

# RACQUET AND ATHLETICS

## THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE LEADERS IN THOSE SPORTS.

### "BILLY" TRAVERS A PROMINENT FIGURE IN BOTH CLUBS--THE ANNUAL ELECTION IN THE LOTOS--GENERAL NOTES.

There are no finer club houses of the kind in the world than those of the Racquet Court Club and of the New-York Athletic Club. The stylish "Queen Anne" of the former, on the northeast corner of Sixth-avenue and Twenty-sixth-street, attracts attention from the fact that it seems to be perched upon the stones along the pavement with the effect of threatening to crush them under its ponderous loftiness. Nine out of ten of the passers-by take it to be a studio building, and the impression is not relinquished until the third story or clubhouse proper is reached, for the stairs and corridor have been along closed doors very like unto artists' studios, but which are the lodging rooms of the members fortunate enough to secure them. It may be observed that in no club are the lodging rooms so well located, for the occupants are practically outside of the club proper, while within its portals, and their visitors can come directly to them without encroaching on the privacy of the membership by reason of the fact that another flight is necessary to reach the club rooms. On the third floor along the southern and sunny side, opening off the entrance room, with the bar, is a series of rooms, the billiard room and parlors, all the rest of the house being devoted to the gymnastic purposes of the organization. There is a piano in the parlor and maybe a banjo or two in the green bags, and frequently there is playing on either by the accomplished members, who while away the time in this manner or by playing billiards when not exercising or to thoroughly cool off preliminary to going out after working in the gymnasium. Among the pictures, mostly those of athletes and athletic achievements, is a portrait of William R. Travers, the esteemed President of the club and one of its most active members in promoting its interests. The club maintains the English idea of the spirit and theory of club life, and is exclusive and conservative, never indulging in Saturday nights or anything of the kind as a rule; but once during the year the genial President is allowed to give a ladies' reception in the afternoon, and this has become one of the fashionable events of the season. The club house is thrown open to the fair visitors, who are not only handsomely entertained at a collation, but are also treated to a gymnastic display, generally including an encounter with gloves between two prominent professionals specially engaged for the occasion. Occasionally a reception is held for the purpose of enabling the members to meet some prominent gymnast or boxer, and many impromptu affairs occur that exercise an important influence in the sporting world. The racquet court on the north side is of course the feature and characteristic of the gymnasium. There is a balcony across one end for spectators and there is generally playing every afternoon as well as in the evening. The gymnasium is well equipped for general work. The running track is under the roof and well arranged. The bath, retiring rooms, barber shop, lockers, &c., are all admirable and afford ample accommodation to the limited membership of 500, with an average attendance of 15 per cent. A majority of the members belong also to the Union Club, and that organization exerts an important influence in this one. Excepting on the occasion of Mr. Travers's ladies' reception, little is heard of the club, especially now that the membership is harmonious and well behaving.

The stately mansion of the New-York Athletic Club, on the southwest corner of Sixth-avenue and Fifty-fifth-street, is well known now as one of the principal buildings in the city. The club has contrived by its interneine troubles, frequent meetings, and pugilistic entertainments to get itself so much in the papers that it is better known than its more dignified and prosperous rival. The membership of the Athletic has been increased several times until it now embraces 2,000, and there is such a diversity of opinion that the future of the organization is by no means assured. There are two leading factions in the club, one in favor of discontinuing the pugilistic entertainments and cultivating the aesthetic side, while the other advocates the contrary, and between them the more conservative members can only cry, "A plague on both of you!" The clubhouse is beyond question the finest of the kind in the world and a credit as such to the city. The whole of the magnificent building is devoted to the occupancy of the club, and the club is not merely a special resort for gymnastic exercise, but a social retreat as well, with the accommodations afforded by any of the others. The scope of this club is wider, therefore, than that of the Racquet, which is chiefly a resort for gymnastic exercise, and there is a regular restaurant, with table d'hôte and a contracting steward. There is a Saturday night every week when there is not a Boxing Wednesday, and there is always one or the other. Members are allowed to introduce residents, and the attendance is probably the best of any club in the city. The clubhouse has been so much written about since its inauguration, last year, that it will suffice to say on this occasion that the gymnasium emulates, and indeed surpasses, that of Hemenway at Harvard, and is probably the most completely equipped in the world. Situated on the top floor of the high building, there are windows on all sides, affording perfect light and ventilation. The running track is overhead in the gymnasium, which is under the care of Prof. Goldey, and which can afford accommodation even for the numerous membership. The retiring rooms and lockers are on the floor below, with interior stair communication with the magnificent plunge bath and Turkish bath on the main floor. The parlors, dining room, and billiard room are on the second floor. In the parlor a conspicuous picture—after that of Jerome Park—is a black and white of the genial and well known face of Mr. William R. Travers, who for a time was as active in the promotion of this club as of his first love, the Racquet, believing there was room for them both. There is exhibited a fine collection of photographs of the club members with their records, also of the boats, boathouses, &c., that is very interesting to visitors as well as the members themselves. There is a bowling alley down stairs. There are no rooms let for lodgings. Next to the gymnasium the pride and boast of the members is the plunge bath, which is 75 by 30 and 15 feet deep, being lined with encaustic tiling and constantly supplied with fresh water. The restaurant is largely patronized as a dining resort—more than probably any other club in the city. It is to be hoped that the interneine troubles alluded to, and which seem to be inevitable with such a large membership, hastily enrolled for the purpose of filling the list and the treasury will not continue and militate against the usefulness of the club as a social factor. With such a grand model clubhouse there is no reason why the Athletic should not be the foremost as well as most prosperous club in the country, especially with its record of splendid achievements in the field.

The annual election at the Athletic on the 9th promises to be one of the most important ever held by the club. It is thought that if the proposed increase in the dues from \$25 to \$40 is made there will be many resignations.

The annual election of the Lotos on March 20 will reduce the Vice-Presidents to one and elect one class for one year, another for two, and a third for three. A recent addition to the very attractive collection of paintings owned by the club is the equestrian portrait of Gen. Horace Porter, by Chelminski. All of these pictures are presented to the club, generally by the artists themselves in payment of their initiation fee, this being permitted by the by-laws. In several cases the works would fetch at sale treble the sum credited to the artist. Chelminski, who makes a specialty of animals, represents Gen. Porter slightly in advance of his command, sitting on a favorite roan, glancing over the field, and the likeness of the rider, as well as of the steed, is admirable.

The success of the recent receptions of the Hamilton and Oxford Clubs in Brooklyn will probably lead to others, that is if the ladies at home have any influence in the matter with the Solons of the two clubs. The ladies of Brooklyn, however, enjoy the privilege of admission to the restaurant of the Hamilton Club during the day hours, which is more than any of their sisters in this city possess. On presenting a club card furnished them by a member the ladies are admitted by a special door to the restaurant and adjoining reception room. They can pay cash for their orders or have them charged to the member introducing them. The member is required to be responsible for the debts contracted by the lady as well as her respectability, and there are blanks on the card for names and addresses.

Of course, nothing is talked about in either the St. Nicholas or the Calumet but the prospective removal to the avenue. The list is increased each election in consequence of the improved prosperity by reason of the removal. It is likely that each club will give a reception as soon as it is completely settled in the new quarters.

The *jeunesse dorée* element in the New-York Club will probably exert an influence in the next election toward doing something to enliven matters. It is claimed that there is no life or spirit in the club. There would often be no one in the club but for the window occupants. This is one of the most comfortable clubs in the city, while the location is simply admirable.

All the clocks in the New-York Yacht Club ring out the hours the same as aboard ship, and as far as possible the regimen of a yacht in commission is observed. There are between 125 and 130 yachts enrolled in the club, and there is always a symposium of yachting chat, and not infrequently an impromptu concert in the model room.

The Authors' Club is still undecided about the honorary member for this year.

The Union League is the only club, excepting the gymnastic, that has a barber's shop.

There is always a light in the card room at the Blossom. Jake Sharp is a member and a frequent attendant when he has leisure.

The Amsterdam, in West Twenty-fourth-street, is becoming quite a social resort of its political members. Hubert O. Thompson is a shining light in this club.

The Union has curtailed its card list, so that there are seldom any outsiders in its palatial rooms. Residents never get any further than the little reception room except to be hurried into a private dining room.

The Whist Club is fairly under way and there is a game nearly every night. The Committee on

Membership is surprised at the number of applications from out-of-town players.

The Carlton is a favorite resort with visiting public men and officers, and there is generally a lion of some sort always on hand. Ex-Congressman Ochiltree and ex-Senator Conkling make the club their headquarters. The distinguished Senator is quiet and retiring, generally keeping to one of the small dining rooms; but the popular representative from Texas is ubiquitous, known to and known by every one, and his stories often cause the rooms to ring with laughter.

The Lambs have made a sort of pet of Kyrle Bellew, of Wallack's Theatre. Montague's friends did not take kindly to Tearie, but they do to his successor, who has much of the grace and gentleness of their deceased champion. The trio from "The Mikado," Billington, Pounce, and Federici, make the Lambs their headquarters.

It is said that the Manhattan Club would like to give President Cleveland a reception if he could be induced to accept one; but it is understood that he will not leave the capital until he departs for his Summer vacation.

Whistler's postponed departure has deferred entertainments in his honor in several of the clubs.

The Kit-Kats unostentatiously have some very merry times on the occasion of their semi-monthly reunions.

The Hamilton Club, of Brooklyn, will keep up its receptions. Formerly the Brooklyn Club gave receptions, but they were finally voted down and have never been renewed, nor are they likely to be. The political element rules in the Brooklyn, and the presence of the ladies rather interferes with the routine.