WOMEN'S CLUBS IN LONDON.

PART I.

This was, and is, a live idea, and the idea of reforming women's social status now within the limits of this present century has been instilled into female minds. The idea of forming a 'Women's Club' new and strange, has gone into the fertile brain of the most "advanced" of our sex; although such an enormity had been suggested as a capital joke. But carried onwards by a flood of social progress - augmenting difficulties - outcomes of the growth of an immense population - and with it the irresistible force of new and varied circumstances, we have had to overrule - many old fuddy-duuddy prejudices, and content ourselves with holding the helm and steering the ship through flood and tide beyond our power to stem.

Amongst the urgent causes necessitating social coalitions for personal improvement and mutual service amongst the several ranks of more or less educated women, notably not the least of which is the fear that we may observe the increase of impoverished marriages and the failures of the physically unsuitable, the many failures of financial enterprises, the deterioration of the moral value of land, and, most of all, the lack of the moral rectitude of non-paying tenantry. All these evil diseases have tended to break up the old healthy constitution of English society. Thus the daughters of the very elite of the untried aristocracy are driven from home, and from private works of benevolence or recreation, to become bread-earners for themselves and their families. Paternalism in this phenomenon must be to most of our readers, an article like this demands such an introduction, showing the origin of the needs-be for women's clubs. Some have been in the country, and visit town for business or otherwise, and thus need such institutions. Others, though living in town or suburban districts, have some need for the pursuit of their literary, artistic, or scientific work at home; and a third party has to attend classes, and requires more conveniently central or adjacent residences than home for so many days a week. Besides these cases, there are those who would prefer to take a bed in a women's club when alone to going to a hotel, if visiting town for shopping or for interviews with friends. We have at least two or three women's clubs which are residential, for the benefit of country members, of such are "The Alexandra" and "The Victoria." In addition to clubs, we also have special restaurants for women, which shall be indicated after I have dealt with the former.

I said that the mere notion of a club for the benefit of women was once in the recollection of many the most grotesque of conical ideas. But some allowance must be made for the insular prejudices and slowness to accept innovations. The first step towards the appearance of women in a house of public resort for reading and entertainment, was made some fifty years ago in Russia and in Germany. The system of table d'hotes and the mingling of men and women took a long time to become acclimatised in the brain of English folk of the upper classes, and the doleful "private dining-room"... engaged, de rigueur, for the benefit of the wives and daughters on a pleasure trip to see the world, and to acquire knowledge of foreign languages by colloquial intercourse. Happily, most avont change tout cela. To return to the question of foreign clubs, though not formed for the exclusive benefit of women and men, the former have been allowed introduction into them in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and a number in some German towns. About eighteen years ago the first was taken up by a club in London, "The Bohemians," who had their rooms in Grafton Street, and opened their doors to the highest class of professional singers, prima donnas, and persons of like vocations. But a grave mistake in the selection of one of these guests put an abrupt end to this first attempt. "The Bohemians..." passed through several changes, and survives under the name of "The Lyric." And now, without further preamble, I invite my readers to follow me out to various clubs for women already existing in London.

I started on my interesting quest on a lovely morning,when the warmest houses, the less unattractive in their normally most melancholy atmosphere, and I selected for my first visit of inspection what I regarded as the parent of them all. It was the first to set the example of a "mixed club," that is, one formed for the benefit of both sexes. The name will be familiar to many—viz., "The Athenaeum." The Athenaeum is rather an imposing frontage, as compared with the majority of its neighbours. The two drawing-rooms are lofty and spacious, and are thrown into one by the drawing-room beneath in the same way. But the entrance hall robs the latter of its otherwise equal dimensions with the reception-rooms above, and can only afford sufficient accommodation for laying some forty covers at a time. This is a very inadequate number to meet the daily demand. Ascending to the bedroom story, I found a very plain-decorated smoking-room, a large reading-room, a room for gentlemen and a small dressing-room adjoining, also a library or room for writing, supplied with suitable tables (at the back), agreed upon and arranged by this lady of fashion, and a ladies' dressing-room, the office of the Lady-secretary, and that of the housekeeping manager.

I hastened till now regarded the Athenaeum Club as a rather fossilised institution, and generally formal in its high and unquestionable respectability, and I was agreeably taken by surprise by the information I obtained from the enormous proportions to which it has recently grown. Within the last four years or so it has become a great financial success, under the admirable management, I should say, of the excellent secretary and the house-keeper. The chef would appear to be unsurpassed amongst his fellows in other clubs; it is a perfect symphony, a sort of air of sound harmony, the chief of the club, who have the credit of being good conniseurs in the mysteries of the culinary art.

In view of the multitude who have to wait in relays to be accommodated with seats at the dinner tables, for whom some four hundred sit down to dinner none too many, it has been for a considerable time past acknowledged that the mansion in use is very much too small. "When and where will you have a new one?" is the well-known game that sometimes elicit singularly enigmatic replies—would seem, as yet, to have found no solution of objective difficulties in this case, and no response of a generally acceptable character for the many expectants.

No less than twenty-nine rules are given in their prospectus, and amongst them there is one limiting the number of members to six which is the most formidable, and in which five guineas is required from every new member on election, and the same amount thereafter, so that the annual fee will fall due on the first of January every year. But an inspection of the club shows that there is a great proportion of ladies in favour of members of one family residing together, and foreigners, colonists, and even India may become honorary members for a period. Members are permitted to introduce their friends to dine or otherwise use the house, provided they be above the age of sixteen. No gratuity may be offered to any servant of the club, and the house is opened at 8.30 a.m., and closed at 11 a.m, no one being admitted after 12.30. A very strict system of rules may suffice for the convenience of intending members, and I now take leave of this important institution, and select the nearest of its neighbours, the "City Club." Not far to seek—on the sunny side of New Bond Street—there is a small and unpretending club, exclusively for the benefit of women, where hospitality and reception, must be graduates, undergraduates, and students who have passed certain examinations.

Unfortunately, there is no very apparent sign of the existence of a club to a general observer in passing. I overlooked it myself, while moving on, when I sought again for the number specified. Yes, I was not mistaken, this club has a number, and I only saw a tailor's shop on one side, and engraving, or pictures of some sort on the other. I tried a query at the former shop, and was politely let through a side door within, and a very small brass plate indicating the locality of the club was pointed out to me—the Women's "University Club." Behind a narrow staircase, much in contrast with the handsome entrance of the mansion before-named; but arrived at the second floor, I was shown into a bright front room of the most cheerful, though very unpretending, and all the more suitable for study, from being raised thus far above the noisy traffic of that ever-crowded thoroughfare. Next to the outer door, a pleasant room was united to one at the back, in which I noticed three or more additional writing tables, and all desirable papers and periodicals were provided. In one respect this club resembled the "Athenaeum," as it is non-residential. Tea and coffee and bread and butter can be provided in the house; but were dinners, or rather luncheons, desired by the students, mutton chops, beefsteaks, cheese, or any other simple viands would be sent in on demand—not drested, nor kept in readiness in the house. The entrance fee is only one guinea, and the annual subscription is of the same amount, as from the 1st January. Members elected in April or September are only required to pay the balance of the subscription due for the current year. Persons eligible for membership are graduated medical practitioners of the University of London, but the body is qualified in one of the ways of which I give a list:

1. They must be graduates of a University.
2. Registered medical practitioners of the University of London.
3. Students or lecturers who have been in residence for (at least) three terms at Gtton or Newman Colleges, Cambridge; or at Somerville or Lady Margaret Halls, Oxford.
4. Undergraduates of any University who...
A STOREHOUSE FOR GOLD.—It is much better to have true gold in the heart than in the hand.

BE PATIENT.—People are always talking of patience and forbearance and for many, but patience is the finest and worthiest part of fortitude, and the rarer too. I know twenty persevering girls for one patient one, but if it is a ten-bed dormitory, and on the second, and patience lies at the root of all pleasures and all powers. Hope herself ceases to be happiness when impatience compasses her.——Richter.

WISDOM, POWER, AND RICHES.

Who is wise? She who learns from every one.

Who is powerful? She who governs her passions.

Who is rich? She that is content.

A LOVE STORY.

“No, George,” faltered the maiden. “I fear it cannot be. I admire you as a gentleman, I regard you as a friend, but——”

“Laura!” he exclaimed, “before you pass sentence, hear me out. A recent lucky stroke in business has enabled me to buy a beautiful house in Kensington, which shall be in your name. I will insure my life for ten thousand pounds, and——”

“George!” coldly interposed the lovely girl, “you interrupted me. I was about to say that the sentiments of respect and esteem I feel for you, though so strong, are feebler in comparison to those——which——which——I—which I have long——don’t George, dear!”

For George had interrupted her again.

A PIECE OF ADVICE.

“John,” said an experienced member of the Society of Friends, “I hear thou art going to be married.”

“Well,” replied John, “I am.”

“I have one little piece of advice to give thee, and that is, never marry a woman worth more than thou art. When I married my wife I was worth just fifty pounds, but whenever differences have occurred between us she has always thrown up the old idylls.”

A POPULAR BELIEF.—It is a popular belief that if there was a woman instead of a man in control of that man's history would no longer be a secret to us.

DO NOT QUARREL.—Is life long enough for quarrelling? Are there so many good people that they can afford to shun and avoid each other?——Richter.

VARIETIES.
in another friend cost her still deeper pain. Mr. Glyne was not amongst those who traversed the five straight miles of dusty road to pay their respects to the heiress of Wyndham. Aldyth hardly expected that he would come unless invited; but when some weeks later she chanced to meet him at Mrs. Greenwood's, there was such a lack of the old friendliness in his manner as made it impossible for her to respond to his grave politeness except with a courtesy equally distant. Had anyone told John Glyne that he had spoken coldly to Aldyth Lorraine, he would have been surprised. He was conscious of an inward excitement on seeing her that forced him to exercise strong self-control. Whilst talking to others he thought only of her, and nothing that she said or did escaped his notice. But it was impossible for Aldyth to know this. She was conscious only that he remained aloof from her, and when others were paying her considerable attention, appeared indifferent to her presence. When he quitted the drawing-room without having attempted to exchange a word with her, Aldyth's heart throbbed with painful resentment.

"Why should he be different to me now?" she asked herself. "I never needed a friend more than I do at this time, and he is so wise and good; he could advise me, he could help me. There are so many things I should like to say to him, but I cannot utter a word when he looks at me in such a severe way. Oh, I did think I could rest on his friendship; but that, too, is slipping away from me.

(To be continued.)

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WOMEN'S CLUBS IN LONDON.

PART II.

Probably but few of my readers are aware of the existence of a mixed association, the committee of which consists of both sexes in equal numbers, distinguished by the title of "The Denison Club." Its address is 15, Buckingham Street, Strand, W.C., and as my peregrinations I made the discovery that the object of my search was the last house in the street, with a pleasant look-out on the gardens of the Embankment. I walked up to the first door, and seeing no bell, I went in. A female attendant was sitting there, keeping guard alone, and in a few minutes she replaced her presence by that of the secretary. He gave me a prospectus of the society to supply all information respecting its raison d'etre, and as there were no other apartments to be seen than three small sized rooms thrown into one, and the secretary was far from communicative, I had to content myself with the paper he gave me, and will extract the little that is to be gleaned from it. The institution had its origin in the weekly meetings at dinner, provided in a Strand-side tavern, of from six to a dozen men, mostly workers on charity organisation committees, with a view to discuss common problems. Out of this small beginning the circle of philanthropists expanded. They were recruited by fellow-sympathisers; a club was formed, and made its first home at Toynbee Hall. The opening meeting was attended by forty or fifty members in the summer of 1885; but difficulties arose, which led to their removal to their present rooms. "A club of social workers without women was an absurd anachronism," says the hon. secretary; and so the original members joined hands with the new workers, and a mixed club was started in the spring of 1885.

My readers will inquire what this little association combined together to effect. It was "to promote friendly intercourse and frank discussion between men and women interested in social and industrial questions, and to encourage study and investigation."

Tea and coffee can be obtained by the members; writing materials and a few newspapers are provided gratis. The room is open every day (Sunday excepted) from 12 noon till 10 p.m.; but, as a rule, it is reserved for the use of men only on Wednesday evenings. To give some idea of the subjects discussed, the following may be named: "Trade Societies," "Regularity of Employment," "Poor Law and the Condition of the Poor," "How far Women's Unions can be Successful," etc. The subscription required of members is £1 annually.

I had intended to give some information respecting the "Trained Nurses' Club," to which I had paid a visit, being in the same street, at No. 15. But as the hon. secretary promised to send me the forthcoming report, I will discuss its merits by-and-by, and pass on to the "Lady Guide Association," at 16, Cockspur Street, S.W. I had not an idea when I entered the pretty, well-appointed office, just facing the equestrian figure in bronze of George III., that the club was one so comprehensive in its work, and offered so much to its members—the serving and the served—whether of the town or the country. Great taste is exhibited in the whole style of the reception, reading, and writing rooms, and although not a large house for the supply of many requirements, it has the advantage of being residential, and can also afford accommodation for a few country members for some days if desired. There are two reception-rooms, one in which gentlemen may be received, the other for ladies only, with lavatory and a dressing-room (convenient for those too far out of town to dress for evening entertainments at home). There are two compartments screened off in the ladies' cubicle-room, for the use of those who require privacy, whether for seeing doctors, or other persons on business. There is a very nice scale & balance on the entrance floor, behind the several offices, where breakfasts, dinners, luncheons, teas, and suppers are served daily, and where members may entertain their friends. The ordinary annual fee for membership is £1 is., and, in addition to the free use of the sitting and dining rooms, a reduction is made to them in every department of the work carried on by the acting resident members. So extensive are the ramifications of business undertaken here, that I scarcely know where to begin; yet this article would be of little general use if I omitted to give a list of them. Lady guides—by the hour, day, week, or month—for London or abroad, are provided; also teachers, companions, readers, singers, artists, amanuenses, shorthand and typewriters, and repairers of wardrobes. Dressmakers, milliners, and needlewomen are recommended; purchases are undertaken; arrangements made for entertainments (dinner, balls, etc.), and professional entertainers provided. Apartments are found, houses taken, rooms at hotels engaged; houses are let or sold, and their artistic decoration and furnishing arranged. Travelling tickets are procured and steam passages taken. Travelers are met at stations; arrivals, departures, and addresses are registered; tickets for places of amusement are procured; money exchanged (deposit and ready-money system); and parties of six persons are escorted for rounds of sightseeing and excursions at so much a head, inclusive of food. I need say no more. Truly we have already a good list of duties, for which this useful association makes itself responsible, under the patronage of their Graces the Duke and Duchess of Wellington. Touched not to have omitted the domestic servants' department, although the association does not supply a registry office, and servants are not to be found there in daily attendance.
small offices, where orders are registered and
advice is given, in or on the several departments of business; and, in the
most delightful and open-air dress way, a view of the restaurant, as
consists to the world, the visitor either write or make inquiries in person, when some
thing else is more convenient, papers will be preforated to her, as they were to me. The
give the fullest particulars on all the above-
named subjects, and I feel that the readers of this article, as I feel in favour of what
will experience from the lady
who will conduct her over the premises.

"The Welbeck Restaurant," is well
known, but in any case deserving of honourable
mention. It consists of a pair of sister
establishments. The first experiment was of a
very charitable character, and the beauty
selected was in Mortimer Street, W. The
object of the promoters was to meet the
requirements of persons of very small
prospects, who should find it possible to provide a good dinner or meal, including meat, at the trilling price of eightpence. How great a boon this has proved, and how extensively this novelty has done much to increase the number of those availing themselves of it.

Students, and young women engaged in
business houses, have the advantage of quick
access to a line of good stuff, for the food provided for them during the brief space of leisure time allotted to them. In the sister
institution in Oxford Street, No. 44 (opposite No. 51), W., dinners and luncheons are supplied from twelve to two
o'clock, and at any cost, arranged for with
the manager; and a tea and coffee, teas, soups, are sold for the second course, and the meal which is supplied at eightpence
included. Newspapers and writing materials are
supplied free of charge. I was taken all over this
institution, and found that the two kitchens and all the domestic offices and store-rooms were upstairs, so that the dining saloon and the lower premises were perfectly free from unpleasant smells of cooking or baking.

The lavatory is below the tea and coffee room, and is specially well appointed, with an attendant to wait upon its visitors. There is a large drinking fountain in this
furnished apartment, supplied by some dozen of basins and jugs, which will prove a delightful
acquisition to those who come into town from the country in the first few days of the autumn.

"The Dorothy," a place of rendezvous, and refreshment for themselves and their friends, I must here draw attention to the fact that no
gentlemen-friends are eligible for enjoying the privileges of this essentially female institution; and any meetings of the "town and country cousins" of the two "opposite sexes" would have to be relegated to the rooms of the Lady Guide Association.

"The Welbeck," a home and institute in connection with the Y.W.C.A., is a very
handsome, spacious, and commodious
institution. There are probably about a common of two or three houses, and "returns" at the back. One of these is 101, Mortimer Street, W., the other is used to the restaurant; and the
houses formerly known as "The Russell" or "Lotus Club" are entered from Regent
Street, nearly opposite the Polytechnic. I
have been of an hour to walk over the
institution, which quite answers the hope of comfortable accommodation of two classes, having their respective dormitories—rooms and their own private rooms; I mean the upper and student, and
women or servants’ class. There are
good reading and lecture rooms; the latter is
capable of accommodating about three hundred persons. These Regent Street premises are now renamed "The Morley Halls," having been acquired for the Y.W.C.A., since the winter of 1886. The list of visitors that are always huddled together in the new "Welbeck Restaurant," shows a considerable
variety of every description (excepting made
dishes), and the prices vary from one penny to one shilling. The following is the first-named menu: "For one shilling a
choice you have a piece of sauce, almost any
ordinary vegetable, rice or tapioca pudding, jam roll or tart, or blanmange, or a cup of tea, and a slice of bread and butter, for
a halfpenny extra. As the readers of the "S.O.P." are made up of all classes, I think
that many of them will be glad to read these
particulars.

Certainly, the "Young Women's Christian
Association" is a wonderful club—so extensive
in its group of ways and means, both
social and religious, of benefiting all its mem-
bers. Amongst their many offices in the
"Morley Halls," there are those of the Contin-
ental department and International Union,
for Sweden, Norwegians, Danes, Italians,
French, Germans, and other foreigners are
instructed there, and find the means of existence as they may individually need. Arrangements are made for those of any nationality in
the matter of emigration, or for residence abroad, as stated above.

Before proceeding further, I would certainly
advise English girls who desire foreign situa-
tions of any kind to seek addresses and recommendations before leaving London.

It would take too much space to enter into
an exhaustive account of all the departments
of this really great institution. I will only
add that the "Central Institute," is at 166,
Old Cavendish Street, W. In this house the
"Travelers’ Aid" branch is located, and
lodgings for a single night are to be had. But
I believe that ordinary boarding houses and restaurants exist in London under the auspices of this institution. It should not
omit to mention that the dining hall is used as a gymnasium in the evening; and also that classes are held for
instruction in every branch of an ordinary
education, besides work—such as dress and
manteau cutting and making, and shorthand
writing—as well as Bible classes, choir singing, etc.

I may now pass on to the Girls’ Friendly
Society, of which the central office is at 3,
Victoria Cottage, West Hampstead, N.W.,
minister, S.W., but there are about a dozen lodges connected with it in London, one each
in Edinburgh and Dublin, and about thirty in
the provinces of the country. It is specially
designed for young working women and
domestic servants, who constitute the members,
all of whom must have been, and continue to be, of unblemished character—the special ground of eligibility. Ladies
are desired as associates to assist in the work, the
objects of the union being the advantage of mutual help, both religious and secular; the
encouragement of purity of life, dutiful con-
duct towards parents, faithful service to
employers, and thrift. The usual advantages afforded to members are, admission to all the services and lodges, into which I need not enter. Her
Hajesty the Queen is the patron.

Amongst the innumerable minor clubs
instituted by benevolent women for the benefit
development of all classes of girls, we find about
display for general education, or special branches of the same; and besides these we have needlework societies, exercise and early-rising clubs, and, in general, everything that „just, not
least, " the "Ministers’ Club and Leagues," first among, an immense and most valuable organisation; and one or two invalid clubs, associations for mutual comfort and kindly offices, exchanges of books and of other articles, and congratulate correspondence, chiefly for the benefit of the
bedridden. Most of these clubs and unions have
been named, with more or less information,
in title "Directory of Girls’ Clubs" (Griffith and
Farren) and although some have become defunct since the publication, or their direction may have changed in some respects, yet you will obtain an ample number from which our readers can always take a selection.

I will now return to the "Trained Nurses’
and Midwives’ Institute," at 15, Buckingham
Street, Strand, W.C. The present office is a
very small one on the entrance floor, but the
"Free School Society," has a larger room, into which the students are admitted, and there they live for several months. Here lectures are given, and social meetings take place, from
5.30 to 10 p.m., for the refreshment and relaxation
of nurses on duty or for that time. About fifteen or twenty can meet together between these
hours, and from thirty to seventy usually attend the monthly lectures. Medical papers are
taken in, and a small lending library has been formed. The school is recommended because the fee of £10 is much desired. In a publication called the "Hospital (of March 15th)" there is an interesting account of the presentation by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, signed by himself, to the first thousand nurses who joined the "Pensions Fund." This pension is to be paid to the subscribers on their attaining the age of forty years, but before they have completed the period they have individually subscribed. The.
certificates were of an artistic character, designed by Miss Lilian C. Smith, and were greatly admired by the subscribers, and is now being raised to bring the "Donation Bonus" Fund up to £40,000.

The last institution of the nature of a club,
besides that of the "Nurses’ and Midwives’ Institute," also enjoys a wide sphere of existence to the "Ladies’ Dwellings Company, Limited," having its place in Lower Sloane Street, the mansion bearing the name of "Sloane Gardens House." The annual fee for membership is only five shillings, which entitles to the daily use of the club. There are drawing, writing and reading rooms, and a very beautiful room will be opened shortly, to be used for all the meals. Already there are forty-eight ladies in residence, and the new block of buildings at the present address of the former, in Sloane Street, was opened in May. On look-
ing over the rules I was pleased to see an important step made in advance, ensuring much comfort for the residents. The use of all musical instruments is prohibited between the hours of 10 p.m. and 8 a.m., nor can a sewing-machine be used between those hours; also dogs and cats are excluded.

In conclusion, I would observe that possibly some may say I have not restricted myself exclusively to the subject indicated in the title of these articles. Perhaps not entirely in all cases. But there are diversities in the several characteristics of such associations. They are not all formed exactly alike in constitution, nor have they each precisely the same objects in view. But inasmuch as they are all united in one common bond of fellowship, and to the service of women of every class, whether socially, intellectually, religiously, or all three objects combined, I should not have felt my work complete had I not given some idea of the various classes.

Besides this view of the advantage I might fairly be allowed, there is another and weightier consideration that will fully justify the extension of the study in the future; for these unions meet the requirements of extra thousands amongst the ever-appreciative and faithful readers of the truly invaluable Girl’s Own Paper.

SOPHIA F. A. CAUFIELD.