

ITS WINE CELLAR FAMOUS

THE LEADING FEATURE OF THE MANHATTAN CLUB.

THE MAGNIFICENT APPOINTMENTS OF THE UNION LEAGUE—MISCELLANEOUS NOTES AND GOSSIP.

There is always more or less of mystery, and it may be added dignity, about club life and clubhouses because of the fundamental privacy and exclusiveness. A clubhouse is always an object of interest and curiosity to passers by who are not as familiar with its interior as with its outward aspect, and even those who are in the habit of passing daily will involuntarily glance at the windows as if to catch another glimpse of the attractive interior revealed. The numerous world outside is all agog about the interior of a clubhouse. The ladies especially are most inquisitive about the domestic and internal arrangements of a clubhouse, and the frequent receptions in several of the clubs have afforded them better opportunities for personal inspection than have been enjoyed by their liege lords, who can rarely get beyond the carefully guarded portals except as visiting strangers or guests to a private dinner party. It may be observed, however, that the special arrangements on the occasion of these ladies' receptions considerably change the interior aspect, and consequently the glimpse thereby afforded does not give a good idea of the lion's lair as it is for everyday ordinary use of the regular occupants. While some of the clubs are elegantly furnished and supplied with various paintings and other works of art, others equally prominent and influential are severely plain and unattractive to the eye as the conventional hotel parlor. The majority of the clubhouses, however, are attractive resorts, combining the elegance and comforts of a domestic establishment with the accommodations and resources of a first-class hotel, the bustle and life of the one being curiously blended with the quiet and privacy of the other, without acquiring the characteristics of either, but containing *sui generis*.

The massive and severely plain exterior of the Manhattan Club, on the southwest corner of Fifth-avenue and Fifteenth-street, gives little indication of the comfort and cheer within. The broad tessellated entrance hall, which fortunately escaped the flames recently, prepares the eye for the spacious parlor alongside, with its two big fireplaces, so attractive at this season of the year. All the public rooms are large, with the high ceilings of construction of some thirty years ago. There is an air of solid comfort and serenity, chiefly conveyed by the commodious chairs and sofas and general airy repose. While the walls and ceilings are handsomely frescoed an absence of paintings gives the interior the appearance of a public place rather than a strictly private one, especially as the "Rules and Regulations" are conspicuously displayed. In the parlor there are fine portraits of the late Judge Robertson, the late "Prince John" Van Buren, (both painted after death from photographs,) and the esteemed President of the club, Mr. Aaron J. Vanderpoel, and in one of the up-stairs rooms there is a bust of Andrew Jackson, which calls to mind the fact that, as stated in the constitution, the object of the club "is to advance Democratic principles." There are fine and large mirrors in nearly every public room, which add to their cheerfulness and perspective, while proving attractive ornaments on the occasion of the receptions to the successful Democratic candidates. The extension built in the rear a year or two since enabled the club to prepare one of the most attractive billiard rooms in any clubhouse, as well as to increase their number of rentable rooms to members and lodgers. It was the custom of the club to always be ready to give shelter to its out of town members by having one or two sleeping rooms for their accommodation, but now there are several permanent lodgers. The billiard room is the most frequented in the house. Chairs on platforms around the sides enable the spectators to watch the play as comfortably as in an amphitheatre. There is much billiard playing, and one of the finest amateur billiards in the city, Mr. Dugro, a brother of Commissioner Dugro, is a frequent player when he can get any one to play with him. But though there are many players none are particularly good except Mr. Dugro, Dr. Flint, and Mr. Dan Starr. The card room on the second floor used to be a great resort in the old days when the late Commodore Vanderbilt played whist nightly before he took unto himself a second wife. There is indeed not much card playing now at all, excepting among some of the political old stagers. The club is much frequented for its restaurant, which has long been its pride and glory, and many of its patrons can be confidently relied on for an annual expenditure of from \$2,500 to \$3,500 for regular dining. The diamond-backed terrapins and canvas-backs come from the Chesapeake direct to the club; so does its Maryland whisky from the distillery. The butter is manufactured expressly on the model dairy farm of a Pennsylvania railroad magnate at a cost of \$1 25 per pound. The wine cellar is probably the finest in this country. It is a model cellar as regards the range and facility of the racks. The temperature is maintained by close observation of numerous thermometers, and it is doubtful if the choice vintages stored are any better served anywhere than here. The Rhine wines and Burgundies are especially fine, and the club has thousands of dollars remuneratively invested in this way. It may be correctly inferred that there are some wine connoisseurs in the membership, and there are some to whom the cost is no object so long as they obtain what they want. The credit of organizing this model wine cellar is generally given to Judge Allen. The membership is about 700, and is rapidly increasing toward the limit of 1,000, though the percentage of attendance, except for dining purposes, is not large, unless, indeed, on Saturday nights, when there is always an informal gathering, especially of the older married men, who have a "night off." As in the other clubs, many of the members are prevented by business or social engagements from ever coming into the clubhouse. There's the Hon. Abram Hewitt, though on the Governing Committee, he seldom comes; on the other hand, the Hon. Ben Wood, Mr. Douglas Taylor, the Hon. James O'Brien, and such society men as Messrs. Wright Sandford, Dr. Hendricks, Fishel, and Carroll are regular habitués. Since his retirement from the Chairmanship of the National Democratic Committee the Hon. August Belmont does not frequent the club so much as the Union Club. In this club non-residents are charged the full initiation fee of \$250, but are exempt from the annual dues of \$70. Many of the more prominent Democratic politicians of the day, from the Hon. Thomas F. Bayard down, are non-resident members. The club is managed by a steward on a salary, Mr. Boreel, under the direction of the House Committee, Messrs. Bangs, Gilbert, and Hone, and the prices are about the same as at Delmonico's. Formerly the club was inclined to be very exclusive for such a Democratic organization, but latterly, other counsel prevailing, the modern liberal bearing toward the surrounding world has been adopted, and members are allowed to introduce residents twice during the fiscal year. This club suffered more probably than any other by the hard times of the past few years, and a year or two since lost in a bunch many prominent real estate men and Wall-street brokers who were compelled to economize in their daily expenditures, many of whom, however, are returning to the fold. The clubhouse, with the exception of the Washington, is the lowest down town of the social or up-town clubs, but it is not likely to be ever changed, as it is situated in a part of the avenue that will always be easily accessible, and the development of trade has evidently now passed upward so far as this locality is concerned.

No two clubs could possibly be more dissimilar in every respect than the Manhattan Club and the Union League, which occupies the diametrically opposite position in the social world as well as real estate in being on the northeast corner of Fifth-avenue and Thirty-ninth-street, the highest up town on the great central thoroughfare. The magnificent architectural exterior of the Union League, with its solid and elaborate masonry and high-reaching roof, is a good index to the commodious and palatial interior. It is generally admitted that this is the finest clubhouse in every respect for the purpose in the world. Those who have traveled abroad as well as foreigners visiting here concede this at once. It is palatial in its accommodations and equipment. In its charter it was boldly proclaimed that the object was "to promote, encourage, and sustain, by all proper means, absolute and unqualified loyalty to the Government of the United States; to discountenance and rebuke by moral and social influence all disloyalty to said Government and every attempt against the integrity of the Nation; and, in furtherance of these objects, to establish and maintain a library and a gallery of art and military trophies, especially devoted to the perpetuation and illustration of patriotic services and sacrifices," and the absolute and unqualified loyalty to the Government of the United States," and consequently the membership several times increased, until now it amounts to a limited 1,600, embracing a much wider range than the curiously homogeneous silk-stockinged and horny-handed Democracy of the Manhattan. The independent spirit and thought of the League so forcibly expressed in its organization reasserted itself during the recent Presidential campaign in a division on the candidates now that the rebellion no longer united them. The patriotism of the club is evident everywhere, in paintings, busts, trophies, documents, and ornamentation. In the reading room, which is the commodious apartment on Fifth-avenue which passers-by can peer into, and in the library of the same size and immediately above here is a very fine collection of portraits and busts of all the known heroes, from Lincoln and Grant down. Some of these portraits are admirable and many of them are evidently painted by contract. In the smoking room on the second floor are some attractive war sketches by Ward, Scott, and Forbes. In the private dining room there are two good views of Fort Sumter before and after the bombardment. There are various war trophies scattered about, including a battle scene by Wordsworth Thompson in the reception room just beside the grand entrance on Thirty-eighth-street. In the billiard room, in the basement, there is a large and fine collection of steel line engravings, mostly representing French historic scenes. It is generally believed that the billiard room is in the form of an amphitheatre, with pyramidal seats around the tables, but this is not so, though a raised café at one end enables those sitting there-

in to obtain a good view of the play—no better, however, than that enjoyed by those on the settees around the sides. There are no particularly good players, such as at the Manhattan, the Lotos, the Union, or the University Club. The grand entrance hall remains unchanged, as the proposition did not carry to convert it into a café excepting on the occasions of the annual meetings; nor did that proposed at the same time to open a grill room for midnight refreshment. An attraction is the bowling alley in the basement, which is a feature of none of the other clubs excepting the University and the sporting clubs like the Athletic and Racquet and the cosmos Liederkranz. There is no card room and never any card playing allowed. The restaurant and lodging rooms are on the top floors. There is no pretension to culinary or vinous excellence, though everything served is thoroughly good, the fare being more homelike than club life. The Governing Committee employs a Superintendent, who is responsible for everything under their control. The steward is also an employe, and the charges are from moderate to first class. So large an establishment employs a staff of 180 odd people. All the waiters are colored. It is considered a great honor among the colored waiters to get employment here because it is the highest position of the kind they can attain; and as a rule these waiters seldom leave the service of the League. The art gallery on the east side of the building enables the frequent artists' reunions and ladies' receptions to be given without discommoding the domestic arrangements, as in the other clubs. Excepting on the occasions of these receptions the gallery is denuded and closed. The large membership yields a more numerous regular attendance than in any other club in the city, and for this reason probably the rules regarding visitors are most stringent.

It is rumored that the Century will secure a suite on Fifth-avenue, somewhere between Twenty-third and Thirty-fourth streets, but both the St. Nicholas and Calumet will be there before.

There is some trouble again in the Union about a card member, this time a Western man, not a nobleman, (even by nature.)

There is a genuine love feast going on in the New-York Yacht Club since the election. The deposed Union Club influence claims to be perfectly satisfied, although defiant at first.

The Lotos is making extensive preparations for its art reception on the 27th, and ladies' reception in the evening, Monday. The annual election will also occur next month.

The Kit-Kats have come out Phoenix-like, and will soon hold another reunion.

There is no trouble in the Racquet, but on the contrary an increasing regular attendance and consequent prosperity.

The Athletic will continue its Saturday nights, but it will rely more on impromptu volunteer talent.

The Union Boat Club ball was spoken of by some of the papers as the Union merely, much to the annoyance of the staid and small Union Club.

The Lotos is similarly annoyed annually by some ball association on the east side taking their name in vain.

The Liederkranz has a jollification every Saturday night, but always for its members only.

The American Yacht Club contemplates another series of lectures on exploration and marine architecture.

It is the custom of the Lotos and other clubs to give their discarded reading matter to the State Charities Aid Association, which equally distributes it among the eleemosynary institutions.

All who heard President Chauncey Depew's remarks on the late Gen. Hancock at the meeting of the Union League agree in saying he was never more eloquent, and that the effort was one of his ablest.

The terrapin supper at the Carlton was a love feast to prove there is no interclub trouble among the clans, and was certainly successful.

There is a wide division in the Gentlemen's Driving Association over the expenditures of the present administration, which, it is alleged, has exhausted the fund, besides incurring debt, and the former régime will probably regain control.

The Lambs will be represented in a box at Wallack's Theatre on the occasion of the rentrée of their Shepherd.