

CLUB NEWS AND GOSSIP.

"Why was Dr. Seward Webb blackballed at the Union Club?" is getting to be a chronic question in club circles. They say that history moves in cycles; certainly the history of Union Club blackballing would appear to do so, at least as far as Dr. Seward Webb is concerned. Just about a year ago—possibly, a little less—he encountered blackballing No. 1 at the hands of the Union's Governors. Blackballing No. 2 claimed him for its victim last Tuesday night.

Now, a single blackballing in the board room of the Union Club is enough to make a man's name well known in club haunts; two blackballings within a single twelvemonth are more than enough to make the victim's name a household word, as it were, in the club world. When Dr. Webb was first denied admission to the Union Club, clubmen speculated for several weeks as to the causes of his exclusion. And yet not even the knowing ones were able to propound a satisfactory explanation. The second episode of the sort involved the matter in even deeper mystery. Every man "on the outside" in the Union Club has his own pet theory of how it all came about. Those "on the inside" are altogether too much frightened at the hullabaloo which the publication of the blackballing has created to so much as whisper even the vaguest hint as to the true inwardness of the situation to their most intimate friends. Consequently, there is an unlimited field for speculation.

Several former pillars of the club unite in attributing Dr. Webb's rejection to the lack of ballast which now characterizes the Board of Governors of the Union Club. As they say, the club has fallen into the hands of managers who are boys in action and motives though men in years. The pettiest objections, it is alleged, influence their exercise of the blackballing prerogative. Time and again have men of unquestioned eligibility been excluded by these men. John King, Austin Corbin, and Dr. Seward Webb are but three of a dozen notable candidates who have been sat upon by the Governors of the Union. In each case the candidate has been kept without the club's gates by but two negative ballots.

Those who should know say that in the case of Dr. Webb no reasons whatever were publicly advanced by the two men who cast the black ballot. There is a story in circulation to the effect that the cause of the blackballing really dates back to Dr. Webb's college days, but this lacks confirmation. None of the fifteen Governors of the club is known to be hostile to the doctor, and this fact has given rise to the rumor that the two blackballing Governors served as cats' paws for enemies of Dr. Webb outside of the Governing Board, and did not drop in the unwelcome blackballs through any particular animosity of their own. However that may be, the recent manifestation of bad blood will very likely work a revolution in the management of the Union Club at the next election of officers. The election does not take place until the fourth Wednesday of next May, but Dr. Webb has friends—and several relatives—in the club, and among them are several men of long memories, who are good haters. Both William K. and Cornelius Vanderbilt are members of the Union, and all the influence that they and Messrs. Samuel F. Bargar and Stuyvesant Fish, who proposed and seconded Dr. Webb, can bring to bear, will be exerted to overthrow the present administration.

Then there are Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan and dozens of other influential members added to the Vanderbilt family in a social or business way who will take particular pleasure in joining hands with the opposition. The fact that all of them, and particularly Mr. Morgan, are active in the new Metropolitan Club will not make them any the less zealous in their efforts to bring about the downfall of the present dynasty of the Union Club. Besides them there are, too, no end of men in the club who have old scores to settle and who have become disgruntled at the recent policy of the club.

The St. George Club, which was organized by men who formerly owed allegiance to John Bull, is no longer homeless. It has ceased to be a club on paper and has become a club in fact, with a real tin roof over its head. Its home is the four-story brownstone house on the southeast corner of Lexington Avenue and Twenty-eighth Street, that property having just been purchased by the club. The deeds were signed during the past week, and the title is now vested in certain Governors of the club, who represent it in this matter. The house in question has 125 feet on the avenue and a depth of 55 feet on Twenty-eighth Street. It isn't exactly a new house, having been built nearly thirty years ago, but it is in excellent condition, and when those whom the club has set at work renovating and refurnishing the house take themselves away, the transformed clubhouse will be a pretty place. The first floor will be fitted up with parlors and all that sort of thing; the second floor will most likely be converted into a billiard room, with the real old-fashioned English billiard tables; the top floor will be set apart for the use of the janitor and the attachés of the club, and the ground, or street, floor will eventually be put in shape as a meeting room for the various English societies of one sort or another in this city. The work of making the slight alterations necessary has already been begun, and it is promised that the house will be habitable by the 16th inst. Promises do not count for much, though, so far as contractors work is concerned, and very likely the club will be unable to take possession of its house before the end of the month. That it will be safely housed by the 1st of February is certain.

The club will start in with pretty close to 200 members. There are 150 of them on the roll already, and once the fact of the club's purchase of realty is generally known among former subjects of the Queen there is pretty sure to be a rush of applications for membership. Under the constitution "Englishmen or the sons of English men and women over eighteen years of age, wherever born," are eligible to membership. Just how many English residents there are who are eligible under these conditions nobody knows. Probably 500 would be a low estimate, and there is no reason why the St. George Club should not eventually have a membership at least meeting that figure. The officers of the club are: President—James Gamble; Vice President—Oswald Vayne; Treasurer—Dr. H. J. Desaxe; Secretary—Dr. E. V. Brendon; Governors—B. W. Hayward, Charles D. Marvin, A. J. Osborn, W. D. Williams, W. P. Robinson, F. St. George How, J. W. Cooper, A. A. Michell, and J. Selwin Tait.

The Ohio Society is in a flourishing condition, and, for an organization of limited scope, is doing quite well. On its roll are the names of 226 resident, 63 non-resident, and 3 honorary members. The organization has no debts, has two or three thousand dollars to its credit in a good, sound bank, and apparently has a promising future before it. It is getting too big for the brownstone house at 236 Fifth Avenue, and in all likelihood will take up its trunk and walk when the lease of its present quarters expires next May. As yet the organization has no particular project in mind. Action in the matter has not yet been taken, but a committee to look into the question will probably be appointed before long, and a list of suitable properties made up and submitted to the society.

The so-called "row" in the New-York Club can only be compared to a tempest in a teapot, so trivial is the whole matter. The causes which led to the resignation of a majority of the Governors are of superlative unimportance, so to speak. Some members of the club wanted to see the cardroom transferred from the second to the third floor; others didn't. Both sides talked about it, and then seven of the ultrasensitive Governors of the club resigned. A special election to fill their places will be held next Thursday, these gentlemen having been nominated for Governors: F. T. Adams, David Banks, J. M. Hughes, W. H. T. Hughes, Jordan L. Mott, and L. M. Schwan.

Barring this little unpleasantness and the suspension of a certain conspicuous figure in dudedom a few months ago, the New-York Club hasn't had a sensation in many a day. In fact, it is the quietest, easiest-going, and most placid club of consequence in New-York City. It religiously keeps out of the newspapers, does all its fighting within the walls of its handsome house just above the Stewart mansion, and more nearly approximates the old English idea of a club, "a gentleman's family," than any other big club in town. To the minds of many old-time club men this very privacy and absolute lack of public functions prove the club to be one of the best in town. In the view of some of the younger men who float about clubdom the New-York Club is just a bit fossilized and lacking in life. It's a good club, though, and ever these youngsters think about it, and as becomes the second oldest club in town, is a model of the conservative and dignified club organization.

The little Alpha Delta Phi Club had its hands full last night, the occasion being a club reception and loan exhibition of paintings by American artists. Members of the Alpha Delta fraternity, though not members of the club, were privileged to enjoy the hospitalities of the club, and scores of them took advantage of the opportunity. About one hundred and fifty canvases were exhibited. None had been before exhibited. Quite a number were the products of the brushes of members of the club, some of the artists contributing being F. S. Church, Hamilton Hamilton, H. Bolton Jones, Francis C. Jones, William H. Law, George W. Maynard, Walter Shirlaw, M. F. H. De Haas, C. Y. Turner, J. Alden Weir, J. Carroll Beckwith, C. A. Platt, Horatio Walker, L. C. Earle, J. B. Bristol, Thomas Moran, Thomas W. Wood, Charles H. Miller, J. C. Nichol, and Wordsworth Thompson. The exhibition will continue tomorrow, when there will be a ladies'-day reception. The last affair of the kind brought out the fair friends of the club by the hundred, and the club was simply swamped. Fewer invitations have been issued this time, but enough of them are out to fill the house from basement to garret.

The annual meeting of the Alpha Delta Phi Club will be held next Tuesday evening. Incidentally five Governors will be elected in the place of the outgoing members of which ex-Committee the Nominating Committee, of which Commissioner Henry J. Sprague is Chairman, has placed in nomination these gentlemen, who will probably be elected without opposition: Collin Armstrong, Nelson S. Sponcer, Robert B. Rudd, Dr. Robert P. Morris, and Dr. Charles E. Quinby.

The suggestion of a consolidation of the Followercraft Club with the Lotus Club, first publicly advanced in this column last Sunday, has caused considerable talk among the members of

both clubs, and has met with no little approval, particularly from the Followercraft men. There are a dozen reasons why the proposed amalgamation would be a good thing for both clubs; there are very few, if any, valid objections to it, and the more the scheme is talked of the more feasible and desirable it appears. Developments in the matter may be expected before the end of the present club season.

The next monthly dinner of the Followercraft Club will be held on the evening of Wednesday, Dec. 16. The dinner book was opened for signatures last week, and those desiring to secure seats will do well to make early application, as the book closes on the 14th.

The newspaper workers of the Press Club enjoyed their monthly subscription dinner last night. Sixty men gathered about the board and for four or five hours enjoyed the good things eatable, drinkable, and hearable.

The consensus of comment on the project for a college athletic club made public in this column last Sunday is decidedly favorable. The men who have been talking the matter over have been rather close-mouthed about it, and but few college men in the city knew anything about the scheme until they read of it in this column. Almost without exception they indorse it. Every one seems to recognize the existence of the field and its possibilities of cultivation, and judging from present indications the projectors of the scheme could safely come out and announce their project in a formal way and easily secure all the numerical and financial backing necessary.

One thing is certain: There is bound to be another club of some sort or other for college men in the City of New-York. The University Club fills the bill so far as it goes, but it doesn't go far enough. There are hundreds of college-bred men who would like to join a club, but are discouraged by the presence of the three hundred and odd names already on the waiting list, and under existing conditions it would be a physical impossibility for the club to take them in or to admit even a tithe of them. Its house is barely large enough to accommodate the present membership, and when ex-President H. H. Anderson moved at the last annual meeting to increase the membership by 250 he was met by a very storm of opposition on the part of men who objected to holding their elbows outside the window while they sipped their cognac in the dining room.

Of late there has been no little talk in the club about spurring the management up to the point of taking steps in the direction of building an unequalled clubhouse. The talk has been, for the most part, among Princeton men who are anxious to see that energetic Princetonian J. W. Alexander, the President of the club, push the scheme. Mr. Alexander is one of the lucky men who always make things go, and as one of the movers in this building matter remarked the other day, "All that is needed to make the scheme a success is a leader."

Financially, the club is probably in better shape than any other New-York club has ever been on the eve of launching a building project. Of members it has about 1,700, including no end of financial moguls. Of dollars it has about 250,000 stored away in the bank. Of debts it has none. Now, a club that has these three attributes of success and the stamp of unquestioned social standing thrown in can well afford to take the plunge from tenancy to ownership. Before long the University Club will surely make a move in the matter, if only in self-defense against projects looking for the formation of other college clubs.

The men who are talking about the matter have in mind a clubhouse surpassed by none in town and capable of accommodating two or three thousand members. They think that there is no reason why the New-York University Club cannot pick up a membership approximating the famous Oxford and Cambridge Clubs of London, and these clubs count their members by the thousands. One of the leaders in the movement is authority for the statement that he and his friends propose to "make the fur fly" within the next three months.

The hopes of the members of the Catholic Club are doomed to disappointment, as, notwithstanding the promises of the contractors for the new clubhouse, that pleasing addition to the clubhouses of the city will not be ready for occupancy until the latter part of next February. The house has been promised for Jan. 1, but strikes and other delays have greatly hindered the work and forced the contractors to modify their promises. The club has now entered upon negotiations with the present owners of the house which it occupies looking to a renewal of the lease after Jan. 1 for such time as may intervene before the completion of the new house. The opening of the new house will take place on the Monday and Tuesday preceding Ash Wednesday. The first day's reception will be in the nature of a formal affair, participation being confined to members of the club, representatives of other Catholic clubs, dignitaries of the Church, and distinguished guests. Chairman John D. Crimmins of the Building Committee will formally hand over the house to the President of the club, and after its acceptance, Archbishop Corrigan will duly declare it open. The second day's reception will be partially a ladies' day affair, and will be open to members and friends of the club generally.

At last Tuesday's meeting of the managers of the Catholic Club twenty-four candidates for membership were elected. Fifty names are still posted on the bulletin board.

At the annual meeting of the Catholic Club the following gentlemen were elected to membership in the Board of Managers, the regular ticket going through with but two exceptions: John D. Desmond, Thomas F. Fitzsimmons, Adrian T. Kiernan, Edward McGuire, Joseph F. Mulqueen, Matthew P. Ryan, Thomas F. Ryan, Richard M. Walters, and Dr. Alberto Falcon.

The activity of even the smaller clubs in looking for new and larger accommodations is a striking indication of the hold club life has taken on the inhabitants of this city. The latest to make a move in this direction is the Zeta Psi Club, one of the earliest-established college fraternity clubs of the city, which, at a meeting of its Board of Governors, held at the clubhouse, 8 West Twenty-ninth Street, on the evening of Dec. 1, Austin G. Fox, President, in the chair, appointed a committee to find a new home for the club, increasing membership making such a step necessary.

The Zeta Psi has occupied its present quarters for several years. It formerly occupied a smaller house in Thirty-fifth Street. A feature is the Tuesday "Club" night, which always draws a large attendance to enjoy music and other impromptu entertainment. Occasionally a more elaborate "Smoker" is given on this evening. A surprisingly good Guitar, Mandolin, and Banjo Club composed of members living in the house holds forth frequently to admiring audiences. There are some well-known names on the list of the Board of Governors, among them Austin G. Fox (President), Judge Augustus Van Wyck of the Brooklyn City Court, Calvin Tomkins, William McElroy, President of the Alumni Association of Union College, Dr. J. Frelinghuysen Talmage, Edward H. Litchfield, ex-Judge George M. Van Hoesen, the Hon. J. Howland Ford, Francis Lawton, Israel C. Pierson, Nathaniel Smith, and Frederick Bonner.

AN AWE-INSPIRING SIGHT.

The Justices of the Supreme Court in this city are far and away in the lead in the matter of style and ceremony. It is an impressive thing to hear the announcement of the Justices of the General Term when they come into court to hand down opinions. After a vast deal of waiting on the part of the expectant lawyers, the Justices file in, headed by Presiding Justice Van Brunt, and a solemn court officer says, in a loud and awe-stricken voice: "The Justices of the Supreme Court, General Term." The Justices look down on the lawyers, who all get up and bow, and then they file out again.

Now the Justices are so magnificent that they never had before—an obsequious policeman to escort them through the corridors from their chambers to the courtrooms. He is Policeman Schneider, who has for many years untangled trucks and horse cars at Broadway and Chambers Street as one of the Broadway Squad. Transferred now to be a special policeman at the County Court House, he pilots the Justices, much as he used to pilot old women across Broadway, waving aside obstructions that now are imaginary, for lawyers and court loungers do not need to be told to give an advancing Judge free passage. Formerly the Justices walked in more humble style to their courtrooms, followed by their lowly private attendants.

The Judges in the upper part of the building, in the Superior Court and the Court of Common Pleas, are more democratic. They find their ways to their own courts, and do not disdain to stop on the way to notice less honored individuals. The thought of Judge David McAdam of the Superior Court being escorted from his chambers to his courtroom by a policeman is a most amusing one. It would probably strike Judge McAdam as a most ridiculous proceeding.

When on Jan. 1 the court attendants in the Supreme Court get their new uniforms—which are to cost \$29 each—and appear for the first time dressed differently from the Judges and the lawyers and others in the courts, the Supreme Court will be worth a visit. It will then be as awe-inspiring a court as is possible for a court to be where the Judges do not wear robes.

THE DYKER MEADOW.

The Dyker Meadow, adjoining Fort Hamilton, which the Federal Government is to buy for \$250,000, consists of fifty-six acres of land only, three of which are meadow land, the other fifty-three being on high ground. The property has a shore line of 1,700 feet, and through it runs what is reputed to be one of the oldest roads on Long Island. It was constructed in 1630 and follows an old Indian trail.

The British marched through it to meet the Army of Washington and engage in the battle of Long Island. In assessing the value of this land the commission appointed by the United States court awarded \$3,000 to the Town of New-Utrecht for this old road.

On the Dyker Meadow the Government is to erect a mortar station. The idea has been pronounced by army officers an ideal spot from which to command the entrance to New-York Harbor.