for play wearing itself out.” As a fact the Dover House Club gamblers never reached the height of Brooks’s, and were for the most part content with whist at comparatively low points.

Before passing to the club makers who were the lineal descendants of those just mentioned, something must be said about men belonging to a very different kind, who during 1813 were the first to introduce the club in its then new, but now familiar and representative, character as a co-operative home for otherwise entirely or partially homeless gentlemen. That new departure in the club record the common sense and better feelings of the fourth George did something to promote. This sovereign, like most of those born in the purple and brought up in the world, was not prevented by his own excesses from appreciating conduct and homely virtues at their true value as the foundations of national character and as social guarantees of political stability. Even while regent, he could show as keen an eye for





CHARLES JAMES FOX.

*(From a drawing by Lady Diana Beauclerk.)*



real merit in a man as for the qualities that make an agreeable companion. Above all, he knew a good soldier by instinct.

The beginning of the Peninsular War in 1808 awoke him to a new sense of his responsibilities as regards the Army at home. St. James's and Pall Mall swarmed with officers who had made arms their serious profession. These, while eagerly waiting to join the campaign, had for some time wished to employ their social leisure in London more pleasantly, profitably, and economically than the gentlemen of their cloth had so far found it easy to do. The club makers who led this social movement were officers in the Household Infantry. These found their most popular and active member in Jack Talbot of the Coldstreams. A bold and skilful leader of men in the field, he had also given proof of administrative capacity, as well as of intellectual taste, when in his Eton days captain of Oppidan's, and his failings were common to his time rather than personal to himself. His old comrade-in-arms, Alvanley, calling in the course of his last short illness, commented, on the suggestion of bleeding the invalid, that nothing but claret would be found in him. The sick man faintly smiled approval. To another of his friends, the Duke of Cambridge, who had begged him to call in medical and spiritual advice, he had said, "I want neither doctor nor parson, but only to depart in peace." The Duke, however, was not prevented from sending to the dying Guardsman his old schoolmaster, Keate, of Eton. That spiritual comforter arrived only to find his former pupil dead in an arm-chair, with an empty sherry-bottle near his hand.

Before displaying his resourcefulness and energy in the establishment of the Guards' Club, Talbot had won the same professional distinction in Spain as another member of his set, a Light Cavalry officer and frequent visitor of the Guards' Club, then the only military club existing. This was Talbot's fellow and contemporary

Etonian, affectionately known throughout the whole service as "Teapot Crawford," and singled out for special eulogy and benediction by the Regent, when his regiment, the 10th Hussars, paraded before the Prince for the last time on the eve of sailing for Spain. His Scotch bravery and skill were combined with a Scotch prudence and frugality which made his social influence all for good. His nickname recalled a schoolboy habit of making tea in an odd-looking, old black vessel. He fulfilled the promise of his earlier career by his part in the charge at Orthes, and reappeared in London covered with glory. The confidence in his judgment, business aptitude, and tact, recognized by all his brothers-in-arms, was largely availed of by the founders of an institution older by a few years than the United Service, the pioneer of the nineteenth-century club system. The St. James's Coffee House, about which a good deal has already been said, was the chief resort of officers on London duty about the year 1813. Its frequenters agreed in calling it "a miserable little den." The comforts and refinements of continental restaurants, with which spells of foreign service had acquainted them, made the standing floors and the pothouse surrounding seem, on their return to London, more intolerable than ever. The company, too, had become as mixed and unsavoury as the place. Sheridan and Jekyll occasionally enlivened it; but the chance of their society was heavily paid for by the impossibility of avoiding the sharpers and the Irish bullies who infested the coffee-house. In Brussels, Vienna, and Paris, too, they had seen the best refreshment-houses so monopolized by gentlemen in uniform as in effect to be army clubs. The warriors, mostly but not exclusively Guardsmen, already known to us, talked the matter over. They were cautioned by the Regent and the Duke of York against repeating the excesses and luxury of Watier's, and bidden to aim at something which would combine the comforts of a private gentleman's

first-class house with the opportunities of a select hotel in which every one would find himself at home. The result was the still flourishing Guards' Club. Originally domiciled during the year 1813 in the north-western section of St. James's Street, it fulfilled its purpose of presenting a complete contrast to the gambling and drinking haunts of the regency. It was absolutely the first members' club, as distinguished from the proprietary club, firmly to establish itself. The Coldstreamer, Dan Mackinnon, of the fine figure, the calm smile, the black eyes, and the acrobatic endowments above described, ruled the committee, saw that its cookery was good, its cellar first-rate, and the whist points in its cardroom kept discreetly low.

The example thus set by officers of the Household Infantry before receiving the general compliment of civilian imitation, found favour with the highest representatives of the Army at large on the conclusion of the great war in 1815. About that time two of the Duke of Wellington's officers happened to meet each other at the Albion Hotel, 86, Pall Mall. In the coffee-room, or seen from its windows, passing and repassing in the street outside, were many of their old comrades, some who lived in London on their daily stroll to or from the park, others birds of passage up from the country on business. "We are all of us," said one of the veterans, "as sheep, if not without a shepherd, yet wanting a pasture-ground; and the need can only be supplied by a club, which there need be no difficulty or delay in making." In appearance, in dress, habit, tastes, and pursuit, both the friends belonged to the class of country gentlemen. Each had reached the rank of general.

Thomas Graham, whose father, the Laird of Balgowan, spelt the family name Graeme, had passed from private tutors at home to Christ Church. Here his horse waited for him at the "Canterbury Gate" on the morning of every convenient meet of the old

Berkshire pack. No undergraduate of his time rode to hounds with more courage or judgment, or, if he sometimes cut his lectures, kept more uniformly clear of serious trouble with the dons. Before going down he had introduced golf to the Bullingdon ground. Re-establishing himself in his native land, he captained the first cricket eleven Scotland ever knew. Full of zeal for agricultural improvement and a keen all-round sportsman, he had settled down to a squire's life when his wife's health compelled her removal to a milder climate. Some years were now passed at Gibraltar and elsewhere in Spain, or as a guest with Lord Hood's Mediterranean fleet. But he had caught the military enthusiasm of the time. He returned to Scotland to raise a regiment of his own, the Perthshire Volunteers, that with them he might take part in the fighting. Then followed a succession of moving experiences without a break until he retired from the Army in 1814.

In addition to the work he did with his own corps, he was attached as the British Military Commissioner to the Austrian Army. In Virgil's day the vicinity of his native Mantua to Cremona almost proved its destruction. During Napoleon's invasion of Italy it first made Graham's name known throughout Europe. Besieged by the French, the Austrian commander at Mantua perceived the surrender of the place to be inevitable if timely relief did not come from the main body of the Austrian army stationed some distance off near the Adige, the classical Digentia, a tributary of the Po. Not a day must be lost in acquainting their distant comrades with the dire need of the besieged Austrians. But how, came the question, find or spare a man capable of taking the message? "I," said the English *attaché*, "have nothing to do. Send me." Accordingly, at nightfall, December 29, 1797, in a heavy snowstorm, Graham, disguised as a peasant, set out on his desperate errand. Within a week, January 4, 1798, he had reached the headquarters of the Austrian

general, Alvinzi, at Bassano. Mantua was saved, and the first serious check to the French advance in Italy came from the British officer who, afterwards on March 5, 1811, with a handful of men, by his great victory at Barrosa, planted the English colours in the village over which the French flag had floated.

Almost a quarter of a century previously Graham had added by purchase to his Scotch possessions the estate of Lednoch or Lynedoch. Hence the title of Baron Lynedoch, with which in 1814 he retired.

His brother-in-arms and associate-in-peace, General Sir Rowland Hill, came, like an earlier great soldier, Robert Clive, of a Shropshire stock. He belonged to the Hills of Hawkestone. Second son of the third baronet, Sir John Hill, he had for his ancestor the famous Tory, Sir Richard, commemorated in the *Rolliad* for his loyalty and piety. Educated, not, according to the current account, at Rugby but at Ightfield and Chester, he served successively in the 38th and 53rd regiments, took part in the bloodless capture of Minorca, 1798, but first won his laurels in the battle of Aboukir three years later, 1801, where he commanded the 90th Highlanders, and in the same year led that regiment in the advance on Cairo. Then followed his distinguished doings under the Duke of Wellington, first in Portugal and Spain, finally at Waterloo. "I am," wrote the Duke in his Waterloo dispatch, "particularly indebted to General Hill for his assistance and conduct on this as on all other occasions." After the European pacification Hill became Commander-in-Chief during the fourteen years (1828-42) before Wellington himself took up that position for life. His closing years were those of a country gentleman, dividing his time between field sports and the care of his estate and labourers at Hardwicke Grange.

Trained in the same social and military school, as well as resembling each other in mode of life, tastes,

and personal bearing, Lords Lynedoch and Hill were strongly of the same opinion on one point connected with their new project. The association of club with pub., however inevitable, had been hitherto mischievously close. The venture whose details they were busily maturing in 1815 must entirely avoid the traditional sinister connection. It must not derive its origin from, or be tainted by, any relation to the taverns and taprooms that were the curse alike of the town and the service. "Till we have a roof of our own, beneath which a man can eat his mutton-chop in the same surroundings as his own dining-room, we must refuse to come into existence."

On the 31st of May, in the year just mentioned, that decorous shelter was found in Charles Street, St. James's. The necessary building had been quickly run up under the skilled and energetic supervision of one of the two men whose mastery of bricks and mortar was indispensable to the club makers of the time. Robert Smirke, who within and without designed the United Service Club's earliest habitation, combined a fine natural taste with a cultivated intelligence. For not a little of his training he was indebted to his brother, Sydney Smirke, the Royal Academician. Thanks largely to this relative, as well as his accomplished and influential father, he had already been the architect of the British Museum and the Covent Garden Theatre when Lynedoch and Hill secured him for their earliest clubhouse.

To a very different class belonged Smirke's contemporary and professional rival, John Nash. To Welsh cunning and greed he added a rare capacity of making the rich and great take him at his own estimate of himself. Ten years after the date now reached he drew the plans and superintended the construction of the Pall Mall palace still occupied by the club. But long before this he had been concerned in raising the Brighton Pavilion and Chain Pier, as well as innumer-



able town and country mansions, some of which were eventually devoted to club purposes.

Lynedoch and Hill lived for some time after Nash had prepared his plans for the second clubhouse. They were inspecting them one day in the committee-room of the Charles Street building while, after his usual peacock fashion, Nash, strutting up and down, radiantly congratulated himself on having conceived the chambers that would be honoured to the end of time by England's greatest warriors. "It is," he said, "my lords, no small glory to have created the earliest Service Club in this metropolis." The two grave old soldiers exchanged looks but said nothing. At last Lynedoch, in a deep, weather-beaten voice and his most solemn Scotch accent, said: "Not quite so fast, if you please, Mr. Nash. That cannot be your honour, for long before any of us here were thought of, the Royal Naval Club, founded in the reign of Charles II, was at the height of its fame soon after its reorganization a hundred years ago by Admiral Sir John Kempthorn, with Admiral Boscawen, Lord Rodney, Lord Nelson, and his Royal Highness, the Duke of Clarence, afterwards William IV, for members." It was all perfectly true, and the old salts of which it consisted periodically foregathered at the Thatched House in the same room as was afterwards appropriated by the Dilettanti.

On a social level different from that to which this narrative so far has confined itself, the first quarter of the nineteenth century produced a fusion between two separate kinds of club makers. The description in *Pickwick* of the Bath footmen's "swarry," under Mr. John Smauker's presidency, is no caricature but an exact sketch of the high life below stairs that had become general under the first two Georges. All the servant troubles, to-day spoken of as the peculiar curse reserved for employers in this degenerate and revolutionary age, had been cited at the beginning of the Hanoverian succession as proof of the celestial wrath

at the end of the Stuart dynasty. Dressed in their masters' clothes, calling each other by their masters' names, and imitating their masters' manners, footmen, valets, and grooms swaggered about their Bloomsbury clubs, as nearly as art could make them copies of the beaux, fops, and coxcombs who paid them their wages, and who then probably were themselves sauntering into White's. These coteries, composed from the house-keeper's room and the kitchen, began to take on something of a political complexion after the French Revolution. Between 1812 and 1827 the coercive severities of the Liverpool-Castlereagh and Sidmouth dispensation united with the societies of the gentleman's gentleman, and these organized by the professional demagogues in a common resistance to the Tory Government. The Bath footmen in *Pickwick* who entertained Sam Weller at the boiled leg of mutton with the usual trimmings "swarry," called the greengrocer in attendance upon them a vulgar beast because he yawned while handing round the dishes. In 1815 and again in 1817, however, the Smaukers, the Tuckles, and the rest of the flunkey tribe, condescended to make common cause with the greengrocers, giving them at the same time the benefit of their earlier experience. From that coalition resulted certain industrial and proletarian bodies, which gradually grew into political powers. Such were the promoters of the Spencean, the Hampden, and the Union Clubs. Of these, the Spenceans were organized by a Yorkshire schoolmaster named Spence, who aimed at making all land the property of the State, and dividing all its produce among the people. The Hampden Club, founded in 1811 by a Devonshire man, Northmore, living in London, stopped short of Socialism, and limited its programme to parliamentary reform and the ballot as a guarantee of free voting. The class fusion already dwelt on, as promoted by the club system, reached its culminating point in the *personnel* of these societies.

The servants' clubs had, indeed, largely become confederate with them, but the Union Club at least included some highly placed and extensive landlords too. That resulted less from enthusiasm for the Progressive cause than from the daily deepening Radical tints imparted to Whiggism by a master-maker of clubs like those now touched upon.

Major John Cartwright had not, like his brother Edmund, who invented the power-loom, been at a crack Oxford College (University), but he had spent twelve years in the Navy (1758-70), under Howe. Before getting his majority in the Nottingham militia, he did some soldiering and more writing. He might not have taken up the business of agitation manager but for the fine of £200 he had just paid on the charge of sedition. His good family connections and personal popularity secured him the friendship of the great, as well as the enthusiasm of the lowly. Thus he secured for his Union Club the adhesion of men like the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Oxford, Lord Byron, and others, representing the landed interests, such as Ducane of Braxted, Fawkes of Farnley, Hodges of Hemsted, and Rashleigh of Prideaux.

Meanwhile, in the central points of London clubland, as well as in the provinces, there steadily advanced the movement whose impetus animated and strengthened the future creators of the Carlton and Reform. One result of the overthrow of absolute kingship in 1688 had been an immense increase in debating societies on every social level, but for the most part on the City side of Temple Bar or in the Fitzroy and Soho quarters. The institution improved to suit the taste of a more fashionable district reproduced itself at the West End, and occupies a middle place between the Brooks's or White's, in the time of Pitt and Canning, and the two great party headquarters which to-day ornament Pall Mall.

The hitherto unfamiliar details concerning the

founder of Brooks's given above show that, from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards, an upper male servant in a great family saw in the private venture club the same opportunity, on his retirement from service, as his latter-day descendants have discovered in the tavern, the hotel, or in the Mayfair lodging-house. During the reign of George III the Duke of Portland had an under-steward whose name, easily corrupted into Goosetree, supplied with its title a Pall Mall *bagnio*, at which the second Pitt won the only money he ever made by gambling. Its chief pillars were the men Pitt afterwards ennobled—Robinson (Lord Rokeby) and R. Smith [(Lord Carrington)]. The Goosetree's founder, or his descendants, saw the rise of the debating societies already mentioned. A Mayfair house which they had on their hands gave them the chance of making a new venture in this line. Thus originated the Clifford Street Club. The mark made there by the most illustrious of its earliest habitués, George Canning, first brought him to the notice of Pitt. It was, in fact, a West End edition of the Fleet Street Coger's Hall.<sup>1</sup> A few doors off lived Addington, at whom in the club Canning levelled his bitterest gibes. The chief other debaters were Lord Charles Townshend, Sir James Mackintosh—a combination which made the club quite as much a commercial success as its projectors' Pall Mall establishment—and a pushful mediocrity, "Conversation Sharpe." Platitudes, spiced with malice, poured forth without pause or end, have preserved in an epithet the memory of this link between the club society of Johnson, Burke, and that of Byron, Rogers, and Moore. The trade of a hatter had brought him a fortune; the publication of his poems and essays,

<sup>1</sup> More exactly No. 15, Bride Lane. The Ancient Society of Cogers, established 1756, was the school in which many others besides Charles Bradlaugh trained themselves for House of Commons debate, and was from the first quite the most distinguished institution of the kind dealt with in this chapter.

a taste for travel, art, and other modes of intellectual self-indulgence, provided him with a means of spending it. He entered Parliament, never to be heard of again, and joined the Clifford Street Club, chiefly, it seems, to regret that he could not induce William Wordsworth to follow him. The poet, however, gratified him by saying that he knew more of Italy than any other Englishman, neither Byron nor Rogers excepted. At the club he talked well enough to receive from Mackintosh the compliment of being the soundest critic he knew, while in one of the debates, during which George Canning advocated the Liberal view, Sharpe put the opposite argument so well as to elicit from the statesman the words, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Tory."

The club makers of the pre-Carlton and Reform period were party peacemakers as well as party organizers. The nineteenth century, indeed, brought with it signs of a coming relaxation even in the political rivalries of White's and Brooks's. But the honour of the initiative in devising a club for the exclusive purpose of bringing together men of various and even diametrically opposite political views belongs to the tenth baronet of the Acland line. This creator of Grillion's was fitted alike by temperament and career for the social part he was to play. The cross-bench mind was afterwards to declare itself throughout the most important episodes of his political course. He co-operated with Wilberforce and Stuart Wortley in their efforts to avert the scandal of the divorce proceedings against Queen Caroline, pressed by George IV. on the Liverpool Government. Like the Conservative Lord Sandon, he showed his independence of party by supporting Lord John Russell's repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828. That was just sixteen years after he first conceived the idea of using the club as an agency for promoting mutual knowledge, social peace, personal goodwill between political combatants on both sides. Casually mentioned to some of

specimen of this Grillionite bard's society verse, often misquoted and mangled, may, however, be taken from Grillion's authentic record :—

“The first of September one Sunday morn,  
I shot a hen pheasant in standing corn,  
Without a licence : combine who can  
Such a cluster of crimes against God and man.”

Gladstone was not the first member of the club whose solitary repast the same muse had chronicled. On March 9, 1864, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe sat down companionless to table, minuting the fact in the club book. At the next meeting, the Bishop of Oxford being chairman, Lord Clarendon (Liberal) and Colonel Wilson Patten (Conservative) united in a resolution carried *nem. con.* that “Lord Houghton do write an ode on the event, and henceforth wear the title of the club poet-laureate.” Some years before this the place had been promoted to official rank in English diplomacy. In 1851 Lord Granville, then the new Foreign Secretary, following Palmerston's example, wished to establish confidential relations by private letters with our leading representatives abroad. Sir Stratford Canning, afterwards Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, was the most commanding figure among our diplomatists abroad, but did not share the Foreign Secretary's Whig opinions. In opening communications with him on the subject, Granville began by pleading the freemasonry of Grillion's as a sufficient introduction to his new correspondent.<sup>1</sup>

As a scholar, but scarcely in any other respect, Sir George Cornwall Lewis had much in common with Gladstone. Feeble and halting in his oratorical manner, he seldom made a speech which did not contain one or two memorable expressions. Amongst these was the remark that life would be tolerable but for its amusements. “The most real of these,” he after-

<sup>1</sup> Lord Fitzmaurice's *Lord Granville*, vol. i. p. 69.

wards said, "I have found at Grillion's dining-table." It could not well have been otherwise, for amongst the brilliant contrasts of the club in his day were, not only some already mentioned but the "Rupert of debate," the fourteenth Earl of Derby; two Indian Viceroys, Lords Canning and Dalhousie; Lord Ashburton, Lord Stanhope the historian; Lord Lyttelton, Sir William Sterling Maxwell, Lord Shaftesbury, the poor man's peer; Sir James Graham, Charles Buller, and Dean Stanley. The twentieth century reveals the same charm of variety that characterized the club in the nineteenth. Sir Edward Grey may find himself seated next to Lord Milner, Mr. Bonar Law may have for his next-door companion Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Carson and Mr. Birrell are helped out of the same dish. Revisiting England, the Indian Viceroy, Lord Hardinge of Penshurst, would be sure to see in the company Field-Marshal Earl Roberts. The most Catholic Duke of Norfolk enters the room at the same time as Edward Stuart Talbot, Bishop of Winchester, to be followed immediately by Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Lord Derby, and the Duke of Devonshire. The present number of the club is eighty; four members are elected each year, if so many vacancies occur.\*

As free from party, colour and as diversely representative as Grillion's was the Cosmopolitan. It was cradled during the winter of 1852 in the Bond Street lodgings of Robert Morier, then of the Foreign Office, a man full of useful and curious information, afterwards our Ambassador at St. Petersburg, gradually throwing aside in that position an opinion he had brought to it of Russia's intention to lose no time in advancing on Herat, while, as was then the case, we were pre-

\* Contrary to the prevailing impression, the name of Mills does not, it will be seen, occur among the thirteen original members of Grillion's. The fact is that the present Sir C. T. D. Acland's uncle, Mr. Arthur Mills, succeeded the founder of Grillion's as the club secretary, while he lived chiefly at Bude in a house built on ground given him by Sir Thomas Acland.

occupied with Egypt and had an army locked up in Africa.

“Why should not we and a few others,” it was asked, “come together, as we have done this evening, in some place of our own on Saturday and Sunday nights during the session?” The suggestion came from A. H. Layard, whose eventful course then lay for the most part in the future. The Sultan’s firman and a large supply of pickaxes had, indeed, already secured him the nickname of “Nineveh,” and won him fame from his excavations in that ancient district. The Dean of Bristol’s son, and born in Paris, he was from his boyhood a “rolling stone.” He had not passed beyond his twenty-third year when, traversing the valley of the Tigris on his way to Ceylon, he was impressed by the appearance of the neighbourhood, and thought of the prehistoric monuments probably buried beneath its surface. Five years later he had begun his subterranean researches at Nimrud, the undoubted Nineveh of biblical narrative. Almost at the first turn of the spade he struck a main, which afterwards led him to the discovery of four palaces. The books recording his experiences made him, not only the lion of the season but the first authority in a department of learning till then practically unknown.

Henry Reeve, Registrar of the Privy Council, editor of the *Edinburgh Review* and the Greville papers, came in with the first batch. By the beginning of the season and session of 1853, the *Cosmopolitan* had become a brilliant success, membership of which ranked only a little below and promised to be something like a stepping-stone to Grillion’s and “The” Club. Established on the drawing-room floor in Charles Street, Berkeley Square, that had been G. F. Watts’s studio, it became the one nocturnal lounge at the week’s end and beginning, regularly frequented by the most brilliant among those who remained of the Cambridge



“apostles,” with Alfred Tennyson, the poet-laureate, at their head; Lord Houghton, James Spedding of the *Times*, Baconian editor, and G. S. Venables, the *Saturday Reviewer*, for his supporters. In its later days the club included among its members the pleasantest and brightest of Parliament men, the ever-delightful Frederick Leveson-Gower, and Viscount Barrington, one of Disraeli’s two confidential lords-in-waiting. Their contemporary, Henry Drummond Wolff, combined in the happiest proportions the mental acumen and close observation of his widely travelled father with the outspoken insight into human nature that, directly inherited from his maternal ancestor, Sir Robert Walpole, imparted an airy cynicism to his temper and talk, and made him in his prime an enjoyable *raconteur*. The charm of contrast to Wolff was forthcoming in Robert G. W. Herbert, the fourth Lord Carnarvon’s cousin, permanent Under-Secretary in the department controlled by his kinsman, whose success as Colonial Minister Herbert did not a little to promote.

For about half a century the Cosmopolitan remained the London paradise of the intelligent foreigner. Then the frequenters, who did so much to give it its character, one after another from death or infirmity left their places vacant. The lease of the famous old house ran out, other quarters had to be found. At the beginning of the twentieth century the club was only a pleasant memory to those who, like the present writer, had belonged to it, or a name of little meaning to those who had not.

What, in the fifties, the Cosmopolitan began to be for the night, the Breakfast Club on February 24, 1866, became for the morning. Its original or early members included among others equally distinguished its active promoter, Mount Stuart E. Grant Duff, his particular friends Lord Arthur Russell, Sir James Lacaita, Sir John Lefevre, Sir Edmund Head, Sir John Simeon, Sir T. Erskine May, Sir W. Stirling Maxwell;

Lords Carlingford, Goschen, Herschell, de Tabley, Wolseley, and Reay, the Marquis of Lansdowne, Speaker Peel, Mackenzie Wallace, Henry Cowper, G. S. Venables, and Sir Alfred Lyall. The invitations to the houses of all the members in turn were for 9.30 a.m. ; no one was waited for after ten. Gradually it contributed as large a proportion to the governors of the British Empire as Balliol College itself. By 1884 Lord Lansdowne had exchanged the Canadian for the Indian Viceroyalty ; Lord Dufferin, after having held various embassies, had become Indian Viceroy, and Grant Duff himself had been successively Colonial Under-Secretary and Governor of Madras. Indeed, almost the only Breakfast Club men who failed to achieve high promotion during these eighteen years had either approached the end of their career when they joined the society or had been withdrawn from it by death or some other cause.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CLUB AS A HOME

The Travellers' Club and its creator, Lord Castlereagh—Features of the playroom—Scenes between Talleyrand and Montrond—A diplomatist as conversational leader—The Duke of Wellington's opinion of clubs, and what came of it—The Union—The Windham—Makers of the Athenæum—Sir F. Chantrey—J. W. Croker—His personal warfare with Macaulay in society and politics—The Bowood "tale-bearer," Joseph Jekyll—His brother wits, Luttrell and Rogers—Reasons for their close companionship—What Bulwer Lytton thought of Rogers—The fusion of classes and professions at the Athenæum—A new quarter for reform—Thomas Walker's work in kitchen and cellar.

WITH the nineteenth century, a reaction set in against the club as the outwork and agency of Parliament. Political organization, it was felt, had been secured on terms disastrous to social intercourse. If life was not to lose one of its chief pleasures, the brightest and best of the Westminster partisans on either side must be systematically brought together at a common table in St. James's or Mayfair. That feeling had, as the reader already knows, moved Sir Thomas Acland in 1812, on lines generally resembling "The" Club, to establish another dining society, Grillion's. That, however, was a nomadic institution, changing its weekly venue according to taste or convenience. After the United Service, the first politically neutral club settled in its own permanent premises owed its existence to a diplomatist, who had for some time conceived the design of a Pall Mall society which should be as cosmopolitan as Grillion's was impartial. At the dining club, men of all political connections, sat

down with great satisfaction together ; the living club, now about to be created, was to form an international home for distinguished foreigners, irrespective of the country to which they belonged, or the form of polity which they represented.

Special endowments and opportunities ensured success in the execution of this scheme for Lord Castlereagh.<sup>1</sup> He had been Foreign Secretary, and led the House of Commons during the Liverpool administration. His intimacy with the polite world in all its phases, his aptitude for personal detail, and his untiring business industry had made him of special service at White's, where he first learned the art of club management. White's, indeed, alone had given him the social training only less indispensable than his high station and his parliamentary experience for success in the control of St. Stephen's, as well as in his violently opposed but fruitful administrative course. For Castlereagh, as will presently be seen, unlike his rival, Canning, never had the advantage of an Eton training ; while, at the University, instead of Canning's two years at Christchurch, he only kept a twelvemonth's terms at St. John's, Cambridge.

Yet this was the man who enabled the second Pitt to carry the Irish Union, who, by trusting Wellington with the command, crushed Napoleon, and thus secured for Europe more than half a century of subsequent peace. He now added to these achievements the fame of a club founder, on lines then entirely new. Each of these great performances was due to Castlereagh's unfailing presence of mind, sound sense, serenity of temper, and unflinching courage, which carried him through many difficulties that would have wrecked quicker intellects and more highly cultivated minds. In reality, too, he no doubt gained, rather than lost, from not, as a youth, having gone through the same conventional mill as other lads of quality. At Armagh

<sup>1</sup> Son of the first Earl and Marquis of Londonderry.

College he had studied the life and character of a people, instead of, as must more or less have been the case at an English public school, contracting the narrow prejudices of a class. Personal intimacy with the Courts and capitals of Europe formed a better apprenticeship to his trade in life than the same time spent in dissipation or even study on the Cam. From his mother he had inherited the fine manner, if not the grace, of the stately Seymours. Before he came of age he knew as much of the chanceries and diplomatic coulisses of Europe as he did of St. James's or Pall Mall.

By 1790, while still under twenty-one, he had been returned to Parliament by the Tory landlords of the County Down. In the next century, having meanwhile been Foreign Minister at home, he went as British representative, in 1818, to the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle. Thus habituated to intercourse with European sovereigns and statesmen, he asked himself, during his return journey, whether it might not be possible to create in London a company whose ampler atmosphere, inaccessible to the disturbing influence of party, might recall, not only to Englishmen but to foreigners of ambassadorial rank or antecedents, the Olympian air of continental council-chambers and salons—in a word, an international reunion, all whose appointments were to be on a correspondingly impressive scale.

Passing through Paris, he saw, at his house in the Rue de Rivoli, an old friend, General Sir William Keppel, one of the survivors of those who had witnessed George IV's marriage to Mrs. Fitzherbert, and who had won fame throughout Europe for his mellow wisdom, for the sweetness and gentleness of his manners, and for a power of patient listening, which had recommended him to sovereigns and statesmen. To him Castlereagh confided his project, with the result that soon after reaching London he became the founder and Keppel one among the original members of the Travellers' Club. Subsequently Lord Chancellor Eldon

successfully faced the ordeal of the ballot ; Sidmouth was put up and blackballed. Castlereagh himself used the club regularly till the close of his life ; he dined there together with Eldon just after his nomination to attend the Congress of Verona in 1822. The two friends made merry on that occasion over the name borne by the club in which they were sitting being also that of the newspaper belonging to their arch-assailant in the Press, William Hone, abortively prosecuted in 1817, and tried by Lord Ellenborough, not for libel on Ministers but for the profane parodies of the Litany and the Athanasian Creed. As to Hone's political gibes, the founder of the club laughingly reminded his friend how he had been called " Old Bags," Sidmouth the " Doctor." " I myself," he added, " was immortalized as ' Derry Down Triangle.' " A few days later Castlereagh killed himself by cutting his throat in the dressing-room of his house at Foots Cray.

From the first the club distinguished itself by supplying foreigners of social or official position with a well-appointed home, temporary or permanent. The tariff had the economical advantages of the Guards or the United Service. High play of any kind was discouraged, pure games of chance were forbidden, and the whist points were kept severely low. The reputation at this game brought by Talleyrand and another stranger, Montrond, to the Travellers' card-room altogether exceeded the skill and success of either. The two men secretly disliked and were jealous of each other. Talleyrand's ill-will frequently found very brutal and by no means amusing expression—as when Montrond, tilting his chair and losing his balance, fell back to the ground in an epileptic fit. The stricken man, in the convulsive clutching and tapping of his fingers on the floor, only drew from Talleyrand the sneering murmur, "*Il me paraît qu'el veut absolument descendre,*" and the company applauded and circulated the remark as the great man's latest good thing.

Montrond himself could be equally bitter, but generally contrived to put more point and information into his least amiable words. For instance, the appearance in 1832 of Louis XVIII's "Memoirs" raised some doubt of their authenticity. "Their genuineness," observed Montrond, "is stamped on every page because, while wishing to convince readers of his wisdom, he cannot help writing himself down the consummate rogue which every one knows him to have been."

Ten years later the gossips at the Travellers' were discussing the successive bulletins from Montrond's sick-room and telling each other how, thanks to the Duchess de Broglie and Madame Hamelin, both indefatigable in their deathbed ministrations, he had gone through a complete conversion and had passed away in the odour of sanctity.

For at least fifty years after its foundation, the Travellers' remained the centre of the best Anglo-French table talk about the relations between the two countries, and above all on whatever concerned the growth and embellishment of the Napoleonic legend.

On these subjects, the Travellers' had for its oracle a nobleman whom the gossips, groundlessly enough no doubt, called the original of Dickens's Cousin Feenix in *Dombey and Son*. This was the Lord Rokeby who died during the April of 1847, at Naples, while still, as years went, little past the prime of life, but driven by various maladies into premature old age. He had long spent most of his life abroad. He would probably never have revisited England, but for the attraction of his friend Castlereagh's club. As regards bearing, address, and independence of character the universally accepted model of his order, he had been longer and oftener behind the diplomatic scenes than any of his club contemporaries. Those who came after him at the club might well fancy they still saw him in his brother, the last wearer of the title, who died in 1883. This Lord Rokeby not only reproduced

his kinsman and predecessor's appearance and manner, but, having lived in the closest confidence with him, bequeathed to Mrs. Climenson, his daughter, the varied and valuable memorials, skilfully condensed by that lady into a work forming the best commentary possible on one who will always be remembered as a club worthy, as well as on not a few of the secret international episodes which occasionally formed his Pall Mall table talk.

“ If something cannot be done to change their tone, clubs will gradually become like spouting booths at a country fair.” So said the Duke of Wellington, while Master-General of the Ordnance, one of Lord Liverpool's Cabinet—his ears, as he put it, deafened, his whole being disgusted by the echoes of party strife. Amongst those who heard the great man's remark, were his private secretary, Arbuthnot, and a young naval officer, Lieutenant Egerton, Lord Francis Egerton's son, whose general intelligence and professional zeal had won the Duke's good opinion. Nothing, however, in the signs of the times promised any club movement such as the Duke seemed to desire. On the contrary, so far back as 1822, the party managers on both sides had begun to talk about the necessity of supplementing Brooks's and White's with institutions more suited to the spirit of the time. Nevertheless the decade and a half preceding the Grey Reform Act witnessed in Pall Mall and its neighbourhood a desire for places of social meeting into which politics, so far as might be, should not enter. The Duke had no sooner signified his views and wishes than those about him were moved to see what might be done towards extending the movement so successfully initiated by Castlereagh in the Travellers'.

The earliest result of their efforts was the Union Club, with the hero of Waterloo for the most illustrious on the list, and with Sir Robert Peel coming in soon afterwards. The Union was the first institution



to be from its birth a members' club. Candidates were elected by the vote of the entire society. Its original, distinctive, and long preserved feature was the copious interfusion of professional men, bankers, merchants, and lawyers with the country gentlemen, who, as the Duke had foreseen, found it a pleasant alternative to Brooks's or White's. Applications multiplied more rapidly than was in the interests of the society itself. It began to be honeycombed by mutually hostile and jealous coteries and cliques. The country gentlemen pillaged the professions. The lawyers and doctors, not seeing their way to retaliate directly, showed their independence and power by blackballing indiscriminately those not belonging to their cloth. The fortunes of the place suffered from the intestine strife. The representatives of the Wellington and Peel tradition wisely decided that disruption could only be averted by transferring the power of election from the body of the club to a committee, in whose hands it still remains. To this day, the happy blend of the man-about-town, the professional, and the squirearchical elements has preserved for the Union its former attractions, both to members and their guests, that marked it during those Victorian years when Sir Bruce Seton, among the pleasantest and best-known figures of the club-life of his time, employed his evening's leisure from War Office duties in familiarizing a series of representative companies with the Union's best resources of cuisine and cellar. Another of the club's leading Amphitryons then was Sir Richard Quain, most amiable and serviceable, whether of friends or doctors, presiding over a party that generally numbered Lord James of Hereford, Henry Calcraft, H. M. Stanley, and Anthony Trollope.

Six years after the great Duke and his agents had made their successful protest against the club system becoming a political monopoly, one of Wellington's countrymen founded on the same neutral lines as the

Union a club that has flourished uninterruptedly to the twentieth century. Queen Anne's Secretary of State, immortalized by Pope James Craggs, had a sister, also his heiress, who married an Irish husband, Robert Nugent, who subsequently and successively became Baron Nugent, Viscount Clare, and Earl Nugent. To the daughter of this union, the first Marquis of Buckingham's wife, was born Lord Nugent, who lived much with literary men of his time, and himself dabbled in prose and verse.

The taste for pen and ink was, indeed, hereditary in his line; his grandfather, who had brought a title to the family, lived with the wits of his day, and was addressed by Goldsmith in his poem "The Haunch of Venison." The descendant of the afterwards ennobled Robert Nugent carried on his grandfather's socio-literary traditions. Burke and Johnson's intimate, he had no sooner gone through Oxford at Brazenose than he became in London the Mæcenas of his period. From 1812 to 1832 he sat for Aylesbury, and resigned his seat that he might go as Lord High Commissioner to the Ionian Isles. Returning to England in 1835, he resumed, not without distinction, his course at Westminster, and always in connection with the same Buckinghamshire constituency which family influence had first given him. There were, indeed, breaks in his Aylesbury membership between 1837 and 1847. During the last year, after unsuccessfully contesting Southampton, he regained his original borough and remained its representative till his death, in 1850. His closing parliamentary sessions were signalized by his motions for the abolition of capital punishment.

Had he been a richer man, with a domestic establishment on the old grand scale, he might have had no place among the club makers. As it was, he found the rôle of entertainer so costly, and the list of guests expectant so increasingly formidable, that the house of William Windham the statesman, No. 11, St. James's

Square, had no sooner been vacant some time than he secured it for the club which he named after the original owner of the mansion.

Nugent's intellectual sympathies were quite as much with the new sciences as with the old letters. The movement that led three years later to the British Association, 1831, was now fairly started. The various Inns of Court, during the late twenties and the early thirties, seem to have abounded in students who had many intellectual interests, even though these did not include any great zeal for their future profession. Many of them had but recently gone through the course of foreign travel begun after leaving the University. While abroad they had acquainted themselves with the latest discoveries of continental researchers in various branches of physical inquiry. Such subjects had for them a permanent attraction greater than they had yet found in politics or pen and ink. Most of them were friendless and homeless in London. Some found their way to Nugent, who let them know that they might not only be welcome but find congenial company at the Windham Club. In this way, therefore, the place from its very beginnings had a character and fulfilled a mission so far entirely unique. There were, of course, plenty of young men-about-town of a more frivolous turn, but the superior element just described formed for some years an appreciable leaven. From the middle of the nineteenth century, however, the Windham had more in common with Arthur's than with any other club. During the dead season, while repairs and cleanings were in progress, the two clubs exchanged hospitalities.

Meanwhile, the club makers to whose example Nugent and his colleagues of the Windham owed something could congratulate themselves on an achievement more important in itself and more far-reaching in its results than any addition to the joint-stock palaces of Pall Mall since Lord Lynedoch

and Sir Rowland Hill had called the United Service into being.

Upon one point the three or four men of widely differing antecedents and character who combined to found the Athenæum in 1824 were unanimous. Art, literature, and science had become powerful enough to dispense with purely aristocratic patronage. The originators of the Athenæum belonged by birth to the middle class. Taking them in alphabetical order: Sir Francis Chantrey was a Derbyshire carpenter's son. Apprenticed to a carver and gilder in Sheffield, he showed a skill in modelling stone and wood that attracted the notice of the mezzotint engraver J. R. Smith. The good offices of this his first friend enabled him on his twenty-first birthday to strike out a new line by cancelling his indentures, going to London, and studying in the Royal Academy schools. While thus a student, he supported himself by wood-carving, with such results as soon to be promoted to marble. Without any help or introductions from the rich and great, his first work in stone, a bust for Sheffield Church, was followed by commissions for stone heads on a larger scale of naval celebrities to adorn Greenwich Hospital. By 1807 his artistic industry and a discreet marriage had made him an independent man. He still remained busy in his studio, executed the statue group that still adorn the Lichfield Cathedral, "The Sleeping Children," and had won twofold European fame by his marble figures of statesmen and sovereigns and by the treatment of imaginative subjects shown in his "Peace and Plenty," his "Penelope," and his "Satan."

Chantrey's chief colleague at the Athenæum was the man generally credited with the lion's share in founding the club. John Wilson Croker (1780-1857), a native of Galway and the son of an Excise officer, in the opening year of the nineteenth century exchanged Trinity College, Dublin, for Lincoln's Inn, London.

The foundation of his success was, not professional distinction as a lawyer but the skill and happiness with which he hit off the public taste in his letters to the French Revolutionist Tallien, published by the *Times*. In his mastery of that subject he had few rivals, and his perfect command over it secured him at least one victory over Macaulay during the 1832 Reform Bill debates.<sup>1</sup> The rivalry of the two men extended from politics to society and from Parliament to the club. Macaulay casually remarked at the Athenæum that he knew only two ways of governing men, by public opinion and the sword. For some days afterwards Croker's table-talk abounded in efforts to cap, to controvert, or to improve on the observation. Croker, it has been circumstantially shown, was much less black than Disraeli and Macaulay agreed to paint him. The social jealousy which, in *Coningsby*, made Rigby try to keep Lucian Gay out of Monmouth House was so absent from the Croker of real life that he secured the friendship and service of the Prince Regent for Walter Scott, as well as the refusal of the laureateship.

No two men sat at the same table more frequently than the author of *Waverley* and the *Quarterly Reviewer*, and it became a fixed club opinion that Croker owed not a little unpopularity to his inevitable personal comparison with Scott. To Croker's disadvantage, as it could not but be, women as well as men contrasted the sarcastic table-talk and the contemptuous expression of his face with the always amiable

<sup>1</sup> See T. E. Kebbel's *Essays upon History and Politics* (Chapman and Hall), 1864. On December 20, 1831 Macaulay had warned the English aristocracy against bringing on themselves the same destruction that had overtaken the French *noblesse* because of their obduracy to the popular demand for political rights. "But," asked Croker, "did those nobles show the blind and obstinate resistance imputed to them?" As a fact they joined the *Tiers État* with headlong alacrity, and even led the way in the giddy orgies of ruin. It was a Montmorency who offered the privileges of the nobility on the altar of sacrifice, and a Noailles who proposed the abolition of all feudal and senorial rights. Turn over the page, and we find the Montmorencies in exile and the Noailles on the scaffold.

conversation, the frank and benevolent countenance of the good and great Sir Walter. Yet the reputed original of Disraeli's Rigby had a personality neither unpleasing nor unimpressive. Under rather than above middle height, his slight, well-knit figure was so perfect in all its proportions as to convey a sense of natural dignity. A glance at his face and a minute or two's exchange of remarks were enough to tell the casual acquaintance of brain power, quick perception, and active intellect. He had, too, the capacity of making the first personages of his time, including the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel, take him seriously at his own estimate of himself. The damaging disclosures, as they were called, of his confidential business relations with the Duke of York and Lord Hertford were so put by Louis Jennings<sup>1</sup> in his encyclopædic work as to win from two judges, not less competent than Mr. Gladstone and Sir William Harcourt, the verdict that Croker came remarkably well out of it. Whether in club, drawing-room, or print, Croker's enemies were, not his rivals and caricaturists but his own overwhelming egotism, much paraded superiority, and omniscience. These were qualities resented by Byron when, on the publication of "Beppo," 1818, Croker told Murray that the inspiration of this poem was purely Italian. Berni, Byron admitted, had founded that kind of writing, but, he added, "my poem all the same is purely English, and my immediate model was 'Whistlecraft' [Hookham Frere]. As for Croker's further suggestion, that I plagiarized from Rose's *Animali*, I did not know you had published the translation till I saw it a few days ago." After 1824 the Athenæum and its affairs became in themselves a sort of profession to Croker. They did not, however, interfere with his long prepared and much talked of edition of *Boswell*, published in 1831, or cause Macaulay to

<sup>1</sup> See Croker's *Memoirs and Correspondence*, edited by L. J. Jennings (Murray, 1884).

neglect the pickle in which he was keeping the rod to be applied directly his enemy's *magnum opus* appeared.<sup>1</sup>

During his Athenæum days club memories also naturally ran on the literary hot water out of which Croker never long kept himself. Thus the critic had written one of his slashing articles on Lord John Russell's *Life* of his own compatriot and friend Thomas Moore. Russell, by way of reply, showed that Croker, while indulging the safe malignity of his pen, had been cultivating his own acquaintance, as well as asking his good offices, for his own ends. Much later, between 1848 and 1857, Croker published in the *Quarterly* those onslaughts on Macaulay's *History of England* which caused Samuel Rogers pleasantly to remark that Croker had attempted murder, but had only committed suicide. Especially did the Athenæum Club become a personal battle-ground between the two men during the period of instalment in its present building, 1830. That year, by bringing Macaulay to Westminster as Member for Calne, marked the beginning of their parliamentary feud. For Croker, who had held the seat for Downpatrick since 1807, stood so well with all the Tory leaders of his time, and showed such official ability as to have become in 1809 Secretary of the Admiralty. He held that office till the fall of the Wellington administration, in 1830. His literary retirement which followed proved most active, and among other things produced the rechristening of the Tory party as the Conservatives.<sup>2</sup> Nature had formed him for a life of bustling self-assertion. He seemed out

<sup>1</sup> Fourteen years before this Sir Walter Scott generously acknowledged to an Athenæum acquaintance his obligation to Croker's *Stories for Children from English History*, for his own *Tales of a Grandfather*. As for the Boswell episode, it had been matter of Athenæum gossip for some time that Croker's edition would at once be tackled by Macaulay in the *Edinburgh Review*.

<sup>2</sup> First, in a *Quarterly Review* article, written after much conference with Sir Robert Peel. The new name gained general adoption during the elections of January, 1833, and was recognized by Lord John Russell, who met it by himself taking that of Reformer.

of his element during his forced abstinence from occupation with the affairs of others. Nothing therefore could have been more congenial to him than the swift succession of personal detail and the free scope for the exercise of administrative ingenuity and personal predilection afforded by the society of which, from the first he had put himself forward as the incarnation. On May 11, 1829, was held a general meeting of the club. One of its trustees and a permanent member of the committee, Croker had specially concentrated himself on the architectural details for the stately fabric then rising in Pall Mall. The original scheme provided the same four-columned portico as that which ornaments Pall Mall to-day. Without consulting his colleagues, Croker had taken steps to substitute one of two columns. On the motion of a little known but original member, a Scotch physician, Dr. Henderson, a keen debate about the whole subject arose. But behind Henderson and one or two more there stood Macaulay. All these warmly advocated the first plan. Samuel Rogers and Crabb Robinson were equally strong in the same direction. The general sense of the meeting was that the time had come to throw off the Crokerian despotism. "Move! Move!" became the general cry; and the Macaulayites carried by acclamation the proposal not to affront the committee by substituting for its collective scheme the arbitrary amendment of an individual.

Of the Athenæum company in the pre-Victorian days, now looked back upon, belonged one or two others of what may be called the Bowood group. Lord Lansdowne, it has been seen, wisely wished not to put himself in the forefront of the enterprise. He smiled, however, his active approval, and it prospered accordingly. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Lord Lansdowne was the figure-head and patron of men, without the spice of whose conversation any club would then have lacked its most essential flavour. Such



were the two sharpest tongues that had wagged almost from time immemorial in Pall Mall, and that linked the traditions of Selwyn and Alvanley with the performances of Theodore Hook, Abraham Hayward, and Bernal Osborne.

Born in the reign of George III, and living into that of Queen Victoria, Joseph Jekyll, after going through Westminster and Christchurch, set up in society during the Regency on an anecdotic capital, chiefly derived from his father, a naval officer, who had not only sailed round the world with his eyes and ears always open, but had dined and talked with statesmen and generals personally concerned in the rise and fall of the first Napoleon. A barrister by profession, Jekyll first rose to fame as a depositary of legal jokes, most of which when he began were new. Some of them had been rehearsed at Bowood, if not elsewhere, too, before their issue from the Athenæum secured them metropolitan currency. During Lord Mansfield's Chief Justiceship heavy arrears of work were supposed to necessitate a sitting on Good Friday. The barristers would not attend. The judge went through the cases with the attorneys alone—"a thing," said Serjeant Davy, "never known before." "Naturally," observed Jekyll, "seeing there has been no precedent for such a transaction since the time of Pontius Pilate." Great as a lawyer and advocate, Lord Erskine, the tenth Earl of Buchan's youngest son, never caught the ear of St. Stephen's or showed much fluency of speech elsewhere. So ill did he acquit himself at a Fishmongers' Hall dinner that Jekyll, who was sitting near, asked him in a very audible aside whether it was in honour of the company he had floundered so. Jekyll had followed Dunning as Member for Lord Lansdowne's borough, Calne. His parliamentary patron's house became to him a second home. "This pert joker's one vocation in life," amiably remarked Jeremy Bentham, who had not much in common with the wits,

“ is to act as tale-bearer to the household at Bowood.” The description, when repeated at the Athenæum, was met with a stinging retort from Charles Buller, then, as always, the social ally of Monckton Milnes. Indeed, whether at the club or in private house, the two worked together, concerting their epigrams or anecdotes beforehand, and each in turn so leading in the conversation as to give the other the best chance of exhibiting his well-prepared verbal fireworks.

Of the same Athenæum standing as Jekyll was the breakfast-giver, the poet of Italy, who, dying in 1885, outlived most if not all fathers of the club. Rogers and Jekyll were seldom out of each other's society. “ It is the only way,” said Jekyll, “ in which I can prevent Rogers saying spiteful things about me.” And in another room of the same club at the same hour Rogers might have been heard making the same observation about Jekyll.

Equally sharp and caustic of tongue, but without the nerve control and calmness of Jekyll, was another of Rogers' club associates, first known as the “ Colonel Luttrell of Junius ” ; he was a natural son of Lord Carhampton, the Irish Commander-in-Chief, and was much sought after by Rogers, because, as was said, his bustling vivacity seemed the only thing which could impart warmth and movement to the chilly and sepulchral serenity of the banker bard's prevailing manner. Resembling Jekyll in the smart impudence, talk, and manner that won Jekyll his reputation for wit, Luttrell showed himself far more sparkling and widely informed in conversation than either Jekyll, Rogers, or any other of his sect. The infancy of the Athenæum witnessed a characteristic display of his peculiar temperament. Lady Holland had been driving him in her carriage from Kensington to Pall Mall. Part of the road had been very rough ; her ladyship was very nervous. She therefore told the coachman to proceed slowly. The drive, performed

at a foot's pace, occupied some hours. Luttrell reached his destination to find that the friend whom he had kept waiting had lost patience and gone. "No wonder!" he hissed out between clenched teeth. "Did not the very funerals all pass us?"

What Rogers and Luttrell were at the beginnings of their fame, they remained to the end—Luttrell, at fourscore, an unrepentant and a most-sought-after diner out, the life and soul of every party, the coveted quarry of every hostess and host. Equally unchanged, so long as breath lingered in the attenuated frame, was Rogers. To the last the same mild venom as in his maturity flavoured his every word, causing Jekyll, on his last appearance in the club, to compare him with one of those soft caterpillars that crawl gently and quietly over the skin, but mark their track by irritation and blister. Notwithstanding his bitterness, Rogers had nothing about him of the bully, was not really unpopular with such of the Athenæum rank he noticed, and spoke as if he hated only those of his social betters whom the world agreed to praise. He made it his special mission to play the part of the slave in the triumphal procession of the Roman Emperor. He might sometimes put in a good word for the absent subject of universal abuse; his dissentient voice never failed to break the chorus of general praise. Thus the vocabulary of panegyric was being exhausted upon a certain young peer noted for his good looks, his brains, and his wealth. Rogers listened in patient but visible disgust. At last, unable longer to bear the strain, he murmured, "Thank Heaven, he has bad teeth!" A little later the over-praised nobleman came up for election at the club. The decisive blackball was dropped into the ballot-box by Rogers.<sup>1</sup> Jekyll, at the Athenæum dinner-table, was the one member of

<sup>1</sup> For, as he frankly explained to the historian Grote, much the same reason that the Athenians ostracized Nicias, because they wearied of hearing him called by every one "the Just."

the club who could give odds to its quickest and sharpest repartee-maker, the Foreign Secretary, Lord Dudley and Ward. But then it must be remembered that it was Rogers himself who, exasperated by one of the nobleman's very personal remarks about his appearance, retaliated with the familiar epigram of learning his speeches by heart. The best of Rogers came out, not in the conversational tournament of the dinner-table but in colloquy with an audience "fit though few."

Bulwer-Lytton, at the Athenæum, had always rather avoided him. One evening in the dead season the novelist, having been at the play, acceded to the bard's request that he would sup with him in St. James's Place. "His talk," said the novelist, recounting the experience, "was the most brilliant, varied, instructive, and inspiring to which I ever listened. And it was poured forth continuously from a little before midnight till within an hour or two of dawn."

The only other joint-stock palace that could compare with the Athenæum as a genuine home for its members was the United Service, its senior by nine years. The younger establishment gradually realized a distinction desired and foreseen for it from the first by Croker, necessarily not within the United's reach. In other words, its neighbours of all kinds appreciated the compliment of contributing their foremost representatives to it. The Athenæum numbers from time to time as many famous soldiers and sailors as its nearest Pall Mall neighbour, founded by Lyncedoch and Hill. It is as well supplied with ambassadors as the Travellers', with the makers and unmakers of administrations as Brooks's or White's, the Carlton or the Reform. Throughout the nineteenth century it was the only London home of his spiritual lordship, Samuel Wilberforce. It afforded the same domestic haven to most occupants of the episcopal bench. Hence the joke wickedly invented for Lord Salisbury that he had to give up going to the Athenæum because

the bishops took away his new umbrellas by mistake. Here, too, one of those same bishops heard Lord Brougham deny the authorship of the *Edinburgh* article on Byron's first volume of poems, while, a little later, he was one of the country house party which received Brougham's confession of the *Edinburgh Reviewer* having been none other than himself. In that Athenæum period prominent and unfailingly regular figures were also Abraham Hayward, Eothen Kinglake, Chenery, Delane's successor at the *Times*, as well as the most distinguished officials and authors then at work. These, at the luncheon hour, included Sir Lewis Mallet, of the India Office; Robert G. W. Herbert, the Colonial Under-Secretary; M. E. Grant Duff and Laurence Oliphant. St. Mary's Church, Whitechapel, contains a memorial tablet to the man who, more than any other of his day, had been instrumental in perfecting the home life and conveniences of the club.

This was Thomas Walker, son of the Manchester cotton-spinner, who founded the local Constitutional Society and formed a chief pillar of Lancashire Whiggism. His most interesting monument, however, is the *Original*, published by him in the interest of good cookery and high health in the year before his death at Brussels in 1836. "His one real and sufficient title to immortality is," said Hayward, "the Athenæum cuisine and cellar." In the latter he introduced the first really good claret at a moderate price ever drunk in Pall Mall. This was the wine that Hayward himself had in mind when he disclaimed the reputation of a professional diner out: "Cold beef, if you like, does for my dinner, provided there is good claret, and plenty of it." The considerations suggested by this remark, however, pave the way to another chapter.

## CHAPTER IX

### CLUB FARE AND CLUB FATES

How mediæval clubmen dined—Subsequent reformers of the club *menu*—The club cuisine, the high-water mark of the cookery of the period—Survivals, revivals, and specialities in White's kitchen and elsewhere—Changes in the club dinner-hour—The French Revolution's effect on English dining—Culinary perfection and speculation made the foundations of a new club—Crockford's—Its cook, Louis Ude—Its wits and most prominent habitués—Lord Willoughby D'Eresby—Count D'Orsay—Statesmen and diplomatists at Crockford's—The hazard-room, and supper-table—The personal incidents leading to the abolition of "hells"—Crockford's among them—The last of the Crockfordians, Sir W. H. Gregory, George Payne, Frank Lawley, and the short-lived refuge at the Coventry Club.

IN the most popular arts for the gratification of the senses, music, painting, cookery, and wine manufacture, the moderns have had little to learn from the ancients. The two most learned and practical authorities on the subject, Beauvilliers and Carême, have shown that neither the Roman, nor the Athenian cuisine produced anything likely to be appreciated by the discriminating palate of Christian Europe. That, too, is the verdict of impartial historians of the kitchen,<sup>1</sup> as well as of scholarly critics like the already mentioned Thomas Walker, and his commentator, Abraham Hayward. The Athenians, of course, were to the cuisine of antiquity what the French afterwards became to that of the Middle Ages.

The Roman commissioners to the Attic capital for

<sup>1</sup> Such are William Rabisha in *The Whole Body of Cookery Dissected* (London, 1675), Mrs. Hannah Glasse in *Cookery made Plain and Easy* (1747), and R. Warner, *Antiquitates Culinariae* (1791).

investigating the laws of Solon brought back with them some domestic suggestions much appreciated by the housekeepers of the seven-hilled city. More than a century and a half later a family intimate of Pericles, the little known poet Arcestratus, so far combined a *gourmet's* taste with a poet's pen as to commemorate in many verses the various products of the then known animal and vegetable world. Further, he personally watched their preparation for the table by the cooks of the countries he had traversed, and only accepted dinner invitations from those who valued the good things of land and sea as highly as he did himself. Pericles, however, on hearing this from his son, the poet's chief friend, sceptically remarked that the fellow was always like an undersized skeleton, and since his return had dwindled almost to nothing. Talking over this story, at the Athenæum, to Washington Irving during his last visit to England, Hayward said, "I have found a classical prototype for the Dutchman in your *History of New York*, who pined away so imperceptibly that there was nothing left of him to be buried."

The first century A.D. witnessed an advance of far-reaching results in Roman cookery, thanks chiefly to one of the three epicures, bearing the name of Apicius,<sup>1</sup> who between 14 and 37 founded cookery schools, and was hailed by his disciples as "mighty master." This gastronomic worthy, having by a course of table extravagance, reduced his fortune to a poor £80,000, heroically chose death to starvation on such a pittance. To pass from Periclean Athens to Imperial Rome, Lucullus and his convives seem first to have demanded that their *menu* should be the costliest which ocean, earth, and air could furnish. Hence the value set upon

<sup>1</sup> The first of these belonged to the age of Sulla, B.C. 92, the second is mentioned in the text. Quite early in life he won fame with his contemporaries, and assured himself of immortality afterwards by his sauces and confection. The third, Celius, presided over the Emperor Trajan's kitchen, and especially distinguished himself by an invention for sending his master fresh oysters while on his Asiatic campaigns.

the dishes made from five hundred peacocks' brains, or from the tongues of as many nightingales. Cleopatra therefore only followed the fashion by quenching her thirst with a decoction of pearls, and it was unconscious fidelity to classical precedent that made the English sailor place a £10 note between two pieces of bread and butter for the lovely Mrs. Sawbridge<sup>1</sup> to eat as a sandwich.

The two bright features relieving the darkness of the Middle Ages were the culinary and the literary *renaissance*. Before then, however, in the eighth century, Charlemagne's feasting companies described by Brillat Savarin (in other words, the club dinners of the period) helped to raise the standard of table arrangements.

Then came the Normans, whose educated and educating taste in cookery may be judged from Sir Walter Scott's historically accurate description of the banquet (1197), given by Prince John after the tournament at Ashby-de-la Zouche. Not only venison pasties, but others composed of the most exquisite foreign delicacies, generically known as karum pie, as well as preparations of larks, pigeons, and nightingales, appeared at these Norman feasts, which, more closely than the Saxon, presaged the club dinner, because they were for the most part bachelors' banquets.<sup>2</sup> Amongst the Norman contributions, first to the French, afterwards to the English *menu*, were ices and cunningly prepared salads. In England, however, as in France, the earliest great kitchen reformers were of the nationality which, personified by Francis Bianco, *alias* White, introduced the club system to Pall Mall and St. James's. In 1533, Catharine de Medici, as bride of Henry II, brought to Paris several Florentine professors of the domestic arts, perfected in the establishments of the princely hosts then ruling the Tuscan capital. A writer of that period, Montaigne, mentions his con-

<sup>1</sup> The reputed original of black-eyed Susan.

<sup>2</sup> *Ivanhoe*, chapter xiv.



versation with one of these artists in Cardinal Caraffa's service. "He expounded to me," says the essayist, with the magisterial air of one declaring a grave theological doctrine, "the difference between the appetite caused by fasting and that excited or piqued after the second or third course. He then dwelt on the philosophy of salads and sauces, passing, in the rich and magnificent terms drawn from the government of an empire, to elevated and important considerations connected with the order of service, and why some dainties are better cold than hot."

Berini was the name of Catharine de Medici's cook, whose instructions descended with unbroken continuity to the days of Francis White. One of Berini's famous dishes was often seen at White's Club, during the first half of the nineteenth century. The genius who prepared it afterwards entered the service of the first Henry Labouchere, Lord Taunton, the second Henry's uncle. As his guest at his Somersetshire house, Quantock Lodge, the present writer saw and tasted it. Its picturesquely parti-coloured appearance was produced by the contrast between slices of ruddy tongue and some white velvety substance, which proved to be tripe, laid on the side of the dish round the other ingredients in the centre. It was, or at least by one of the company was represented as being a dish with a history that gives it special interest in these pages. Lord Taunton's *chef*, Perron, was an importation from White's, where he had introduced the *plat* which so pleased the Quantock Lodge guests. Amongst these was Mr. Gladstone, whose knowledge of social life in mediæval Italy included even its cookery. Perron's ancestors, from time immemorial in the same line as himself, had delighted royal palates by preparing them delicacies whose secret, he said, had descended from the sixteenth-century Berini to Signor Francesco Bianco, the founder of White's Club. Bianco's recipes were all preserved, and often referred to in the kitchen archives. Nothing

more likely, declared Mr. Gladstone, than that one speciality of White's Club should be identical with the favourite dainty of the French queen. Other dishes traditionally distinctive of that institution will presently be given a place among the characteristic products of club kitchens. They may appropriately be preceded by a retrospect of club cookery from mediæval times.

Neither at Hoccleve's Court of Good Company, nor in the societies which, at different intervals, followed it, did the club cellar or cuisine fall below, if it did not rise above, the high-water mark of the time. While taking their ease at their inn, the primitive clubmen did not dispense with the elaborate ceremonial proper to the feasting table in the Middle Ages, or the graduated hierarchy of butlers, pantlers, tasters, and carvers. The carvers, indeed, must have had an easy time of it. Joints, roast or boiled, did not become the chief items in the bill of fare till the seventeenth century.<sup>1</sup> The Court of Good Company, if not their Mermaid successors, chiefly confined themselves to "made" dishes. These largely consisted of flesh, fish, or fowl, reduced to a pulp, and prepared with fried fruit, spices, and wine. The luxury in most esteem, *blamange (sic)*, consisted of pounded chicken, almond, rice, and white sugar, tinted just enough with sandal-wood, or blood, to secure for it the name of the rose. Another confection of the same class, gracing the Good Company board when Sir Henry Somer was the guest of honour, *amedon*, must have been nearly if not quite the same as the *mortrews* which Chaucer celebrates in the *Canterbury Tales*. It formed another variety of the *compote*, which, made of meat, was as much a club-standing dish under Richard II and Henry IV. as the fruit *compote* is at the Anglo-German *table d'hôtes* of our own day.

Eggs, from the first, were much used in the four-

<sup>1</sup> Joints of meat were particularly patronized by Charles II, who was always regaled on them by Lady Castlemaine.

teenth-century cuisine, and their yokes suffused amedon or mortreus with a much appreciated saffron hue. At other times when chicken formed the *pièce de résistance*, it was nearly always boiled, and served with verjuice or sorrel sauce. At the best houses of call used as club centres, croquettes, rissoles, haggis, black pudding, and sausages of various kinds were as familiar in Lancastrian or Tudor times as beef-steaks and mutton-chops afterwards became.

Between 1575 and 1621 the Mermaid and the Apollo entertainments marked a new and better stage in club cookery. These confraternities were the earliest to acquaint themselves with and adopt the kitchen and table reforms for which the English clubman first, and the English household afterwards, owe undying gratitude to the sound common sense and the innovating genius of William Rabisha, whose name and writings have already been mentioned with the pioneers and oracles of the British cuisine. He it was who closed the era of animal food, taken in the form of pulp, and seasoned with barbaric sauces, and who, at the school of cookery which he opened in the City, taught the art of roasting game and poultry and bringing them to table after the fashion of to-day. The Civil Club in 1675 regularly opened with boiled meats, and continued with game or poultry, each item cooked and supplemented according to Rabisha's instructions. The earliest club bills of fare prepared on Rabisha's principles, and therefore the earliest club dinners of the modern type, belong, not to St. James's or Pall Mall but were those of the Civil Club, under the already mentioned Bryan Corcoran's presidency<sup>1</sup> between the years 1780 and 1830. Soup, fish, poultry, ragouts, and joints appeared at these quarterly feasts. The opening *purée*, generally some bird, was almost a

<sup>1</sup> The present writer's obligation, for whatever concerns the Civil Club, to the present Mr. Bryan Corcoran has been confessed, it will be remembered, on an earlier page.

meal in itself, because often it contained whole the duck, the partridge, or other bird which gave its name to the dish. Then, at the West End club would come a chine of mutton, a fillet of beef, and at Arthur's invariably veal *à la royale*.

At this point, however, may be given the *menu* which, during the year 1707, a certain Squire Hill approved for a party of friends at White's. Two sorts of soup, a *purée* of ducks, and a bisque of partridges were followed by three or four varieties of fish. These gave place to marrow puddings, sweetbreads, oyster loaves, and mince pies. This substantial refection derives additional interest from the fact that it was among the earliest at which the different dishes did not appear on the table, but were served from the sideboard. This *à la Russe* method was, however, seemingly not altogether the novelty it might have been thought. It had, as a fact, been adopted at bachelor parties in Tudor times. After that, it had fallen into disuse. The credit of reviving it belongs to Lord Castlereagh's *maitre d'hôtel*, Montoy, who also, for a time, presided over the culinary arrangements of the Travellers', and who, as regards the management of that august society, condescendingly recognized in his employer who founded it "my noble colleague." At the Travellers', Montoy, who might have been twin brother to Thackeray's Mirobolant in *Pendennis*, did not disdain certain suggestions (inspirations he called them), of Colonel Damer,<sup>1</sup> Richard Ford, the Devonian traveller in Spain, Lord Marcus Hill,<sup>2</sup> and Talleyrand. The two first had consulted him about the cooking of the first canvas-back ducks ever seen in England, a present from the American diplomatist, Featherstonehaugh to his friends at the club. The last won his approval of the custom just introduced from France of taking parmesan immediately before cheese, and madeira immediately after.

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Dorchester, 1847-52.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for Evesham, 1837-47.

At the particular point in the first half of the nineteenth century now reached, the club epicures, and the *chefs* whom they favoured, might have been divided into two schools. That represented at the Alfred by the first Earl of Dudley, who died in the March of 1833, without exactly proposing to itself an ideal of plain living and high thinking, did what it could to discourage the vaulting ambition of the gastronomic masters. English cookery, Lord Dudley and his friends maintained, when good, was the best the world could show. "Do not," he said to Alvanley, "talk to me about *entrées* and *entremées*. Nothing in the world can beat a good soup, a neck of venison, a duckling with green peas, or a chicken with asparagus." Lord Dudley's wholesomely patriotic influence upon the club dinner table radiated from the Alfred to a wide circumference, and is felt at the Athenæum, the United Service, and many other clubs to this day. Dudley's recommendation of a famous cooked-beef shop, patronized by George IV as regent, became instrumental in ensuring a supply of this meat, roast or boiled, hot or cold, throughout clubland, and no item in the daily *menu* was ever more in demand.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, vivurs like Lord Alvanley thought that the art of dining had seldom been better understood than by the prodigal feeders of Imperial Rome. The true reason, it came to be said, why the witty *gourmet* had given up the Alfred, as well as greatly diminished his attendance at White's and Brooks's, was the difficulty of getting his favourite dish, a *suprême de volaille*, made to his liking. It ought, he held, to be composed entirely from the tit-bits of poultry known as the oysters. It thus, of course, took some twenty fowls to furnish forth one dish of moderate size. The

<sup>1</sup> The popularity of Bellamy's historic cold joints already mentioned suggested to some purveyors in or near St. Martin's Lane the preparation and sale of beef better cooked than was possible at any private establishment, and always sent out so hot that in *The Art of Dining*, p. 125, Hayward mentions the possibility of sending a round to Birmingham without any loss of heat or gravy.

*suprême* of ordinary dinner-tables had, before Alvanley's day, secured for itself a high place among club delicacies, and was served everywhere but at the Athenæum. That exception has been anecdotally explained. John Wilson Croker had induced Lord Hertford to dine with him at his house at Molesley. A *suprême* appeared in honour of the great man, who, before he could be induced to take any of it, said: "Only one artist in the world, my own chef, can prepare this thing properly. Yours, of course," the guest presently added, "is detestable." "Now, I have you, my lord," rejoined the host. "That dish came from the hands of your own cook, who is at this moment in my house." "Then, all I can say," replied the marquis, "is, you must have spoiled his palate by drinking beer with him." It must have been a Pyrrhic victory for Croker. The little incident left so much soreness behind as to make the dish an abomination to him. He never talked about it again, and did all he could to discourage its appearance at the Athenæum.

With one characteristic addition to the menu of that club, made during his lifetime, Croker had nothing to do. Colonel William Mure of Caldwell, the historian of Greek literature, during one of his tours in Attica, had proved the excellence of the native turkeys when fattened on the olives of Hymettus. Some of these birds, together with the necessary olives, he brought back with him and acclimatized at his Scotch country seat, and occasionally presented them to his chief London club. Hence the occasional appearance some years afterwards on the Athenæum dining-list of turkeys prepared in the Hymettian manner.

A very different kind of writer, the creator of Pecksniff, popularized pike and carp, and more than won London clubs by recipes brought back by him from Salisbury. But long before then Arthur's South of England connection had made much the same dishes

a feature in its cuisine.<sup>1</sup> There is no salmon like that taken from the Christchurch waters, nor trout to compare with those caught in the districts watered by the Hampshire Avon. To be tasted at their highest perfection they must be done over a fire, if possible, of myrtle wood. All this was diligently impressed upon the cook at Arthur's by the Wiltshire and Hampshire squires who at one time dominated the club. The tradition has been handed down through generations, and to-day Arthur's arrangements of fish and fowl—the latter especially, including wheatears and reeves—are among the best things to be eaten in St. James's Street.

The club popularity of marrow from the earliest times has already been mentioned. Marrow-bones, clothed in snowy white napkins with the necessary silver accompaniments, already an institution of the place, were always ordered by the historian Gibbon when he dined at Boodle's. From Boodle's, its cradle in the St. James's quarter, this dish next grew into high favour at the Windham, and, at the instance of his private secretary Algernon Greville, was never wanting at the Union when the Duke of Wellington talked of dining there.

The great events through which the Duke had lived, or in which he had taken part, coincided with the opening of a new epoch in the club dinner-table. First came the question of time. In St. James's or Pall Mall, as elsewhere, the dinner-hour had varied through centuries to and fro from any time between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. Oliver Cromwell always dined at 1.0; Joseph Addison, whether in his lodgings, at his house of call, or in the convivial fraternities he frequented, never later than 2.0. That was also the time at which the poet Alexander Pope and his

<sup>1</sup> This detail was given me personally by Mr. Hayward, who at the White Hart Hotel, Salisbury, discovered the origin of the great novelist's fresh-water additions to his *menu*.

Twickenham neighbour, Horace Walpole, sat down to their chief meal. In 1740 Pope complains of his friend Lady Suffolk inviting her guests for the fashionably advanced but painfully inconvenient 4 o'clock. Between 1804 and 1810 6 p.m. replaced 3 to 4 as the college dinner-time at Oxford. The innovation shortly afterwards spread to the London clubs.

While absent on his campaigns, Wellington got into the habit of not sitting down to table till the day's fighting was done, and, whenever that might be, generally to a beefsteak-pudding as a dish that would not spoil by keeping. On his return to London he brought with him these habits. The 7 p.m. or 7.30 p.m. dinner-hour was the social monument of the conqueror of Waterloo. So, too, as regards the bill of fare. The *pièce de résistance* and potatoes *au naturel*, both coeval with the revolutionary period of 1793, were introduced by the Duke's officers, first at the United Service and thence to the neighbouring establishments.

Meanwhile the Revolution had overthrown the aristocratic hospitalities of the Faubourg St. Germain and replaced them with cafés and restaurants. After some experience at these, the unemployed chefs of the French nobility drifted across the Channel, and soon, to their great advantage, reorganized club cuisines. Thus, while domiciled at Gore House, but on one of his occasional visits to France, Count D'Orsay in Paris complained that French gastronomy had followed the example of society, emigrated to England, and had no wish to return, adding: "We do not absolutely die of hunger here, and that is all that can be said."

This was in 1852. Some quarter of a century, however, before that, as will presently be seen, the Parisian artist of the kitchen had taken his place among the club makers of St. James's; while, much more recently, Felix, the great captain's chef, lent for a time by his grace to the Union, had improved at that club on the Duke's favourite beefsteak-pudding



by the addition to it of oysters and mushrooms. In the same place he also bequeathed to his successor the idea of a mutton-chop pudding, with oysters but without mushrooms, that remained for some time a Union dish. In 1827 a French cook of wider immortality than Felix obtained the great opportunity which made him part-creator of an institution that marks an epoch in a narrative like the present. At the date now recalled the club palate generally had been educated to a highly fastidious point, while, after a temporary lull, the passion for play raged once more at least as widely and feverishly as it had ever done. Between the western end of Piccadilly and the east side of Leicester Square there existed thirty-six gambling houses, all of them filled night after night, and many of them known to be little better than swindling dens, in which dishonestly kept hazard and faro-tables emptied the pockets of the unwary.

These were the circumstances under which it occurred to an astute tradesman of the smaller sort that a fortune might be made out of an establishment in which the attractions of an honestly managed gambling-room were combined with those of a first-rate cuisine. Hitherto he had been content with making shillings or at most pounds from the lowly wayfarer. He would now build a fortune on the foundation-stone of the "nobs."

William Crockford, born in 1775, had begun by laying the odds against horses to his customers in the little parlour behind his fishshop close to Temple Bar. According to rumour, more illicit forms of excitement were known on the premises. Gradually he conceived the notion of reviving, within the walls which were once Watier's, the culinary perfection and speculative charms of that institution, dismantled in 1819. He found a partner in a certain Taylor. The two therefore began business together in Watier's old Piccadilly house. The ex-fishmonger was evidently

the master mind, and when, after working together a year, the partners separated, Crockford had acquired so much capital and so many backers as on an entirely unprecedented scale, without difficulty and with great *éclat*, to open in February, 1827, what his patrons called his new concern. Magnificent, perfect in taste and beauty, it contained the finest suite of rooms in England, surpassing in splendour, as those who knew both buildings said, even the Palace of Versailles.

Its architecture would have been little without its cook. That personage, the indispensable joint-creator of Crockford's, stands forth from the cooks of the world, not only as a consummate artist but as the *Gil Blas* of the kitchen. Louis Eustache Ude was the son of a scullion in Louis XVI's household by an attractive and vivacious milliner. The mother, seeing her own good looks and cleverness perpetuated in her boy, thought him too good for life below stairs. She apprenticed him first to an engraver, then to a printer, finally to a haberdasher. After this he became a commercial traveller. Wearying of that employment, he next tried the stage. This not suiting him, he set up an office, drove in a smart cabriolet, and turned broker or jobber on the Bourse. Next, trying official life as an inspector of gambling-houses, he was seized with a desire to breathe once more the natal atmosphere, and donned the white cap and blouse with which it had been from the first the scullion's paternal ambition to see him invested. In that capacity he began with the Princess Letitia Bonaparte. After the Bourbon Restoration of 1813 he came to England and soon obtained great engagements—successively with the Duke of York and with the acknowledged head of the English *gourmands* and *gourmets*, the second Earl of Sefton. The completion of Crockford's palatial structure was finished soon enough to secure him as *maitre d'hôtel*. The same year closed the life of his old employer, the Duke of York, and elicited from



WILLIAM CROCKFORD.

(From a print kindly lent by the Devonshire Club.)



Ude himself the comment : " Ah ! *mon pauvre duc*, how much you shall miss me where you are gone ! "

An early chapter of Disraeli's *Sibyl* gives a notion of the life at Crockford's as true as the descriptions in most fashionable fictions, notably those of a novel called after the place, are false. No representative of the new wealth, after the manner set forth by the romances of high life, was ever lured to the place that he might be plucked and pigeoned in its play-rooms. The committee discouraged all candidates except men of station and means. Whether hazard or whist, the gambling arrangements were always above suspicion. The playroom at the end of a long suite was next to the apartment in which, throughout the season, supper of the most elaborate kind was going on.

The magnificent peer who as Lord Gwydyr had led the dandies at Watier's a decade earlier, was now, as Lord Willoughby D'Eresby, the most imposing and authoritative among the dandies at Crockford's. Those ornaments of the place, if sometimes fops, were seldom fribbles, noodles, or spendthrifts. At Crockford's the future Napoleon III, then an exile, completed his education in the reserve of manner and tongue which afterwards made him the sphinx of Europe, and which he always said he had learned from the grave, silent men of the English turf ; there, too, he refused in 1830 the offer of the brand-new Greek crown, while his great friend D'Orsay showed himself, not only an arbiter of fashion but a man of first-rate accomplishments, sagacity,<sup>1</sup> and wit. D'Orsay's social part was, like his personal endowments, hereditary ; for his father, Le Beau D'Orsay, one of Napoleon's generals, and

<sup>1</sup> D'Orsay's judgment of character was at fault in the case of Louis Napoleon, who, he said, having *pas d'esprit*, had no future. But then, of all those conversant with the talk at Crockford's, Benjamin Disraeli alone correctly predicted his future. In that forecast he was confirmed at the time by no one else except the host at Gunnersbury at himself and Louis Napoleon, Baron N. M. Rothschild, who never doubted the great things in store for the Bonaparte adventurer. So the present writer was told by the first Lord Lamington.

particularly distinguished at the battle of Salamanca, had passed for the handsomest man, not only in the French Army but in all Europe. D'Orsay's stately and symmetrical figure, developed to perfection by all manly exercises, clothed in faultless taste but in the extreme of fashion, so dazzled spectators with a sense of splendour that, as they saw him driving in his tilbury, they involuntarily compared him with a gorgeous dragonfly skimming through the air. The charm of his conversational wit was heightened by the blend of French and English that he chose for its medium. Patronized by Lady Holland on his first arrival in England, he was given a chair at dinner next to his hostess. The lady was so stout as to find a difficulty in keeping her dinner napkin in her lap. "Please pick it up," she said, with a bland but authoritative smile to the count. The performance and the request were repeated so often that at last D'Orsay wearied of the exercise, saying : "*Ne ferais-je pas mieux, Madame, de m'asseoir sous la table, afin de pouvoir vous passer la serviette plus rapidement?*"

Crockford's itself was the scene of another witticism. The diarist known in his day as Dandy Raikes had written D'Orsay an anonymous letter, impressing the wax which fastened it with something that might have been the top of a thimble. The recipient of this missive soon found out who its writer was, and did not forget that his face was much pitted with smallpox. Going up to him in Crockford's morning-room, he pleasantly addressed him with : "Ha ! ha ! my good Raikes, the next time you write an anonymous letter, you must not seal it with your nose."

Membership of White's had never been more coveted than that of Crockford's. To belong to it one need not be a gambler, but one must be something of a personage. The Duke of Wellington seldom played at all, and never played deep. Lord Palmerston was equally careful ; so were Lord Lyndhurst, John Wilson Croker,



CROCKFORD'S CLUBHOUSE, ST. JAMES'S STREET, 1828.

*(From a print kindly lent by the Devonshire Club.)*





and the most impressive of the Peelites, Sir James Graham. None of them, however, failed nightly to look in at Crockford's. The *corps de diplomatique* was represented among others by Count Matuscewitz, Prince Lieven's colleague at Palmerston's conference for peacefully settling the affairs of Belgium and Holland. Fresh from the St. Petersburg *chancellerie*, the joint Russian plenipotentiary had, with the rest of the delegates, reached London in 1830. Like another of his countrymen at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Count Woronzow, Matuscewitz did not return when the special business which had brought him here was settled. As permanent Ambassador, he took root in this country, spoke the language perfectly, adopted English habits and tastes, and only departed to become Russian Minister at Naples.

The triumphs of the culinary art achieved for Crockford's table, by Ude first and Francatelli afterwards, were enjoyed to the accompaniment of talk worthy of their excellence. The Whig and Tory whips, Henry Baring and Ben Stanley, sparkled competitively with wit and repartee, only at times eclipsed by another member of the club named Auriol, whose good looks and personal charm were crowned by an unfailingly healthy appetite, and whose uniform luck won him the name of "Crockford's ugly customer." Nine and five were Auriol's lucky numbers, as they were also the favourite ones with another of Crockford's leviathans, Ball Hughes, though less frequently with Auriol's good results. Lords Chesterfield, Lichfield, and Cantilupe, the last of the dandies, as Willoughby D'Eresby was the first and greatest, and Sir Vincent Cotton played habitually for stakes not less heavy than Auriol and Hughes. The scene of their operations, in comparison with the supper-room, was small, most of it being filled by the large green table presided over by the croupiers. Page, Darking, and Bacon, each equally conspicuous for a fateful, bland impassivity of countenance, a

general sleekness of appearance, stiff, spotless white neckcloths, and the dexterity with which they raked away the stakes of the punters at the table. In a corner of the room, from a desk somewhat raised above the floor, the proprietor himself as groom-porter silently and incessantly watched over all, scrutinized every one who entered and every coin or note staked. The fishmonger was fifty-two when he opened his "hell." He had, therefore, passed middle age at the time of the incidents now described in the forties, and his face had acquired an expression of sly and oily omniscience.

Crockford's, like known "hells" of every kind, received its deathblow from the Report of the House of Commons Gambling Committee, 1844.<sup>1</sup> Before then, and particularly in 1832, Crockford's became more of a socio-political lounge for party malcontents from both camps. At the supper-table there sat side by side Benjamin Disraeli, in the glory of his jet-black curls, Bulwer-Lytton, proud of his abundant auburn hair, the Waterloo heroes, Lord Anglesey and Sir Hussey Vivian. Near these, in the same ringing voice as a little while before he was calling the main in the playroom, Tom Duncombe, dandy, demagogue, the Chartist patrician champion, told Colonel Armstrong, famed for his pungent comments and rasping repartees, how, looking in on the Upper House Reform debate a few hours earlier, he had heard Lord Carnarvon say that to support the Bill a man must have a fool's head on his shoulders with a traitor's heart in his bosom.

On Tuesday, May 10th, the Duke of Wellington was sent for by the King, and, abortively as it turned out,

<sup>1</sup> As for Crockford himself, notwithstanding heavy losses in mining and other speculations, he left behind him on his death, in 1844, £700,000. His club building served for the Military, Naval, and County Club till 1851. Then it became the Wellington Dining Rooms. Known afterwards for a short time as the St. George's Club, it remained without a permanent occupant till its acquisition in 1877 by the Devonshire Club, which at the same time acquired the back premises fronting Arlington Street, formerly belonging to the Arlington Club.

undertook the formation of a ministry to replace the resigned "Greylings." The same evening the appearance on the premises for a few minutes of the Duke of Wellington himself, attended by Lord Sefton, roused the men who at Crockford's table lost or staked their thousands with absolutely unruffled tranquillity to uncontrollable emotions of applausive welcome. Within a week the Duke, after having kissed hands as First Lord of the Treasury, failed to bring a new Government together. Crockford's, before any other club, knew of the failure by the recently jubilant Sefton entering the place with the look and manner of a lost spirit.

By 1835 the play at Crockford's had reached a greater height than ever. Stories of the ruin of families descending to generations yet unborn so multiplied in number and circumstantiality that the growing scandal could not be ignored. Even thus, however, Crockford's, had it stood alone, might have remained untouched, for its havoc was at least worked honestly. The bank won, as it always does, but never by foul play. Nor was it, indeed, at Crockford's there occurred the incident which led to the fatal investigation at Westminster.

A Balliol undergraduate visiting London on his way home at the end of term had gone to the opera with others of his little party. Coming out, he told his friends he had to see a lady into her carriage, promising presently to join them at Evans's Covent Garden supper-rooms. He never came. At the opening of the next Oxford term nothing had been heard of him. In his absence his rooms on the arch above the porter's lodge were given to a freshman. His nearest relatives did not know certainly what had happened till he reappeared in the family dining-room some years later. The mystery of the whole episode explained itself in the following way. The undergraduate of the forties, on the eventful evening at Covent Garden Opera, had

no sooner lingered behind his friends for a few minutes than he realized that he was coming to the end of his ready money. He had put up at a Jermyn Street hotel, next door to which he knew there was a public hazard-table. Believing in his star and his luck, he went in, took his place at the table, and called a main. He contrived to leave the room a little richer than when he entered. Going into Piccadilly, he saw a coach starting from the "White Horse" cellar for Southampton. He got a seat, and reached the Hampshire seaport shortly before a vessel was announced to lift anchor for South Africa. There, he suddenly recollected, his maternal relatives had some property. The next day he was on the seas, and in due course found himself at Pietermaritzburg. Here he soon came on family friends, found occupation as a rough-rider and farmer, made a prudent marriage, became a prosperous colonial worthy and politician, only revisiting his native land when he could give this satisfactory account of himself.

Meanwhile, his sudden withdrawal had caused natural distress to his family. One of his relations, then M.P. for Winchester, alone shrewdly conjectured almost exactly what had happened. Other experiences of the same kind had fallen in this gentleman's way. In conjunction with his most intimate friend, Mr. Milner Gibson, he obtained the parliamentary committee<sup>1</sup> which examined representatives of every class engaged in gambling operations of all kinds, east and west of Temple Bar, and reported that on the declaration of three inhabitants the police should be empowered to visit all suspected houses so as effectually to stamp

<sup>1</sup> The chairman of this body was Lord Palmerston. Among its best known members were Viscount Jocelyn, Sir Horace Seymour, Mr. James Wortley, Mr. Lascelles, Mr. Baillie Cochrane, and Mr. Milner Gibson. But, together with the last of these, the chief promoter and most active prosecutor of the inquiry was a member of the same name as the present writer, who is indebted to that long-departed relative and the late Lord Lamington for the hitherto unpublished details now given.

out the growing curse of "hells," high and low. The informations thus invited began to reach the police-courts in shoals. Crockford's, vainly urged Palmerston, a member of the committee, was a genuine club. Its play, restricted to a single room, formed merely an accident of the place. Upon none of its arrangements had there ever rested a suspicion of malfeasance. The magistrates would make no exception in favour of the "hell" frequented by hereditary and elective legislators. Gambling was illegal, and the law enforced against one must be enforced against all. With Crockford's there disappeared one of the most familiar, and as it had been immemorially considered characteristic phases of club life. Games of pure chance were driven from the West End joint-stock palaces. As a consequence, the money won at billiards or bridge (whist having now practically gone out among club-men) is inconsiderable, and gambling in the old sense has become scarcely less obsolete than the personal equipments once commonly used, according to a contemporary writer,<sup>1</sup> by the gamblers—the pieces of leather used to protect the lace ruffles, and the masks worn to conceal their emotions when playing for high stakes.

Several who had been noticeable figures at Crockford's survived till within measurable distance of the twentieth century. Such were Sir W. H. Gregory, to whom the present writer is indebted for many of these details, the second Lord Wenlock's son, Frank Lawley, and Charles Greville's friend and contemporary in sport alternately his confederate and rival, George Payne. The last of these, like Greville himself, was a perfectly preserved and typical specimen of the old turfite school. Both men looked upon racing as a business not less serious than politics, and as one exclusively proper to aristocracy, wealth, and education. Both equally detested mere trifling of every kind, could not tolerate

<sup>1</sup> *The Decline of Aristocracy*, by Arthur Ponsonby (Fisher Unwin), p. 73.

the vapid or frivolous talk of the modern dining-table, drawing-room, or club, and abominated the class fusion, the alloy of wealth and mere notoriety, which, as they thought, were the ruin of society. Both had received the regulation Eton and Christchurch training, lived in the same set, kept up the knack of classical quotation, and thoroughly understood horses. Payne, however, differed from Greville in possessing hosts of friends and no enemies, as well as in having, both at Newmarket and in St. James's Street, plunged more heavily, and on the whole more disastrously. Inheriting from his father Sulby Hall, Northamptonshire, when scarcely of age, he lost at Doncaster over £20,000. Entering Crockford's a few days after this knockdown blow as he called it, he said to Gregory: "This is my last appearance at any of the places. I have made up my mind to cut the turf entirely, and stick to hunting." Had that resolution been fulfilled, he would have lived and died a prosperous, hospitable, and highly cultured country gentleman—the part for which he had been cast by kindly Nature and generous fortune. For, as the Sulby squire, he had been sheriff of Northampton while still under five and twenty. Even after his fortunes began to wane he was master of the Pytchley. Alas! it was too late; he could not shake off the fascinations of the play-room and the racecourse. Two fortunes and his ancestral home passed from him. All he got in their place was a dual success during the second half of his life—that of Clementine in the Thousand Guineas and of Glauca in the Cesarewitch. He had also, it is true, the satisfaction of seeing his "magpie" colours, the well-known black and white, thoroughly popular wherever they appeared. George Payne's later days, like those of his friend Greville, were embittered by a sense of misspent time and lost opportunities. To one human being only did he confide these regrets, the late Rev. J. B. Fleming, who, when Canon of York, was frequently with him during his

last illness, and to whom the present writer is indebted for his knowledge of the scene and character on which, in 1878, the curtain fell.

Before Crockford's ceased to exist, the connection of its creator with its most famous cook had been severed. Ude's successor in St. James's Street was Francatelli. When the latter had been deprived, by the events already narrated, of that opportunity of exercising his genius, Sir W. H. Gregory's, George Payne's, and Frank Lawley's organizing energies combined to provide him with a new opening in the short-lived Coventry Club, Piccadilly, which those just named had done more than any one else to call into existence, and which made a show of perpetuating the traditions and carrying on the life of Crockford's. The hazard-table could not, of course, be reproduced. Its best-known members, however, were men of sufficient mark to impress the club with a character distinguishing it from other institutions which came into being about the same time. Sir William H. Gregory's rare social gifts delighted successive generations of clubmen during his parliamentary course from 1857 to 1871, ending only with his appointment to the Governorship of Ceylon in the last-named year. To the Coventry he attracted several representatives of the old Irish squirearchy, notably Seymour Fitzgerald, M.P. for Horsham from 1852 to 1859. Returning to England from Ceylon, he regained and till his death, in 1892, held almost the same social place as he had adorned the best part of half a century earlier.

## CHAPTER X

### THE CLUB TRIUMVIRATE OF WHIP, CELLAR, AND CHEF

From Crockford's to the Carlton—A great Conservative Whip in the making and his club work when made—How "Billy" Holmes got in for Berwick-on-Tweed—How the Carlton, uniting all Conservative sections, compensates the neutrality of White's and counteracts Brooks's—"Billy's" successor, Colonel Taylor—"King" Hudson in the Carlton smoking-room—Other instances of the club's discreetly tolerant hospitality, and enlargement of Conservative influence by non-insistence on severe party test for membership—W. E. Gladstone, the second Duke of Wellington, the third Sir Robert Peel, and the welcome given to W. H. Smith—Lord Abergavenny's benevolent dictatorship, and its well-judged results—His twentieth-century successors—"Bear" Ellice's tit-for-tat with "Billy" Holmes in founding the Reform—Authorship—Ambiguity of name—Joseph Hume its godfather—And other of its early celebrities—W. M. Thackeray scribbling copy in a quiet corner while printer's hoy waits, presages Henry Labouchere similarly occupied at a later day—Garibaldi, an honorary member—Party conventions and club meetings—The succession to Gladstone, the choice of "C. B."—Joseph and his brethren—The Junior Carlton—Conservative Club episodes and cookery—The National Liberal Club makers—The Constitutional Clubs—Club makers below stairs—Great artists of the club kitchen—Rise and progress of Alexis Soyer—His wide and enduring influence on the club dinner *menu*.

THE figures of most prominent interest in the last chapter are not so much characteristic representatives of the club movement during the first half of the nineteenth century, as, in taste, temper, associations, personal habits, and dress, the survivors of a bygone dispensation. Instead of following the central stream of club progress, we have been drawn by the current of our subject into one of its backwaters. Crockford's marked a reaction towards Watier's, and was essentially a Georgian product. The club makers and members with whom we have now to do, like the



methods and economy of their institutions, as in time, so in spirit and temper, belong to the Victorian age.

Among the newly fledged graduates of Trinity College, Dublin, in 1795, was the son of a rich Sligo brewer whose resourcefulness, inventive ingenuity, and refusal to be beaten by circumstances marked him out, in the contemporary opinion of the place, for a career of bustling and successful notoriety. Grasping the sword as soon as he had put on his bachelor's gown, he soon found himself under orders to proceed with his regiment to the West Indies. While there, he became military secretary to Sir Thomas Hislop. "Short of creating anything from nothing, there is no emergency to which Holmes can prove unequal, or no difficulty out of which he cannot find a way." Such was his commanding officer's estimate of the man destined to organize victory for the Conservative cause by founding the Carlton Club.

In 1807 a lucky marriage with a wealthy dowager, Lady Stronge, made him independent of a profession. The way, therefore, had now become clear to realizing the parliamentary ambitions, that his Irish readiness of wit and speech had long caused him secretly to indulge. His first seat was the Cornish borough Grampound. His Tory friends were then opposing the Portland administration. Holmes made himself so invaluable as a party man-of-all-work, that, on the Tories coming back, Perceval gave effect to a general wish of his supporters by putting down Holmes's name for some official post thereafter. Not, however, till 1820 did Holmes receive from Liverpool the Treasurership of the Ordnance, which he held till 1830. Nature, however, whether on the side of the ins or the outs, had created "Billy" Holmes to be a Whip. That was the capacity in which, for thirty years, he kept Sir Robert Peel's majority together. His constituency during that critical term was no longer Grampound, but Berwick-on-Tweed. His return for this borough

took place in a manner highly characteristic of all those concerned in it, and of the time.

In his election business he had the help of his son Tom, the popular parliamentary agent, and the sole manager of his father's business in the border town. The following description was given by Tom Holmes himself to the late Markham Spofforth, the present writer's lifelong acquaintance, and if an old Carlton story, is no mere club invention. The Berwick poll had been kept open till there were no more votes to be recorded, and "Billy" Holmes was twenty to the bad. Tom at once went to his father's committee-room, and reminded the thirty committee men, whom he found sitting round the table, that he had only paid the last £500 on the solemn assurance that his father was safe. "Yet," he added, "the poll is now closing, and my father is twenty votes behind." "But," said the chairman, "you will find it is still as I said, for all of us here have yet to vote." "Then why on earth," came the natural rejoinder, "don't you go and do so?" "Because," was the answer, "we have not yet had our regulars." These, it appeared, meant £10 apiece. Tom therefore placed a ten-pound note before each of the hangers-back. They trooped off like one man to the polling-booth, and the founder of the Carlton Club secured the border seat.

His insight into character, his intimacy with the family connections, the personal interests, and ambitions of the Conservative rank and file, made the elder Holmes extraordinarily skilful in dispensing patronage. "Holmes," said his chief, "consolidated the party by playing upon the foibles of individual members and sections as upon an old fiddle."¹ Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington recognized that White's had lost its old distinctive colour. "And," added the Duke, "we must have something to counter-

¹ Disraeli might easily have been told of this remark; at any rate, he applied the same metaphor to Sir Robert Peel's influence over the House of Commons.

act the vitality of Brooks's." Agreed on this point, the two chiefs were also unanimous that the practical details of the new Conservative society should be left entirely to the ingenious and invincible "Billy." Irishmen in England were then fond of working together. Compatriotic sentiment seems to have had more to do than party zeal in winning Lord Clanwilliam's warm support of his fellow-Celt's enterprise, and even facilitating the purchase of Lord Kensington's house in Carlton Gardens as the Carlton's first home.

On the 11th May, 1832, the Duke of Wellington and Lord Lyndhurst rallied their followers at Apsley House. "You will have," said the chiefs, "a club which, when finished, will differ from other places of the kind, in being the daily resort of men representing the whole party in active co-operation. On the Sunday following the Duke took the chair at the Carlton's opening dinner. This occasion was unique in the history of club dinners, because there were present several who, like the diarist Thomas Raikes, repudiated party labels, or openly called themselves lukewarm Tories, not to be relied upon too implicitly by the Whip in any division. Of these Peel smilingly whispered Holmes, "Then, by true companionship, we must educate them into good Conservatives."

Words could not more aptly and accurately express the socio-political mission continuously fulfilled from that time to this by the club whose agency, within ten years from its foundation, helped Holmes, by a series of gradual advances, to change Peel's Conservative minority of 314 in 1832 into a majority of 81 four years after the accession of Queen Victoria. Dying in the January of 1851, Holmes, forecasting the future with the eye of experience and hope, never despaired about the Conservative reaction which his club would prove instrumental in effecting—not, as he always maintained, under the fourteenth Lord Derby, but under Disraeli. By more than twenty years he missed seeing

the fulfilment of his prophecy in the election of 1874, giving, as that did, for the first time during forty years, his party not only place but power.

Some of his contemporaries survived to see a compatriot of "Billy" Holmes, in Household Suffrage days, take his place as chief party Whip and Carlton Club pillar. This was Colonel Taylor. In appearance the model of a well-proportioned, athletic, handsome, and genial Irishman, he was, like the Marquis of Abergavenny, then Viscount Nevill, whose portrait, admirably painted by Mr. Mark Milbank, is among the club's most becoming and most valued ornaments, one of Lord Derby's and Disraeli's confidential advisers, as well as perhaps the most popular Parliament man of his time, and as patronage secretary at once so conciliatory, persuasive, and keen, that his whisper or look would prevent either absentees or pairs. The most pointed and freshest *raconteur* in all Irish matters of his day, he had a conversational colleague rather than competitor in W. H. Russell of the *Times*. This little group was often joined by Lord Abergavenny's chief henchman, Markham Spofforth, of whom more presently, and to whom the Carlton was a home as well as a club. That was what the place had been for a deposed railway sovereign, during his retirement. In 1870 there still sat in the Carlton smoking-room a big, heavy man, whose head still kept some of the drab-coloured, wiry hair which, twenty years earlier, had attracted notice, as, by the side of an overdressed lady in a gorgeous carriage, he rolled on the afternoon drive through Hyde Park. This was the York linen-draper George Hudson. In 1828 he put his inheritance of £30,000 into railway speculation, made more than one fortune for himself, put others in the way of doing the same, and then "fell like Lucifer, never to rise again." He dragged, however, no one down with him, nor divulged any secrets of the prison-house. Friends, therefore, were not wanting to him in his distress. His



*Photo]*

*[Reeves, Lewes.*

THE MARQUIS OF ABERGAVENNY.



house at Knightsbridge, where he had entertained the great Duke of Wellington, the Duke of Cambridge, and other smaller royalties, became the French Embassy. Mrs. Hudson's chariot was put down. The "railway king" himself walked where he had formerly driven, but bore the change of fortune cheerfully, or at least calmly, and remained radiant for the rest of the day after a courteous recognition in the park by Lord Grey. The acquaintances of other days rallied round him. The first Sir George Elliot and Mr. Hugh Taylor became the trustees of a fund subscribed to ensure him £600 a year. His wife and son were still spared to him. For himself, however, he preferred a solitary life in London lodgings. He had ceased to be Member for Sunderland in 1859. The forbearing kindness, traditionally characteristic of its members, was pleasantly shown in the welcome given to Hudson at the club till the close of his life, in 1871. The unfailing resort of his evenings was the smoking-room, where he was always accorded the same seat. "They have," he might in the north-country dialect that he never lost, be heard quietly and pathetically boasting, "made me their chairman." His keen Yorkshire common sense and his equable temper were never displayed with more of dignity, as well as pathos, than during the twenty-three years of eclipse (1848-71) which, in his own words, perfect freedom from anxiety made the happiest time of his life.

The founder of the club, and those for whom he acted, had decided from the first that tolerant and comprehensive hospitality should be one of its principles. That characteristic has been worth to the party many votes on a division in the House. It has also, from time to time, reinforced the club with some of its less known members who have been pillars of strength to the Conservative cause at Westminster. The idea of inducing Disraeli and Gladstone to work together on the Conservative side was long encouraged in

sanguine breasts by their common membership of the club. Gladstone just missed being an original member. He joined at the same time as he took possession of his Albany chambers, in the March of 1833. His name remained on the books, not only after he had ceased to be, in Macaulay's words, the hope of the stern, unbending Tories, but after he had become as much an object of distrust to the new Liberal Conservatives as to the old Whigs. Sir Robert Peel's death, in 1850, marked him out as that statesman's successor in the completion of the Free Trade system and the creation of an untaxed breakfast table. Two years later came his first great and victorious encounter with Disraeli over the Conservative Budget of 1852.

During the same twelvemonth occurred, within the walls of the place, an incident that beneath any roof where the genius of clubability was less strong must have brought the Gladstonian connection with the society to a close. The charge of bribery at the election for Derby, first insinuated against Mr. Horsfall, the Tory Member in December, 1852, not only rallied his friends round him but made him the guest of the evening at a Carlton dinner. Mr. Gladstone did not join the company; he was, however, quietly reading in another room. Some of the diners presently entered; in rather more than audible asides they hinted at the renegade's removal through the open window by a short cut to his proper place, the Reform.<sup>1</sup> Exactly ten years after this the Carlton once more exemplified its real policy by bestowing membership on W. H. Smith, rejected at the Reform in 1862, and by thus securing for the party one of its most esteemed and not least successful House of Commons leaders. As for Mr. Gladstone, his connection with the Carlton long survived his real conversion to Liberalism. Without further molestation or suggestion of his departure, he only took his name off in 1860, two years

<sup>1</sup> For the details of this incident see Morley's *Life*, vol. i. p. 441.



before Mr. W. H. Smith was put on. While still a Carltonian, therefore, he had been for the second time, and then for a full year, Palmerston's Chancellor of the Exchequer. Such are the classical instances of the discriminating superiority to partisan scruples which the club managers have always reserved for themselves the right upon special occasions to show. This judicial and genial elasticity of qualifying test has been maintained and increased in a very special degree by one who, as regards dates to-day, boasts the distinction of being six years older than the club itself. Collaterally descended from the great baron who made monarchs and changed dynasties, Colonel Taylor's and Markham Spofforth's Viscount Nevill, known since 1876 as the Marquis of Abergavenny, has owed his supremacy in the party and its club to his territorial power. Grants from the Crown, united with fortunate marriages, have extended his family sway over three southern counties.

Beauchamps, Braoses, and at least one other line equally illustrious and opulent, had bequeathed to his predecessors and to himself, not only their estates but their mediæval founder's most rare and precious personal attribute, the gracious and genial art of winning favour, as with the rank and file, as of the peerage, so with the commonalty. Hence the happy way in which, as has been related elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> the Lord Burgeny of 1747 (for so the name was then spelt) helped himself and a college friend out of what might, with less tactful adroitness, have been magnified into a charge of homicide. The details, which may be briefly recalled, are to the following effect. One morning a scout was found dead at the bottom of some steep stone steps near Lord Burgeny's rooms. These, or the adjoining chambers, had witnessed some rather noisy festivities on the previous evening. One of the revellers had been heard to threaten the dead servant

<sup>1</sup> *Society in the Country House*, p. 110.

with punishment for some delinquency. The town authorities, having got wind of the affair, hinted that certain noble undergraduates, Lord Charles Scott of the ducal Buccleuchs, as well as Lord Burgeny, might find themselves in the Criminal Court. The academic and municipal authorities met for the purpose of considering the course to be taken. Their deliberations were interrupted by the appearance of the Dean of Christchurch, who, he said, had just received an interesting and important communication from Lord Burgeny. His lordship, it seemed, was filled with creditable concern for the deserving family suddenly deprived of its breadwinner by the occurrence of the previous night. He had just heard from his agent that a lodge-keeper was wanted for one of his parks, and that the gamekeeper and gardener had employment for respectable lads. He could, therefore, offer immediate provision for the household now suffering from the college servant's regrettable death. And so, without scandal and with much praise to Lord Burgeny, the matter ended. Another ancestor of the first marquis, Earl Henry, locally known because of his splendour and puissance as the "grand Duke," threatened with ejection all the marriageable widows on his property if they did not take second husbands to increase of his local voters. Borough Members and shire knights alike were all, of course, in his neighbourhood returned by himself. Some of his electoral pawns took exception to his parliamentary nominees. The "grand Duke," with unruffled and beaming calm, had a contingent of prize-fighters sent down from London to protect his candidates, who, of course, were brought in scatheless and with flying colours at the head of the poll. The first Marquis of Abergavenny had relinquished little of his beneficent absolutism in the club or in the party when, now more than a generation ago, Lord Randolph Churchill asserted his independence of Sir Stafford Northcote not entirely without the

backing of Eridge Castle. He not only liked the courage but sympathized with the sporting instincts of the nineteenth-century reviver of that Tory democracy which he wished the Carlton to reflect. Men of such unchallengeable ascendancy as his can condescend to any personal associations without loss of dignity. Therefore, as king of the committee, in considering the qualifications of candidates, he despised all petty inquisitiveness about personal or social antecedents, and even degrees of political conviction, only inquiring of his henchmen whether the aspirant was a good sort of fellow.<sup>1</sup> During the seventeenth-century parliamentary conflict Thomas Wentworth, Lord Strafford, was known as "the Cock of the North." John Pym, therefore, received from his followers the style "Cock of the South." As a party boss Lord Abergavenny had, not a rival but an ally in a nineteenth-century "Cock of the North," the opulent Tory Yorkshire squire, Andrew Montagu, at different times, and in equal degrees, the good and golden genius of the Carlton itself, of the entire party, and of such among its individual members as needed a patron.

Personal varieties, of the type once familiar, have quite gone out of date in Pall Mall and elsewhere. Club pillars like those just described were the products of a period which has almost as little in common with the twentieth century as the Regency itself. With Sir John E. Gorst, the brains, wisdom, wariness, and statesmanship of the old Randolphian coterie, there disappeared from the club the last representative survivor of the great Abergavenny and Taylor dispensation. To-day the Carlton remnant of the Victorian age comprises few, if any, besides Mr.

<sup>1</sup> What "troubles," like those at Winchester and Rugby in the sixties, were to public schools, incidents verging on the scandalous have since then been to clubs. The only experience of this sort at the Carlton took place late during the eighties, when a financial adventurer was smuggled into the club by the committee, through the agency of a very clever legal M.P., who, not long afterwards, died.

H. D. Greene, K.C.,<sup>1</sup> Mr. Agg Gardner, Mr. A. Baumann, Lord Claud Hamilton,<sup>2</sup> chairman of the Carlton committee, and Viscount Chilston,<sup>3</sup> formerly Mr. Akers Douglas, all happily living, who, like the late Mr. John Bateson, missed by less than half a generation a personal acquaintance with the consummate kitchen organization which secured for the dinner-table Christchurch salmon, caught the same morning in the Hampshire Avon. The near predecessors of these had frequented the club when its famous chef, Palanque, won its fame for his entirely unique arrangements of fowl and truffles, or when George Smythe, reflected at more than one point in Disraeli's *Coningsby*, the exclusive original of Waldemar in his last novel *Endymion*, drank the famous dry champagne that soon came to be known as "Young England's nectar."

Disraeli himself, as Young England's inspiring genius, appropriately left his mark in the new decorations added to the club during 1878. These, as it was, were of sufficiently Oriental magnificence; that they were not more Asiatically gorgeous was due to Lord Abergavenny's restraining influence, exercised, not then for the first time, upon the great man's liking for Semitic colouring. The squire of Hughenden had come up from his Buckinghamshire manor-house one September day dressed, according to his idea of a modern country gentleman, in a short, purple velvet coat and resplendent knickerbockers. Thus attired he was about to enter the Carlton when the master of Eridge met him on the steps. "Dizzy," said the Marquis, "this

<sup>1</sup> M.P. Shrewsbury, 1892, retiring 1906. Treasurer of Middle Temple, 1912, and now bencher. His cousin, Sir Walter Greene, also formerly one of the Cambridgeshire Members, and his son, Raymond Greene, M.P. North Hackney, 1910.

<sup>2</sup> Chairman of the Carlton Club Committee 1913, as well as a recent benefactor of the club by bringing to light, and restoring to their proper place, some well-carved panels and fittings previously covered over.

<sup>3</sup> A prominent and popular figure in the Kentish group, 1883-95. One of the Conservative Whips. Thereafter First Commissioner of Works, with a seat in the Cabinet.

will never do. For Heaven's sake go back to Curzon Street and change!" Dizzy did as he was told, and presently reappeared at the club in the orthodox frock-coat and the regulation topper instead of a loose Tyrolese felt, decorated with a pheasant or peacock plume.

Other times, other manners and other men. Comparing the Carlton present with the Carlton past, one is almost tempted to adapt to the change Burke's lament over the succession of the age of chivalry by that of sophisters, economists, and calculators. Not, indeed, that the glory of the Carlton is extinguished for ever, or even for a day, but the feudal great Panjandrums, the many-acred sporting grand transparencies, wearing their hat at an angle of forty-five degrees, belong to a past which will never again be a present. They have given place to the professional managers of party and the clerkly bosses of faction. There is no great Kentish leader of many legions to confer to-day with presences approaching in picturesqueness to the House of Commons chief, who then still remained something of an "Asian mystery," or his eagle-beaked, eye-flashing *generalissimo*, the fourteenth Earl of Derby. Instead of the nineteenth-century Viscount Nevill, organizing Conservative reaction with the help of Colonel Taylor, or the Whips who came afterwards, the personalities dominating the Carlton to-day are first, of course, the Conservative Premier of the future, complained of perhaps by some as not of the *Vere de Vere* stamp, nevertheless, the indispensable head of his political connection, Mr. Bonar Law, together with his compatriot, the creator and controller of Midland Unionism, Mr. Steel-Maitland, Member for East Birmingham, still wearing as he does the ornaments of varied scholarship and the genial graces of the honour schools.

The most minutely observant, active, and absolutely indefatigable Pall Mall personage, in the years im-

mediately preceding the Victorian era, was, beyond a doubt, the Right Hon. Edward Ellice, the maker of the Reform Club, and still best known in socio-political life by his original *sobriquet*, the "Bear." Not, as Thomas Carlyle has put on record, from any trace of ursine ferocity but from his wiliness, as well perhaps as because of his fortune, acquired in the fur trade. His private residence at 14, Carlton House Terrace<sup>1</sup> gave the Whigs the same rallying point during the Reform period as at an earlier date they had found in Lord Althorp's Albany chambers. No reward might well have seemed too great for a man who by his inexhaustible energy and vast wealth did more than any other to hasten, if not to ensure, victory for the Grey Government. Returned for Coventry in the first Reform Parliament, Ellice held the seat at each successive step of his parliamentary rise till his sudden death, from heart disease, in 1863.

As Secretary at War thirty years earlier in the Melbourne administration, he furnished the first instance of an outsider passing, at a single bound, from the counting-house to the Cabinet. Keen partisan as Nature had made him, he always instinctively looked at politics in their purely personal aspect. For whole sessions together, during the first half of his time at St. Stephen's, he devoted himself to the study of Brougham, shadowing that extraordinary man in all his movements, private or public. In 1827 Brougham had a *rencontre* with Raikes the diarist that seemed to promise a duel, and that he particularly wished to hush up. Hurrying out of Brooks's, the scene of the row, he ran into the arms of Ellice, who, of course, knew all about what had just happened, and who was ready to be useful, apparently to either party, in any way that might be desired.

On the other hand, what Ellice was to Lord Brougham, the Tory Earl of Sefton made himself to

<sup>1</sup> Ellice's later and equally known London house was in Arlington Street.

Ellice, watching him as a cat does a mouse, and rivalling Cassandra in his predictions of the "Bear's" impending fall. One day it was the ruin of the fur trade which doomed the "Bear" to bankruptcy; the next certain malpractices, accidentally discovered, would destroy him with his political chiefs, and might conceivably lodge him in the Tower.

"Bear" Ellice's dryly humorous and pungent remarks about his colleagues, under his two great chiefs, Grey and Melbourne, contain few jokes. His Tory rival, "Billy" Holmes, whether in the lobby or the club, at times literally overflowed with his Irish fun. Thus, during the first session of 1832, a rather pretentious Leicester M.P., Morrison, by trade a haberdasher, having just made a speech on the foreign glove question, came up to Holmes and asked the Whip to get him a pair for the rest of the evening. "Of what," said Holmes—"gloves or stockings?"

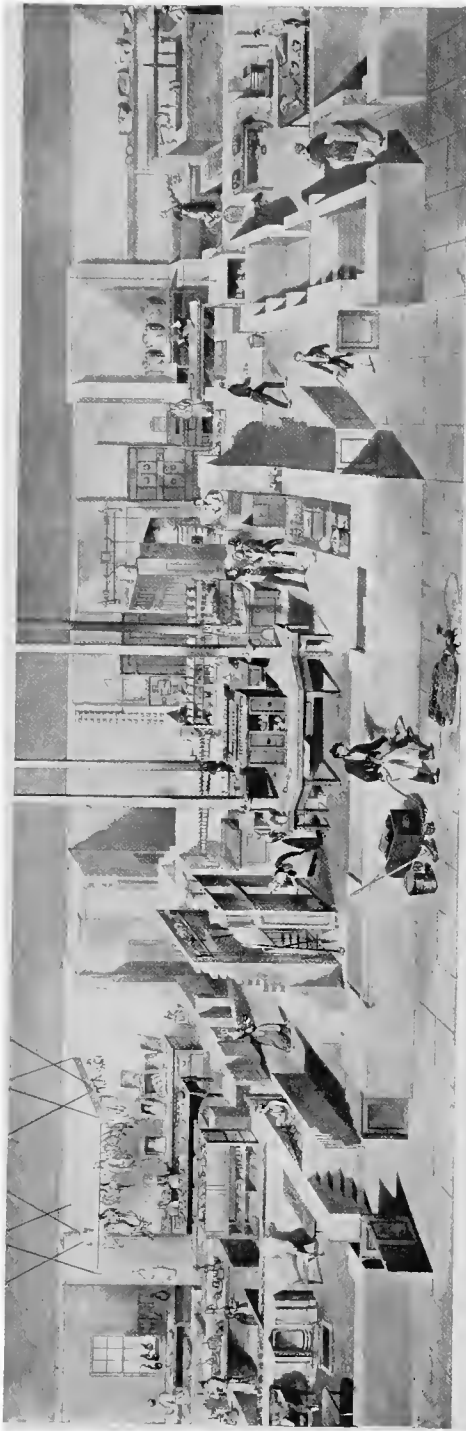
This sort of banter was not at all in the "Bear's" line. Nor were his most monumental services to his party rendered till his official days were over, and he had become almost as much of a personage in fashionable Paris as in West End London. His trips across the Channel had some connection with the effort of club creation reserved by him for the Victorian era. For, during his sojourns in the French capital, he seriously studied the art of cookery and reconnoitred the best talent available in connection with the club scheme that was his masterpiece. On May 5, 1836, he convened his friends in Carlton House Terrace for arranging the preliminaries of the Reform Club and securing for its temporary domicile Gwydyr House, Whitehall.

Ellice credited Joseph Hume with the title of the new fraternity. Before, however, his club association with Ellice, Hume had been one of a company originally known as the Westminster, afterwards dubbed the Reform. Bulwer-Lytton, as a Radical, promoted its

formation and invited his friend Disraeli to it, who in 1834, when applied to for an overdue subscription, paid the money, but requested that his membership of the place should end. Hence the charge afterwards made against the future Lord Beaconsfield of an early connection with the Liberal headquarters in Pall Mall. As for Hume himself, his admission to the club came some time after his first return for Middlesex, if not after he had exchanged that constituency for Montrose. The Reform founder had the satisfaction of seeing the place become as important a centre of political small talk and Cabinet negotiation as Brooks's. Fifteen years after it had been established the parliamentary diplomatists were discussing possible combinations on the Liberal side. At the Reform, rather than anywhere else, might be heard the best answers to the question whether Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston would be induced to serve together; how there were hopes that Granville's tactful versatility might smooth away the mutually contemptuous bitterness separating Palmerston from Sir James Graham, and might bring about the co-operation of the Peelites with the Whigs, absolutely indispensable as that was for a Liberal Cabinet. Lord Granville from the first had done much towards making the club the common centre of all the Liberals.

By 1852 that was what it had really become, and from it issued the sole trustworthy talk as to the negotiations in progress. Before this Ellice had the satisfaction of seeing his club instrumental in rallying the letters and intellect of the time to the Liberal leaders. In 1850 Palmerston's successful diplomacy was celebrated by a club dinner, with Thackeray among those present. The author of *Vanity Fair* had joined the club in 1840. In that year his wife's ill health broke up his domestic life. After that the club became his home. At the Reform he not only dined regularly but did much of his work, covering, as he sat in a





THE REFORM CLUB KITCHENS.  
(From a print at the Club, reproduced by permission.)



corner of the library or at his table in the dining-room, small slips with pencil manuscript, often carried away by a servant to the printer's boy waiting in the hall. Between fifteen and twenty years later at the same club and in the same place Henry Labouchere the second, when editing and largely writing *Truth*, did exactly the same thing.

The Reform also showed Thackeray in his most amiable humour. He took much pains to secure success at the ballot for Douglas Jerrold first and G. A. Sala afterwards, coming up in both cases from the country to whip up supporters on the day of election. The novelist also showed himself not less kindly to new members whose solitary strangeness he had noticed. Such, on his first appearance there, was Henry Fawcett. "Do," he said to Bernal Osborne and Milner Gibson, "what you can to make that poor fellow feel a little less like an alien within the gates."

"Bear" Ellice had passed away before one of his wishes was realized and the club's hospitalities extended to foreign chambers of the Progressive cause. In 1864 Garibaldi was not only entertained by the Reform at breakfast but became its honorary member. Meanwhile the club had become the scene of party meetings, like those previously held at Brooks's. At one of the Brooks's gatherings it was that the future Conservative leader, Lord Derby, then Mr. Stanley, apropos of the contemplated peers creation during the Reform contest, jumping on the table, said: "The King will clap coronets on all the Foot Guards to swamp the House of Lords." The most important among the latter-day meetings of Liberal M.P.'s at the Reform began with that in 1875 for choosing Lord Hartington as Mr. Gladstone's successor in the leadership. The next century saw Lord Salisbury's House of Commons opponents entering the club for a similar purpose, to ratify Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman's choice as Mr. Gladstone's twentieth-century successor. Between these

two gatherings there was another, the important attendance at which made it, though only a club meeting, something of a party convention as well. In 1883 two brothers of Mr. Gladstone's most representative Radical colleague, Joseph Chamberlain, had been rejected at the Reform. The full strength of the club now mustered to discuss whether this particular pilling should be reconsidered. John Bright, then Joseph Chamberlain's colleague at Birmingham, used the club regularly and took an active part in these proceedings. Lord Hartington, who entered the place soon after, so rarely frequented it that he was asked by the hall porter's officious page whether he was a member.

The Carlton's judicious comprehensiveness, already mentioned, was twice signally illustrated during the nineteenth century. The third Sir Robert Peel, the Prime Minister's eldest son, changed his colours more than once, but never left the club. The second Duke of Wellington, almost politically immutable, received a hint from the committee that he might withdraw. His characteristic reply was: "I shall do no such foolishness. For the purpose for which I use it, it is the most convenient spot in London." The catholicism of the Carlton has been imitated by its younger namesake, originating as that did, not like the older club in the efforts of a Whip, but of an election manager, Lord Abergavenny's right-hand man, Markham Spofforth, once belonging to the legal firm Baxter, Rose, Norton, and himself a universally known Carlton figure. The country lawyers had rendered invaluable help in organizing the party in the provinces. They now looked for admission to the Carlton. For this, however, the waiting list was already too heavy.

Spofforth, therefore, after consultation with Colonel Taylor, then the head Whip, called on Disraeli at Grosvenor Gate, and suggested, with his chief's warm approval, the name Junior Carlton. The most difficult

preliminary now remaining was to secure Lord Derby's consent. Eventually, Taylor and Spofforth, calling at St. James's Square, received "the Earl's" authority to go ahead, but only on the express condition of, in Lord Derby's own words, "the curtain not drawing up till the house was full." Nothing now remained for the present but the formation of a committee. This was headed by the then Viscount Nevill, and included, besides Taylor, the two other Conservative Whips, Mr. Gerard Noel and Sir William Hart Dyke. These men and their successors, in an unbroken line, contrived to make the Junior Carlton the most popular and representative institution of the time, at once the mirror and the bulwark of the party. No profession but what is included in its list, or whose members are not conscious of deriving definite advantage from their connection with it.

The club makers recalled showed the confidence and courage of their partisanship in never doubting an early Conservative success, even when the political tide seemed most decisively to have set against them. The next achievement in the way of club creation on the same side took place under conditions less depressing, and had the encouraging approval of the Carlton's founder, who remained, till his death, in 1850, the Conservative Whip. His son Thomas, it will be remembered, was a parliamentary agent. As such he took no part in club manufacture, but he watched keenly the political signs of the times throughout the country, and in this way made himself generally useful to his father. "Our prospects," he said to that relative in 1840, "are really brighter to-day than when, eight years ago, the rally of the Carlton began. For," he added, "manufacturing Lancashire and the industrial Midlands will vote, to a man, for Sir Robert Peel. These, however, have no social centre in London; even those whom they send to Parliament will not feel at home in Pall Mall." Representations

of the same kind, especially from a group of Staffordshire Conservatives, with "Tom" Nash as their spokesman, reached Sir Robert himself. Official Toryism, it became known, had pronounced its blessing on the movement, whose visible result in 1840 was the Conservative Club.

In the way just explained the beginnings of this society connected it closely with the new and enlightened Toryism of Peel and his followers. Its chief promoters, however, wanted a social quite as much as a political reunion, and were not going to deny themselves any of the comforts and luxuries for which the Carlton was famous. On the contrary, their first action was to call in Francatelli, who set all their kitchen arrangements going, and who, in the most accomplished of his pupils, provided them with a permanent cook of the first order. At the same time, the cellar was magnificently stocked with wines, some of which, of almost fabulous value, had come from the disestablished Crockford's. These attractions not only delighted the gentlemen for whose special benefit the club had been started, but drew to it some of the Carlton's most epicurean frequenters.

On the other hand, the Conservative justified its title by instituting a political committee, as well as by assisting the party through subscription from its members. Its zeal has been less uniformly tempered by the politic toleration which has served the constitutional cause so well. Thus in 1865 a recently elected member of the St. James's Street body, a Fellow of King's, Cambridge, an inoffensive scholar, who had joined the club for its library, voted for John Stuart Mill in the Westminster election. The Carlton would have ignored the matter and very likely have gathered into the true fold the misguided member, Thomas Bendyshe. The Conservative managers insisted that he should take his name off the books. "I will do so the more readily," he said, "because, since I have

been here, I have read everything the library contains."

A little later another literary member, E. C. Grenville Murray, was charged with libelling in the *Queen's Messenger*, under the title of Lord Coachington Jarvy, a nobleman who, when one fine afternoon the peccant journalist was coming out of the place, made a show of inflicting on him personal chastisement.<sup>1</sup>

To that period of the club belonged one of its chief parliamentary ornaments, Patrick Boyle Smollett. Descended from the novelist of his name, this Conservative clubman inherited much of his ancestor's full-flavoured humour. He was never more amusing, either in the club or at St. Stephen's, than when bantering the Irish Members. Living till the eve of the twentieth

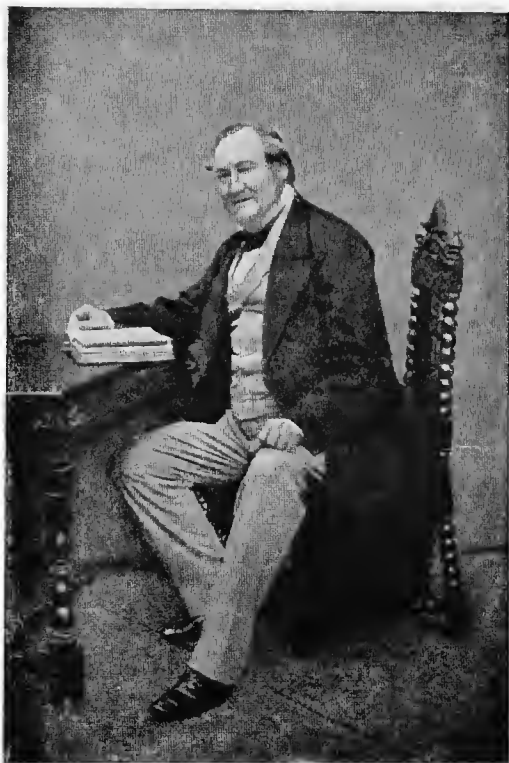
<sup>1</sup> This incident was absurdly exaggerated by the newspapers next morning into "Horsewhipping of a Personal Journalist by a Peer." Not long before it occurred the present writer had heard Murray's *Apologia* orally expressed by him to one of his friends at the Conservative. "Society," he said, "like its ruling powers, wears a conventional expression and has struck a conventional attitude. In dealing with it, I, as a writer, claim the liberty which was conceded to Hogarth as an artist." *Marriage à la Mode* was a pictorial satire, full of point, but not much relished at the time. George II's remarks about the march of the Guards to Finchley will not bear repetition; the painting is now the chief ornament of the Foundling Hospital Collection, and was admitted to have had something to do with the mended manners of the household troops. I have modelled myself upon Addison, use only the simplest words of his vocabulary, and avoid all expression, suggestion, or colour that would violate his purity. As for Grenville Murray, his father, the Duke of Buckingham, who ruined himself, noting his natural son's literary turn, got him on to the then Palmerstonian *Morning Post*. Palmerston, struck by the young man's cleverness, put him into the Diplomatic Service, and made him an attaché at Vienna, where our then Ambassador was the object of Palmerston's special detestation. The attaché's duty was to furnish private reports to Palmerston, not directly, but through one of his creatures at the *Morning Post* office. Some of these documents miscarried, into the hands of Murray's official chief at the Austrian capital. Palmerston then appeared to laugh the matter off, putting it down to the zealous youth's error. Murray, however, was moved from Vienna and shelved with a Consulship of Odessa. This he subsequently forfeited, less, he admitted, from ill-will on the Foreign Minister's part than because he had fallen foul of a man whom he described as a Foreign Office clerk, but who was in reality James Murray, an assistant Under-Secretary. Whatever Grenville Murray's failings, he was not only a very agreeable man, but at heart serious, and even religious, as may be seen from the Prefaces to his various novels.

century, he made his most lasting joke at their expense when he called them "talking potatoes." With him, too, originated the advice which since his day has infused new blood into the club, and by doing so greatly enlarged its membership. "Let us," he said, "invite those of our sons or nephews who have taken good degrees at the University, or who are in a fair way of achieving distinction in their respective careers."

All these Conservative club makers not only consolidated their own side, but helped their opponents by putting them on their mettle. Hence, just a generation ago, the earliest Liberal effort to counteract and reproduce on the other side the most fruitful hotbed and effective agency available for Conservatism in the Junior Carlton. The year 1882 witnessed the settlement of preliminaries, and in 1883 the National Liberal Club was established in temporary premises in Trafalgar Square. The foundation-stone of the existing structure in Whitehall Place followed, after a short interval. A special propriety and significance attached to its name. It was not to be, like the Reform, a metropolitan association alone,<sup>1</sup> but was to form a centre in London for Liberals belonging to the provinces as well as to London. A. G. Symonds, Secretary of the National Reform Union, whose headquarters are in Manchester, signed the circulars sent out in 1882. There was an autumn session that year. The club committee used to meet in "Willie" Bright's rooms at Storey's Gate. Of this

<sup>1</sup> During the seventies the Reform Club acquired a fresh interest for Free Traders throughout the country from the fact that T. B. Potter, then Member for Rochdale, a well-known and popular member of the Reform, had been allowed to occupy a little room on the second or third floor, as the temporary offices of the Cobden Club, formed by himself in conjunction with Thorold Rogers and others. The twentieth-century headquarters of the Cobden Club are in Broadway Court, Westminster. One of Mr. Potter's sons, Mr. Arthur B. Potter, Mr. T. Fisher Unwin, and the treasurer of Mr. Potter's day, J. W. Probyn, belong to the committee whose chairman is Lord Welby.





T. B. POTTER.  
*(Founder of the Cobden Club.)*



body the brother-in-law of the host, J. J. Tylor, Henry de la Beche Dillwyn, S. C. Evans-Williams, Walter Wren, and A. J. Williams were members. The last of these was the ruling spirit, life, and soul of the movement. Mr. Symonds organized the secretarial business and the whole department to which it belonged. Even sooner than had been anticipated, everything was ready for the laying of the foundation-stone by Mr. Gladstone (November 5, 1884). Such have been the successive stages in the fulfilment of the promise held out on May 2nd of 1883 at the Westminster Aquarium dinner, formally introducing the scheme to the public. On that occasion Lord Granville took the chair; round him were gathered the guest of the evening, Mr. Gladstone, the Earl of Rosebery, the future Viscount Morley of Blackburn, and the leader of the Essex agricultural Progressives, to-day Lord Blyth. Among the rest were Sir Charles Dilke, the late Lord Avebury, the Earl of Aberdeen, Lord Monson, Mr. J. Bryce, Mr. Lewis Fry, Mr. J. J. Colman, Mr. T. R. Buchanan, and Mr. C. B. MacLaren.

So successful a proof of club creation not being a Conservative monopoly stimulated the other side to fresh efforts of the same kind. The defenders of the Church and altar, at the instigation of their then election manager, Captain R. W. E. Middleton, with others of the Kentish gang, rejoined, in 1883, with the Constitutional and, in 1887, Junior Constitutional Clubs. Both of these adopted the custom, long known in the provinces but still more or less novel in London, of providing bedrooms for country members. Both, too, like other societies founded during the Victorian age, recognized the importance of a cuisine less *recherché* and costly, indeed, than Crockford's, but still excellent of its kind and within the reach of an ordinary purse. With much wisdom this was often secured, not by a male artist, receiving a Cabinet Minister's wages, but by a first-rate woman cook, if not occa-

sionally a *cordon bleu*.<sup>1</sup> Justice has been already done to the great Carlton chef, Palanque. He and his rival at Brooks's, Comte, were the masters of the studios and laboratories in the basement, whose pupils made their influence felt in most club kitchens during the period now looked back upon. Among the disciples of those artists were the Englishman, Farmer, who, having perfected himself in Lord Bathurst's service, eventually regaled the *gourmets* of the Conservative with the *potage à la Mag Merrilies*, the Duke of Buccleuch's particular delight. Best known of all, however, was a Frenchman, trained at Lord Chesterfield's, Alexis Soyer, to be remembered for other reasons than his connection with the Reform. Wit and author, as well as cook, he published in 1846 his *Gastronomic Regenerator*. Five years later he took his place as a guest among the cosmopolitan notabilities in the drawing-room of the long, low, stucco-fronted house which, then standing in Kensington Gardens, opposite Kensington Gore, belonged to Lady Blessington. The building overflowed with motley associations and had belonged to curiously different owners. Before the D'Orsay era it had for its possessor and occupant William Wilberforce. In 1849 the closing of what is immortalized in *Pickwick* a Mrs. Leo Hunter's menagerie, left it available for the professional operations of the Apicius, who had formerly mingled on equal terms with the company which glittered in its saloons. Soyer's conversion of the place into a

<sup>1</sup> *The New Almanach des Gourmands* (1883) refutes the mistake of supposing this expression to mean a first-rate artist of either sex. Louis XV held excellence in the culinary art to be denied to women. Madame Dubarry resolved on convincing him that he was wrong. Under her supervision, the cleverest of her cook maids prepared a delicious dinner for the King, who expressed his satisfaction in these words, "Let your *cuisinier* henceforth form part of the royal household." "It is no *cuisinier* at all," rejoined the lady, "but a *cuisinière*. I claim for her from your Majesty a *cordon bleu*." The *ex-grisette* carried her point. But the first known recipient of the title was Marie, cook of the *fermier général* who built the Elysée Bourbon.



ALEXIS SOYER.

*(From a print at the Reform Club, reproduced by permission.)*



restaurant was suggested to him by his extraordinary success at the Reform. During his twelve years of office at that club he had seen his administration of its kitchen bear fruit throughout the caravanserais of Pall Mall and St. James's Street in the growing diffusion of improved cookery at not unreasonable prices. This, indeed, was Soyer's special mission. The race of cooks, some trained by himself, who came afterwards never repeated, whether in club or private service, the insanely wasteful habits of their predecessors; while after Soyer's day the club coffee-room prices went down everywhere, except at the Windham.<sup>1</sup> The amiable and wealthy Irish peer, with whom acquaintance has already been made as its founder, did not desire, it was said, the indiscriminate membership of his less well-to-do fellow-countrymen, the Irish M.P.'s. He had, therefore, fixed coffee-room charges at a prohibitive figure, retained, however, only a short time after his death, in 1850. Elsewhere, thanks largely to Soyer's influence, skill in the selection of the *carte du jour* would enable the clubman to dine at any of the great Pall Mall clubs as well for four or five shillings as would have been possible for five times that charge at the coffee-houses and hotels resorted to by bachelors in the Georgian era.

The epoch in club cookery which Soyer introduced at the Reform had two distinctive marks. Generally he revived the taste for old English dishes, often of the most simple kind, by showing the imperishable attraction with which a little care in their making invested them. The boiled beans and bacon which Thackeray loved, remain to this day one of Soyer's monuments. So, too, is the *volauvent à la financière*. That dish came in with the epicurean plutocrats who, after the Revolution, succeeded the old nobility as Amphitryons and critics.

<sup>1</sup> My authority for this statement is Abraham Hayward, who has not, I think, included it in those of his writings to which this present work is so much indebted.

## CHAPTER XI

### NINETEENTH-CENTURY SOCIAL CLUB CREATORS

The homeless squire at St. Stephen's—And the United University Club—Sword and gown—How the Duke came in—"Men of metal and of acres"—And a family party in the early Suffolk Street days—Palmerston as a light blue champion—His academic patriotism and its club results—The Oxford and Cambridge clubmakers and club-marrers—The Harington case—Treasures of the cellar and cuisine at the University Clubs—*Literati* and *literatuli* as club creators—Social mixture, and Covent Garden wits—The Garrick generators and regenerators—The Duke of Sussex and his staff at work—Sir Andrew Barnard—Lord Kinnaird—S. J. Arnold—And Francis Mills—Two personal storms in Garrick teacups.

EVEN the work of socio-political organization would not have been complete without the two rival establishments added to Pall Mall during the thirties. Parliament men and others brought to London by the Westminster sessions had already received much help in their social arrangements from two clubs established between ten and twenty years before the Carlton, the Reform, or the Conservative opened their doors. During the pre-Reform era Joseph Hume brought back with him from India, in 1808, a fortune of little less than £50,000, and a determination to spend, whether at St. Stephen's or elsewhere, all his money, energies, and time on a war against all the abuses, social as well as economic, of public life. The first thing he took in hand was the creation of direct personal responsibility on the part of Members to their constituents. Pamphlet after pamphlet, and speech after speech, showed that a growing proportion of those sent to



guard local interests in the great council of the nation, were not only silent and indolent, but for weeks and months together absentees. For their own personal interests and private advancement, they put the letters M.P. after their names, without the faintest sense of obligation to the taxpayers who had enabled them to do so. Only after the burning of the Houses, in 1834, did the country realize that the chamber which easily contained its 530 occupants in the seventeenth century was preposterously inadequate to the 658 representatives of the people two hundred years later. Long before this, however, Hume, on first entering it, in 1818, found that there was not only a deficiency of seats but an absence of standing-room. Consequently a large percentage of Members never went near the place, and were at their country houses when they ought to have been at Westminster.

From the quarters immediately interested in this matter, Hume at once received an unmistakable and most encouraging answer to his appeal. M.P.'s of old standing were looked up by their constituents in the Lobby, and received plain hints not to shirk their duties. New candidates were told that punctual attendance at divisions must be a condition of their return. About 1820, therefore, Members were faced with the necessity of passing most of their time in the capital. Locomotion between the provinces and the capital was costly and tedious. Wholesale domestic migration from Arcadia to Babylon meant endless discomfort and impracticable expense. A bachelor, however, could find an excellent bedroom and dressing-room in clubland, and could easily house for a few days in town his womenkind at a hotel or a friend's. When, therefore, the head of the family was summoned to his duties at St. Stephen's, unless he rolled in the same wealth as some of his new commercial colleagues, or were a great squire, he found a *pied à terre* for himself in one of the streets opening out of St. James's or Pall Mall,

taking his more serious meals at the House itself, or at the club.

As above all things the London home of the country gentleman in the Commons, the United University, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, formed the great club success of 1822. That was twelve years before the Duke of Wellington's official connection with Oxford, as Chancellor. Unlike other Conservative leaders before or after him, the Duke, knowing little from experience of home life, was the most inveterate and ubiquitous clubman of his day. He looked from the first favourably upon the Suffolk Street society. Lacking the academic qualifications for membership till he became Chancellor, he joined it in 1835. His first appearance at the club then had been heralded by several anecdotes about the Oxford function of the previous year. Of these stories the least known and the most authentic may be given.

The short Latin address demanded from the hero of Waterloo contained the names of James I and Charles I. *Jacobus* was the new Chancellor's pronunciation of the first Stuart King. Accepting the whispered correction of the Vice-Chancellor standing by, Dr. Wynter of St. John's, the great man proceeded confidently to *Carolus*. Again the false quantity was pointed out, this time, however, only to elicit from his grace, "Hang it! you know, you can't have it both ways."

Others who belonged to the club from the first were George Canning, Lord Eldon, Lord Lyndhurst, Lord Grenville, Lord Abinger, Lord Palmerston, the Earl of Aberdeen, the Earl of Ellenborough, Sir J. C. Hobhouse, Lord Broughton, Dr. Butler of Harrow, Dr. Keate of Eton, Whewell, Master of Trinity, H. H. Milman, then Professor of Poetry at Oxford, in and after 1849 Dean of St. Paul's.

The rank and file of the Lower House was led into the club by a gentleman of middle height, remarkable

for corpulence of person, largeness of features, fullness and rotundity of face. This was Sir Robert Harry Inglis, since 1829 Member for Oxford University, the strength of whose sentiments, the force and occasional ferocity of whose epithets were the more noticeable from the bland meekness of his manner and the melting softness of his voice. Thus, when first seen at the club, in pained tones of plaintive murmur, he had lately concluded a peacemaker's speech at Westminster by charging with perjury O'Connell, Sheil, and the Roman Catholic Members generally. Caseproof against ridicule and attack, Inglis, as a speaker, never allowed his composure to be disturbed. Sometimes, indeed, he acquitted himself so well as to hold the assembly from the moment he rose till he sat down. This was the case with his declaration, in 1834, against the admission to Oxford of Papists and Dissenters. Sheil, unable to refute his argument, could only rally Inglis on the fatness and sleekness of his oratory as well as of his appearance. The performance, however, enriched with well-digested historical research, was admittedly, next to Sir Robert Peel's, the best contribution to the debate on the Tory side, and made him for the moment something of a club personage.

Another picturesquely typical Conservative Member of the Inglis period, Samuel Trehawke Kekewich, a man of strikingly distinguished and handsome presence, had been in the same division at Eton as the fourteenth Lord Derby, and given his form fellow one of those openings never missed by the Rupert of debate. "D—your eyes, Stanley!" Kekewich had impatiently said, instantly drawing forth the rejoinder "*Damno tuos oculus arboris accipiter!*"

Of the same political colour was another early habitué of the place, noted at St. Stephen's for his beautifully modulated silver voice, strikingly reproduced at a later day by his descendant, Dean Goulburn. Henry Goulburn himself, Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1841,

might have combined with his great social popularity more political weight than he did but for his advanced, uncompromising High Church and State views.

At the epoch now looked back upon, the club's personal composition presented a feature already mentioned in the case of Arthur's, and common of course, to many other societies. During its first decade some half a dozen of its most regular frequenters belonged to the same family. Thus Trehawke Kekewich was one of a group of cousins that included also another original Member, Charles Barter of Sarsden, a little later his younger brother Robert, Warden of Winchester, and yet another kinsman, from 1841 to 1847 as Member for Winchester a well-known parliamentary figure. Some of these names have appeared pretty continuously or at short intervals in the club list since then.

In 1830 the Oxford and Cambridge Club was created by much the same social agencies of the time, and was connected with many of the same personal forces, as the United University Club, eight years earlier. It found in the initiative of Lord Palmerston an equivalent for the older institution's patronage by the Duke. At the Cambridge election of 1806 Macaulay, at Lord Brougham's request helped "the good cause" forward by supporting the independent candidate, Lord Henry Petty, against the Ministerial nominee, Viscount Palmerston.<sup>1</sup> Fresh from college, that young man was pronounced by Brougham wanting in all qualifications for the place. "His family are uniformly enemies to slave trade abolition, presumably he is so himself. His maxim is that the life of a courtier is the most brilliant object of human ambition." This was not the first

<sup>1</sup> This was the struggle mentioned by Palmerston's Harrow schoolfellow, Byron, in "Hours of Idleness":—

"Petty and Palmerston survey,  
Who canvass there with all their might,  
Against the next elective day."

occasion on which the misguided nobleman had entered the electoral running on the Cam. William Pitt was burgess for the University up to the time of his death, in the preceding January. Palmerston, having recently inherited his title, was reminded by his private tutor, Dr. Outram, how well he had always done in the college examinations, and how exemplary his conduct had always been. Others of the authorities at St. John's said pleasant things of the same sort to the newly fledged peer. Why, therefore, should he not boldly come forward and contest the seat, notwithstanding that he would have for his competitors Lords Lansdowne and Spencer. At the close of the contest Palmerston was neither surprised nor discouraged to find himself at the bottom of the poll. The next year, 1807, brought another University election. Palmerston again came forward, did much better than before, and lost the seat by only 4 votes. Towards the close of his life Palmerston confessed to something of disappointment at never having received the compliment of the Cambridge Chancellorship. Palmerston never lost his attachment either to his old school or his university. He made a point of riding down to every Harrow Speech Day. "If," he once said, "my house had not been so named before I got to it,<sup>1</sup> I should have called it after the *alma mater*, in love for which I do not yield to Macaulay himself."

In 1830 Palmerston became Foreign Secretary, and, in the engrossing international affairs of that year, made his diplomatic mark. Neither the settlement of Belgium, nor the repression of the Russian advance upon Asiatic Turkey, diminished his vigilant activity in university matters. An original member, and a pretty regular frequenter of the United University, he

<sup>1</sup> "The last house built in Piccadilly," first inhabited by the Earl of Egremont, gained its later style when the Duke of Cambridge took it in 1829, living there till his death, July 8, 1850. Then the owner of the freehold, Sir Richard Sutton, resided there till 1855, when Palmerston's occupancy began.

saw from the growing pressure on its accommodation from the increased attendance at the House of Commons, and the immense development of the London season, that there was ample room for another resort of men trained on the Isis and the Cam.

Oxford, it struck him, had taken a leading part in the movement whose result was the Suffolk Street establishment. Time should be saved and success ensured by Cambridge, with himself for its representative, promoting the preliminaries to be settled before another university club could be organized. Throughout the entire business he received valuable assistance from two gentlemen named Mazzoni and Moore, both equally entitled to a place among the club founders. Outside those already concerned in the enterprise, the first recruit personally enlisted by Palmerston for the enterprise was one of the oldest Oxford graduates then living, the fourth Earl of Egremont, whose predecessors in the title owned and inhabited the building which, first taking its name from their title, was afterwards known as Cambridge House, with all its Palmerstonian associations. The Cantab. contingent was headed by the Earl of Fitzwilliam, the Duke of Devonshire, and the most distinguished resident members of Palmerston's old college, St. John's.

As if equally to associate both universities with the scheme from its inception, Palmerston chose a favourite Oxford house of call, the British Coffee House, Cockspur Street, for the meeting which (May 17, 1830) resolved on the formation of the club. Conspicuous among those who then attended were the Duke of Devonshire, at that time Lord Cavendish, Sir R. H. Inglis, already known to us at the United University, the tall, handsome figure with a dark complexion and black hair and the delicately chiselled features which belonged to Lord Chandos, afterwards Duke of Buckingham, well deserving to be called the farmers' friend, from his forfeiture of a high place under Sir

Robert Peel rather than throw over the agriculturists by a postponement of his motion for the Malt Tax repeal. Three years previously, notwithstanding the credit for the idea claimed by Colonel Sibthorpe, he introduced into the Reform Bill the Chandos clause, enfranchising £50 county occupiers. Those three formed the first club trustees. In their frequent appearances at the place they were afterwards joined by, not only, as was seen on an earlier page, W. E. Gladstone, but by Sidney Herbert, Sir Robert Phillimore, S. H. Walpole, Gathorne Hardy; among classical scholars by H. A. J. Munro, editor of *Lucretius*; and among men of letters by the towering presence of Matthew Higgins ("Jacob Omnium"), J. T. Delane's and W. M. Thackeray's associate. The succession to celebrities like these was continued by Vernon Harcourt, Sir Henry Holland, Viscount Knutsford, Speaker Gully (Lord Selby), Sir Edward Grey, Sir R. C. Jebb, and Andrew Lang.

The deliberations at the British Coffee House were followed by the opening of the club itself on temporary premises in St. James's Square. The first year of the Victorian era saw it settled in its present home, periodically improved within and redecorated without till the finishing touches were only given on the eve of the twentieth century. During the process of perfecting the structure, an important principle of club administration, involving the collective rights of a club committee and the privileges of individual members, became the subject of a legal decision. In March, 1902, the club committee raised the annual subscription from eight to nine guineas. The late Sir Richard Harington, a County Court Judge, in answer to an inquiry of the secretary, itself in the nature of a protest, was told that the alternative to paying the higher subscription would be a determination of membership. On this he appealed to the courts and secured an injunction against the committee. The eventual decision was entirely in his

favour, for the court judge ruled that even the ratification of a general meeting does not empower the committee to raise the subscription without the approval also of the subscribing members. Sir Richard Harington, therefore, neither paid the increased subscription nor resigned — he merely went on at the old rate. On these terms he remained a member of the club till his death. Since then, of course, the rules have been altered. In the case of the Oxford and Cambridge, the original omission, providing for the alteration of rules from time to time, has been repaired. As a consequence, to-day, there as elsewhere club committees, when backed by a majority of members, can raise the subscription at will. The Harington incident could in no case recur.

Meanwhile the Oxford and Cambridge, like the United University, had made for itself a reputation of being, in Palmerstonian phrase, one of the very best mounted institutions of its kind. Palmerston never, or extremely seldom, touched any wine but the driest Amontillado, which he imported direct. The new club in Pall Mall shared with the older one in Suffolk Street the distinction of possessing a supply of the statesman's particular vintage, not yet, it was recently said, quite exhausted.<sup>1</sup> Both clubs also contrived, during the thirties, to lay in a few specimens of the finest port ever known, dispersed from the Wootton cellars of George Grenville, the minister who died in 1770. Side by side with the port were some bottles of the priceless sherry produced by the City of London at the banquet to the Queen and Prince Albert in 1840. There were also some of the spoils of Crockford's. Such was the champagne formerly drunk at the club for seven shillings a bottle, afterwards sold for a guinea, and finally bought up by Lords Donegal, Lichfield, and Mr. Orby Hunter, from whose collections after their

<sup>1</sup> With a sandwich, a glass of it formed the daily lunch of E. F. S. Pigott, examiner of plays, almost down to his death, in 1895.



death the United University, and the Oxford and Cambridge Clubs acquired it. When it had found its way into the cellars now mentioned, it would have been considered something of a bargain at twelve guineas a dozen.

There is an old story of George Canning's tasting some dry champagne, spitting it out in disgust, and saying, "The man who says he likes dry champagne will say anything." Canning, however, before he died, was induced to change his opinion on this subject by a glass of the famous vintage mentioned above, Stock's dry champagne. The United University and the Oxford and Cambridge cellar committee bought with rare success because the connoisseurs personally superintended the business. These were the men who understood that it was not mere antiquity, but the year or the vintage which stamps the value. Thus the famous hock of 1801 is inferior to that of the comet year 1811; while the claret of 1834 is altogether superior to the far more celebrated vintage of a decade earlier. Acting upon this knowledge, the club managers, to the infinite chagrin of the Travellers' and White's, drained the market of those particular products that were the crowning glory of 1811 and 1834 respectively. On these principles, Lord Ducie, by far the best judge of claret then living, and Sir John Mowbray, laid the foundations of the Suffolk Street and Pall Mall cellars respectively. The chief baron of the exchequer, both as Sir James Scarlett and Lord Abinger, Sir John Johnstone,<sup>1</sup> R. Bell, Lord Melbourne's younger brother, George Lamb, and his private secretary, T. Young,<sup>2</sup> at the United University, not only had a genius in wine judgment amounting almost to an instinct, but seemed to know intuitively where new and priceless acquisitions for their club cellars from time to time might be found. Lampreys,

<sup>1</sup> Of Hackness York, M.P. Scarborough 1832-68.

<sup>2</sup> Known as the real though irresponsible Prime Minister, because his chief left everything to him.

Jersey mullet, and lark pudding were dainties brought into favour at the older club by Lord Melbourne's taste, and a special gift for preparing them possessed by its cook. Menus of the thirties or forties in which they appear were preserved by old members living into comparatively recent times.

The first half of the nineteenth century witnessed a renewal of the socio-literary movement whose beginnings may be traced back to Samuel Johnson, and which found its later expression in clubs of various calibre still flourishing. Maclise's well-known picture, "The Fraserians," brings together, round a dinner-table, at their headquarters, 215, Regent Street, Coleridge, Carlyle, D'Orsay, James Hogg, the Ettrick shepherd, and a writer so good-looking that Lady Blessington, with him on one side of her and D'Orsay on the other, described herself as sitting between the two handsomest men in London. At the Fraserian feasts Thackeray had an occasional place, and here he saw enough of Maginn, of Theodore Hook, and of John Wilson Croker to supply him, in *Pendennis*, with the originals of Captain Shandon, Wenham, and Wagg.

Gradually others unconnected with *Fraser's Magazine*, such as Thomas Hood and Robert Browning, dropped in. Informally, therefore, and by imperceptible degrees, a new literary society came to the birth. The most active and prolific maker of clubs on this smaller scale was Douglas Jerrold. The London Library only began to exist in 1846. Before then, and more than ever afterwards, in the great reading-room opened in 1857, men read up for their articles and books at the British Museum. Hence the Museum Club, due to the united efforts of Jerrold and Charles Knight. A little later these two created a dining company, "Hooks and Eyes," which, by its maturer style, Our Club, flourished till late in the sixties.

Of this, other early lights were Shirley Brooks, T. K. Hervey, editor of the *Athenæum*; Mark Lemon,

editor of *Punch*; as well as a later and better known *Athenæum* editor, Hepworth Dixon, who assisted at the feasts held at Clunn's Hotel, Covent Garden, till a much later date. Such were Thomas Hamber, then one of the most familiar and picturesque among Fleet Street figures, editor of the *Standard* till 1876; his particular friend John Bruce Norton, formerly a legal member of the Madras Government; another of Hamber's intimates, also an Anglo-Indian, a good writer, a first-rate English scholar, Colonel Cunningham, Allan Cunningham's son. With these also were two genial and accomplished bohemians, both club types of their period, Spencer Smith, a medical man, and M. C. Conry, a Wykehamist, for many years one of the House of Commons clerks in the private bill office. A more notable figure than any of these had been at the earlier meetings a little, old-fashioned City clerk, Jerrold's special favourite, the secretary, F. W. Hampstede, who might have stepped out from one of Dickens's novels. Thackeray, if not a very regular frequenter, belonged to this society, under all its different names, from the first. After Jerrold's death he became its acknowledged leader, and here only was he heard to sing his own ballads of "Little Billee" and "Dr. Martin Luther." This, in Jerrold's life or presence, he had never done.

The humour and satire of the two men had so much of the same flavour that each felt a sort of constraint while in the other's company. Thackeray's retirement from *Punch* in 1854 did not grow out of any personal difference with his colleague on the paper, Jerrold, but in his want of sympathy with its line in public affairs. Other of Thackeray's minor club associations will be reverted to on a later page.

The institution with which he specially identified himself owed its existence to personal agencies very different from those that created other literary and artistic resorts of the time. At several points in this

narrative, from the infancy of the club system in the Court of Good Company, and through all its successive developments, not less at the Mermaid and the Apollo than at White's or the Alfred, we have seen the unrestrained intermingling of the aristocratic or official orders with untitled intellectual workers of the period. This feature showed itself more conspicuously than is generally known—or at least commonly remembered—in the genesis of the Garrick. George III's sixth son was justly called the popular member of the royal family. He was also the most sensible, best informed, and, in his popular affinities, the most wholesome among the royalties of his time. This was the Duke of Sussex. In the absence of blood and rapine from the French Revolution of 1830, he found a new argument for parliamentary reform; while his acute observation of the literary class, and especially of journalists in France and England, impressed him with the English superiority. The time, he thought, had come when it would be an advantage to all concerned in literary industry, as well as society at large, if the Athenæum were supplemented with a club recruited from the most active caterers for the public taste with pen and pencil in the studio and on the stage.

Once satisfied that the scheme was feasible, he cast about for some coadjutor, not himself connected with the arts and sciences, on whose experience, counsel, and tact he could rely. He found ready to his hand just the man he wanted, as well as two others.

The first was a man for his experience and sagacity esteemed a very Ulysses among his contemporaries. Sir Andrew Barnard (1773-1855), a native of Donegal, had begun life as an ensign in the 90th Foot in 1794. Transferred subsequently to different regiments, each time with higher rank, he served under Abercromby in the West Indies, in Canada, afterwards distinguished himself in Spain and Portugal, fought at Quatre Bras, was wounded at Waterloo, and ten years before

becoming associated with the Duke of Sussex in the enterprise of 1831 had been made groom of the bed-chambers, and soon afterwards one of the royal equerries.

For his second in command the Duke chose one whose antecedents were not less cosmopolitan than Barnard's. The ninth Lord Kinnaird, before going to Eton, had shown himself a shrewd, clever, adventurous boy at his Perthshire home, Drimmie House, the family residence before Rossie Priory. After some years in the Guards in Canada, and a long course of travel in Italy, he succeeded to the family title in 1826, and settled down to agricultural reform in his native county. Here he introduced the first steam implements used in Scotch farming, superintended the construction of the Perth to Dundee Railway, established evening schools, reading-rooms, and libraries for the workmen on his estates, and drafted the Forbes Mackenzie Act, closing public-houses on Sundays.

These public services secured the conversion by Lord Grey of a Scotch barony into an English peerage in 1831. That year brought the Duke of Sussex another club colleague in the most ingenious, resourceful, versatile, and highly cultivated man-about-town then living. This was Samuel James Arnold (1774-1852). Educated for an artist, he found his strongest attraction in the theatre. Drury Lane was burnt down in 1809. Arnold engaged those of its company whom he thought useful for the purpose and removed them to the Lyceum, which he opened as an English opera-house. His ability and ambition could be satisfied with no smaller field than the rebuilt Drury. Of this, in due course, he became manager. Three years afterwards his chief friend on the committee, Samuel Whitbread, committed suicide in 1815, and Arnold retired from the management, too soon for the public, but not before he had secured rare success with "Man and Wife" or "More Secrets than One."

As regards the fourth of the Garrick founders, Francis Mills, it might be well to correct some current mistakes about his identity. These seem largely due to the fact that Sir Thomas Acland's brother-in-law, Arthur Mills, a member of Grillion's, took a part in other club activities belonging to the first half of the Victorian age. His father bore the name of Francis, and held for fifty years the Warwickshire living of Barford, his best known descendant being V. H. Mills, of Pillerton Manor, Warwick, Arthur Mills's grandson. There was, however, a second Francis Mills during 1831, connected with the other family of that name. He lived at Bistem Manor, Ringwood, and was a well-known figure at the Hampshire and Sussex country houses so much mixed up with the socio-political life of the Regency and of William IV. He was also, like Sir Andrew Barnard, though much less intimately, among the fugle men of the Duke of Sussex.

Seven years earlier the Athenæum (1824), as has been already seen, proclaimed, at Lord Lansdowne's own suggestion, its independence of aristocratic patronage. The Garrick at its birth was partly noble, partly royal, and altogether patrician. These associations, indeed, it has never shed. The two most notable among its earliest members of this kind, Sir Charles Taylor and Sir Henry de Bathe, both well-known men of the world, with a large following among the representatives of stage and pen, combined an airy cynicism with a contemptuous condescension of manner. They were each of them privileged to call the literary chief of the club, Thackeray, by the first syllable of his name, and were never slow to unbend in congenial, appreciative smoking-room company. Neither at the Garrick nor elsewhere are there now club autocrats like those just named. Both men outlived their original ascendancy, and as in Pall Mall so in Covent Garden, abstained from attempting any revival of the earlier system.

To some extent Sir Charles Taylor, and in much larger degree Sir Henry de Bathe, were prepared to act as mediators in a quarrel of Thackeray, the great panjandrum of the place, with a then obscure member of it, afterwards the once well-known Edmund Yates. There was no doubt a touch of vulgarity about Yates's criticism in a twopenny paper of Thackeray's personal and literary manner. There was, however, no violation of the confidences of club life, nor did the comments contain any proof of social intimacy with their subject. They might have been written equally well had their author never been in the same room with the novelist. The great man, however, with the littleness from which even finer natures are not exempt, protested that his commentator's acquaintance with his characteristics had been gathered from the Garrick smoking-room. "If," he said, "such practices were to be allowed, it would be fatal to any society of gentlemen." It was thus, as will be seen, a trumpery affair from the beginning. Of all men who ever handled a pen for the purposes of history or fiction, Thackeray was the one whom it least became to appear as complainant in such a matter. No novelist ever drew his characters from the life more systematically than was done by him. His *Book of Snobs*, made out of "Snob Papers" in *Punch*, had been recognized on its first appearance as a portrait-gallery of habitués at the Reform, the Garrick, and elsewhere. The scurrilities, with which he assailed Bulwer-Lytton in *Fraser*, in *Punch*, and wherever else his struggling pen forced an entrance, disgusted many of those to whom the author of *Falkland* and *Pelham* was the opposite of a hero.

Those not themselves sufferers in this way resented the caricature of the brilliant, reckless, unhappy William Maginn, as Captain Shandon in *Pendennis*. Both in that novel and in *Vanity Fair* there were held up to ridicule others whose acquaintance, so Thackeray told

them, had been welcomed by him as a pleasure and a compliment. Such were John Wilson Croker and Theodore Hook. These were the novelist's models for his Wenham and Wagg, the former of whom co-operates with Rawdon Crawley's "friend" as peacemaker after Crawley's castigation of the marquis in Becky Sharp's drawing-room. Unlike either of these, another character in *Pendennis* not only belonged to the Garrick but lived there intimately with Thackeray. He was indeed the Mr. Archdeckne who, after assisting at one of the lectures on the English humorists, remarked before leaving, "Thack, my boy! you ought to have had a pianner." Thackeray no doubt forgave a liberty of this kind; he did not forget it, as Archdeckne found out to his cost when, a little later, his Garrick friends congratulated him on the immortality of ridicule awarded him in the character of Harry Foker.

Another club acquaintance of a very different kind complained, from his point of view not without reason, of the novelist's addiction to personalities. The famous Reform Club cook, Alexis Soyer, with all his pseudo-artistic affection and gastronomic sentimentalism, was reproduced to the life in Mirobolant. The great chef resented bitterly the sorry return made by this caricature for his delicate attention during many years to the novelist's table tastes in various menus and in the *carte du jour*.

Thackeray was only less thin-skinned himself than he was indifferent to the feelings of others. In his youth he had met Benjamin Disraeli at Lady Blessington's. His attempt many years later to renew the acquaintance when both men were famous failed. Why? In 1847 Thackeray was writing his "Prize Novelists" for *Punch*. Far the best of those wonderful productions was *Codlingsby*, the parody of the great Young England novel, then the talk and admiration of the town. Thackeray himself, elate with satisfaction, as he well might be, at his own masterpiece, saw so



little of offence in it to Disraeli that he actually suggested to Monckton Milnes the possibility of the skit being taken by Disraeli for a compliment. "Why," he said, "should not we three celebrate the event, and bury the hatchet by a friendly dinner at the 'Little G.?' " Disraeli never forgave his satirist. Many years afterwards Lord Stanhope, getting up a dinner for Disraeli's amusement, suggested asking Thackeray. "On no account," was the reply; "but I should like to meet Mr. Dickens." The creator of *Pickwick* accordingly came, and was pronounced by the guest of the evening "a perfectly delightful person."

Thackeray's annoyance of Yates in the affair already mentioned was embittered by the memory of a purely personal difference with the peccant paragraphist's father, Frederick Yates the actor. The incident soon developed into a quarrel, in which sides were taken, and in which Edmund Yates never had a chance. Thackeray's reference of the matter to the committee produced from that body a demand for an unreserved apology from the younger to the older man. Had Yates been well advised, he would have bowed to the *force majeure*, and made it. Instead, with amazing unwisdom, he consulted Dickens, who at once declared the proposed apology impossible. Then came the general club meeting, held for no other purpose than to emphasize Thackeray's triumph and to heap fresh ignominy on the victim of his wrath.

This, though the best known, was not the only nor the earliest Garrick trouble of the same kind. Among the first if not absolutely original members were the publishers, Richard Bentley, William Longman, John Murray; Spottiswoode, the King's printer; Sheridan Knowles the dramatist; Poole, the author of *Paul Pry*; George Catermole and Clint, artists; Sir George Smart the composer; Horace and James Smith, of *Rejected Addresses* fame; Samuel Rogers, at least two of the Sheridan family, the elder and the younger Mathews, and

T. P. Cooke, who, from being a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, distanced all rivals as a player of nautical parts on the stage. The Earl of Coventry, when Lord Deerhurst, the second Duke of Wellington, while as yet only Marquis of Douro, Lords Adolphus Fitzclarence, Clanricarde, Chesterfield, and Castlereagh, and the witty Canon of St. Paul's who wrote the *Ingoldsby Legends*, R. Barham, all belonged to the second batch of members. Barham's chief intimate at the Garrick was Francis Fladgate, a man of great social polish, varied culture, and singularly attractive manner, represented at the club by an unbroken line of descendants till the eve of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> Barham's pet aversion was a certain Ibidson Farquhar, who gradually became to the poet of *Ingoldsby* what Edmund Yates was afterwards to be to the author of *Vanity Fair*. In the earlier case, as in the later, the great man squeezed out the small, and Farquhar succumbed to the same fate as Yates for a like offence, the putting of club impressions into print.

Of those now mentioned Lord William Lennox and the second Duke of Wellington were among the few who survived to assist at the club's removal from its earliest home, 35, King Street, Covent Garden, to its present abode in Garrick Street. The Yates-Thackeray incident of 1862, like its predecessor the Barham-Farquhar business of twenty years before, does not belong to the existing structure, which is not less remarkable for unbroken freedom from all disturbances in its domestic economy than for its art treasures, its beautiful landscapes by Clarkson Stanfield and David Roberts, that wealth in artistic treasures generally which caused the old Eton master, W. G. Cookesley, seldom to find himself in that quarter of the town without obtaining from his old pupil, Sir F. C. Burnand, an introduction to the Garrick theatrical portrait gallery.

<sup>1</sup> "Papa" Fladgate the father of the Garrick, Thackeray's special friend, brother of the solicitor William, died at the age of 93 in 1892.



FRANCIS FLADGATE.

*(From a photograph kindly lent by Miss Geraldine Fladgate.)*



Nor is the club less famous for the art in its kitchen than the art on its walls. Now, like other clubs, it has a French chef ; but much of its nineteenth-century cuisine was managed by a woman cook, one of the few consummate *cordons bleu* then known in the club world.

## CHAPTER XII

### ARTS, SCIENCE, AND CULTURE IN THE CLUBABLE MOOD

“American Notions” in Covent Garden—Garrick Club secessionists led by Dickens to an artistic paradise in Hanover Square—Italian and pre-Raphaelite poets and painters at the Arts Club—The Arundel Club, Salisbury Street, Strand—Frank Talfourd, its founder—His works and ways of life—Fleet Street workers in their anecdotage at the Arundel—Amateurs and professionals—The latter take refuge in reviving from the fifties Robert Brough’s Savage Club—Smaller Bohemian societies—The Century—Its contemporaries, the Burlington Fine Arts Clubs and the Savile—The Cecil—The Gladstone—Russell New Reform—The æsthetic vagabond—All the talents and arts at the Whitefriars—The old and new Savage, and the vanishing of Bohemia—The Royal Society Club and its founder, Edmund Halley—The Antiquaries Club—Its makers, members, and guests.

THE club forming the chief subject of the last chapter is the one society of its kind that reached fashionable notoriety on both sides of the Atlantic at the same time. For that fact credit was claimed by the New York literary gossip, N. P. Willis, who visited England during the period in which the club came to the birth, and who, in his “Home Letters,” revealed glimpses of its celebrities in comparison with which Edmund Yates’s remarks about Thackeray were models of discretion and good taste. As a fact, however, Willis had less to do with the matter than an American turfite, Stephen Price, well known in all theatrical and sporting circles, an acquaintance of Thackeray, and a constant frequenter of the club. Those were the days when Theodore Hook was the fashionable novelist of the hour, and a great Garrick habitu . The inventor of Hook’s favourite gin punch was not, as has been often supposed, Hook himself, or Tom Hill the genuine

original of Paul Pry, the Garrick veteran whose baptismal register could not, as Hook said, be found, because it was burned in the Great Fire of London, 1666. The true patentee of the beverage was the already mentioned Price, who also introduced to the club the modification of the porter-house steak known as the Garrick steak.

The Garrick steak was described to the present writer by G. A. Sala, who, though not a member of the club, knew the dish well, and rivalled Dumas in his acquaintance with cookery, as an adroitly carved combination of the upper and under cut of a sirloin. Abraham Hayward's punch recipe, given him by Price himself, was : Pour half a pint of gin on the outer peel of a lemon, add lemon-juice, sugar, a little maraschino, a pint and a quarter of water, and of soda-water two bottles. This was the preparation of which Hook, with the accompaniment of one or two mutton-chops, once took six glasses at the club, and only stopped at that lest he should be late for a dinner at Lord Canterbury's.

The Garrick and, by the name of Lord Dollamore, its great patron during the club's rise to fashion, were described to the life by the expelled Edmund Yates in *Black Sheep*. But the two Garrick novelists *par excellence* were W. M. Thackeray and his disciple, Anthony Trollope. At the time of the Thackeray-Yates episode his victorious hero had but a year to live. He had entered the club in 1833, four years before Dickens and twenty-nine before Trollope. Those are the writers who in their club descriptions have exactly hit off the amalgam of intellect, frivolity, bohemianism, and sweldom characterizing the life of the place at the time of the Dickens and Thackeray duel over the prostrate form of the victimized Yates. Dickens immediately left the Garrick. Several of his friends retired at the same time. A good many of these did not belong to the

Athenæum, or to any other important society of the kind. An opening, therefore, evidently presented itself for another establishment on something the same scale as Thackeray's "Little G." Exactly the building wanted for the purpose was not at first to be found.

About this time, it so happened that another as yet unfledged club company was on the look-out for a suitable home. The popular and accomplished Arthur Lewis, in taste, appearance, and association, most attractive of typical artists, had made his Jermyn Street rooms the rendezvous of the gifted and variously distinguished set to which he belonged. An adept, like many of those about him, in all manly exercises, he took an active part in the Volunteer movement. Supported by his particular intimates, he founded the Artists' Rifle Corps. The company thus brought together had outgrown the capacity of his private chambers. They held their meetings in a portion of the old Burlington House, granted them for the combined purposes of drill-hall, armoury, and mess-room.

The artists of the brush had been gradually reinforced by those of the pen. Thomas Hughes, who wrote *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, had joined the group, bringing with him other of F. D. Maurice's lay pupils. With the body thus formed the Garrick secessionists united themselves. Instead of a house in the artists' quarter, in and about Fitzroy Square, according to the original idea, the clubmen eventually settled on a more picturesque abode than any that region could have afforded, and in a more convenient quarter. The representatives of art and literature could not have housed themselves more suitably than in 1863 they were able to do, with the Academy of Music for their next door neighbour at 17, Hanover Square. It was a Georgian mansion, whose chief feature on entering seemed the magnificent old oak staircase. The rooms above stairs and below were adorned with floridly



carved mantelpieces, superbly panelled walls, and ceilings painted by Angelica Kauffmann.

Among those domiciled beneath this charming and delightful roof, the most famous was the creator of *Pickwick*, who, though not often seen on the premises, remained a member till his death, introducing to it his son, afterwards his successor in the conduct of *All the Year Round*, Charles Dickens the second, and the son of his old friend Frank Stone, the present Royal Academician, Mr. Marcus Stone, whom he had proposed for the club in 1866, and who, after forty-seven years, still remains a member. Of those he met at the Arts, none interested Dickens more deeply than the Chancery barrister who had been Arnold's pupil at Rugby, and whose impressions of his old master are recorded in the most successful story of school life ever written.

The attraction possessed for Dickens by Hughes is easily explained. Some twenty years earlier the novelist, during his continental travels, experienced a prolonged and acute spiritual crisis. This was succeeded by a torment of self-questionings about the Church to which, Anglican or Roman, a true Christian should belong.<sup>1</sup> During this protracted and growing agony the book which helped him most was Stanley's *Life of Arnold*. "I respect and reverence his memory," Dickens afterwards said, "beyond all expression." "Every sentence you quote from it," he said to Forster, "is the textbook of my faith." Afterwards at the Arts, Hughes, in answer to his eager questions, told him something of Arnold's magnetic attractiveness, and the occasional never-to-be-forgotten addresses to his sixth form. Till then, any personal acquaintance of Dickens with Dean Stanley was only that of chance meeting in society. Hughes brought about a closer personal intercourse. The Arts clubhouse would, he knew, interest Stanley's historical taste. Eventually, the

<sup>1</sup> John Forster's *Life of Dickens*, crown edition, p. 255.

biographer of Thomas Arnold and the author of *David Copperfield* signalized the first year of the Arts Club's existence by meeting as Hughes's guests in the dining-room of the infant society; for the twelvemonth witnessing the club's formation saw also Arthur P. Stanley installed in the place, as he often put it, of the Abbot of Westminster.

Personal ties connect the Arts Club only less closely with the writers of the time than with its painters. Poet in print, as well as on canvas, Dante Gabriel Rossetti sometimes delivered in the club smoking-room those discourses, emphasized by the eloquent Italian gesture, that proclaimed him a natural leader. Thither also came his brother, W. M. Rossetti, the art critic, for the most part silent, but sometimes readily discussing to a little circle the experiences and observations, foreign and British, of which his comments were the well-weighed outcome. The atmosphere of the place at this time was perceptibly charged with Pre-Raphaelite influence and interests, with Dante Gabriel for the prophet of the cult in metre and W. M. as its expositor in prose.

From Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, where, most of them beneath the same roof, the band then lived, there came throughout the sixties to Hanover Square, not only the two remarkable brothers just mentioned, but George Meredith and A. C. Swinburne. From Swinburne take all that is Rossetti, or that was acquired in association with George Meredith or Rossetti's pupil of the brush, Frederick Sandys—very little will be left of the poet of "Atalanta" and "Chastelard."

The personal forces concerned in the composition of the poet were those of his inferiors as well as of his elders and equals. Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton) and Captain (Sir Richard) Burton were the two chief master minds with which Swinburne was brought into contact. But, once he had risen to fame, their influence upon him was not greater than that of the worshippers

with whom by this time he had surrounded himself—Thomas Bendysshé, Joseph Knight, and Alfred Bate Richards. These were not all members of the Arts Club, but they were its frequent visitors, and the club thus became the intellectual centre of the whole mixed Swinburnian company. Swinburne's chief inspirer, if not creator, Rossetti, was far from being the sole Arts Club celebrity of Italian name and blood. The club beneath its present Dover Street roof is still visited by one who only just missed being an original member, C. E. Perugini. His whole English course has been one unbroken fulfilment of flattering prophecies about his artistic future, uttered in his student days by his chief European teachers, Ary Scheffer, in Paris, and Mancinelli in Rome ; while, at the same time, his own triumphs with the brush have been accompanied by those of his gifted wife, daughter of the most famous of all Arts clubmen, Charles Dickens himself. Finally, till 1889 the most original cartoonist of his day, Carlo Pellegrini, of *Vanity Fair*, entertained and exercised his brethren at the Arts with the humours and antics of a Neapolitan lazzaroni. Present and past Arts Club lists give the same impression as a stroll through a gallery of nineteenth and twentieth century painters. The artist whose "Darkened Room" was the picture of the year at the Academy of 1913, Sir Luke Fildes, forms the most illustrious link connecting the artists at work under George V with their club predecessors of the Victorian and Edwardian eras, including as these did, in addition to the names already mentioned, Field Talfourd, the Serjeant's brother, with his fine aristocratic features and bearing, admirably set off by his velvet coat, gracious and kindly smile ; Henry D'Egville, still remembered for his Venetian water colours ; the Kentish cattle painter, Sidney Cooper ; his son Thomas, who did not carry his years so well as his venerable father ; the impressionist James Whistler, with his squeaky voice and white forelock, a club and draw-

ing-room pet whose social acceptance did much towards giving a fashionable vogue to the studied Yankeeisms of phrase and pronunciation in which he vied with Lord Dunraven. Among the Arts men whose social antecedents and connection caused them to start from a position like that of Clive Newcome, were, in the Hanover Square days, Val Prinsep, Philip Calderon, W. V. Burgess, Edwin Long, Colonel Robert Goff, Fellow of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers ; Edwin Hughes, society's chief portrait painter ; Haynes Williams, credited with so many historical pieces ; and Heywood Hardy, whose studies of brute creation are not so much counterfeit presentments as living creations.

The *Punch* illustrators have always been familiar in English mouths as household words. First came John Tenniel, whose cartoon was from time immemorial, as it almost seemed, the artistic feature of the week, together with Tenniel's colleague and contemporary, Charles Keene, the great and noble artist who hit off the life and character of the street and of the hunting field with a colour, a movement, and a life that made the paper happy enough to possess him, a joy and refreshment to every member of the body politic. His death, in 1891, eclipsed the gaiety of *Punch*. The old fun died out of its pages, and the new social satire of drawing-room and dinner-table seemed but a partial substitute. Those who supplied these elements were, like their predecessors of the Arts Club, George du Maurier and Linley Sambourne.

The most famous artistic ornaments of the nineteenth century all had a connection with the club. Frederick Leighton had belonged to it some time when, on becoming President of the Royal Academy, he received a complimentary dinner, in 1878. This event also brought into the club J. E. Millais, hurriedly elected to take the chair on the occasion, and, except on that evening, afterwards as before, a stranger to

the place. Passing to its literary members, Edmund Yates speedily followed his friend and champion, Dickens, into the club, and used it regularly throughout his editorship of the *World* till the year of his death, 1894. The most variously accomplished of Dickens's magazine staff, Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, did not follow his chief to Hanover Square, where, however, the rank and file of periodical letters—for instance, Bernard H. Becker, a sound and safe general utility journalist, of Dickensian training, and H. Schütz Wilson, a various and versatile magazinist, with Alpine climbing for his forte and æstheticism for his foible—shone for years with pleasant brightness, and may still be remembered for their genial presence, honest and finished work. The one master of fiction with whom Dickens lived in intimacy, Wilkie Collins, was not quite a stranger to the club, and drew from it all the touches of club life incidentally relieving his most sensational stories. Charles Reade used the club as regularly as in the vacation he did his Fellow's rooms at Magdalen, Oxford, and often stayed till nearly midnight, walking up and down the smoking-drawing room, refreshing himself at every turn with a deep draught of tea, two relays of which had sometimes been consumed before he went home. The tea-drinking may have been dropped, but the whist-room knew him constantly till within a decade of his death, in 1884. To Reade's era also belongs the membership of three other writers who left their mark upon the time—W. R. S. Ralston, the Slavonic expert, who did for Russian letters what Sir Mackenzie Wallace afterwards did for the social and political life of the Tsar's subjects; Emanuel Deutsch, whose *Quarterly* article on the Talmud was welcomed by the learned as an original contribution to the study of Israelitish tradition and thought; and the *Cologne Gazette's* extraordinarily acute and well-informed correspondent, Max Schlesinger, whose peculiar sources of behind-the-scenes acquaintance with international move-

ments made him sought after, not only by newspaper men, but by financiers, leading parliamentarians, and sometimes ministers themselves.

Less completely equipped with club conveniences than the Arts, and designedly unconventional in its life and atmosphere, was the Arundel. It differed chiefly from innumerable other fraternities of similar personal composition in its permanent possession during the sixties of a picturesquely placed roof looking out on the Thames in Salisbury Street, Strand.<sup>1</sup> Its parentage was respectable and even illustrious enough for a far graver institution, keeping much more decorous hours.

Frank Talfourd, Serjeant Talfourd's son, had, under his distinguished father's eye, been given, at home and at school, an education almost unique in its social and intellectual value. Before going to Eton as a brilliant boy of thirteen, he had been patted on the head by celebrities of all kinds at his father's house. Going to Christchurch in 1845, he brought there, and carried away from it, a reputation for ability equal to any performance, qualified, unfortunately, by a disposition only to exert it upon the intellectual taste or humour of the moment. From the first he had been taught by precept and example to look for the best company that could be found, and to keep his mind in constant training. Called to the Bar at the Middle Temple in 1852, he went on circuit so long as the travelling mess amused him, and no longer. He then settled down to work, but not of a legal kind, in his Temple chambers.

His school and college antecedents, a pleasant, easy manner, a faculty of self-adaptation to the chance acquaintanceship of the moment, natural readiness and unflinching versatility of pen, once created an idea that he may have been the original of the name character in Thackeray's *Pendennis*. Any such notion is a chronological impossibility; the true and only Pendennis was Thackeray himself. But the journalistic and lite-

<sup>1</sup> Later it moved to Adelphi Terrace.

# Whig Club

## List of Members

Those whose names are hereunto subscribed agree to the Rules for Conducting the Whig Club as entered at the other end of this Book and also to such alterations and additions as may be made to them agreeable to the Twelfth Rule.

1	John Bullen	9	Albion
2	Th. American	10	J. Hartley
3	Chas. D. D. D.	11	Robt. Blair
4	W. H. Crowder	12	John Claxidge
5	Mrs. Bursford	13	John Lee
6	E. Hall	14	Math. Wiggins
7	Jos. Brett	15	<del>W. H. D. D.</del>
8	L. W. Moore	16	J. Hartley

### THE WHIG CLUB LIST OF MEMBERS.

(Block of autographs kindly lent by Messrs. Maggs Bros., Strand.)

The Whig Club started in 1780. It did much towards bringing to a focus the obscurer and dispersed Whig agencies which a generation later were to be utilized by Ellice at the Reform.





rary associations of Serjeant Talfourd's youth may well have given the novelist many hints, both in the way of character and incident, for the story that at different times has attracted to newspaper-writing as many lads as Charles Lever's novels have impelled into the Army or Captain Marryat's sent to sea.

Coming after J. R. Planché, Frank Talfourd worked, with equal industry and success, the vein first struck by his predecessor. He thus prepared on the burlesque stage the way for Sir F. C. Burnand, H. J. Byron, and Robert Reece. Between 1852 and 1862 his extravaganzas "Alcestis, the Original Strong-minded Woman" and "The Rule of Three" were played at the Strand, two more, "Ganem" and "Shylock," at the Olympic, yet another, "Pluto and Proserpine," at the Haymarket, then one more, "Abou Hassam," at the St. James's. No man, in his way, worked harder than Frank Talfourd. Had he contented himself with the labours of the pen, he would not have had to exchange London for Mentone, or have died on the Riviera at thirty-four. By way of adding to his exhausting enjoyments and to ensure himself against a sufficient amount of nightly rest, he founded the Arundel Club at 16, Salisbury Street. In that enterprise he was assisted by a solicitor of artistic tastes who had his offices next door, and who decorated the Arundel rooms with his own fine collection of line engravings. The club outlived its creator. When the third or fourth anniversary of his death came round, it had grown into a favourite house of call for workers in the thoroughfare and its tributaries happily called by G. A. Sala, Great Brain Street. Albert Smith looked in almost nightly on his way to or from the Garrick and the Egyptian Hall.

Charles Mathews, then at the Lyceum, before going there, had often dined from the joint at the house dinner, and sometimes told a droll story about himself, Albert Smith, and another Arundel man, a playwright

as well as daily newspaper editor, the most strikingly handsome and quite the best talker among his Fleet Street contemporaries. This was Leicester Buckingham. When editing the *Morning Star*, he had gone one evening to the Lyceum by appointment to see Mathews in his dressing-room. Arrived there, he found, not Mathews but his other friend, Albert Smith, who explained his presence by saying he had come on the same errand as Buckingham. After a long time of waiting, and no appearance of Mathews, Buckingham could stay no longer, and was departing when Smith drew him back with the words, "One moment more, and perhaps Mathews will come after all." Suiting the action to the word, the speaker pulled off a false moustache, and revealed to the amazed Buckingham, not the supposed Albert Smith but the expected and indubitable Charles Mathews.

The other daily editor best known to the Arundel, both when conducting the *Standard*, first, the *Hour* and the *Morning Advertiser* afterwards, was Tom Hamber, always, whatever the journal with which he had to do, in the ultra-Conservative interest. On one occasion he capped Leicester Buckingham's recital of the Lyceum dressing-room incident with something like a similar experience of his own. Going to dine with a Conservative host in Mayfair, arriving rather late and proceeding to the dinner-table direct, Hamber suddenly realized that he was sitting next to John Bright. He looked round, thought the room had a strange appearance. He had of course entered the wrong house, but went quietly through with his dinner while the "tribune of the people," ignorant of course as to his next-door neighbour's identity, denounced the Conservative Party and Press, but finally made some complimentary remarks concerning the tone of some recent *Standard* leaders. It suddenly struck Hamber that it might be a good thing for his paper to print in its correspondence columns a short letter to the editor from Bright on some

topic of the day. He knew that the great orator rather fancied his own pen, and often took a pride in something he had written or inspired in his paper, the *Morning Star*. Frankly explaining his identity to Bright, and the cause of their accidental meeting, Hamber ventured so tactfully on the suggestion that he at once jumped into Bright's favour, and of course secured from him the "letter to the editor," signed with his name.

During the sixties and seventies there was less all-night work at newspaper offices than to-day; the pressure of personal competition, steam presses, and telegraphic extension had not organized the system to a height that seriously interfered with the nightly attendance at the Arundel of many who were then considerable journalistic figures. The wit combats of John Oxenford and James Davison, the theatrical and musical critics of the *Times*, sometimes attracted also Laman Blanchard, the veteran pantomime-writer and the *Daily Telegraph* stage oracle. There was plenty of force and freshness, too, in the premeditated dialogues on all things histrionic, held by the well-read and clearly judging Joseph Knight of the *Athenæum* with Clement Scott, whose days were then occupied by a War Office clerkship, but whose evenings were always free for the play and the critical column afterwards called forth by a first night. Seated a little apart from these was a man who had scarcely reached the prime of middle life, and who was not destined to see the full fruits of his work as the dramatist who, by his series of Prince of Wales's plays, did not a little towards re-creating the English stage, T. W. Robertson, remarkable for the impression of intellectual power conveyed by his well-shaped head, and his talk, now pungent and cynical, now humorous, but always holding spellbound the circle of which he was the centre, and which often included two other dramatic authors, W. S. Gilbert, then best known for his "Bab Ballads" in *Fun*, and William

Gorman Wills, who, beginning with *The Man of Airlie* in 1866, rose to higher flights with *Charles I*, *Jane Shaw*, *Nell Gwynne*, and *Sedgemoor*, before his death, in 1891.

The founder of the Arundel Club, in popularizing the theatre with clever young men of good position, was followed a generation later by Lewis Wingfield, the sixth Viscount Powerscourt's second son, also an Arundelian. The club itself, from originally being and long remaining entirely a meeting-ground for men who lived by pen or brush, transformed itself into a resort of the theatrically disposed loafers on the look-out for a chance of planting their own unacted plays, or securing from some playwright of repute a piece adapted to the genius of an actress in whom they were interested or a favourable press notice of her current performance. The place thus gradually lost its original character of a reunion of men whose chief concern was the industry by which they lived. Young gentlemen reading for Civil Service examinations, briefless barristers of all standings as of all disqualifications, and copper captains from Aldershot, whose efforts on the amateur boards had eaten up their narrow means and left them hungry for an engagement from a manager for whom they had just the new comedy sure to suit him, now flooded the club. The bored professionals of studio, stage, and press did not then appreciate the opportunities of social advancement that might be opened up by the invading amateurs. Might it not, they asked themselves, be possible to revive the "free-and-easy" for intellectual toilers only, forthcoming at the Savage Club, as devised by Robert Brough ten years earlier. Even in the late sixties Sala's Great Brain Street, with its denizens and Tyburnia, not to mention Belgravia or Mayfair, were, not as afterwards, hand-in-glove with each other, but rather at open feud.

The secession from what he thought the degenerate

Arundel to the Savage of which he hoped so much was led by Tom Hood, son of him who sang the "Song of the Shirt," till 1865 one of many literary clerks in the War Office, after that the conductor of an attempt to make *Fun* the literary and artistic rival to *Punch*.<sup>1</sup> Himself the inheritor of some of his father's gifts, he laboured indefatigably as well as to some extent successfully to raise the literary tone of the lighter journalism of his day and to help the play by capable and honest criticism. He had gathered round him, and had been the first to bring out, several clever performers with pen and pencil. The former comprised W. S. Gilbert, Clement W. Scott, George Rose, J. T. Delane's Oxford contemporary at Magdalen Hall, one of Newman's followers to Rome, the creator in *Fun* of the Gampish Mrs. Brown, the rarely gifted W. J. Prowse, whose debauched old tipster, Nicholas, with his "sherry wine" and "knurr and spell," would not have discredited Thackeray; and H. S. Leigh, whose *vers de Société* were not below Praed or Locker. At the early Savage Club Saturday dinners, both in its original Maiden Lane home, and afterwards at Radley's Hotel in Covent Garden, were James Macdonell, then of the *Daily Telegraph*, afterwards of the *Times*, two Yankee humorists, one pictorial the other literary, and Ernest Griset, whose close study of the caged dwellers at the Zoological Gardens, quick, original imagination, and keen eye to the ridiculous enabled him to read varieties of human character into members of the brute creation. The American *littérateur* at the early Savage Club was Charles Farrar Browne, whose refined and grave personality was in impressive contrast to the jesting exuberance which formed the profes-

<sup>1</sup> This competition showed itself particularly in the engravings of Alfred Thompson, Gordon Thomson, W. Brunton, Thomas Morten, and above all of a gifted young Irishman, Paul Gray, whose cartoon, "Puck in Tears for the Lost Cable" (one of the failures to complete the telegraphic connection of the Anglo-Saxon world on the two sides of the Atlantic), fell little short of Tenniel's excellence.

sional rôle of Mark Twain's and Bret Harte's predecessor from the Far West.

A great character of the Savage at this distant date was a certain old Frankfort Jew, a Doctor Strauss, originally discovered by G. A. Sala in his wanderings, and was made something of a hero by an action for libel that he brought against the Athenæum for throwing doubt on the genuineness of the learning he had paraded in a novel called *The Old Ledger*.

The essayist was then more in demand than at the present time. His two representatives among the early Savages were Hain Friswell, who secured fame and fortune from a collection of social articles contributed to the *Family Herald*, afterwards republished and sold by thousands as the *Gentle Life*. Other essayists at the club were two of Dickens's writers, Andrew Halliday, John Hollingshead, and Arthur William à Beckett, the youngest member of the *Punch* family. Science had its labourers in the recently departed W. B. Tegetmeier and John Brough, a chemist, who with his two brothers, Lionel the actor, and William, a country theatrical manager, were among the latest survivors of Robert Brough's Savage Club.

The tradition and something of the spirit of that primitive Savage's bitterness against rank, wealth, and social privilege had descended to his club posterity in the sixties. But neither of his two kinsmen had any of that quality known as "devil," so conspicuous in Robert Brough, or, the one in the theatre he controlled, the other in the laboratory where he worked, cared for anything outside his business. Even T. W. Robertson, a Savage as well as an Arundelian, who had more of Brough's genius and temper than any others of the set, saw that there was a cant of Radicalism and democracy, as well as of smug, prosperous, and respectable Philistinism. Dr. Strauss, who had a really revolutionary temper, as well as personal memories of Robert Brough, thought the original genius of the



SAVAGE CLUB  
WELCOME

W. DALMOND

**SAVAGE CLUB HOUSE DINNER**  
 SATURDAY APRIL 12<sup>TH</sup> 1902  
 DR PHINEAS S. ABRAHAM IN THE CHAIR

AN IRVING NIGHT AT THE SAVAGE CLUB.  
 By W. H. Pike, R.B.A.  
 (By permission of the Club.)





society suffered from the infusion into it of the professional element by Edward Draper, a solicitor, and C. Millward, a Liverpool trader of literary tastes, who conducted the *Porcupine* in his native city, and who afterwards edited one or two volumes of Savage Club papers.

If the men thus banded together gloried a little ostentatiously in their bohemianism, they were united among themselves by a genuine spirit of mutual assistance in their daily work. It was quite as much an industrial guild as a convivial fellowship. None of its members had any means of living except by their brains. None at the Saturday gatherings were "going on" anywhere afterwards; only a stray Savage of that period was ever seen in evening dress. No "person of quality" appeared among the guests. Except, therefore, in name it had little in common with the twentieth-century Savage Club, at which princes, ambassadors, and bishops have appeared, and an invitation to whose table has become an honour of the same kind as was a feast at the Prytaneum in classical Athens, or an invitation to a City company dinner in modern London. To its progressive social distinction the modern Savage Club has added much of genuine journalistic authority. The last years of the nineteenth century saw, not only a leading Savage, George Byrom Curtis, a man of great mental power, as well as of rare journalistic gift, justly, on W. H. Mudford's retirement, promoted to the *Standard* editorship, but his staff exclusively recruited from his fellow-clubmen.

In transforming itself from a homeless gathering into a sufficiently select, well-to-do, and decorous society beneath its own illustriously hospitable roof-tree, the Savage has not only obeyed a fundamental law of club evolution but has illustrated a social tendency of modern life. Neither in the Fitzroy Square district, in St. John's Wood, in Chelsea, nor in its more ancient Westminster whereabouts, does the social cartographer

to-day place any geographical counterpart of the Parisian Latin quarter. The explanation is that Bohemia, which formerly had as distinct a local existence as Leicester, and as much a population of its own, finds its twentieth-century equivalent in a place of fashion participated in by ladies and gentlemen of every degree. In the old Robertsonian Prince of Wales's comedy, "Society," the Alsatian "pressman," Stylus, scandalizes a titled hostess by accidentally pulling out of his pocket and dropping on the carpet a strongly smelling brier-root pipe. To-day her ladyship would have thought it the most natural thing in the world, and by way of making a guest at home might have offered him her own silver cigarette-case.

The polite world first found its delight in bohemianism about the same time that it made a "smart" philanthropy of slumming. Royalty led the way with smoking-concerts, modelled upon those at which it had assisted in the unconventional saloons of Langham Place. Dukes, duchesses, and Cabinet ministers, by their presence at the *recherché* suppers of a popular actor behind the scenes after the play, set the example to Tyburnia and Suburbia of conjugating in all its moods and meanings the not exactly translatable verb *séncanailler*. Meanwhile the old picturesque, irregular life had gone quite out of date with the intellectual workers conventionally supposed to be incapable of leading any other. The sober truth is that the new organization of the literary and artistic craft has compelled its practitioners to turn their lives into the same self-denying ordinance as that imposed by his duties on the physician who cannot set to work editing his Medical Encyclopædia till after midnight, or the Oxford theologian whose University lectures in the week have to be combined with preparation for the Sunday sermon at Whitehall. Shakespeare's Bohemia was a land of inhospitable deserts, surprising pomps, and strange portents. The London Bohemia of

the current Georgian era is the pleasant meeting-ground of congenial spirits taken indifferently from every social order and class. Wherever those who belong to it congregate, it first came into vogue as a protest against the dull decorum of a pretentious aristocratic monotony.

The sixties produced several little societies in addition to those already mentioned. Some of these either grew into clubs now flourishing, or gave the first impulse to the movement of which those clubs were the result. Among them was the Century,<sup>1</sup> which in 1867 on Sunday evenings met on a Pall Mall first floor, occupied during the week by a fashionable money-lender. Thomas Hughes, of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, was the chief talker in a circle which included W. Sidgwick of Merton, still living near Rugby, whose son, N. V., is a Fellow of Lincoln; R. S. Wright, afterwards the judge; Lyulph Stanley, now Lord Sheffield, both of Balliol; the then future Greek professor, Mr. Ingram Bywater; C. E. Appleton, Fellow of St. John's, Oxford, founder of the *Academy*; the Dilkes, Charles and Ashton; Joseph Chamberlain, W. E. Forster, Frederic Harrison, T. B. Potter, and the pioneer, as Lord Salisbury may be called the creator, of the endowment of research. Cambridge was first represented by Mr. Oscar Browning, a host in himself, as well as by one or two of his personal intimates and most prominent pupils.

These reunions afterwards developed themselves on two different lines. J. S. Mill and John Bright were the chief political heroes of the Centurions, and the inspirers of one or two other smaller societies, contemporary with or quickly following on that already mentioned.

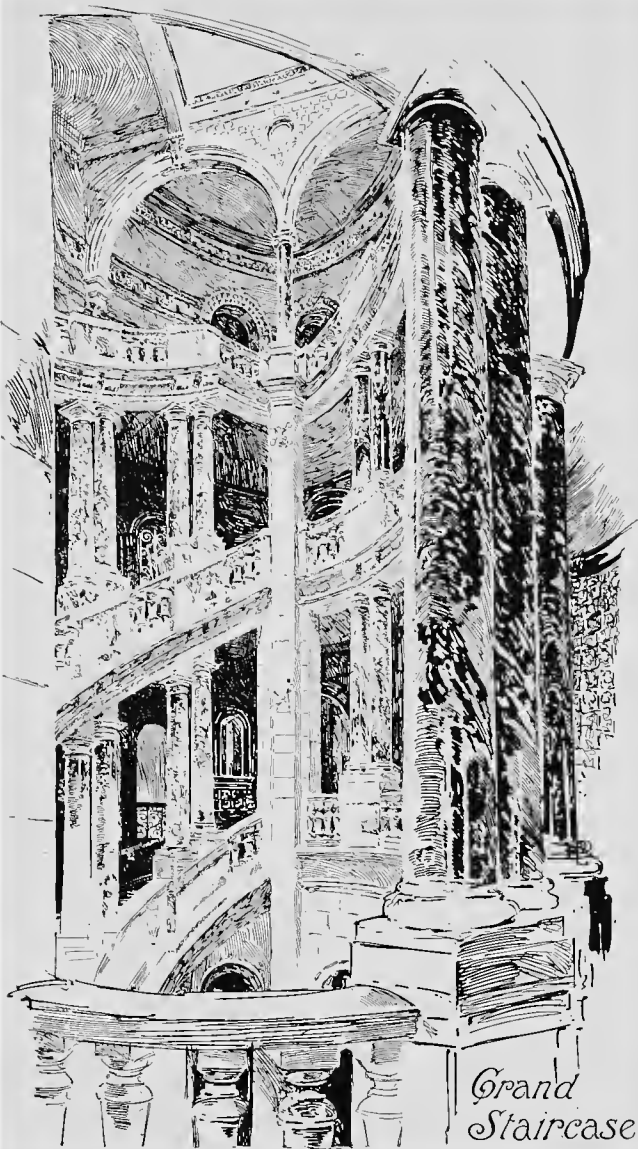
<sup>1</sup> The Sabbath Century meetings were not easily attended by Oxford residents. These combined to produce on the Isis, a local edition of the society known as the Dominicans as well as the Century. For this or for its metropolitan original Mr. Robinson Ellis suggested a motto from Tacitus, *corumpere et corrumpi sæculum vocatur*.

Art and letters, not less than politics, also began to make themselves felt as club forces. C. E. Appleton, Sir Henry Thompson, Seymour Haden,<sup>1</sup> both scarcely less famous as artists than as surgeons, a Sussex art collector, R. Fisher of Hill Top, Midhurst, Mr. George Salting and Mr. Montagu Guest, both first-rate judges, as well as collectors of paintings and statuary, combined to advance the movement ultimately resulting in the Burlington Fine Arts Club. The Savile Club, a later development of the New Club in Spring Gardens, and the Authors' Club in Whitehall, form the most important additions to the literary resorts already visited. To the Century in 1882 is due also the first faint outline of the idea since, as we have already seen, triumphantly fulfilled by the National Liberal Club.

Indirectly the Radical Century was to yield some Conservative fruits, for the rooms in which it met became afterwards the haunt of several clever young men, who saw so much of and liked each other so well that they fancied themselves a political party. They actually called themselves the Cecil Club. Their chief speaker and their most resourceful mind, Alfred Austin, afterwards poet-laureate, here found the encouragement to start the *National Review*.

The inevitable tendency on the part of smaller reunions to merge their identities and their names in larger bodies explains the complete disappearance of innumerable coteries very much in evidence during the second half of the Victorian age. Such were the Fielding, not the revived institution of that name already mentioned, but the earlier society, domiciled first at Offley's, afterwards at the Cider Cellars, the reunion whose best known habitués were J. G. Tomline, the theatrical critic, in its earliest days Walter Lacy, and its very latest the actor, H. J. Montagu. The Knights

<sup>1</sup> Between this gentleman and James Whistler a personal difference much agitating the club in 1874 was composed, at least for the time, by Sir E. J. Poynter, P.R.A., an original member.



THE STAIRCASE, NATIONAL LIBERAL CLUB.

(From a drawing by Mr. Joseph Pennell, kindly lent by the Club.)



of the Round Table dined on Saturdays at Simpson's in the Strand. These were succeeded by companies equally unconventional but of more serious aim, artistic or political. Such were the New Reform Club, brought into being by P. W. Clayden, of the *Daily News*, and by Mr. G. W. E. Russell as a corporate protest on the part of the Liberal forwards against the Transvaal policy of successive administrations. Chiefly or entirely literary or pictorial in their origin were the two Vagabond Clubs, the Old (and the New, which grew out of it). These, from their personal associations, have some claim to be considered Pre-Raphaelite monuments erected out of due time. James Westland Marston, a well-read and conscientious dramatist, showed himself at his house in Regent's Park the most hospitable of men. His son, Philip Bourke, combined his father's knowledge and taste with more than his father's genius. The friend of Sharp, Swinburne, and Rossetti, he solaced the blindness that afflicted him by poetic composition, in particular delicately wrought lyrics on the friends whom his genius and affliction had gathered round him, and who formed themselves into the Vagabond Club with the chief purpose, in the first instance, of providing him with a resort to his own taste. In 1913 the Vagabonds have merged themselves in the O. P. Club, and the name is now known no more.

The countless little coteries of which the Vagabond, Old or New, is a specimen resembled each other in gathering themselves round the more or less well-known central figure, and in being dominated by the representatives of some commanding interest. Thus the still existing Whitefriars, one of whose principal meeting-places was Anderton's Hotel, was largely coloured by the Cassell staff of La Belle Sauvage Yard, and had for its personal providence a gentleman whose connection with the social life of Fleet Street and the Strand dated from Frank Talfourd and the Arundel

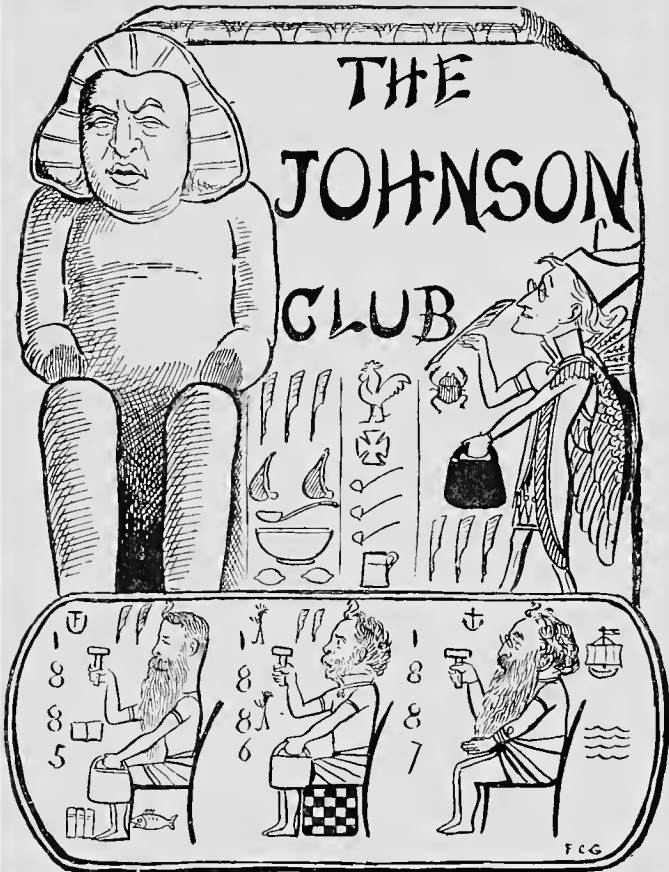
Club—the late Jonas Levy, who seldom missed the Whitefriars' Friday meeting or removed his cherry-wood pipe from his mouth even when retailing his Green Room stories. Other members of great literary distinction were E. H. Palmer, Arabic Professor at Cambridge, and a writer for the *Standard*, who lost his life on a Government mission to the Sinai tribes in 1882, and the well-known newspaper authority on all financial subjects, Mr. A. J. Wilson. Omar Khayyám, Rabelais, and other quaint literary unions had existed for some time when the Samuel Johnson centenary of December, 1884, brought into existence the Johnson Club,<sup>1</sup> after a preliminary supper at the "Cock," a Johnsonian brotherhood of thirty-one members, including the Greek Minister in London, M. Gennadius, F. W. Chesson, Dr. Birkbeck Hill, Mr. T. Fisher Unwin, Sir F. C. Gould, and a former Member for Blackburn, Mr. W. E. Briggs, best known as "Napoleon" Briggs.

Extremes meet. Among the latest of nineteenth-century clubs the Royal Societies', now housed in St. James's Street, is lineally descended from the most illustrious of the nomadic coteries that sprang up during the Restoration. An early chapter of the present narrative, touching upon the Rota, mentioned that one of the Rota men would be met again in the scientific circles of the seventeenth century. Sir William Petty, thus referred to, notwithstanding his eminence in scientific research, would have had no place among the creators of clubs for the learned apart from his association with the discoverer of Halley's comet.

Edmund Halley, a Derbyshire man of good birth, owed the independence which made him master of his time and movements to the paternal success as a Shoreditch soap-boiler. The Royal Society had been

<sup>1</sup> Naturally convener of the company at the "Cock," Mr. T. Fisher Unwin was proclaimed the prior of the new social order, who, in addition to those mentioned above, has for his fellow-clubmen Mr. Birrell, K.C., Mr. Oscar Browning, Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, and John O'Connor.





*(Drawn by Sir F. Carruthers Gould, Brother of the Johnson Club.)*

The three portraits below are those of the early Priors: T. Fisher Unwin, the originator of the Club, the late F. W. Chesson, and E. J. Leveson. The portrait above is that of S. Rowe Bennett, the Club's first scribe.



founded before his birth, and had its earliest beginnings in the rooms of Dr. Wilkins, above the entrance arch of Wadham College, some ten years before its establishment in London. With that learned body Halley communicated on the movements of planets, while still an undergraduate of Queen's. On leaving Oxford he went abroad and became socially intimate with the first European *savants* of the time. On his return to England, his experiences abroad, and especially his observation at St. Helena of the transit of Mercury, secured him admission into the famous body that then included Sir Isaac Newton, Robert Boyle, with Sir Joseph Williamson for its president, and the German philosopher William Oldenburg, John Milton's friend, for its first secretary. Eventually Halley became Oldenburg's successor. Halley's personal appearance and manner gave no suggestion of the profound and absorbed student of Nature in her grandest, most mysterious phenomena, and of the abstrusest problems presented by the universe to man. His slight, well-knit figure, with its quick and light movement, he must have resembled the late Lord Avebury, like whom he had the faculty of interesting in scientific study men of the world who, till they knew Halley, exclusively divided their attention between the racecourse and the club.

The Royal Society Club, as Halley called it into being, had, like the other companies just recorded, no fixed dwelling-place. Its earliest rendezvous was the Devil Tavern, Temple Bar, about which a good deal has been said on an earlier page. Thence, by way of Covent Garden and Pall Mall, in each of which quarters it made some sojourn, it settled in the Thatched House Tavern, St. James's, till that structure was pulled down to make way for another building, eventually developed into a new club. The vicissitudes of the "Thatched House" will be mentioned in a coming chapter. Here something

may be said about two or three other haunts neither less prominent nor less interesting than those already mentioned in club affinities of the illustrious corporation of British *savants*.

The most various as well as one of the most entertaining and useful nineteenth-century diarists would have had nothing to say about his experiences in general, or the most notable among the Royal Society's Club tributaries, but for his friend and contemporary the shrewd and kindly Scot, Alexander Macmillan, who made the great publishing house which bears his name, and who saw at a glance that his friend's adventures among the wise men would make excellent copy. Robinson was induced by Macmillan not to give up the Antiquaries' Club in a fit of pettish boredom, and was rewarded for taking this advice by his consequent intimacy with two natural philosophers, almost as learned and perhaps quite as agreeable as Edmund Halley. These had found the Antiquarian company the direct way into the Royal Society itself. They were amiably willing to enable Robinson to make the same discovery on his own account. Like Halley, Ayloffe, afterwards by inheritance the sixth baronet of his name, was no mere recluse preoccupied by calculations of eclipses and diagrams of the heavens, but being by profession a barrister, was a man of the world from his position, and by his personal endowments did much towards propagating an interest in science throughout the polite world.

His successor, Thomas Amyot, who lived from 1775 till 1850, laboured in a different field, but as an intellectual missionary among the same classes; while his researches were specially in the province that the Antiquarian Society had made its own. To illustrate and apply the services of archæology to the historian became Amyot's great work, never attempted before him, and in its far-reaching results never more felt than at the present moment. The chief corporate

agencies established by him for the advancement of this work were the Camden Society, still flourishing, the Percy, the Shakespeare, and other literary brotherhoods. The social orbit of these club makers continuously enlarged itself, attracted to it all that was most brilliant and famous in the intellectual movements of the time. Amongst others was Whewell, the Master of Trinity, who had pursued knowledge to its last term, and it was of him that Samuel Rogers, who as a visitor of course, was everywhere, drew from a fellow-guest, Sydney Smith, the remark, "Whewell's forte is science; his foible omniscience." Perhaps the most interesting habitué as honorary member of the circle was R. W. Emerson, then on one of his visits to England, who, when he made his *début* in April, 1848, at the anniversary Antiquarian dinner, was not only a stranger to English Society except by name, but was confronted by personal prejudice against him. His combination of intelligence and sweetness quite disarmed his severest critics, drawing from them the unanimous admission that he had one of the most interesting countenances and charming manners the learned gentlemen had ever beheld.

## CHAPTER XIII

### SWORD AND GOWN

Eighteenth-century clubmen at the Thatched House Tavern—The Dilettantists—Characteristic members or managers—The Earl of Middlesex, Sir Francis Dashwood, and Thomas Brand of the Hoo—Noble opera patrons and their touts—How the Muscovita gets her salary raised—Lord Thurlow and Edmund Burke on pothouse club companies—Thatched House vicissitudes, and its reversion to club use—Sir John Milton designs and Sir Antonio Brady and others found the Civil Service Club—Its transformation into the Thatched House Club—The Bayford Boat Race banquets—Nineteenth-century successors of Junius at the Thatched House—Bob Truffleton the courtier at club and country house—Quick changes in St. James's Street—The Club where Gladstone was at home, the Devonshire—Pratt's the old home of "crib"—The Junior United and its makers—"Cripplegate," "Billingsgate," and "Hellgate"—"Billy" the second at the "Rag and Famish" Club—Two "Rag" tragedies—Major Arthur Griffiths, the Army and Navy Club's historian—Napoleon III at the "Rag," and the first club smoking and stranger's rooms—The Naval and Military—The Cavalry—The National Club, and its services to Church and State—Its devotional exercises.

THE assembly place of Crabb Robinson and his brother Antiquarians mentioned in the last chapter differs from other institutions of the same kind, not only in having been a home of several clubs but in eventually becoming a club itself, to-day called by its own name. The Thatched Club<sup>1</sup> was the title given by Jonathan Swift himself, in 1711, to the most important among the many Tory coteries which he organized in Harley's service. Exactly fifty-eight years afterwards it was again to be used as a political club, the extra-parliamentary headquarters of the Opposition to the Government of the day. But in 1769 its chief reception-room was occasionally appropriated by a society of patrician

<sup>1</sup> *Swift's Prose Works*, edited by Temple Scott (Bell & Sons), vol. xii.

origin formed in 1734 for the combined furtherance of conviviality and art.

On Mondays and Thursdays during a greater part of the eighteenth century there bustled of an afternoon in and out of the "Thatched House" two titled personages, as well known to every street passenger as the sentries outside the neighbouring palace. Their particular business was personally to see that no hitch occurred in the arrangements for the bi-weekly Dilettanti Club dinner, for which they held themselves responsible in their capacity of club managers. They were Charles Sackville, Earl of Middlesex, eventually the second Duke of Dorset, and Sir Francis Dashwood. The former's only claim to personal distinction was his peculiarity of expression, gait, and a habit of talking to himself which suggested lunacy. The latter, from his conduct in the Bute administration, was known for the most blundering Chancellor of the Exchequer who had ever received the promise of a peerage.<sup>1</sup> Both were known to be distanced in the infamy of their life by Bute's First Lord of the Admiralty, the Earl of Sandwich. They were, however, experts in painting crockery and bric-à-brac, judging not as connoisseurs in love with beauty but as dealers who knew the worth of an article to a sixpence. They also set the fashion of opera and theatre management. Regularly on one or other of the days just mentioned they convened at the "Thatched House" a committee presided over by themselves, and including Lord Saville, Thomas Potter, the archbishop's son, who, in bestial blackguardism, could give points to Dashwood or even Sandwich, and John Wilkes, who owed his moral wreck to domestic surroundings, and whose mature life might have been cleanly but for the calamitous, ill-assorted marriage forced upon him in

<sup>1</sup> He was created Baron le Despencer in 1763, the year in which Henry Fox, for being content with the Paymastership of the Forces, became the first Lord Holland.

his youth. The shining purity of his boyhood was considered by his family friend the saintly Andrew Baxter to contain the sure promise of godly and philanthropic service. As it was, his intellectual displays, his humour, wit, and epigram did something to relieve the unspeakable degradation of the company into which he drifted. In his own words, he had stumbled at the very threshold of the Temple of Hymen ; he married when little more than twenty, to please, he said, his father, and not driven to the step by debt, a wealthy woman, half as old again as himself, with whom he only lived till the birth of one child, a daughter, and whom he afterwards only once saw again.

The "Thatched House" Dilettantists were the subdued London duplicates of the sulphureously styled clubmen of Medmenham, Bucks. The chief business done at the Dilettanti dinners, after a little picture-dealing, was to ensure the diners against dull evenings. To that end the general opera fund must be well maintained, while a periodical whip was put on for special sums that would make the London ballet and its "pet" equal to those of any other European capital. Thomas Brand, of the Hoo, Hertfordshire, one of the original Dilettantists and a toady of Lord Middlesex, took upon himself the penetration of continental *coulisses* from Madrid to Moscow in search of *coryphées* up to his fastidious patron's high standard. On that errand Mr. Brand took with him for companion and guide the Dilettantists' operatic manager, Venneschi. For his complete success, however, he was indebted to an Italian tailor whom, in gratitude, he brought back to London, "because," sneered Horace Walpole, "we have no tailors here!" who was warmly welcomed by Brand's fellow-clubmen, and who made himself so agreeable as to be unanimously elected a member. The Middlesex interest soon created him opera paymaster, and the grateful





THATCHED HOUSE CLUB.

Dinner of the Dilettanti Society.

(From a print kindly lent by the Thatched House Club.)



tailor, once installed in his new post, showed a proper sense of obligation to the friendly nobleman by raising the salary of the dancer known as the Muscovita, one of the Middlesex harem, from four hundred to six hundred guineas. The poet who did the librettos had to be satisfied with fifty, but the Italian vocalists, called after the *impresario* the "Tailorini," secured for the season from eight hundred to a thousand.

The business of pleasure and the various interests of the Dilettanti brought many curious characters to the "Thatched House," among others Adolphus Frederick of Holstein, whose tastes and habits were those of Heliogabalus but who actually became Bishop of Lubeck and narrowly missed election to the Crown of Sweden; the eccentric Mathias Howard, third Earl Stafford, who, marrying the wealthiest heiress of his time, a Paris banker and wine-merchant's daughter, Miss Cantillon, repaid the enjoyment he received from the Dilettanti by a large legacy to the club for beautifying its rooms, and by a smaller one to the tavern in which it was held.

George II's great minister was a member of White's but not of the Dilettanti. That society had, however, a Sir Robert of its own (Sir R. Rich) without the statesman's abdominal development, as well as, of course, minus his official decoration. A Dilettanti page-boy knew no other Sir Robert than the knightly Premier, familiar to every one by his proportions and the insignia of the Bath that he always wore. One day the Suffolk baronet<sup>1</sup> bounced into the club and desired that a gentleman whom he had come to see should be told of Sir Robert being there. Taken aback by the name, perplexed, incredulous, but pale and trembling, the lad exclaimed to a fellow-servant standing by, "Where can the blue string and the corporation have gone!"

A later generation witnessed other clubs within a club

<sup>1</sup> Sir Robert Rich, Bart., of Rose Hall, Suffolk, Colonel of the 4th Dragoons.

at the "Thatched House" besides the Dilettanti, among them a Pittite company exclusively composed of peers; one of these from his place in Parliament mentioned some information coming to him from the "Thatched House." This brought down Thurlow, then sitting on the Woolsack. "As regards," he said, "what the noble lord in the red riband told us he had heard at the alehouse. . . ."

In much the same spirit Edmund Burke, writing to Lord Claremont, calls it an ordinary place of refreshment. Whether in its club or tavern character, the "Thatched House" by the middle of the eighteenth century was a place of which it was a distinction to be made free. In 1769 the *North Briton* episode united the Rockingham and the Grenville Whigs with the chief Chathamites, Shelburne and Temple, against the Duke of Grafton for making his administration the tool of the royal vindictiveness towards the Middlesex electors and the Member they persistently returned. Both the Whig malcontents of title and the commoners, like Burke, Barré, and Conway, made the "Thatched House" their headquarters. There, too, they conferred with Sir Philip Francis, Alderman Sawbridge, and the Progressive members of the Civil Club.

The Junius letters were now drawing to a close, their general drift being favourable to Wilkes but not to the American colonies—an accurate reflection of popular feeling which sufficiently explains their success. Long ago, in the terms of an algebraic problem,<sup>1</sup> de Quincey set forth the proofs of Francis's identity with Junius. Francis himself admitted his indebtedness to the company of all sorts he met in St. James's Street for his correct insight into the public mind on all the subjects he touched.

The "Thatched House" habitués did something more than prime Francis for his work. In due course they

<sup>1</sup> *Tait's Magazine*, December, 1840. De Quincey's Works, vol. iii. pp. 132-3.

1830

Sir

The favor of your Company is desired  
to dine at the Thatched House Tavern,  
St. James's, Street, on Friday the 15<sup>th</sup> Inst.

To celebrate the  
Birth Day of his Royal Highness the  
Duke of Cambridge.

Stewards

McLellan  
McLellan

Dinner on Table at 6 o'clock precisely.



Printed by W. G. & Co. 17, Strand, London.

McLellan  
McLellan

A THATCHED HOUSE INVITATION.  
(Original kindly lent by the Thatched House Club.)



led the movement for an amendment in the Statute Book, vitally and permanently affecting the freedom of the press. Woodfall, who owned the *Public Advertiser*, in which the letters appeared, when brought to trial was found by the jury guilty, not of libel but of publishing, and Lord Chief Justice Mansfield denied the jury's competence to consider a question of law as well as of fact. "This will never do!" exclaimed one "Thatched House" man to a more famous member, Horne Tooke; and the two set on foot an agitation which knew no pause till its authors had applied to Fox the pressure that produced the Libel Act of 1792, enabling a jury to find a general verdict. That legislative feat entirely resulted from the "Thatched House" dinner, May 10, 1769, celebrating the substantial minority of 143 votes against the 197 awarding the Middlesex seat to the Court candidate, Colonel Luttrell, afterwards Lord Carhampton.

The "Thatched House" entered on the club stage of its existence in 1865, but not exactly on the spot formerly covered by the little rural inn adjoining the hospital for leprous maidens, which Henry VIII converted into a royal palace. The place of refreshment, as Burke had called it, was not entirely squeezed out, but only elbowed a little south by the Conservative Club in 1843. Between five and six years later the last dinner took place beneath the old convivial roof. The building, continuously devoted for more than a century to some form of social enjoyment, was allowed to remain first as a house of business, then as an insurance office. That, or some kindred purpose, it subserved till the whirligig of time once more wrought its revenges, and a new transforming agency began to readapt the historic—then the most perfect situation of the kind available—to a social use.

The extraordinary success of the Junior Carlton in 1865 suggested the idea of a Civil Service Club to certain members of the staff at St. Martin's le Grand

and at the War Office. The latter contingent was headed by a man who, had honours then been bestowed as lavishly as they are now upon the service to which he belonged, would have received something more than the C.B. and the knighthood eventually awarded him. Sir John Milton had begun in 1840 as a junior clerk in the department of the Secretary at War. He rose by annual degrees to be recognized as the most useful and brilliant servant of the reconstituted War Office. National recognition soon followed the services he rendered to Miss Nightingale in the hospital work at Scutari and elsewhere in the East during the Crimean War. An occasional writer for the *Times* under Delane, he also acted as one of John Murray's "readers." Government clerks were then systematically underpaid and overworked. Milton took up their cause and soon secured a material and lasting improvement in their prospects and pay.

A cousin of Anthony Trollope, he was the novelist's one kinsman to whom the lonely and out-at-elbows post-office junior owed many good turns during his squalid lodging-house days. The memory of kindnesses like these made Trollope, in *The Small House at Allington*, find in Milton the original of the office colleague Butterwell, who so seasonably and promptly lends Crosbie £400. Milton's own prosperity deepened his interest in the social lot of his juniors, and their want of any comfortable centre for meeting each other at a clean table, over decently cooked food. Trollope, who could speak from a sterner experience than Milton, took up the matter, but not quite so warmly as some of his Post Office contemporaries, especially Mr. H. Buxton Forman. But the man on whom Milton chiefly relied, and whom he always called the real founder, was Sir Antonio Brady.<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Cole, the

<sup>1</sup> Of the Admiralty, lived in the East End, and took as leading a part in the establishment of the Bethnal Green Museum as he did in that of the Thatched House Club.



creator of the South Kensington Museum, and afterwards of an entirely new school of juvenile literature, contributed to the club his goodwill, and an enthusiastic supporter in his nephew, Wentworth Cole, if not an original, one among the earliest members, joined afterwards by his cousin the present Mr. Alan S. Cole. Anthony Trollope's indifference to the undertaking is largely to be explained by his official and social intimacy with the Treasury and other Brahmins of the service, who from the first frowned on and did all they could to frustrate "a thing of this sort."

The kitchen and the cellar were always first-rate as to quality and reasonable as regards cost. Club life, to the economically disposed, is no bad preparation for housekeeping. The Civil Service clubmen frequenting the place on fixed incomes soon found that they could live there in the same high degree of comfort as in any other of the joint-stock palaces adjoining, and, with a little study of the coffee-room list, at a daily rate not exceeding their previous expenditure on lodging-house landladies and restaurants. The rent, of course, was heavy, while on the second and third floors there was much unoccupied room. This, when the club took a new, or rather an older, name, was let to one of its members, and became Mr. George Salting's Palace of Art,<sup>1</sup> whose cultivated and wealthy owner had raised up some humbler imitators in curio-collection — a quaint little old gentleman, Doctor Manley, a persevering philatelist, given to rummaging in waste-paper baskets, if happily he could find a fresh specimen for the stamp-book

<sup>1</sup> These spacious chambers were chosen by their opulent and discriminating tenant less because of their receiving visitors than for the excellence of their arrangements as regards light for the priceless objects of art with which they overflowed. Mr. Salting, a man of handsome and dignified presence, used the smoking-room more than any other part of the Thatched House Club. It was singularly in accordance with the fitness of things that his pictures, cabinets, and china should have been housed just where the eighteenth-century art connoisseurs, the Dilettanti, held their meetings.

always carried about with him ; and an Anglo-Mexican doctor, the attendant of Juarez (1862-7), who, returning to the club after a long absence with many new ideas of club management, gave the place a new lease of prosperous life. It soon proved necessary to recruit the membership from outside Civil Service ranks. The result was a miscellaneous but well-assorted company, whose members soon displayed mutually assimilative powers that made the place an agreeable, as well as excellently regulated, resort. The original name, however, had obviously ceased to be applicable. A new and convenient title was readily forthcoming from the topographical associations of the place. From 1866 the former Civil Service Club has been known as the Thatched House Club.

The chief stronghold of John Wilkes being the City, his Westminster friends were, as we have seen, largely reinforced at the Thatched House Tavern by adherents from the eastern side of Temple Bar. It was consequently a reversion to historic precedent for the nineteenth-century Thatched House Club to derive strength and substance from the City in the persons of Mr. Frank C. Fielding, Mr. F. C. Rasch, and others.

At the same time, the place by no means lost its original civilian colour. Anthony Trollope had for some time been too much occupied by the Garrick to visit the "Thatched House" often ; but his cousin Milton never lost his paternal interest in it, and constantly looked in during the years of his service on various royal commissions connected with the relations between the English and Indian military forces under Lord Cranworth first and Lord Cairns afterwards.<sup>1</sup>

The best known of those brought by Milton into the Civil Service Club remained there when it had become the Thatched House. That was the case

<sup>1</sup> Royal Commission on recruiting, 1866. Sir W. James's Committee on the Supersession of Officers, 1870, and the Royal Commission on same subject presided over by Lord Cairns, 1871.

with one among the earliest light blue oarsmen of note, and, as he became afterwards, a pillar in the service of the Crown, the shrewd, genial A. F. Bayford, then registrar of the Court of Probate and Chancellor of Manchester Cathedral, formerly bow of the Cambridge crew in the first University boat-race ever rowed, 1829. He often kept up the memory of his aquatic prowess by entertaining at a club dinner on boat-race day some of those who had been his colleagues in the initial contest, Thomas Entwisle, like himself of Trinity Hall, and a barrister, a Hampshire squire of good fortune near Christchurch; W. T. Thompson, as English chaplain at Brussels, himself by way of belonging to the Civil Service; Charles Merivale, whom, as his old friend, Anthony Trollope was always asked to meet, the historian of Imperial Rome and Dean of Ely. Nor from Bayford's anniversary banquets was there often absent the most illustrious then living of Eton "wet bobs," the former "seven" of Bayford's boat, G. A. Selwyn, the best school swimmer of his time, whose establishment, at his boyhood's *alma mater*, of the swimming school called "passing," has prevented any death by drowning since.

Scarcely less well known in their different ways than Bayford and his guests were the younger civilians, past or present, brought by Milton into the club. Edward Letchworth, who served the Crown by managing the royal manor of Enfield, a solicitor, one of the best bred and most universally welcome club figures, whose fine, dignified presence to-day adorns the office of Grand Secretary at Freemasons' Hall. For premises associated with the author of *Junius* some representatives of the nineteenth-century press were properly forthcoming at the club on the old "Thatched House" site in Arthur W. à Beckett, in whom Milton took particular interest, and a still more notable writer, the founder of a whole journalistic school and style, Thomas Gibson Bowles.

Those were the days when, at the "Thatched House" and elsewhere, the "club characters" now absolutely unknown were still to be seen. A superannuated ex-Windsor subordinate, with something of the old Georgian swagger in his bearing, was full of royal reminiscences and Court anecdotes, which the club smoking-room humoured the old gentleman by encouraging with a smile, but which proved a social capital of some value at the select provincial boarding establishment where he made his "round of country-house visits" during the long vacation. There old Bob Truffleton played conversational battledoor and shuttlecock with a little dried-up compound of fiction and affectation in petticoats, who, born in a kitchen of quality, had afterwards, during a period of promotion as lady's-maid, caught the grand manner of the housekeeper's room and picked up a familiarity with the names and doings of the fine world profoundly to impress a sensitive, well-to-do Liverpool gent, to be installed with the management of his villa at Sefton Park. When old Bob used to meet her she was comparatively fresh from this situation, and with the pathetic sprightliness of a comfortably left widow of threescore, rattled on with an occasional tear about the fine society and surroundings to match of her old home, the husband, who was altogether imaginary, his vineries, glass-houses, and stables. All these, as old Bob at once saw, were pure inventions for the purpose of capping his own mythical recollections of the "grand transparencies" who had smiled approvingly on his youth and who had not forsaken him in his maturity. Among the other human specialities of comprehensive nineteenth-century clubs, like the "Thatched House," were the retired diplomat, who still flourished on the strength of having saved his country from some vague, untold calamity or by remaining at his post in some South American State through war, earthquake, and pestilence in the Palmerstonian era. In St. James's Street it is

only with the present neo-Georgian era that the club types and characters of our grandfathers' days have quite gone out. The "Thatched House" illustrates the transformation of the counting-house into the club. At some points in the same street, the order of things is being exactly reversed. Messrs. Hooper, the Court coach-builders, have to-day annexed the ground on which in Victorian days there stood the Argus Club, not dissimilar in composition to the Thatched House, and another, the Verulam, combining in judicious degree veiled bohemianism with severe orthodoxy. The most permanent and noticeable club addition to this part of the thoroughfare, the Devonshire, was at its beginnings the Gladstonian supplement of the Reform. Here the Liberal leader, with Canon Malcolm MacColl for his host and Archbishop Magee for his chief fellow-guest, unbent more freely than at any other dinner-table in the quarter, and when in the vein would give copious droll extracts from the secret history, as it may be called, of his own measures for abolishing Church rates. The exact circumstances promoting the most active of the Liberal clubs in St. James's Street will be mentioned more appropriately on a later page.

Meanwhile the fashionable counterpart of the Covent Garden and Strand nocturnal haunts already visited was, from the fourth year of Queen Victoria to the last of her successor, Pratt's Club, now exiled to 14, Park Place, though only founded by an enterprising billiard-marker under substantial rather than fashionable patronage during its St. James's period, was the nightly lounge of the Fraser trio—the handsome Keith, the greatly daring Charles, and their eldest brother, the scholarly and poetic Sir William, whose baronetcy has descended to his nephew, Keith Fraser's son, well known formerly at Lord's as the Eton bowler.

Prominent among the other habitués of Pratt's, the former rival in society and on the turf of the eleventh Earl of Winchilsea, who criticized the Greville papers

in an epigram sometimes wrongly attributed to Lord Rosslyn—

“For fifty years he listened at the door—  
He heard some secrets and invented more”—

Lord Winchilsea was not the only old-world peer who always remained faithful to the haunt he had done much to create, and only left it when its various attractions as a supper club in the seventies elbowed out the old-fashioned game of cribbage, of which it had been the one St. James's Street stronghold. Lord Willoughby also, in the intervals of its nocturnal sports as he paced up and down the hearthrug of the club-room on the lowest floor, delivered himself of sentiments exactly in the Winchilsean vein. Some one had praised the indifference of the English peerage to revolutions of all kinds. Dukes, in fact, like his grace of Sutherland, rather encouraged them, as they might well afford to do, and their leaders. Willoughby, who had in early days travelled much in the Far West, then took up his parable to this effect. “The old aristocracy is in exactly the same case as the tribes of North American Indians. The tide of pseudo-improvement hems them in, narrows the circle of their influence, and will before long sweep them away. *Mais en attendant, ils s'amusement.*” “The aristocracy,” commented Sir William Fraser, “has too fast a hold on the real feeling of the country to be swept away by Radical clamour”; of which “All my eye and my elbow!” was the only notice taken by Lord Winchilsea, of whom, as he will be met with a little later, no more need be said here.

The military element was at first more marked in the membership of Pratt's than it otherwise might have been, because, throughout the forties, the Junior United Service and the Army and Navy did not represent the Army so exhaustively as was the case a little later. The organisation of the Junior owed much to the Duke of Wellington's well-known Peninsular veteran Colonel Sir Henry Brackenbury, uncle to the two gifted brothers

Charles and Henry Brackenbury of a later day. Co-operating with him and constantly at the club during the first half of the nineteenth century were three or four of his contemporaries, special favourites with the Duke, himself one of the club's earliest patrons, the social and professional pick of the headquarter staff, Horse Guards. The club, true to prehistoric precedent, began in a tavern much in vogue with officers who had served in Portugal, the Lisbon, Dover Street, and was established a year later, 1828, in the house formerly belonging to the Senior, which then moved to its Pall Mall home. It was not completely settled beneath its Charles Street roof till 1856. Its successful course has been chequered, like other clubs, by intrigues and cabals resulting in periodical sessions, but not affecting the prestige, comfort, or prosperity of the place. The chief feature in these vicissitudes has been its domination from time to time by the Army doctors, who here first planned, and afterwards completed, the successful movement to obtain independent military rank. One of the more recent worthies of the club, dying only in 1910, was Lord Wolseley's accomplished officer General Sir William F. Butler, who in 1877 gave his name to the artist of the "Roll Call," and who especially identified himself with the club by not moving on, as Sir Henry Brackenbury and others of his contemporaries did, to the Senior.

In the year of the Queen's accession the Senior, from the supposed but absurdly exaggerated average of its members, had received the nickname of "Cripplegate"; unparliamentary language was said to have been heard at the Junior, which in consequence was called "Billingsgate." By 1838 a fresh institution was ready for the description of "Hellgate," where, as at other places in that period, high play sometimes still went on. This club, the Army and Navy, owed something, not only of character but of its title to the great Duke, who, declining all recognition of a society to be called

the Army, welcomed one that was to bear also the name of the sister Service.

This company had, like the Carlton, though in a less distinguished degree, a "Billy" of its own, Captain William Duff of the 3rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Without the Carlton "Billy's" statesmanship he was not a bad man of business, and was frequently consulted by his more famous brethren-in-arms, who did not rest from their labours till, on the site of Nell Gwynne's Pall Mall dwelling, they had erected the handsomest and most perfectly appointed co-operative palace at the corner of St. James's Square. Into its coffee-room, after a lively evening with some choice congenial spirits, came Captain Duff, hungering for supper. He could find none, for the cooks had gone to bed and the fires were out. Before quitting the premises with a benediction he had coined for them a descriptive phrase, the "Rag and Famish," whose first monosyllable still forms his sufficient title to immortality.

Other and later captains might have a place in the "Rag" portrait-gallery. Hawley Smart, whose *Breezy Langton* can hold its own as a sporting novel with any of Whyte Melville's, was seldom out of the place till the poor, dear fellow's stricken lungs sent him from London for change, and as it proved for death, to the soft, myrtle-scented air of Budleigh Salterton.

The Army and Navy whist-room and billiard-room, both of equal repute for their scientific play, also attracted Captain Sam Batchelor, a past master in all such games, who looked to his "Rag" winnings to make up his weekly printer's bill when he owned the *Glowworm*, and who, finding the horse he had drawn in the club Derby sweep was next door to the actual winner, was so overcome that, sinking on a couch in the hall, he dissolved himself in tears.

Another "Rag" ex-captain, the easiest and pleasantest of men, when Major Arthur Griffiths, formed an addition to the club's *literati* and made him-



self its historian. The place never had a more hospitable habitué. To his frequent guest, the present writer, he recounted, with much wealth of detail, how the Army and Navy strangers' room was the first known in clubland, and how the regular visits to it of the future Napoleon III when a London exile secured it the earliest smoking-room on a lower level than the attics.

In 1862 the Buffs were quartered at the Tower of London. Some of its officers, Major W. H. Cairnes, Captain W. Stewart, and Lieutenant F. T. Jones, after dinner in their historic mess-room, were talking club matters over with their visitors, L. C. Barber of the Royal Engineers, and his brother H. H. of the 17th Lancers. All the Service clubs were then crowded to more than their full number. It was decided that, before Lady Day, something must be done for the accommodation of the clubless ones. The Naval and Military Club came into existence at once. No house was found till the following September, when the clubmen became yearly tenants of 18, Clifford Street. Next year there was a move to more spacious premises at 22, Hanover Square. Here, however, the overcrowding still went on. It was only ended in the April of 1866 by the acquisition, chiefly through Major Cairnes's business diplomacy, of Cambridge House, Piccadilly.

The most ancient Service club, the Royal Naval, has been incidentally mentioned on an earlier page. Nearly if not quite the newest military house of call, it has a special interest from being a posthumous creation. The Cavalry Club first suggested itself as a possibility to some officers of the King's Dragoon Guards and some others in the sixties. These early projectors included some of the best amateur actors and brightest spirits of our land forces. Roger Darnell, who, before turning soldier, had done well at Eton, and one of whose remarks at University College, Oxford, afterwards suggested a little engraving to a *Punch* artist: "My father is a well-meaning man,

who never misses sending his old butler down to clear up one's ticks at the end of the term."

Among Darnell's comrades, as agreeable though in some cases less well informed than himself, was the husband of the greatest beauty of her age. No woman ever had a more faultless face or more expressive eyes than Mrs. Thistlethwayte, whose features may still be seen, drawn from life, in a picture, "The Nun." The officer whose name this lady bore had an eccentric way of summoning his servant from the lower regions by firing a pistol through the ceiling of his room. Riding with his regiment through Hertfordshire, they approached the battlefield of Barnet. "Here," said Thistlethwayte, "must have been the fight." "You old stupid!" rejoined his companion, Captain Prior. "Don't you know that was at Farnborough, in Kent?" The correction becomes intelligible when it is remembered that the incident now recalled belongs to the year 1860, the year of the Heenan-Sayers encounter, which had put all other historic contests out of the gallant Captain's mind.

On other subjects the two men talked on their march of little else but the addition they intended making to military clubland. Some thirty years were to pass before their project took form and substance, and the Cavalry Club at 127, Piccadilly, by including the Imperial Yeomanry, as well as all the equestrian regulars of the Crown, sensibly helped the reaction towards the militarism with which the nineteenth century went out.

The peer who patronized Pratt's and did not love Greville showed himself also a club maker for the organization of another body not less militant in a different way than that from which the clubs just mentioned drew their members. In his youth the eleventh Lord Winchelsea had been among the best cricketers, horsemen, and proficient in all manly exercises of his time. At his country home at Burleigh-on-the-

Hill he kept open house, welcoming at the same time hundreds of guests, with their horses and their stable servants. Twice married, the second time to Sir Charles Bagot's daughter, the maid-of-honour, he had been confirmed by his first wife, a daughter of the Duke of Montrose, in the more serious objects of his life. These found expression in his manifesto, prompted by the rise of tractarianism, by the increasing Romeward drift of Anglican ritual and doctrine, and by a shrewd presentiment of the fresh papal aggression which was to come a few years later. Hence the appeal to his countrymen that they should stand up and protect their religion from Popish scepticism and infidelity.

Among those who responded to this call were the Dukes of Marlborough and Newcastle, the Earls of Egmont and Roden, Viscounts Hill and O'Neill. Within a month these had founded the National Club, then, as now, at 1, Whitehall Gardens, for the maintenance of Protestant principles in political administration, for upholding national education based on the Scriptures. The National Club men have shown themselves on the alert in all the successive crises of Church and State, and were particularly active in supporting the Public Worship Bill of 1874, subsidizing to that end a new daily Conservative paper, the *Hour*.<sup>1</sup> The members of the club who took the move in that matter were a West Highland Scotch laird, Colonel Macdonald of St. Martin's Abbey, Perth; his clerical adlatus, the Reverend G. R. Badenoch; J. Bateman, F.R.S., of Biddulph Grange, Congleton; and the still happily surviving Lord Balfour of Burleigh.

<sup>1</sup> Edited by Captain Thomas Hamber, formerly of the *Standard*, and as much devoted to certain forms of sport as to the Church itself. He then lived in a house with a beautiful garden sloping down to the river at Chiswick. Thither he was going when he took on his way the National Club to confer with its committee on the conduct of his journal. He had scarcely sat down when there stepped forth from his shooting coat's capacious pocket, and strutted over the green-baize table, two game-cocks. These he was carrying home and had invited some friends in to see their combative performance on the following day, which happened to be the first of the week.

If poor Tom Hamber's fighting cocks scandalized any of those with whom he had come to do serious business, the National Club leaders of his time were not wanting in sportsmen of proved and unimpeachable staunchness. Side by side with purely evangelical champions like the Marquis of Cholmondeley, the Earl of Cavan, H. L. Powys-Keck, Colonel Myles Sandys, James Maden Holt, and W. B. Habershon were men as distinguished in the hunting-field or on the road as C. N. Newdegate, Arbury Warwick, and Lord Tolle-mache of Helmingham, Suffolk.

The National clubmen, though still loyal to their earliest traditions, are to-day powerful individually rather than collectively, and though among them are a noble pillar of their earliest faith, Sir John Kennaway, do not include Lord Radstock, or other successors to himself, and Lord Shaftesbury, like Lord Kinnaird and Sir Fowell Buxton. From the eighteenth century till nearly the close of the nineteenth Messrs. Hatchard were rightly described by Sydney Smith as the great evangelical resort of the West End. This character it has so far periodically maintained, as still to be more or less a house of call for many, lay and clerical, whom one would have expected to find at the National Club.

On the other hand, the Rationalists and Ritualists to-day dominating Anglicanism do not possess, simply because they do not need, any club centre. Such an experiment, made a few years ago in the Westminster, proved entirely superfluous. Any club organization to-day needed by the clerical party overwhelmingly in the ascendant is supplied by the literary or academic clubs, and especially by the New University in St. James's Street, ever growing in popularity as the resort of the progressively triumphant broad or high ecclesiastics.

The National Club, notwithstanding a good deal that has been said to the contrary, still maintains the devotional aspect and practices which distinguished it



THE NATIONAL CLUB STAIRCASE.

*(With portrait of the sixth Duke of Manchester. Photo kindly lent by the Club.)*



on its establishment, sixty-eight years ago. The weekly prayer-meeting from 2 to 2.30 on Mondays during the parliamentary session has not been dropped ; committee-meetings open with a request for Divine guidance, daily prayers are morning and evening usage in the committee-room. If, in this age of rush, the evening prayers are a difficulty, the morning worship brings together an average of from three to ten members and from eight to ten servants.

The autumn of 1913 finds the National clubmen in quest of new quarters. Among those of their number most active in making the attempt at migration a success are the Bishops of Durham, of Newcastle, and of Khartoum, Sir Alfred Bateman, Sir Clifford Cory, Lords Ardilaun, Blythswood, Lytton, Inverclyde, Iveagh, and such well-known men of letters and of the world as Mr. A. C. Benson, Mr. Austin Dobson, Mr. Edmund Gosse, and Mr. Maurice Hewlett.

## CHAPTER XIV

### CLUB ORGANIZATION OF SPORT

The Raleigh Club renders timely service to the soldier and the author—Whyte-Melville and George Lawrence, the Raleigh projectors—Crimean veterans and Oxford graduates among the Raleigh men—"Jack" Bailey and Captain Grant, the "makers" of the Raleigh Club—The Badminton Club—The original Four-in-hand—Charles Finch the first president—Finch's successor, "Tommy" Onslow, his Four-in-hand followers and Jockey Club retinue—Wine that was little for its age—Twentieth-century transformations in the character and life of sporting clubs—A Royal Yacht Squadron members' punishment for complaining to the waiter—The Arlington Street Club, afterwards the Turf, and its mission in the sporting world—Its whist shares with the Portland the rank of Graham's—Turf notabilities outside the circle of sport—Lord Maurice's anecdotal displays at the Churchill dinner-parties—A big move on the speculative board—The Jockey Club of to-day.

THE English officers who lived through the Crimean War found the London to which they returned on the conclusion of peace in 1856 very different, in some respects that touched them closely, from the capital they had left two years before. Many of their old haunts had quite disappeared; most of those that remained had fallen into bad management or worse repute. Limmers's Hotel in Conduit Street, Hanover Square, from being rapid was becoming rowdy. Even Long's seemed shorn of its old perfections. As for clubs, the Junior United and the Army and Navy had grown in comfort and splendour, but did not necessarily include all the returned warriors among their members. There seemed consequently room for another institution, on a less extensive scale, available at all hours of the day or night for those who now found themselves practically clubless and tavernless in Pall Mall. "Let



it be," said W. H. Russell of the *Times*, then a social power in all circles, "a place where all which is mutually congenial in sword and pen can meet." As a fact, the most active promoters of the Raleigh Club in 1858 did not then belong to the regular Army. Two novelists of the time, with a difference in age of only six years between them, Whyte-Melville and George Lawrence, happened to meet each other in a Hampshire country house. Whyte-Melville, born 1821, had been writing successful and generally more or less sporting stories since 1850. Lawrence had made his first hit in 1857 with *Guy Livingstone*. Before then the only fictions treating of the hunting-field or the racecourse that attracted many readers were those with Mr. Jorrocks for their central figure. But Surtees, notwithstanding his wide acceptance, lacked social qualities abundantly forthcoming in his two successors, and had never been the personal idol of the regiment and the college that Whyte-Melville and Lawrence afterwards became.

At the period of the country-house visit now referred to Whyte-Melville had just passed his thirty-seventh birthday, an age that to an extremely youthful and bumptious subaltern, who happened to be staying beneath the same roof, seemed something more than the beginning of fageydom. When the juvenile officer, without as yet knowing his fellow-guest's name, first met him in the smoking-room he showed his extreme greenness by rattling on about his own performances in games of skill and on horseback. The click of balls in the neighbouring billiard-room suggested a game before they went to bed. Whyte-Melville, a really first-rate player, proposed playing a hundred up, of which, in a very few strokes, he had put together just a quarter to his adversary's "love." When his opponent had made between twenty or thirty the elder man scored the game by a very difficult screw cannon, following three or four losing hazards off the

red into the middle pocket—the now familiar but then little known stroke.

The scene of competition was next morning shifted to the turnip-field and the stubble. The young marksman blazed away, but seldom came near a bird. The "old fogey," himself carrying and loading his gun throughout, time after time wiped the youngster's eye. By noon he had filled the partridge-bag. "Ever have a canter over the hurdles?" said the boy to the veteran. "Yes," came the drawling answer, "when there's nothing better to do." Accordingly, the paddock was approached, the hurdles set up, and the jumps cleared by both, the elder man always leading, while George Lawrence stood, watch in hand, as timekeeper. When they dismounted Whyte-Melville could and did compliment his rival on his performance. "You will," he said, "find it no bad aid to success in going through life to ride straight to hounds and say nothing. You can do the former well enough; try the latter."

Whyte-Melville had gone into the Coldstreams after the usual years at Eton and something less than a term at Christchurch. He had left the regiment with the rank of major in 1849. On the Crimean War breaking out he had joined the cavalry corps of the Turkish contingent, thus ending his connection with the profession of arms. Lawrence, on the other hand, had never been nearer to the Army than the Militia, in which he became captain. Going up to Balliol from Rugby about 1845, he passed his vacations and some two or three years after he left Oxford less in his father's Essex rectory than with some Irish friends he had made at school. The most important of these belonged to the Vandeleurs, with houses chiefly in the counties West Meath and Clare. Here he met the first of the Herculean warriors and of the tigerish *belles dames sans merci* who served for the models of the heroes and heroines, the consummate human animals of both sexes, whom Lawrence introduced in 1857—eight years,

that is, before Ouida followed suit with *Strathmore* and its sequels.

At the conclusion of the country-house visit already mentioned, before leaving that part of the country, Whyte-Melville decided on looking in at Aldershot to see the progress of the camp, new since his time. There, long known from his books, he found himself preceded by the fame of his exploits just described. Before his departure with Lawrence on short visits to Eton and Oxford, he had been told of a club enterprise, scarcely inchoate, in whose success young Aldershot took a keen interest. Would not the author of *Digby Grand* give the thing his support and be one of its patrons? The original idea was a place on a much smaller scale than any of the service clubs, and not, indeed, necessarily connected with the land or sea forces, but at the same time specially suited to military members on active duty, who, after an evening in town, had to appear at the regimental parade next morning at Aldershot, or elsewhere, travelling for the most part by a very late night, generally called the cold-meat, train. Civilians, however, were not only admitted but were essential features of the establishment.

During the progress of these preparations Whyte-Melville was not only the most distinguished novelist in his line then at work, but in appearance, manner, and conversation quite the most interesting of men-about-town. From his father, the old laird of Mount Melville, near St. Andrew's, he inherited a pawkiness and tact that ensured exactly the right thing at the right moment being done or said. Neither father nor son had probably ever committed a serious social mistake. Personally no two men could have been more unlike—the elder even at eighty years keen, quick, alert, straight as an arrow, and eager as a boy in the business of the moment, whatever it chanced to be; the younger with a drooping figure, a face pre-

maturely lined and aged, and the abstracted look and speech of one who had long since exhausted existence. At times, however, when in congenial company he could be induced to talk, the smothered fire often burst into flame, and one realized the presence alternately of the man who had been everywhere and seen everything, had written the *Adventures of Tilbury Nogo* and *Holmby House*, as well as the *Queen's Maries*. Those who assisted at the opening dinner of the Raleigh Club in 1858 had the opportunity of seeing Whyte-Melville in both these moods.

Among the best known members of the Army and Navy Club, who were also of the Raleigh in its earliest days, were at least two Light Brigade officers who had ridden at Balaclava, Sir Roger Clayton and Colonel Harrington Trevelyan; while the officers of the old 56th, now the Essex regiment, furnished some of its most useful and active members. Civilians, however, were quite as much in evidence as soldiers. Lawrence, it has been already said, revisited Oxford towards the close of the fifties and talked in Balliol about the club then coming to the birth. Two other old Balliol men happened to be there at the same time—Robert Herbert, subsequently Colonial Under-Secretary, and C. S. Calverley, afterwards of Christ's, Cambridge, known throughout his Oxford time as "Blayds." None of these men ever made much use of the club; both were elected members, and about the same time one or two other University men who had taken orders, and then held country livings. Concerning one of these is the familiar story told that, having to catch an early morning train for the resumption of his clerical duties in the country, he entered the Raleigh coffee-room so early that the overnight's work was not quite finished. "Beg your pardon, sir," said the half-asleep waiter, "but the supper bill has been taken off." This is only one of many anecdotes formerly current to illustrate the contrast between lay and clerical, decorous and fast, visible

beneath a roof that, though on a humbler scale, combined as much of sword and gown as the Athenæum itself.

Most club experience shows that the projector is seldom the same as the executive and practical organizer. It was so with the Raleigh, where the Whyte-Melville and Lawrence patronage would have waited much longer than they had to do for any practical result without the "spade work" done by Major John Bailey and Captain John Grant. Either of these genial and inexhaustibly resourceful gentlemen was fully capable of doing single-handed everything necessary for a club's success, from the laying of its financial foundation at the bankers' to the equipment of its smoking-room, the stocking of its cellar, and the setting of its kitchen in working order. One of the countless officers who at the end of the Crimean period went into the wine business, "Jack" Bailey, had no superior as a judge of vintages, and knew instinctively what would be the eventual value of any investment he might make in the juice of the grape. As for Captain Grant, the Raleigh had still to come into being when he placed the whole British Army under an obligation to him for the supervision of its commissariat and the improvement of its cuisine." A mediocre school for training men, not meant to be soldiers, into indifferent generals, but partially redeemed from discredit by Captain Bailey's lessons to soldiers' wives in the art of preparing food on which their husbands can fight"—such was Bernal Osborne's description of the temporary Chobham and the permanent Aldershot camps. It was the co-operation of Captain Grant with Major Bailey which formed the entire secret of the Raleigh's success. Its subsequent course has been decided by its earliest traditions, and it is still without any dangerous rival, excepting possibly its eighteen-year junior, the Badminton.

Notwithstanding its associations, the only ducal thing

about this club is its name. Yet it owes its existence to a coaching celebrity almost as well known in the nineteenth century as his Grace of Beaufort himself, John Benedict, more familiar and famous by his sporting alias, Cherry Angell, the hero of the Reverend Carlo Clarke's once popular novel, *A Box for the Season*, died in Curzon Street, May 12, 1874. About a year earlier he had become acquainted at Hatchett's in Piccadilly with a sporting surgeon, ambitious of social promotion, of a highly adventurous turn, named Hurman. "Why not start a new kind of club? We will all back you up, and the place is ready to your hand in the tenantless stables at 100, Piccadilly." "Sawbones," as he was greeted, knew the place, had often thought something might be done with it, liked the suggestion, secured a lease, and straightway prepared to convert a stable-yard, belonging in its day to various horse-dealers, into a suitable resort for his patrons and friends. A club looking out on a garden of its own was at least a novelty; and into a very pretty garden was easily improved the front yard, formerly used as a trotting-ground. The adjacent stalls and loose-boxes, hayloft and corn stores, not less readily underwent a process that made them billiard-room, coffee-room, and other chambers necessary for the new establishment. Applications for membership poured in. The two next houses were added to the enterprise. Before the end of 1875, in its own stables, horses, and vehicles, the Badminton possessed all the conveniences and comforts, within and without, necessary for a noble owner who was also a member of the Four-in-hand.

The best part of a century before the Badminton came into existence, the fourth Earl of Aylesford's brother, Charles Finch, with abundance of patrician support but quite unhelped in this particular work, had organized the original Four-in-hand, flourishing since then till the present day without any break in its activity, but, amid many vicissitudes, always of an

upward tendency in the progress toward its twentieth-century social distinction and personal prestige ; for when George III was King, the Four-in-hand Club gave no more promise than the Jockey Club of being the exceedingly select and high-toned body which each has become under George V. Its early picturesque traditions have been maintained at all eras by the Four-in-hand, meeting at first three times a week (the twentieth-century meets are, of course, very much less frequent) ; the equipages were to proceed together towards their appointed dining-place to the music of silver bugles, played by the members' servants on every coach. Disguised in a livery coachman's greatcoat, Charles Finch led the procession—or, in his absence, the temporary "master" of the club—for many years, always along the Windsor Road. If the royal borough itself were the destination, the banquet which the club chef had been sent on to superintend took place at the "White Hart" ; or, should a more rural venue be chosen, it was frequently the "Wheatsheaf" at Virginia Water. For a generation that has watched the meets at the "Magazine" in Hyde Park, and the horses' heads turned afterwards in the direction of Richmond or Norwood, it must be said that both these objectives were innovations of the middle Victorian age. But, however the route has varied, the popular interest in the parades of the Four-in-hand Club has been maintained through more than a hundred years.

The essential features of the whole pageant have been preserved in their integrity from Finch's time to the present day. The costume worn by the accomplished amateurs of the Duke of Beaufort's company may be less severely professional than that in which the second of Four-in-hand presidents, "Tommy" Onslow,<sup>1</sup> insisted on turning out.

<sup>1</sup> The second Earl of Onslow (1814-27), commemorated in the famous lines, "What can Tommy Onslow do?" etc. Onslow, however, was a scholar as well as a coachman, and often, in and out of Parliament, very effective with his repartees.

The other pictorial effects—the beautifully appointed vehicles, the grooms in rich liveries behind, and the perfectly dressed queen of beauty on the box-seat—are all there still.

With Charles Finch's successor as Four-in-hand president, the just-mentioned "Tommy" Onslow, a master equally of the whip and of the slang and persiflage of the road, there were associated such Regency celebrities as Sir John Lade, the concentration, epitome, and amalgam of eighteenth-century black-guardism, without a single redeeming spot in his nature or in his life, with a pawnbroker's heart, a drayman's tongue, as degraded in his vices as he was infamous in every relationship of life. With this pleasant crew, captained by the first gentleman of Europe, were closely connected three bright particular stars of the Georgian Jockey Club—the Duke of Queensberry, the most repulsive instance of senile sensuality, disgracing even those bad times; the last surviving member of the old Bloomsbury gang, "Old Dick Vernon," who, beginning life in the Foot Guards, continued it as a blackleg at Newmarket, too mean to be a spendthrift, but still contriving to live and die a debauchee; and General Smith, who, wanting Vernon's social opportunities, learned the business of life in a cheesemonger's shop, went as a boy to India, shook the pagoda-tree with such effect that he returned to England in early manhood with a large fortune, qualifying him at once for a place in the fastest and smartest circles of the time.

General Smith's one service to his impure and sordid set was his relief of its dull dissipation by introducing to it Foote, the actor-manager at the Haymarket, a man, in Garrick's description, of wonderful abilities, the most entertaining companion of his time, to whose vivacity, intelligence, gaiety, and unfailing humour the choicest wits of France presented no parallel, placed by Horace Walpole in the front rank of humorists, and only forgotten now because, as John Forster pointed



out, he was less an observer of character than a satirist of peculiarities.<sup>1</sup>

One of his highly placed hosts produced in his honour a very small bottle of tokay,<sup>2</sup> in a very small bottle because of its priceless value, dispensing it drop by drop with many words about its exquisite growth and antiquity. "Indeed!" said the actor, holding up to the light the sample which just wetted the bottom of his glass, "it is very little for its age."

How much the sporting society of to-day has improved upon that of our forefathers will appear from the most superficial comparison of what were known at the end of the Georgian era as the Four-in-hand Club and the Jockey Club<sup>3</sup> with those institutions as they exist by the same name to-day. The committee of the Four-in-hand Club, whose meets at the "Magazine," the twentieth century knows, had for its first president and vice-president the Duke of Beaufort and the Marquis of Stafford; while among those since conspicuous in this body or among the members have been the Earl of Macclesfield, Lord Aveland, Lord Wenlock, the Duke of Portland, the Marquis of Waterford, Mr. Walter Long, Count Münster, so familiar a nineteenth-century figure as the German Ambassador, the sole personal link with the era described by Pigott being "Tommy," Onslow's descendant, the latter-day Earl of Onslow.

The Four-in-hand clubmen have not only gratified their ruling passions themselves, they have communicated it and their organization effectually to others. The committee and members of the smaller club growths

<sup>1</sup> John Forster's Essays, vol ii. p. 296 (John Murray).

<sup>2</sup> The wine called from the town in Upper Hungary, where it was made by Italian dressers (1235-70), and fifty bottles of which were given to Queen Victoria at her Jubilee in 1887.

<sup>3</sup> A picture, at once accurate and vivid, of these clubs as they then were, as well as of the social and sporting conditions of the age generally, is given in the first volume of *Recollections by an old Oxford man (B.N.C.)*, Charles Pigott, drawn upon so extensively by modern compilers as to be generally familiar.

springing from the Four-in-hand parent stock, whether the short-lived Road Club or the existing Coaching Club, have always been and still continue as representative and as free from reproach as their titular predecessors of pre-Victorian times were the exact opposite. It has been with driving as with yachting. The old acres and the new wealth, under the most august patronage, have harmoniously co-operated to keep alive and extend on both sides of the Atlantic the true Anglo-Saxon tradition of these sports. At the same time, these combined forces have made the organization incidental to both a healthy school of social training.

It is not many years since an exceedingly rich baronet of old creation and good family, a Wykehamist, by the by, without William of Wykeham's manners, having been elected by a lucky chance to the Royal Yacht Squadron, and dining for the first time at the Cowes Clubhouse, expressed his dissatisfaction with the cooking and service rather too noisily for one or two leading committee-men who happened to be in the room. When his complaints to the waiter broke out afresh, that attendant respectfully placed in his hands a letter from, as he said, the secretary. It was, indeed, the committee's intimation that since sitting down to dinner he had ceased to be a member of the club; and in other departments of sport like instances might be given of the enforcement of good temper and good breeding by not less exemplary means.

The impetus given by the Four-in-hand Club to the coaching revival made its best-known members national personages in the last century, as well as gave something of the same character to the popular Whips of the last century, Carleton, Blyth, and Captain Candy; while in the present it is the son of an earlier Four-in-hand man, the third Lord Cheylesmore, who as an active member of the same exclusive society personifies the genuine popularity of the recreation which could ill dispense with the Vanderbilt millions or with the equine enthu-

siasm of the Brighton Winans, as with those descended from the nobleman who, when George III was King, to the music of silver bugles piloted the first four-in-hand ever run between the "White Horse," Piccadilly, and the "White Hart," Windsor.

It has fared with the racecourse as with the road. George Payne, and even Charles Greville, lived to see Newmarket a resort for those who qualified for patrons of the play rather than the racecourse, and the Jockey Club entered by men altogether unacquainted with the rudiments of turf law. In London itself the Turf Club had reflected the popularizing processes just noticed in every department of sport. The Marquises of Londonderry and Waterford, whose story is written in the social record of the time, hit upon the idea of gathering from the most select caravanserais in Pall Mall and St. James's such members as were specially given to various forms of sport and play. Thus during the first half of the nineteenth century grew up the Arlington Club in Arlington Street—a thoroughfare constituting a landmark in the social fusion which began in the seventies,<sup>1</sup> and which is nowhere more noticeable than among those whose business is with horses and different forms of speculative pastime. In 1870 it became necessary to think about new premises. At the same time other considerations, originally advanced by Mr. Henry Chaplin, suggested the reconstitution and renaming of the club itself. Whist was still played when, in 1876, after a short sojourn in Grafton Street, the Turf Club settled at the corner of Clarge's Street and Piccadilly, where the Dukes of Grafton had formerly lived. By its earlier name the Turf had shared with the Portland, first formed in Bloomsbury, then moved to Stratford Place, Oxford Street, now

<sup>1</sup> At this time in Arlington Street, a few doors from Lord Salisbury's, Sir John Pender's successes in transatlantic telegraphy were celebrated beneath his hospitable roof by entertainments more conspicuously bringing together than had ever been done before the chief representatives of the patriciate and the plutocracy.

in St. James's Square, the distinction, as the direct successor of Graham's, of being the headquarters of European whist, and speaking with less authority only than the Portland on everything concerned with the game. The third Sir Robert Peel, whose voice Mr. Gladstone considered the finest in the House of Commons, had made his handsome presence felt in the Arlington whist-room. He did not become a negligible figure in the Turf, whose nineteenth-century records contain more than one animated passage between the just-named baronet and the Marquis of Huntly, both rivals at the card-table and both fancying their own play. The Turf, however, notwithstanding its name, was from the first and still remains, not so much a sporting centre as a meeting-place for men of good position in widely different avocations and of very opposite antecedents. The first Lord Russell of Killowen, throughout the successive stages of his great career, used the Turf rather than the Reform. This preference was shared by the terrifically clever Ely Place solicitor whose briefs first started Russell on the road to success, the first Sir George H. Lewis, of whom it used to be said that he knew enough to hang half the City of London.

Almost better known to the general public, and, therefore, reflecting more popular interest on the club than these, were the two racing confederates, the present Earl of Dunraven and the late Lord Randolph Churchill. The latter's dinner-parties at the club were events in its history, if only for the anecdotal entertainment afforded by his guests. Most brilliant among these was Lord Morris, whose Irish stories at the time he told them were new. Such was the reminiscence of the judge who, on bidding a jury to be seated in their proper places, saw each of them one after another enter the prisoners' dock. Another related to Bernal Osborne's friend and contemporary before Irish Members drank, as now, nothing stronger than toast

and water. Tom Corrigan spoke after Osborne on some Irish question, and quoted apropos of Osborne's superficial acquaintance with the subject Pope's line, "A little learning is a dangerous thing." "Go on, Tom!" interjected his friend in an audible aside, "and quote the next line." "And why," addressing himself to the Chair, asked Corrigan, "should I be after quoting the next line, Mr. Speaker, sorr?" "Because," put in Osborne, "it particularly suits you, for it runs, 'Drink deep . . . !' Tom." This was the same Member from the emerald isle whom Lord Morris declared he had seen returning home late one night through a park avenue, and who, coming into collision with one of the trees, politely begged its pardon. Another collision followed, and then another. On this Mr. Corrigan, with the words "I'll be after sitting down till this procession has passed by," dropped on to the lap of Mother Earth.

Neither at the Turf Club nor elsewhere are there turf plungers to-day, or any play except at bridge for moderate points. Why? Because the City has conquered the West End, and the jargon of the Stock Exchange has become the talk of smoking-rooms and the prattle of boudoirs. The game of speculation in Mayfair and Belgravia in stocks and shares supplies the players of both sexes with too much work in getting information about the chances of a rise and fall to tempt them to risk their money on the turn of a card or the running of a horse, as to whom they cannot possibly know whether he is meant or not.

The contrast between the Jockey Club, in the reigns of the third and fifth Georges, is not less striking than that of the Four-in-hand at the same dates. Just half a century before the Four-in-hand, the Jockey Club was founded at the Red Lion Inn, Newmarket, in 1750. Seventeen years later the election to the Jockey Club coffee and dining-rooms began to be by ballot, and the new Jockey Club rules at present existing were

drawn up. In 1821 came further organization, the purchase of the estates at Newmarket was completed. Some two decades, however, elapsed before, in 1882, all the racing details were settled.

Henceforward, every race meeting was advertised in the calender under the conduct of at least two stewards, a judge, a starter, and a clerk of the course, a handicapper, a stake-holder, and clerk of the scales. Of these officials the clerk of the course acts as mainspring of the whole machinery. For these important duties he is paid partly by salary, partly by a share in the profit from gate-money. Equally responsible is the post of clerk of the scales, who, to ensure perfect accuracy in weighing, may be seen throwing his handkerchief into the scales to test their perfect balance before the day's work begins. The starter, like the other functionaries just mentioned, is a salaried Jockey Club official, and the first gentleman who ever discharged the duty was Lord Marcus Beresford, succeeded in 1890 by Mr. Arthur Coventry. The absolute rulers of the turf are the Jockey Club stewards, who are a law unto themselves, and from whom there is no appeal. These, towards the close of the last or the beginning of the present century, were Lords Cadogan, Zetland, and March. At the present time of writing (August, 1913) they are Lord Durham's twin brother, F. Lambton (senior steward), Major Eustace Loder, and Lord Wolverton. These, especially of late, faithful to their predecessors' example in putting a veto on betting or horse ownership by jockeys, practically control the doings, not only of jockeys but of owners.

These autocratic prerogatives have, of course, their perilous side, seen, as some think, during the Derby of the year in which these lines are written, when, without any complaint on the part of those interested in Aboyeur, to whom the race was awarded, the judge disqualified the actual winner and favourite, Craiganour, on the ground of its jockey having "bumped" his

nearest rival. On the whole, however, the Jockey Club supervision has raised the standard of turf ethics. Against occasional rascality there can be no guarantee, but in this third year of King George V, whatever may be the case with trainers, a jockeys' ring can scarcely be said to exist. As for the alleged dearth of good jockeys, that may be largely due to the popularization by the Yankee rider, Tod Sloan, of the "monkey seat." Hence the place of their own filled by such jockeys as Frank Wootton and Danny Maher.

One other innovation is the settlement of bets at the Victoria Club instead of at Tattersall's, whose committee, however, is still the tribunal for adjudicating on disputed bets and for posting defaulters. During the Middle Ages sport of different kinds formed the chief interest of the European upper classes, uniting them, whatever their country, into one social interest. The same may be said about the various divisions of London if not European society generally to-day. Hence the representative character of the Turf Club, as well as in a less degree of others. Not, indeed, that the Turf is the official rendezvous of the turf rulers. These hold constant meetings on their own Newmarket estate. Their annual meeting takes place at the London house of one or other of their members, usually at Lord Derby's, formerly the well-remembered corner building in St. James's Square, but, since the present century came in, removed to Stratford Place.

## CHAPTER XV

### CLUBWOMEN AND CLUBMEN, IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

The she-turfite and her nineteenth-century ancestresses—The primitive clubwoman and her strange contrast to the clubwoman of to-day—Ladies' Athenæum, Lyceum, Lyric, and Army and Navy Clubs—Thames-side beginnings of the London club out of London—The Orleans—Its second home at Brighton—Clubmen who made the Brighton summer season—The typical country club—Its celebrities, and their services to Church and State—A lady club maker of Scotland—Lady Helen Munro Ferguson carries on the Queen's—Clubmaking in Edinburgh begun by Henry Dundas with the New Club evolution across St. George's Channel—Daly's, the original resort for Irish M.P.'s—Blackballing extraordinary and a secession—The Kildare Street Club—The stronghold of Union oppositionists—Nineteenth and twentieth century national and Imperial celebrities there—Treasures belowstairs in Scotch and Irish clubs—Other country clubs—The Yorkshire and the Bath and County.

THE varied animation of the racecourse, the picturesque effect of the well-appointed coaches, especially at Ascot and Goodwood, massed under the trees near the Grand Stand, and the many-coloured line of jockeys breaking up for a preliminary canter, and then manœuvring themselves into position, in a far greater degree than the glimpses caught of the race itself, explain the feminine interest in the great meetings of the different seasons. The smart sportswomen of the earlier Georgian era were so much in evidence, with their jewelled betting-books, and, always in the same groups, appeared so regularly on every course that the social historian recently referred to deals with them collectively as a Female Jockey Club.<sup>1</sup> Prominent among them were her Royal Grace of York, with more than one of her kin, the Duchesses of Devonshire, Rutland, Bedford,

<sup>1</sup> Pigott's *Works*, vol. ii., "The Female Jockey Club, or a Sketch of the Manners of the Age."



Montrose ; Viscountess Hampden, Lady Molyneux, the Countess Dudley and Ward, and the Countess of Sefton. It was some Yorkshire members of this exceedingly "smart set," who had much to do with the St. Leger as early as it did becoming one of the classic races, and with the general success of the Doncaster meeting.

Before the eighteenth-century Ladies' Jockey Club the clubwoman was unknown to polite life. In Elizabethan times there had certainly been "ladies' nights" at Ben Jonson's Apollo, while, more than a hundred years afterwards, Peg Woffington was first elected to the Beefsteak Club, and then chosen president for the season of 1749. But apart from the progressive and generally titled turf patronesses already mentioned, the Georgian ladies affecting what they called clubs, were certainly not in society. They belonged, in fact, to the lower and industrial portion of the middle class.

Thus a Weavers' Wives' Club met at a select pot-house in Spitalfields ; there was a Milliners' Club not a stone's-throw from the Royal Exchange, a Mantua Makers' in St. Martin's Lane, and innumerable others of the same kind elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

The feminine club system of the twentieth century has as little of real affinity to the convivial combination of craftswomen in the Middle Ages as to the sporting sisterhood of some hundred and fifty years ago. The only ladies' club with a suspicion of sport in its name, the Kennel, has grown out of the monopoly

<sup>1</sup> See an anonymous eighteenth-century publication, *The New Art and Mystery of Gossiping*, being a general account of all women's clubs in the City and its suburbs. Only the brush of Hogarth, Rowlandson, or Gillray could do justice to these feminine meetings, at which, after a disorderly repast of French beans and roast mutton, each carving for herself, a discussion on the club funds ends in a free fight ; the cash-box is broken open, and its contents scattered over the room. Ned Ward, the scurrilous pamphleteer who wrote the *London Spy*, gives enlarged accounts of these incidents, which had been used by a French writer, Jean Harley, in his *Clubs de Londres*.

of their mistresses' affection by canine pets, and encourages their breed by at least one annual show. The Park is at once horticultural and residential, and redeemed by Viscountess Wolseley's connection with it from any suspicion its name might suggest of being a butterfly haunt for the *flâneuse*. The clubwomen of to-day form a company at least as miscellaneous and even illustriously representative as their inferiors of the trousered sex.

The Ladies' Athenæum in Dover Street has for its president a royally born lady, Louise, Duchess of Argyll; for its vice-president the most popular and powerful of authoresses, Mrs. Humphry Ward. Among its leading members or its committee of fifty (three forming a quorum) are, adopting alphabetical order, another novelist, Madame Albanesi, Lady Archibald Campbell, Mrs. Calander of Ardinglass, yet a third mistress of fiction, Mrs. W. K. Clifford, Lady Susan Fitzclarence, Mrs. Farquharson of Invercauld, Lady Grey Egerton, Lady Helen Forbes, the Countess of Gosford, Lady Constance Hatch, Lady Herbert of Llanarth, Mrs. Rochefort Maguire, Lady Muriel Paget, the Countess of Portsmouth, Lady Ridley, the Marchioness of Ripon, Mrs. George Cornwallis West (Lady Randolph Churchill), and Lady Rivers Wilson.

Artistic literary sympathies or political interests qualify for membership of the Athenæum. Original contributions in the shape of books or articles, or some achievement in painting or statuary, can alone secure membership of the Lyceum. This select company of modish Minervas, founded in 1911 by the lady who is now Mrs. Armfield, has for its president Lady Frances Balfour, as the eighth Duke of Argyll's daughter, the sister-in-law of the Princess Louise. Among those grouped around her are the lady who, as Sir Richard Strachey's widow, represents the family whose combined statesmanlike and soldierlike qualities have placed them high among the personal forces that have made the

Anglo-Saxon Empire ; Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Lady Beachcroft, Mrs. Dickinson Berry, M.D. ; not to prolong the catalogue of names, there may be mentioned at once the distinguishing feature of the Ladies' Lyceum, its affiliation to societies of the same kind and on the same scale in Berlin, Brussels, Florence, Milan, Paris, and Stockholm. The clubwoman, therefore, has only to intimate her arrival at any of these capitals to find in them without any entrance payment the same sort of accommodation as she has left behind her at 128-9, Piccadilly. The actual or potential mothers of the University first-class women of the future have also a genial haunt in the Lyric Club, at which, as at the Lyceum, the place of a library is filled by the lectures of male celebrities, duly lunched and sometimes dined by their listening hostesses. The practical utility of these institutions to the clubwoman is for non-resident members, who, when up for a short spell of shopping, find independence of movement and economy of money and time, who therefore dislike billeting themselves, and to whom a club bedroom, if one happens to be vacant, is a pleasant alternative to a lodging-house or an inn. Naturally, therefore, all these conveniences are intensified in the case of the Ladies' Army and Navy Club, without which the twentieth-century grass-widow finds it difficult to imagine how her predecessor of the Victorian age contrived to exist. For has not the frequent wifely furlough to Europe become a parental duty, at intervals as short as may be, when boys and girls are at school in England? Fortunately, in these days of rapid locomotion between home and the military stations of our Asiatic Empire or other dependencies, the return journey can be made almost as economically as swiftly, and the clubwoman on whom domestic duty forces that effort heroically goes through with it at a cost which feminine tact, self-denial, and experience have reduced to a minimum.

Before its international application by the Ladies'

Lyceum, the mere man—of course, after a far more limited fashion—had made the experiment of club affiliation in London and the home counties. Captain Harry Wombwell, with Mr. Algernon Bourke, ranks among the most resourceful and enterprising of club contrivers during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Before leaving the Army he had been one of those who co-operated with the officers and others already mentioned in organizing the Raleigh. During the early seventies the success of the Guards' and other clubs on the Upper Thames suggested to him the idea of more elaborately equipped riparian quarters nearer London. One of the mansions in which Louis Philippe had passed some years of his first exile waited for a tenant. Why not acquire the property and fit it up as a branch of the parent tree in King Street. Thus was founded and for a short time flourished the Orleans Club, Richmond. Its prospectus had been idyllically attractive; for a modest subscription it promised to bring within the reach of week-long toilers in London chambers the combined charms of a first-rate hotel and of a private villa, in the prettiest bend of a river rivalled by few streams for the exhaustless diversity of its scenic effects. From the Temple and Lincoln's Inn there was an early rush to secure bedrooms in the summer, weeks and even months ahead. Sir Charles Dilke, whose skill in oarsmanship and devotion to the imperial stream foreign travel and parliamentary preoccupation had not been allowed to impair, gave the project his substantial and enthusiastic support. Sir Douglas Straight, then distancing as an advocate his contemporaries at the Common Law bar, took up the scheme not less warmly as a means of weekly recuperating his physical and forensic agencies. Gradually, however, the warmest votaries of the Orleans found that they were less free than they had anticipated to make it a regular Saturday to Monday resort. Sometimes their Richmond excur-

sions had to be made with their domestic belongings ; at others they were pre-engaged to private hosts in that delightful neighbourhood. As a substitute, at the King's Road corner of West Street, Brighton, exactly the house for a marine Orleans unexpectedly presented itself. The old Sussex Club in the Steine, the Union Club, and its latest neighbour on the sea-front, the New Club, left room for the enterprise. During the earlier eighties the Brighton Orleans became a favourite resort for week-ends and often for longer terms. Lord Randolph Churchill made it his political headquarters out of town, summoning there his chief henchmen, Sir John E. Gorst occasionally, but more often and, indeed, invariably Sir Alfred Slade and one or two of the Fourth Party's unattached members or independent well-wishers. Of these, the chief survivor to-day is Mr. J. T. Agg-Gardner, then, as now, the Conservative Member for Cheltenham. To him Brighton, if she does not owe a statue on the sea-front, is under material obligations, because his hospitalities, exercised at the Orleans, first acquainted Randolph Churchill and others of social consequence in their day with the summer charms of the place as yet fashionably known only in its late autumnal and winter aspect.

Hitherto, throughout the dog-day period, the beach had swarmed with trippers certainly not belonging to the polite world, but, like its adjacent promenades, was barren of visitors from the London West End. Captain Wombwell had had the good fortune to secure for his managing secretary a former Light Cavalry comrade, Major H. J. Wilkin, the perfect embodiment of a club disciplinarian. Under his régime every room was engaged long before the Sussex fortnight opened in August with Goodwood. Thus, for the first time, society, through the medium of the Brighton Orleans, found that East End excursionists, holiday-making shopboys and servants, maids out of place, did not prevent the summer breezes blowing from the Channel

or the inland downs from being equally salubrious and enjoyable.

Beneath another roof Mr. Algernon Bourke meritoriously attempted to revive the club whose lasting memorial to-day is the possession by the watering-place of George IV, of a season in what used to be the deadest time of its year, corresponding in variety and vivacity to the winter season in London before Parliament meets.

Whether on the south coast, at the inland spas, or in any other pleasure towns, the inner life of the clubs most in request and the personality of its habitués a good deal resemble each other. Their most refreshing feature is a comparative absence of party colour in politics, their members taking it for granted about each other that they all belong to what at the centre of provincial fashion which they have made their home is considered the "gentlemanly" party. Only a few doors off at the Madonna Club their womenkind are echoing the London gossip of fifth-rate society papers in the intervals of an active campaign at bridge, and from the small talk of their better halves the local lords of creation, in the club they scarcely call their own, take their conversational cue. For the clubmen of London-by-the-sea, or at the wells of the medicinal hinterland, testify to a pervading feminine influence, which often has its agents in the medical pope and anti-pope of the place, the soft-spoken fetcher and carrier between boudoir and smoking-room, Emulsius Placebo, and the more Abernethylike healer, Sir Rufus Craggs. These are presently joined by Mr. Algernon Theodore Gripp, long the fashionable member of the firm of Clench and Holdfast, Lincoln's Inn, who having professionally achieved something more than a competence, has not perhaps found all that his imagination painted in matrimony, but has reasonably reckoned on some years of happy wedded companionship with a perfectly blameless, attractive, and sensible little widow

without domestic encumbrances, inhabiting a pretty "maisonette" in a desirable quarter. Here she may have escaped the suitors that infested Penelope, but has become the prey of she-parasites and vampires. These resent her second marriage as an injury to themselves, and are intent on its undoing by making the yoke intolerable to the husband, who is gradually weak enough to play into the conspirators' hands by giving up the field to grass widows, district visitors, and pet parsons. Thus though he is now out of the firm he frequently finds there are remnants of business requiring his presence in town, and making it convenient on his return to dine at the club. "If," in his honeyed voice murmurs Dr. Placebo, "I were changing my state, I would sooner face a regiment of worsted rivals than half a dozen dispossessed lady friends. The truth," he proceeds to explain, "is, when pretty little Mrs. Canterton changed her name, the happy man whose patronymic she took put a number of feminine noses out of joint." She had long been the soul of hospitality to countless friends of her own sex, who periodically quartered themselves for health or pleasure at her delightful residence close to the esplanade and the mineral springs in Megiddo Terrace, Mozambique. "Take my word for it," says little Bob Spruce, who knows everything, "it is not the multitude of male admirers who may still buzz about her, but, as somebody called it, the 'monstrous regiment' of her own sex, the sisterhood touts and the host of alms-mongering Mrs. Jellybys who have become her camp followers, that make the popular widow with an independence so risky an investment." At least a score of poor relations and professional mothers-in-law periodically swarmed round Mrs. Canterton, not only for board and lodging when they wanted it but for little loans of money or contributions to the Easter offerings fund, which practically comes to much the same thing.

The consequence is that ever since Clench and Holdfast's former partner set up his own Lares and Penates, the independent gentlewomen who cannot live on Mrs. Gripp as they lived on Mrs. Canterton have commiserated to make the unhappy benedict's life a burden to him, and it may be eventually to break up his home.

If secular politics do not much enter into the Sesame, the smart club at Mozambique, the medical and more or less religious cliques keep it, from time to time, in a ferment. The two white-chokered rivals of the place both belong to the club. Latterly, indeed, they have been, not rivals but allies. The Rev. Plantagenet Toplady Tuft had always passed for an evangelical, and filled his local church with the wealthiest and most select members of that school. Vicar after vicar of Mozambique, generally an Anglo-Catholic, had successfully resisted the mere incumbent's claim to a larger share in the ecclesiastical loaves and fishes, or to speak quite correctly, the parochial perquisites of the places. The club, a real factory of Mozambique opinion, has several unattached clerical members. These, in their unctuous phrase, declared the aforesaid squabbles to be verging on the unsavoury. At last the old clerical autocrat of Mozambique died. "Why not," one day at the club said the *rusé* Anglo-Indian General Protocol, one of Tuft's supporters, to his pastor, "bury the hatchet with the new man and settle the difficulty by pooling whatever comes in, and afterwards quietly dividing the spoil—I mean," he said, "all locally collected moneys for any Church needs?"

The hint did not fall on deaf or unwilling ears. As soon as the ceremony of "reading himself in" had been performed by the new vicar, the High Anglican Pierrepoint Bellows, with the peacemaking General Protocol as seconder, he was proposed by the evangelical Tuft for the Sesame. There, at a luncheon arranged by Protocol and assisted at by two or three of the chief



clerically minded laymen in the place, an agreement between the ecclesiastical boss of Mozambique and the most formidably independent of his clergy was signed and sealed. The vicar of St. Luke's-in-the-Hollow was to make certain concessions in the matter of weekly celebrations, Saints' Day observances, and choral reform. In return he was to receive some privileges, not devoid of pecuniary value, hitherto kept tenaciously by a long line of Mozambique vicars to themselves. From all quarters congratulations poured in upon General Protocol for his politic and equitable composition of differences that had so long marred the social and religious harmony of Mozambique. The general modestly received them with the words: "The credit is not mine but the club's; and if all other clubs like the Sesame would pour oil on the troubled waters of the Church militant, after the same fashion, they would leave the judicial committee of the Privy Council very little work to do."

The absence of any Anglo-Catholic counterblast to an institution like the National Club was mentioned in an earlier chapter. In places like the essentially typical Mozambique this defect is more than supplied by the management and *finesse* exemplified in the historical case just mentioned. The civil even more than the religious administration of a town or neighbourhood gains more than may be thought from a first-class and really representative institution like the Sesame. Every day and in all parts the provincial club operates as a centre for organizing wholesome opinion and intelligent criticism in municipal matters, as well as the most drastic antidote to jobbery and corruption, which social ambition when properly manipulated can supply. It may, like its metropolitan model, be honeycombed by cliques and sets, but these do not impair its effective custody of civic morals and manners.

To pass from the English Channel coast and the home counties to the other side of the Tweed, the

Scotch capital shows the club system, as well in its newest and oldest aspects, and both in the most perfect working order. *Place aux dames*, from both parents the late Lord and the present Dowager Lady Dufferin, Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, has inherited, among other things, a rare gift of organizing. Of that gift there can be no more triumphal exhibition than the Queen's Club, Edinburgh. Its founder had matured her plan and was ready to carry it into execution some time before London varieties of the institution came into being. Had Lady Helen Munro Ferguson needed a model, she would have found it ready to her hand in her own country. The New Club, Edinburgh, in 1787, also the birth year of the M.C.C. at Lord's, owed its existence as entirely to a single mind as was to be the case with the Queen's Club a hundred and twenty years after.

In 1775 a low-roofed room in Dowie's Tavern, with wooden chairs and a sanded floor, convivially brought together the Duke of Buccleuch and various other Midlothian magnates over huge bowls of hot whisky punch, whose steam seemed to drop from the ceiling and whose fragrance, as Cockburn, one of the revellers, put it, perfumed the whole parish. Songs, toasts, and arguments were the accompaniments of these high jinks, as they had been of those at which Councillor Pleydell, the lively, sharp-looking gentleman, with a professional look in his eye and a professional formality in his manner, assisted in *Guy Mannering*. The presiding and animating spirit of these meetings, at which elevation never passed into inebriety, was Cockburn's uncle, universally known alike in North and South Britain as Harry Dundas, the earliest Anglo-Indian expert who ever sat at St. Stephen's, a shrewd, tactful lawyer, a genial, clever, popular man of the world, and in his capacity for stowing away strong waters, wine or spirit, beneath his waistcoat without turning a hair a veritable sandbag. In his preference for men over

measures and his belief in persons rather than principles, Dundas personified the temper of the time at which Whig and Tory had lost much of their own old distinction, and public men were Pittites, Foxites, followers of Rockingham or Shelburne. For some time an established ornament of the Scotch Bar, Dundas entered the House of Commons as the Tory North's Lord Advocate in 1774; he contrived to retain the office under Rockingham. He might doubtless have done so during the Fox and North coalition, under the Duke of Portland, but, distrusting the vitality of that régime and seeing the man of the future in William Pitt, he would not do violence to his political conscience by any connection with the unscrupulous and necessarily ephemeral alliance of two greedy, in themselves mutually antagonistic, place-hunters with a ducal nonentity for a figure-head.

Pawky Hal, as by this time Dundas was known, as one of the Opposition threw in his lot with Pitt, and made himself the coming Minister's right-hand man. In 1784 the fall of the coalition and the rise of Chatham's son to the first place brought Dundas's reward in the Treasurership of the Navy. By this time his popularity in Scotland was only as great as the favour and, indeed, the affection he enjoyed with Pitt. He was able, therefore, from his place on the Treasury Bench to introduce and carry a Bill for restoring their estates to the Jacobite landlords who had been proscribed after the '45. No English statesman since the union under Queen Anne had ever been as powerful north of the Tweed as was the younger Pitt in 1784. With scarcely an exception the Scotch constituencies returned his supporters. Nor in India, then becoming the chosen field for Scotch enterprise and ingenuity, could any applicant for a post, great or small, expect success unless Dundas, now President of the Board of Control, saw that he was not less of a Pittite than himself. Dundas, however, did not allow

zeal for his friend and patron's political advancement to interfere with the work of promoting the social welfare and harmony of his native land, and especially its capital. Of his efforts in that direction the institution now to be visited is the prosperous and enduring monument. The tavern festivities already described were joined in equally by Whig and Tory, by professional men and peers of old descent. At these drinking bouts the question had more than once suggested itself why Edinburgh had as yet no establishment of the same social consideration, convenience, and comfort as the famous London resorts in St. James's or Pall Mall. To remove all traces of the party and personal rivalry between Hanoverian and Jacobite, Dundas, after consulting the wisest heads of all parties and factions, decided that no better means could be adopted than a society which should acclimatize in Prince's Street the social methods and creature accommodation of Boodle's, Brooks's, or the still more venerable White's. Whigs as numerously and as promptly as Tories from the first came into the New Club. On the Tory side the chief figure was the third Duke of Buccleuch, who combined with feudal politics a vast landlord's enlightened and beneficent interest in agricultural reform; and another Scotch peer of the same rank, his grace of Atholl, the intense nationality of whose ancestral traditions had been shown first by a tardy acceptance of the English supremacy, secondly by a gradual and reluctant acquiescence in the Hanoverian settlement. Prominent on the other side was Sir John Dalrymple, afterwards the eighth Earl of Stair.

Within half a century of its having been planted there sprang from this parent stock several smaller social growths. "The" Club and the Friday Club included Sir Walter Scott among their members, and though beginning, like the London club, in a tavern, contained the germs of later organizations like the

Edinburgh City Club, the Scottish Conservative, and the University.

As in the Scotch capital so in the Irish, the club maker developed himself from the tavern-keeper. The coffee-house life of Dublin reproduced in miniature that of London. Lucas's in Cork Street was the same house of call for fine gentlemen, idlers, and gamblers as White's from the earliest stage of its existence had been. At most of these meetings attention was fixed on the handsome face and well-dressed person of Maria Edgeworth's ancestor. This was the great Dublin buck of his day, Colonel Ambrose Edgeworth, called by Dean Swift "the prince of puppies," whose entrance into any company acted as the signal for Swift's departure from it.<sup>1</sup> Edgeworth, like others of his set, longed for a resort where the company would be a little more select and the fare not quite so roughly chosen. The first person to whom he imparted these notions was Enoch Sterne, then a collector of Wicklow, Clerk to the Irish House of Lords, and extensively acquainted with the men most likely to forward such a project. The eventual result was the creation of Daly's Club, encircled, as readers of Charles Lever's novels will remember, with so pleasant a halo of comic romance.

Originating in Dame Street, Daly's reached the height of its fame after its removal to College Green in 1791. To Daly's, when the house was up, came Curran, Flood, Bushe, Plunket, all resplendent in evening dress-coats braided with gold, white pantaloons, satin waistcoats, and above all the Irish Demosthenes, to adopt Lord Holland's description, Grattan, dressed exactly as he may still be seen in his portrait in Trinity College—the scarlet uniform of the Volunteers.

If the club idea had first occurred to Ambrose Edgeworth, it was Flood's chief disciple and successor

<sup>1</sup> Swift's *Journal to Stella*, edited by F. Ryland (Bell & Sons), p. 33. The Dublin Society (now Royal) was founded in 1730, and joined by Swift's friend Thomas Sheridan, and others of his circle, but never by Swift himself.

who carried it into effect. What Henry Dundas was to Pitt, his contemporary and chief intimate, Denis Daly, had been from the first to Grattan, who looked upon him as a master of parliamentary tact and an oracle of social knowledge. At the club to which Grattan's confidant gave his name, the orator, ensconced in a quiet corner, would rehearse in an undertone some of the oratorical effects which, as Member for the Yorkshire borough of Malton, he was long afterwards to reproduce in the English Parliament, when the friend who had helped him so much in their preparation was no more. Grattan's fellow-clubmen at Daly's, Langrishe, Ponsonby, and Plunket, such of these as heard him in the House, said that his short, antithetical sentences, uttered in a foreign accent, owed something of their success, not only to their original preparation at Daly's Club but to the shrewd hints of Denis Daly himself.

Daly's resembled White's, as well in its high play<sup>1</sup> as in its exclusiveness. The severity of its entrance ballot caused a serious secession in 1787. The two most popular young men in Dublin society then were Lord Conyngham's twin sons. Of these, Henry afterwards became the third baron of his line, and subsequently the first marquis. His brother, on inheriting the Barton estates in the county Clare, took the Barton name. This Nathaniel Barton, as he had now become, in the year already mentioned was blackballed at Daly's from purely political motives.

The inevitable result was a withdrawal of his supporters from Daly's, promptly followed by the genesis of a new society. This, flourishing as much as ever at the present moment, gradually achieved the same consequence in the Isle of Saints as had been already done by the New Club in Scotland. The

<sup>1</sup> See Charles Lever's novel *The Knight of Gwynne*, where the knight stakes every acre in his possession, and rises up from the card-table in the grey of the morning a beggar.

Kildare Street Club has always stood at the meeting of Nassau Street and Kildare Street. It soon successfully competed with Daly's as a parliamentary and fashionable haunt, and eventually eclipsed its older rival. From the first it brought together not fewer celebrities than, as we have seen, met beneath the famous roof on College Green. The Kildare Street Club of one's own time is associated so closely with the territorial and bureaucratic *élite* that some surprise may be excited by the presence among its earliest members of men uncompromisingly opposed to the English connection. Such were Sir Jonah Barrington, the anecdotal historian of the Union Act, with which the nineteenth century opened, an independent and entertaining critic of successive administrations, while sitting for Tuam first, for Bannagher afterwards, the fourth son of the squire of Abbeyleix, in Queen's County (the reputed original of Miss Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent*.) Sir Jonah certainly personified throughout the vicissitudes of his life the presiding spirit of the home surroundings described in that novel. In 1798, some years after he had been called to the Bar, he received the appointment of Admiralty Judge. Those portions of his *Memoirs* relating to the tenure and forfeiture for corruption of that office gave Thackeray some hints for *Barry Lyndon*. Other Kildare Street Opposition champions were Lord Henry Fitzgerald, Arthur O'Connor of the *United Irishman*, and Robert Stewart, who a few years later, as Lord Castlereagh, by a corruption more lavish than Barrington's, was to overthrow the national Legislature of which he had been a bulwark. But the club's most familiar ornament, in its opening years, was Sir Boyle Roche, noteworthy not only for his bulls but for his repartees.

Of the former, less hackneyed than the bird simile, was the passionate declaration: "I would gladly sacrifice, not only part of the Constitution but the

whole of it to preserve the remainder." The readiness of rejoinder has no better example than the words addressed to Curran, who had just exclaimed: "Don't speak to me of my honour; I am the guardian of my own honour." "Faith!" said Sir Boyle, "I knew you would, at one time or other, accept a sinecure." Contemporary with these, and not less well known in his day, was the head of the Conollies, whose father had been the first Member returned by Ballyshannon, and one of whose nineteenth-century descendants kept open house at Castletown, near Dublin. Between 1849 and 1876 "Tom" Conolly visited the club once or twice a week for the express purpose of reinforcing the guests under his huge, rambling, universally hospitable roof with some of its members, who generally included Sir William Gregory, the some-time Ceylon Governor, as well as M.P. for his native county, Galway, and for Dublin, the most delightful, instructive, and variously experienced Irishman of his time.

The bay window of the club, for the interest of its varied associations, may be compared with that of White's, and contains the corner in which the most illustrious of Kildare Street warriors, the first Viscount Gough, whose victories secured England the Punjab, talked over past times with Gregory, and often beckoned to his chair some of the younger men about him. To this period of the club belonged also the best known of the Herberts of Muchcross, the second Earl of Erne, the most universally beloved of all Irish magnates, and the great Ulster leader of Florence Court, the picturesque patriarch of his people, the third Earl of Enniskillen.

So the Kildare Street Club succession has gone on till to-day, by no one in the Victorian era more impressively represented than by the fourth Earl of Longford, by none more agreeably or amiably than by the eloquent and resourceful Edward Gibson, the first Lord Ashbourne, by none in a manner more congenial to the



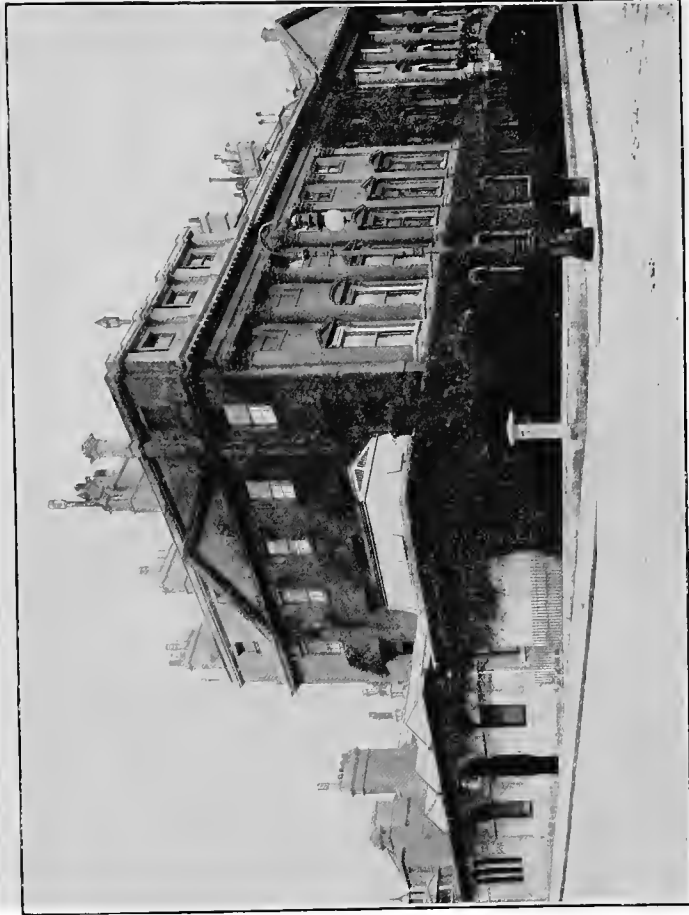
place than the twentieth-century Lord Longford, and by the inheritor of so many great and graceful endowments, the David Plunket who is the first Lord Rathmore.

The common possession both of the chief Edinburgh and Dublin club is a cellar whose contents are of matchless merit and antiquity. Irish wine was in Swift's day and long afterwards the common description of claret. Scotland, of course, claimed an equal right to give the vintage her own name. No connoisseur in the British Isles during the first half of the nineteenth century had such an assortment as lay in the cellars of the New and Kildare Street Clubs of the 1834 claret, of the 1811 (the comet year) hock, and of Stock's dry champagne, bought at Crockford's sale for something between half a guinea and a guinea a bottle. This was the wine of which, at the Dublin club four Irish members drank fifteen bottles at a sitting in the worst year of Irish distress.

Of other provincial clubs, nearly, if not quite, the oldest is the Yorkshire. This, like the Edinburgh and Dublin societies, grew out of the meetings held at a tavern, in this case the Black Swan Hotel, by men well known in their different divisions of the county. The lead in this matter was unanimously given to Mr. George Lane Fox, of Barkston. His chief coadjutors in the year which witnessed the club's foundation, 1839, were the third baronet of the Wombwell line, as well known in the Court and in the salon of his day, if not in the camp, as his son and successor of Balaclava fame; a great cricketer's grandfather, the fifth Lord Hawke, and the first and newly created Lord Wenlock. Head and shoulders above the notabilities who afterwards came in was the last Duke of Cleveland, with his tall figure, piercing eyes, eagle beak, in his countenance and carriage the personified ideal of a great noble, the surface area of whose estates covered a great part of the kingdom.

Going southward, most of the excellent resorts abounding in the western counties grew up at least a couple of decades after the Yorkshire Club, and in one western county, Somerset, the Bath and County Club was indebted for its earliest vogue to the fact of its having secured a cook who had been trained in the Bath, York House Hotel, had there learned the secret of the *filets de bœuf à la Bernaise*, and who could tell the butler how and where to get the champagne called *vin du Président*, from being the brand which, in his pre-imperial days, the great Napoleon dispensed to the troops at Satory.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hayward's *Art of Dining* (Murray, 1899), p. 51.



THE BATH AND COUNTY CLUB.

(Block kindly lent by the Club.)



## CHAPTER XVI

### CLUBMEN ABROAD AND AS PEACEMAKERS

The English and French Jockey Clubs personally compared—Parisian clubmen at home and English clubmen in Paris—Diplomatists as club internationalizers—The Grosvenor—The St. James's, its makers, migrations, and survivors—The Bachelors' Club—Sir Thomas Pycroft as Anglo-Indian club creator and pioneer of an Empire club system—the East India United Service Club—Ladies' Imperial institutions—Club manufacturers of Anglo-American cement and their forerunners—Two clubmen as peacemakers—Sir Frank Lascelles and Lord Weardale—Back from club to pub.—The old club and the new parliamentary timetable—Week-end influences on club and dining-room—Restaurant and café rivalry to the club—The club on the Isis, its sympathy with the London club in abstemious habits.

SEPARATED by their wealth and leisure from their less fortunate fellow-countrymen, the upper classes of mediæval Europe, as Bishop Mandell Creighton has shown in his *Simon de Montfort*, were united into a single aristocratic polity, with sport or war for its exclusive pursuit. As regards the former of these occupations, the remark is singularly applicable to opulent Britons of widely differing origin and antecedents at home, and it characterises the international relationships of polite life in the twentieth not less than in the thirteenth century. An institution so variously representative as the Turf Club, for example, not only brings together the English personification of the old acres and the new wealth, but, as has also been done by the Travellers' and the St. James's Clubs, mingles with these from time to time men of corresponding station and resources from the other side of the Dover Straits. There is consequently some amount of intercommunion between

the clubs of Paris and London, notwithstanding the many contrasts between the developments of the club system in the two capitals. The French Jockey Club sometimes admits to social fellowship beneath its roof in the *Rue Royale* foreigners of high distinction, as well as pillars of the turf belonging to other countries, even though little known outside sporting circles. King Edward VII and the Duke of Fife were both members. Lord Farquhar is still a member. Sir H. Austin Lee, of our embassy most polished, pleasant, kindly, capable, and distinguished of international types, figured as a "diplomatic" member for twenty-five years, but has recently taken his name off the books. The other two or three Englishmen are turfites of high authority and extensive influence in their own department, but of a fame chiefly confined within its limits. In its official and executive capacity the club is assisted by other bodies in its turf administration. Its racing committee is concerned chiefly or only with flat racing; the *Cercle de la Rue Royale*, less select than the Jockey Club but recruited from the upper classes, manages steeplechases and is largely a gambling club. So, too, is the *Cercle de l'Union Artistique*, the resort of artists, society actors, promoters of amateur theatricals. This is said to realize from its card money between £20,000 and £30,000 a year. The Union Club is the most purely diplomatic and old-fashioned in the French capital. The Travellers' Club in the Champs Elysées has little in common with the Travellers' Club in Pall Mall, and is chiefly in favour with flutter-loving Americans. The *Cercle Agricole* is a country gentlemen's club, known as the *pomme de terre*. The *Cercle Volney* resembles the Artistic Union in the large proportion of painters on its books and the periodical exhibition of their works.

Generally the continental club system shows two signs of as yet being in its youth: its subscriptions are much higher than in England, generally ranging between

£15 and £30, and in nearly all there is tolerably high play. Englishmen, who are seldom found in the native institutions, have in Paris a club to themselves, but of no social consequence, being chiefly commercial. The Ladies' Lyceum is the only London club possessing, as already mentioned, what are practically quarters of its own in Paris. But the Grosvenor, which began on an artistic, literary, and scientific basis, the Albemarle, the New Almack's and the Bath, each open to both sexes, have club connections, not only in Europe but at the Antipodes, as well as in Mexico. In London a club movement towards internationalism set in with the St. James's Club. While founding this, three years after he had come into his title and nine years after his first Foreign Office experience as Under-Secretary, Lord Granville interested in his project the younger as well as the older members of the London *Corps Diplomatique*, just as, a generation earlier, Lord Londonderry did not establish the Travellers' before securing Talleyrand's goodwill and adhesion. Lord Granville's motive was to relieve the pressure on the Travellers', for which then names had to be put down twenty years ahead. The St. James's Club (1849) began in Bennet Street, St. James's, and moved to Grafton Street before settling at their present abode, 106, Piccadilly, once Coventry House, afterwards occupied as the French Embassy by Count Flahault, the present Lord Lansdowne's grandfather. The best known among its original members were the witty, kindly *rusé*, *raconteur*, home and foreign politician, Henry Drummond Wolff, and Percy Smythe,<sup>1</sup> younger brother of George, loosely known as the original of *Coningsby*. Beneath its present roof, decorated with

<sup>1</sup> Asked to join while the club was in formation, but retired very shortly after. In addition to Sir H. D. Wolff, among the other original members departed in the last few years are Sir John Gordon Kennedy, the Earl of St. German's, and Sir E. Malet. Of the original members (in the first week of September, 1913) still living, the only two are Sir Horace Rumbold and Mr. Victor W. Bates Van de Weyer.

visible associations of the Second Empire, it soon widened its pale and became the resort, not only, in addition to Foreign Office men, of Treasury exquisites, but of the social *élite* of the whole Civil Service and of golden or smart youth generally. In that capacity it may be regarded as having become, with the help of Mr. William Gillett, a born master of the ceremonies, whose social tact was only equalled by his enterprise, the parent, in 1880, of the ultra-brilliant and perennially prosperous Bachelors' Club, which, by being the first to entertain ladies at five o'clock tea, began to revolutionize the club system and give an impulse in the direction of ladies' clubs.

Similarly, the Oriental Club visited in an earlier chapter occupies something of a parental relation to the East India United Service. The actual maker of this, though, had little personally to do with the Anglo-Indian company in Hanover Square. The elder of two uncommonly clever brothers, Sir Thomas Pycroft, who lived till 1892, entered the East India Company's service in 1829. On one of his visits home he met, at a room provided for their convenience by their London agents, several of his past or present colleagues. No feature of the time was more prominent than the multiplication of clubs. The gentlemen on furlough from Hindustan asked each other why they should not follow the fashion and establish their own social resort in a commanding position. Finance, architecture, and domestic management were all equally in Sir Thomas Pycroft's way. The prompt conclusion of all the preliminaries, the selection of a suitable building, and the changes necessary for its adaptation to its new purpose were all his work.

In justice to the militant sex, twentieth-century male club makers who have worked on Sir Thomas Pycroft's lines might take for their motto the Elizabethan *Dux femina facti*; for two years before the male United Empire Club in Piccadilly (1904) there had come the



Ladies' Empire (1902), while, after a short interval, this was followed by the Ladies' Imperial (1906). During and before this period of patriotic club-running, certain transatlantic agencies were preparing the ground for several Anglo-American club ventures. First came the conciliatory and winning methods, the faultless tact, and an amiable common sense approaching to genius, with which not only Mr. but Mrs. Phelps, during their London stay, inaugurated an entirely new era in the mutual intercourse of the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon family. Then followed the extraordinary professional success and universal acceptance of the ex-Confederate Attorney-General J. P. Benjamin, together with Charles Russell, afterwards Chief Justice, and the late Sir George Lewis, one of the best whist-players in those official headquarters of the game, the Portland Club. Benjamin died in Paris in 1884. Before leaving London the golden opinions won by him there on all sides were shown by the farewell dinner in the Temple Hall, promoted by all the legal lights of his day. Other incidents or personages in Anglo-American intercourse leading up to the twentieth-century international clubs were the reception given here to the benevolent and sagacious United States industrial captain and benefactor, Mr. Peter Cooper, and to his son-in-law, Mr. Abraham Hewitt, and the extraordinarily favourable effect produced by Lord Coleridge's and Frank Lockwood's transatlantic tour. Among the literary ambassadors from the New World, whose accomplishments, sympathetic and successful deepening of the *entente cordiale*, endeared them to the multitude, as well as helped on the coming clubs, were Colonel John Hay (1897-9) and Mr. J. H. Choate. Neither of these, in the cordiality of his welcome from all sorts and conditions of Englishmen or in social and intellectual charm, fell short of the author of the *Biglow Papers*, James Russell Lowell (1880-5).

The Anglo-American societies, for which the twentieth century had thus become ripe, incidentally revived the most ancient of all features in the club system, its tavern life. The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed, in the Old World and the New, the simultaneous establishment of twin societies, both named the Pilgrims', for the promotion of Anglo-American good-fellowship. On the other side the Pilgrims chiefly rallied round Joseph Choate, after returning to the land of his birth, William Butler Duncan, and Chauncy Depew. In London their first president was and continues to be Lord Roberts. Its members include General Doveton Hutchinson and Mr. Moreton Frewen. Its secretary is a born organizer, Mr. Harry Brittain. The club dining-rooms and offices are at the Savoy Hotel. Another company of like texture and kindred motive, the Welcome, finds a home in the exhibition-grounds of Earl's Court.

The cause of amity and good understanding between the peoples and rulers of Europe is maintained without any special club machinery by champions like Lord Weardale and Sir Frank Lascelles. The latter was our Ambassador at Berlin till 1908; Lord Weardale, a diplomatist, not by calling but by natural aptitude and experience, combines the shrewd insight of a travelled man of the world into the dominant feeling of nationalities, with a knowledge of the personal character and rivalries of the statesmen who govern them. Both the men now mentioned have for their object the strengthening of the European concert and the establishment of international solidarity upon the basis of conciliation and arbitration. Comprehensive aims like these scarcely admit of advancement by club agency. "Club opinion," generally a fiction and often a caricature, could not in these matters form a really driving-power. Propagandists like those now mentioned may, however, and actually do influence the manufacture of current opinion in the joint-stock palaces of the fashion-

able quarters, or wherever else the process may be carried on. But whether social or political, imperial or domestic, club creation has now done its work and reached its goal. Whatever additions may be made to any of the societies already existing are likely to illustrate a further reversion to type in the shape of a return to the tavern clubs. Much that gave the nineteenth-century Carlton and Reform real interest and importance has disappeared before the innovation of week-ends. In Victorian days the house rose on Wednesdays at 5.30, and was generally counted out early on Fridays. Now Wednesday is a Government night ; Friday, being allotted to private Members for business of only local or personal concern, practically ends the parliamentary week. The released Members take the first train out of London, and perhaps, *en route* to the country house, the seaside, or some other pleasure or business resort, a hurried meal at the club. Club life, therefore, instead of being, as formerly, at its height on the eve of the Sabbath between or during church hours on Sunday, is in a state of suspense.

The great Saturday and Sunday dinners at the joint-stock palaces of Pall Mall or St. James's have therefore gone, like the week-end banquets in Belgravia or Mayfair. At the height of the session and the season the Athenæum, the Travellers', and the St. Stephen's Club, so convenient for gentlemen of the long robe with parliamentary practice, are scarcely less deserted than during September or on Christmas Day, while, in addition to this, the clubs which during the Victorian era were the sole dining-places for men have now to compete with rivals daily growing in popularity like the legion of first-rate restaurants, none of which were in existence fifty years ago, while some of the best known, like the "Ritz" and the "Savoy," however famous and firmly established, are even more modern growths. In this respect London's experience is that also of provincial capitals, where the companies

most in demand meet, not like the pleasant and cheery Brazenose Club at Manchester, beneath the roof of their own, but at an inn. Similarly Vincent's and Loder's, each in a separate abode of its own, flourished at Oxford half a century ago. Then came in quick succession the Palmerston, the Canning, the Russell, the New Tory, the Old Etonians', the Caledonians', the American, the Canadian, the Gridiron, the Authentics. Of these, several may be suggested by the old Bullingdon Club, the Trinity Claret Club, the Myrmidons, the Phoenix, the Octagon (both of Brazenose), the Adelphi, and the Remnants (both of Exeter)—all, like the last London institutions included in this survey, of a migratory kind and free to meet on any premises they like.

These counterfeit presentments in miniature, whether on the Isis or the Cam, of the London societies already described, have done the same good, and are at this moment exerting the same beneficent influences, moral and social, as are contemporaneously illustrated in Pall Mall, St. James's, and Piccadilly. Whether metropolitan or provincial, the twentieth-century club, so far from stimulating, operates as a powerful check upon youthful extravagance. Costly wines for the most part enjoy the unbroken repose of the club cellar. They only appear upon rare and august occasions on the clubman's table. The long drinks that quench a wholesome and entirely non-crapulous thirst are generally innocent of alcohol, the sherries and bitters or brandies and sodas of fifty years ago have been replaced by the huge jug of iced barley-water on the buffet in summer, or by the plain draft of hot water from the kitchen boiler which has been discovered to possess the same liver-awakening and invigorating effects in the smart *à la mode* club, cleared of the old fogey element, as in a Derbyshire hydro. Such is the clubman up to date, as in the metropolis so in the garrison or university town, whatever the convivial traditions of the house of call may have been.

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