

PARISIAN CLUBS.

PARIS, Aug. 18.—The attractions of outdoor life in Paris have long been unfavorable to the growth and prosperity of clubs. By outdoor life is meant life in the restaurants and especially in the cafés, not to mention outdoor life in the literal sense of the word, as typified by the crowded Champs Elysées and Bois de Boulogne in the afternoon and the teeming boulevards in the evening. Hence a club, in accordance with the English idea of that institution, has less *raison d'être* in the French metropolis, perhaps, than anywhere else in Europe. Still the change that comes over all great cities has slowly but surely come over Lutetia. Time was when the Café Anglais was an exclusive spot, when the Trois Frères was safe from the encroachments of the vulgar, and when the frequenters of the "swell" restaurants were pretty sure of comparative privacy in their favorite places of resort. The invading foreigner, the ambitious and pushing *nouveau riche* have at last driven the *raffiné* Parisian from his best liked nooks, and the time is almost at hand when a club will be as necessary to him as to a Londoner. Thus far only about a dozen "circles" are in existence. I take no account, of course, of those that exist for no other purpose than as a series of private card rooms and derive the larger part of their revenue from the percentages of the gaming table. Some of the latter are, in truth, among the most prosperous and showiest of metropolitan gathering places, but they can scarcely be considered as clubs, having really no other magnet than the green cloth and perhaps a first-rate table d'hôte dinner served at a very low figure—*toujours*—thanks to the subsidy furnished by the "kitty." Among the most solid and representative bodies can only be reckoned the Union, the Jockey Club, the Cercle Agricole, the Cercle des Champs Elysées, the Union Artistique, and a scientific and literary club, the Cercle Saint-Simon. To American clubmen, at any rate, and possibly to a still more numerous fraction of the reading community, some facts and figures concerning these organizations and their leading spirits may not be uninteresting, and with the assistance of M. de La Brière's valuable data on the subject, the task of presenting them becomes an easy as well as a pleasant one.

The oldest of Paris clubs is the Cercle de l'Union. As a typical assemblage of the ancient aristocracy of the land it is, moreover, first and foremost. Its history goes back to 1828, in which year it was founded by the Duke de Guiche. This nobleman—the great-grandson of the Gramont-Guiche that negotiated the marriage of Louis XIV. with the Infanta Marie Therese of Spain—had dwelt in London, and when he returned to France his glowing accounts of the delights of English club life induced a score of his intimates to lend him their aid in communicating his enthusiasm to their fellow-countrymen. The records of the Union have handed the names of the organizers of the Cercle down to posterity. Among the most distinguished were Count de Montalembert, father of the historian; Duke de Talleyrand-Périgord, Count d'Orsay, Gen. Sebastiani, and the Duke de Fitzjames. These gentlemen were the first members of the Union and took up their abode at the corner of the Boulevard des Italiens and the Rue de Grammont. Previous to completing the work of organizing the club, M. Bocher was instructed to obtain the King's consent. This was accorded, but in terms that could scarcely be considered as encouraging, for Charles X. coldly observed: "The laws and statutes do not oppose your scheme, but it will kill 'good society' in France." The monarch's disfavor, however, exercised no evil influence upon the destinies of the Union, for it prospered from the very outset of its career. All the foreign diplomats in Paris immediately joined its ranks, and two years later its numbers were swelled by all the gentil-hommes sent back to private life by the events of 1830. Under Louis Philippe the Cercle formed the nucleus of a haughty and tenacious opposition, whose power was in no way lessened by its quiet and dignified methods of procedure.

Nowadays the rolls of the Union include 350 names. Each candidate is voted on by the whole club, and 1 black ball in 13 excludes an applicant from membership. Foreign ambassadors are alone spared this ordeal, and are admitted without ballot. After a 30 years' term of occupancy the Cercle quitted the Rue de Grammont in 1857 and moved to No. 11 Boulevard de la Madeleine. Its rooms are spacious and comfortably, if somewhat sparsely, furnished. Between 4 in the afternoon and 7 in the evening the attendance is fairly numerous; in the evening it is usually small. Cards are indulged in, but piquet and *écarté* are the favorite games, and *baccarat* is seldom played. The principal members of the Union are, in truth, pretty well on in years. Prominent among them are Baron de Charette, who visited Canada officially a few years ago; M. de Lareintie, whose recent duel with Marshal Boulanger made a stir that later events have kept in mind to this day; Count de Blacas and the Marquis de Dreux Brezé, two of the leading royalists of the age; the Duc de Broglie and d'Audiffret-Pasquier, and the Marquis de Gallifet. But the "great guns" of the Union are the Duc d'Aumale and the Duc de Chartres. At 7:30 o'clock a table d'hôte dinner is served; one large table is set for eight guests and a number of smaller tables kept in readiness for chance diners. The Duc d'Aumale when in Paris semi-occasionally honored the Cercle with a visit, and when he appeared in the dining room the guests rose and remained standing until requested to sit. *Tempora mutantur*, and for the present at any rate the Union is shorn of its highest ornament. After dinner the guests scatter, and although the clubhouse is lighted a giorno until the small hours of the night, its splendors attract, as a rule, few visitors.

Except during the dog days, when all self-respecting Parisians are at the seashore or in the mountains, the Jockey Club advertises its existence daily to the throng that moves past the corner of the Rue Scribe and the boulevard, between 5 in the afternoon and 7 in the evening. Two dozen of its liveliest members never fail to occupy, between these hours, the circular balcony of the building situated as above, and partly tenanted by the ground floor apartments of the Grand Hotel. At nightfall the loungers pass through the broad French windows opening into the salons of the club and share the club dinner or take seats at the numerous card tables of the *salle de jeu*. The Jockey has 1,000 members, but its rooms are seldom crowded. It is one of the most exclusive of Parisian circles, and one in which membership is most coveted, although it is generally conceded that as a place of resort the clubhouse is a trifle stupid. Foreigners are permitted to enjoy the privileges of the club for six months, but are not eligible for membership.

If ever the history of the "Jockey" is written from the infancy of the club to the culminating period of its brilliancy in the most progressive days of the Second Empire, the volume will present such a record of romantic deeds, mad pranks, and reckless extravagance as the world has never seen. It was founded in 1833 as a society for the "encouragement and bettering of the horse in France," and for the specific purpose of improving the breed of blooded horses

by means of races and money prizes. The chief promoters of the scheme were Count de Cambis, Count Demidoff, Lord Seymour, Charles Laffitte, Prince de la Moskowa, and the Duc de Guiche. The first revenues of the club were derived from the annual dues of the members and the gate money received at the races held under its auspices. Later on the State, the city, and the railway companies gave liberal aid, and thus the club has been able to offer annually a number of valuable prizes, including the Grand Prix of 100,000*fr.* When the organizers of the club first came together they now and then awarded to the wearers of the victorious colors a dozen baskets of champagne; in 1838 the prizes represented 46,000*fr.*, in 1857, 362,000*fr.*, and in 1867 a round million. The Jockey Club first went into quarters at the corner of the Rue du Helder and the boulevard; a year afterward it moved to the Rue Drouot, in 1856, having added to its roll of membership the 130 members of the Jeune Cercle; then it shifted its ground to the Rue de Grammont, and finally, in 1863, it took up its abode in the *local* it now occupies.

The chroniclers of Parisian life under the Second Empire gave their readers occasional glimpses of the merry round led by the members of the Jockey Club, that had within its fold the whole *jeunesse dorée* of the liveliest of European capitals. The first President of the Cercle was renowned for his wealth, his physical strength, and his eccentricities. Lord Henry Seymour, an Englishman by birth, but a Parisian by sojourn, was the idol, and the wonder of a past generation. His escapades filled the newspapers. He lifted with his little finger a hundred-pound weight and held it out at arm's length. His horses were covered with ribbons, and from his coach fell showers of toys and bon bons for the street arabs to scramble for. One day, at the corner of the Rue de la Paix, hearing two vagrants insult an old fruit vendor, he jumped out of his caleche and sent the offenders sprawling in the mud amid the cheers of a thousand loiterers. Simultaneously with the pranks of Lord Seymour, the less noisy achievements of two of his fellow-members often supplied the *chroniqueurs* with material for paragraphs. Both belonged to the army; one was known as Capt. Walewski and the other as the Duke de Morny. Those were the days when all sorts of mad bets were made and duly set down in the archives of the club. Some of them were of so equivocal a character that they had to be expunged from the record; others remain to bear testimony to the imaginativeness and rashness of juvenile France. Among the latter one may be cited. The Marquis de Gallifet had incurred the displeasure of Napoleon III., and the latter had withdrawn his speech from his erstwhile favorite. The Marquis and Gen. Fleury, the sovereign's grand equerry, were conversing on the subject. "I will compel him to address me," said the former. "You will not," answered Fleury; "the Emperor is obstinate." A few days afterward, as Napoleon and his escort were crossing the Seine, the Marquis de Gallifet handled his horse so as to force the animal off the bridge and into the water. Thence he made it swim ashore and resumed his place, dripping, as the imperial cortège reached the quay. The Emperor leaned out of the window of his carriage while Gen. Fleury narrated to him what had occurred. Then he beckoned to the Marquis, who, notwithstanding his pitiable condition, kept up with the escort, and said to him harshly: "This is another act of folly, Monsieur. Go change your clothes, and do not do it again!" The Marquis had won his bet.

The most elaborate room in the Jockey Club is the oval *salon* at the corner of the boulevard and the Rue Scribe. The scene it presents is most animated toward 5 o'clock in the afternoon, when the titled members are assembled in force. Notable among them are Count de Noailles, the Duke de Maille, the Prince de Tarente, and Count de la Rochefoucauld. Many of the parents and grandparents of the younger members of the club have figured on its rolls, besides a number of brothers, cousins, and nephews of the founders. Among living members are four Princes de Ligne, three Caramans, six Lauristons, three Princes de Polignac, three Fitzjameses—the latter being descendants of King James of England, who died at Saint-Germain—and three Barons de Rothschild, who are referred to as unusually prudent card players, as becomes family men anxious to keep a crust for their children. Card playing is, of course, one of the favorite distractions of the Jockey Club, but the palmiest days of the sport are past, at least within the precincts of the clubhouse. A game of whist that lasted three days and three nights still lives in the memory of the old members, but the club men of the period prefer indulging their inclination for *baccarat* in places where play is carried on less publicly. The finances of the club, that once derived a handsome revenue from the "kitty," have suffered a good deal from the change. The house expenses are heavy, and among the heaviest is the cost of maintaining the restaurant. The table d'hôte dinner, for which 8*fr.* a cover is charged, without wine or coffee, is one of the choicest in Paris, and it is claimed that its exceptional menu has never shown any falling off, whatever the season or the condition of the markets. During the siege the table d'hôte dinner was served as usual, and the valuable animals which were sacrificed in the Jardin d'Acclimatation toward January, 1871—the elephants Castor and Pollux, for example—furnished to the Jockey Club their daintiest morsels. There are three dining rooms in the club, which are tenanted, on an average, by 30 guests daily. Dinner is served at 7:30 o'clock.

In the historical period in which Marianne de Mailly, widow of the Marquis de la Tournelle, received the duchy and peerage of Châteauroux, her potent admirer bestowed upon her a dwelling situated on the Quai de Seine, at the corner of the Rue de Beaune, and known as the Hôtel de Nesle. The gardens extended to the Rue du Bac, upon which they opened through a small door, whereof Louis XV. kept the key. The Duchess lived and died in this princely abode; the Revolution divided up the property, but the salons remained uninjured, and were occupied for a long while by the Mosbourg family. In 1835 they were rented to a sort of high class agricultural club, founded by M. de la Chauvinière, and called "L'Athénée Rural." This organization still flourishes under the title of "Cercle Agricole," and its rolls of membership have included or still include the names of the most illustrious economists, scientific men, agriculturists, and orators of modern France. Berryer was among its earliest members, and so was M. de Lagrené, the first French Ambassador to China; the Baron de Damas, and the celebrated Marquis de Barbantane, an eccentric old nobleman who always wore a cap, ate his first meal at 7 o'clock in the evening, and when he traveled by rail occupied his family carriage, which had been placed upon a platform car. Some years ago the club—then, as now, 600 strong—moved to the Quai d'Orsay into a house of its own. As may be imagined, card playing is not a feature of club life at the Cercle Agricole. A few games of whist or piquet are carried on in the Winter months, but the members incline toward more edifying amusements. For a while readings and discussions were now and then gotten up. Michel Chevalier was invited to speak on economical topics, Dumas lectured on agricultural chemistry, Champollion-Figeac on Egyptology, Desbarolles on physiology, and Babinet on mineralogy. When the topic last named was on the tapis the Duke of Brunswick brought his diamonds for purposes of illustration. During the last year or two the club has been somewhat slumbrous. Its financial prosperity, however, and the solid comfort of the clubhouse will probably enable it to dispense with what genuine club men regard as extraneous attractions.

The principal aristocratic clubs of Paris had been in existence for 20 years when the Second Empire dawned upon France. The friends of the new régime were, of course, anxious to counteract the effect of the seniors' opposition, and they set about organizing a wealthy and brilliant Cercle that should proclaim its approval of the new order of things. The court, the army, the public departments, and the world of finance supplied the first recruits, and, in 1854, the Cercle Impérial was founded. The roll of membership embraces many names that do not appear in connection with the Union, the "Jockey," or the Cercle Agricole. The financial world is especially well represented by the Baron de Soubeyran, the Rothschilds, Baron Seillière, Baron Gunzbourg, the Oppenheims, the Ephrussis, and the Camondos. Among the former intimates of the Tuileries are Count Exelmans, M. Abbateucci, the Abeilles, the Marquis de Bassano, Count Davilliers, the Marquis de Caux, and Baron Haussmann. The clubhouse of the Cercle is admirably situated in the Rue Boissy d'Anglais, whence its terrace overlooks the Champs Elysées. Its salons are unusually spacious; once upon a time they were adorned with paintings which Count de Nieuwerkerke, Superintendent of Fine Arts, thought proper

to borrow from the National Gallery. When the fact was made public a great outcry was raised, and the pictures were hurried back to the Louvre. Since the downfall of the empire the club has changed its name; it is now called Cercle des Champs Elysées. Although it has 700 members it is a quiet place of resort, melancholy even, when its present tranquillity is compared with the pomp and circumstance of the past.

The Union Artistique, with an allusion to which this sketch must be brought to a close, is the most bustling and merriest club in Paris. It was organized in 1860, and among its founders were Count d'Osmond, the Marquis de Vogüé, now its President; Prince Poniatowski, and Mario Uchard. The object of the projectors of the Cercle was to bring together professional people and "society" men, and it promptly found favor with both classes of the community, the first meeting being attended by 400 persons. Among the notable members of the club are Princes d'Hénin, de Polignac, and de Metternich, the Marquis d'Audiffret-Pasquier, the Dukes d'Esparre and de Maille, Bida, Cabanel, Dubufe, Gérôme, Meissonier, Gounod, Angier, and Feuillet. The Cercle originally occupied a house in the Rue de Choiseul; it now tenants the former Hotel Aguado, on the Place Vendôme. Its membership is about 1,000 strong, and all the members vote upon the admission of candidates to membership. The great picture of life at the Union Artistique is its entertainments. Three committees organize these delightful affairs. A Committee on Literature, a Committee on Art, and a Committee on Music. Members' mothers, wives, sisters, or daughters are admitted to the dramatic and musical performances, in which original works by members of the club are generally represented by the leading artists of the Parisian theatres. During the Winter months the Committee on Music arranges weekly concerts of chamber music. Once a year the Committee on Art contrives to hold a private Salon made up of new works that occasionally outshine the wonders of the more comprehensive exhibition in the Champs Elysées. Among the less elaborate amusements provided for the members of the club are fencing bouts—the Cercle possessing its own salle d'armes and an abundance of good swordsmen—and a decidedly popular card room. An excellent restaurant is not the least attractive department of the Union Artistique—which is unquestionably, as suggested already, the most "live" body of the kind in the French metropolis. F. A. S.