

CLUB LIFE IN NEW-YORK

DUTIES OF THE DOORKEEPER AND BARTENDER.

TWO IMPORTANT FACTORS IN THE MANAGEMENT—GOSSIP ABOUT THE DIFFERENT CLUBS.

The doorman and the bartender are very important personages in a club. While the chef and the steward may be known by very few, these two are generally familiar to all the frequenting members. His duties require the doorman to know by sight every member that visits the house, and, consequently, he soon comes to recognize all of them; while, on the other hand, the member generally himself seeks a personal knowledge of the bartender that he may fully appreciate his predilections in the matter of liquid refreshments. Generally the doorman is elderly, and has been long in the service of the club, probably having commenced as a waiter. It is the business of the doorman to sit by a table at the door, on which is spread the roster, and make a lateral line opposite the name of each member as he enters and a longitudinal one as he leaves, as often as he does so during the day. The roster is printed alphabetically, and a fresh list is supplied each day. In some of the clubs these "marked" and dated lists of the frequenting members are filed for future reference. Often in lawsuits these lists would be valuable in proving an alibi, but as clubs are strictly private institutions, only amenable to their own laws so long as no statutory provision is violated, the effort to produce this list in the court has never been successful, though tried not long since in one of the numerous divorce suits in which the *jeunesse dorée* of the Union Club occasionally figure.

There are several doormen, one being in constant attendance from the opening in the morning until the closing after the midnight hour. After the closing hour, which varies in the clubs, but is generally 2 A. M., the doorman gives place to the night watchman, who will seldom admit any one, and whose duty it is to patrol the house to guard against fire as well as thieves until relieved in the morning by the "coming on" of the doorman whose watch it is. While the closing of the house in accordance with the rules of the House Committee prevents admission, excepting indeed in some urgent case, (such as "when the light holds out to burn" there is always a chance,) those members who are in are not compelled to leave until so inclined. The duties of the bartender are generally required so long as the members remain, and he is often still at work while the doorman is dreaming away the fatigues of the day. There are rules regarding the closing of the bar which are seldom observed by the bartender under the circumstances indicated, because he is generally rewarded by the "boys" for his extra hours of attendance. In a certain club, which for obvious reasons it were better not to mention, the "boys" order a round or two of drinks ahead and allow the bartender to leave them to themselves. One of the reasons for not mentioning the name of the club is that this action on the part of the "boys" might be considered reprehensible by the austere House Committee, which is generally, by the way, constituted of the most genial coterie, but which in its official capacity rigorously enforces the common laws as well as those of its own framing.

The hours of the doormen and the bartenders are the same, there being two watches. While the former are generally elderly men, who seek the inactivity and ease of the routine, the bartenders are youths whose endurance and agility are often exercised. Neither of them ever leave their stations while on duty, the attendants in their respective domains being within call of the little hand bell.

The duties of the doorman are more exacting than might be supposed, for it produces an unpleasantness to stop a member who is not recognized, and, on the other hand, some visitors not *au fait* in club etiquette attempt to rush past him on his opening the door the moment the shadow of approach falls across it, and here again he is careful not to give offense. His daily trouble is failing to note the presence of a member in the club in glancing over his checked list, and informing some expected visitor he is "not in" consequently, which, it is needless to say, leads to a complaint. Another source of trouble to the honest old doorman, always striving to please every one, is that he neglects to give cards to members that have been left for them, or, more commonly, forgets to deliver messages that are left with him. The card member generally shows his card the first time he visits the club or is identified by the member introducing him, and so from these the doorman has little trouble unless he forgets them when inquiry is made about them. To avoid this, however, he generally keeps a supplementary list.

In some clubs the position he occupies by the constantly opening and shutting door is exposed to draughts and frequently during the Winter he complains of rheumatism. To relieve the rheumatism and chills he fortifies himself before coming on duty with too liberal potations, and the result is that the habit grows on him and he ultimately loses his position. It is rarely that the doorman is ever discharged excepting for dereliction resulting from his tendency to "crook his elbow." Growing gray in the service of the club, he is generally respected and revered by all the frequenting members, and only his demonstrated incapacity under the circumstances permits his discharge. His excuse for drinking is not really tenable, for storm doors and a sheltered nook generally protect him from the cold blasts which are tempered by the warmth within. It is his business to open the door as soon as he discovers an approach. In several of the clubs, notably the Union and the Union League, the doorman can seek the protection of a sort of Sedan chair, and in every way they are made as comfortable as their duties will allow. Thomas, gray and spectacled, has been the doorman at the Union League for going on 20 years. "Jacob" has been attending the door at the Union Club for years and years; so has "Larry" at the Manhattan. The business of the doorman, besides his routine, is simply to answer the questions asked him by the members or visitors, but probably no one could give a more interesting opinion of the members than he, unless, indeed, it be the bartender, who sees them under more familiar conditions.

The bartender is as much an autocrat in his realm as the chef is in his, and his relations with those who resort to his solace are more intimate than those of any of the other functionaries. All the members of a club are not, it is almost superfluous to say in this connection, what may be termed "drinking men," nor, on the other hand, are members of a club likely to be teetotalers, and consequently it is very likely that the bartender will possess a very extensive knowledge of the general membership. If he would give general satisfaction and keep his place he should study the individual taste of every one of his patrons, as in his club a man expects to be suited exactly, and is disgruntled if he is not. It may be truly said that the tastes and predilections of no two men are alike any more than their chirography, and it may as well be said that in the matter of their imbibations men are more fastidious than in their eating. There is a science even in the compounding of the refreshing but innocuous lemonade, and those addicted to the beverage will complain as decidedly if there is not the proper admixture of the juice and the sugar as another will become ferocious if by not remembering his predilection the bartender has made his California absinthe with vichy instead of water.

There is a great diversity of tastes regarding the appetizing cocktail which the bartender has to carefully consider. Being brought generally into personal contact with the members, or at all events with their voice, his *amour propre* is likely to be continually offended by the criticisms of his skill if he does not suit those for whom he caters, especially if his predecessor has been successful. The discipline that prevails in clubs, however, the unwritten law that causes a member never to be guilty of any conduct unbecoming a "gentleman and an officer," generally protects the offending bartender from those whom his inebriating compounds have made very plain spoken when not entirely pleased and smarting under the conviction that in his club everything should be satisfactory while it is not and it is his personal duty to see that it is. The bartender in a club, if he takes any interest in his duties, will soon so thoroughly understand the predilections and habits of his regular patrons that he will suit them every time to a T, and will make a wholesale mixture of cocktails to satisfy several individual tastes by deftly bestowing a drop or two more of bitters or absinthe or syrup into the particular glasses, whereas if not for this extra trouble or thoughtfulness he would only satisfy half his orders and enrage or disgust the others. The bartender's career in the club is generally terminated for the same reasons that the doorman's is—he becomes addicted to too liberal a use of his own compounds and his hand forgets its cunning; at least this is invariably the fate of the clever ones. He is supposed not to touch the liquors he dispenses, but he does. The unsatisfactory bartender who loses his place consequently generally crops up sooner or later as the keeper of a saloon, where he bosses those under him.

Now from this allusion to the bibulous habits in clubs the outside world, which knows nothing of its domesticity for bachelors and the general refining influences of congenial association, which begets an *esprit du corps* that inspires loyalty and self-respect and that sentiment that always animates the army officer at his mess that he should do nothing that would compromise him as a gentleman, may conclude that the privacy of a club shields considerable intemperance and dissipation. Such, however, is not the case; for inebriety will elicit a rebuke from the House Committee, and the member apt to become so is soon shunned by his confrères as one likely to sooner or later involve them in trouble. There is the social drinking in clubs, it may be said, of the social circle; and often these symposiums are occasions to be remembered with pleasure rather than with the regret of similar occurrences in public barrooms, where there is not the self-imposed restraint of the associations. The defamers of clubs, which are to many of the members a retreat as sacred as home, and to many a second home, with all the comforts and privacy of such, should remember that while the members do not sink their individuality or masquerade their habits, a club is an autocracy.

and that offenses that could be committed with impunity in a public barroom are not permitted in the charmed circle.

In the aspect of a home the club is to be considered in alluding to the death of one of the most popular members of the Calumet Club. Mr. William C. Van Lennep, an estimable young gentleman, who died on Tuesday, in his twenty-ninth year, of typhoid fever, at St. Luke's Hospital, had for years made the club his home in consequence of the absence of his family in Europe. He roomed near by and took all of his meals and spent most of his leisure time in the club. He was taken to a hospital because better attention could be bestowed on him there, but daily his confrères in the club called on him. They took charge of the remains, in the absence of the family, and numerously attended the funeral. Under the circumstances the club associations of the deceased secured him all the attentions of the domestic circle. There is no rule or by-law in clubs regarding visiting the sick or attending funerals, but there is nevertheless an active sympathy displayed as soon as the illness of a member is known, whether he has been much in the club or not; the flag is always displayed at half mast, and there is a more or less numerous attendance at the last sad rites. It may be truly said as a tribute of the esteem in which he was held that the death of Mr. Van Lennep has really thrown a gloom over the Calumet Club.

Few outside the limited membership are aware that there is such a cozy and pleasant clubhouse on East Twenty-seventh-street, just off Fifth-avenue, as that occupied by the Delta Phi Club, one of the most prosperous of the several "college" clubs in this city. The club was founded in 1884 as a social resort for those who are eligible because "a member in good standing of one of the chapters of the Delta Phi Fraternity" but "has ceased to be an active member of such chapter." Mr. Oakley Rhinelander is the President of this flourishing club, which now numbers some 125 bright young gentlemen. On the first floor is a reception room, café, and dining room, and in the latter a table d'hôte is served daily. On the second floor are the parlors. On the floor above is the billiard room and lodge room, while overhead are several apartments occupied by members. As the membership is small and the annual dues are only \$25, it is astonishing that the club should be run so successfully, as a by-law provides that "the Treasurer shall place all entrance fees in a separate account to be known as the permanent fund, and such fund shall not be used for the payment of the running expenses of the club." There is a numerous frequenting membership and Saturday nights are indulged in, at which Marshall Wilder and other professionals appear.

The Republican Club, on West Twenty-eighth-street, which is becoming quite a popular social resort, and aims to be a social as well as active influence in politics, has decided not to increase its initiation fee. There is every prospect that before another year the membership will be filled.

There are over 150 candidates for membership at the Harmonic Club, and there is some talk of raising the limit to 1,000, as the spacious clubhouse on West Forty-second-street affords ample accommodation for that number.

The social meetings of the St. Nicholas Club have caused quite a revival in that pleasant retreat, as it is only these that attract the numerous membership outside of the frequenting element. There are so many "special" clubs, like the art clubs, athletic clubs, &c., that the orthodox clubs must do something to attract what may be called the floating element of membership.

The Press Club is once more serene since the excitement of its annual election, and an entertainment will soon be in order, affording President Greene his first opportunity to preside.

A new element in club life, but developing the general usefulness of clubs, is the founding of the numerous "special" clubs, such as the New-York Railway Club, succeeding the Master Car Builders' Club, on Liberty-street. The merchants have their down-town clubs, and the new one is only the last addition to a numerous list.

The cozy house of the Renaissance, although pretty well up town, is becoming a favorite resort, not only of the artists having studios in the neighborhood, but of others lower down. It is the purpose of the club to entertain all artists of distinction who visit this country, as well as those of their own number when they make hits.

The Lotos is making extensive preparations for its Saturday night on the 18th. The Mayor's dinner does not take place until after the inauguration, Jan. 1. In consequence of the absence of Mr. Roosevelt the custom of inviting the defeated candidate as well as the last incumbent will not be followed this year, and only ex-Mayor Grace will be invited to sit with Mayor Hewitt.

As previously stated in these columns, the numerous alterations that would be required to adapt the Stewart mansion to club purposes has deterred the only two clubs that ever for a moment entertained the idea of occupancy from any further consideration, and it can be positively stated that none of the clubs will seek the lease. An objection to the white marble mansion on the corner of Fifth-avenue and Thirty-fourth-street is the narrow windows, which, according to the plans, could not be safely enlarged. Large, wide windows are absolutely requisite in a club for light and ventilation as well as sitting places for the members. There is a numerous following in the Union Club that would like to remove higher up the avenue, but at present they can see no way of bettering themselves. Some of the wealthy members of the Manhattan, which is a prosperous corporation, thought the purchase of the Stewart property might be a good stroke for the club if a removal from its present comfortable and elegant quarters should be advisable, but the proposition may be said to have fallen dead, as apparently all the other members are entirely satisfied with the down-town location. To tell the truth, the elderly element predominates in both the Union and the Manhattan, and the elders are not inclined toward a removal from places in which they have seen so many pleasant days. Age has its effect and influences in clubs, and there is a decided objection in the elder clubs to a removal as long as the premises which have been comfortable so long can possibly be retained. In the New-York Club it is the *jeunesse dorée* that favors removal, while the seniors are quite satisfied with the present central location, and find the accommodations quite adequate. It is needless to say that the elderly element largely prevails in the Century Club, and that is one of the reasons why the several propositions to move higher up town have never been seriously entertained.

There is no discussion whatever in the Union Club regarding the return of Mr. Loubat. It is true that his name is not on the roster, but he has been restored to membership, and will probably be well received by his friends when he visits the club, as he undoubtedly will, if he resigns the next day.

The custom of the members of the Century Club of doing their own cooking in chafing dishes is becoming quite popular in the clubs generally at midnight suppers, when oysters, terrapin, or Welsh rarebits are in order. As a rule, club members understand something about the culinary art, and can turn out a good oyster stew or a terrapin stew, while most of them have receipts for other dishes. In the cellars of the Manhattan, Union, New-York, University, and Lotos there is a supply of terrapin on hand to last the season; there are over 400 diamond-backs stored in the Lotos Club cellar.

The members of the Athletic are deservedly much elated over the success of their Ladies' Day, and since it caused little interference with the domestic routine there is every likelihood that there will be another held before the season is over.

It is likely, in view of the success of the Brooklyn annex, that ladies will be admitted to the dinners of the Twilight Club. "The Land Question" will be discussed at the dinner on Thursday.

The ladies' receptions give little trouble at the Union League, excepting to the Art Committee in obtaining the pictures. There is no entertainment, and the ladies take care of themselves, while the members are not disturbed in their usual retreats, the picture gallery enabling the display without inconvenience.

The University Club hears with delight that a syndicate will purchase the Madison-square property and change its present character, which, attracting heterogeneous crowds to the neighborhood, is very objectionable to them. It is not unusual for country people to mount the steps of the more pretentious clubhouses in the supposition that they are hotels, especially of the Union, the Lotos, the New-York, which are in the great hotel neighborhood, while many in the crowds that gather at a Madison-square take the University Club to be a drinking palace and seek admission—in vain, of course.

The Twilight Club has arranged for a daily fifty-cent table d'hôte from 12 to 3 o'clock at the down-town restaurant at which it has decided to hold its dinners this winter.

The Hamilton Club, of Brooklyn, finds its monthly dinners likely to rally its members generally. Mr. Gordon L. Ford has presented the club with a frame containing an autograph letter of Alexander Hamilton and nine steel portraits of him.

Col. Robert Ingersoll has declined to be an honorary member of the Thirteen Club, but wishes to be a regular member, and will be initiated at the anniversary dinner on the 13th. While there have been no deaths among the regular members, three have been removed from the honorary list, (Peter Cooper, John Kelly, and President Arthur,) and probably the wily and eloquent Colonel proposes to take no more chances than necessary in making a popular superstition.

There is an improvement in the attendance at the informal reunions at the Author's Club the first and third Thursdays of the month. Some animated discussions sometimes occur on these occasions.

The American Yacht Club will have a jollification toward the close of the month, following the musicale of the New-York Yacht Club on the 22d.

The German Club claim that Mr. Schnabel is the best amateur billiard player in the city, but professionals consider that Mr. Dugro, of the Manhattan, is by all odds the champion amateur. Messrs. Carroll Livingston and R. Young are reckoned the best two in the Union, while the Lotos pout Messrs. Britton, Kendall, and Murray at the head of the list.

The dinner of the Stanley Club will be given in the private room of the Lotos on the 26th, most of the members belonging to that club.