

Tempted London: young men

New York, A. C. Armstrong and son, 1888

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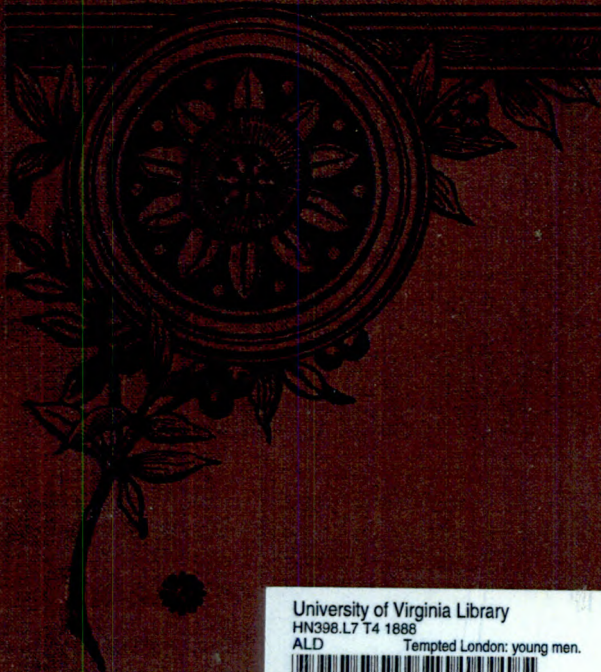


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TEMPTED LONDON:  
YOUNG MEN.



# TEMPTED LONDON:

YOUNG MEN.

NEW YORK :  
A. C. ARMSTRONG AND SON,  
714, BROADWAY.

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1888  
43149

## P R E F A C E .

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THE following papers were printed in THE BRITISH WEEKLY, commencing in October, 1887, and continuing until the end of April, 1888. They excited extraordinary attention, and were made the subject of sermons and courses of sermons in many churches and chapels in the United Kingdom, and reproduced in all parts of the English-speaking world. The facts were collected with great care by commissioners specially selected for the purpose. It was not possible to publish more than a selection from the material available, and for obvious reasons the most startling facts discovered cannot be made public. The Editor was made to feel very acutely both the danger of saying too much and of saying too little, and he cannot hope to have perfectly succeeded in striking the mean. Some parts of this volume will seem to some too outspoken ; and others, again, will think that greater frankness should have characterised it throughout

He can only say that he and his contributors have done their best. They are already grateful for the good these papers have done, and may perhaps reasonably hope that in their collected form they will be widely read by young men all over the country. It is believed that no such complete study of the subject has previously been published: The Editor may be permitted to add two specimens of the numerous comments that have appeared.

The *Canada Presbyterian* says:—"The BRITISH WEEKLY has just concluded one series of exceptionally able articles on 'Tempted London.' Hitherto these have been confined exclusively to the temptations that peculiarly beset young men in the great metropolis, and what efforts the Churches and Christian organizations generally are making to shield and rescue the tempted. This series is to be followed by another relating to the trials and temptations of young women. Sad as is the appalling array of facts marshalled throughout the entire series, the work has been done in a most satisfactory manner. The articles have been written in a proper and common-sense spirit. Nothing has been taken for granted. Hearsay and imaginary conditions have been carefully and rigorously avoided. There has been no exaggeration, no sensational parade of the evils disclosed, nothing to shock the most fastidious or in the least degree to palliate

evil or make it attractive. Whatever evil has been depicted has appeared in its true colours as evil only, and that continually. The worst has not been dragged into the light of day, but sufficient illumination has been cast upon it to enable every reader to know that it exists as a terrible reality."

The *City of London Association News* says:—  
"For many weeks past articles on the above subject have been appearing in the enterprising and ably edited BRITISH WEEKLY. The section specially dealing with young men has now been completed. The work has been executed with care and thoroughness, and for the first time a complete record exists of the numerous temptations which surround the young men of this great city. For many years to come these articles will doubtless be the text-book on the dangers of London life, as far as they affect young men."

27, PATERNOSTER ROW,  
LONDON. E.C.

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# I.—YOUNG MEN.

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## CHAPTER I.

### *COMING UP FROM THE COUNTRY TO LONDON.*

THE subject we have selected for investigation is one of universal interest. There is hardly a household in the land that is not more or less concerned with it. There is no parish, however remote or obscure, from the Hebrides to Cornwall, from which young men do not find their way to London. There is, perhaps, none who has not a relative or friend who has made his journey to the great city and fought his battle there; and it may be said that millions have had their lives darkened by the defeat and ruin of some one they have loved in that centre of temptation. So, too, even at this moment many are spending anxious days and nights in thinking how their dear ones who have gone out from the sheltered home are faring face to face with wickedness in its most seductive forms.

The servants of Christ in all the churches are

deeply concerned. There is no little congregation that has not sent up members of its Bible-class to seek their fortune in the city ; and these are often most in danger. According to the minister in London who knows most of city young men, it is usually "the most amiable, warm-hearted fellows that are most easily ensnared." In this question, too, the nation is greatly concerned, for upon the fate of the young men of London depends, to a very large extent, the future of our country. The prizes of London are very difficult to earn, and they are becoming more difficult every day. Of the multitudes who set out full of buoyant hope and ambition, and even high-toned resolves, many are disappointed. They look upon London as a prospective earthly paradise, free from all restraint, and offering every conceivable satisfaction. The would-be Whittingtons must have Whittington virtues, or the prospect may resolve itself into a hard and woeful experience. Into the actual prospects of young men we shall enter into detail afterwards. Meanwhile, let it suffice to say that they under-estimate the difficulties because they will not examine the details, and they over-estimate their own capabilities because they persist in an outlook through the romantic colouring of their own imagination. The position the average young man will have to fill is not at all romantic. He may be successful ; he may rise to high position and influence, as many have risen and are rising ; but it will not be without a rigorous perseverance, a stern self-denial, and through a vast amount of labour, extended, perhaps, over many years. On the other hand, he may fall at once ; he may rise and fall again ; or he

may sink from prosperity to misery by degrees, and join the ranks of the vast lawless crowd of Darker London. Whether successful or not, he will have to face enormous difficulties, endure many privations, and be brought face to face with temptation on every side. But in spite of all these considerations, the mighty magnet exerts its mysterious fascination, and the number of young men and women who come to London every year is steadily on the increase.

Not only is the subject deserving of consideration, by reason of its absorbing interest and importance, but also because so little is known in this connection. To the general public absolutely nothing is known of the life of young men and young women who make up Tempted London. The young people themselves are very isolated; they are also very reticent. As a rule, they do not know much of one another. Indeed, in many, if not in all, houses it is etiquette that one employé should not know the salary of another. Between the religious and the irreligious, the virtuous and the "fast," there is a great gulf fixed, and the one class can tell very little of the real life of the other. Ministers and associations have only a very limited hold of these young men, and also a very limited knowledge. Those who come up decided Christians generally connect themselves at once with churches, and in many cases with Young Men's Christian Associations; but the vast majority do neither. To achieve any permanent good there must be in large business establishments a corporate spiritual life. As in a family, religion has little chance of flourishing unless

one of the family be religious, although next door there may be a most energetic church or chapel, so when there is no high moral life inside a warehouse it is useless to expect much good from outside agencies. The secretary of one of the largest Christian Associations has said that "unless a young man coming to London joins us at once, he is not likely to do so until he has passed through the bitterness of having to eat the fruit of his own wrong-doing ; and until he has for himself discovered the hollowness and unsatisfactory nature of that way of living, he will be impervious to better teaching." It is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain full information from ministers or other Christian workers, for the simple reason that they do not possess it ; nor is it easy to get information from the young men themselves. Largely isolated from society and thrown upon themselves, they shrink from confiding to strangers ; they have no father-confessors. It does not appear that any one has yet thought of establishing a censorship in any large house. There does not seem to be a single instance where any one is found to supervise the moral life of the establishment, to act as guide, philosopher, and friend to the youth of the house. There is no one to whom a lad wrestling with the first throes of temptation can go for counsel or help, no one to whom a young man in trouble, doubt, or difficulty can make a clean breast of it, and obtain guidance and comfort. Boys and young men alike, so long as they keep out of scrapes, can do as they please, go where they please, and will be asked no questions. The competition in business, and the knowledge that if a man loses

his position there are hundreds ready to grasp at it at once, are sufficient to ensure outward decorum and observance of rule in most houses, and there is really little or no trouble in maintaining the necessary discipline. The large houses in which young men reside practically serve them as clubs. A young man has his reading-room, smoking-room, and other conveniences at his own place of business. He has his cricket, rowing, or football club there too, and therefore does not go outside for relaxation or companionship. Thus he necessarily keeps much to himself. To add to these difficulties, the subject has never before been taken in hand in a serious manner. Attempts have indeed been made, but owing to the difficulty of the task, they have been abandoned. There are no statistics of any kind upon which reliance can be placed.

In the present work, therefore, the information has been collected by commissioners conversant with city life, who have thoroughly investigated the subject; and it is hoped that the mass of facts in the following pages will be found as useful as they are certainly accurate.

The plan that has been adopted is to follow the career of a hypothetical young man who comes to London for the first time; to describe his surroundings, his lodgings, his business life; to explain his ways, his prospects; in a word, to depict as far as possible his life in London. Then follows in strict sequence a consideration of his temptations, ranging under these formal heads—Drink, Betting and Gambling, and Impurity. Of course there are other temptations than these, the minor temptations to

which all are alike exposed ; but our subject deals rather with the peculiar temptations of young men in the position indicated. Commencing with the evil of drink, which lies at the foundation of almost every crime, we shall pass on to the fruitful theme of betting and gambling. The enormous proportions to which this evil has grown are now beginning to be realized by the public ; but as yet it may be said that the churches and the instructors of youth are entirely ignorant of its real nature and the way in which it gradually creeps on, of the extent to which it fills the life of those who engage in it, and of the results to which it leads. Perhaps there are not a hundred pulpits in the land from which has been denounced the canker which threatens to eat out the very heart of the nation, and which affects all classes, from the highest to the lowest. As these papers will be strictly free from everything prurient and indecent, it is obvious that the evil of impurity must be touched upon in a guarded manner. At the same time, there are many facts which ought to be known to all, young as well as old, and which it will be necessary to state. We shall refer particularly to the whole subject of "pleasure"—the real nature of theatres, music-halls, dancing-saloons, and the rest. In various ways the Christian Church has been lately roused to the importance of this subject ; but it is not too much to say that no full and reliable materials for judgment and warning exist.

There is no train from the provinces that enters London but shoots a number of young men into the metropolis. Day by day, week by week, and month

by month the stream flows on, filling ever and refilling the great tide of the unemployed. Quite recently a London lawyer advertised for a clerk at a salary of £70 a year. He got some thirteen hundred answers, of which over a thousand came from the country. The number of young men employed in and about the city was estimated by the late Samuel Morley as amounting to some two hundred and fifty thousand. Good judges now estimate it as about three hundred thousand. According to the best information in the city of London, there are, annually, twelve thousand young men who fall. Often the fall is but a momentary aberration, but it is sufficient to exclude from employment, and oftentimes from recovery.

The change from a small country town to London is enormous; it is like going out of the calm twilight into a blinding blaze of gas. A young man, though now approaching his twentieth year, has lived hitherto an uneventful life. Perhaps up to the day when he departs for the metropolis he has not been a fortnight away from home. Home influence, the greatest of all educating powers, has kept him in check, and made a healthy-minded lad of him. His severest dissipation has been a visit to some neighbouring town to play a cricket-match, and he has grown up under the eyes of a minister, between whom and himself there is mutual regard. His weaknesses are merely weaknesses, as yet nothing more, though capable of shooting up into vices. "All wickedness," Milton says, "is weakness;" and it is as true that all weakness is potential wickedness. The young man has not reached the stage of

despising his parents, and there is a lump in his throat as he bids them "Good-bye." But youth is sanguine. He spends the first half-hour of his journey making brave promises to himself, and for the remainder of the time he looks out at the window.

He has never been in London before, and among all this seething mass of humanity he does not know where to look for a familiar face. There are old school friends of his here, but we know that life begins over again when we leave school. He may meet half a dozen persons whom he knows within an hour of his arrival, or he may not meet one for a dozen years. He is full of vague anticipation at first, but the prosaic business of engaging lodgings, and the prosaic life in those lodgings, soon sobers him down.

In the city of London the price of ground is so enormous that it is impossible to have business premises sufficiently large for clerks to reside in them, and, as a matter of fact, the large majority of young men live in lodgings. Our new arrival must therefore look out some lodgings. With all his worldly possessions on the top of his four-wheeler, he rumbles through miles of thoroughfare until he reaches the apartments. They are in a street where every other window exposes a card with "Apartments," showing through layers of dirt. Even when the house is full this card is not taken down, for lodgers come and go in London as they do not elsewhere, and there is generally some destitute man or woman on the third floor without money to pay the rent. The young man tries several houses, and

finds each one duller and less home-like than the former. He can only afford to take one room, which must serve as bed and sitting-room combined. A house repeats its tenant. Know the one, and you can conjure up the other.

In these streets of London lodging-landladies are very like each other. All their lives are engaged in a conflict with Want. They may prevent his getting across the threshold, but he is always knocking at the door. This makes them in many cases mean, avaricious, grasping. In smaller towns the landlady takes a healthy interest in her lodgers. In the poorer class of lodging-houses in London it is a fact that she frequently never learns their names. Call on them. Ask for Mr. Brown, and note what follows. A slovenly "slavey," from whose life all the beauty of existence has long been driven, appears at the door with a sooty face, and a bucket of slops in her hand. The name of Brown suggests no one to her. In a shrill voice she demands of some invisible person in the back regions whether there is a Brown in the house. "Try the second floor back," suggests another harsh voice. Yet Brown has been there for months.

Herein, too, is exemplified the "comforts" of lodgings. At three houses where inquiries were made, in the Islington district, the young men were expected to absent themselves on Sundays, a reasonable time being allowed for dinner if he desired to share the meal with the family. The same price (*1s. 6d.*) was charged at each, though in two of them he was to take his mid-day meal alone. In many others a very strong objection was made to his occupying the

room during the whole of the evenings of the week. One landlady suggested that he "ought to go to a public-house if he wanted to pass his time away, like other young people." The landladies prefer their lodgers to spend their evenings out of doors, where they require no attention, and do what damage is done to other people's furniture. Many little tiresome annoyances are repeated for this object, and generally end in forcing young men into public-houses, although they had no previous inclination.

Here is a true sketch of one lodging-house. Flats are unknown in the part of the world where it stands, and it is a large house of four floors. On the ground floor is the dining-room, with a bedroom opening off it. A music-master has these rooms, and his cracked piano jingles all day. On the first floor is the drawing-room, which is occupied by two ladies, occupation at present unknown. The stair to the first floor is carpeted, and comparatively well lit. On the next stair—in the ascent of which it is well to grip the banisters—there is a piece of ragged carpet here and there. Beyond that all is plain wood, which, however, is hidden from you unless you carry a candle. At the top of this stair the new lodger has his room. It looks out on chimney-tops, which is not a disadvantage in this street, where for a view you have to choose between the dingy houses opposite and a lumpy plain of roofs. The room is of fair size, with a bed on one side, and a dilapidated couch on the other. The occupant will have to use the bed as a sofa, for the couch gives way if it leaves the wall. There is a washstand, flanked by two chairs; an aged easy-chair, which rocks uncomfort-

ably, owing to a castor being gone ; and two decaying tables. Nelson is dying at Trafalgar, on the wall, in a flashy frame. The ceiling is very low, as in nearly all London houses when you come higher than the second floor. There is no gas. The higher class of young city men may be found in the Camberwell and Brixton neighbourhoods. In a street turning off the Clapham Road there are four houses taken by a speculative apartment-letter. Ladies take a house in these neighbourhoods, and so contrive matters that they not only pay the rent of the whole house out of the apartments let, but keep themselves and their families in a moderate state of respectability besides. The whole board, lodging, and laundry work is undertaken at a fixed charge, with the distinction of a late dinner in the better houses. The cost of the whole is from 18s. to 30s. a week, with a few extras which have to be arranged for afterwards. But although these lodgings are cleaner and more comfortable, the position of a young man in them, with the necessity of keeping up a corresponding appearance, is worse than in a by-street elsewhere. He is also much more exposed to temptation. In that very neighbourhood there are houses to which we shall call attention later, where, with the most devilish ingenuity, provision is made for the ruining of young men and young women under the most respectable external appearances. The keepers of these places have clients in many business houses, and others paid to tempt and introduce, at their convenience, young men engaged in the city.

Happily, there are exceptions to this gloomy

picture. Apartments are certainly to be had in London where Christian benevolence induces to treatment marked by kindness and real consideration. In particular, the Church of England Young Men's Society, at the Leopold Rooms, 3, St. Bride Street, provides a first-class residential club for young men. The annual subscription is 10s. 6*d.*, and the advantage of this and other institutions of a similar character cannot be over-estimated. In addition to reading-rooms, concert-rooms, and a gymnasium, there is a floor divided into a number of bedrooms—small, indeed, but each a distinct room and sufficiently large. Each is furnished with an iron bedstead, a chest of drawers, washstand, and chair, while the occupant is allowed to adorn his room according to his own tastes. There is a bath-room close at hand, where cold baths may be enjoyed gratis, though a charge is made for hot baths. The weekly rent of each room is 7*s.*, and this includes the washing of the linen. For about a guinea a week a young man may board and lodge himself in the Leopold Rooms as comfortably as any sensible and healthily organized youth need desire. But the drawback is that the rooms are too few, and the greater number of the applicants are of necessity denied admittance. But there is here on a small scale what might be effected on a larger scale all over London. We must not forget to add that lists of recommended apartments are kept by the Young Men's Christian Associations, and that there is little doubt that care is exercised in the selection of such houses. The number, however, is small. Most young men, too, object to the kind of restraint they

imagine is involved in such an arrangement, and the system of boarding with families is to the English mind objectionable. Young men prefer their own lodgings and a latch-key, even though the material comfort of this system be less than in the boarding-houses.

The onset of temptation is often immediate, as will hereafter be seen. The moment the youth arrives in London chance nudges him with its elbow, and many go down at the very first, yielding to sins which avenge themselves with fatal precision. But we have said enough to indicate two at least of the great dangers of London. The first is the loneliness and monotony of life, which drives young men out of doors to seek excitement; the next is the want of home restraints and the force of environment. Where a man is unknown, and where all his life he can only be known to a few, the restraints which, even in large provincial cities, have very great strength altogether vanish away.

Even when temptation does not come immediately, there is a thrilling sense in the mind of the youth that it is in the air if he but choose to utilize it. London, to one who does not look for vice, is outwardly one of the quietest and most decent places in the world, and many of the institutions which, even a few years ago, were the notorious resorts of the vicious seem to have vanished. All the same, they exist. No one has seized this aspect of London with such force as Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson. Nothing could be less romantic than a square in Bloomsbury or a by-street leading off the Strand yet this plain, dingy house, dark below and lighted

above, is the most notorious gambling-hell in London—a place the full history of which it would be impossible for any journal to print. That quiet house in yonder sober square, which looks like the residence of peaceful respectability, is inhabited by a knot of people whose orgies may match anything to be witnessed in the worst dens of Paris. This other quiet-looking residence is a great factory for the secret manufacture of impure literature. It takes some trouble to get the pass-keys, but once the inner region is entered its secrets are not hard to find.

Two remarks may be added by way of reassurance. In the first place, it is certain that hosts of young men pass through this ordeal triumphantly, not only resisting the evil, but hardly knowing of its existence. In the very midst of the furnace of temptation there are many as unhurt as the three children in the flames.

Next, everything depends upon the training and principles the young man brings up with him. It was remarked recently, by one with a very large experience of London life, that it is a great mistake to suppose that young men, as a rule, come up innocent from hamlets and country towns to be led away by the vices and temptations of London. They have been vicious before they come there, and the opinion of this gentleman is that, as a rule, London-born young men are at least as free from evil as those who come up from the country to London. If parents could bring up their sons total abstainers, and if the young men vigorously adhered to the pledge, there would be, comparatively speaking, little danger. But the true preservative is.

conversion to God. Young men with real religion in their hearts will not go wrong. In the course of these investigations how often we have recalled the good old hymn—

“ 'Twill save us from a thousand snares  
To mind religion young! ”

## CHAPTER II.

### *LIFE IN BUSINESS HOUSES.*

**I**N nine cases out of ten a youth comes to London from the country, either to thoroughly learn some business, in order that he may then return to the provinces and devote his acquirements to the management of his father's shop, or to enter upon a career of his own, with the idea of thus slowly working his way to the fore in London. The former is by far the more happily situated, seeing that he is sure of succession to a business, and his only quest is experience. But whatever the object of the young man, his first place is in the "entering-room," probably on the basement of the premises, where he prepares the invoices of the daily consignments of goods sent out. His hours are long and very irregular. In busy seasons he may be kept for several nights in succession until midnight. No especial talent is expected of him. He must display shrewdness and sharpness, that is all.

The first move is into a "department." All the departments, however widely they may differ from one another as to the hands employed and the emoluments to be earned, are constituted alike. The head is "the buyer," whose duty it is periodically to visit the manufactories and purchase all new goods,

and who is directly responsible to the firm for the success of his branch of the business.

The second in command is styled the *first man*. He does not initiate movements, but he follows up the buyer's policy. If he can lay no claim to daring or originality, he must be pushing and energetic. After him come the rank and file, as a rule moving up by seniority to the more coveted and lucrative positions. Once a year each assistant appears before the firm. His record is called over. He is advanced or retained in his position, according to circumstances, and his salary is settled for the next twelve months. But as the result of visits to most of the leading houses in the city, it is clear that a young man who has served a five years' apprenticeship in some retail house may expect to begin life on a salary of £25 a year, rising £10 annually, until he is in receipt of £120. After that he cannot reckon upon any regular or definite scale of annual increment. His future will depend upon his own good fortune. But should he be fortunate enough to rise to the position of first man or buyer, he may expect to receive from £300 up to £1,000 a year and beyond it, according to the standing of the house to which he belongs and to the value of the department in which he serves. But salaries of £1,000 a year are very few and far between. He may, however, elect to go "on the road," or become an "ambassador of commerce;" in other words, a "commercial." In this capacity he will probably receive as a start £150 a year, and £1 1s. a day for expenses. His district will be assigned him, and in that given area he has to push the trade to the utmost of his power. His

firm will expect a definite amount of business at his hands ; and should he fall short of it, he will be cold-shouldered. Should, however, he exceed this standard, he will have a commission upon the excess. There are cases in which a traveller may net £1,000 a year over and above his stipend in the shape of commission, but they are not frequent. It follows, then, that if all goes well, if a lad behaves himself, learns his business, manifests ordinary capacity, and makes no stupid blunders, he may hope, upon reaching middle age, to be in receipt of £300 a year, perhaps even more. Such is the prospect the wholesale drapery trade, for instance, holds out to him.

There is some difference of opinion as to whether salaries are rising or falling ; but it is generally agreed that there has been a distinct declension in business prospects, even though the actual salaries may remain little altered. For example, age does not tell as it used to do ; indeed, it not infrequently goes to the wall ; for employers are making the young men do what used to be the peculiar province of the old, and, of course, are not giving them the same salaries as the old. They are expected to do, and to do better, for £300 or £400 a year, what their elders received £700 to £1,000 for doing. To add to this disadvantage, there is the German competition, which has pushed its way into most commercial fields now, saving, perhaps, the drapery trade.

But to return to the young man's novitiate. He is expected to "live in"—in other words, to make his home on the premises of the firm. He will breakfast, dine, have tea, and sup at the warehouse

or shop, and probably sleep on some adjacent premises, where his leisure time must be spent. Of course the domestic accommodation varies greatly, but in the best firms nowadays it is, on the whole, very fair indeed. About 7.30 a.m. every one is expected to have left the dormitory and to be at the warehouse. In some houses the junior hands will have to use the broom and sweep out the floor ; in almost all they will be expected to dust the goods. This work done, the young man changes his clothes, generally arranges his toilet, and goes to breakfast. Tea, coffee, and bread and butter are the invariable fare. Such luxuries as eggs, bacon, marmalade, etc., must be provided out of the individual's private purse.

From 8 or 8.30 to 12 he follows the usual routine of warehouse life. Few customers have to be served before 11 o'clock, but there are cases to be unpacked, windows to be dressed, goods to be displayed, bales of stuff to be measured, and innumerable duties to be accomplished before the world comes to buy. At 12 o'clock the first party goes to dinner : in most city houses it goes up to the third, or fourth, or fifth floor ; in suburban neighbourhoods it often goes down to the dismal gas-lit cellar or basement. The officer responsible for the catering of the establishment is the steward, generally one of the hands, who in some way or another has developed a capacity for domestic economy, and upon whose shoulders lies the responsibility of supplying according to strict regulation several hundreds of men. Beer—of a very indifferent quality—is put on the table in jugs, for all who choose to drink. It is

of the kind known in town as porter, and especially fancied by the charwomen of the metropolis. In some houses what may be termed the "aristocracy" of the establishment—that is, the heads and the principal buyers—dine by themselves, and are provided with their own table and their own *menu*; but in others all share alike, the 'prentice boy being as well catered for as the "head boss." After dinner most of the buying and selling is done, and from 12 to 5 are the busiest hours of the day. A quarter of an hour is allowed for tea, after which the day's work is wound up. The place is closed to the public at 6, and, except in busy times, most of the employés are at liberty to leave about 7, and do what they like with the remaining hours until 11.

Usually a housekeeper or "locker-up" presides over the dormitory, and hers is almost the only feminine influence vouchsafed to the youth of the establishment within its walls. She attends to the sick, reigns supreme over the bedrooms, and is at the call of any who have complaints or wants to make known. She is generally a lady, not only by courtesy, but by birth and behaviour, and often exerts a very wholesome, softening, and refining influence over those who come in contact with her. A large and well-appointed reading-room, supplied with most of the leading daily papers, and possessing a library of general literature, is to be found in most houses, as well as a smoking-room. Some have a billiard-room also. There is often a spare room used for religious or club meetings, where the business of the rowing, swimming, football, or cricket clubs is transacted, where prayer-meetings are held,

and other agencies find their temporary home. The bedrooms, which are after all the most important, are in many instances the most cheerless rooms in the establishment. It is true they are generally scrupulously clean, but they are monotonously plain. The number of beds in each room varies from three to fifteen ; in some houses each bedroom is distinct. The furniture is sound and good. Spring mattresses are occasionally used. Chests of drawers, apportioned out to each occupant, and small cupboards, or rather lockers, form the chief articles in addition to the beds, lavatories being often provided on each floor in lieu of the washhand-stand of private houses. There is little or no attempt at ornamentation. In some instances it is absolutely forbidden. After business hours the young man is thrown on his own resources. Life in the house is life in barracks, and lacks excitement, even interest. He is driven, therefore, to seek relief from its tedium outside ; and it is thus that he meets his danger.

Of course, in communities such as those we are speaking of, there must be order and regularity, and to ensure these there must be set rules. Some idea of the latter may be gained from the ensuing copy :—

“ 1. No boots, clothes, or boxes are to be left about in the bedrooms.

“ 2. No matches are allowed in any part of the house.

“ 3. No pictures are to be placed upon the walls of the bedrooms, nor is any of the furniture to be moved from the position it now occupies.

“ 4. Reading in bed is strictly prohibited.

“ 5. Smoking is permitted only in the smoking-room.

"6. All must have left the dormitory by 7.40 a.m. on weekdays, and by 8.20 a.m. on Sundays. On the latter day they must not return until 9.30 p.m.

"7. The outer doors will be locked each evening at 11 p.m., and all lights must be put out by 11.30. On the first and third Wednesday of each month young men may remain out until 12, on leaving their names with the locker-up. This does not apply to youths under sixteen years of age, who must be in by 10 p.m. each evening, unless they have obtained express permission to be out later.

"8. Any man not complying with the above rules will be reported to the firm.

"9. All cases of sickness must be reported to the house-keeper immediately."

We have given a brief outline of the daily round in a young clerk's life. The question now naturally arises, What moral forces play upon him, either from those in authority over him, or from his companions and coequals, or either from within or from without? In some instances there are active agencies put in motion by the head of the house. He takes an interest, not merely in the moral, but in the spiritual condition of his employés, and does all in his power, according to his light, to make them religious men.

In some cases the heads of the firm are known to be worldly, irreligious, or even immoral men, and the vicious influence surrounding them infects their dependents. Others, again, admit no principle into their relation about them but that of pure business. Their position towards their men is that of an employer seeking the best service at the lowest price. They are shrewd enough to value good services at a good price, and they are liberal in their

pay to those who are necessary to them, and are just to all ; but philanthropy, benevolence, and all similar sentiments find no place in their consideration. In one great house it used to be the custom to pension off all old servants who got beyond their work. Under younger management it is now the rule to give a gratuity in the place of granting a pension, and it is expected soon to become a mere matter of dismissal for all whose age and infirmity prevent them being of further service.

We add a few extracts from the statements lying before us—statements which relate to almost every house in the city or its neighbourhood :—

“ Mr. V——, an assistant in a large wholesale drapery house in the city, says he has been there several years. There are between 800 and 900 dining on the premises every day. The firm encourages all religious movements, and engages the services of a clergyman as chaplain, who reads prayers every day immediately after breakfast. Attendance is voluntary, and the average number present is small. The dormitories and the recreation-rooms—such as the billiard, smoking, and reading-rooms—are apart from the business premises. The employés are required to be in at 11 p.m., except on one night in the week, when the doors are locked at 12. There is no one whose duty it is to exercise any oversight of the morals or behaviour of young men after hours. The quality of the food is fair, and the quantity is not stinted ; but it is frequently spoiled in the cooking and serving, and is grievously monotonous, meat and potatoes, without pastry, puddings, or fruit, being the mid-day meal, and bread and butter being the fare for breakfast and tea. Supper consists of bread and cheese and ale.”

“Mr. S——, who has for eight years been in a large West End retail drapery firm, where over 500 men and women reside on the premises, at salaries from £25 upwards, says that almost all except the buyers sleep on the premises. No one is allowed to sleep out until he has been four years in the house. After that he may go out on Saturdays for the night, but on no other night, not even if his home is within walking distance. The hours are from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. on all days except Saturdays, when the majority get away between 2 and 3 p.m. Doors are locked at 11 p.m., except one night in the week. There is a very good library. The bedrooms accommodate from seven to eight each. In time a senior can have a bedroom to himself. Sunday is spent variously. Many go out for the day. About forty are Sunday-school teachers, and a fair number attend church or chapel once in the day, but very few go twice. No religious services are provided by the firm, although they encourage religious meetings amongst the inmates, and little or no persecution need be feared by a religiously disposed lad. No restraint is put upon their behaviour out of doors. Sporting papers are in great request, and although no really vicious literature is in circulation, solid reading is the exception.”

“Mr. F——, of the house of ——, drapers, Shoreditch, describes another class of business. He had been there nine years. There were twenty in all, most of whom slept on the premises, three being young women. If not both the partners, one of them was always on the premises. Salaries ran from £12 upwards; a man of twenty-five would be doing very well if he had £25 a year and his ‘keep.’ There was no restraint upon them after business hours, but there were no attractions to keep them indoors. They had a cricket-club, but the cricket-ground was a considerable distance away. An apprentice had to take his turn ‘on the door’—to mind the door, take in letters, admit incomers, and sleep in the shop. Apprentices were

expected to be in at 10 p.m. In other large firms of a similar character he knew that attendance at prayers was enforced, but he believed this had a worse effect than when there were no prayers."

"Mr. W—, in the employ of a firm of upholsterers, said their business was much freer than the drapery. In fact, he looked upon 'drapery hands' as so many slaves. There were about 900 hands in their business, exclusive of porters and factory workers. A young man might rise to a fair position after six or seven years' work. He would then be able to marry, and no obstacle would be thrown in the way of his doing so. The employers were not professedly religious, nor did they encourage religion, but they were kind, just, more fair in dealing with their employés than many who professed religion. A voluntary Bible-class was, on the whole, well attended. He had noticed a great improvement in the moral tone of the great houses during the last ten years. He attributed it to voluntary effort, especially such as that of the Y.M.C.A. The food was good, but too little varied. Doors were locked at 11 p.m., and as in the other cases, a late night was allowed. He could not see how any restraint could be placed upon their young hands. In fact, he believed that any attempt to coerce on the part of the authorities would issue in an increase of viciousness. Still, a young man with good principles would find the drawbacks inconsiderable. There was much to help him, and little directly to hinder him beyond the liberty such a vast city conferred. The lads of the Stockwell Orphanage were conspicuous for their good principles and satisfactory lives, as well as for their aptitude for business."

Here is, however, a less favourable instance. Speaking of a large drapery house, an informant, who is one of the employés, says—

"It is a busy place, and the assistants have to work very

hard. No one is allowed to idle. Each assistant has to take complete charge of his own stock. He may not buy it, but if he does not sell the socks, or calicoes, or dress materials, whichever it may be, he is discharged, although the fault may lie with the buyer. If an assistant allows a customer to go out unserved for any number of times he is discharged, though a great many ladies come in with no intention of buying, but merely to spend an hour or two. We have to undertake, when we are engaged, to put up with instant dismissal, without explanation, at the will of the proprietors, but we have to give a whole month's notice if we wish to leave. The shopwalker in my department is a sharp-tempered man. He takes a broad view of his importance in the place, and never forgets any shortcomings in the recognition of that importance. He it is who recommends us for increase of salary or for discharge, so we have to be on as good terms as possible with him. Fines are inflicted for those mistakes which most ordinarily occur, and in spite of all one's care and exertion, the small salary is considerably reduced at the end of the week. The advertised hour for closing is 7 o'clock, but when the last customer has left and the doors are closed the hardest work of the day begins. We commence rearranging all the rolls of stuff, measuring the lengths, putting tickets on again, and getting things straight for the following day; and that, even in quiet times, will take a couple of hours."

The life of porters is very hard. One writes to us that he commences work at 7 o'clock all the year round, working for four days a week till 11 o'clock. This prevents any attendance at classes, and is prohibitive of energy and time being given to self-improvement.

And now we regret to say that though life in business houses where young men are lodged together

is made by many conscientious heads of houses as pleasant and as pure as they can, the universal testimony which has reached us from the best houses, as well as from the worst, is that it is distinctly less favourable to morality than life in lodgings ; in fact, many large houses are truly described as "hot-beds of hell." From the letters that have been sent to us we make a few quotations.

"One whose lips have sometimes touched the rim of the cup, and who has found the drops bitter to the belly," writes—

"I am four-and-twenty years of age, and for the past three and a half years have been an accountant in a public institution. For three years I was in one of the big fashionable houses. I was a mere youngster, almost fresh from home, when I went to this place. There was a private house in the neighbourhood entirely devoted to male employés' bedrooms and sitting-room. I used to sleep in a large room with eight beds in it. I remember it was called 'the barracks.' The fellows in this room were somewhat older than I was. It was of no use going to bed before closing time (11 p.m.). Many a time did I attempt it ; but the drunken yells of the incomers to the room, when lights were turned out below, was a sufficient reason for not getting to sleep before that hour, or indeed long after, as will appear. The language of these fellows was filthy beyond description. One might have wished they would swear more, so that they might speak their obscenity less. 'Nap' would be played by candlelight for a few hours. I have known a knot of fellows to play 'Nap' from the beginning of a wet Saturday afternoon to Sunday evening, one of the number going out to buy victuals and drink. I remember the passionate home-sick tears I used to shed at the thought of all this, and how I wrote to my father pouring out my wretchedness,

but not giving a hint of the actual experiences I was undergoing. Fortunately, I often went home from Saturday to Monday morning. I can recall the form and feature of this and that one coming straight to the place from home as apprentices, falling naturally in a week or two into the habits of loose conversation, drinking in bars, smoking, theatre-going. Of course, worst of all, sooner or later most of them were tempted into still deeper evil. After a time I ingratiated myself with the housekeeper, and obtained a separate room, opening into a larger one, where there was my dear friend H—, before whom no man dared say a vile thing, a man of six feet two inches, who owed his conversion to the Salvation Army during my knowledge of him. Of course, as to the absolute effect of these surroundings I can only speak of myself: solemnly I say it—I must rue them to my last day.”

The following is from a gentleman who is now an influential Baptist minister in the neighbourhood of the metropolis :—

“When I left school I went to live in a large house of business. We closed about 9, and after a hurried supper, were all turned out to promenade the streets until 11, or to spend the time in a music-hall, dancing academy, or theatre. The men always looked upon a young man fresh from the country who made any profession of morality as a milksop, and they would set to work persistently, night after night, to drag him down to their own level, and they always succeeded. The first step was, ‘Get him a little on’—that meant, of course, get him to the public-house. Dress, of course, is a great snare with the men, as with the women. Our young fellows were well paid—far higher than most; but still I have known them to lavish so much at the beginning of the quarter on clothes and gaities as to be

compelled to sell all except the very clothes they wore before the quarter was ended."

The following is another striking case of the evils of bad companionships :—

"I have now been five years in London, and well do I remember my first impressions. I had had one situation, and then came into a London warehouse. My father and mother were Christians—good examples to me—but they never warned me of the temptations I should be subjected to. Probably parents think their example sufficient. It is a good thing, example, but not enough. A few words from them would have put me on my guard. I was not then a Christian. The house I went to, I suppose, is like many more in town—contained plenty of men who laughed at virtue and extolled vice. Such were my associates. For a time I stood my ground, but gradually got accustomed to many objectionable things, did not notice them, and then (although I detested swearing) I did not mind hearing or making a joke about vice. I then met an old schoolmate who was not particularly moral, and we attended several restaurants together. Luckily he gave me the cold shoulder subsequently, and I was thus, perhaps, prevented from going farther into dissipation. The chance, as some might call it, was, I am sure, the restraining grace of God in answer to a praying mother. As I look back I can now see plainly how it was I was not allowed to go my own way; the prayers of a believing mother were answered, and I was converted to Christ a month after her death. At the wish of my parents, I joined as an associate at Exeter Hall, but I was very quiet and retiring, and as no one spoke to me—I only used the reading-room—I soon left it. I have given some of Henry Varley's lectures to men to young fellows, and they have told me if they had only known what they

had been doing they would have avoided the evil. Ignorance must answer for so much unhappiness."

These letters will serve to illustrate what we have stated. Perhaps the most fertile sources of temptation, in addition to the freedom from home restraint and the want of a healthy public opinion, are the monotony of the life young people have to lead and the influence of bad companions. Along with these may be named the impossibility of marriage. We need not wonder that the forces of temptation attacking a citadel so weakened are to so lamentable an extent victorious. Indeed, as has been said, religious influence is in the vast majority of cases the only hope. This is felt by other than religious men. A young man was taken to the Hall of Science by a sceptical associate, and was so impressed by the freethought doctrines he listened to that at the close of the meeting he got up and said, "I renounce my father's faith; I renounce my mother's Bible." "Not so fast, young man; not quite so fast," interrupted one of the speakers.

## CHAPTER III.

### *THE LIFE OF CITY CLERKS.*

CITY clerks may be divided into several distinct classes, the principal of which are stockbrokers' clerks, bank clerks, general office clerks, and lawyers' clerks. The first of these may be dubbed the aristocracy of clerkship, for the young men who comprise it are the most fortunate of their kind, and lead a life far removed from the dull, quill-driving existence of the others. To get into a stockbroker's office is a matter of extreme difficulty—with which, however, the advantages are commensurate—and is entirely the result of influence. The salaries are good: a youth of eighteen commences with from £80 to £100 a year, and receives an annual rise of £20, and a present of from £10 to £15 at Christmas. The only drawback is that the salary is paid quarterly, which is apt to keep the youth very short of money for a time, and then overwhelm him with a sudden access of wealth. Twenty-five sovereigns is a demoralising sum of money to the boy who has not been accustomed to more than five shillings a week pocket-money, and it is small wonder if he is at first inclined to think that its possession warrants him in launching into petty

extravagances which make difficulties for him before the next three months expire. The duties of stock-broking clerks are varied and interesting, and by no means confined to the desk. The hours of business are from 10 in the morning to about 5 in the afternoon, and quite half of the seven hours are spent in the neighbourhood of the Stock Exchange itself, or in the multifarious outdoor transfer and registration duties which are a necessary result of the constant buying and selling of stock. Consistently enough with their "aristocracy," brokers' clerks dress themselves very much better than other clerks, and can always be distinguished by their scrupulously shiny hats, their clean linen and well-cut clothes. Fastidiousness in dress has its disadvantages, but it is oddly enough something of a safeguard in many cases. The youth who comes up to town in a top-hat and well-polished boots, carrying gloves and umbrella, and displaying a watch-chain, is aware that he has a character to keep up, and tries to do it. He will not be seen smoking a pipe nor entering a public-house, and his walk suggests more dignity than that of the ordinary clerks. Stockbrokers' clerks are implicitly trusted, and walk about the streets with thousands of pounds' worth of bonds under their arms on the Stock Exchange settling days. The principal temptation that they are open to is the growth of a spirit of speculation, born of constant intercourse with the rises and falls in the prices of bonds. There are upwards of three thousand members of the Stock Exchange, and it has been computed that all the investment business that is done there would only keep about two hundred

employed. The balance, then, derive their living from speculation.\*

Bank clerks are a much-envied class, but they are envied principally by those who know nothing about them. A boy's fortune is supposed to be made if he gets into a bank; but experience teaches that, beyond the fact of its being, under ordinary circumstances, a permanency for him, it possesses little advantage. Considering the large sums of money that are constantly entrusted to the keeping of junior clerks, as well as the amounts that are left constantly in the custody of cashiers and others, the flagrant under-payment that is the rule in several well-known banks cannot be too severely censured. Youths, to get into a bank, must be well-educated and have powerful friends; but having got into the bank, it is by no means a novel experience to discover that they might have done better outside. One of the most widely known banks, whose head office is in Lombard Street, and whose branches are all over the country, starts its clerks—who must not

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\* German competition has made itself more felt upon the Stock Exchange than, perhaps, in any other city profession. Previously to 1881 the number of members was fourteen hundred; but in that year it was doubled, and amongst the new batch were a great number of naturalized Germans. It is a rule on the Stock Exchange that no foreigner who is not naturalized can be admitted, and yet quite a sixth part of the members are foreigners. These Germans at once commenced showing their gratitude by cutting down commissions. The usual broker's commission is  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the amount of stock bought or sold. The Germans by rapid gradations reduced this to  $\frac{1}{3}$  per cent., half of which they were willing to give to any one who should introduce business to them. A thirty-second is  $7\frac{1}{2}d.$  on a hundred pounds, and by giving half of it away to the introducer of the business the broker nets  $3\frac{1}{2}d.$  for himself. It is needless to say that the Germans are more considered than loved on the Stock Exchange.

be less than seventeen years old—at a uniform salary of £50 per annum. Out of this they have to pay £2 10s. a year to an insurance society, which then becomes answerable to the bank for their possible defalcations up to £1,000. The salary increases at from £5 to £10 a year, according to the arbitrary decrees of the chief clerk. One of the paying cashiers, who has been thirteen years in the bank's employment, receives a salary of £155 a year. As he is married, this is obviously not enough, and yet he is in permanent charge of an amount averaging daily from £500 to £600. Christmas presents are not allowed in banks, and the clerk never receives any of these extra *douceurs* that sweeten the lot of young men in other businesses. There is another bank which follows closely on the business lines marked out by the one just described, and also upon the same plan of salary; but here clerks are admitted from the age of fifteen upwards, and the commencing salary is £20 a year. This advances at the rate of from £5 to £10, nominally according to merit, but more often to favouritism. This bank has of course to earn as large a dividend as it can for its shareholders, but what it saves in salaries it loses by the dishonesty of its clerks. Young men are placed in charge of suburban branches with salaries of from £75 to £90 a year. The few shillings a week that these salaries represent are of course swallowed up in supplying the necessaries of life, and as the average sum in the keeping of these branches is £2,000, it may surprise no one to hear that within one year this bank had to prosecute five of its employés for embezzlement. The chief clerk (who

is a sort of usher to look after the behaviour of all the others) was, until recently, a young man of about twenty-seven, of limited education and proportionate narrow-mindedness. The annual increases depended upon his recommendations, and it was fully recognized that those who laid themselves out to please him stood the best chance of preferment. He was a great believer in obtaining information, and encouraged tale-bearing to an annoying extent. If he took a dislike to a clerk he could wreak his vengeance on him by means of the "holiday list." Every bank clerk is obliged to take a fortnight's holiday, and he is allowed to choose his time according to seniority. The time during which all holidays had to be taken extended from March to November inclusive, and by merely omitting to hand to a clerk his proper turn he could seriously limit his choice of a pleasant time of the year. One clerk whom he disliked remained fixed at a salary of £65 for three years, although he had a widowed mother and two or three young brothers and sisters who were mainly dependent on his earnings.

Foreign competition is not felt by bank clerks, as only English young men are admitted. Some banks, we must inform our readers, treat their employés very well indeed, especially the London and Westminster Bank, the Bank of England, and several private banks. But these are closed against all but favoured applicants. Rothschild's Bank is the *ne plus ultra* for bank clerks. The lowest salary paid there is stated to be £200 a year, bonuses are frequent and large, and a month's holiday is given to every officer. Several of the clerks here are

drawn from stockbrokers' offices. This may be called an oasis in the desert of clerk life.

General office clerks are, however, far worse off than any of the others, excepting solicitors' clerks. In this class must be included that vast army of penmen who can do little more than read and write, who come straight from the Board School or the National School to the desk, at ages varying from thirteen to fifteen, and remain at it from 8.30 in the morning until 7 o'clock at night for the rest of their lives—if they are lucky. If they are unlucky they devote various periods of time to the search for similar employment. The hungry competition for employment that exists among clerks naturally reduces wages to the very lowest point at which body and soul can be kept together ; and thus it is we have the heartrending spectacle of some five or six hundred men, of all ages and positions, applying for a vacant clerkship the emoluments of which amount to no more than 25s. a week. Indeed, even to get such a wage as that, the applicant must nowadays possess more than the usual qualifications. He must understand shorthand ; he must correspond in French and German ; he must have a thorough acquaintance with English composition. If he can do all this he will find that he takes rank amongst the first twenty or thirty out of the five hundred competitors, and in that twenty or thirty quite five or six will be Germans.

This brings us to the great festering sore in the heart of city clerk life—to wit, German competition. It is forcing wages down year by year, and at the same time raising the standard of excellence. The

Germans possess that plodding industry and stubborn perseverance which is so necessary to the man who wishes to obtain the greatest amount of success—small though that be—which is possible in the serfdom of clerkship. But they can be energetic when necessary, and their education is much above that of English city clerks. Of course it is undeniable that the men who come over here are to an extent picked men, for the mere fact of rooting themselves up from their soil and venturing into such a city as this, the overcrowded state of which is a matter of world-wide notoriety, shows the extra force of character which bodes ill for those with whom it comes into competition. There are houses in London—not unfrequently headed by Englishmen—where an English clerk would not be admitted, and where all the employés are Germans, so that a knowledge of English is unnecessary, and a young German may commence business at once, and learn English at his pleasure. The German learns nothing that he does not consider to possess a marketable value. He is a business man. He will accept wages that an English youth would refuse, though he makes those wages the standard for all in the end. He is assiduous in endeavouring to please his employer, and will receive what an Englishman considers indignities or injustice with meekness. He is remarkably frugal, is greatly disinclined to spend, and he is not particular as to the duration of the hours of labour. He is not disposed to be sociable with his English workmate. He keeps to himself and his compatriots, and is scarcely ever seen in other than business hours ; he follows German tastes

and enjoys German amusements in German ways and in German society. This is, however, only natural, and is perhaps rather to his credit than otherwise. But we regret to say that we have abundant testimony that many German clerks are conspicuous for immorality—not reckless vice, but cold-blooded sensuality. We have an instance before us where, through influence, a Prussian youth was permitted to attend an insurance office for the purpose of learning the language and gaining an insight into the principles of the business. As he slowly picked up the language, and commenced conversing with the other clerks, he became an object of interest, and could always command an amused audience, eager to laugh at his slips of pronunciation. As soon as he could master enough English he commenced telling indecent stories. The mischief that this young man wrought amongst the other clerks may well be described as incalculable; and yet in himself he was a gentlemanly looking youth of modest demeanour, plentifully endowed with the deferential politeness so characteristic of Germans and so pleasing to those with whom they come in contact. The drinking-clubs, of which mention will be made hereafter, where young men can drink and dance from 12 o'clock at night to 6 o'clock in the morning, and young women can do the same, are mostly conducted by Germans. German employers of clerks have greatly extended the practice of engaging lady writers instead of men. Their opportunities as masters are, we fear, very greatly abused.

Female competition for clerkships is only less keen

than the German, and between the two the English youth is going to the wall. The advantages of employing women as clerks are obvious. They are neater and more exact in their work, they are less demonstrative in their behaviour, they will work for smaller wages, and they never want to go out for "drinks" or on any of the numerous errands that young men are so apt to find compulsory. But they are driving their brothers farther and farther into despair. We know of three families in which the daughters have situations as clerks and the sons are out of employment. It stands to reason that when young men and women are competing for the same posts, if the latter get them the former must lose them. Twenty-five shillings a week is a good salary for a young woman and a poor one for a young man. Lady clerks are much more widely employed every year, and the type-writing machine, which is especially adapted for the working of young women, effectually does away with any objection that might be taken on the score of handwriting.

Clerks engaged in the business of the law may be said to reach the nadir of clerical existence. Articled pupils are, of course, not included in this statement, inasmuch as they are virtually students in training for solicitors, paying large premiums for their instruction, and intending, as soon as they have passed examinations and obtained their articles, to start in business for themselves. The ordinary clerk in a solicitor's office leads a life of monotonous drudgery. His wages vary from 18*s.* to 25*s.* a week, and he has little prospect of advancement. The same work that he does at the age of twenty

he will still be expected to do when he is fifty, and experience teaches that his employer is not inclined to recognize any claim for increase of salary based solely upon the service of years. The necessary qualifications are limited to shorthand and caligraphy, for which a salary of £1 a week is usually paid. That may be regarded as the Alpha and Omega of the clerk's career. He is not expected to dress well, and tall hats are by no means as indispensable in connection with solicitors' offices as they are with most of the others. Long working hours are the rule, and it is thought nothing unusual to sit at the desk from 8.30 in the morning to 7 o'clock at night. Taking an average day's work at half an hour less than this, it will be seen that he earns about 4*d.* an hour, or less than half as much as a carpenter. In common with all other clerks, he is expected to work as late as may be needful without receiving additional payment. This is one of the instances of the injustice the penman must submit to by reason of the overcrowded state of the market. He never receives any extra pay for extra hours of labour.

Law-copying clerks lead a precarious existence. They are paid a certain sum per folio of seventy-two words—usually about 4*d.*, but competition has reduced this in many cases to as little as 1*d.* Yet even at this very fair wages could be earned if the men could get plenty of work. The long vacation is a terrible time for them, and many travel down into Kent to make a little money at hopping whilst it lasts. Here is an incident from life: There is a public-house restaurant in Chancery Lane

which is much frequented by law-writers. Two clerks, who were *habitués*, announced their intention of walking down to a well-known hopping centre, as they were quite out of funds, and could not expect to earn anything at their business until the end of the then present month. They arrived at their destination, but could not get taken on. Walking being a novel experience to them, and much too arduous for their ill-nourished constitutions, they found it quite impossible to walk back. Their slender funds were exhausted, so they wrote a letter (the postage of which they could not even pay) to the barmaid of this public-house, and she made a "whip-round" amongst the frequenters of the place, and collected enough money to enable them to return to London by train.

A word must be said upon the subject of Civil Service clerks. There are two or three open competitions every year for fifty to sixty vacancies, for which seven or eight hundred youths enter. There is no standard to be passed, and the fifty who obtain the highest number of marks receive the appointments. The young men who compete are naturally better educated than the ordinary run of clerks, but it is obvious that the vast majority of them must fail. Many, however, continue to go up for five or six examinations; as they are not eligible under the age of eighteen, it follows that the majority must seek for different employment when they are upwards of twenty. The kind of education they have been crammed with renders them of no more value in ordinary mercantile pursuits than the youth of sixteen who has attended a Board-school and spent

the previous two years as an office-boy. The Junior Civil Service is open to boys of sixteen, who enter on the understanding that their appointment is to cease when they have attained the age of nineteen. Superannuation at nineteen is not a pleasant prospect, and if they fail to obtain appointments in the regular Civil Service—for which they must compete as ordinary candidates—they go to swell the drifting crowds that are fiercely fighting among themselves for the few crumbs of employment that are annually thrown out to them. Those, however, who obtain the coveted posts receive a salary of £80 a year, which is slowly raised until it reaches the maximum of £200.

The enormous competition that exists for clerkships is but dimly comprehended until it is too late to turn in other directions: if parents would only give the subject their attention it can hardly be doubted that the first step would have been taken to remedy the evil. Defective and wrong ideas of education, with the accumulated prejudices of years, have to answer for the keen competition now existing amongst penmen. There is too much regard for the "office," and too much contempt for "trade." Every teacher in a middle-class school can tell how parents demand that their sons should be prepared for office life. "*Quick at figures*" is the one thing insisted on by all. Education is simply despised. Even now, badly as clerks are paid, there is no disposition to alter this condition of things. The only tendency is to cram more clerical qualifications into the boy's brain, that he may be able to outstrip or underbid his fellows. The causes of this struggle

for precedence are many. The rapid spread of instruction—for it cannot be called education—is the chief. The Education Acts of 1870 and subsequent years have to answer for a great deal of misery, whatever their beneficent effects may be. Every year has seen an increasing multitude of youths issuing from the lower-grade schools to compete for the office stool instead of the loom or the lathe. Men who are clerks themselves make clerks of their sons, simply because they are too poor to make them anything better, and too foolish to allow them to put aside the black tail-coat for the artisan tweed. The father who intends his son to be a clerk, if he have any wisdom or knowledge of the subject, will not waste precious time upon his education. The younger he is when he gets into an office the better it will be for him. The lower-class youth leaves school when he is thirteen or fourteen, and receives a wage of six or seven shillings a week. The better-class youth, whose father, although he may be ill able to afford it, is anxious to give him a year or two's extra schooling, enters the office at fifteen or sixteen, but receives no more to commence with than the other. It therefore often follows that the better-educated youth is the office junior of his intellectual inferior, and the painful complications that will assuredly arise from this may be easily comprehended. Indeed, there is every inducement to the parent to refrain from spending his slender store upon teaching his son the luxuries of education. The man who can read and write will receive as good a salary as the one who is educated up to his finger-nails. Let the following

advertisements, taken from the daily papers, speak for themselves in proof of this :—

“Wanted, for a London warehouse, young gentleman of good address, able to correspond in French and German. Thorough knowledge of book-keeping. Shorthand preferred. Salary £50 to commence. Apply Box 1709v., *Daily News* Inquiry Office, Fleet Street.”

“Clerk wanted. Smart, active, and quick at figures. Knowledge of German. Not afraid of work. Salary 25s. Apply by letter, stating age and full particulars, —, Fore Street, E.C.”

“Drapery. In a city warehouse, young man wanted for the prints. Knowledge of French indispensable. Abstainer. Salary 25s. State where last employed, and how long. Horncastle's, 61, Cheapside, E.C.”

“Wanted, first-class English, French, and German correspondent for large export firm in the city. Knowledge of shorthand and slight Spanish desirable. Opportunity for willingness. Commencing salary £60. Apply, personally, between 11 and 1, —, Cornhill, E.C.”

One would almost think that such impudent demands would meet with no response ; but the city man knows that these announcements result in his being inundated with applications, the writers of each of which would willingly accept two-thirds of the salaries advertised rather than lose the opportunity. Temporary relief is obtained, no doubt ; but the man who has once accepted half a loaf finds it impossible to increase his demands to a whole one. There are many young men from the country who are willing to accept any salary in order to get an introduction into a business house, whilst others are so happily placed that they can afford to work for nothing for a period, just to gain experience. There are firms

in the city, to be counted by the dozen, that take advantage of this condition of things. They obtain clerks, anxious for experience, by offering certain advantages, but paying no salary for the first six months, at the end of which time the luckless young men are discharged for some trivial reason, and others engaged on the same terms. Thus the means provided, perhaps with great difficulty, by the parents or friends are exhausted, and no advantages beyond the "experience" have been gained. A clerk who has passed through the experience of the almost hopeless search for employment informs us that he met young men applying with him for a situation who had tried for several months without success. One, who had no appearance of inability or want of energy, had been thrown out of employment in consequence of his employer's bankruptcy, and had remained without work for nine months. He then obtained a situation for four months, which he subsequently lost, and spent another three months in the attempt to re-establish himself. He had a mother and a young sister depending upon him. It is a matter of great difficulty, in consequence of the number unemployed, to change from one occupation into another; employers naturally prefer young men who are thoroughly acquainted with the details of a business. Consequently each has to wait until an opening occurs in his own particular class of work.

Many young men of good education, who, through misfortune or otherwise, have no prospect of support but by their own exertions, are frequently compelled, when their small means are exhausted in their search

for employment, to enter whatever occupation gives them the readiest offer of subsistence. This is exceedingly unfortunate for them, as they have the greatest difficulty in reaching again their proper position in life. A young man went into a well-known hatter's in Cheapside, in answer to an advertisement for a porter at 10s. per week. Though dressed in superior clothes, he pressed his application, and stated that they might find him useful, as he was well acquainted with French, Latin, and Greek. It was largely out of humanity that the manager of the firm declined his offer. At Morley's, too, one of the porters had been educated at a public school.

The greater number of clerks hail from various conditions in life ; some have risen, as they think, from the ranks of the artisan and small shopkeeping multitude, and others have fallen, in the estimation of their neighbours, from much higher positions. These compete for their posts amongst themselves upon a fairly even footing, but the increase of foreign candidates causes the bulk of them to take only a secondary place.

A correspondent writes, "There is not only a more marketable familiarity with foreign languages to be found in Continental candidates for office work, but a readier submission to discipline and a greater indifference to physical comforts than our insular habits display. A Swiss or a German will subsist upon and save out of a stipend an Englishman would scorn. What to a young Englishman is wretched parsimony to him is generous living. In his Continental home such matters as we consider necessities are unheard-of luxuries, and thus he

contrives not merely to live, but to flourish and enjoy himself, upon a salary a Briton would consider penury."

Another correspondent takes a somewhat different view of the case. He says, "The German parent, if he is able to afford it, will send his son to England, not merely to learn English, but also to study English systems of trade, the better to take advantage of them for his own ends. And though English is taught in all the schools of the lower middle classes in Germany—which of course produce a good many aspirants for employment in England—it must not be forgotten that the majority of German clerks in London come from the upper middle class, and even the aristocracy of Germany. A young man will come from Germany, staying some time in Paris on the way—say two years, the general average—and on arriving here will accept a salary of £20 per annum. He will dress well, better than his English fellow-servant; he will smoke and drink, and lodge in good apartments at Brixton or Bayswater; and he will spend an amount of money on pleasure that proves he must have considerable means at his disposal. A German, who is one of the Commissioners of the Schwarzwald, has a family of thirteen sons, nine of whom he has sent to England. They went first to commercial houses in Paris to learn French, and then came to England as volunteer clerks to learn English."

Both of these sketches, although of a somewhat opposite character, are undoubtedly true pictures of the foreign competitor. No large offices are without a proportion of German clerks, and it has been

estimated that they will be found in one out of every five offices in the city.

The German clerk is much better educated, as a rule, than his English fellow. The system of moving from place to place is adopted as far as possible by the poorer Germans, who advance by stages through France until they arrive in this country, the Arcadia of German dreams. It gives them a wider field of practical experience, with the advantage of gaining a thorough knowledge of various systems of business, which is of enormous value to them when they arrive in this country. There are societies in London, subscribed heavily to by the German manufacturers, and indirectly by the Government, which take them up in London and introduce them into business houses.

Although the majority of German clerks receive very poor wages, they are gradually securing the better posts in London offices, and a great number of them now hold positions of importance in many city houses, from which they have effectually ousted their English rivals.

Another element of competition, which is keenly resented by those who regard themselves as trained clerks, is the influx into trade of the sons and dependencies of the gentry, who feel acutely the pressure of circumstances and the changing aspects of that political life which gave them comfort and security. Great families are breaking up all over the country, and young men with brilliant educations are competing for the only class of occupation open to them. The son of a major-general is working as a clerk, at a salary of 35*s.* per week, in an office not

a mile from where we write, and rather startling evidences of the pressure of circumstances may be witnessed in many of the city offices.

The spread of School Board education has produced a large number of young men who are unacquainted with trade and who are without the smallest technical knowledge, but who are ambitious of rising above the condition of their artisan parents. They have but the merest elements of learning, and in the endeavour to escape from bench and tools they are reducing each other below the level of the dock labourer.

The question of wages is a sore one with the clerk. If the trade maxim that a thing is worth what it will fetch were carried into office work, the clerk would find himself priced very low indeed. But a man must live, and clerks' wages are now at so low a point that there is little to be feared in the way of reduction. Let a man be ever so much in need of employment, he cannot keep himself, his wife, and his children on less than £1 a week. For the clerk who has no claim upon his employer for long services or special usefulness this may be regarded as the average stipend. Beginning with 7s. a week as a boy, he may hope to attain to 25s. in a few years; but unless he displays uncommon ability or possesses extraordinary push, he may limit his ambition to £100 or £150 a year as the utmost market value he can expect to reach. Of course there are exceptions. There will always be cases of the adventurous youth who comes to London with the traditional half-crown in his pocket, and by dint of sheer industry dies a millionaire. But it is

wits, not industry, that gain the day now. A *smart* man is more in request than a plodding man. But, except in large houses of long standing, this life, unprofitable at its best, is exceedingly precarious. The hungry watchers and waiters upon opportunity are ever at hand to "push us from our stools," if by a slip or a fault that opportunity is given.

Prospects are not as bright as they were, and the future of the young city man is not altogether an encouraging one. There are a great many young men who receive what may be termed comfortable salaries of £2 or £2 5s. per week, but the number is on the decrease. Young men who six or seven years ago were receiving that salary are now being satisfied with £1 10s. or £1 15s. per week, and the sliding still continues. Where so many superior young men may be obtained at from 18s. per week, up to 30s., the general average, employers are less disposed to regard the service at its just value, to consider their duties to the State in the matter, or to suffer the want of that sharpness and agility in their old hands which is possessed by young.

It is a fact no less true than disturbing that the older a general office clerk becomes, the less valuable he is to his employer. A clerk at the age of fifty is "nobody's money," and if, as is too often the case, he loses his situation through incompetency, as the result of mental and bodily decay, prematurely brought on by the hard and prolonged struggle to keep himself and his family respectable on insufficient means, his position is a hopeless one.

Strange as it may appear, the insecurity of tenure by which these positions are held does not conduce

to either industry or honesty. And why not? In the first instance, all hope is crushed out of the man, all ambition is deadened. He knows he cannot command much in the future. Position, respectability, "love, honour, troops of friends," will never be his; and leaving his God and the sacred constraints of religion out of the question, what is there to inspire him? Nothing. He cannot be very much worse. Why should he not live as much as he can in the present? He can scarcely hope to have a comfortable home of his own to which he may bring a wife such as his fancy delights in. Is he, therefore, to deny himself the solace and pastime of female society? He thinks not, and therefore he goes into the street to find it there. The dull monotony of figures, wearing on from day to day, drives him to seek artificial excitement in the gambling den or the drink-shop, or in something viler still.

The evening employment that is occasionally to be got is of a character the reverse of relaxing, and calculated only to accentuate the dull monotony of clerk life. Addressing envelopes at from half a crown to four shillings a thousand is not very lucrative work, yet we know of cases in which the whole family, including children, in the evenings set to work on them. The enormously increasing number of new joint-stock companies—many of which are cheats pure and simple, and intended to fill the pockets of the promoters—provide a lot of evening work for clerks and others in this way. The prospectuses are sent out to all the shareholders in companies of a similar nature. They are folded

in wrappers which have to be addressed. The rate of payment for addressing is about the same as for the envelopes.

Notwithstanding all the heaviness of the future, and the smallness of the pittance on which he has to subsist, a proportion of clerks get married. They will marry on £100 a year, and in many cases every morning, as they go up to business by the 8.30 train, they will wish that they had not. When single, they can get rooms in the neighbourhoods of Islington and Kennington at from 2s. 6d. to 10s. a week ; if they share with another they can live even more cheaply. But marriage alters all this, and the wives are driven to add to the funds by millinery or dressmaking.

The offices in which clerks have to work are in many cases conducive to ill-health. They are dark and ill-ventilated, and in some of them the gas is always lighted. The continual stooping posture of the penman is bad for his lungs, and the habit of keeping the eye close to long columns of small figures, illumined by an unprotected gas-jet, is damaging to the sight.

The daily dinners of clerks have been improved by the competition amongst restaurants, but even now a large proportion can only afford to frequent the dirty coffee-shop, where "a good dinner may be obtained for 6d.," and where the tablecloths are unchanged for a week, the knives smell of stale onions, the cabbage has always a long hair lying across it, and the meat consists of a piece of fat embedded in muddy hot water. The vegetarian restaurants and the shops of the Aërated Bread

Company bring light and clean repasts within the reach of every one, but meat is not to be obtained at either of them.

Much might be said of the daily struggle to make both ends meet and keep up a respectable appearance. Wearing apparel, travelling, a hundred other things encroach rapidly upon the pittance of the poor clerk. But enough has perhaps been written to give an idea of the unrelieved monotony of his life, which naturally makes him a ready subject for those temptations which come within his means.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *DRINK.*

“**H**AVING a drink” may almost be called the latch-key to everything that is vicious. It is the first of the temptations by which youths are assailed, and its pertinacious propinquity renders it the most difficult to avoid. A glass of beer is the usual result of friends casually meeting, or of any little occurrence that requires celebrating in company. The lapse of time has in no way lessened the cruel force of Mr. George Cruikshank’s “The Worship of Bacchus”—a large cartoon, it will be remembered, wherein is depicted the appearance of the glass of wine in every social occurrence from a birth to a death, and inclusive of all things that could happen between. How far the lack of conversational powers in middle-class young men is responsible for this habit of “nipping” it is perhaps hardly within our compass to inquire; but it is not too much to say that in quite half the cases of friendly drinks as the result of accidental meetings one of the parties would just as soon be without them. We must all be familiar with the spectacle of two young men suddenly meeting each other in the street, shaking hands, blushing, looking foolish

or twelve hours at the desk, do you think I would take it? Not I." So it is not to be wondered at if billiard-saloons, gaming-clubs, music-halls, and dancing-classes are crowded as soon as the shops and offices are closed. The Churches, it must be repeated, are doing little to gratify the social instincts of the homeless youths entrusted to their care; but they are becoming aware of their deficiencies, and by means of the two great societies we have referred to much is being done to repair them. It is on these lines they must proceed, remembering that Christ claims the whole man, spirit, soul, and body, to be preserved entire and presented blameless at His coming; nor must the reproach any longer be merited that Christians are so intent upon saving souls that that they have no time to save men and women.

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Printed by Hazell, Watson, & Viney, Ltd., London and Aylesbury.

entertainments, and effect much good by so doing ; another, by the same means, would do infinite harm. It cannot, however, be denied, we think, that until very lately the Churches have failed to approach the young on that side of their nature which is most approachable, and their labour has therefore been to a great extent in vain. Let us take but one aspect of it. A young man comes to town from the provinces. At home he has the companionship of his fellows, of his sisters and his friends' sisters, cousins, and others, all of whom are in their social position respectable and respected. He moves freely about amongst them, restrained only by those natural limits of decorum that prevail in all respectable society. From the moment he comes to London all this is changed. He sees none on terms of intimacy but a lot of young fellows in precisely the same position as himself. But out in the street he can meet with companions, male and female, some of whom are by no means the monsters of vice that good people paint them, but who have lost the respect of their neighbours and their own, and who are free from any strict restraint whatever. This, then, is the only variety open to him in the way of companionship, and if he have a few pence in his pocket it is easily obtainable. What more natural than that he should avail himself of it, until the ideal he had formed of all that is manly and womanly in human nature fades into unreality ? And the Church offers him nothing in place of the street, except a seat at a Bible-class or a mutual-improvement society. As a clergyman remarked to the writer a day or two ago, " If that were all they could do for me after ten

offer no attraction to the more frivolous or to the worldly. They make no appeal to the young man's craving for amusement and excitement, which has been shown to be the chief factor in the accomplishing of his ruin. A few Churches, therefore, have ventured farther, and introduce into their programmes concerts, social clubs, and even dances. But most hesitate at this point, and openly confess that it is no part of Christian work to compete with worldly devices in framing allurements for the young. They believe that they are quite unable to cater for the pampered appetite that seeks satisfaction in the ribaldry of the music-hall, and therefore confine their efforts to evangelistic agencies, which, by changing the desires of the young, will cause them to be contented with the less stimulating fare to be had within their borders. But others maintain that it is quite possible to offer healthy excitement "within the limits of becoming mirth," and that it is legitimate Christian work to do this. And these two opinions will no doubt continue to be held, however much they may be disputed. But the discussion cannot do harm, and may be productive of much good. It being taken for granted that the temptations of the young derive their chief force from a natural love of amusement and excitement and the cravings of the social instincts, is it the province of the Church to provide such amusements? Some will answer Yes, and some No, according to their personal characteristics, for, as we have seen, personal character has much more weight with the young than particular method. One man may gather his young people together for dances or dramatic

class from that reached by the Y.M.C.A., it proceeds on much the same principle. Conversion to God is the great object of its being, but it seeks to convert the whole man, to train intellect, motions, and spirit to offer the best they can to His service who has formed them.

With these two institutions are connected more than 20,000 young men of Tempted London, and their numbers are rapidly increasing. Is it not a matter of thankfulness and of abounding hope that so many are eagerly seeking admission to societies where they know that religion of no perfunctory type is considered the chief thing, and where, though it will not be offensively obtruded upon their notice, it will be kept well before their eyes? It is the mainspring of it all. It has prompted and sustained the noble generosity and untiring energy of the men who are carrying on this great work, and what other motive but that of true religion could have done likewise?

From what has been written it is apparent, then, that there are very few Churches indeed that are not doing something on behalf of the youth of London; but what does it all amount to? Of mutual-improvement societies, debating-clubs, and Bible-classes there is no lack at all. They abound everywhere, and it is a most satisfactory sign of the times that the number of young men periodically meeting for the systematic study of the Holy Scriptures is rapidly increasing. But these efforts, however praiseworthy and successful, touch but one side of the question. They may do much to preserve their members from temptation, but they

which they may bring their sisters, or sweethearts, or wives.

Religion here, as at the Y.M.C.A., occupies a foremost position. Let the programme for one week illustrate this:—

Sunday.—9.30 a.m. Mr. Studd's Berean class.

„ 3.15 p.m. Mr. Quintin Hogg's class for young men only, in Great Hall.

„ 7 p.m. Mr. Paton's evangelistic service in Great Hall.

Wednesday.—Evangelistic service, 8.30 p.m.

Thursday.—Bible-class for young men, 8.30 p.m.

Every evening.—Short service, 10.15 p.m.

Each athletic club has its occasional festive reunion, and some of them give an annual ball, which, though not held on the premises, evidently has the sanction of the heads of the Institute.

An air of freedom, business, and happiness reigns throughout the whole place. It is a grand philanthropic achievement, and has, we believe, solved what to some seems an insoluble problem—how to combine the highest regard for the promotion of personal Evangelical religion with a wide sympathy for those youthful instincts that demand amusement and social entertainment as well as piety and prayers. Within its range of work may be found provision for body, soul, and spirit in all their various yearnings, and it is pleasant, but not surprising, to note that numerous similar institutes, smaller "Polys," offspring of the mother "Poly" of Regent Street, are springing up in different parts of the metropolis. Although it touches a different

it, a library and reading-room, swimming-bath, large and small lecture-hall, social room with refreshment-bar, lavatory and bath-rooms, and several class-rooms. A recreation-ground of twenty-seven acres is connected with it, situated at Merton Hall, Wimbledon, and numerous athletic clubs belong to it, as well as a company of Rifle Volunteers, of the Medical Staff Corps, of Artillery, and of Engineers. It possesses a military band, an orchestral and a choral society, a savings-bank, a sick-club, and a Christian workers' union. The leading spirit of it all is Mr. Quintin Hogg, but its affairs are managed in great part by the members themselves, who elect a council formed of representatives of each section. Every night it resembles nothing so much as a busy bee-hive. Youths are seen clustering round the entrance, passing in and out on their way to gymnasium, swimming-bath, entertainment, or class-room, and so the swarm keeps moving until about 10.30 p.m. The students of the "Poly" have distinguished themselves in numberless examinations and exhibitions and in all branches of technical education. They have won medals and prizes of all descriptions, and have shone in the fields of sport as much as in the examination-room.

The class of young men for whom it is designed is that of artisans and apprentices between sixteen and twenty-five years of age. The subscription is three shillings a quarter, entitling members to free use of the library, reading, social, chess, and draughts-rooms, the use of the gymnasium and swimming-baths, admission to the concerts, entertainments, etc., that are constantly being given, to many of

## CHAPTER XVII.

### *THE POLYTECHNIC.*

THE other great young men's society is the Young Men's Christian Institute at the Polytechnic, Regent Street, familiarly known amongst its members as the "Poly." It has grown to its present dimensions in the space of a few years from a very small beginning in a street off the Strand; it now numbers over 10,000 members and students, and has attained high rank as the most successful attempt yet made to establish a popular technical college in this country, for its principal feature is the technical education offered within its walls to artisans and apprentices of every conceivable trade. It would take up too much space if we tried to enumerate all the subjects here taught, but they are roughly classified under four heads—viz., practical trade classes, such as carpentry, plumbing, upholstery, etc.; technical classes, as telegraphy, printing, drawing as applied to cabinet-making, etc.; science classes and general classes, including languages, music, elocution, etc. The Institute is open to its members from 5.30 to 10.30 p.m. every day of the week, and within its walls are a large and elaborately fitted gymnasium, with a gallery running right round

experience the vanity and vexation of spirit that unrestrained indulgence in sin creates.

Many of the great wholesale and retail warehousemen are independent of the Y.M.C.A., as they have the same advantages offered them in the houses they are connected with, and it is therefore amongst those who occupy private lodgings that it finds most of its members.

The terms of subscription are 5s. per annum for those from fifteen to twenty years of age, 10s. from twenty to thirty years of age, and a guinea for all above thirty. This subscription gives the free use of the reading-room, library, and writing-room, admission to lectures, entertainments, etc., and admission at reduced fees to all educational classes, which in most instances are 3s. per term. Any young man in London can, therefore, at a trifling expense, command more advantages than membership of a wealthy West End club could offer him, with the exception, perhaps, of a billiard and a card-room. Neither of these will be found at Exeter Hall.

Enough, then, has been said to show what a great work is being done by the Y.M.C.A. on behalf of Tempted London. It is difficult to say what more it could do. It derives all its energy and support from its distinctively religious and Evangelical character, and we very much question whether it would effect half the good it now does were it to follow the advice of those who would have it relegate its evangelizing agencies to the background.

ligious, but amongst intelligent Christians ; but that this is being rapidly overcome may be gathered from the wonderful increase in the numbers of its associates during the last few months. There are in London more than 10,000 young men in connection with the central institute or its branches, and of these more than 1,000 have joined within the last year. Every day widens the circle of its influence and increases the number of its members. In almost every large house of business there is a resident correspondent, who forwards a monthly list of new arrivals to the Secretary, and each of these receives an invitation to the social evenings of the Association and a free card of membership for one month, in order that he may become thoroughly acquainted with the objects and advantages of the Y.M.C.A. before being asked to join as a subscribing member.

The difference between members and associates has already been pointed out, and it is interesting to know that the proportion of the former to the latter is about one-third. Of course the very word "Christian" in the name of the Association is quite sufficient to deter many a youth from joining it at first, as it suggests to his unthinking or ill-instructed mind ideas of goody-goodness, milk-sopism, or cant, and to many the great attraction of London life is its utter freedom from religious or moral restraint. It is not surprising, therefore, to hear from the Secretary that those who join the Association may be roughly divided into two classes—those who come straight to them upon their arrival in London, and those who have learnt by bitter

she hardly knows what to do with. It is too early to go home to bed, and too late to go anywhere else ; and the only alternative is to walk the streets awhile, when every element of moral danger is at its height.

A comparatively new feature of the Y.M.C.A.'s work is the provision made for the physical culture of its members. The gymnasium in Long Acre is one of the most spacious and best-appointed in London. It is filled every evening by numbers of young men, who submit to regular instruction and judicious oversight in the practice of athletic exercises, but Wednesday is a kind of show night, when visitors are admitted to the gallery, and members are expected to appear in athletic costume—white flannel guernseys and knickerbockers, with blue stockings, the squad-leaders being distinguished by red stockings and sashes. As many as four hundred youths spend their evenings here, and as the Secretary remarks, after two hours' exercise in the gymnasium they are glad to go straight home to bed. The culture of athleticism is a direct antidote to sensual indulgence. There are cricket, rowing, cycling, and swimming clubs in connection with both the Exeter Hall and Aldersgate Street centres, so that the reproach so often cast upon religious movements that they aim too exclusively at saving souls has little or no force in reference to the Y.M.C.A.

But now the question comes, Does the Y.M.C.A. command the confidence of the youth of London ? We believe that it soon will, if it does not already. There is still, as we have pointed out, a vast amount of prejudice against it, not only amongst the irre-

Street are good reading-rooms and libraries, while popular and scientific lectures are periodically given during the winter season. The social claims of the young are recognised to some extent also. There are monthly receptions of new members, frequent social evenings, to which members and associates are invited to meet people of note, distinguished foreigners, etc., and pleasant evenings, where music, vocal and instrumental, with recitations, affords an hour and a half's healthful amusement. Then there are ladies' evenings, when lady friends of the Association come and spend two or three hours in the drawing-room, and try by their winning smiles and charming arts to keep alive in the breast of the homeless London youth some of the reverence and chivalrous regard for women that life in the great city is only too apt to dissipate. We cannot speak too highly of the entertainment offered at these pleasant evenings. The only fault is that they are too short to effect the object they have in view—viz., to offer counter-attractions to those who would otherwise frequent doubtful places of amusement. By paying sixpence at a music-hall a young man can have his whole evening occupied from 8 till 11 p.m.; but here, though he pays nothing for his entertainment, it is over at 9.30, and he is then as much at the mercy of the streets as ever. This is, in fact, the fault of almost all the philanthropic efforts now being made to afford free and wholesome amusement for the people. They do not give enough to fill up the evening, and thus at the most dangerous hours of the day the young man or woman has an hour or more of leisure which he or

evening an evangelistic service was held in the large hall, attended by more than 700, and sometimes by over a thousand, of the general public. A daily prayer-meeting is held from 1 till 2 p.m., and Gospel meetings for young men are conducted on four evenings in each week, by which much spiritual good is continually being done.

At the City branch in Aldersgate Street much the same work is carried on, every evening being taken up by one or more religious meetings; and during a short break in the Wednesday evening gymnastic practice, at the spacious and well-appointed gymnasium in Long Acre, a ten minutes' "practical Gospel address" is given by Mr. Kennedy, who is a squad-leader in the gymnasium as well as General Secretary of the Association. The prominence given to the purely spiritual aspect of the Association's work may blind the eyes of outsiders to the thoroughness with which the other requirements of a young man's nature are supplied. There are as many as sixty-seven educational classes held, all of which are self-supporting, while some of them produce a fair return to the general fund. The teachers of these classes have rooms found for them, and in most cases the necessary advertising, but they receive no stipend, their remuneration consisting of two-thirds of the tuition fees, the remaining third being paid to the Y.M.C.A. In some instances very fair incomes from this source alone are being made by the teachers of the more popular subjects, which include ancient and modern languages, English, commercial requirements, music, science, ambulance work, etc. Both at Exeter Hall and Aldersgate

above are founded and maintained for that very purpose.

The Church of England is, we believe, the only Church that has a young men's society of its own, and even that is generally associated with the Low Church section of its adherents. Upon its council, however, are representatives of all parties in the Church, and the sneer that it is a young men's society without any young men in it is no longer true, if indeed it ever were. At its central offices, at the Leopold Rooms, Ludgate Circus, there are billiard, reading, and smoking-rooms, a gymnasium, a restaurant, and a lecture-hall, with a number of bedrooms, where those who can afford a guinea a week can have bed and board in addition to the other advantages of the institute. There are several branches in London and the provinces, but these seem to be little more than mutual-improvement societies. The Church of England Young Men's Society proceeds on exactly the same lines as the Y.M.C.A. It is, however, still in its infancy, and has not, therefore, a sufficiently large *clientèle* to offer the same advantages as the Y.M.C.A.

The work of the Y.M.C.A. proceeds upon four main lines—spiritual, intellectual, social, and physical. The first of these is chiefly carried on by young men for young men. For example, at the time of writing, every Sunday afternoon Mr. E. J. Kennedy, the Secretary at Exeter Hall, gives what is termed a "straight talk" to men only. The attendance averages about 350, and to make the service bright and hearty the musical part of it is led by the string band of the Association. On the Sunday

religious test or to make a definite profession of religion before they are made welcome. But such is not the case. In fact, to become a member of the C.E.Y.M.S. nothing is needed but a reference as to respectability of character, and the same is the case with respect to *associates* of the Y.M.C.A. *Members* of the latter, however, are required to be communicants of some Christian Church and to give "decided evidence of conversion to God."

It cannot be denied that until recently the social and physical interests of young men were of little importance in the eyes of the Churches, and for this neglect all Christian effort has to suffer, even where it has corrected this error ; for the spirit of suspicion is still abroad, and many have the idea that these great associations are simply spiritual agencies, and that all joining them are liable to incessant religious importunities.

But amongst better-informed people it is thought that the religion professed by the members of the Y.M.C.A. is of a narrow, namby-pamby description, and that the "Exeter Hall young man" is a pale, bloodless, knock-kneed creature, who is of no account amongst his fellows in the rough-and-ready warfare of the world.

There is no doubt, then, that a very widespread misconception exists, which we hope by this chapter to dispel, or at least modify. If, however, the term "conversion to God" offend any, or if the admission that the one great aim of all the Association's efforts be the conversion to God of those within its reach be considered a proof of narrowness, then our labour will be lost, for all the three societies referred to

## CHAPTER XVI.

### *CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS.*

HAVING glanced at the efforts that are being made on behalf of the young men of Tempted London by certain representative congregations, there remain to be considered those associations which are unconnected with any particular Church, but which welcome the co-operation of all. They are few in number; in fact, there are but three—the Young Men's Christian Association, better known as the Y.M.C.A., which has its central offices at Exeter Hall, the Church of England Young Men's Society, with its headquarters at the Leopold Rooms, Ludgate Circus, and the Young Men's Christian Institute, at the Polytechnic, Regent Street.

Of these, the first-named finds its adherents amongst wholesale warehousemen, clerks, and retail salesmen, while the last is specially intended for artisans and trade apprentices. The Church of England Institute runs on parallel lines with the Y.M.C.A.

It must be confessed at the outset that both the Y.M.C.A. and the C.E.Y.M.S. are the subjects of considerable prejudice on account of their distinctively religious character; and there is an idea abroad that their members are required to submit to some

in any other way. How to satisfy this craving was a great and pressing question. And with respect to this matter of gambling, the writer was asked by one of those he interviewed if he had rightly estimated the difficulty of combating the evil upon moral grounds. Its spirit was an unchristian one, but how could the practice be reprobated? Upon what principle could it be met? If the man who betted on the chances of a certain horse winning a race was sinning, is not he also sinning who invests his savings in an undertaking on the chance of its securing a greater return than it has hitherto produced? Does not many an honest Christian man stake his earnings on mere chance in the same way as the office-boy does when he joins a sweep-stake? and how, then, can the evil be exposed and denounced? It is a question easy to ask, but difficult to answer. Are we not all gamblers? and how, then, can we effectively denounce gambling? Wherein does the sin lie? No Christian man denies its existence, but how may it be detected?

The great work of the Y.M.C.A., the Church of England Y.M.S., and the Christian Institute at the Polytechnic, Regent Street, demands chapters to itself.

shops came down, to study the Greek Testament. He laid himself out in every possible way to do good amongst the young, and was prepared to teach almost everything they wished to learn. He could not say whether it would be possible in the altered condition of things to muster a class of twenty young men at seven o'clock on a week-day morning for study of any kind.

But there seemed to be a growing interest in the Bible. One of his office-bearers had for some time now conducted a largely attended Bible-class for young men on the Sunday afternoon, in which there was great freedom of discussion, both as to subject and method. Nothing was excluded upon which the Bible could be referred to, social, political, or moral.

But he felt the need of something to fill up the Sunday evening after the hours of worship. It was the most dangerous time of the day. The public-houses alone were open, and they were attractive enough. It had been the custom of one of his people to throw open his drawing-room on the Sunday evening to the young people of his congregation, and he should very much like to see such an example widely followed, for the domestic comforts of the large drapery houses in that neighbourhood were few and small. Their life at its best was but a barrack life.

So far as his inquiries went, he believed the crying evil of gambling now so prevalent was due to the utter absence of all healthy excitement in the lives of the young. They did not bet for gain, but for fun. It gave them something to look forward to. It added a relish to life which was not provided

Islington, is the centre of a most extensive circle of work of all kinds, and of course the details have to be committed to the hands of numerous lieutenants. The pastor looks to them to carry out the execution of the Church's will. His work amongst young men closely resembles that of Dr. Davidson, allowance being made for the difference of personal characteristics. There are the same periodical sermons, the same social gatherings, and the same literary associations. Dr. Parker is perhaps the most popular preacher among city young men, and there are lectures and societies in connexion with his church.

#### DR. CLIFFORD.

A chief feature of another large centre of Christian agencies, Westbourne Park Chapel, is the flourishing literary institute connected with it. In the mammoth concerns of the Grove there are great numbers of young men, countermen and others, who gladly avail themselves of the advantages of the Westbourne Park Institute, which is by no means a close preserve of the chapel adjacent. All creeds and no creed may join the classes or attend the lectures and weekly free concerts. But Dr. Clifford acknowledges the difference between the young man of to-day and the one of twenty years ago, and unless we are mistaken, he notices and regrets the absence of that earnestness and solidity of character that was to be found in bygone days. Self-amusement has taken the place of self-improvement. When he was the pastor of Praed Street Chapel he used to have a class of young men at seven o'clock in the morning, before the shutters of the great

give no ready assent to the reports he hears of so much evil abroad. It was a special feature of his pastoral teaching to insist upon the responsibility of those possessing homes and domestic circles of their own towards such as had nothing of the kind, and he was continually urging them to throw open their doors to the stranger amongst them, the young man or woman of good character, who was isolated from such refining influences amidst the dreary surroundings of a North London lodging-house. Many who came to him were attracted by his printed discourses, many more were the result of invitation, and others came direct from pious homes in the country. A great proportion were Scotchmen, who in general resembled Jeremiah's figs ; the good were very good, and the bad very bad. Owing to the strictness of the restraint under which they had been held at home, the large liberty of London proved too much for them, and they burst all bounds.

Beyond the usual congregational agencies of services, mutual-improvement societies, debating-clubs, reading-rooms, and the like, common nowadays to every Christian Church, there seems to be nothing peculiar to Dr. Davidson's Church except the personality of the pastor. This is, however, the chief secret of all successful work amongst the young. Some ministers, with every good desire and the most elaborate agencies, can never hope for success in this direction, as they are not young men's men and never will be. Now Dr. Davidson is a young man's man, and that is what has given him his great power and influence.

The same is true of Dr. Allon. Union Chapel,

practical temptations that surround the young were ignored. For every doubt that assails the mind a hundred snares allure the flesh ; but it was the former alone that were combated in the Evangelical pulpit ; and so thousands were falling a prey to the temptations of the senses, while the few were being equipped against the misgivings of the mind.

Dr. Davidson saw this error, and determined to avoid it. Young men who came to hear him felt that something practical was offered them. The preacher was a man who knew what life was, and his audience recognized that he had correctly diagnosed their complaint and was prepared with a remedy. He did not put a blister behind the ears when they needed a draught for the stomach. And so his work has gone on and prospered. Dr. Davidson's lectures are published periodically in fugitive form in the *Islington Gazette* and also as books. In the former they are sent all over the world, and frequently reappear in other countries and languages. But he does not confine his labours to the pulpit. His correspondence is very great, and he is constantly being called on to minister to minds diseased through the post. Every few weeks the lecture-hall of his church, the Presbyterian Church of England, Colebrooke Row, Islington, is transformed into a drawing-room, where the young people of his congregation are welcomed to an evening of social entertainment of precisely the same nature as they would meet with in the drawing-room of a private house. He acknowledges that his experience had shown him the more favourable side of a young man's character, and he seems to

portion of their leisure to missionary work amongst the poor, outdoor evangelizing, etc.; their hearts thus being kept warm in God's service, while their bodies are provided with wholesome food and their physical interests promoted by careful tendance.

What Mr. Hughes has done in Soho a very successful Congregational minister, lately come to London, is thinking of doing in the far west of Paddington—viz., forming a home for Christian workers, a sort of college of lay evangelists, or, as they are termed in the Anglican Church, lay readers or subdeacons.

#### TWO ISLINGTON CHURCHES.

To go from Central London to "merry Islington" is to obtain a complete change of air, so far as the domestic life of Tempted London is concerned. We are no longer surrounded by colonies of wholesale warehousemen, lodged in great caravanserais, but by swarms of private lodging-houses, tenanted by city clerks. Amongst these the labours of Dr. Thain Davidson have long been famous the world over.

It is more than twenty years since he instituted his lectures to young men that from month to month crowd his church with eager listeners. In those days there were but few who made any direct efforts on behalf of young men, and their mode of attack was chiefly that of argumentative discourses on the evidences of Christianity. Every youth was looked upon as an atheist in embryo. It was taken for granted that he was the prey of all sorts of intellectual questionings, that must be answered before any moral good could be effected. The

other than that of providing fairly comfortable accommodation, while in some instances the profligate life of heads of departments and the complete absence of all moral oversight are producing terrible results amongst the young men and women in their employ. There is no power to cope with this so great as individual consecration to God. In one instance Mr. Hughes mentioned that a single country lad, coming to a great London house, had, during a few years' stay there, by his consistent life and manly piety, changed the whole current of public opinion in the establishment and purged the moral atmosphere of the perilous stuff that had been hitherto fatal to all true life. It was on individual effort and example that he placed his chief reliance.

In passing it may be noticed that Lincoln House, called so from Lincoln College, Oxford, of which John Wesley was some time Fellow, is intended to form, amongst other things, a kind of depôt of the army of workers who are trying to evangelize the neighbourhood. With this object in view, its upper floor, formerly a billiard-saloon, has been divided into twelve roomy cubicles, the partitions of which are about eight or nine feet in height, and which in every other respect are independent rooms, having a lock and key on the door and every necessary for complete privacy. Each room is well furnished, having an iron bedstead with spring mattress, a chest of drawers, a washstand, a chair or two, and abundance of comfortable bedding. Twelve young men can be accommodated in this way and supplied with full board at a weekly charge of 16s. 6d. In return they are expected to give a considerable pro-

West Central Mission affects Tempted London. It is, of course, as yet in its infancy, and its organization is by no means complete; but the Rev. H. P. Hughes has informed us that the bulk of his great Sunday-evening congregations and of his Saturday-evening concert audiences is formed of young men and women, but especially of young men, from the great West End shops. They number fully two-thirds of his hearers. But as yet very little has been done to affect them on the social side of their natures. There is, however, a choral society, numbering at present about a hundred young men and women, who meet at Lincoln House, Greek Street, once the notorious Austro-Hungarian Club, every Tuesday evening, which affords not merely musical recreation, but an opportunity for social intercourse to those who attend it. Lincoln House is well fitted to become a centre of good work as far-reaching and effective as were its capacities for evil. It has ample accommodation, and its nobly proportioned rooms will answer every purpose except that of public meetings, for which Wardour Hall is available. But the Wesleyans are ambitious, and there are hopes in the air that soon they will be in possession of a great central hall, where every kind of philanthropic and spiritual agency will find an appropriate "local habitation and a name."

Mr. Hughes avails himself of every opportunity of meeting the young people of the West End houses in their own rooms, and in many of them he finds proofs of steady and earnest Christian work, although it is a lamentable fact that a great many employers recognize no responsibility towards their assistants

could not afford to find more than 5s. to 7s. a week for their bed and breakfast. They could get it, of a sort, in many quarters of Hoxton and Islington, in most cases by sharing their bed, or at any rate their room, with another.

It was extremely difficult for a minister to accomplish any good by calling upon young men at their places of business, either during or after hours, and yet he was continually being asked by anxious friends at home to "look up" So-and-so. He found he often did harm where he most desired good. The "parson" was "spotted" as soon as he entered the place, and his quarry was marked, while the object of his attentions, blushing and bothered, stammered out a few curt answers to his inquiries, knowing that as soon as the parson was gone his companions would be down upon him with all kinds of chaff, to clear himself of which he would not improbably indulge in some stupid outburst of folly, which would destroy what little seeds of good still lingered in his heart.

So far Mr. Dawson's labours amongst the work-girls of the neighbourhood had been more productive than his efforts on behalf of young men, but these may come to be noted when the case of the young women of Tempted London is treated. On the whole, then, Methodism cannot be said to be doing much in the city. It has, however, taken the initiatory step, and it has only to give Mr. Dawson a free hand and plenty of money to accomplish a great work.

We may turn from City Road to St. James's Hall and Wardour Street, to inquire how far the Wesleyan

every reason to be gratified with the audiences he commands. But he feels the common difficulty of getting into personal contact with them. Hurry out of the pulpit as fast as he can, in order to get an exchange of greetings with his departing hearers, he cannot be in time to catch all, and so far his invitations to the vestry for personal interviews have not met with much response. He has no premises where he can find a common meeting-place, although in his heart he cherishes the hope of covering the vacant plot of so-called garden-ground, or forecourt, with a building for a young men's club. But that is a question for the trustees.

In the debating-class connected with the Wesleyan Young Men's Christian Association the question of clubs was lately discussed; and as an instance of what the city young men require, it may be noted that all but an insignificant minority declared that a club, to command the confidence of those whom it would seek to attract and benefit, must permit billiard and card-playing and the free sale of beer on its premises. The youth of London object to moral coddling, and it is the existence or the suspicion of it that hampers the noble exertions made on their behalf by some of the great institutions of the metropolis.

Mr. Dawson greatly favoured the idea of a residential club for young men, where for a small weekly sum a bed, breakfast, and evening recreation could be had. In order, however, to reach those chiefly in need of it, the terms would have to be very low. He was constantly being asked to find lodgings for youths in receipt of from £50 to £70 a year, who

commodation consisted of tiny cubicles, across the end of which a curtain might be drawn to secure whatever privacy was desired. To enjoy a smoke one had to seek the hospitality of the pavement outside. There need be little wonder that it was a difficult task to make the place pay at a weekly charge of one guinea a head for board and lodging. It was maintained chiefly by those whose loyalty to Methodism was greater than their regard for personal comfort.

On the other side of the street a gas-lamp over an entry informs the passer-by of the existence of a Wesleyan Young Men's Christian Association. Its quarters form the ground floor of a pile of warehouses, and the high rent that is paid for them is drawn from the purchase-money received from the sale of the old Jewin Street Chapel. It is not a popular resort with the young men for whom it is provided, although it is used on Sundays for the purposes of a flourishing Sunday-school. We are informed that it is shortly to be given up for less expensive premises.

It is evident, therefore, that Mr. Dawson has to work amidst great difficulties, as every step he takes for the benefit of his flock must be done on his own responsibility and at his own expense, in the hope that it may be refunded to him in the future.

Once upon each Sunday he is expected to occupy the pulpit of what every Wesleyan looks upon as the cathedral of Methodism, and although the numbers of his hearers unaccountably vary, as they do in most non-residential neighbourhoods, he has

## CHAPTER XV.

### *WHAT THE CHURCHES ARE DOING (continued).*

#### THE WESLEYANS.

THE Wesleyan Methodists have so far recognized their responsibility towards the young men of their own body in the city as to appoint the junior minister of the City Road Circuit to attend to their spiritual interests. But beyond giving him this commission they have done little. Certainly they could not have designated any one more fitted to fulfil this duty than the Rev. W. J. Dawson, who has effectually gained the ear of the London public as a preacher and lecturer in the chapels of his own denomination and in such popular resorts as the City Temple. But to preach to a large congregation of city youths on a Sunday evening is a very small part of a pastor's duty, and no one recognizes this fact more fully than Mr. Dawson. Yet what are his opportunities of doing more? In Aldersgate Street a small house, named after the founder of Methodism, was started some few years ago as a city home for Wesleyan young men. It did not answer the expectations formed of it. There was but one common room—dining-room, drawing-room, and writing-room combined—and upstairs the ac-

society ; but we knew that unfortunately he was compelled to live at a great distance from his church, so that he was heavily handicapped in his efforts to benefit the young around him. Our business was to inquire, not to recommend anything ; but it occurred to us as we listened that in the immediate neighbourhood were a great many young ladies, employed in the fancy drapery houses, who might be induced with little difficulty to meet their brothers in toil once a week for social relaxation and amusement under the genial presidency of the minister and his wife, and that by such gentle pressure both young men and young women might discover that there were other and purer delights than the excitement of the billiard-room and the music-hall. And in this matter we know the great houses would not venture to compete, for we have not yet heard of one that possesses a common hall—or drawing-room, shall we say ?—where ladies and gentlemen in their employ can meet for mutual society, benefit, and entertainment.

hood he has hardly begun to "feel his feet." Strangers told him what magnificent opportunities he had for "getting at" the youth of the city, and no doubt they were right, but he should consider himself a happy man if any one could give him the secret of getting at them. Indeed, he had come to think that the less you tried to get at them the more likely they were to come to you. He was inclined to doubt the expediency of special efforts on behalf of young men. They fought shy of the man who was too lavish of his bait, or if they took it they considered themselves as conferring a great favour upon him. Of course there was a small percentage of serious youths who gladly availed themselves of the services of the Church, but the majority were eager only for amusement. He had been beating about to find some line of address that would interest them, but so far to little purpose, and he had been told by those who ought to know that the wholesale warehouseman cared for none of the great social or religious questions of the day, he thought of nothing but how to amuse himself when the hours of work were over.

And it was difficult to work even upon that side of his character, for almost every large house of business had its own athletic-club, rowing-club, debating and literary society, etc., so that there was nothing for the Church to do in that way. They were well provided with all means of recreation, so that he found it an extremely difficult matter to get into contact with them. We omitted to inquire whether the gentleman were a bachelor or a married man, or whether he had tried the lure of attractive female

they might meet for other than spiritual purposes, but it was not the case that many were led through such surroundings into the more spiritual centre.

As a matter of fact, he had every reason to be gratified with the success of his work amongst the young. They formed a large proportion of his congregation, and his spacious church was crowded to the doors on the Sunday evening, and very many were communicants. The evils of impurity and gambling were gigantic and innate, but he did not believe in "straight tips" or special recipes for the cure of either. It was certainly very important that the heads of Christian households should recognize their responsibility towards those who were without the advantages of home life in a great city like London, and as far as possible throw open their doors to young men and women of good character, and thus confer upon them the inestimable boon of congenial domestic society. But he doubted whether there was such a demand for clubs as was sometimes represented.

#### IN THE HEART OF THE WAREHOUSES.

Here, then, are the opinions of two able and energetic clergymen, each of whom has reason to be satisfied with the success he has achieved, but who differ widely in their methods of work. Let us turn to a third, the minister of a church in the very heart of the wholesale warehouses, who has a well-appointed church, ample lecture-room accommodation, and who is young in heart and years. He has been for some time now on the ground, but he confesses that so far with regard to the young men of the neighbour-

ences of Tempted London, and his efforts are certainly meeting with deserved success.

#### ANOTHER CLERGYMAN.

In the course of our inquiries we called upon another representative clergyman, the minister of a large and crowded church that lies outside the city boundaries, but which numbers a great proportion of young men amongst its congregation and Church workers. He felt doubtful of the wisdom of the Church seeking to gratify the social demands of either young or old. He imagined a clergyman's time and energy could be better employed in purely spiritual work than in maintaining men's or youths' clubs, etc. This was good work, but it was not the Church's work. He found such institutions required a great amount of nursing. In another neighbourhood he had worked hard and spent a great amount of time and money in keeping a youths' club going, but he felt it was practically labour lost. It would have been better employed in putting another curate on the ground to minister in more purely spiritual things. In a case which he regarded as typical a club, which had arisen out of a Bible-class, had completely overshadowed the original institution, and well-nigh strangled it. Nor did he much esteem such efforts as a draw-net for the Church. He did not find that they attracted many to it. As an environment, a kind of garden surrounding the Church, no doubt they had great value, but he did not think they drew many inside it. In other words, it was well for those who were members of the Church to have such places under its shadow where

for social intercourse except at such gatherings? Their only alternative was the street or the public-house.

For the men he had instituted or encouraged smoking concerts. He was chairman of half a dozen or more that were held from time to time in the neighbourhood. In all these forms of work he was greatly hampered for room. Except his church and rectory, he had no meeting-place for his people, and of course the hire of rooms, etc., added considerably to the difficulty of developing his ideas for their social benefit.

But was there not a danger of the young regarding the Church as a merely social institution, a kind of club, to the exclusion of its spiritual nature altogether? Mr. Shuttleworth did not think so. Many of those he had gathered round him were now real, earnest Christians, who had been sceptics and scoffers, and, indeed, vicious in disposition and life.

Altogether apart from his own parish there was a young men's club in which he took a deep interest. It is situated in Wardrobe Place, and is named the St. Paul's Cathedral Club. The Cathedral authorities provide the house, at a rental of £250 per annum, and it stands in a quiet nook in the shadow of tall trees within a stone's throw of "London's central roar." Here are billiard-rooms, writing-rooms, reading and smoke-rooms, all substantially but plainly furnished; and tea, coffee, bottled beer, and simple refreshments are at hand for all who call for them.

In these and other ways the Rector of St. Nicholas Cole Abbey is striving to counteract the evil influ-

with a house he imagined it was not for his exclusive use, but for the benefit of the people generally.

Church life in London was not parochial, but congregational. It could not be otherwise. According to primitive custom, the people had a voice in the election of their pastors, and so it should be now. In London they had practically the choice of their minister, for they went where they found the one they liked, regardless altogether of parochial boundaries.

From amongst his young people he had trained an efficient choir of sixty voices, and had accustomed them to render the masterpieces of sacred musical art in the course of their Sunday services. A grand piano stood in the church just below the pulpit, and the "sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music" were introduced into the service of worship.

He did all he could to afford facilities for social intercourse amongst the young people of his congregation in the form they liked best. To this end they were in the habit of holding periodical dances. Young people would dance, and if they could not do it in a respectable way they would in another. He was not a dancer himself, had never learned to dance, although he occasionally attended dances; but he promoted such gatherings in the sincere hope of doing good, and he had his reward. Young men who would have lounged the evening away in questionable resorts came there and spent their leisure hours morally and rationally; and overworked, dreary-faced girls had their lives brightened and cheered by an occasional gleam of pleasure and many hours of anticipation. Besides, what opportunities were there of young men and women meeting

condition of moral as well as physical life. Let a healthy man go into the fever ward of a hospital, and the probability was that he would come out unharmed ; but let an unhealthy one do the same, and he would succumb to the disease. A great number of those living in the city inherited moral disease, and surrounded as they were by contagion, they readily fell victims to it, and indulged in drunkenness, fornication, and the like. It was time to cease tinkering. He believed in God : many good Christians seemed to believe only in the devil.

When he came to St. Nicholas's the congregation consisted of a few old women, who went there for the sake of the charities attached to it. It was not long before the church was filled to its utmost capacity with young men and women from the wholesale houses, post-office and telegraph clerks, etc. The question was how to become personally acquainted with them. He instituted classes of one kind and another, and this did something, but not much. At length he began a system of registration by which all who wish to be considered under his pastoral charge enter their names on the church book and receive a card of membership. There are now about five hundred so enrolled. He invited them by parties of thirty to his house to spend the evening, and at length he was able to say that he knew them all personally.

As soon as his rectory was built he taught his people to regard it as their church-house—indeed, to look upon it as their home, where they would be at any time welcome in the drawing-room or at the dining-table. When the Church provided the parson

energies upon suppressing the symptoms of moral disease rather than destroying their causes. Intemperance and immorality are symptoms, not the disease itself, and you might just as well drive inwards the eruption of scarlet fever or small-pox as think of removing such evils while the root of the distemper is untouched. What, then, is the root to be attacked? Overwork and the consequent monotony of existence. Long hours, sameness of employment, and dull surroundings when business is over are the occasion of most of the vice of the young. Is it not natural that the first thought on escaping from such an environment should be amusement? This they must and will have. If no one will provide it for them in a proper and healthy form they will get it how they can.

Now the chief remedy for this would be the passing of the Eight Hours Bill, to apply to all occupations. But this is hardly yet, we urged, within the range of practicable politics. It soon might be, was Mr. Shuttleworth's reply. If Christian people would take the matter up, in five years it might be the law. It would ruin a few capitalists, but only such as deserved to be ruined, and it would no doubt be bitterly opposed by the more selfish section of the working classes. It was quite time the Church raised her voice against the sin of accumulating wealth by the sacrifice of thousands of young lives.

But would not so much leisure afford increased opportunities for indulgence in evil? He did not think so. His experience was that the vicious classes were those who had nothing to do and those who had too much. Either of these was an unhealthy

independent ways of speaking and acting while Minor Canon of St. Paul's, and people looked with curiosity to see what a parson who felt at liberty to stand on the same platform in a Hyde Park demonstration with notorious Radical and Socialist leaders would do when he had a free hand as a city rector. One invaluable gift was his—that of music; and another was added to it even greater—an indefinable sympathy with the young, expressed by the much-used phrase of being “in touch” with them. He came from the rugged shores of North Cornwall, where his boyhood had been spent in a secluded vale that opened out into Padstow Bay, and here as a lad he had gained all hearts, as the writer, who spent some weeks in his father's, now his brother's, parish, has had good reason to know. In London his experience seems to have been much the same. Between himself and his youthful hearers there already existed an affinity that opportunity only strengthened and confirmed. We dwell on this because it is a fact that there are hundreds of well-intentioned, hard-working pastors of churches who never will or can gain the hearts of their young men, however much they merit and enjoy their respect. And they may pipe until doomsday, but the listening youth will not dance to their piping. The chief cause of the widespread abstention of the young from communion with the Church is the absence, not of kindly interest in, but of instinctive sympathy with, their requirements on the part of the parsons and their coadjutors.

But now let us hear what the ministers have to say. The Rev. H. C. Shuttleworth declares that the Christian Churches, in his opinion, are wasting their

ings are, affording him in many instances all the conveniences of a club, he cannot shake off the sameness of them. He may boat or play cricket, debate or cycle, but it must be in pretty much the same company all the year round. His life is at best a barrack life, and his temptations are near akin to those that attack all barrack inmates.

Can the Churches do anything to alter this state of things? or is it their business to do so, supposing they can?

It is generally thought that those clergymen and ministers whose lot is cast in the heart of the city have magnificent opportunities for solving the knotty question of how to get at the young men of London. To some of these we have gone to gather the fruit of their experience, and though we cannot in all cases give the names of our informants, yet we shall as far as possible confine ourselves to the words of the representative men who so kindly afforded us an interview.

#### REV. H. C. SHUTTLEWORTH.

No one is better known or more universally respected for the work he has accomplished amongst the youth of the city than the Rector of St. Nicholas Cole Abbey, in Queen Victoria Street, the Rev. H. C. Shuttleworth. When appointed to the living the church was pre-eminent amongst its neighbours for the meagre congregations frequenting it. The former incumbent was a good and able man, but his working days had long gone by, and new men and habits had arisen that demanded new methods. Mr. Shuttleworth had already acquired a reputation for

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *WHAT THE CHURCHES ARE DOING.*

**I**N view of the facts that we have brought before our readers, many will ask, What is being done to counteract these evil influences? What allurements to good are being presented? What means are being used to "strengthen such as do stand, to comfort the weak-hearted, and to raise up such as have fallen"? We propose to answer these questions from the mouths of representative workers and the records of accomplished work.

The Churches of England have not been unmindful of their duty, but until very lately they have had little idea how to set about it. They have been out of touch with those for whose salvation they have prayed, and are only slowly acquiring it.

All who have followed carefully the foregoing chapters must have noticed that the chief hold the tempter has upon the youth of London consists in the monotony of their lives and the homelessness of their surroundings.

Employers cannot do much to remedy this state of things. In the larger houses of business all that they can do is to provide convenient and comfortable quarters for their employés, and this they do. But no matter how comfortable a young man's surround-

are actually lessening the evil. But any one who has known the terrible results that frequently follow a single lapse into vice will feel that if only young men could once know the horrible risks they run by not living purely they would strive all they could to keep themselves from falling into sin, if for no other reason than to avoid the inevitable punishment. We know of a young man who contracted an illness which, after lingering about him for thirteen years, during the greater part of which he was incapacitated from work, caused his death. This is an extreme case ; but it is certain that many forms of the dread diseases of immorality—and they are legion—result in permanent ill-health and accelerate death. But this is not all, for they sap the energy of a man completely, and if they do not kill him, render him a misery to himself and to everybody else. In some forms they can never be shaken off, and men go through life subject to ever-recurring attacks.

Let it be added, in conclusion, that we must not take too gloomy a view. Many young men are strictly pure. A leading East End worker has written us deprecating pessimism. His experience of the young men of the East End is such as leads him to give God thanks. He is of opinion that it is not young men, but middle-aged and elderly men, who mainly frequent haunts of vice. The picture is too black for us to wish to darken it by a hair's breadth.

which he can only allay by plunging into courses which a short time before he would have shuddered to think of.

Let us add that within the metropolitan district there are tens of thousands of women plying a hideous traffic. Last year this class contributed no less than 20,525 towards the sum total apprehended and proceeded against for various offences against the law. In the London district, out of 30,000 arrests for drunkenness, not less than 15,600 were women. Such facts are only weakened by commentary.

What is to be done? We need not say what in our view is the great remedy. Christianity alone can cope with immorality. Let young men be advised—

1. Never, on any pretext, enter into a doubtful house.

2. Leave drink alone.

3. Cultivate good company.

And 4. Let them be told of the awful results of immorality.

There can be no doubt but that ignorance of the results obtains amongst youths. The cases that have come to our notice are in most instances too painful to be mentioned, but they cannot but have the effect of arousing a feeling of pity on behalf of the poor sufferers, who, although they may have only themselves to blame for their penalties, have often drifted into sin through weakness of mind or under the guidance of some stronger hand than their own. It is a difficult thing to bring these cases vividly before the reader. There is a widespread feeling abroad that all unpleasant things should be put behind us and forgotten, and that by so doing we

women, returning from business and otherwise, who, without being what is called "fast," are yet quite ready to make friends with the opposite sex upon scant introduction. As they do not generally leave their work until 8 o'clock, they are able to tell their parents they were detained, and can easily take a walk for an hour with any young man who solicits such a favour. Thus it happens that they mutually lead each other astray. For acquaintances are ripened into intimacies without the guidance of either affection or respect, and in many cases result in a manner that will be only too easily understood. But the girls who swarm the streets on their own account, seeking whom they may pick up, are a more active source of danger. We have nothing to do now with the causes of their being there, which it is more than probable are the results of deception or misfortune befalling them; they are there, and they do much to wreck the lives of foolish youths and men who, in the darkness of the night, cannot see the dirt and disease that are but half hiding themselves under the paint and tawdriness. Youths who walk the streets at night are on the high-road to vice, for they speedily become acquainted with companions of both sexes who laugh at and decry everything that it is not disgraceful to engage in. Some of these poor girls in the earlier stages of their disgrace are young, light-hearted, and fresh-looking, and make in the eyes of their male admirers very desirable companions. But the more a youth gives way to vice, the more the desire for it grows upon him, and in a less time than may be believed he finds that he has a craving for the satisfying of his passion

seventeen or eighteen, who is just beginning to cut himself loose from the home-ties, is apt to almost deify the companion of two or three-and-twenty, who talks so glibly of the gaiety of life and the general manliness of doing everything that is disgraceful. He relates incidents that make the blood run hotly through his listener's veins, and paints the glories of vice in such glowing colours that the youthful hearer longs to enter upon the scenes for himself. Such young men are often free from any desire to lead their younger friends astray, and have mostly, indeed, not nearly so wide an acquaintance with the subject as they affect, but they cannot resist the temptation to show off before inexperience. Young men have more influence over youths a few years younger than themselves than any others, and they can use this for good or evil. Where a young man is well-disposed he can do much to develop that which is good in the characters of those around him; but where he strives to be what is called "fast," even without being badly disposed, he does more to spread evil amongst his friends than he would probably ever believe. The habit that young men who are employed in the day-time have of walking about the streets at night is at the root of all the mischief. It is a mode of lazily passing the time which grows upon them, although the fascinations of the pavement do not seem great to the mind which is not accustomed to them. But the clerks of London, or a majority of them, look to this as their ordinary relaxation, and to the girls with whom they thus become promiscuously acquainted for their feminine society. There are a number of young

to the task of rooting up some of these nests of villainy. It is also necessary to say that in the regular ranks of the medical profession there are men who, in an indirect and very skilful way, advertise themselves as specialists in this particular kind who are very little better than quacks. They cannot, of course, extort money to the same extent, at least not by threats, but their medicines are, as a rule, useless, and their charges heavy. We also have testimony that some—perhaps we should say many—medical men unwittingly do harm by making light of the troubles of young men who go to consult them. The result of this is to drive the sufferers to quacks, who industriously foster the impression that the regular profession does not understand or sympathize with diseases of this kind.

And now to speak of the social evil.

It is undoubtedly a fact that vice is often entered upon by young men not to please themselves, but their companions. Many a youth who, if left to himself, would not think of entering a house of ill-fame will do so in the company of his fellows, fearful of the ridicule he will excite if he should hang back on the threshold. It is an unfortunate and distressing fact that most young people are more or less ashamed of doing right, unless they have a strong religious background to their education, and it is on this account that too much care cannot be devoted to the task of selecting one's companions. This brings us round to the advice of our forefathers to choose our friends wisely. Young men are not all strong-minded enough to withstand the influence of older men than themselves; and the youth of

there may be on other subjects. We are glad to say that young men's Christian associations are becoming alive to this, and are taking means to warn and to save young men. We have found the chief workers among young men in London very much alive on this subject, and doing their part with great kindness and discretion.

2. That advertising quacks are as numerous and as dangerous as ever. There is an impression that they have been less active of late years, and that respectable journals now refuse their advertisements. As a matter of fact this is not so. Now, young men should be told that they will never, under any circumstances, get any help from these men, but harm, and harm only. Their medicines are invariably quite useless. In several cases where they have been analyzed they have proved to be harmless coloured mixtures. They are invariably charged for at a high price. But the danger lies in the fact that the names of applicants are carefully registered, and in many cases their history is inquired into. They are compelled to pay larger and larger sums for their medicines, and if they refuse they are threatened with exposure. The morbid terror which is a main feature of the disease makes this appear worse than death, and the miserable victims often pay the last farthing they can spare out of their scanty earnings for years to some miserable quack. These scoundrels have many aliases. They work a great deal in concert, and have establishments in different towns. When trouble rises in one they escape to another. It would be a great service to society if some courageous journal would set itself

avoided absolutely by young men they would, comparatively speaking, be safe. We repeat it with, if possible, greater emphasis. Only let there be no mistake about it ; it is total abstinence in the fullest sense that we mean.

What remains to be said on this subject will be said as briefly and guardedly as possible. The interpretation will not be found difficult by those whom it is meant to reach.

Of the two forms of immorality, secret vice is not the least destructive. We have been urged from the most influential quarters not to pass by this painful subject. We have before us a collection of letters and testimonies which, if we dared to print them, would astound every reader. This vice, in the opinion of many who know the secrets of young men, is at the bottom of more misery than any other. It is generally learnt early at school, and when it gets a hold is rarely shaken off. Its results are in many cases complete collapse of body and mind. It is the cause of nearly all premature breakdowns among young men, and every lunatic asylum is full of its victims. The feeling of hopelessness and degradation which it speedily engenders is of the most intolerable kind, and often leads to suicide. The opinion of one whose name, were we permitted to give it, would carry great weight is that it is the great cause of suicide. On this painful subject two things need to be said very plainly—

1. That it is necessary for parents and teachers to warn their sons against this ruinous practice and its consequences. We do not think there can be any doubt about this, whatever difference of opinion

him incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong. Then in connection with every theatre there is a mixed mass of people employed. The morals of many of the girls are loose, and it is an ambition with young men to be acquainted with them. The results may be imagined. And it cannot be denied that recently there has been a distinct tendency to have immoral plays. This is acknowledged, and in many cases condemned by the critics of the daily press. Of the music-halls much has already been said. The whole tendency of them is cynical. The songs are jests at what young people have been brought up to consider sacred and venerable. In this way a process of sapping and mining goes on. Under the heading "Young Women" we shall have much more to say of the actual life of the stage and the music-hall platform.

4. We mention in addition the great difficulties in the way of marriage. Salaries, never very high, are now distinctly on the down grade, and while the rent of houses in London is diminishing, and some household expenses are diminishing along with it, a revolution must take place before living in London can become really cheap. When there is no escape from the monotony of the office except to the monotony of lodgings it is no cause for wonder that many become entangled in vice.

5. The last incentive we shall mention is drink. The first lapse from morality, which counts for so much, is almost invariably smoothed by drink, and drink accompanies all the rest. We said in one of the earliest of these chapters that if drink could be

abundant scope for the development of the traffic. There are many more novels to translate; the work can be done inexpensively; the books are sure of a market; and the lower class of publishers will cheapen the books to the utmost. We have uttered our warning and protest; if the Church and the State are content that it should be so the blame is not with us.

It may be noted that alongside of this production of the foreign literature of vice a company has been formed to produce at a low rate English "top-shelf" books which have become scarce and dear. No surprise can be felt at this. These operations also are bound to extend.

3. The influence of theatres, music-halls, etc. We have said so much on this subject that we need only touch on it briefly. Correspondents have written to us defending theatres, and we readily admit there is much reason in what they say, so far as they are concerned. That many go to a good play, and spend an evening pleasantly and without much injury, is undeniable. But the thing has to be considered in its total influence. The first thing to be remarked is that morality among actors and actresses is very low. We need not enter into what excuses or explanations there may be for this; suffice it to say that it is from theatrical managers that we have received the darkest account of the morality of the stage. Actresses whose names are in every one's mouth are notoriously immoral. What is the effect on a young man of admiring and applauding women whose life he knows to be impure? It confounds his moral sense, and renders

The comic and sporting papers offend to a certain extent, and one notorious print makes its appearance from time to time. Its proprietor once underwent a term of imprisonment. The contents-bill is generally more indecent than the paper itself, and certainly ought to be suppressed by the police.

What is alarming under this head is the portentous development of translations from French novels. At a time when the French themselves have wakened up to the moral havoc wrought by the wholesale dissemination of corrupt fiction it is being naturalized among us. We have already pointed out that assuming the right of certain books already published to be circulated among us (and that right has never been disputed), there is absolutely no limit to the circulation of French books. No line of demarcation can be drawn which has not already been passed over, and from the press, even from the religious press, there has been practically no protest. The most respectable journals have inserted, and still insert, advertisements of these books. It may be replied that they are also translated and circulated in America. This is not the case. The American editions are thoroughly expurgated, and in Germany many of the books are forbidden. When these novels first appeared in a somewhat expensive form some well-known city book-shops practically did business for a time in nothing else. Now they are being reprinted in cheap forms, and in a little time we have no doubt they will be universally circulated over Britain with results of the most appalling kind. It is significant that they are to be had in the most respectable booksellers' shops. There is

2. Loose reading. This is a much smaller evil, though it threatens to grow greater. Almost every Londoner knows the streets about the Strand where indecent books and pictures are sold. These shops are now under pretty rigorous supervision, and the business has to be conducted with great caution. The ordinary spectator will notice in the window pamphlets with long titles, promising entertainment of a certain kind, bad photographs of dancers, and a few books, of which "Maria Monk" seems to be the most common. If he goes into the shop and buys the pamphlets he will find that he has been taken in, and the photographs are not worse than may be found in many "respectable" shops where actresses' portraits are shown. If he endeavours to go farther he will find the proprietor exceedingly shy. So many "commissioners" are about, and penalties are so strictly enforced, that it is with the utmost circumspection that further dealings are entered into. Long experience has made the "bookseller" a tolerably good judge of men, and if his customer be a young man, not very knowing and possessed of plenty of money, there is more for him in the shape of Parisian photographs and indecent books that he dare not sell openly. We do not, however, attach very great importance to this. There *is* a grossly indecent literature published in London, but this, as a rule, is very expensive, and only within the means of wealthy sensualists. A five-shilling magazine was till recently published monthly, in which there was one coloured picture and vilely indecent letter-press. This kind of thing is to be had of certain Jew dealers in antiquity, and is not widely known.

fluences it is their clear duty to do so. One depraved boy may poison the whole atmosphere of a school and destroy many lives. How far the knowledge which will inevitably come should be communicated by parents is a very difficult question, not to be answered positively ; but the moral shock suffered by an innocent boy when a whole new world of danger and evil is opened to him suddenly is terrible, and there should surely be some preparation. But the evil of obscene talk among young men, and not among young men only, is one which is very dimly understood by the public. It is the ordinary and ever-welcome theme of conversation. The fact that the subject is forbidden is enough to make it attractive. To depraved minds it is always interesting. The deadly monotony of daily toil is broken by it. The imagination becomes thoroughly polluted, and dwells continually upon the familiar theme. The whole moral fibre is relaxed, and temptation becomes all-powerful.

We do not mean that this is universal. Far from it. There are many counting-houses in London where a high moral tone is kept up, and many young men who frown upon and discountenance filthy conversation. Still, we are certain that the pulpit—that the Christian Church—has not sufficiently understood the awful perils and results of obscenity in talk. And we have abundant testimony that one filthy rhyme fastening on the imagination in childhood may be enough to darken and even to wreck a whole life. The tongue is a fire ; the beginning of impurity is almost always there.

We shall do well not to count on silence, but rather to expect disclosure to follow disclosure, and we assure our readers that however startling what has been made known may be, there is in reserve matter a hundred times more amazing. To speak of exaggeration and sensation in connection with these things is absurd. But our business is not to furnish unclean details. We shall simply give a plain and sober recital of facts that ought to be known to young men and those who have to do with them, and leave these facts to speak for themselves. If we are guarded and reserved it is not because we have not details that would make a sensation ; it is simply because we think that more good will be done by this way of stating the case.

Of what may be termed the inevitable incentives to immorality we have nothing to say. Our object is to speak of those by which they are reinforced.

1. One of the greatest evils wherever young men congregate is that of obscene conversation. It very often happens that a boy brought up strictly is entirely ignorant till he goes to a boarding-school. A feeling of false shame prevents his confessing that ignorance. He listens greedily to his companions, and in a short time is initiated. There are certain rhymes and stories which, once learned, cleave to the imagination and taint it almost irretrievably. They often remain for a lifetime, and refuse to be forgotten. Thus the seeds are sown of future evil. There are schools, no doubt, where every precaution is taken to save the youthful mind from contamination, and where a high Christian standard is maintained. Still, when parents can retain their sons under home in-

## CHAPTER XIII.

### *IMPURITY.*

**I**N the judgment of all who know intimately the lives and temptations of young men, impurity does more than any other sin to injure and destroy them. Many who are impervious to other temptations succumb to this. The results are in numberless cases of the most painful kind. There is a secret history of life known to comparatively few, but suspected by more. If that were written the sin of impurity and its consequences would be found to account for very much that is ascribed to other causes. A perfectly truthful and complete story of life as it is lived in London would be full of a subject which naturally, and in the main rightly, is under the seal of silence. Suffice it to say that much which seems perplexing would then find an easy solution ; misery, illness, pain, defeat, and death are in thousands of cases due to this cause, and not to the causes they are ascribed to.

No doubt much evil as well as good comes from the lifting of the veil. Whether the evil has been greater than the good is a question we do not care to discuss. We accept the disclosures as inevitable. In the publicity given to everything in these days a main part of human life cannot be curtained off.

desire for the company of the low saloon may become a ruling passion. As the three vices mentioned are destructive of average mental calibre, so is the other the high-road to the loss of the moral perceptions ; and the youth who enters the dancing-saloon for the first time, be it as spectator or participant, may be sure that he is at the commencement of a path which can lead him to no good, and may conduct him to infinite harm.

is attractive to the youth who remembers the adventures of Jack Easy and other similar heroes, and this is especially noticeable so far as the women are concerned. The dancing in these places is of a boisterous character. Indeed, the women oftener than not dance with each other for the want of male partners, the latter sitting round the room the while, drinking atrocious beer, smoking clay pipes, and watching with admiration the well-developed dancers as they swing past. The advent of a stranger is regarded with suspicion, and it would undoubtedly be a dangerous thing for a clerky youth, in a high collar, a brown hat, and a tail coat, to make his appearance unattended, for he would certainly be the recipient of more attention than would be good for him. Thieves abound in these dens. The women, whose appearance is quite unique, have always some male friends in the vicinity, whose duty it is to keep themselves in the background unless they are wanted, but who are ready to fill up their spare time in any remunerative way that may offer itself. Dances of a highly indecent nature can be witnessed in these places on any Saturday night, which is the more to be marvelled at as there is no difficulty in getting into the rooms, which are always attached to public-houses, nor is any charge made for admission. Our commissioners report several performances of this description, the details of which we prefer to leave to the imaginations of our readers.

Young men should sternly repress any desire to frequent these places. The habit grows upon them, just as betting, or smoking, or drinking, and the

morning. The dance, which had begun somewhat earlier than on other nights, owing to the fact that the public-houses had half an hour's less grace, was in full swing, when several tipsy young men, amongst whom were some volunteers of the London Scottish Corps, entered the room. Some chaffing remarks were uttered upon the peculiarities of their uniform, which would probably have passed unheeded had they been sober. As it was, before any one could rightly understand how it began, a fight was in course of progress; chairs were broken up and thrown about the room, gas globes were smashed, and the girls ran screaming in all directions. The proprietor speedily appeared, but it was several minutes before order was restored, as he did not dare to call in the assistance of the police. Drunkenness is quite a usual thing in the club dancing-room, and impropriety of all kinds is rampant. The club, however, which was principally celebrated for its female dancers, has been forcibly suppressed.

The dancing-saloons that one meets with in the East End are of the very lowest description imaginable. They are carried on to suit the tastes of the sailors on the Middlesex side, and of the soldiers on the Kent side of the river. Ratcliff Highway has a reputation for its dancing-rooms which extends to many foreign climes. But they are of a character which but rarely attracts young men of the middle classes, and then as a matter of curiosity more than pleasure. Yet as they are somewhat used by the sons of surrounding shopkeepers, it may be as well to point out their more glaring disadvantages. There is a Captain-Marryatish air about them, which

naturally dance exceedingly well ; they make themselves very fascinating, and they have a turn for practical joking and create plenty of fun. They dance in the men's hats ; when the tunes are popular they sing the choruses to them ; they encourage familiarities in the progress of the figures ; they call their partners by any nickname that comes uppermost. This room is densely crowded every Sunday night.

Another club not far from this one, owned by a man who has suffered several terms of imprisonment, has a musical entertainment—"sing-song" it is called—every Sunday night, followed by a dance, the latter commencing at about 10.30. These are rival establishments, and it is reported that the proprietors actually pay the prettier girls a shilling or two to induce them to attend. The dancing here is of the same unrestrained description, the constant practice which the girls experience rendering them very good partners to those young men who have a love for dancing. It is currently reported that these two club-rooms provide more enjoyable dances on Sunday evenings than can be obtained anywhere else in the whole of London. Much ruin is wrought among youths thereby. The ballet-girls, who are pretty and dance well, use their advantages to their personal aggrandisement, and the male dancers are apt to find that this practising is rather expensive. The ordinary club dance, which takes place every night, has also its attractions, since the floor is not so crowded, and the youth who is fond of the exercise has more scope for it. One of our commissioners witnessed a disgraceful scene in a club dance-room one Saturday night, or, more correctly, Sunday

is not harmful in its immediate results, however much it may be fraught with future evil. But in the club dancing-room all is different. No woman with the least remnant of respectability about her would dream of allowing herself to enter it. The dancing here does not commence until after 12 o'clock at night, and is then continued until such time as the members weary of it, frequently 5 and 6 o'clock in the morning. We hear of one club from which dancers were seen emerging as late as 9 o'clock in the morning. A commissioner sends us a report of a place styling itself a theatrical club, in which Sunday-evening dances are a great feature. It is in a turning out of the Tottenham Court Road, and is resorted to by many ballet-girls and others, who are allowed free ingress and may be sure of getting plenty of gratuitous "drinks." All clubs that have dancing-rooms (it must be understood that the clubs we are alluding to are the half-crown betting and gambling-clubs, specially designed for the ruin of young men, and not any of the legitimate clubs, to which no exception can be taken) admit women without any of the formalities of membership being observed. If a girl will promise the proprietor to attend regularly he will give her a ticket, but no woman of likely appearance is refused admission if she presents herself at the door. Young men employed in shops or warehouses, and whose principles have become rusty through disuse, find these Sunday-evening dances very attractive, and the particular club that we are alluding to, through the energy and tact of the proprietor, has always a crowd of showy girls on these occasions. They can

On the other side of the Thames many dancing-saloons of large dimensions are to be found. They are often owned by men whose characters will not bear investigation, and who are concerned in betting-depôts, theatrical agencies, and other such institutions for preying upon the folly of young men. To describe one is to describe the others, for the same young men of apparently weak intellect and the same young women in tawdry finery are to be seen at them all. They all help to bring young men and women into easy contact with each other, and the acquaintanceship of the sixpenny dancing-saloon is regarded as sufficient introduction. The girls will never object to "walking out" with young men they have thus met, and the freedom of these unceremonious dances is as destructive of bashfulness in youths as it is of modesty in girls. We are informed that the proprietors, as a rule, have plenty of means.

Club dancing-rooms are certainly the most obnoxious, since there is no restriction placed upon the hours to which the revels may be prolonged, and only women of bad characters are to be met in them as partners. In the ordinary dancing-room, where the admission is sixpence or a shilling, a certain leaven of medium respectability is to be met with; young women of the milliner's-assistant stamp and similar callings, who do not object to what they call a "lark," but who do not allow themselves to go any farther, make up a large proportion of the female attendance, and young men can dance with them and see them to their homes, and be safe in their own beds long before midnight. Nothing worse need happen than a coarse kind of flirtation, which

character are admitted, and part of the functions of the woman on the staircase is to obstruct them ; but it requires a very charitable mind upon the part of the visitor to believe that this is rigorously carried out. To all appearance the dancing is conducted with due decorum, the retreats to the curtained alcoves being understood to be made for the purposes of cooling ; but an evening passed in the pleasures of this room will prove to any one that they are objectionable and to be discouraged as much as possible.

There is a sixpenny dancing-room in the vicinity of Gower Street Station, which has a wide reputation of an unenviable character. Here the patronage of loose women is openly encouraged, and attractive ones can always count on being admitted free. The consequence is that the youth of the neighbourhood devote their evenings to the pleasures of the dances and the female society, with what results to their own welfare can easily be imagined. It is a wonder that the place has been allowed to continue so long, but a judicious system of secret-service money is supposed to be at the bottom of it. Inquiries amongst the neighbours seem to discover the fact that although they would like it to be elsewhere, they are very chary about making complaints. And our commissioners have found this same reticence obtaining all over London. There appears to be a conspiracy of silence amongst those who live near this sort of places, the reason for it being partly the fear of stirring up a hornets' nest, and on the part of the shopkeepers an unwillingness to make enemies among their customers.

if we except the city proper, and which, if it does not aim at being ultra-respectable, at any rate poses as fairly respectable, teems with suggestions which it is certainly unwise to put before the young. Let us take a well-known building in Clerkenwell, owned by an Italian, and widely celebrated throughout this large district for its comfortable dances. It is fitted up with all the gorgeous gaudiness that one meets with in the Strand cafés—gilt and blue ornaments, statues holding gas-lamps, and tawdry glitter of all kinds. The effect upon entering the saloon, which is approached by a well-guarded staircase, the windings of which are constantly checked by baize-covered doors, and the foot of which is presided over by the proprietor's wife, who bestows a smile of welcome upon each arrival, is dazzling to the eye. There are all the paraphernalia of "ladies' cloak-rooms" and "gentlemen's cloak-rooms," a bar, at which only non-alcoholic beverages are dispensed, owing to the difficulties of getting a licence, and a cosy little sitting-room, which may be invaded by a chosen few who have been regularly to the rooms for some considerable time. The staircase is set with mirrors, after the style of a steam roundabout. The dancing-floor is a good one, and the room fairly large; all round it are little retreats, set with curtains, and in which there is only room for two, who, whilst in there, would be completely hidden from view. There is a little room at one end, fitted with easy chairs and a piano. It is called the smoking-room, and it is not unusual to see girls of the mechanic class in here smoking as well as the men. It is understood that no women of doubtful

certain girls, but which they not only soon accustom themselves to, but endeavour to imitate. But the most dangerous point about the place, and one which shows the proprietor's hand beyond doubt, is the fact that 'all refreshments are served downstairs,' and no one is allowed to go down and bring anything up for a girl. The refreshment-bar is in the club-room, and it is therefore necessary for all those who want even a glass of water or a bottle of lemonade to go into the club-room to obtain it. Dancing is hot work, and each person is almost bound to need some refreshment, however light, in the course of an evening. Between each dance the M.C. goes downstairs, and as the place is a club, and no one but members can lawfully order anything, loudly proclaims his willingness to order for any one, much as though he were giving out the figures of a dance. The members of the club are of course in this room, and the ingress of the dancers is watched with interest. The majority of the girls are known to be respectable, and many of them run into the dance-room for an hour, having made some excuse at their homes to account for their absence. The pretty ones come in for a share of attention which is more pleasing to than good for them, and the dangers of it will readily be seen. On the one side we have youths and young girls, flushed and excited from a dancing-room, on the other the wary proprietor, a low club, and the gambling, drinking, betting of members of the same. I have seen all this myself, and can vouch for it."

The ordinary shilling dancing-room, which is to be found in every leading thoroughfare of London,

indeed, is the club, the proprietor of which has had to give up another in the neighbourhood, owing to the character it acquired, that the members seem of too besotted a nature to be capable of joining a dance, and the owner of the place has seen the necessity of getting accessions from both sexes into his 'institute,' as he chooses to style it. But there is only one entrance to the club and the dance-room, the former being downstairs, the latter upstairs, and the cloak-rooms, etc., on the ground floor. Bills setting forth the usual terms for teaching are displayed in the neighbourhood, and the consequence is that a certain proportion of young people go there. The dancing-room is nicely fitted up, with a good floor and plenty of the surrounding nooks and corners upon which the attractiveness of this class of place seems to largely depend. An M.C., in approved costume, instructs on off-nights and conducts on dance-nights, but the proprietor wishes his hall to be known as a place chiefly devoted to teaching. His club is an 'institute,' his dance-room is an 'academy for beginners.' The proprietor's wife—a big, fat woman, with some faded remains of coarse good looks still about her—takes an especial interest in the dance-room, and has an easy manner of ingratiating herself with any girls that happen to take her fancy, and then inviting them down to her room to have a cup of tea. Girls are very sharp on some points, and as it has been discovered that it is only good-looking ones who can hope for this honour, the competition is keen for the distinction. This woman indulges in a loose, 'chaffy' style of conversation, that may at first somewhat startle

out of the room. The man in charge of the cloak-room evidently anticipated my prompt return, for he had disappeared, and the waiter came out to give me my things, and in the course of doing so remarked that he had not had an order all the evening. It was about ten minutes to 10 then."

This report sets forth that the writer of it visited the rooms on a Thursday night, whilst it is well known that Mondays and Saturdays are the dancing nights—the latter for preference. We sent a representative to the place mentioned on a Saturday evening, and he found it fairly crowded and dancing going merrily on. The elementary character was dropped altogether, and those who did not know their steps were in the minority. The waiter seemed busy, and the band scraped discordantly along, intent only on getting through the programme.

We have received a description of an elementary dancing-room which is attached to one of the low clubs in Pentonville, and seems to be full of danger to young people of both sexes. The aim of the dancing-class room of the low stamp we are dealing with is to get its pupils on far enough to tempt them to bring their particular friends to the Saturday-night "advanced dances." If this can be managed of course the connection is widened and more profit is obtained.

The writer says, "The dancing-room, which rejoices in a high-sounding title, is actually the dance-room to one of the lowest clubs in the neighbourhood, a place in which the worst forms of gambling and betting are indulged in, and the chief room of which is actually underground. So low,

and a bar, a barmaid, and a waiter (by far the most respectable-looking person there) were at the other. On one of the cane chairs sat a disconsolate-looking young woman. In the middle of the room were eight dancers in a dreadful muddle in the fourth figure of the 'Lancers,' whilst near them was an incomplete set of six persons, one of whom was the instructor in a suit of dress clothes whose determination to hold together was apparently only equalled by its inability to do so. The complete set, each factor of which was in utter ignorance as to the movements of the figure, seemed to get along better than the others who had the assistance of the master, since the former could gloss over their own little mistakes and make believe they had not committed them, whilst the latter were continually baulked in their similar endeavours by the stamping and gesticulating of the teacher. My advent was hailed with delight by the incomplete set. 'Now we'll go through the figure again,' said the man in dress clothes. We did it without the music first, and the young men and women wandered about in various directions, and then, at the stamp of his foot, ran back in confusion to their original positions. Having thus rehearsed it, he signalled the 'band,' and they struck up. Away we all went into an inextricable jumble, and it was by the ceasing of the band that we ever got through that figure at all. Thus it went wearisomely on. At the finish I inspected the dancers, the men among whom seemed to be mostly tradesmen's assistants, while the women were possibly under-housemaids, and then, although the waiter and the barmaid looked expectantly at me, I slipped

for a course of instruction in dancing, the cost coming to about sixpence for a lesson of two hours' duration, with the option of stopping to 'advanced practice' afterwards. Various other advantages are set forth on the bills.

"It was a Thursday night when I visited the place, and passed up a staircase that was really narrow, but was so cleverly adorned with lamps and coverings as to look almost wide. On the first landing a startled-looking man appeared at a door with a most surprised expression of countenance. 'Any dancing here to-night?' I inquired. 'Oh, yes, sir! plenty,' was the reply. I wanted to go in and have a look round before I paid the sixpenny charge for admission, but this, he informed me, was quite against their rules. As I conjectured afterwards, they had possibly found this an unsatisfactory way of inducing people to remain. 'It's all right, sir, I assure you,' said the man; 'we've got plenty of ladies, and all we want is a few more gentlemen.' In the cloak-room I saw three hats and coats, and I was charged threepence for leaving mine. The charge in such case is apportioned to the look of the person. 'Can you smoke inside?' I inquired, with the intention of learning all about it. 'Oh, yes; and there's a bar there as well.' I completed my ascent of the stairs, and passed into the dancing-room, guided thereto by the strains of a band whose inefficiency seemed only equalled by its insufficiency. It was a large, bare room, with a few cane chairs round the sides, and the windows furnished only with blinds, and without a vestige of curtain or adornment. The band was on a raised platform at one extreme end,

teaching young people to dance, and it is perhaps difficult to find any serious fault with private dancing-classes, which merely teach an amusement to be pursued at home or in the houses of friends; but the fact that the houses of the lower middle-classes rarely contain a room large enough to dance in, and that the passion for dancing amongst the young becomes uncontrollably strong when once they have been instructed, would seem to show that grave consideration should be given to the subject by parents before they decide to have their children taught the fascination of the waltz and the quadrille.

From one report we extract the following :—“ A dingy, dirty, promiscuous gambling, dancing, and betting-club, near Islington Green, having been deserted by the majority of its members in consequence of recent exposures, has been taken by an impoverished dancing-master at an exceedingly low rental, for the purpose of imparting instruction to the neighbourhood in what he prefers to call ‘ calisthenics.’ Like the penny shows, the exterior of this place is made as attractive as possible, in order to induce the unwary to enter. No expense, within a reasonable limit, is spared to make the entrance appear showy and suggestive of internal comfort and splendour. An enormous lamp over the door displays around its four sides the legend ‘ Dancing,’ the step is scrupulously whitened, green baize swing-doors are flung open, showing a wide hall, the centre of which is occupied by a red carpet, whilst the sides are decorated by plaster figures supporting lamps. Large, well-printed bills set forth the terms

but which are conducted in an orderly manner, and where swift ejection follows upon any freedom of behaviour, are sufficiently mischievous, but cannot be so strongly decried as some others. And last of all, the low dancing-places of Greenwich, Woolwich, and the East End generally must come in for their share of attention. These latter are not much frequented by young middle-class men, and we shall therefore only have to deal with them very lightly. And it is as well, for the particulars are highly unsavoury.

We think it will be best to commence with the least harmful, and show how an indulgence in them must necessarily lead the youth on to participating in the pleasures of the worst. The elementary dancing-room seems, as we have said, innocent enough. Its pleasures are certainly sufficiently dull to make it a matter of wonder that they can ever be endured, and show strongly how few the pleasures of the needy youth must be, and how easily their evils might be defeated by the discovery of lighter and healthier ways of spending the evenings. The reports of our commissioners upon these places tell a uniform tale of dreary desolation, enforced decorum, and escape from the hands of the teacher to the more fascinating public dancing-room at the earliest possible moment. To reproduce them in detail would be as wearying to the reader as the collection of the facts was to those engaged thereon, and we think that a selection of a few of the more salient points from the reports will be all that is necessary to establish our contention that they should be avoided. Opinions may be divided as to the advisability of

have a check upon the dancing-rooms, and the increase of such institutions, so far as it is due to the failure of the gambling-clubs, must be considered a distinct advance. There is, however, one consideration ere we congratulate ourselves too hastily ; shop-girls and others in a similar position will not, as a rule, enter a club dancing-room, but do not hesitate to go to an ordinary dancing-hall. And as the latter is fraught with almost the same amount of mischief as the former, it would seem as if young men were relieved of some of their dangers at the expense of young women. As it is now our investigations prove that youths frequent the licensed dance-rooms until 11 or 12 o'clock, and then adjourn to the club dance-rooms, where they perhaps find a more venturesome set of partners. Here they can continue as long as they like ; and if they happen to have made the acquaintance of an attractive young woman at the first place they may induce her to accompany them to the second.

Dancing-rooms, to be properly considered, must be divided into several classes. Those belonging to clubs are without doubt the most dangerous, since every woman who ventures into them goes to certain destruction and every young man runs the greatest risk of ruining himself for life. Elementary "dancing-academies" are the least apparently harmful, but inasmuch as they constitute the portal to all others, they should perhaps be as sternly reprehended. Ordinary low-class dancing-rooms, where no surveillance is exercised, teem in all the suburbs of London, and must be carefully considered. Dancing-halls where the admission is cheap,

## CHAPTER XII.

### *DANCING-ROOMS.*

**D**ANCING-ROOMS have sprung into renewed life latterly. A short time ago their value as paying properties were largely interfered with by the growth of gambling-clubs, the great majority of which possessed dancing-halls as the only means of inducing young women to attend. But now so many of the clubs have died and are dying that the ordinary dancing-room proprietor finds that once more there is room for him. Since these articles appeared in serial form a number of gambling-clubs have disappeared, several of them have ceased to be clubs and have passed into dancing-halls. The change may be said to be for the better, since the evils of gambling and billiard-playing are checked, and the hours kept are not so late. Clubs can, of course, do as they like, and for this very reason will not be entirely suppressed until legislation is brought to bear on them. If the members choose to dance all day and all night no one can prevent them. But with public halls it is different. The licence only allows them to keep open to a fixed hour, and if on any special occasion, such as Boxing-night or Valentine Day, a "long-night" is wanted special permission has to be obtained from the authorities. Here, then, we

ordinary comedy and farce, but goes in for burlesques and extravaganza, and the young-lady members vie with each other in travelling as far as they dare in the direction of approved burlesque costume.

If those people who defend the theatre could see as much as we have seen they would probably change their tone. When they compare the watching of a play to the reading of a novel they might as well remember that the latter does not necessitate stopping out late at night, mixing with all kinds of dubious company, nor the midnight revelry of the Strand. Theatre-going amongst the young should be discouraged by all means open to parents and persons in authority, since it is fraught with a great deal more of future evil than appears to be at all properly comprehended.

the one side, and unchecked "cadging" on the other.

Within the last few years the growing favour in which all things theatrical are held has resulted in the growth of many amateur theatrical clubs, the members of which comprise both young men and women of the shop-serving classes. We have received many particulars of these clubs, and can come to no other conclusion than that they are an unmixed evil. There is one which holds its fortnightly performances at a hall in Hammersmith. All the young men are terribly clean-shaved, let their hair grow as it will, wear long coats, and in many instances white hats. They have cards printed, with their names followed by the word "comedian," and they imitate the lowest class of provincial stock-companies by sharing whatever profits may arise from the money taken at the doors, after the cost of the hall and other expenses have been deducted. Frequently the result is a loss, not a profit. As new plays are produced at nearly every performance, rehearsals are numerous, and the young women who are members do not on such occasions get home until past 11 o'clock at night. Enthusiastic amateur actors are found in both sexes, and one of our commissioners witnessed the performance of the part of "Jo," the crossing-sweeper, in an adaptation of "Bleak House," with all the necessaries of costume to depict it properly, by a young woman employed at a shop, who did not in any way seem ashamed of herself for appearing in such guise. Another club, which makes its headquarters in Camden Town, is not content with the

them outside. I asked one of them (for they were all in the scantiest of attire) if they did not often catch cold in those stone passages and draughty flies in their stage costumes. Her face changed abruptly from its previous seductive smile to a most business-like air. 'Oh, yes, dreadful!' she said; 'we have nearly always got coughs, and some of them gets awful bad chests sometimes.' She gazed thoughtfully on the ground for a second or two, and then dropped back into the light chaffy manner natural to her. Presently we had a whole crowd round us, all of them painted to a horrible extent, the colours in great streaks and utterly repulsive to the eye. The effect, however, from the auditorium is all right, and they never venture beyond the precincts of the theatre until they have washed the worst of it off. Emboldened by their numbers, they commenced vieing with each other in taking liberties with us—tipped our hats off, called us endearing names, slipped their arms into ours, pulled our hair, all of which we took in good part, anxious to bear out our character of greenhorns. Then they all suddenly left us with a rush at the sound of a bell, though not before they had put their hands into our pockets and taken what loose money they could. This of course was done by them as a great joke, but they nevertheless kept their spoil. As by this time we had spent as much money as we considered the experience was worth, we escaped through a labyrinth of passages into the street."

We have received other accounts of similar experiences which bear a strong family likeness, being nothing but a continuance of spending money on

made friends with us. Then a stalwart young fellow with a nice-looking face, but made up to appear hideous, came and inquired in a knowing way if we would like to take a walk round. We acquiesced, and he took us out of the cribbed prompter's box into a dreary region of dust and stone staircases, where impertinent faces peeped out at us from doors, and figures in spangles and tights now and again rushed out of a room, looked at us, giggled, and darted away through some other door. Presently a childish-looking little person, in a blue knickerbocker suit, open at the neck, with short sleeves, and short curly hair like a boy's, appeared at the top of a staircase and looked down upon us with large wondering eyes. She had pretty rosy cheeks and the blackest eyebrows imaginable, and our guide introduced us to her as Miss Somebody, who was playing 'principal boy.' We took off our hats; she ducked and smiled, and said, in a loud, harsh, common voice, 'How do you do—quite well?' and then fell at once into a chat with the three of us. The irrepressible waiter opportunely appeared, and I had the temerity to ask her if she would have anything. 'A glass of stout, please,' she said, and continued her running remarks. Just then a whistle was heard, and shouting out, 'I'll be back presently,' she ran down the stairs to take up her cue. 'Why, she is quite a child?' said I, interrogatively. 'She is twenty-five, and has got two children,' said the painted young man, and then *he* suddenly darted away at the sound of the whistle. Seeing us left alone, two or three young women came round and fell into easy talk, and made us promise to wait for

“On the boards behind the flat scene some of the performers were trying, with much silent laughter, some new steps, and they continued this without regard to us, only one of the men, with a horribly painted face, giving us ‘Good evening,’ and winking as he did so at one of the girls. The unprotected gas-jets on the inner sides of the flies were very dazzling to the eyes, and we were not sorry when our guide opened a door and ushered us into the prompter’s box. This was a narrow little place between the proscenium and the first wing, commanding a good view of the stage and of the O.P. side of the auditorium. A chalk line was drawn on the boards where the stage proper began, and the waiter explained that there was half a crown fine if any one put a foot over it, as by so doing he could be seen from the front. Near the stage end was a big gong, with a sounder attached, and a card of directions for each scene, showing when lights were to be turned down, limelight to be turned on, blue fire to be kindled, gong to be sounded, scenes to be shifted, etc. The prompter, who looked after all this, was the stage-manager as well, and the waiter whispered us that it was usual to invite him to have a drink. We did so. Presently to us came a shabby-looking individual with a card, on which was printed ‘Scene-shifters’ Sick Fund,’ asking for a donation. We subscribed. After him, but with a space of some minutes between, appeared a small boy, who said, ‘Please, sir, the chorus would like to drink your health.’ The principals came in one by one to speak to the prompter, and the waiter was always close at hand, and the performers quickly

would like to go.' I expressed delight, and my companion was equally ready. The waiter then adopted a mysterious manner, told us we were not to let the other people in the box know anything about it, as he could only take 'such as he could see were gentlemen,' and added that he would go round behind and see the manager and come back for us presently. During his absence we watched the performance, which was of the usual pantomime character. Presently he returned with a troubled look on his face to announce 'that the manager wouldn't allow it, but he thought he was going out presently, and if so he would take us down on his own responsibility.' I concluded that all this was so much strategy, intended to raise the price of his services. In about a quarter of an hour he returned in a suspicious hurry, and said that 'Mr. So-and-so had gone away for the evening, that he had squared somebody else, and we could come down now.' When we got out of the box into the passage his confiding manner became more confidential. He told us that there was no occasion to spend any money 'behind ;' of course if we chose to 'stand' the stage-manager a drink we could do so, but it was not imperative. We went down the stairs nearest the proscenium, and he opened a door with a key, and admitted us to semi-darkness, amongst a lot of side-wings, ropes, and pulleys. He shut the door after us, and then stopped and explained to us with much redundancy of language that 'gents never gave him less than half a crown for this.' We maintained the standard, and followed him round behind a flat scene to the opposite side of the stage.

from the auditorium to the green-room. An instance of this, from the personal experiences of one of our commissioners, will better explain the case.

He says,—“I went with a friend to the pantomime at a well-known theatre on the Surrey side of the Thames. He was unacquainted with the reason of my visit, and believed only that I had come, as did he, to see the performance. We were provided with an order for a private box. Orders for this and similar theatres are easily obtainable. Indeed, when the play is not very successful they are distributed broadcast amongst the surrounding tobacconists and public-houses, and any customers may have them for the asking. Such orders, however, are mere decoys, for the attendants do not scruple to inform the holders of them that they must give sixpence each for a programme, and the same amount for the use of the cloak-room. I know a theatre where notices to this effect are posted up inside. Therefore an order to admit two necessitates the expenditure of two shillings at the least. A most obsequious waiter received us from the check-taker, and conducted us to a private box in which four other persons were already seated, it being the rule to admit people to such seats on payment of half a crown. He gave us a programme and deferentially demanded sixpence from each of us. Being desirous of being imposed upon as much as possible, I did not demur, and he then asked if we required any refreshments. We had two glasses of port wine, for which we were charged a shilling and fourpence. He then stooped down and whispered in my ear, ‘I can take you behind the scenes presently, if you

but if any should read these lines who are intending to consent to their children adopting the stage as a profession we would urge them, in the strongest manner possible, to pause before it is too late. The theatrical calling is certain ruin, both mental and physical, to the bulk of the persons who embrace it; and although there are not wanting very many examples of God-fearing, respectable, hard-working people therein, yet these are but the exceptions. The topsy-turvy manner of living which it necessitates, the highly objectionable people whom it is not only absolutely necessary to come into contact with, but to make close friends of as well, the looseness of conversation, the impertinences of managers and others with whom engagements and salaries rest, combine to hedge it round with dangers both for man and woman. To permit a son to go on the stage is, in the majority of cases, to doom him to ultimate penury and to intervening foolishness of life; but to send a daughter to the theatre for her living, no matter how easy and proper the earlier stages may seem, is in 90 per cent. or more cases to expose her to temptations presented in such guise that it is almost impossible for her to resist them and to prosper in her profession.

The West End theatres have no lack of patrons behind the scenes, and the ordinary "pleasure-seeking" youth, with little money in his pocket, is not induced to invent some reason for entering, and feels exceedingly out of place if he does; but some of the outlying theatres, unwilling to forego the chances of profit resulting from the visits of green-horns to the wings, put every facility in their passage

their brothers and sisters in art on the spot. But the sporting tout, with his latest information and his news from the clubs, is always welcome, and thus it is that he is so often to be found behind the scenes, surrounded by an eager crowd of principals and supers, all hanging on his words to hear if he can tell them anything fresh. His presence is, of course, forbidden ; but as it is winked at by every one, from highest to lowest, it is difficult to enforce his absence. Besides, he is frequently the husband of one of the actresses, and is, of course, there to "look after" his wife ; and when a man is behind the scenes with such a laudable object it is impossible, of course, to prevent his conversing on any subject he chooses.

The connection between bookmaking and the profession is very close, and we could give many instances of bookmaking husbands with actresses as wives, and even some instances of the reverse. Actors' salaries, when they have any at all, are higher than the remuneration of commercial men, quite a "stick" or a "walking gentleman" receiving from £6 to £8 a week ; and as, with the exception of rehearsals, which in these days of abnormally long runs are not nearly as numerous as they were, they have nothing to do in the day-time but parade the Strand or Stamford Street, it follows that they are peculiarly liable to the temptations alluded to. At a time when the stage as a profession is gravely discussed and approved, both for well-educated young men and women, and when other walks are so unremunerative and so over-crowded, it is difficult to get parents to listen to facts in an impartial way ;

To get behind the scenes of a theatre appears to be the aim of all young men who claim to be considered "fast;" and so necessary is it deemed to the maintenance of such a character, that it is by no means uncommon to hear youths boast of an acquaintance with the "flies" which the technically educated mind at once discovers to be imaginary. Notwithstanding the printed notices found at the stage-doors of the West End theatres, setting forth that none but those engaged are allowed to enter on any pretext whatever, it is a comparatively easy thing to get behind the scenes of most of them. There is little desire evinced to accomplish this, except at such places as employ a number of young women, and here it is only necessary to be an acquaintance of one of the performers or, better still, "a friend of the manager's," to secure a passport. Going behind the scenes of the West End theatres is, however, much too expensive a pleasure to be indulged in by any but those people who have plenty of money in their pockets, since the "standing" of champagne and the tipping of officials are beyond the scope of a clerk's modest income.

The actor, speaking in a general way and omitting several noteworthy exceptions, has but two pleasures—drinking and betting. To the pursuit of these he devotes all his spare time and money, talking of horses whilst he is waiting for his call, whispering about them at the wing whilst watching for his cue, and often making them the subject of those stage conversations which are required occasionally to fill up the picture. Many actors "make books" on their own account, and are ready to do business for

state is sufficient to throw the most ardent pursuer off the scent. If, however, he does not miss her the young man whom we have already been following blushes all over his face when she appears at the door and, after an impudent stare at the people congregated around, pursues her way with the mincing tread peculiar to stage-dancers. The giddy-headed boy, quite thrown off his balance, feels a hot glow all over his body, and steps hastily back into the crowd for fear she should recognize him there, as he would, of course, not like her to think that he was waiting for her. But as she has had no chance of distinguishing him in the audience, this is of course not likely. For a moment he hesitates as she walks away, and then, as some of his companions make remarks at his expense, he shambles off in a weak-minded way and follows in the wake. If he is very young the extent of his adventure is limited to such following until she turns into a wine-bar or meets somebody she seems to know ; but if he has the necessary impudence he probably accosts her, when, if she is not expecting to be otherwise engaged, she may speak to him for a time until she can take his measure. The melancholy and ridiculous spectacle of a shamefaced youth hanging upon the heels of a ballet-girl, unable to make up his mind either to accost her or to go away, at times passing her, then walking slowly until she repasses him, then getting in front of her and standing at the edge of the pavement while she passes, and finally, perhaps, being sent about his business when he at length screws up his courage, may be seen on any night in the neighbourhood of the Strand.

Between the acts he goes into the lobby and smokes a cigarette, and at the end of the performance he adjourns, in company with a crowd of other equally foolish young men, to the stage-door, with no other intention but the inane one of observing his "Dottie" in ordinary attire. The small crowd of misguided youths always to be seen at the stage-doors of theatres employing *coryphæes*, after the conclusion of the performances, is a sufficiently significant sight. Most of them are clerks, and their appearance suggests their ambition. To paraphrase the celebrated Jeffrey's saying, they cultivate gentility on a very little oatmeal, and have no better idea of appearing fast than to indulge in loud, slangy chaff for the edification of the policeman who is told off for the particular duty of keeping the path clear. Directly the first shabbily clad young woman, carrying the well-known actress's basket, in which are stowed her materials for making-up, her small flask of spirits, and the one or two other things that she accustoms herself to bear backwards and forwards, appears at the door and hurries off down the street the loungers cease talking, and huddle up as close to the entrance as they dare, since bitter experience has probably taught them that it is one thing to recognize a young woman on the stage and quite another to distinguish her at the stage-door; indeed, if it were not for the growing habit of female supers of not washing off their make-up until they get home it would be next to impossible to do so, since the usual change from rosy cheeks, red lips, and black eyebrows to the pale, dirty complexions common to these young women in their natural

quent the music-hall come here instead, and when they come something must be done to keep them. Thus it is that at a theatre which we could easily name the class of entertainment provided is almost entirely of a music-hall character, depending primarily upon the efforts of a late variety-theatre "star," and secondarily upon a *posse* of pretty young women, who crowd the stage at every conceivable opportunity, ogle the audience with unabashed impertinence, and disport themselves generally in an obtrusive manner. The light-headed boys who assemble night after night in the pits of this and similar theatres, just as we have shown that they appear in the music-hall, become so familiar with the characteristic names of these women that they soon believe themselves to have become intimate with them. They talk to each other in loud tones of the charms of "Miss Dottie May" or the particular young person whose peculiar agility in making-up happens to please their taste; they applaud her vigorously as the meaningless procession or "compound movement" brings her periodically across the footlights; they nudge each other as they clap, and whisper, "Isn't she a fine girl!" and if their vociferations cause her to throw her impudent eyes in their direction they raise themselves on tip-toe, and occasionally wave their hats, exalted beyond all measure in their own minds if they meet with recognition. The foolish boy will then look round upon the less-favoured crowd with a conscious air of superiority, only anxious that as many people as possible shall see that he is on terms of close acquaintance with one of the actresses.

the exterior of the theatre, and the playhouse is therefore only indirectly to be charged with it ; but when the performance is a burlesque, or a comic opera, or a farcical comedy, or any of the other objectionable loose productions that do duty for plays at so many theatres it is to be found as largely within the walls as without. The entertainments at more than two-thirds of the London theatres at the present moment appeal to the senses and not to the mind, and such appeals must have the very worst effect upon the young. Within the last few years the drama, which seemed to be rising in character, has fallen back again, and in place of the poetical play or the genuinely comic dramas of Byron and Robertson, we have unhealthy melodramas, sickly, spurious, shoddy-classical productions, whose sole reason is to feed the vanity of some managing "star ;" the modern burlesque, which depends for its attention upon catchy tunes, pretty actresses, and a spice of vulgarity ; or the much more objectionable Palais Royal offshoot, which depends for its success upon the comicalities arising out of a husband deceiving his wife, or *vice versa*.

We have mentioned the fact that several music-hall performers find their natural home in burlesque, and there are not wanting instances of leading male comic-singers who have attained a popularity on the stage far in excess of their music-hall celebrity. They bring their vulgar songs, their absurd antics, their tricks, jokes, and sayings (funny enough, possibly, from their own standpoint) to the adornment of a burlesque or a comic opera, and find that they are much appreciated. The youths who fre-

as he dares, in order to postpone the evil moment of a resumption of his daily duties. Every youth knows that directly he lays his head on his pillow and closes his eyes the grey morning seems to come upon him, with its call to the distasteful duties of the office, and so he puts off sleep as long as his companions will remain with him. Perhaps he catches the last train, or perhaps he has to walk home ; but in either case his imagination is heated and his fancy excited sufficiently to keep his mind in a state of dazed dreaminess that makes him but dimly cognizant of the real dulness of the life around him.

This effect of the theatre upon the youthful mind does not seem to be as fully recognized as it deserves to be, and yet many warnings of its potency are matters of common notoriety. It is certain that under the influence of a visit to a theatre youths will prefer to stop in drinking-bars, mix in the society of dubious women, or visit a low dancing-saloon, to returning to their homes and the dulness of every-day life, not knowing that this ephemeral excitement has a much worse effect upon them than any dulness, however unchanging in its character.

But all that we have said up to now is true of the best theatres at which the best plays are produced ; it is the result of the unusual visit to a theatre, let the play be Shakespeare's or Tippy Cook's, and the players Mary Anderson or Minnie Palmer. The attendant occurrences of a visit to the theatre are always fraught with danger to the young, let the class of performance be what it may. When the drama is a healthy drama it is limited to

modesty ; and when the latter appears in some thrilling scene clad in a white robe, her hair flowing loosely in extravagant luxuriance down her back, her white arms bared to the shoulder, her neck and bosom by no means jealously guarded from the vulgar gaze, he loses his head in the enchantment of her presence, and carries away a mental impression of her which can do him no good and may do him much harm. The crowded and heated state of the pit, in which he has taken up his position, renders an adjournment to the bar between the acts a matter of pleasant anticipation, and theatrical bars are usually presided over by young women who have been carefully selected for their good looks. When the play is over the youth, with his imagination excited and his senses in a whirl, comes out into the region of the Strand, amongst the crowd issuing at the same time from other theatres, notes the men and women in evening dress seeking their conveyances, observes the brilliant bars and supper-rooms, whose attractions are of too expensive a nature to permit him to approach them otherwise than through the imagination, looks upon the gaily appalled women who flit around him with laughing eyes, and altogether feels no inclination to seek his dismal suburb and his own sparsely furnished bedchamber. Everything here seems so full of life and brilliancy that even the drudgery of the desk fades from his mind, and so long as he treads the enchanted ground he almost fancies himself as free as the giddy throng around him seem to be. At such a moment the ordinary routine of life strikes him as being especially odious, and he defers the return to his home as long

in taking our sons ; but from this we most strongly dissent. If fathers could only bring themselves to understand that youths should be taken nowhere where it would be impossible to take their sisters also much ultimate mischief might be saved. Why should there be one code of morals for men and another for women? True it is, as an eminent Unitarian minister once said in the pulpit, that the almost universally accepted idea that young men should be allowed to sow their wild oats is an abomination, condoning, and even excusing, as it does, youthful viciousness. Young men should frequent no places of amusement to which they would be ashamed to take their mother or sisters, and it is certain that there are some theatres and many more plays to which respectable women could not allow themselves to go.

The question as to whether the theatre on its theoretical merits is to be approved or disapproved cannot claim any attention from us in this chapter. All we have to deal with is the practical question whether the theatre as it exists is a fit place for the young to frequent. To say broadly that it is not might be capable of misconstruction. But even when nothing can be said against the play there is always much that is objectionable in the environment and associations. The youth who is allowed to go with two or three companions to the play probably takes a seat in the pit and watches the mimic show with intense interest. He becomes more or less enamoured of a "singing chambermaid" or the "leading lady," both of whom display their personal attractions with more emphasis than

evils of drink, the manager of a theatre a dubious authority upon the ethics of the stage. An instance of what we mean may not be amiss. The lessee of a leading London theatre recently produced a play on a very expensive scale, setting forth the manner in which young men go to ruin. He advertised the moral merits of the play far and wide. He said, "Parents should take their sons and daughters to see this drama;" he produced testimonials from a certain clergyman praising its instructive qualities; and after this he described the sensational scenes and the "roars of laughter" that were produced by a popular low comedian. To the unbiassed eye the whole advertisement looked like a cleverly worked-up preparation for the purpose of inducing all classes of people to go and see the play, and it owed not a little of its success to the Machiavellian manner in which it seemed to hint at scenes from real life being reproduced on the stage in a manner repulsive to any but coarsely constituted minds. In the days of the old Victoria Theatre the play-goer could always rely upon seeing virtue triumphant and vice humbled to the dust before the curtain fell; but, for all that, he never thought of taking his wife or daughter there. The triumph of virtue is always accompanied by so much that is distasteful and repellent that we prefer our own domestic circles not to be witnesses of it, since, after all, there is no great credit in being virtuous when you happen to know that it will all come right in the end. Now there seems to be a widespread opinion that although it may not be right for us to take our daughters to certain places of amusement, there can be no harm

## CHAPTER XI.

### *THE EVILS OF THEATRES.*

**I**T is as much the fashion now to applaud the theatre as it was but recently to decry it. The theatre is spoken of by some as "a means of education," as calculated to "improve the minds of the young," as a channel through which we may hear "the noblest thoughts of our noblest poets nobly rendered," as, at the worst, not more harmful than novel-reading. We are told that the modern drama teaches us our duty to our fellows, that it inculcates temperance, good morals, and well-living, and that, moreover, bishops and clergymen are frequently to be found among the audience. The force of all this, however, is somewhat marred by the fact that it is usually said by persons whose impartiality, to say the least of it, is open to doubt, such as actors, dramatic authors, and managers of theatres; in other words, the people who certainly profit by the enlargement of the public taste for this class of amusement. It is not for us to discuss whether they really think what they say, because even if they do it cannot have much bearing upon the case. The keeper of a casino must be a doubtful authority upon the advisability of encouraging dancing, the publican an equally unsatisfactory arbiter upon the

is really a gentleman or not, so long as he can make other people think so. If he have any right feeling left he goes home utterly ashamed; or if he be utterly irrepressible, as most young men of his class are, he supports his spirits by the knowledge that he is attired after the fashion of other swells, and endeavours to cut a dash by "palling on" to one of the showiest of women, paying for some wine for her, and talking in as loud a voice as his fear of the attendants will permit. This is the sort of thing that a youth will descend to if he attempts to ape the vices of his superiors. There must be something radically wrong in the way our boys are brought up when the majority of them, or a great minority, are imbued with such wrong ideas in respect of gentlemen and enjoyment. We do not mean to convey that the sons of wealthy people, who have been educated at college, do not disport themselves in ways that it would be best to refrain from; but, with rare exceptions, they do not misbehave themselves in music-halls and drinking-bars, nor swagger about with their hats on the back of their heads, and their coats thrown open, and big cigars protruding from their lips. Another fault to be found with the big music-halls of the West End is that, in addition to the time-wasting movements encouraged at all such places, they add the development of snobbery and shoddy gentility; they inculcate into the weak minds of young men the ideas that to be a gentleman is to do everything that no gentleman would do, and that to be low, insolent, immoral, and disgusting is the sincerest flattery that can be paid to the "upper ten."

the shilling promenade, positions in which they are probably allowed to live at home and keep their salaries for their personal use. Parents cannot be too deeply impressed with the folly of this. Youths with two pounds a week in their pockets, and no necessaries but clothing to purchase with it, waste it in absurd adornment of their body and in ruining their health by smoking, drinking, and other pleasures. The clerks and others who allow themselves to drift into the habit of frequenting this part do so because they think it sounds fast and impresses others with the idea that they are gay livers. They are, unfortunately, more or less devoid of natural acumen, and persuade themselves that the men they see around them are "real swells," living as real swells do. These foolish youths, in their morning-coats, and top hats, and high collars, watching with wide-opened eye the movements of the gentry, so as to be able to go home and practise it, seem to have no doubts about their genuineness, nor any suspicions that the men they see are little better than themselves. And yet that is, of course, the case. The full-dressed men to be found in such a place comprise the loafers of the West End, the sons of the big shopkeepers, the smaller members of the Stock Exchange, the livery-stable keepers, the West End wine-bar proprietors, and all those men who, daily brought into contact with gentlemen, fancy they have only to assume the feathers to become counter-parts of the bird. In due time the envious youth gets a cheap dress-suit, and puts it on and goes up to the promenade, and converts himself into a mean-minded little snob, who does not mind whether he

such painful exhibitions could be brought to understand that he must hold himself partly responsible for whatever is presented upon the stage.

At these leading music-halls there are the usual "popular promenades," this meaning any portions of the house to which the admission is a shilling or two shillings, and to which the young men of London flock in order to inspect the girls who go there to be inspected. But there is a great difference in the appearance of the promenades at these halls as contrasted with the minor halls. Here there is none of the freedom which is the distinctive feature of the others; attendants in uniform are ready to check any lightness of behaviour or loudness of voice, so the chaffing, and laughing, and scraping of acquaintance have to be carried on in a much more subdued manner. But such as it is, it is even of a more vicious character than that which obtains at smaller places. At one hall in the west of London there is a shilling promenade on the floor of the house and a two-shilling promenade in an upstairs balcony. To the latter resort the showiest and fastest of women, intent upon their business, and well versed in all the tricks so necessary to their success. Also as the evening wears on there is an influx of young men in evening dress, some of whom are what the vulgar call "swells," whilst others are simply young men employed in the city, who don their evening dress for the sole purpose of impressing the poor wretched creatures whom they meet with the idea that they fill a better position in life than they really do; also the usual medley of young men, of somewhat higher social positions than those who go to

their legs, a thick strap, furnished with a buckle, was passed round the throat, and the legs and the head forced backwards, whilst the strap was tightened. The boy was left thus for about a quarter of an hour, and then the strap was taken up another hole. Each day the strap was further tightened, and a case occurred of one of the boys having his back broken by this disgusting cruelty. Every man who applauds such performances as these should remember that he is encouraging an exhibition which is more cruel than bull-fighting and almost as immoral as the performances in the Roman arena. Every music-hall artiste can tell heartrending tales of the brutalities practised upon embryo acrobats, the hard-and-fast rule with all trainers being that when once a "trick" is attempted the child should not be allowed to desist until it is accomplished. Trapeze performers, who are now frequently girls, suffer chronic pains in the head and have to endure racking pains in the limbs and back. A trapezist informs us that she always has a splitting headache after her performance, but that although she is now virtually her own mistress, she is fit for nothing else, and is therefore bound to stick to her profession. The training for this sort of thing is done in France, whither all children are sent whose parents are despicable enough to allow it. It can hardly be denied that the witnessing of performances which are known to be dangerous, or at any rate hurtful, to the performers is to be deprecated, since it must have a vitiating effect upon the mind and lower the sense of moral responsibility; although it would probably be a long time before every spectator of

ances that now disgrace every music-hall in London, if that can be disgraced which is in itself disgraceful and in no way to be defended. Tumblers nowadays perform much more dangerous feats than formerly, and necessarily so if they are to demand attention. These persons of old were wont to receive sufficient applause for feats which would now be regarded as insipid and devoid of interest. What satisfied an audience ten years ago will not satisfy it now, and the complicated contortions and gyrations that are attempted by acrobats in order to gain engagements depend for success upon their danger. Such lissomness of limb is now required that none but very young acrobats have any chance of acquiring it, and thus it is that we see children of from five to ten years of age twisting their limbs and throwing themselves about in a manner that, as we are authoritatively informed, stunts and warps the growth and actually shortens life. We know that an acrobat rarely lives to be forty years of age, that he is trained to his disgusting business when he can make no choice of his own and he is under the brutal power of a relentless master. The accomplishment of his "tricks," as his somersaults are called, can only be arrived at by much painful practice and cruel treatment. Boys are strapped in unnatural positions for long periods of time in order to get the proper bends in their limbs. The disgusting brutality practised by the "Arab" leader upon his apprentices, and which was discovered and exposed by Mr. Littler a few years ago, cannot be forgotten. He found that in order to get his apprentices to bend their heads back and put them between

that there is some amount of ingenuity in his movements; the juggler who has devoted months of practice to attaining completeness in his manipulation, the equilibrist whose performance is the result of much rehearsal, the acrobat whose contortions are the outcome of years of painful training, only command the appreciative attention of the gallery; but the loud-voiced comic singer, in evening dress, who shouts out some wretched lines to a taking tune, lines which are replete with double meaning, often descending to base indelicacy, has the "hands" of all the house, and stands bowing before a storm of tumultuous applause as a reward for the prostitution of his talents and impudence. How can we hold our heads up, and talk of the progress made in the nineteenth century, when such an exhibition as this enables the performer to make his two and three thousands a year, and have his name and achievements gravely discussed in the columns of all the leading journals of the day? There is no censorship of his songs, which are sure of failure if they do not teem with vulgarity and bristle with objectionable meaning. The wretched singer cannot be blamed, as he only does that which is expected of him, and would not be tolerated if he were not utterly devoid of self-respect. It is the public who must reform the music-hall, and not the performer. So long as people will pay handsomely to hear the latter, so long will he certainly give them what they want: if they would not tolerate him, if they would abstain from listening to him, he would soon cease to sing, and speedily sink into the oblivion which is the best fate that could be wished for him.

A word must be said about the acrobatic perform-

expensive ; that they are filled by men in evening dress, and women without their bonnets ; they see that the boxes are occupied by fashionable-looking people in faultless attire, with all the attendant paraphernalia of wraps, fans, opera-glasses, and broughams outside ; they see a first-class orchestra, scented programmes, a handsome curtain, and a gorgeous proscenium, and everything seems to them quite as it should be. They take no heed of the brilliant bars so plainly to be discerned from all parts of the house, of the carpeted promenades on which the "unfortunates" lay themselves out to attract the notice of the men, of the half-tipsy swells who come in late for purposes best known to themselves, of the fact that when the curtain goes up the same vulgar men and women that we have already introduced our readers to in other halls make their appearance on the stage, and sing the same vulgar songs, and accompany them with the same vulgar gestures and repellent facial contortions. The exhibition is in every way as low-class as that of the minor hall, except for the ballets in one or two houses (not a very high-class exception, it may be said) and an occasional good ballad-singer, who is listened to with more or less of impatience, and regarded generally as a bore interfering with the appearance of some more lively performer.

It is unfortunately the fact that what cannot be called otherwise than the worst part of the performance is the portion received with the most favour. The quick-change artiste, who can transform his appearance from an old man to a lady in a ball-dress in something under a minute, receives but a scanty amount of applause, although it cannot be denied

performers on both stages are largely the same, for whilst the music-hall artistes are constantly being drafted into burlesque, acknowledged burlesque performers take to the music-hall as a stop-gap whilst they are what is technically called "resting" —in other words, out of work. The burlesque, indeed, differs little from the variety-entertainment, except that the former makes some attempt at illustrating a continuous plot or story, whilst each item in the latter is supposed to be distinct. To the former men take their wives, and nobody seems to think that they should not; but to the palatial music-halls of the west men take their wives as well, and there does not seem to be any unanimous opinion against it. And yet the performances at the leading halls are of the same tone and character as those at the lesser ones; indeed, the self-same performers, in many instances, appear at both of them. If men may take their wives to these entertainments without a warning voice being raised against it, how long will it be before they take their daughters as well, and how long after that before there is no such thing as modesty left in the world? If young men see their employers in a private box at the Pavilion or the Empire, accompanied by their wives, how can they see any harm in taking their own sisters there? as they probably would, were it not for the fact that young men who pass their time in this way hardly ever take their sisters out at all. People seem to think that because the auditorium is large, handsomely decorated, with well-furnished seats, luxurious boxes, and brilliantly lighted the character of the place is altered. They see that the stalls are

## CHAPTER X.

### *THE VARIETY-THEATRES OF LONDON.*

THE half-dozen leading music-halls of London may be grouped under the name of variety-theatres. It cannot be necessary to mention the names of these palatial places of entertainment; those who know them do not require to be told, and those who do not know them are all the better without the information. They are of quite a recent growth, and are a curious commentary upon the supposed improvement in the public taste for entertainment. Hardly one of the big music-halls of London is more than ten years old; and although the old Alhambra was at one time a music-hall, it was found to be too large to pay, and was converted into a theatre. Lately it was found not to pay as a theatre, and was reconverted to a music-hall, since when it has returned good profits to its owners. It is not yet time to consider theatres proper, but we may remark in passing that the increase in the taste for variety-entertainments seems to have grown with the descent of the drama from what was known as the "legitimate" to the modern comedy, the opera bouffe, the Palais Royal farce, and the recent form of burlesque. From the latter to the music-hall is an imperceptible gradation. Indeed the

## MUSIC-HALLS.

A curious danger is incurred by young men who happen to believe they can sing and are in the habit of frequenting music-halls. They are pretty sure to confide this to some of the "fly" young men, whose acquaintance is so speedily made. Such confidants, seeing the chance of making themselves "useful" both ways, communicate the intelligence to the chairman, who overwhelms the aspirant the next evening by pointedly observing that he understands he can sing very well, and offering to give him a turn on the stage one night, if he will be so good as to let him hear his voice first. The green-horn gives the sample, and the chairman and one or two pros. and others who stop to hear it are delighted, and the singer stands drinks all round and lends some money to somebody. After due delay, and due extra drinks and loans provided by him, he is allowed to go "on" the very last turn, and is given five minutes, that five minutes' exhibition of himself costing immediately two or three pounds, and possibly filling his head with such notions as entirely unfit him for his daily work.

came up to just let them pass the barrier under his protection. This sort of thing goes on now in some halls, and young men find it difficult to refuse so apparently trifling a request. There are many music-halls of a very low stamp, situated in out-of-the-way corners of London, that charge a low price for admission, and give two performances during the evening, the first commencing at 7 o'clock, and the second at 9 o'clock. The most expensive seats are sixpence, and the cheapest are a penny. Bare wooden benches are all that are provided, and beer is supplied in pewter pots. Such music-halls invariably belong to the landlords of adjoining public-houses, and it is an established rule with all of them that Thursday shall be "the ladies' free night," which is to say that every man can take a woman with him, and need only pay for himself. The entertainments at these halls are not worse than at others, but partake a little more of the "knockabout" character, which is pleasing to the "coster;" but the smell of the interior is something dreadful, and the odours given off by the beer, the tobacco, and the persons of the penny seats do not improve it. Dirty women, with shawls for their bonnets and babies in their arms, drink beer with the men and watch the performance with delight, whilst if anybody takes up too much room they commence to swear and quarrel, as a matter of course. Any chance visitor to such a hall comes in for more attention than the show, and if he happens to wear a tall hat it is made the target for odd ends of sausages, plugs of tobacco, and anything else that may be portable and dirty.

ceivable to receive one or two of her especial glances in the course of her performance. But it may be said that when youths settle down to the chairman's table all hope of rescuing them from their own folly is at an end. The chairmen are usually low-class men, whose idea of wit is obscenity, and whose enjoyment is summed up in the most expressive meaning that can be attached to the lower forms of sensuality. The youth with his season-ticket finds that the music-hall fun does not begin much before 9.30, so it is not until then that he makes his appearance, considering that it gives him a certain amount of extra importance to come swaggering in after most of the "paying people" are there; and as a consequence of this, he is never home until 11.30 or 12 at night, being therefore more or less unfit for his business in the morning.

But another danger awaits the youth who goes frequently to the music-hall, and to describe this it may be as well to record an actual case that occupied the attention of the public a few years ago. A certain music-hall in the south of London was nightly frequented by a crowd of the loosest women in London, and, as this became known, naturally attracted men. In due course remonstrances came from the authorities, and the management, to avoid trouble on licensing-day, issued an order at the door that no ladies would be admitted unless accompanied by gentlemen. In a short time the proprietor of the music-hall found that his chief attraction was gone. To get over the difficulty, he issued free passes to the hall to women, who then congregated outside, and accosted every man who

boy dislikes it the first time he goes, and thinks it remarkably stupid, as in truth it is ; but just as the fact that he is made sick by his first cigar does not prevent him trying again, so does he essay the music-hall until he persuades himself that he likes it. The well-brought-up youth may for a time feel rather ashamed of himself for being there, but the desire for the noise, the tights, the music, the drink, and the girls who are there every night soon gains the mastery over him, and he spends as much time there as he possibly can. Now, young men cannot afford to go many times a week to a music-hall, and pay two shillings each visit, but the managers, knowing that when the youths are inside something must be spent one way or the other, issue guinea season-tickets for six months, and in some cases half-guinea season-tickets for three months, entitling the holder to entrance every night. Such tickets are largely issued, and thus it is that one may go night after night for a week to the same music-hall, and see the same youths there talking and laughing with the same girls, and virtually making a club of the place. The chairman's table is a favourite goal for certain young men, but arrived here they become more sedate ; they drink and smoke steadily, they converse earnestly with the chairman, they regard the performance with the cynical eye of indifference, and from their exalted position contemptuously survey the audience when they laugh or when they join in the choruses. They reserve their applause for some particular female performer, whom they fixedly regard the whole time she is "on," and lay themselves out in every extravagant manner con-

finger at the audience as though to reprove them for their levity, and the girl nudges her companion to draw his attention to it, and laughs loudly in his face, and he, although for the moment he had pretended not to hear it, can do nothing less than laugh back, in a shamefaced sort of way. For to object to the music-hall entertainment when one is in a music-hall is obviously impossible, since all know what to expect, and if they do not like it would certainly stop away. Then, again, some "pros." have established a reputation for making personal remarks upon such of the audience as are in conspicuous positions, and these remarks frequently serve for introductions when young men and women in close contiguity come in for some broad impertinence from the stage. The girls always seem to like it, and the young men will certainly not allow themselves to show any displeasure, whatever they may feel. Servant-girls are fond of going to music-halls, and seat themselves in prominent positions, and go into convulsions of laughter when some dark young man in greasy curls blows them a kiss from the stage, and draws the attention of the whole audience to the fact that he is doing so. Many similar occurrences might be described, but we think we have said enough to show that no women should be allowed inside a music-hall, and if no women, then no men.

The youth who goes to the music-hall every Saturday night (and there are many who make a habit of doing so) soon finds that this is not often enough. It is astonishing how rapidly the enervating influence of this kind of performance makes headway against any common-sense resistance. The

girls like it, and as they certainly do not appear to mind very much, he treasures the stories up for future use, and lays another stone upon the wall of his growing uselessness in the world and his lessening chances of advancement.

It may be said that music-halls, more than any other places in London, even of the lowest and worst descriptions, engender looseness of behaviour and laxity of morals. They do much to contaminate the minds of the young, because they pose as ordinary places of entertainment, instead of as traps for the energy and intelligence of youth. There is a kind of freemasonry existing between the frequenters of the music-hall, which is greatly assisted by the fact that every such place has a promenade, usually in the vicinity of the bars, where the young men may strut, complacent admirers of their own trousers and shoes, and the maidens may display themselves with all the arts of which they may be master. Lads who would probably not think of accosting girls out of doors see every one exchanging chaff with the opposite sex, and therefore do likewise, in the fear of being deemed soft; and when nicely dressed young women knock up against them in the crowd, and begin conversing in an easy way about the performance, and how hot it is, and how thirsty they happen to be, find it quite an ordinary thing to have drinks with them, and cannot for the life of them see, *then*, where is the harm of it. To the assistance of the youth who is "green" comes the performance on the stage: something is said or sung that makes everybody roar with laughter, whilst the singer half turns his head away and shakes his

other people around think so too. But he glances across the bar at the reflection of his vacuous countenance in the mirror forming the background, and notes with pride the set of his coat, the two inches of cuff showing, the curled point of his pocket-handkerchief protruding from his outside breast-pocket, and is at once reassured upon his own position in the eyes of the world, and upon his certain immunity from the ribaldry of the vulgar. The young men whose ambition is to be "fly," by which they mean a mixture of low cunning and meanness, pride themselves upon getting in a word with the "pros." without cost to themselves; and as this class of beings is very numerous at every music-hall, and constitutes the most appreciative part of the audience, it is to them that Bang addresses any of his would-be funny remarks, sure of an answering roar of laughter. The fresher youths, who would neither have the courage to press themselves into close proximity nor the effrontery to ask a man they did not know to "have a drink," look on from the outskirts of the group, and treasure up the worthless remarks of the brazen-voiced "pro.," and go home and repeat them to their younger brothers, to show that they are seeing life, and are hob-nobbing with celebrated personages. But the Great Jack Bang, who may be taken as a representative type, is not content for long without engaging in conversation with the ladies on one side of the bar or the other. He tells them little anecdotes at which some of the younger youths blush, thinking what a shame it is to talk to girls in this way; but as his friends laugh at him, and tell him that the

hearted air, which attracts the empty-headed youth who has a desire to be something of that sort himself, little remembering that whilst the former is making money by his folly, he is losing it. The weak young man who asks the Great Jack Bang to have a drink (he sings the wonderful song "I didn't tell the missis where I'd been" with much loudness of voice and variety of facial contortion, and by extra hurry and roar glosses over the fact that the lines do not scan and the air clashes with all ideas of harmony) has an idea that it will enhance his importance in the eyes of his fellows to be seen hob-nobbing with so big a personage. The Great Jack Bang, who is a man with a blotchy face and a red neck, and wears a billy-cock hat and a tweedy-grey ulster reaching to his feet, accepts him by saying, "Thanks. A brandy-and-soda and a cigar." The "Thanks" is the only part addressed to the weak youth, the rest of it being said in a jocular way to the barmaid; and whilst the great man takes no further notice of his self-constituted entertainer than by just nodding to him when he commences to drink, the latter, who of course has been unable to do anything less than order two "brandies-and-sodas" and two cigars, as it would ill-become him to drink threepenn'orth of whisky whilst his guest was regaling himself so differently, finds himself called upon for two shillings, when his highest flight of fancy, before embarking on the enterprise, had but reached to sixpence each. The Great Jack Bang has a crowd of people to talk to, and it presently dawns upon the weak youth that he has made rather a fool of himself, and that most of the

looking air, create quite a sensation amongst the young men with cigars and canes, and as they are not at all bashful in their manners, they are soon surrounded by a small crowd of youths, each endeavouring to shine as a wit upon a very small stock of "plucky slang." But the eye of the feminine pro. is keen, and it takes the measure of the young men about it in a much quicker time than they have any idea of. It selects the most likely-looking from a pecuniary point of view, and at once devotes all its archness and brightness to them, ignoring the others in a callous kind of way that ere long drives them from the scene ; the same discriminating action is then taken with the others, until one remains the master of the field. It may then be his privilege to be invited to accompany her in her brougham, she undertaking to set him down anywhere he likes. Elevated by his distinction, the young man readily promises to be at the hall the next evening, when if he makes his appearance without a gift of some kind he is speedily made to feel how grossly he has erred in the ways of feminine "pros." He must also pay for a bottle of champagne, supposing that he is sufficiently foolish to have brought the expected present, and the fair one touches him with her daintily gloved hands and looks at him with her black-rimmed eyes, from the influence of which he does not then escape sometimes until he has used up his own petty resources, and possibly "borrowed" elsewhere as well, in supplying her with unnecessary knicknacks, which she regards as of no value when she has got them.

The male "pros." affect a racy, flippant, light-

week, the usual engagement being for a fortnight, although in cases of extra success it may be extended to a month, and this, together with the fact that the performers are at other music-halls as well, induces the frequenters of one to keep to it rather than go one week to one hall and the next week to another. The youth who goes on Saturday night to a music-hall, if he confines himself to one, knows that he will see a variation on each visit. An additional advantage in his eyes is that he gets to know the ins and outs of the place, becomes acquainted with the chairman, the waiters, the barmaids, and possibly the manager (for in many cases this gentleman is to be seen at a particular point of the principal bar for an hour or two every evening), and with amazing rapidity scrapes friendships with other inmates of the place, both men and women. We are talking now of the clerk who goes to the shilling seats on the floor of the house, or possibly even to the special, reserved, red velvet-cushioned seats at two shillings each, into which, after they have done their "turns," the "pros." occasionally come for a few minutes if they have no other engagement. The performers who appear after 10 o'clock have usually done their other business, and when their turn is over give themselves up to the pleasure of watching their brother and sister artistes or of scraping acquaintances in the audience for the purpose of being treated to "drinks." The female "pros." who appear "in front," as the auditorium is called, with their "make-up" on their faces, sealskin-jackets, and coquettish bonnets partly concealing their highly artificial-

brogues who tumble down without the slightest occasion, and fall very much harder than anybody else would, more men, more women, and then the end. Towards 9.30 the place becomes nearly full, and the waiters are running about with drinks and cigars. Everybody is smoking, and nearly every one joins in the choruses that are at all catching. There are many young girls in the audience, and every song that is sung has something that is objectionable in it. When it is not absolutely indelicate it is absurdly inane, and when it is not vulgar it is without feature at all. The women accompany their efforts with movements and motions that offend the taste and that arouse the laughter of young men already fuddled with smoke and spirits. When the audience disappears a horrible odour remains in the building, which has but a poor chance of being dispelled before the next evening, owing to the defective ventilation of this, in common with most other music-halls.

The performance at one of the minor music-halls, such as that described, may be taken as a fair sample of the whole ; for just as the tunes, owing to the limited nature of their scope, have a family likeness, surprising in its completeness, so, with a few striking exceptions, do the comic male singers run on the same lines and the female performers resemble each other. Moreover, as the same artistes procure engagements at two or three different halls simultaneously, it is possible to go to several entertainments and see practically the same performance at each house. Every music-hall of the smaller class changes half its performers each

appears to sing his second in a loose, light spring coat, and a hat tipped at the back of his head. He jumps about, shouting all the time, whilst the limited orchestra bangs away at something resembling an inverted scale, and it presently dawns upon us that he is pretending to be drunk. The gallery laugh immoderately, especially when he lurches down to the footlights and says something like, "I was walking along without saying a word to anybody when one of these paving-stones jumped up and kicked me in the eye." For his next song he appears in a suit of fustian, cracking a whip. He is supposed to be a coster. He does it much better than either of the others, because by this time his exertions have made him very hoarse and dirty. Then his turn is finished, and the chairman announces "the Evergreen Tottie, the irresistible male impersonator." The orchestra jingles again—all music-hall tunes have a family resemblance—and the "Evergreen Tottie," a fat, brazen-faced, vulgar-looking woman, in tights, short yellow hair, and a cavalier hat, struts on to the stage. She opens her mouth, and there issues forth a horrible scream of the most discordant character, out of which it is almost impossible to make any sense, although one may occasionally catch such words as "Charlie," "squeeze," "good-bye," and so on. She sings three songs, each in different-coloured tights, but otherwise much about the same, and then disappears. She gets more applause than poor "Poppy John," because she is a woman, and the gallery is ever gallant. She is followed by a child with no power to make itself heard at all, a nigger minstrel, two men with Irish

self-glorification it contains. It should, however, be mentioned, in justice to the performers, that these flights of fancy originate usually with the managers. The habit that has fallen into desuetude with the theatres, except in so far as the quotations of extracts from press criticisms are concerned, is still in force at the music-halls.

The orchestra strikes up a jingling jangle, the not over-elaborately painted curtain is raised, and the celebrated and versatile Mr. Poppy John makes his appearance. He advances rapidly from the wings to the front, and at once plunges into an unintelligible medley, interspersed with guttural exclamations, and somewhat interfered with, so far as coherency is concerned, by the fact that the singer has lost some of his teeth. For it must be known that no management put any but those performers whose age or infirmities render them mere stop-gaps into the front part of the bill, when there is nobody there to hear them but the gallery. What are called the "stars" never make their appearance until after 9 o'clock, unless there is any special reason for it, such as an engagement for the same evening in a distant part of London. "Poppy John" blunders along through his song, his "catch" chorus failing to arouse any vocal effort amongst the audience, from the fact that they cannot hear the words and there seems to be no particular tune, and he retires at the end of his first song with very little to cheer him but the applause of the chairman's hammer. This, however, is given generously, and a few determined-to-be-pleased auditors faintly echo it. "Poppy John" has sung his first song in a very ill-fitting dress suit ; he

As we have said, at ten minutes past eight the chairman, attired in evening dress of a pronounced Gatti-waiter character, his fingers supplied with big, fat rings, his hair well oiled, and his face very shiny, raps smartly upon his table with his indispensable hammer, calling forth the obedient applause of the gallery occupants, rises abruptly to his feet, removes a big cigar from between his lips, and in loud and rolling tones exclaims, "Ladies and gentlemen, the celebrated and versatile Mr. Poppy John will appear first," and sits suddenly down and applauds his own announcement with his hammer. We have invented the name, which we hope is as meaningless and stupid as the majority of the names taken by music-hall artistes. Before the appearance of each performer, the chairman—who is usually what is called a buffo singer, and in some cases "does a turn" himself, in which event he always comes first on the list—makes a similarly ornate announcement as to the qualities and personal attractions possessed by each. Thus "the fascinating Polly A——," "the dashing serio-comic Nelly B——," the "charming sisters So-and-so." Whilst music-hall women all claim to be lovely, music-hall males dub themselves "popular comedians," "the only," the "champion knockabout," "highly gifted," "versatile," "the people's favourite," "the prime favourite," "England's only comic singer," and so forth, and this without any personal rivalry or animosity one towards the other. Not only is this done from the chair, but in the bills as well; and any one who will take the trouble to read one of the long, narrow bills which music-halls delight to issue may be amused at the

conscientious of music-hall waiters care nothing for orders unless they are accompanied by tips.

The hall is not a large one, and the seats on the floor are arranged something like the pews at a church, only that the ledges in front are intended for the support of pewter pots and glasses. In days gone by, before the music-hall had attained its present popularity, the floor used to be half-covered with chairs, and the other half with tables, and little parties used to be formed round them, which attended or not to the performance as they chose. But now space is too valuable for this, and the audience are just as crowded as in the pit of a theatre. The character of the entertainment has possibly undergone an improvement; but the level of music-hall singing has not been raised, and the lion comique, with his rouged nose, and loose coat, and pocket-handkerchief, which he holds in his teeth at one end and swings backwards and forwards with his two hands at the other, is still to the fore. Perhaps he is less assertive and boisterous, more decent than of old, yet his loud, hoarse shout—which he hopes his audience will regard as a singing voice—and his winks and vulgar gestures are as objectionable as ever. The salaries earned by these persons are in some cases very large, and surpass even those of the regular actor. Quite second-rate performers, even according to the music-hall standard of excellence, get £10 a week for singing three songs every evening; and as there are no restrictions upon them as to how many halls they may appear at in the same evening (except in certain cases of rival positions), they can easily earn from £30 to £40 a week.

so long as they can smoke and observe the display of female loveliness. The performance commences at 8 o'clock, and at that time the sixpenny seats are full, the red coats of one or two soldiers relieving the dark mass from too sombre an appearance ; the shilling seats are but sparsely occupied by some of the more respectable mechanic class, who are not sufficiently wise to know that the entertainment is not of a first-class character ; the two-shilling seats are empty. The chairman does not take up his position in the envied arm-chair, with his back to the stage and his face to the audience, until fully ten minutes after 8 o'clock, during which time the orchestra has played through a jingling overture with much energy and less time. The chairman's table is empty, and the seats are understood to be engaged, for if any one attempts to seat himself thereat a waiter approaches and informs him "that all the seats at the chairman's table are taken." The road to the chairman's good graces is through the bar, and if the intruder has only sufficient presence of mind to at once propose a "drink" he may count upon not being disturbed, even although, as is frequently the case, the table is usually filled by the same people every night. The waiters are standing at the back of the shilling seats, where the glittering bar, presided over by two well-developed young women in tight black frocks and golden hair, in no way disconcerted at the blank appearance of the hall, and not yet bestirring themselves in the search for orders. The early orders are all for "bitters," the waiters contemptuously say, and the consumers "look sharp after their change ;" and, as is well known, the most

places of amusement in the eyes of the city youth : it is a place where he can smoke and drink—two very doubtful advantages, but powerful attractions for him. Then he can talk with his companions without the trouble of missing some threads of the performance and having to catch them again. The performance itself does not overtax his intelligence, and he can, moreover, join in it himself at pleasure by helping to swell the choruses. Women abound, and he can solace himself by ogling and winking for the barrenness of feminine society which is his usual daily lot. A description of one or two of these resorts will perhaps give a better idea of their objectionable character than any amount of generalization. We will speak presently of the half-dozen big halls, whose lavish decorations and gaudy discomforts do not attract the young men of the lower middle class so much as the smaller places, which offer the attraction of additional liberties.

For our first example we will take a hall that is situated in a side-street not far removed from the centre of theatrical enterprise. It is what is called a cheap hall ; that is to say, the price of the best seats is about two shillings, and private boxes to hold four persons cost ten shillings. It is frequented by the ordinary crowd of music-hall goers, composed of young men employed in the city in various capacities, boys of the lower stamp with their sweethearts, shabby loafers who are always to be seen in these places at night, and shelter themselves in public-houses during the day, whose means of subsistence are alike mysterious and yet apparently plenteous, and who evince a certain amount of Oriental content

ance at such places, the youth who goes once a fortnight, or at the most once a week, pays a shilling to enter, watches the performance through, and comes away feels that the indictment is too severe to be credible, and smiling inwardly at the excess of zeal, disregards and disobeys. "He must go somewhere for a change," he says; "where else is he to go?" That is a question that should have been answered long ago. Surely the inventive genius of the caterers for public amusement can devise something that shall be stimulating and recreative, and yet wholesome and harmless. The full amount of evil that is done by the music-hall is in no way fully understood by those who would amend it; there is no great, particular, terrible blot upon it, but a number of little misleading ways and a crowd of unconsidered evils, which are, in combination, no less hurtful in their results. Before they can be amended they must be understood, and the facts that we have been at some trouble to collect will, we hope, give a clear idea to all who are desirous to obtain it of the pernicious character of the music-hall and everything connected with it. Its atmosphere is replete with all that is noxious, demoralizing, debilitating, destructive of energy and intelligence, but the individual components of that atmosphere are so minute and apparently trivial that they are apt to seem almost harmless when isolated for inspection. It is therefore necessary, in estimating the effect upon the minds of the young of each component, to consider it in conjunction with the others that are virtually inseparable from it.

The music-hall has this advantage over other

expensive for them, and less fraught with future evil ; but they will not do so, and consequently we are bound to take cognizance of what is a natural disposition. Constituted as they are, young men, or at least most young men, break off all pretence of study directly they get their first place, regard chess with as much aversion as cold meat, and look upon musical evenings with their sisters as wasting time. As things stand youths will go to the theatre, and the music-hall, and the dance-room, and they go because these places are attractive to them. No quantity of argument will convince a young man that he does not like a music-hall if he does, but no one can doubt but that he would speedily forsake it for something that amused him more. The claim of the music-hall (to which we shall at present confine ourselves) to be regarded as the only place where a man can enjoy himself free from restrictions of all kinds must be disproved before it can be disregarded, and the only way that it can be disproved is by providing something better and more attractive.

Many well-meaning people, conscious that harm is done by an attendance at music-halls, endeavour to set young men against them by making all sorts of sweeping assertions which those who are conversant with the subject know to be unfounded ; for the advisers of the young do not always seem to think it necessary to learn themselves before they essay to teach others. When an irritable father inveighs against the music-hall as the house of the devil, or when somebody else gives terrible instances of young men who have gone to the bad by attend-

## CHAPTER IX.

### *MUSIC-HALLS.*

**W**HAT may be called the night pleasures of London for young men are extremely scanty. They consist of the theatre, the dancing-room, and the music-hall. Search as we may, there is no other to be found. The growth of this biggest city in the world has resulted in the corresponding development of everything but its pleasures, which remain, *mutatis mutandis*, much as they have been these last three hundred years. It seems strange, upon reflection, that all the inventive power that must have been brought into existence by the needs and desires of London should not have resulted in the discovery of some new "pleasures" for those who depend upon external aid for their amusements. At present if the young man wishes for recreation he goes, as a matter of course, to one of these three places. He goes there because there is nowhere else for him to go, and because his own resources do not suffice for him. It is only begging the question to say that young men should stop at home and study, or play chess with their fathers, or adapt themselves to a domestic environment. If they would do so it would undoubtedly be less

bet that is made lie the germs of future ruin and disaster. The traps that are spread around boys and young men to induce them to bet are innumerable, and, as we have shown, wherever they are likely to remain for a few minutes and get into conversation an enterprising bookmaker establishes himself to receive them. Young men must depend upon themselves to escape the danger, and if they once fully realize the big consequences with which a boat-race "sweep" may be fraught, even if they think they are strong enough themselves to know when to stop, they will refrain from giving a countenance to it which may induce others to follow their lead.

he had got a really good tip, by which he could recoup himself, he borrowed from his till for the experiment. The tip turned out a failure. He borrowed again and lost, and yet again. Then he was afraid to come to the office. He was not prosecuted, and is now driving a hansom cab. The other quite speedily followed his example, and was sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

Alfred B——, a Cornish youth in an insurance office in Lombard Street, was inveigled into betting, and contracted the habit of supplying his stakes from the pockets of the coats of his fellow-clerks, which were kept during the day in a lavatory underneath the office. He was discovered, and dismissed without a character.

William M——, a pawnbroker's assistant, married to a very pretty young wife, found that he was lucky at betting. In the usual course, he lost his place, and then hawked jewellery amongst the servants of West End houses. One day his furniture was seized and sold, but he never ceased betting. He was a pleasant-looking, fresh-faced young man, and he obtained furniture on hire from a firm in Queen Victoria Street. He pledged this furniture to raise his necessary stakes, but could not keep up his weekly payments. Then he obtained other things, amongst them a sentence of twelve months' imprisonment. His young and pretty wife, ashamed to show her face to those who knew her, fell into evil courses. These are but stray examples of what has come to our knowledge.

The folly of betting cannot be too strongly impressed upon the minds of young men. In the first

night rendezvous for all the betting-men who are in town. Here may occasionally be seen such celebrities as Jem Smith and Mr. Topping, and many of the members obtain the *entré* merely to be able to say that they know such characters. They are expensive, however, these acquaintances; but there is a certain "Boys of England" glory about it which is irresistible to the horsily disposed youth. In the Imperial Arcade, leading from Ludgate Hill, there is a well-known meeting-place for betting-men, to which the youth of the neighbourhood repair on the off-chance of getting a good tip. The police appear to wink at the fact, although it *must* be well known to them.

The result of betting is, in many cases, ruin and disaster for young men. It plunges them into difficulties from which it is impossible to extricate themselves, except at the expense of their honesty. The habit grows in time into a vice, just as drinking or gambling, and saps their energies and destroys their interest in all other things.

A few instances of this may not be amiss:—

Two young men were employed by the London and South-Western Bank, the one as clerk in charge of a suburban branch, and the other as cashier at the head office. The salary of the former was £90 with a house, whilst that of the latter was £120. They were accustomed to play chess for £1 a game, and to finish the evening by tossing for sovereigns. They both became members of a betting-club behind Sanger's Theatre, and immersed themselves in a science they "did not understand." The cashier lost a lot of money, and believing that

only "make books," the minimum amount they accept being a sovereign. As, in addition to the ordinary members of this institution, there are some six thousand clerks of all ages connected therewith, it will be seen that there is a wide scope for making money out of them. The Stock Exchange "Derby sweep" is well known, and the big first prize is a matter of common talk.

There are one or two "outside" stock-broking places—*i.e.*, unconnected with the Stock Exchange—which under this guise carry on large betting businesses. They are fitted with the telegraphic tapes, and are made the resorts of numbers of young men in their lunch hours. The tapes, we may explain, are automatic machines connected by telegraph wires with the central office, from which are sent the names of the winners of the various races. The machine stamps the news on a roll of tape which unwinds itself with the motion. Betting-men sometimes elect "to pay on the tape," which means that whatever the tape first announces they will accept as correct, although the instrument frequently makes mistakes.

There are little betting-clubs in every part of London, clubs to which the subscription is small, and whose advertised advantages consist of "tape and telephone." There is a very low place of this kind on Islington Green, where betting touts of the shadiest character congregate, and to which many young men of the clerk and shopman stamp resort. There is another, of a better class, to which the subscription is a guinea, at Dalston. The proprietor is a well-known bookmaker, and the place is a Sunday-

siasm. The foolish, blind trustfulness of amateur betting-men could not be better shown than by this instance.

Professional betting-men who "make books" for a living are by no means anxious to be pestered with the small accounts of city young men ; but there are plenty of individuals who combine bookmaking with their other businesses, and are always prepared to bet in small amounts. Bakers and barbers have well-deserved reputations for making books, especially the latter. The Jew barbers of Houndsditch are celebrated for their "starting-price" books. "Starting-prices" mean the odds that are actually laid against the horse just before it starts for the race. Many city waiters make books and whisper seductive tips as they bring the plates of hot meat to the hungry clerks. Tobacconists, who are well known to foster every form of vice under the pretence of selling cigars, are notorious betting-men, and we know of several shops, behind the counters of which young ladies assist, which are made the daily resort of young men with a *penchant* for "sport." Publicans in many cases make books and register bets over the counters, and this quite openly. Nay, the police themselves are more than suspected in some instances of "putting money on" with the very publicans whom they ought to denounce. In nearly every bank and most large offices there are sure to be clerks who surreptitiously lay the odds. It is hard to believe that the principals could not easily prevent this if they chose to bestir themselves.

In the Stock Exchange there are several members who, although nominally dealing in stocks, actually

skill full justice. Playing at billiards, then, not reprehensible in the abstract, is accompanied by so much that is objectionable that those who have any influence over the young should certainly discourage the taste for it as much as possible. In addition to the injurious habits promulgated by an addiction to this pursuit, the extremely bad company that a youth meets in the billiard-room should not be overlooked. The ordinary time-wasting young men, with their slang, their loose ideas, their low conversation, their general ignorance and stupidity, are objectionable enough, but the sharpers, sporting touts, and professional misleaders of youth are much worse, and individuals of these classes are to be found in every billiard-room. The youth of seventeen or eighteen who is conducted from his home to the billiard-room, amongst a lot of fellows who endeavour to be dreadfully jolly, wear their hats on the backs of their heads, stick their hands in their pockets, know the latest music-hall catchwords, joke familiarly with the barmaids, and generally seem very "knowing cards" indeed, is, to a certain extent, dazzled, and thinks it must be a fine thing to be such a dashing sort of chap himself. Not being behind the scenes, he cannot see that the red-striped shirt-front is only a dicky, and the "knowingness" the result of spending Saturday night in the shilling seats of a music-hall.

Certain city barmaids, as we have mentioned in speaking of gambling, have acquired a reputation of selecting the winners in races. There is one in a well-known restaurant in Queen Street, of whose sagacity many men speak with the utmost enthu-

but it may be taken for granted that with no one does the unwritten law of custom prevail so strongly as with weak-minded young men.

The betting is carried on fairly, and there are never any instances of trickery. This consequently reconciles the youth who is at first apt to hold aloof, and at the second or third visit he "puts his money on" some one, just for the fun of the thing. The fun of the thing is not so apparent when he loses as when he wins; but he, of course, cannot show the white feather. It is a noteworthy fact that the young men who commence betting are always scrupulously honourable in their dealings; it is only after they have been several times tricked themselves that they begin to think they may as well turn their experience to account.

Learning to play billiards is expensive, since it is always understood that the loser of a game must pay for the hire of the table. The teacher, moreover, cannot be expected to give his valuable time for nothing; and if the novice is not himself imbued with the idea the other will soon insinuate, with no great delicacy of manner, that he expects his drinks and smokes to be provided for him. Drinking, smoking, and betting are the inseparable adjuncts of billiard-playing, ill-fitted as they necessarily must be to the game. Billiards require steadiness of hand, keenness of sight, readiness of nerve; but drinking must interfere with the first, smoking with the second, and betting with the third, since the youth who is likely to lose two or three shillings that he can ill spare, if he makes a few misses and bad strokes, is much less likely to do his

every half-hour, all combine to render the place a veritable pandemonium. Yet it is not at all an unusual thing to see two or three fresh-faced youths in the room, only just introduced there by some "fly" young man of their acquaintance.

There is another well-known billiard resort in one of the semi-suburbs of London ; that is to say, a suburb which was a suburb once, but has now so much that is suburban beyond it that, by a process of negation, it seems to be almost part of the city. It belongs to a public-house sufficiently distinguished-looking to call itself an hotel, and has no shortcomings in the matter of ventilation, being lofty and fitted with glass air-holes. It has all the appurtenances that the most exacting of billiard-players could desire, and is frequented by the more aspiring members of the lower grades of city men and shopkeepers. A couple of Jews make this place their nightly resort, and "make a book" on the games of pool that are played. They take up the same position every evening with quite a professional air, and offer the odds on the players with no attempt at concealment. It has become the habit to accept their presence, and it is almost a matter of personal honour with the players to take up the gage which is thus thrown down to them. New-comers will do it in the fear of being thought soft if they refuse, and the *habitués* will not desist, lest the others should think they were losing faith in their own skill. How much influence this sort of feeling has upon young men who use billiard-rooms and bar-parlours cannot be rightly understood by any but those who are well-informed in their ways,

clean collars on in the evening instead of the morning, so that they may look nice and fresh in the eyes of the barmaids; others wear rings, and have a dog with them that they hold by the collar, so as to display them. Most of them smoke pipes of various patterns, a few cigars, whilst some of the younger ones even descend to cigarettes. Somebody once said that it was a sure sign of the deterioration of a country when its inhabitants took to smoking paper. If that be the case the London suburbs must be going headlong to ruin, for one may everywhere see small boys smoking paper cigarettes. In the room under discussion a ceaseless babble of tongues is kept up, and the conversation, when it is at its best, is chiefly devoted to betting. Betting upon the games being played is only a small part of the evening's amusement, although if the game be pool instead of billiards there is much more opportunity for wagering, and consequently more excitement. The greatest possible number of players at billiards is four, but at pool fifteen or sixteen will essay to "save their lives," each of them will back themselves, and upon nearly every stroke the watchers can bet. As the evening progresses the atmosphere of the place becomes positively noxious, for public-house loungers can never bear any windows open; fresh air is a great deal too much for them. The smoke hangs heavily against the low ceiling, the smell of the conglomerated fumes from the spirits, together with the clatter of the waiters, the rattle of the billiard-balls, the heat from the gas, and the loud, coarse jokes of the inmates, which get louder and coarser

who loses has to pay for the hire of the table in addition to the stakes. But the opportunities of money-changing do not rest here. If those looking on know anything about the players—and as the frequenters of a billiard-room soon scrape acquaintance with each other, they are most likely to do so—it is a usual thing with them to bet with one another upon the probable result; or when a rather “nasty” position is taken up by the balls the man who is about to make the stroke will frequently accept bets against the chance of his doing so. It is but fair to say that such betting usually takes the form of “a drink,” thus combining conviviality with the speculation; but it is an open question whether betting a drink is not fraught with worse tendencies than betting money. It is certain that in the former case the result, let it be what it may, is positive evil to both, since “betting a drink” means one for the winner and one for the loser, as it is contrary to all public-house etiquette to drink by oneself.

A casual visit to some of these billiard-rooms is not uninteresting. We will instance one in the Upper Street, Islington, the street which is popularly supposed to be attended with more danger to young men than any other in London. The entrance is through an unimposing public-house door, from which a passage conducts to a long, narrow, low-pitched billiard-room, which after 8 o'clock at night is filled with smoke and reeking of whisky, and tenanted by a lot of aimless men of all ages, with nothing to do until from 8 to 9 o'clock the next morning, and most of them intent upon enjoyment in the meantime. Some of them put

each public-house possesses a billiard-room, the game which a few years ago was regarded as almost beyond the reach of the middle classes is now played by mechanics, under shop-assistants, and the out-at-elbows portion of humanity with which London is so familiar. The gambling-clubs are all fitted with billiard-tables, and the charges made for playing on them are usually small. But it is not to these resorts that we intend to turn our attention just now, because the very character of the places is sufficient to keep away many youths and young men who will think nothing of frequenting the ordinary billiard-room at a public-house. It is a great temptation to the youth who, when he has finished his day's work, can think of nothing better to do than walk about the streets with a pipe in his mouth to drop into a billiard-room, seat himself on one of the softly cushioned, comfortable benches that line the walls, call for a glass of beer, and give himself up to the delights of watching the game that is progressing before him. If he understands anything of it himself he will enjoy himself the more, for he can mentally criticize, and hammer on the floor with his stick when a good stroke is brought off, or make a peculiar gasping noise in his throat if one of the players "pots" his adversary's ball. The men who are using the table are probably both in their shirt-sleeves, smoking pipes, and stopping occasionally to take large draughts of beer. They remark loudly to everybody around on the progress of the game, and in the course of a few minutes all those present understand that they are playing "100 up" for "the table and half a crown," which means that the one

are constant losers by it. The many instances that have come to our notice of youths who have been induced to bet upon horses at the confident advice of the tipsters who write for these papers are a sufficient justification for our assertion that fully half of them should be summarily suppressed.

But betting finds harbourage not only in racing, but in many other amusements—billiards, for example. Billiard-playing is one of the most fruitful sources of what may be called ordinary betting. Against billiards as a most interesting game of skill nothing can be said ; it combines plenty of exercise, with improvement in accuracy of judgment and keenness of vision ; and the only objection is that it necessitates the devotion of a great deal of time, if a man desires to excel. To those who do not play billiards, as with those who do not dance, it is impossible to comprehend the fascination which it exercises on the minds of its votaries. The youth who acquires a taste for billiards may be regarded as engaged for the rest of his spare time through life, as long, at any rate, as his means will suffer him, for billiards is an expensive amusement. A short game of billiards—"fifty up"—may be played at some places for sixpence, and in others for a shilling. The "places" are for the most part public-houses, though there is a fair proportion of "billiard-saloons" in existence. There are some exceedingly "shady" resorts where billiards may be played at "3*d.* a game," but the tables are rarely "true" enough to tempt the adept at the game, and are chiefly used by the lower class of players. Owing to the growth of "billiard-saloons," and the fact that

anecdotes and jokes are the talk of London, and which notwithstanding are to be bought at all the most respectable newsvendors'. There are two papers largely made up of "funny" stories of this description, and their absolute indecency is frequently but thinly veiled. Yet their cleverness is undeniable, and the papers number amongst their contributors some University men who may be said to have "come down to this." We know of a paper whose aim is to imitate the style of the two just mentioned, and which is owned and mainly written by a first-rate classical scholar and clever journalist. When such men will stoop to pander to two of the lowest vices of mankind, betting and indecency, it must seem that journalism is in a bad way. That the police could interfere if they would is only too palpable. But people who remember the great Kurr and Benson turf frauds, and the prosecution and imprisonment of several leading London detectives for virtually aiding in them, will not be inclined to place much reliance upon the supervision of the police. That a press censor is urgently needed cannot be denied, and that sooner or later such an individual will be appointed must be apparent to all. The sporting papers should certainly have their freedom curtailed, since they abuse it to the common danger of the young men of England. If it were not for these journals, half the betting that is now done would not exist, and many a youth would have no cause to regret the time that they were first brought to his notice. Their *raison d'être* is the love of betting that grows up with young men from the cradle, and never leaves them, even although they

chances for the forthcoming runs. He cannot go to a public-house without drinking some beer, and this although he has had next to nothing to eat all day ; and perhaps with the shilling he has just borrowed from his mother or his landlady he finds that he has to " stand " some one else a glass of beer in return for some worthless tip, which, if he takes any notice of, will cost him at least another half-crown.

Every public-house that is the resort of young men has a tipster of its own ; that is to say, some down-at-heel individual who, according to his own story, is always related to somebody in half the stables in England, and always knows whether " the stable is betting " on a horse or not. A good example of this is to be found in a public-house in Camberwell, which, owing to the fact that it is kept by two sisters, is the nightly resort of a crowd of young men of the usual class. Here, after 8 o'clock at night, a man familiarly known as " Tommy M—— " may always be seen, drinking at everybody's expense, and giving off his oracular statements with all the gravity in the world. He is the umpire of a local cricket-club, and has, therefore, a double distinction. It is instructive to note the manner in which a lot of young men, most of whom are old enough to know better, hang upon his utterances, when it should be patent to them all that he cannot know any more about it than they do themselves.

The circulation of several sporting papers is largely aided by paragraphs in the Parisian style of wit, which means very little better than gross indelicacy. With this, however, we do not intend to deal just now, beyond instancing one or two whose

that a taste for betting ensures, and they dwindle away with a rapidity which is hardly to be conceived. The betting youth, who is pretty sure to get his very best tip on the day that his funds are exhausted, borrows five shillings and stakes it on something which starts at four to one, so that if it comes in first he will receive a sovereign. All day long he fidgets about at his desk, unable to keep his attention on his work, lucky if he escapes reprimand for some absent-minded blunder, faint from want of food, as he of course has had no money to pay for any dinner, and listening with hungry ears for the hoarse cry of the newspaper-boy announcing the "winner of the So-and-so." His inattention to his work is of course noted, if it is not commented upon, and he is mentally marked down as one of the entries for what is vulgarly called "the Irishman's rise." At length the "fourth edition" makes its presence heard above the din of the passing traffic, and the anxious watcher evolves some excuse and slips out to buy one. Of course his horse has not won—it never does when so much depends upon it—and he returns to his desk only to wonder and scheme as to how he can procure the money to back his "fancy" for the next day. This sort of thing necessitates a very shabby personal appearance, walking backwards and forwards to business from the suburban home, a deterioration of health from insufficiency of food, and a shamefaced acquaintance with the pawnbroker.

Nevertheless he resorts to his usual "bar" in the evening, to talk over his misfortunes and hear what other people, as foolish as himself, think of the

of selections, and he probably subscribes. The usual price is one shilling and twopence an issue; and occasionally, in order to impress the recipient with their value, they are printed in cipher, and a key sent. The information is, of course, all rubbish, but an address is given to which money may be remitted, with the understanding that it is to be "put on" the sender's "fancy," and the winnings to be forwarded by the first post on "settling-day." Settling-day with circularizing tipsters is usually the Monday after the race. But as letters must be addressed to initials under cover to some general address, there is not much certainty of receiving winnings in the unlikely event of any being theoretically made. If the betting greenhorn has won a little the tipster may take the trouble to recommend him to put it on another "moral cert."—a slang phrase for a horse which is supposed to be sure to win—in the hope that he may lose; or he may just not trouble at all about it, and vouchsafe no answer to the young man's tearful epistles on the subject.

It is a melancholy sight to watch the young men in railway trains and on tram-cars poring over these wretched slips of paper with long, anxious faces, fingering the while the solitary half-crown, and utterly unable to grasp the fact that the selection of names to which they give such close attention is only a hap-hazard collection, without even as much value as the usually worthless stable-tips that occasionally pass from mouth to mouth. Such young men live a life of misery to themselves. Their scanty wages, which at the best would barely suffice for their daily necessaries, cannot withstand the drain upon them

the bounce," "short and long prices," and so on. The young man, knowing no bookmakers himself, and having been worked into a state of sporting semi-enthusiasm, entrusts his half-crown or five shillings to his instructor to put on a certain horse. Half a crown is the lowest bet that is professionally accepted, and bigger bets are multiples thereof. If the horse loses his money is gone, and of course there is no one to blame but himself; but if the horse wins his friend may assure him, with many expressions of disgust, that the "fellow's book was full up, and he could not get it on." This is a very usual trick, and it is not until it has happened a second or third time that the greenhorn wonders whether his mentor does not pocket his winnings, and only return him his stakes. He cannot, of course, prove this, but he decides to put it on for himself for the future. The facilities for doing this are not far to seek. He turns to his sporting papers, and reads the advertisements. Professional bookmakers of the class who will accommodate him call themselves "turf commission-agents" or some of the other titles already given. Some few of these are "safe" men; others are decidedly the reverse. But there are many who do not send winnings, and never have any intention of doing so. Those firms which are most advertised, as a rule, are those which are least to be relied upon, but which usually attract the novice. They talk about "Experience must tell! We have been forty years on the turf. For a small weekly sum we print our list of advices and send it you," etc. To the youth who knows nothing about horses it seems just the thing to receive a list

themselves, would seem to be the *ne plus ultra* of empty-headed folly ; yet this is what is done. The sums of money ventured at first may not be large. Half a crown might be styled "the clerk's bet." This is the amount he generally risks for a beginning, and it is usually upon one of the big races that he commences, such as the Two Thousand, the Oaks, the Leger. The youth is apt to think at first that these constitute almost all the races, until he makes friends with a typical "horse" young man, with a striped shirt, a brown "bowler" hat, and a horse-shoe pin, which he is pretty certain to do before very long. This young man may be in the same office or he may not, but he knows all about everything, and although he does not seem to make much money himself, he is anxious to do all that he can for his friends. As soon as the novice finds out that there is a horse-race every day for about eight months in the year, he at once sees what numberless opportunities there are of making money. His friend points out the advantages of the sporting papers and the various guides, shows him where to "put his money on," and how to do it with a certainty of "making something." The friend usually finishes up with borrowing whatever he can get, but of course a man cannot be expected to give his time for nothing. This sort of friend has a frank and racy manner, which causes him to be freely trusted at first. He knows a man who "makes a book," and he offers to place his new friend's money for him. He explains that sometimes a man has his book full, and cannot take any more, and also defines curious expressions, like "on the nod," "on

be a mistake to suppose that the vice of the turf, any more than other vices, is confined to men who are young.

In addition to the papers that devote themselves exclusively to what they call "sport," we must remember that every daily paper has a sporting article, and gives particulars of the "latest London betting." It must be difficult for young men who so frequently have betting and racing thrust upon their notice to believe that there can be much that is wrong in it. But experience teaches, and the youth who develops a passion for betting and has only his limited wages wherewith to satisfy it soon learns, that the punishment it brings in its train is sweeping and unavoidable. Against the turf as a sport there may not be a great deal to say; and the best criticism upon it, for cruel common sense, was uttered by Richard Cobden, when he said, "That out of a given number of colts, the name of the one which could run the fastest did not interest him." But the vast majority of persons who pretend to an interest in the turf care nothing for it beyond the opportunities for betting that it offers. Young men who discuss racing in offices and wine-bars never consider the beauty nor the breeding of a horse, nor even its speed in the abstract. It is only the name of the horse that has the best chance of winning that interests them, and that only interests them because they have a few shillings risked upon it. Hazarding money which they cannot afford to lose, upon something which they do not understand, and with persons whom they know to be a great deal sharper than

knows that these are professional bookmakers who are open to receive amounts from five shillings upwards, to be placed on any horse that the sender may select.

In another we find such advertisements as the following : "The 'S. W.' System ; circular forwarded on receipt of self-addressed envelope. Apply," etc. "Jack Black's" (*the name is ours*) "1888 season. Terms 20s. All who subscribe before January 1st will receive Lincoln and Liverpool daily wires free." Most of the other sporting papers have similar advertisements. The lower they get in the scale of respectability, the more daring they become ; but to all intents and purposes, it seems to us that the examples we have given are quite as bad as they can be, since they distinctly point out to young men where they may go to be plundered and ruined. Let it be understood that we make no charge against these papers or their advertisers of playing otherwise than strictly within their own rules, but to make money at betting requires a combination of sharpness and experience that few city clerks or shopmen can aspire to. If street betting is illegal, and none of us can pretend that it is not, then betting by advertisement must be distinctly a breach of the spirit of the law, and for the sake of the hundreds of young men who are annually led astray by the attractions of horse-racing, some steps should be taken to check these public finger-posts to ruin. A discussion recently took place in the daily papers regarding the enormous circulation of sporting papers, which shows us how wide an influence they must have upon the youth of England ; although it would

the list of runners is exhausted, when they recommence and go through them again. By this means there is always somebody with a winner, and genuine testimonials may be procured, giving, in some instances, leave to other readers to write to the senders and verify the facts for themselves. But it follows that there are more failures than successes, and the youths who aspire to make money on the turf get tired of one tipster after a few failures and try another. Very possibly the new guide is the old under a different name. We hear of one man who produced five new sporting papers in a year, none of which ran simultaneously.

In almost any sporting paper numberless advertisements allure the half-initiated to a consultation. An example of this is the following, taken from the columns of a sporting paper, name and address being omitted: "Mr. A. B. begs to inform his clients and the public that his offices are ——. Established 18—." It is not difficult to divine who the clients must be in such a case. Many a "client," possibly as a result of knowing Mr. A. B.'s address, goes frequently without his lunch, and walks up to business in boots that sadly want repairing. Here is another from the same paper: "Noblemen and gentlemen who are able to appreciate reliable intelligence of a practical turfite of twenty-five years' experience, having superior associations on the turf, also at the principal training quarters, should communicate without delay for terms to ——" etc. Other advertisements give merely names and addresses, in some cases with the curious description "turf accountants" after them; but every one

the *Turf Tipster*, printed on vapoury paper, with worn-out type and smudgy ink, eagerly scans that column which is headed "Important to our Readers," or "How to Back the Winner," or something of the sort, and greedily swallows the bait that is often so cleverly laid. "We"—that is, the broken-down beerhouse loafer who is the owner, and writer, and "everything" of the sheet—"are constantly in the receipt of important information from trainers and others"—who, of course, are always sure to know exactly which horse is going to win and which is not—"and this information we are prepared to impart privately to our readers, charging only a small fee to cover the expense of collecting." Then they go on to hint—not daring to say anything clearly—that the best thing is to "place your bets" with some respectable turf authority, who will be able to get "on" with bookmakers of undeniable character. Read between the lines, this sort of thing means, "Send your money to the editor of this paper." Many of these papers rely upon their own obscurity for impunity from police interference, and when they do attract the attention of the law they quietly drop out of existence under one title and reappear under another. It may be needless to say that such "information" is absolutely worthless, notwithstanding the fact that such prints can always point to a long list of extraordinarily successful tips, as well as to several testimonial letters from delighted and satisfied recipients of them. The course adopted by the editors of such papers in dispensing tips is virtually the same as that practised by the public-house tipster. They send a different horse to every applicant, until

*ence, and when the market prices are controlled quite as effectually as any Stock Exchange quotations."* The italics are ours. Was anything ever written that was more grossly misleading? How can there be less harm in betting by correspondence than by word of mouth? and how much easier is it for a junior clerk to lose ten shillings in the form of a postal order than in current coin of the realm? That a paper with an enormous circulation, such as the *Sportsman*, can be found willing to disseminate such pernicious doctrines as these should surely be regarded as sufficient reason for some decisive steps being taken to limit its power of doing harm.

The number of sporting publications is sufficiently astonishing, especially to those who are unacquainted with the numerous indirect ways of making these prints paying properties. There are close upon fifty journals issued in and around London. As such papers go, about ten may be styled respectable, relying upon their circulations for their newspaper existence; about another ten rely on their circulations, but can hardly be styled respectable; whilst the remainder consist of printed sheets, issued in some cases for private purposes, and in others for gulling inexperienced youth, the majority of them disreputable both in appearance and matter, and appealing to the worst passions of the human mind. A usual dodge is to offer "advice," in the form of the name of a horse that is "likely to win" in a certain race. The fee for this advice varies, but as it costs the senders nothing but the trouble of putting it in the post, it is all clear profit. The boy who buys a wretched rag, rejoicing in some such title as

got up in a similar way to shipping reports and Stock Exchange price-lists, and contain the ages of the horses, their weights, and all information appertaining to the racing future. They even go so far as to caution operators against "welshers" and "bogus firms," who offer better prices than those current in the market, but from whom winnings are not always to be obtained—and their cautions are no doubt *bond-fide* ones. An extract from the *Sportsman* upon one of these firms may be of interest, as showing the assistance accorded them in evading the moral spirit of the law:—

"The police of the town of Boulogne have no cause to complain of the law in England which banishes *respectable commission-agents*. It has brought them several respected residents, and there is not the slightest chance of the Boulogne business ever being interfered with. Everything is carried on in the most loyal and straightforward manner, and the offices of Messrs. Valentine, Hardaway, & Topping would resemble a bank if they were thrown open. There is a sort of record-room where all the correspondence is received, opened, and sorted. Every transaction which has taken place since the office was opened has been duly recorded. Custom keeps the doors closed, and no one is admitted into the house of business, where affairs are transacted by correspondence. The confidence merited by the Boulogne firm and the high character borne by the Englishmen who have settled down there have tempted others to imitate their method of doing business. *Any one can understand that there can be no harm in betting when it is carried on by correspond-*

tises in every sporting paper, and announces that it sends a printed sheet "containing the latest market movements on all big events, which is forwarded free on receipt of post-card containing address." It also announces its willingness to receive any bets—or as it prefers to call them, "commissions"—from five shillings upwards, either for horses to win or "obtain places." To obtain a place is to be one of the first three to pass the winning-post. From their own point of view these people carry on their business in a perfectly respectable manner, and those who send their money may rely upon receiving winnings if they make them—by no means the normal case with bookmakers and betting-agents. Private bookmakers may be seen in barbers' shops and at railway bookstalls, and oddly enough are frequently bakers and milkmen. There are several bakers and milkmen in Islington who make much more money by bookmaking than by pursuing their legitimate trades.

The English betting law as it stands, which consists virtually of what is called the "Ready-money Betting Act," is of course powerless to prevent this kind of thing. But as betting in this cold-blooded way is distinctly illegal, we rather wonder that some steps are not taken to prevent the sporting papers displaying advertisements which certainly break the spirit if not the letter of the law. Another of these "respectable guides" is Mr. James Webster, who also carries on business at Boulogne in much the same style, issuing a weekly printed sheet of prices at which bets may be made on the horses for the forthcoming races. The circulars are

mention numbers of older people, whose appearance and position would lead one to expect them to be the very last to give their attention to such matters, and their hurtful influence has probably never yet been fully considered. It is a mistake to suppose that sporting papers are read only by what are called "horsey" young men; that is to say, youths who dress themselves in short coats and tight trousers, and wish their companions to believe they are very "knowing cards" in all matters appertaining to the turf. The youth who buys his *Sportsman* or *Sporting Life* pins his faith to its utterances, and swears by the prophecies of the writer with a flashy *nom-de-plume*, generally couched in a hazy verbiage which leaves him in a muddled condition as to their real meaning. A few years ago these papers were in the habit of coming out twice a week, and then only had a limited circulation. They are now issued every day, and two or three times a week find sufficient matter to make up double numbers. A great part of their contents is composed of the advertisements of betting men, known as bookmakers, some of whom offer special facilities for betting on limited means.

It is not legal for a man in London to set up an office where bets may be recorded, and thus it is that these firms—for they may so style themselves, since they make a regular business of betting, having the usual paraphernalia of offices, clerks, books of account, etc.—carry on their business by letter from the other side of the Channel. A notable instance of this is the firm of Messrs. Valentine, Hardaway, & Topping, whose place of business is at Boulogne-sur-Mer. This firm adver-

his ventures ; he strives to gain some knowledge of horses and jockeys. He is much too new at the work to know anything himself about tips, but is apt to get introduced at a very early age to some "horsey" individual who frequents a suburban public-house, and is a coachman or a groom, or something of a kindred nature, and who is therefore supposed to know everything about horses. The fellow is regarded by these unsophisticated youths as a kind of oracle on the subject, and his lightest utterances are listened to with awe and acted upon without hesitation. The oracle works his own advantage by giving every youth a different "tip," with the result that if five or six horses are running in a race the probability is that some of his juvenile followers get the name of the winner given them. It is considered very bad form to make a fuss if the information that is so freely given should prove incorrect, but the tout does not forget to remind the youths who have received good tips of the correctness of his advice. Young men soon find out, too, that these tipsters do not expect to give advice for nothing, and that it is hard work indeed to refrain from making over a substantial portion of their winnings to the man through whose good offices they were made.

But public-house tipsters do not flourish so well now as they did a few years back, and the cause of their decline is to be found in the enormous increase of sporting papers, which bring much and varied information within the reach of the persons who are desirous of obtaining it for a comparatively nominal outlay. These papers are to be found daily in the hands of a majority of the youths of London, not to

thought "mugs" than of anything else, and would much rather run the risk of losing a little money than of being classed as such. There are, of course, a few who hold back, but they are what may be termed the pronouncedly religious ones. Young men are not apt to look much below the surface of things. The sinfulness of betting cannot be made so apparent as its foolishness; and it seems to us that there would be a greater chance of their abstaining from the practice if the sinfulness were not so much enlarged upon as the foolishness of young men's hazarding their small earnings on matters of chance. The clerk who is receiving from fifteen shillings to a pound a week cannot afford to lose half a crown every now and again, and if this could be put before him in such a way as not to wound his susceptibilities he would probably agree with it at once.

Beyond the Derby sweepstakes do not go, and the youth who is developing a taste for hazarding his money must look elsewhere for accommodation. From the boat-race to the horse-race is the obvious step. The youth who has won is anxious to increase his winnings, and the youth who has lost is perhaps not so anxious to recover his money as to show that he does not mind having lost it. Although his lack of means may be notorious, he can never bring himself to accept the fact, and will always sooner put himself to personal inconvenience than acknowledge that he cannot afford to lose his money. So, having once tasted of the sport, he goes on.

He endeavours to be more or less systematic in

fixed at a shilling or sixpence, and perhaps twenty join. There are then two prizes and eighteen blanks. The winner of the race generally receives about three-fourths of the money subscribed, and the loser one-fourth. The mode of procedure is probably well known, but it may not be amiss to describe it. Twenty slips of paper, of the same size, are twisted up and put in a hat. On one of them is written Oxford, on another Cambridge. The others are blanks. The names of the twenty subscribers are placed in another hat, written on twenty similar pieces of paper. One person draws a name from the first hat, and then draws from the other hat for the owner of that name. The one who receives the winner of the race of course wins fifteen shillings, and, it is needless to say, from that time forth is willing to join any number of similar experiments. Boat-race sweepstakes are, however, not confined to offices. We know of a youth, the son of a well-to-do city merchant, who is allowed to get one up in his father's house every year, into which he presses the servants, his mother, and anybody else he can. It is a great annual joke to every one, and is encouraged as a piece of harmless fun.

But the Oxford and Cambridge boat-race only comes once a year, and that is obviously not often enough for the youth who has imbibed a taste for betting. So a sweepstake is got up on the Derby. In most banks, insurance offices, and warehouses the "Derby sweep" is an institution. Into this nearly every one must go, under the pressure of public opinion. Young men have a greater fear of being

use these meaningless phrases, which soon, however, begin to acquire meaning. Somebody takes him at his word, and asks him what he will bet. The boy, who has only used the phrase in the same way that he has done a dozen times before, is taken aback, but is unwilling to appear diffident, and has to stake some small sum, say sixpence. The sixpence changes hands, and the price of a dinner is lost to one ; while this same bet is but the precursor of others, for the boy is then anxious to win his sixpence back if he has lost, or get another in the same easy way if he has won.

Those parents who at Christmas-time allow games of cards to be played for stakes have perhaps more to blame themselves for than they would like to admit. It is the easiest matter in the world to implant a gambling spirit, and it is the hardest matter to eradicate it. To win at such games of chance is fraught with unseen danger, yet parents invariably contrive that the children shall rise the winners. The money won is spent on sweets or other small indulgences, and an association with gambling is thus created. The parents think that as it is only once a year it cannot very much matter, and so the evil grows.

The Oxford and Cambridge boat-race is responsible for sowing the betting fever in many a youthful mind. There are but few offices in the city in which any number of young men are employed that do not get up a sweepstake on the boat-race. A sweepstake is an unalarming matter, and many will go in for it who would be extremely loath to bet right away. The amount for each subscriber is

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *BETTING.*

IT is difficult to realize how large a hold the habit of betting has upon the young men of London. Gambling has to be conducted under circumstances which render it more or less difficult of attainment, and the clubs which may be regarded as the homes of gambling are of such a class that comparatively few young men can gain admittance to them. It is otherwise with betting. Every boy bets, almost from the cradle, and the tendency develops more strongly with each succeeding year. Its permeating influence is to be seen in the middle-class household and the daily school, so that when a youth goes to business it is quite a matter of course for him to offer to substantiate every statement he makes by betting upon it. One has only to listen to the conversation of a group of schoolboys to realize this. A boy advances a remark, upon which another throws doubt. Immediately the first says, "I'll bet you it is so," and the second caps it by saying, "I'll bet you it is not." It is only their mode of arguing, as of course they do not really bet, but it is significant of the depth of the national habit.

By-and-by the youth leaves school, and becomes a junior clerk or a warehouse-boy. He continues to

so fair a chance of bagging great numbers of both large and small game!"

It is indeed to be hoped that this expectation with regard to the Excise officials will be fulfilled in the fullest manner, as it is one more method of getting at the clubs and forcing them under the notice of the police.

Next, we would once more impress upon our readers an extremely important comparison. There are many pressing social questions the practical answer to which is beset with innumerable serious difficulties, but the question as to how to deal with gambling-clubs is easily answered. Some things cannot be stamped out to any extent, if at all, by means of law ; gambling-clubs can be repressed to a very great extent. If mere law would suffice to check certain evils we have not yet made the law, whilst for diminishing and almost extirpating the noxious influence of gambling-clubs the Legislature amply provides. We may not know how to approach other tasks ; this work, at all events, lies ready to our hands, and the tools are forged wherewith to accomplish it. It is therefore no credit to us that we are passive.

We may therefore sum up in the following censure :—

That the neglect on the part of the police to carry out the commands of the Legislature is absolutely inexcusable ; that the inferior officers are deserving at the least of severe reprimand for their gross perversion of duty, in not reporting gaming-houses and in accepting bribes ; but that the real responsibility for the neglect rests with the superiors, who have refrained from enforcing the law, have passed over without reproof the misdeeds of their subordinates, and have so been guilty of a most serious and reprehensible breach of trust towards the public.

We have only a few words more to say before quitting the consideration of gambling in London. And first, we would shortly draw attention to the enormous liquor traffic carried on in connection with the clubs. This matter is rather outside what is at present our more immediate object, but we gladly give additional publicity to the following quotations from the *St. James's Gazette* : “ The vast majority of the smaller and least reputable of London ‘ clubs ’ are what is called proprietary ; that is, the concern really belongs to one or more persons, and not to the members as a whole. The effect of a decision given in the Queen’s Bench Division is to make the sale of intoxicating liquors in such clubs illegal. The proprietor in the case in question was fined by the magistrates, and the court has now affirmed the conviction. We may expect this decision to be followed by a zealous activity on the part of the Excise officials, who have not had for many years

Further, the law has made everything smooth in this respect. By 8 and 9 Vict., c. 109, s. 6, the Commissioners of Police are authorized to enter, forcibly if necessary, *any house suspected* to be a common gaming-house, and seize all instruments of gaming, and take into custody all persons found therein. That is to say that if the police merely suspect a house, and cannot be bothered to send detectives first, all that the Commissioners have to do is to send down to the suspected house a superintendent and some men, and collect evidence of the most direct and conclusive kind in the most direct and forcible manner. There is no reasonable ground on which the police may be absolved from the neglect of their duty. To put the matter into a series of propositions, we claim to have shown—

1. That the law declares gambling such as is carried on daily in London to be illegal.
2. That it grants the police special facilities for obtaining information and evidence of gambling.
3. That it provides very effectively for the conviction of offenders.

And we further assert—

1. That the inferior members of the force are constantly in the habit of accepting bribes from those interested in maintaining illegal gaming-houses.
2. That the superior officers of police are fully cognizant of the entire circumstances of London gambling.
3. That the few raids upon gambling-houses which have been undertaken in recent years have been, without exception, forced upon the police by external influence.

“ Austro-Hungary ” club in Greek Street, Soho ; and he hinted that existing clubs do likewise. But it may be said, whilst the rank and file of the force are aware of the clubs, the superior officers, whose duty it is to give the orders for raids on clubs, may be quite ignorant of the state of affairs. To this we answer that the vast majority of the superiors have risen from the ranks, and are just as well acquainted with the dens of all descriptions in London as are the men on night duty. And, in addition, we would point out that over and over again cases of robbery are reported which involve clubs, and which are bound to come under the notice of the superintendents and inspectors. In fact, it is merely for the sake of completeness that we have considered the probability of the force being unaware of what goes on in connection with gambling, for any one who has the faintest idea of the workings of a huge police force would never doubt for a moment that gambling-houses are as little hidden from it as are public-houses.

We spoke of another possible excuse ; it may be by a stretch of the imagination considered possible, but certainly not probable. It is that the police are unable to get definite evidence. On this point we shall merely remind our readers that our commissioners had very small difficulty in obtaining access to the clubs. Is it likely that Scotland Yard is behind Paternoster Row in facilities for collecting information ? Scarcely ! And if a concrete argument is wanted it may be found in the fact that policemen in plain clothes were the chief witnesses in the recent case of the raid near the “ Elephant and Castle.”

force knows every foot of London. The authorities will tell you that their men know each stone in such a district as Seven Dials. It is not possible that an officer shall be on duty one night in the vicinity of a club without learning about it. He sees men and women going in at all hours, and coming out early in the morning ; many of the people who go in are perfectly well known to him as thieves, as hard drinkers, as prisoners of some kind at some time or another. Complaints of robbery are made to him, and it cannot be supposed that he will not be fully aware of the nature of the house.

Furthermore, from our own knowledge we are prepared to make a more serious charge, and we do it most deliberately and on extensive information. The members of the police force are constantly receiving "tips" both from frequenters of the clubs and from the proprietors. These tips are in reality bribes. The officer distinctly understands what the money is for—to keep his mouth shut. We are far from saying that every policeman accepts silence-money from the clubs ; what we do affirm is that bribes are by no means rare. The result is easily imagined. Policemen are human, and the fact is that their interest lies much more in the direction of remaining silent about gaming-houses than in reporting them. In the one case they spare themselves trouble and at times make money by so doing ; in the other they would be making extra work for themselves and doing away with one class of tips. For example, an officer told a commissioner that he had repeatedly received a sovereign at a time from swindlers and others frequenting the old

c. 9, s. 12, a penalty of 6s. 8d. is imposed on every person who plays in a gaming-house for every time of playing therein.

As baccarat is the game with which in considering London clubs we are concerned, and as Justice Hawkins has declared baccarat to be an illegal game, therefore if the players in our clubs be proceeded against on proper grounds they will be convicted.

Thus, then, it must be evident to a little consideration that so far as gambling-houses are suppressible by any law, all that is requisite is the vigorous enforcement of the existing law. There are alternative modes of attacking the gaming as illegal, either of which would cover nine-tenths of our clubs. The proprietor is punishable in whatever guise he may appear; dancing may be carried on as well as gambling, and rules and regulations formulated by the dozen, without making a club legal; the committees of all kinds are indictable; and the players may be convicted if care is but taken. The evil is great, but the law amply provides for its effectual repression; and why, then, is it not repressed? There is no need to ask whose duty the repression is; what we have to ask is why that duty is not fulfilled. There are but two excuses which it is possible to put forward on behalf of the police. The first is that they are ignorant of the existence of the clubs, and it is an excuse which can be safely disregarded by any one who knows anything of the metropolitan police. The ordinary policeman is as well acquainted with the whereabouts of gaming-houses as are gamblers themselves. As a whole, the

will, most effectually. The managers of the London clubs are usually proprietors also. Some are merely deputies of the proprietors ; others are appointed by committees ; but they are all covered. Whether owner, occupier, caretaker, or manager appointed in any way whatever, the person in charge of a common gaming-house is punishable, under the Act of 1854, by fine not exceeding £500 or twelve months' hard labour. But even were it possible for such a person to evade this Act, he may be indicted, irrespective of any statute, for committing a common nuisance. So says Mr. Justice Hawkins.

Committees, too, are punishable. They are held, as in the case of *Jenks v. Turpin*, to "assist in conducting the business" of the gaming-house, and are liable to the same penalties as the proprietor or keeper. Whether the club be proprietary or not, any committee, whether appointed by the proprietor or elected by the members, is directly responsible to the law for the gaming which is carried on in the club in whose management it takes part. This is under section 4 of the Act of 1854.

Then as regards players. In the *Park Club* case the three players indicted succeeded in freeing themselves on appeal. They were summoned as "assist- ing in the conduct" of the club. Justice Hawkins ruled that "it is not an offence to add to the profits of a common gaming-house ;" the law requires that there shall be evidence of share and part in the care or management of the house. *But though the player is not liable in respect of a common gaming-house, he is distinctly liable if he be indicted as playing a game illegal in itself.* Moreover, by 33 Hen. VIII.,

anything in such an arrangement whereby the law may be evaded? *No*; in the Park Club case rules were produced which Justice Hawkins described as admirable, and admirable as they were, they did not hinder judgment against the club. The plain question to be answered is, Do people habitually congregate for the purpose (among others, it may be) of gaming? Yes, they do. Then the places where they so congregate are common gaming-houses.

And supposing that proof were wanting in any particular case that people *habitually* gathered to gamble, we can then turn to the question, What game were the people playing on the occasion out of which the case arose? And for our purposes it is sufficient to say that baccarat is played in almost every gambling-club in London. (Other games are of course played, among them being hazard.) Then is baccarat an illegal game? Yes, according to Justice Hawkins it comes under the meaning in the statute, as being a game of cards which is also not a game of mere skill. Therefore, apart from any dispute as to whether a club is, in the eyes of the law, a "common gaming-house," if baccarat be played there all persons concerned in the game are punishable.

Thus we submit—

1. That all the clubs of which we have spoken are "common gaming-houses" without any manner of doubt; and—

2. That games are played in those clubs which are in themselves illegal, apart from any consideration of place.

Will the law, then, touch the club-managers? It

The players, therefore, in the Park Club case might have been convicted had the information laid against them charged them with playing an unlawful game, instead of with "assisting in the management of the business of a gaming-house."

We have given descriptions of the structure and function of London gambling-clubs. We have seen what the Legislature declares to be illegal gambling, and also what interpretation the courts have put upon the words of the Legislature. Is there any one who will doubt that the clubs are amply covered by the law as it stands? We think not. But as we are to frame an indictment against the executive of the law, there is every reason why, at the risk of iteration, our grounds must be made perfectly clear. We have shown what is illegal. To obviate any possibility of vagueness, we shall now show in detail that the clubs do come within "what is illegal."

Gambling-clubs are certainly "houses in which a large number of persons habitually congregate for the purpose of gaming;" therefore they are common gaming-houses, and as such are forbidden by section 4 of the Act of 1854. The "large number of persons" are for the most part members; *but*, as will be remembered, the restriction of gaming to the members of a club does not make it any the less a common gaming-house within the meaning of the law. Gaming is not the only purpose of some of the clubs; *but* the fact that billiard-playing, dancing, and ordinary social functions are carried on in them does not prevent their coming under the head of houses "for the purpose of gaming." Most of the clubs have elaborate rules and regulations; is there

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provision against "common gaming-houses," nine-tenths of them would be covered by the illegality of the single game. Says Justice Hawkins, "It is a game of cards. It is a game of chance; and though, as in most other things, experience and judgment may make one player or banker more successful than another, it would be a perversion of words to say that it was in any sense a game of mere skill. *It is therefore, in my opinion, an unlawful game within the meaning of the statute.*" This is clear enough; and it is excessively important to remember that after this judgment the playing of baccarat, apart from considerations of time, place, or persons, is distinctly illegal and punishable as such.

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cards at a recognized value). If the banker shows, say, four, the right punter nine, and the left eight points, then the bank loses, and all the punters on both sides receive from the banker double the stakes which they had previously laid on the table. Suppose the banker had eight, and the punters had five or six respectively, then the banker would collect all the stakes. The stakes are tabled before each "draw" of the cards; and the banker is forced to permit the staking by players of money up to the amount of his "bank," which we supposed to be £25. Thus there is not the slightest skill in the game; it is one of pure chance. That is to say, when the cards are shuffled and dealt fairly the game is pure chance-work; but as a matter of fact, in the clubs with which we are concerned there is more cheating than fairness, and consequently the bank (which alone has the chance of cheating) almost invariably wins in the long-run. On this point hear Hoffmann, the celebrated sleight-of-hand expert: "In fact, to the gambler, veteran or novice, who may be desirous of being swindled out of his money in the easiest possible way and with the smallest possible amount of satisfaction we commend the game of baccarat as combining these qualities in a degree scarcely equalled by any other card-game." In case any reader needs further evidence that baccarat is dangerous, we mention the fact that Cavallé, in his "*Les Filouteries du Jeu*," devotes about one hundred pages to the various swindles practised in baccarat. No wonder Mr. Justice Hawkins found the game "illegal."

Second, as to games which are unlawful apart from considerations of place. Justice Hawkins divides them into two classes: those which are absolutely forbidden by name, and to the gaming at which a penalty is attached; and those not altogether prohibited under penal consequences, but which have nevertheless been styled "unlawful" by the Legislature, inasmuch as the keeping of houses for playing them and the playing them therein by anybody were rendered illegal. The former class includes ace of hearts, pharaoh or faro, basset, and hazard, explicitly made illegal by 12 Geo. II., c. 28; passage, and every other game with a die or dice, except backgammon, expressly made illegal by 13 Geo. II., c. 19; and roulette, expressly made illegal by 18 Geo. II., c. 34. The latter class comprises every game of cards which is not a game of pure skill, and every other game of mere chance. It is for the courts to say what particular games come in this category.

Fortunately, in the case *Jenks v. Turpin* the illegality of baccarat\* was decided. This game is played in so many clubs in London that even were there no

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\* The manner of playing baccarat varies somewhat with different clubs, and more in different countries; but in all cases it is the same in principle—a game of pure chance. The following is, in brief, the usual mode in vogue in London clubs: The "bank," being put up for auction, is bought, say for £25. The banker sits in the centre of the long side of the table; on the right and left of the banker sit the two main punters. There are several men seated on the right and left of the bank called punters, but one for each side will represent sufficiently the manner of play. Three packs of cards are shuffled and placed before the banker. He draws one card for himself and one each for the right and left punters, and then one for himself and one each for the punters again. The three men show their cards; the game is to exhibit nine points (ordinary cards counting according to their "pips," and court

First, as to the place. A common gaming-house—and again it is Mr. Justice Hawkins who speaks—is a house in which a large number of persons are invited habitually to congregate for the purpose of gaming ; but a club is not less a common gaming-house because gaming therein is restricted to the members of the club. “To no gaming-house is the public at large invited to go without restriction of some sort or another. The keeper of such a house has always the right to permit or refuse admission to any one he pleases, or to make such rules as he may think fit for the regulation of such permission. The law does not require that it shall be a *public* gaming-house ; a common gaming-house is that which is forbidden.” Further, the fact that a club is used for ordinary social purposes in addition to gaming will not prevent its coming under the description of a house “opened and kept for the purpose of gaming.” And here we may quote from 8 and 9 Vict., c. 109, s. 2: “In default of other evidence proving any house or place to be a common gaming-house, it shall be sufficient . . . to prove (1) that such house or place is kept or used for playing therein at any unlawful game, and that a bank is kept there by one or more of the players exclusively of the others, *or* (2) that the chances of any game played therein are not alike favourable to all the players, including the banker or other person by whom the game is managed, or against whom the other players stake, play, or bet.” It is quite immaterial whether the bank is kept by the owner, occupier, keeper, or manager of the house or by a player.

of the Act of 1854 which we have quoted. By the magistrate the proprietor, A., was adjudged to have been guilty of "keeping and using the Park Club for the purpose of unlawful gaming," and was fined £500; the four committee-men were found guilty as "persons having the care or management of and assisting in conducting the business" of the house so kept and used for the purpose of unlawful gaming, and was fined £500; the three players were also found guilty as "persons who assisted by playing in conducting the business" of this house, and each was fined £100. The defendants appealed, and the case came before Justices Hawkins and Smith. In an elaborate judgment the Bench found that the proprietor and the committee-men were properly convicted, but that the players could not be reached *by the section under which they were prosecuted*. The players therefore got off scot-free. To a consideration of their position we will return in a while; in the meantime it should be noted that without a shadow of doubt the proprietor, keeper, and committee-men of a gambling-house are liable to punishment.

But what constitutes unlawful gaming? On this point Mr. Justice Hawkins is very clear. "Gaming may be unlawful by reason of (1) the place in which it is carried on, or by reason of (2) the unlawfulness of the game itself." That is to say, the gambling at a club may be unlawful because the house is a common gaming-house, in which all gaming, (1) even at games in themselves not prohibited, is illegal, or because the house is opened for playing at (2) a game in itself illegal.

*house of correction, with or without hard labour, for any time not exceeding twelve calendar months."* It will be seen that a penalty not exceeding £500 or twelve months' hard labour attends upon (1) the owner, occupier, or manager, (2) those who assist in managing, and (3) those who lend money for the purposes of unlawful gaming. In connection with the owner or keeper it should be mentioned that by 25 Geo. II., c. 26, s. 8, any person who shall act as the person having the care or management of any gaming-house shall be deemed to be the *keeper* thereof, and may be punished as such, notwithstanding that he is not in fact the real owner or keeper thereof. Thus "the keeper" of a gambling-house has no back-door for escape.

Now the case of *Jenks v. Turpin* (13 Q. B. D., p. 504) which we have mentioned is so pertinent to the question we are considering that a short account of it will set before our readers a clearer idea of how the law actually stands than could otherwise be conveyed.

A. was the proprietor of the Park Club, and was also occupier of the premises used by the club, and received the profits; B., C., D., and E. were members of the committee of management, whose duty it was to regulate the internal management of the club, and, amongst other things, to make bye-laws and regulations for carrying it on and for the government of its members, who were elected by them; F., G., and H. were members of the club.

The game of baccarat was played nightly. An information was laid, charging the eight persons with having committed offences against the section

such sections of the statute as apply to the question before us. And happily our authority does not end here. In 1884 the Queen's Bench Division decided the case of "Jenks *v.* Turpin," a case which in almost every material point covers the facts of all gambling-houses ; and in giving decision Mr. Justice Hawkins made perfectly clear the interpretation which the Bench puts upon the Act " 17 and 18 Vict., c. 38."

Section 4 of that Act provides that " any person, being the owner or occupier or having the use of any house, room, or place, who shall open, keep, or use the same for the purpose of unlawful gaming being carried on therein, *and* any person who, being the owner or occupier of any house or room, shall knowingly and wilfully permit the same to be opened, kept, or used by any other person for the purpose aforesaid, *and* any person having the care or management of or in any manner assisting in conducting the business of any house, room, or place opened, kept, or used for the purpose aforesaid, *and* any person who shall advance or furnish money for the purpose of gaming with persons frequenting such house, room, or place may, on summary conviction thereof before any two justices of the peace, be adjudged by such justices to forfeit and pay such *penalty, not exceeding* £500, as to such justices shall seem fit, and may be further adjudged by such justices to pay such costs attending such conviction as to them shall seem reasonable, and on the non-payment of such penalty and costs, or in the first instance, if to such justices it shall seem fit, may be *committed to the common gaol or*

## CHAPTER VII.

### *GAMBLING AND THE LAW: AN INDICTMENT OF THE POLICE.*

**WE** come now to inquire whether gambling-clubs as they exist at present are permitted by law. And in the first place it is an indubitable fact that at various periods the Legislature has placed upon the statute-books a great many Acts dealing with "gaming-houses" and providing for their suppression. As early as the reign of Henry VIII. an Act was passed, and is still of effect, prohibiting the keeping of "common gaming-houses." But as any one is aware who is in the slightest degree acquainted with legal quibbles and quirks, there might be much difficulty in deciding the precise meaning of a "common gaming-house." Such vague phraseology renders comparatively easy that interesting process familiarly known as driving a coach and four through an Act. However, although the earlier enactments in the matter admit of considerable latitude in interpretation, the last one does not. In 1854 was passed "an Act for the Suppression of Gaming-houses," which leaves small chance of escape for the gambler even though he have the assistance of very expert wigs and gowns. On this Act we shall rely. We propose to quote

officers of the law in the first place, but ultimately we ourselves are to blame. If the public does but insist the police, their servants, must obey. The matter is in their own hands. Shall we stand quietly by any longer?

ridding themselves of their wages. And does it avail anything to say that there are many people who know where to stop? Hardly. The fact remains that in these dens, and by them, thousands of men reduce themselves—and what is more, those dependent on them—to various degrees of wretchedness and misery. It is not only the cases of absolute ruin which must be taken into account, but also the vastly more numerous cases of temporary ill. Surely here is a grave social scandal.

The number of the clubs, their disposition throughout the whole of the metropolis, the attraction which they exert for certain classes in particular, and the enormous extent of their influence in general render it incumbent that some steps be taken to remove the scandal. It is a reproach upon society that most of us stand by quietly whilst in droves the foolish are contaminated by a pestilent crew who are allowed to carry on their poisonous traffic under our eyes. Who shall measure the direct material evil done by gambling-clubs? It cannot be measured. Its ramifications are far too subtle and contorted to be followed. And if this is the case with material harm, how is it possible to gauge adequately the effect of the infinitely more subtle moral ill which they spread? We have been too long blind, and the responsibility for the present state of things lies upon society, upon each and all of us. It behoves us to inquire whether the law makes provision for dealing effectually with gaming-houses. If it does not, then law must be made. But if it does we must further inquire why the law is not carried out. In this case the blame rests on the shoulders of the

want to form some conception of the havoc which is worked and the complications which may and do arise in connection with the loss of money at these clubs, go to a few of them on a Saturday, which we will suppose to be the last day of a quarter. There you will see enough to convince you of the magnitude of the evil. Mechanics losing their week's wages shilling by shilling, small tradesmen watching their small profits gradually but surely disappearing, and clerks reducing their quarter's salary and preparing for themselves a struggle during the next three months—they are all there. You will see "last sixpences" being staked all round; and you can watch the eager, nervous men who have come to win back "what they had." And what are they trying to win it back with? Is it their own or their family's bread? In some cases it may be neither.

It is all very well to say that many of the players are shrewd enough; that they will not lose more than they can afford to do without. Of course there are such players. But a rejoinder to that is easily found in the concrete. How was it that a raid was made upon the club near the "Elephant and Castle"? Simply because every day women came to the police and complained that their husbands were gambling away the food from their children's mouths. No comment is required more than was furnished by accounts of the men found in the club. In some cases shopmen were playing with their masters' money, small tradespeople were neglecting their business in order to squander their meagre gains, and mechanics and labourers in great numbers were

the place, the tone of the company, and the inevitable consequences of heavy play ; it is in the laxity of principle engendered and the lower standard of life which naturally arises that the real danger is to be sought. It is an unavoidable danger. "You can't touch pitch without soiling your hands"—that is an old and hackneyed saying, but they might bear it in mind who harp upon the string of no necessary immediate bad consequences.

And now as to bad consequences, which may be immediate or remote—there is one which, though it is not exactly "necessary," is in the highest degree probable—that is, the loss of money ; and the probability attached to it is so strong that it amounts almost to a certainty. Unless a man be hand-in-glove with the gaming nucleus, depend upon it he will sooner or later find himself in serious difficulties if he frequents gambling-houses. In some his pockets would be promptly cleared, and that as often as he chose to go. In others the process is slower, but equally sure. These are obviously the least dangerous ; they scare rather than attract. But there are plenty where the "skinning" is a much more delicate operation. There is no cheating. You may win at times and lose at others, but any one who imagines that in the long-run the bank will not ruin him is very short-sighted. A man cannot lose more than he has, of course ; but it is rather late in the day, and would be, moreover, out of place here, to enter upon an exposition of what may occur when he has lost "what he has." Naturally he will want to get it back, and the possibilities of his case when he reaches that stage are readily imagined. If you

piano, now scarcely holds the company. There is no need to enlarge on further temptations; they may easily be inferred, and take their place among the dangers of the clubs. And in point of dangers gambling-houses differ not in kind, but in degree. If you have seen one the rest can be imagined—something better or something worse, that is all. Some close at 12, and others remain open all night. To some women are admitted, and from others they are excluded. In many you can play with little probability of being cheated; in more you are sure to be fleeced. If you go into Soho you may get your head broken; in others you are as safe physically as in your own dwelling. But in all the atmosphere is unhealthy and vitiated; the myriad microbes of moral diseases abound in the very air. We are far from saying that every one who uses gambling-clubs is vicious. On the contrary, there are hundreds of young men who occasionally pay them a visit who are, to use a common form of expression, “neither better nor worse than other people.” But we do most emphatically assert that it is utterly impossible for any man to frequent such scenes as the average gambling-club presents without suffering in some way. In the course of time he is bound to undergo a gradual and certain deterioration in his moral and mental faculties. The danger from this point of view lies not in any single occupation of club frequenters. There is nothing radically bad in a game at billiards: apart from monetary considerations, the devil does not lurk in a pack of cards or a baccarat-table, *qua* cards or table. It is in the combined effect of the general atmosphere of

supplies the most intense and fascinating interest. And then is the chance of winning a few shillings nothing to a clerk with a miserable salary? Put at a gambling-table any man who has hard work to make both ends meet, whether he is a saint or sinner, let him win a sovereign, and then set yourself to calculate the chances as to whether he goes back again. A man with a banking account and a set of high moral principles may find it easy enough to pooh-pooh and deride such suppositions, and may consider it his duty to visit the offender against his code with a lofty and severe indignation; but he should rather set to work with others of his kind, and provide healthy and cleanly recreation for those who are practically social galley-slaves.

Suppose, again, a young man with no friends in London to be very fond of dancing; and further, suppose him to be introduced into a Tottenham Court club. Is he likely, in view of the weary treadmill of his daily existence, to split hairs as to the exact moral shade of his partner? He cannot get dancing elsewhere; he can get it here, and in addition to the other attractions of the club; and what wonder if he comes to spend his evenings in the place oftener and oftener? There is not the slightest doubt that the dancing-saloons attached to some clubs are answerable for their large lists of members. One club has recently doubled its premises on account of the numbers of young men who visit it in the evenings for dancing. The old dancing-room—and it was big—has been converted into a billiard-room containing four tables, and a fine double saloon, with refreshment-bars and a grand

horror the meaning of being "alone" in a big city. There is nothing to take him out of himself, and everything to generate in him the most wretched morbidity. He is encouraged to go out at night; that is, his landlady discourages his staying in; and he has to find a sorry enjoyment somewhere. Where does he go? There is no need to answer that. And is it to be wondered at that if some chance acquaintance or some office mate offers to relieve his monotony for one evening by taking him to a "club," he eagerly accepts the offer, and takes it kindly? Is it surprising that having gone to, say, one of the decent clubs once, he is only too glad to go back? He finds he can get company there; he can forget his loneliness and dissipate his morbidity; he has now one place where it is possible to pass the time with something like pleasure. The subscription is very small, and he becomes a member. If he has a little money in his pockets there is no difficulty in paying his way without spending very much. He can get the evening paper, can play a game at billiards and have a glass of beer. Or does any one think it astonishing that a young man with plenty of natural spirits and with sociable instincts will, if he cannot get better society, associate with those who, whilst of questionable character, are "hail fellow well met" to everybody? Don't ask such a one, distracted and weary, to draw the line very distinctly between bookmakers and Sunday-school teachers. Relief is what he wants—relief in any shape at first, and then pleasant relief. The excitement of the gambling-table puts care away; it drives off the "blues," and

the general body of the public, and more particularly upon those whose occupations, modes of living, or other conditions of life bring them into contact with the temptation. The first and foremost attraction is that the clubs are a means of expression for that very common, if very foolish, ambition of "mannish" boys, whether town or country-bred, to "be about town," to be thought a "knowing card." In conjunction with this may be taken the inclination towards forbidden pleasures simply because they are forbidden ; and here we have a prohibited pleasure which is all the more attractive because it is not necessarily vicious. Of course you may say such lads are fools, but that does not close the question. There is no reason for encouraging foolishness. These minor silly tendencies are answerable for too much already, and at any rate we might try to put out of reach some at least of the means of indulging them viciously.

But by far the most potent cause why gambling-houses should flourish to such an extent is that monotony of life which falls to the lot of so many young men, and which we have already insisted upon in other connections. It is such an important factor towards individual degeneration of all kinds that even at the risk of repetition we must again draw forcible attention to it. The life of the average young clerk or shopman who lives in lodgings in London is utterly joyless. Each day he has the same grinding, uninteresting routine, and the same thankless hard work ; each night he returns to the same bare, comfortless lodgings. Nobody takes interest in him, and he realizes in all its

In Soho and the Tottenham Court parts many of the smaller but lower sections of artisans congregate ; they are bullying and grasping, and an enormous amount of quarrelling and fighting in clubs is to be laid to their charge. In the north and south they are easy prey. They seldom know much about the games or display intelligence in betting matters, and the consequence is that had they only more money to spend, they would be the best " marks " in London. As it is, what with their natural stupidity and with drink they make a good living for a great number of scamps. Of chaff and cockney banter they have plenty ; but though they pride themselves upon an almost preternatural cuteness, they are easily beguiled by the " sharps."

Apart from shopmen, clerks, and mechanics, and apart from the nondescript hangers-on of clubs, there remains the great army made up of minor classes. To enumerate their occupations would simply resolve itself into writing down every trade and profession in the directory. From postmen in uniform to military men out of uniform ; from solicitors struck off the rolls, and earning a living by keeping a " law-shop," to highly respectable merchants ; butchers and cattle-dealers in large numbers ; money-lenders and tradesmen of all descriptions ; Covent Garden salesmen and barristers—every occupation supplies its quota.

In speaking of the attractions of gambling-houses we are not here concerned in defining their attractions to social outcasts or to those who live very near the boundary-lines of society. We have to do with their influence upon young men belonging to

are merely serving their apprenticeship to a place amongst the partners of their firms ; “ seedy ” clerks and dapper clerks ; clerks with money and clerks without ; and last, but not least by any means, clerks out of employment—there is not a solitary club in London but knows them. They differ from the shopmen in nothing more than this, that whereas the latter are for the most part a week, thin-headed set, vapid and harmless, the clerks include a considerable number of bookmakers, and the great bulk of them are more or less interested in racing. From the ranks of the unemployed clerks the non-descript class is constantly recruited. Poor fellows ! penniless, and, if they tried their utmost, incapable of obtaining work, driven from pillar to post, they fall gradually into the ways of the cadger, and forfeit all chance of regaining their old position. They get their living by their wits ; what they do in the daytime no one knows, but as night comes on and the clubs open they appear, and if chances are good and their fingers light they pick up a few shillings. They act as jackals for the rascally proprietors, and do their dirty work—that is, their trivial dirty work—for them ; they toady with the “ bully ” and the bankers, and before long they are initiated into the esoteric part of the gambling “ wisdom.”

It is not possible in this general sketch to do more than mention mechanics and labourers. In Clerkenwell, Islington, Camberwell—the north and the south of London—in these districts their clubs are situated. Of course in smaller numbers they are found elsewhere, but they keep fairly clear of the west and east and west-central portions of the city.

those who are inclined to visit gambling-clubs appear to come mostly from small shops. The explanation of this lies, doubtless, in the fact that a great many of the big "houses" provide more or less satisfactorily for the relaxation of their employés. Still, after all favourable allowances which as a class may be due to them have been made, although compared with the total number of shopmen in London the number of those familiar with gambling scenes is not large, it is in itself by no means small. In every district they are well represented in the clubs. Though more numerous in the west-central parts, they are not absent from the working-men's clubs in Clerkenwell and Islington, and every club in the north has its four or five regular attenders and its dozen or more occasionals. In the south, where as a class they are neither so well brought up nor so well educated as the majority of those on the north of the river, they are to be found shouldering the mechanic and labourer in his chosen haunts; and even Soho is not unacquainted with them. Of course this applies mainly to the shopmen who live in their own lodgings, for the possibilities in the way of those who reside on their employers' premises are limited.

In regard to the immensely more numerous body of clerks, it may be said that their possibilities are their own. Nine-tenths of them live in lodgings, and consequently they make up a heavy percentage of club frequenters. Clerks of all descriptions—raw country lads, undersized cockneys, young fellows who have been at the public schools; clerks who have miserable salaries and no prospects, and clerks who

is that of disreputable women, a great many of whom have some favourite place of the kind. Many of the women who frequent the "Pavilion" and the "Alhambra" are attached, so to speak, to the Soho clubs; whilst another section affect those in the Tottenham Court Road district. But there is no use enlarging upon this or any other such agency. There can be no difficulty for any reader in fixing upon half a dozen different ways in which a person might be introduced into a club. Introduce one man, and on the one hand, if he is foolish enough to like it he is sure to take there others of his class; and on the other hand, if he finds it profitable he will assist in gathering in "pigeons."

As might be expected, shop assistants in considerable numbers make use of some of the clubs. In particular the Tottenham Court Road establishments are favoured by them. After half-past eight or nine on any night it would be impossible to visit a club in the district without coming into contact with shopmen. For the most part they are young—mere lads, some of them; and it is rather strange that though you find clerks of all ages in such places, you rarely come across a shopman of more than twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age. They are more "casuals" than *habitués*, except as regards clubs to which dancing-saloons are attached, and where it is not too much to say that the dancing is the sole attraction to them. In these clubs the shopman is supreme. It is to be noticed that he is seldom a bookmaker, and, indeed, pays little attention to betting, so far as the clubs are concerned. Another point in connection with shopmen is that

it is in Soho; then the first members will be foreigners. But in all cases people of all classes who bet flow readily and easily into the cesspool of vice. These are the men not only who personally constitute a strong percentage of gambling-club *habituels*, but who also bring most of the new members. In plying their bookmaking, whether they be professionals or amateurs, they come into contact every day with the very individuals who are more easily led to the clubs, and often the most useful when there. They frequent the public bars, music-halls, and all places where young men are likely to be found. In the first place they want bets made—that is their chief object—and very naturally they introduce their “clients” to the clubs, as being convenient meeting-places. They know how to impress weak-headed lads. Here is a case in point: There are several bookmakers who regularly attend the “Oxford” music-hall; they speak to any promising subject, and if they are successful in engaging him in conversation they very soon lead him on to talk of racing matters; and that their blandishments are often enough effective there is no doubt. After that it is a short step, if they think there is more to be made out of the subject, to introduce him with much *bonhomie* to some club or other. This is one way by which the membership of the club is kept up. Not that there is any difficulty in maintaining it; nor do the bookmakers, as a rule, care one straw about the club; it is with them a question of keeping their “clients.” Nevertheless betting-men constitute almost the most effective agency working between the general public and the clubs. Another, and also an efficient agency,

they are of Jewish or German nationality ; some are broken-down tradesmen, a few are nothing but shrewd thieves, and a considerable number are professional bookmakers. Almost all are well-to-do, and not a few have suburban residences. One is to be seen every afternoon taking his constitutional ride on a nice cob in Regent's Park ; others affect the Row ; but the most of them prefer to spend their days in the same atmosphere as their nights. How the clubs originate it is not easy to say, nor worth while to inquire. But a house is engaged, the proprietor gathers round him a band of nondescripts, and the club becomes a fact. Gradually it gets known amongst "likely" people around ; the nondescripts act as the scouts of the commander, and before many weeks are over the membership is an evidence of success. Henceforward the evolution is simple. One member brings another, the nondescripts increase, and the club assumes its special character. And night after night the proprietor presides grimly over the pestilent scene. Whatever grain of good there may be in his carrion, there is none in him. His *rôle* is that of a disseminator of moral poison. The membership changes as time goes on ; some go, others come ; his nondescript followers now gain, now lose ; at times they pluck, and at times they are plucked ; but he pockets his plunder and flourishes no matter how they fare.

The class of members depends on the locality. It may be that the club is situated in a neighbourhood where a particular industry is carried on—as, for example, near a market. In that case the original members are the workers in that industry. Perhaps

club. The very fact that you are not inclined personally for playing chance games, that you are not given to frequenting public-houses, and do not care for questionable company, is the most excellent reason in the world why you remain ignorant of gambling-clubs ; or if you do know that there are such places, why, you imagine that they are few and far between. It is quite possible for a man to move freely in the world, and yet never have the faintest idea of the ramifications of gambling and the gambling system. He does not happen to be thrown into contact with the set of people and circumstances which could enlighten him, or if he has rubbed shoulders with them he has not had the curiosity to make inquiries or to listen even to what he may hear. All the more personal respect is due to him in many ways, for there is a large and loud-mouthed section of the public whose morbid curiosity is more repulsive and disgusting than even the vice against which it is directed ; but let him not undertake to say that because he does not see the evil it therefore does not exist.

In turning from the places at which gambling is carried on to the men who carry it on some notice must be taken first of the people who are the groundwork and foundation of the system. But the notice may be brief. Sufficient will have been gathered from the description of clubs to make it clear enough to every one that they are in very fact the moral dregs of society. It need scarcely be said that they are absolutely unprincipled, as absolutely devoid of all moral sensibility, and utterly impervious to all social considerations whatsoever. For the most part

which there are regular illegal gatherings. In the northern suburbs you will find them growing yearly in various shapes and forms, from the quietly conducted hell, recently established in one of the finest streets in Hampstead, to the dirty clubs where working men and lower-class shopmen lose their shillings and sixpences in Highgate or Mildmay. Or cross the water and inquire into the state of affairs in Camberwell. Is it for a moment imagined that the club near the "Elephant and Castle"—upon which a raid was made recently—is the only one in that part? There are a score and a half or more in the southern districts; and—what is very much to the point—in these same districts not one-third of the number existed a few years since. People, as a rule, prefer to shut their eyes to these things. They do not approve of them, of course, nor make use of them; but it is comfortable to take no thought of what is not actually forced upon our notice. But when the evil spreads day by day, and its influence becomes ever more strong, it is surely time to see. At any rate, public disapproval should find some strong expression, for its very weakness is mainly responsible for the extent of the evil as it stands just now. Of course you may walk about the streets of London for years, and never know what is going on around you. But is that good ground for denying that an evil exists? If you walk past the clubs you are in no likelihood of recognizing them. You notice a chocolate-painted window, bearing, in gilt or white letters, "Working Men's Club" or some such thing, but it does not seem to you that gambling is the *raison d'être* of the

self near the Smithfield Meat Market there are seven within five minutes' walk from him. But it may be objected, if it is necessary to hunt for these clubs, if they are thus hidden in a way, how can they exert any influence? how can they reach the rest of society? Well, if one who so objects were to pay a visit to them—and he will not be refused admittance—he would find them full every night. He would soon learn that, be it by whatever means it may, they do reach a very great number of people—what kind of people we shall subsequently indicate. If any argument were needed to prove that gambling-clubs in London are widely known it is easily found by paying a visit to any one of them. The very fact that every one of the vast number of clubs which are scattered throughout the whole of the metropolis manages not only to exist, but to thrive, is quite sufficient indication of the influence which they can exert. Year by year they increase in number. In one district, where three years ago no such club existed, there are now four, each with a large membership. Particularly is this growth remarkable in the case of genuine “working-men’s” clubs. Clerkenwell has always been noted for places of this kind, but of late years the district has fairly teemed with them. Soho of course takes the palm for low establishments of all descriptions, but even there the growth has been very noticeable; at the present time there is scarcely a street in Soho in which there is not at least one house devoted to gaming, and in each of two of the streets there are six. These twelve houses include coffee-shops, restaurants, “national” clubs, and even a laundry, in all of

infest with impunity other social grades. To the other questions our response is to be gathered from a consideration of the vast number of clubs.

There is scarcely a district in the metropolis in which they do not exist. From Hampstead to Camberwell, from Bayswater to Clerkenwell, in side-streets and in main thoroughfares, it is not too much to say that wherever you may be standing you are not more than five or ten minutes' walk from a gaming-house. It may not, even by its *habitués*, be so called, but it is a gaming-house within the meaning of the law. In Soho it may be a coffee-shop or a small foreign restaurant ; it may be a dingy house, ostensibly a national club, or it may be a fine building. In Clerkenwell perhaps it is one of the scores of working-men's clubs which are to be found there, or perhaps it is a veritable "hell." Near Covent Garden it may be one for the "convenience" of the market salesmen, or it may be a haunt of the swell-mobsmen. In Bayswater it is, in all likelihood, in quiet little premises over an equally quiet green-grocer's shop ; or if you chance to be near Tottenham Court Road, it will perhaps be a social club in connection with a dancing "academy," or else a working-men's club which working men never enter. In Smithfield you may take your choice of a salesmen's club or an establishment with a Jewish proprietor.

Thousands of Londoners never hear of such a place, you say ? Quite so ; but if any Londoner chooses to explore the area between Tottenham Court Road and a line drawn parallel to it from Portland Road Station to Oxford Street he may hear of some fifteen or sixteen ; or if he posts him-

Were the legal sanction—which is merely the practical answer to social sanction—granted, and did no social disapproval attend upon the frequenting of such places, they would soon rival public-houses in number. Can those individuals who thus sagely place their philosophical ægis between the law and gambling-houses say that, in circumstances such as we have supposed, public morals would be improved? We think not. They will probably admit that there would be a very pronounced evil effect upon society in general, and that if society retained any instinct of self-preservation it would find prompt and decisive repressive enactments absolutely necessary. Very well; gambling-clubs being, as we conceive, *contra bonos mores*, the question is reduced, so far as the present day is concerned, to considerations of degree. Are there just now in existence so many gambling-clubs as to constitute a distinct and effective evil? Is society in the aggregate affected to any extent by them? Do they exercise any baneful influence upon particular sections of society? More especially, have they any deteriorating effect upon the youth of certain classes? Or, on the other hand, is it simply that since there is in London, as in every congested centre of civilization, a certain portion of the public whose whole life is one long warfare with society, these clubs are their structural correlate, and that if crushed out of one place and form they would spring up in another? To the last question we answer that the gaming nucleus is undoubtedly composed of individuals who are irrepressible, but that there is no reason why they should be permitted freely to exercise their influence upon society and to

## CHAPTER VI.

### *A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF LONDON GAMBLING.*

**T**HE descriptions given in the preceding chapters of gambling-clubs will give some idea of what the institutions really are. The clubs we have described are fair typical examples, and the descriptions have been plain and straightforward ; matter-of-fact statements alone have been employed, and we have neither improved nor exaggerated what we have described. It remains to sum up the descriptions, and thus get a comprehensive view of London gambling.

And in this connection a word may appropriately be said to those who, considering the matter on purely social grounds, are inclined to the opinion that interference with gambling-clubs constitutes an undue interference with the liberties of the individual ; but to such we will suggest that it is necessary to consider the logical outcome of such a theory of things. Let us suppose that gaming-houses were freed from all legal penalties, and were allowed the scope and liberty of an ordinary business. What would result if human nature were to exercise its sway unchecked ? There is no doubt that in a very short time gambling clubs would be established at every street corner.

be seen. The Teutonic element, of course, was well represented.

The pasty-faced young secretary fulfilled his promise ere I left; he crushed a *folded* paper into my hands, saying "Receipt." On opening the paper afterwards I noticed that I had paid a subscription of four shillings. The other shilling was not mentioned.

Such a club as this has little or nothing about it to repel a young man of average experience, more especially if he be fond of dancing. If he knows the inside of a public-house and a billiard-room in a slight way, then to become a member is a step the downward tendency of which is almost imperceptible. Of course, it is all the more dangerous for that; but at the same time it is easy for a man of average determination to withdraw when he finds out his mistake. There are undoubtedly plenty of fellows who use this club really as a club. They are not by any means vicious. They go and have a game of nap, take a turn at billiards, smoke, chat, perhaps join a dance, and go home quite sober. Unhappily, the majority are not content with this, and there is no doubt that for a lad with a weak will and a desire to be "about town" there is no place more likely to help him into difficulty of all kinds than a club of this nature. And it may also safely be said that any man who regularly frequents such clubs, even though he hold himself aloof from actual dissipation, yet loses all delicacy of moral sensibility. Twenty years hence the influence of the club may perchance appear as decisively in him as it does in those of weak will and judgment who start with him.

enjoyment. His mental and moral consistency was perhaps a trifle superior to that of a jelly-fish.

The average intelligence of the room must have been remarkably small : smartness there was—too much of it ; but with the exception of the Jews, who are all sharp enough in some ways, and of a few superior-class clerks, the dancers wore the vapid expression that tells of a dwarfed intellect. The membership includes at least a hundred higher middle-class young men, who “look” in occasionally for a spree. Sunday night is their favourite time. Then numbers of ballet-girls and inferior actresses are present, and the scene is very animated. The night on which I was in was a “bad” one—that is to say, a lower stratum of members was present. The card-room was well filled when I left the dancing-saloon, and the usual games were in progress. The general tone of the room is more “clubby” than that of many gambling-clubs. Members chatted, talked “racing,” and stood drinks ; politics formed the source of conversation of some groups, and gambling was carried on more in the style of social card-playing ; it was exciting enough in some quarters, but there was less of that intense, concentrated interest than is usually to be noticed. The class of men gathered in this room was more that of the billiard-player than the dancer. There was less affectation, less pretence of being men of the world ; the whole affair was part and parcel of their lives, and looked to be so. Clerks, superior shop-assistants, shopkeepers, betting men, and men of the pawnbroking stamp made up the majority of the company ; not a genuine working man was to

coming of age the week before, he celebrated the event by inviting some twenty of his friends to the boxes at the "Oxford," and subsequently to a "little supper." In spite of the designation of the club, there were no working men. These disgusting young Jews are a mainstay of the place, and having money, they have plenty of toadies. Clerks were there of all grades, and every second man wore the regulation top hat and black coat; the few shop assistants, dapper, Tittlebat Titmouses in intelligence, who were in the house when I went in had their numbers considerably augmented as the evening wore on and the business houses closed. After awhile the dancing began, and I went to the card-room. In this dancing-saloon were certainly to be found young fellows of all shades of character. A few were recently introduced, and as yet ill at ease—the dancing attracted them—and it is quite possible that some were ignorant of the character of the girls—"giddy" possibly they thought them. From innocents of this kind, easily led on, but as easily rescued at present, you could mark the descending types until you reached the type represented by the *habitué* of thirty. A shopman he seemed to be, from the stereotyped "What next?" expression on his face; but a more repulsive face it would be difficult to find. Vapid, stupidly unintelligent, weak-eyed, and of exhausted physique, he bore about him a kind of smartness, the mechanical result of his occupation, which simply made his utter weakness more disgusting. Most of the dancers kept him at arms' length, but he did not appear to notice it; he simpered about the room by himself in maudlin

type—clerks and shopmen, with a few bookmakers. We go through the card-room, which in the interval has filled a little ; and here the secretary, a pasty-faced youth of dissipated aspect, proposes to make me a member. He escorts me to a remarkably clean office—little used, I fancy—and takes five shillings, saying he will bring me the receipt downstairs. I doubt it, but go away down to the dancing-saloon.

Here, lounging round a bar, attended to by three young women with a profusion of flaxen hair, are groups of young fellows, chatting with groups of girls—the dancing has not begun. At a half-grand piano a girl stands and listlessly runs through a waltz with one hand, staring at the ceiling the while, as if to show how easy the thing is to her. In various parts of the room young men in twos and threes chat in various manners. Some are not quite at home, and therefore arrange themselves in non-chalant and devil-may-care attitudes; others are very much at home, and behave themselves accordingly. The girls are all at home. Soon some impatient gentleman curses the waiting very heartily, and the “devil-may-cares” look at him admiringly, and, encouraged by his bold example, curse the waiting too. One noticeable feature of the room is the presence of a great many Jewish lads and hobbledehoys. They all wear silk hats, generally on the back of their heads, and are dressed in the most approved style. They have plenty of money, and spend it freely. They know all the girls, and are certainly the most impudent, unrestrained individuals in the place. Mostly their parents are wealthy tradespeople or money-lenders, and one of them was telling how, on

We passed through a large, well-furnished, and nicely lighted card-room into what serves as bar and billiard-room. This apartment was well lighted too, and though the night was too young for the card-tables to be occupied, all four billiard-tables were in great request. At the upper end of the room the bar was attended to by a boy of about fourteen, already of depraved and generally heavy and sensual appearance. Scattered about were several men and lads "belonging" to the establishment, and it was impossible not to notice how the moral atmosphere of the place had become part of their natures, and was plainly enough depicted on their faces. Very prominently throughout the house placards of "rules," "orders," and "notices" decorated the walls. Members are ordered to do this and not to do that; visitors are informed that only members are allowed to pay for drink. The advantages of membership are eloquently described, to ensnare the visitor; and those who wish to be present at a smoking concert to be held shortly, "at which many members of the musical profession have promised to be present," are urgently advised to apply for tickets instantly. For the most part the rules and orders are mere shams; they are all contravened. Their real purpose is to make a brave show of legality to any visitor whose object is not exactly favourable to the club, and in case of a raid the defence would be based on the fact that the club is conducted properly and as the law admits. The billiard-room presents pretty much the same scene as the billiard-room in a public-house, and the twenty or more young men playing and looking on are of the usual

ciently to say where the cheating takes place, but it is certain that wholesale cheating is carried on in this hell. Those who run the bank can guard against it to some extent when they are ordinary players; but it pays them better to stand a little robbery at such times than to spoil their own future opportunities.

There were no women on the premises, with the exception of the barmaid; and I am fairly certain that none are admitted—at any rate before 12. What occurs after that I cannot say, but when I left at 12.15 there were none of the premonitory symptoms of “closing,” and the house is very spacious. However, none but *habitués* and well-known “customers” will be allowed to learn that the place is anything more than a gambling-den.

The clubs which have the most attraction for young clerks and superior shopmen, and exercise the most deleterious influence on them, are of a kind to be found mainly in the Tottenham Court Road district. In these gambling, of course, forms the main feature of the entertainment, but the dancing-rooms attached are of but slightly less importance.

Of one of these clubs a commissioner reports—

I had small difficulty in gaining admission. The club, like most of those in the vicinity, is registered as a “working-man’s club,” and there is very little secrecy as to its operations. The membership is large, and so long as a member introduces you there is no questioning. My introducer is not very well known to the attendants, but when he knocked the “bully” asked, “Member, sir?” and on receiving an affirmative reply, admitted us without further ado.

made my way out before the drove turned to go, the doorkeeper ushering me through the outer door with an obsequiously familiar "Good-night, captain;" for was I not a new member, and, moreover, one bearing the quickly earned reputation of an unplucked pigeon? Thanks to the general excitement, I had played little; nor was the doorkeeper bowed down by the weight of my generosity.

No doubt I got on easily by being a new member; Shylock did not want to frighten me away. The wise youth who introduced me had evidently been himself introduced but lately, for his plucking began to-night. I lost sight of him for some time, but about 11 he came into the baccarat-room staggering, and made for the table. Despite my hints and attempts to get him away, he would play; and the result was that he left this "nice little place" without a penny to take him to his lodgings. He was too shame-faced, it appears, after his bragging, to ask me to lend him sufficient, and slunk away unobserved. It was not till some time afterwards that I learned the full extent of his loss, which was great enough to keep him hard up for the next month.

This club is a shade more repellent than some others; but on the other hand, if after, say, two preliminary visits a "pigeon" goes with a good sum of money in his pocket he may be sure that he will be "treated" until he can hardly stand, and then—well, he will wake next morning with an empty purse. If he is obstinate, and will not play sufficiently, some needy sharper will manage to relieve him of his money in another way. I don't know the tricks which are "workable" in baccarat suffi-

gone for to-night ; faces relaxed, and the interest became less intense. The bank drew in its final sweep, and the chairs were pitched angrily back as all rose. Tongues loosened, and the usual *finale* began. Some were glum and sullen ; others were maudlin and murmured in a weak voice ; here and there a stolid and taciturn expression set off by contrast an angered one and heated words ; a few swore as if for very life ; and the bankers looked the serene look of the winner. But silent and loquacious, glum and animated, grumbling, swearing, mooning, and radiant—all moved down to the bar. All but one, who threw himself down on a chair and bent his head over his knees. No one paid attention to him, and we passed downstairs, leaving him to his wretchedness. In the bar groups of two or three discussed the luck ; Shylock and the bankers smiled comfortably, and the latter “stood drinks.” In the course of a few minutes all trace of the recent agitation had disappeared. A few, too much broken, slipped away ; but the great majority regained their spirits and began to talk of the races of the next week. Betting-books came out, and I left the room in a state of excitement over bets as great as that which but lately came from disappointed gamblers. The innocents were mostly drunk by this time, and those who had any money left soon parted with it on their “fancy” and in drink ; they who were moneyless, but were well known to the proprietor, borrowed money from him and instantly laid it all out. One excitement succeeded the other and dispelled the recollection of it. Possibly next morning’s headache and empty pockets might tell a different tale. I

taken, his good-humour was restored, and he—*mirabile dictu*—managed to get Shylock to “stand him a drink.” Probably the two had other “business” connections beyond gambling; that is the only plausible explanation of an otherwise inexplicable circumstance. Shylock came back looking virtuous, and his generosity had its own reward, no doubt. About 11.45 two players quarrelled, and in attempting to fight both struck a nervous clerk, who seemed unused to the scenes; he laid out right and left, and was taken downstairs very soon and shot out into the street. The players who created the disturbance each got a quietening blow and settled down.

The “table” was much exasperated, for the bank would have to hurry in order to finish by 12, and was there not some chance of coming out successful? Many seemed to think so, at any rate. And yet, had luck turned absolutely against the bank, they could not have recouped themselves. Besides, with these bankers there was little chance of the luck turning. However, there is no hope like the gambler’s. Play went on, and the bank and punters called more frequently, “Any more money this time?” The play became more furious, and scarce an unnecessary word was spoken. Down went the bets, and over and over the punters raked them into the bank. As the last few chances came the bets increased; the excited and inexperienced placed almost their all upon the table; men who were down in the bar having a drink rushed up for a last fling—but luck went with the bank. The pack was run out all but the last draw; hope was

club several nights each week, playing ahead when he can't get the bank, and knowing that all his losses will be made up.

The continued luck of the bank seemed to have the effect of making the great majority of the players fiercely reckless. A man seated on my right maintained a rigid face at each draw of the cards till he saw his florin swept away, and then he ground out in an undertone a hideous volley of oaths. Down went another florin, or maybe two, and a fresh combination of imprecations followed the stake into the bank. How much he lost it is not easy to say ; but he played regularly for over two hours, and did not win once in ten times. His originality in swearing was the most remarkable thing about him. Not only did he invent new oaths, but he displayed the most extraordinary ingenuity in new arrangements of old ones. The recent novelist who invented the tasteful expression "Slap me crimson" did not beat this shopman.

The club closes at 12—the sole attempt at respectability—and at 11.30 the play was fierce and exciting. No one won. The banker and his partners were placid and obliging, speaking in the most courteous manner ; but I strongly suspected sleight-of-hand in their dealing and drawing. Every five minutes some one or other disappeared—now a shopman and now a mechanic. The nondescripts without exception stayed on, occasionally adjourning to the bar for a drink. One lost everything but a shilling. He relieved his feelings in the customary manner, spat on his shilling, and remarked, "Keep that for breakfast." This prudent determination

time, for a drink or anything else that might turn up. One, with a haggard face—perhaps he had lost the whole of his wages (it was Saturday)—managed to borrow five shillings and sat down again. The bank raked it remorselessly in, and in a few minutes the man rose and rushed down the stairs, followed by the mocking laugh of Shylock, who had keenly enjoyed the poor fellow's agonized face. Another, also a mechanic, had just as wretched luck. He staked sixpence at a time, and played ahead until he had but a shilling or two left. Then he commenced to be cautious, and laid his money down at intervals. It was no use ; he was doomed. The last sixpence went ; he quietly lifted his chair back, and as quietly walked to the door. There was no small pathos in his departure, but the repulsive proprietor leered with sneering pity, and seemed to be saying to himself, "He'll come back." Perhaps he was right. The man had certainly lost several pounds, and just as he passed down the stairs Shylock moved after him and whispered something in his ear. The fellow smiled in a ghastly manner, and went off shaking his head. Shylock came back and encouraged me to take the vacant chair. I thought I had better play a little, and so sat down. To-night the bank had all the luck, and at the close I think all had lost save the bankers. A red-faced, healthy cattle-dealer, well-dressed, and apparently of great self-reliance, lost sovereign after sovereign. He calmly changed £5 notes with great good-humour. But he was evidently an *habitué* of the place and an old gambler. Doubtless he ran the bank when he could get the chance ; and I suspect he goes to the

good wages, and the usual nondescripts—these, so far as I could judge and pick up from conversation, formed the bulk of the forty-five or fifty men round the table. There were several skilled mechanics, and a fair number of very ordinary labourers. During the night a few young fools such as my introducer came in, but left shortly for scenes of greater liveliness. Truly the room was depressing. No attempt at comfort was made. Bare wooden benches round a deal table covered with faded green baize; no carpet of any kind; walls dirty and greasy, bearing traces of beer and tobacco-juice, and ornamented solely with a great number of printed rules and orders of the committee—this, lit up from half a dozen glaring burners, was not an attractive picture. Play went on with great regularity and with little in the way of disorder. There was more talking and swearing than at more respectable clubs, and at times the din grew to pitch enough to incite the flashy Shylock to interference. Then he shone forth in all his glory as he demanded order. He did it with the fatty sternness of tone so much in vogue with his kind, as who should say, “*Now, gentlemen, I want you to enjoy yourselves, but really—well, come, you must be quiet, you know.*” After delivering his charge he smiled expansively over the room, replaced his cigar between his ponderous lips, and resumed his stroll, rattling watch-chain and money. Two or three mechanics, originally with but little in their pockets, hung anxiously over the table, watching the luck of the sixpence or shilling which, if not the last which remained, was very near it. Soon they had lost all. They waited about for some

of expense—and taste ; gold *pince-nez* put a kind of note of interrogation into his expression ; spotless linen, a marvellous tie, heavy gold watch-chain, trousers of horse-cloth pattern and irreproachable spots—a truly magnificent attire, which, however, simply intensified his blackguardly appearance. He joked with me for a few minutes in thick, sugary tones, accompanying his jokes with hoarse chuckles, and occasionally poked me in the ribs in a playful manner. In spite of his condescending jocularity, it was evident he was taking my measure. He concluded I must be as big an idiot as my introducer, I suppose, for he complacently hung up my membership notice on the wall, and gracefully pointed to the baccarat-table.

A very nice old gentleman had all this time been consuming a Welsh rabbit at a small table, and I wondered whether he had made some mistake in the number of the street-door. He looked the essence of respectability, and his benevolent gravity was more reconcilable with a prayer-meeting than a gambling-house. Presently he rose just as I turned to go to the table, stretched himself comfortably, and took a seat at the game. His presence gave an aspect of sobriety to his end of the table, but it was almost too ludicrous. He played in the same sedate, benign manner in which he ambled through his supper—and won. The players were a very mixed lot ; a good number of them bore an openly unscrupulous look, though I saw no overt robbery whilst there. Clerks of inferior outward smartness and not very well dressed, five or six retail traders, and a few cattle-dealers, a money-lender or two, shopmen on

certed, and explained that this "cad" was new, and did not know him well. It was not long after the raid upon the club near the "Elephant and Castle," and consequently extra precautions were taken. I had scarcely mounted the rickety, creaking stairs and entered the bar before another bully questioned me, and for some moments my fate was doubtful. The wise youth didn't like this—it seemed to reflect on him, especially as the bar-tender muttered something about a "d——d young idiot." However, I became a member, and, thanks to my guide's reputation, I had to pay 10s. 6d., whereas the regular subscription, I afterwards found out, is only 3s.

The premises were not very enticing. The ground floor contained an office and several store and lumber-rooms; on the second floor the only room to which I could get access was the bar. Here the bully and a particularly quiet barmaid held converse and attended to the needs of members, the bully acting as waiter. On the third floor were several rooms, but I only saw into two of them—one a kind of anteroom, apparently used for consultations, settling money matters, and so on; the other was the gambling-room. Here, after the altercations and explanations before mentioned, I was introduced to the proprietor—a Jew, of course, and a highly objectionable one. In aspect he was near akin to some melodramatic stage villains usually considered impossible. Bulky, with a big, oily face and heavy, fleshy nose, his black eyes, large as they were, had hard work to see over his cheeks, and it was extremely improbable that he had seen his toes for the previous ten years. He was "got up" regardless

put themselves too much in the foreground. There is not about such a place as this that odour and aspect of blackguardism and immorality which repels at least inexperienced youths, and the absence of which makes the danger all the more to be shunned. Filth and roguery *may*, at any rate, repel : a "respectable" gambling club has nothing about it which would be in the slightest degree repulsive to any youth who has had an ordinary experience of life—say of two years in a merchant's office. The only qualification for membership is that you be introduced by a member and get the character of not being likely to "blab."

A commissioner says, "There is one advantage in being considered a "mug"—which is, being interpreted, an innocent—and that is that the "knowing card" evinces the keenest pleasure in showing you round. Your astonishment at the scenes with which he is so familiar, your unsophisticated remarks and ill-concealed freshness make his bosom swell with the pride of the initiated—the foolish initiated. It was a gentleman of this kind who undertook to introduce me to "a nice little place" in a street off Holborn. As our hansom rolled along he expatiated on what I must expect to see, and how I had better conduct myself in order to see it. He seemed doubtful of my discretion, but with the confidence of worth, thought he would "manage to pull me through." When we reached the door of the nice little place the tables were turned slightly. The bully apparently did not feel quite sure of the discretion of my guide, and it needed a long altercation and a tip to get us inside. The wise youth was a little discon-

to the bad altogether, drop into a habit of frequenting such places. The danger of the quiet, orderly club is more insidious and its influence more unconscious to the youth who chances to be introduced there. He has been taken, perhaps, by some one who does not appear to be a bad fellow, but simply a man who "knows the town." He sees nothing but some playing, at which there is no downright robbery, at which he can lose a shilling or gain a shilling. If he is not known, he need not play more than he cares to. A habit of going to the place, where, in addition to the play, you can get a glass of beer and read a paper at night, in a comfortable room, without the noise and odour of a public-house—a habit of frequenting such a place is easily fallen into. It becomes a club, in fact, where, to be sure, there is a spice of illegality, but that only sharpens the taste. If a young man once becomes accustomed to go he will soon become accustomed to play, and the fascination of the play will lay hold of him. There is, apart from the excitement of gambling—fascinating enough to a young man tired out with the monotony of office routine—a distinct and powerful attraction in having a special club, in which he feels a proprietary interest, to which he can go at night. The fee is small, he can have his smoke and glass of beer, and if he has a few shillings in his pocket he can put it on the table with considerable chance of its growing. There are men frequenting these, as well as the lower kind of club, whose livelihood is gained by their wits—who play to win for their living; but a stranger would not be able to pick them out, and in these places they do not

sional gamblers, and inveterates who are too hard up to run the bank. When I mention pigeons I certainly don't mean that the members of this particular club reckon on and look for "pigeons." Doubtless, if one comes in their way they do not quite reject him ; but still, the main object of the club is legitimate gambling, not either fleecing or dissipation. At the same time my introducer made me promise, as a general precaution against being made a mark, that if any one asked the loan of 2s. 6d. or offered to "put my money on" for me, I would decline, on the plea that I was too hard up. There were never more than thirty or thirty-five persons in the room whilst I was there—about two hours in all—and of these some twenty were constantly there, the other ten or fifteen being made up of men staying for half an hour or an hour. Lex belonged to this portion, behaving as if he had just dropped in on chance or when passing, but playing with admirable tact and skill—to win, and not for the sake of playing. Of course all play to win, but most play, as the Americans say, "right away."

This club is of a kind much more dangerous to young men than those of the brawling description. More danger there is in the latter, immediate and physical on the one hand, and a danger amounting to a certainty that you will come out of them with very, very little in your pocket ; but a young man of any character at all going to one of them is apt to be rather scared than attracted, and the severe loss which he is sure to suffer in one way or another will act on him healthily—he will not be so ready to return ; and certainly he will not, unless he go

to cheat in the objectionable manner, and was greeted with a roar of indignation worthy of the occasion, and then (he seemed not to be an *habitué*) the services of the professional ejector were called in. I thought it advisable to play here more than at common places; suspicion would sooner fall on a non-player here than in a club where most present are "dead-brokes." Strangely enough, I won; and yet not so strange, for I had noticed Lex's playing to be successful, and as I had to lay money down, I thought it advisable to play exactly as he did. He came up to me every few minutes and inquired, "Aren't you dry?" I was not; but the question was accompanied by such an expressive wink that I followed the questioner to the outer room, where he would whisper some such admirable sentiment as, "Sure to lose if we bet against the bank just now." After a glass he would say chances were better, and back we went. This proceeding, kindly to me, was not, perhaps, carried out so often simply to give me the best chance at the table; but at the same time my legal friend evidently knew the game well, and knew how to take advantage of his knowledge.

The players might be divided roughly into two classes—first, those who came with £20 or more in their pockets, and were prepared to buy the bank and run the game on their own account. These were experienced individuals, "wide awake," and probably not *too* highly principled. For the most part they are book-makers, and have no occupation or any occupation. The other division comprises "pigeons" and strangers generally, occa-

or anything else, paying his losings and piling up his winnings with the same equanimity. It was principally winnings that he had to do with, for he seemed a remarkably skilled player. But well-behaved as the players generally were, there was none the less excitement, rather more. The sums hazarded ranged here, as in most clubs, from a shilling up to several pounds, and the turns of luck were followed with as intense an eagerness, only somewhat more concealed, as in the commonest *omnium-gatherum* club. Of the occupation of the members it was very difficult to judge. They were all well-dressed, if in some cases not in extraordinarily good taste. A few were "loud," but if you pass over a partiality for brilliant ties, the clothing as a whole would pass muster anywhere. One or two were evidently book-makers, and of almost all it could be said that they were more or less interested in racing. The majority were clerks in fair positions, sharp and smart, and with ability rather above than below the average of their class. Some nondescripts there were, of course, who might be anything, from skilled professional thieves to respectable and respected tradespeople with large businesses. It is not too much to say that the desire to cheat was only suppressed by the impracticability of the desire, and honour amongst the gamblers seemed to be interpreted here, "Don't cheat openly." Aggression and bare-faced cheating they would take as an insult to their intelligence; but as far as I could judge, a capacity for careful and sly cheating would rather add to the reputation of the individual possessing it. One ill-advised gentleman did attempt

baccarat is the main game of this establishment. During the time I was present no other game was played, and though undoubtedly betting of the ordinary kind is carried on, I saw no telegraphic machine, and should say that the club is a baccarat club, pure and simple. No women were admitted, and the order kept was admirable. Indeed, there seemed no inclination on the part of any one present to be unruly, and it was evident that all regarded gambling simply as a fascinating and profitable or unprofitable (as the case might be) game of chance, and not as part of a course of dissipation. Most of the company behaved as *habitués* of the place, and the membership is kept what may be called "select" and quiet. I was instantly noticed when I entered the room, and a man in authority asked me pretty sharply who had brought me in. My guide and philosopher again stood sponsor, and all was right. I took a place at the end of the table and joined in the game to the extent of a few shillings. My introduction was a good one, for no more attention was paid me, and I moved among the players as I liked. Of course a good deal of steady drinking was going on, but as I have said, gambling was the object, not dissipation, and the drinking was entirely subsidiary. All the players were between twenty-five and forty or so, with the exception of a big, aggressive man at the head of the table, whom I should have taken to be H. M. Stanley had that gentleman not been playing a different game in Africa at the time.

This Stanley-like gambler sat stolid throughout, to all appearance paying no attention to the game

on learning, intimated that had I had more than a sovereign he wouldn't have taken me. This promised well for his sincerity, which indeed bore the test successfully throughout the evening. We took a hansom from Fleet Street, and were soon deposited near the first place in the "round"—situated in a small side street, where but few people pass. I marked the place to which we were going immediately we entered the street; the windows on the ground floor of these clubs are almost always painted a dark-chocolate colour, through which nothing can be seen. Lex rang the bell, and after a careful scrutiny of me by the doorkeeper, "A particular friend of mine" proved a password, and we entered through two doors into a fair-sized room, nicely fitted up like an ordinary newspaper or reading-room, only without the newspapers or books. Without the readers too, I might have said, for with the exception of a horsey individual eating a meat-pie at a table, the room was empty. In a recess off from the room a well-appointed bar was attended to by an equally appointed barmaid, and lounging over the counter speaking to the damsel the doorkeeper and bully of the establishment gracefully expended his spare time. We waited here only long enough to allow Lex to refresh himself and exchange sundry playful remarks with the woman, and then we passed to the gambling apartment—the next room. This room was smaller; indeed, when the table was surrounded by the players, some twenty-five or so, little empty space was left except at the upper end, where hats and coats lay on a leather-covered bench. Apparently

The policeman hinted repeatedly that tips were frequently forthcoming from *habitues* of the clubs. He said that he wished the places were cleared out. "But," he added, "it ain't a bit of use; clear them off one part, and they'll spring up in another. Like the bad ha'penny, they always turn up."

The opinion may be taken with the traditional grain of salt, for putting aside the fact that tips do not improve the judgment of the officer, there remains the inconvenient fact that the clubs are *not* cleared out of *any* quarter. An occasional raid on a solitary club, which perchance has not made itself agreeable to the police, scarcely constitutes a "clearing out." It remains to be seen whether "it ain't a bit of use;" and attempt might be made, at any rate.

We next give an account of a club in Clerkenwell, of a description differing somewhat from the last. A commissioner says, I had as introducer a good man, or, rather, a man who was a good introducer. He is a member of the Bar, and was once in very good practice, which, according to his own account, he lost through the new Chancery Rules. He certainly has a remarkable face, and though this qualification might generally be supposed to stand a professional man in good stead, it is extremely probable that my quondam friend's face is answerable even more than the Chancery Rules for the loss of practice. He casually mentioned gambling clubs to me immediately after receiving your instructions. He said that he would show me "round," on the condition that I told no one he knew; inquired how much money I had on me, and

of the door, and landed practically in the arms of a policeman who chanced to be passing. The man in blue calmly set me on my feet and remarked, quite casually, "Hum! coming out in a hurry, ain't you?" I said I was. He asked what I was doing there; to which I rejoined that curiosity was answerable. The introduction, though unceremonious, was opportune, for my new acquaintance opened out more freely than he might have been inclined to in a case of a less unconventional encounter. In the course of our talk he asked if I had seen in the "club" a military-looking man, giving a description that exactly fitted the admirer of Lord Randolph. On saying that I had noticed such a man, I learned that he was one of the cleverest thieves in London. "He lives in the West End," said the policeman, "and in good style too, and every cent he makes is by roguery. He's been *had* twice, but he's a fly 'un, and no error."

This policeman was one of the force which made the raid upon the notorious "Austro-Hungarian" club, which he said was fitted up in luxurious fashion, and was nightly frequented by as many as a hundred women. This is the club where dances in which only women joined were occasionally performed at odd moments in presence of the men. Hansoms rolled up to the door all night long, "and plenty of fine, fat pigeons in 'em." The thief of military aspect went regularly, and made "piles" by cheating and robbery. Short shrift is the reward of a fleeced swell who is fool enough to create a disturbance, and many a man leaves the club, minus all valuables whatever, who dare not complain.

*evidence.* One or two looked in for a familiar word all round, and departed with a general promise to "come in later on," after a peep at the Pavilion or Alhambra. Very few were anything the worse for drink at this time, but before I left the scene was livelier. Upstairs a billiard-room was well patronized, and a knot of gentlemen interested in the turf discoursed learnedly about "odds," and entered bets in battered-looking pocket-books of ample size. There were too few in this room to admit of my staying long in it, and on going back to the gaming-room I found my friend the enemy looking for me. He was quite satisfied; and taking all things into consideration, I thought I had better depart as soon as possible. My chance came in a few minutes. A frenzied young man of decent appearance imagined he was being cheated, which was, perhaps, not an improbable fancy, and declared so, which was very foolish. The Montague Tigg style of man accused was naturally wrath at the accusation, and promptly seized a heavy cut-glass water-bottle wherewith to ease his wounded feelings on the decent young man's head. In rushed the proprietor to the fray; a struggle ensued, and I quietly walked to the door and proceeded downstairs safely. I passed the inner door, and found between it and the outer one the small boy before-mentioned engaged in business-like conversation with three women. The women stood close in to the wall to let me pass, and the diminutive janitor opened the door. Half-way out I was suddenly tripped with great cleverness, whilst a grab was made at my watch. The ribbon which held it broke; the watch was safe, but I went headlong out

becomes obstreperous ; round and round the universal provider of moral poison—this ubiquitous, obese, rascally looking Jew—promenades.

When I had watched the baccarat for some time the unprepossessing proprietor, not quite satisfied with me, beckoned, and I joined him at the bar. A few minutes' talk put him off his guard, but the repeated postponement of invitations to dice, to which ignorance of the games forced me, let him see that I was an "innocent." A disturbance between two players and a young man who looked like a shop-assistant drew him away from me, and for some time I watched the dice-players quarrelling and glaring. The "military" man engaged me in conversation—on politics! and expressed his unbounded admiration of Lord Randolph. After 10 the company rapidly increased, and so many squabbles and other pressing calls upon the proprietor took up that estimable individual's attention that I had much more freedom. Although, as I have said, most classes were represented amongst the players, the upper working class seemed to preponderate. A good many foreigners, mainly French and German ; a few professional thieves and more non-professional ones ; a sprinkling of "pigeons ;" shop-assistants and clerks ; several book-makers ; and the rest working men of intelligence—of such was the company composed. Sitting moodily in corners, or anon wandering with greedy eyes among the rest, one or two regular ragamuffins were evidently waiting until liquor should make easy prey for them. The women were of course friends with all ; but it was too early for them to be fully *en*

and wealth, whilst the late occupant slunk about the room, "on the prowl" for credit or for money in some shape and in some manner.

There is a general movement at the table, and conversation becomes animated and violent; the banker is heard saying, "£9 to you" (followed by a golden chink that brings strange looks into many eyes), as he divides the spoils of the last turn with his partners. Now a new bank is made, and after a little shuffling, comparative silence is restored, and the game begins once more. Some keep stolid countenances, and whether they win or lose, say nothing; others scarcely take their eyes off the table, and at each loss watch nervously whilst the whole of the "table" is swept into the bank, while they grasp with exultant eagerness occasional winnings. Here and there a player, wholly lost in the game, reveals his inmost thoughts in a semi-maudlin manner at every turn of chance. The banker sits quiet, keen and seeing everything, and only speaks the formulæ of the game in a hard, sharp monotone; and so the "fun" goes on—winning and losing, hope and despair. Some are callous, others sensitive to the smallest variation in luck, good or bad. And all the time the manager promenades the room; now watching some particular person; now chatting in an undertone with the bar-tender; collecting his fee from a new bank, and spitting on it with an unpleasant leer; encouraging a "dead-broke" in terms of insinuation and with repulsive greasiness of tone; chaffing the women; bawling with oily and half-deprecatory sternness, "Order, gentlemen, order, *if* you please," when some "gentleman"

the door to be looked at. The inspection was not unsatisfactory. The outer door was shut behind me, and I was solemnly escorted through an inner one, where, after a little talk, I was proposed as a member by the proprietor and seconded by his bartender. A false name given and 2*s.* 6*d.* paid as a month's subscription, and behold your commissioner "outside" the law. My mentor accompanied me upstairs into a large, well-lighted room, and left me to find my own way about. A bar at the side, attended by a surly, bull-necked individual (the same who seconded me), a baccarat-table, a great many smaller tables, and some thirty men and twenty women—such were the contents of the room when I went in.

The baccarat-table at this time (9.30) had the most attention. Sitting and standing round it were quite twenty players, staking sums from 6*d.* to £3 or £4. In appearance they descended in nice gradations, from a dashing military-looking man in evening attire to a remarkably dirty young fellow who seemed to be a Scandinavian. Some sat close at the table and betted against the "bank" throughout—and as a natural consequence lost. Others, more wary, with a greater desire to win cautiously than the genuine gambler is possessed of, stood round and put their money on the table after sundry calculations of chances. Now and then one heard a "sitter" grumble out, "Lend us a dollar, Jack"—a sign of approaching financial dissolution; and, occasionally, a man rose, pushed back his chair angrily, and moved off—"dead broke." The chair was instantly seized by another craver for excitement

quently I learned that none were allowed on the premises unless accompanied by a man. This rule, on a par with the others of the establishment, is merely meant to *read* well, for of course the women have no difficulty in getting some one to take them in. So many entered that it occurred to me that the system of admittance must be very lax—the doorkeeper couldn't know every one. So I crossed over and knocked at the door. A grating was opened and a small boy inquired my business. On telling him that I wished to become a member, an exciting conversation took place between us.

“Who are you?”

“What's that to you?”

“Does the boss know you?”

“Can't say.”

“Who introduces you?”

“I do.”

“What, are you a member, then?”

“No, but I want to be, didn't I tell you?”

“You must get an introducer.”

“I don't know any member.”

“Then clear off.”

The grating was here shut with more force than civility. I knocked again and rang the bell. The boy opened the grating roughly, and swore in a highly experienced manner that if I didn't move away he'd fetch the “committee.” That was precisely what I wanted, I said. He evidently thought I was drunk, and retired, presently returning with a man who proved to be the proprietor or manager. “Who are you?” etc., etc.; the same conversation again, with the difference that I was admitted within

The following is an account, by a commissioner, of a club in the Soho district, regarding which he premises, The club is one of a kind almost peculiar to the district in point of the number of foreigners who frequent them. They all bear a national name, such as (to name one which is now done away with) "The Austro-Hungary Club," but the name is a mere farce. In the case of clubs nominally German, whether in this or any other part of London, you will find that men of that nationality use them to a considerable extent, and there are clubs frequented by Germans alone. It would be an exceptional gambling-room in any of the Tottenham Court, Soho, or Clerkenwell localities in which Germans and Jews were not to be seen. The Soho clubs are well supplied with blackguards, from the clumsiest to the most skilful, but the pick of the swell mobsmen affect the —, in Charlotte Street (in which street, by the way, are or were recently three other clubs), and the —, near Covent Garden. This latter is also much in favour with the Jew salesmen of Covent Garden. Of course these remarks as to frequenters apply to what may be called the "fleecers"—the blackguards who "pluck" any "pigeon" young and inexperienced enough to enter.

Whilst watching two or three houses in — Street, which attracted suspicion by a close, dark ground-floor and well-lit first and second stories, I noticed one which seemed to promise comparatively easy entrance. Several men were admitted within the few minutes which I spent watching from a passage across the road, and with some of them were women. No woman went in alone, and subse-

reader will then be in a position to form an adequate conception, clear and unprejudiced, of the magnitude and virulence of the evil as it actually exists. He will thus be able to judge for himself how far the comments which we make and the inferences we draw are warranted by fact and reason.

This done, we shall give a concise exposition of the law regarding gambling-houses, as it stands at present ; and then, again, we shall call upon the reader to make his own independent judgment, and decide whether the Executive are doing their duty or whether they are guilty of any neglect. We shall have to make serious accusations, but it will be in the power of any one who carefully reads the accounts which follow to formulate his own opinion ; and we think there is but a slight doubt as to whether the charges we bring will meet with general concurrence.

We will begin, then, with gambling ; betting, which is intimately connected with it, will be treated separately, and at present will occupy an entirely subsidiary position when mentioned at all. Gambling is the central object here ; and we give it a most exhaustive consideration because, though it may be a less baneful sore of the body politic than some other evils, its continued existence is relatively more disgraceful to society. There are social cancers which it is impossible to deal with except in the most gradual and indirect manner ; but it is in our power to repress gambling clubs, and if not to ensure their extirpation, at least to cleanse society of them to a vast degree. The more shame to us, then, that they not only flourish, but every year spread their vile ramifications farther and farther.

## CHAPTER V.

### *GAMBLING.*

WE now come to a most important section of this painful subject. The gambling-houses which, as our commissioners will show, thickly stud most districts of London, and are more or less prevalent in all, constitute an evil which, though perhaps less insidiously dangerous to our youth, is a more glaring reproach to civilization than any we have yet considered. Their pandering to vice is conducted in a comparatively undisguised fashion; and whilst in many cases this very lack of disguise would rather shock than allure inexperienced lads, the ease and general immunity under which operations in these "hells" can be carried on, even in the most respectable quarters, show with sufficient clearness that the law or its conduct is somewhere at fault.

In the first place, we deem it best to give various accounts of visits paid by our commissioners to gambling clubs of different degrees in extent of vice. These accounts will be printed just as they have been received; no colouring of any kind will be added. After these plain statements of unvarnished facts will follow complementary details, and evidence of wide import to fill up the disgraceful picture; and the

tastes. Some have an unenviable notoriety for the character of the entertainments and their frequenters, and are therefore generally crammed.

The only drawback to the complete success of the "free-and-easy" is that it must terminate shortly after 12, and youths who are in for "making a night of it" do not relish this. They have perhaps not drunk very much during the evening, yet enough to make them feel that they would like more. But the publicans, however much they may wish to, dare not allow them to remain after closing time, and they are ejected, noisy and "jolly," into the street. But the difficulty is easily got over, for one or two of the party are members of some "club" in the neighbourhood, whither they can all go and "stop as long as they like." "Club" sounds unobjectionable enough, but it is generally an evil hour for those who consent to the arrangement, instead of seeking their homes. These clubs have arisen in the crowded central suburbs of London within the last few years, and are virtually after-hours' drinking-bars, where gambling, betting, card-playing, all unlawful games of chance are indulged in, where young women are admitted and dancing all night is the rule, where every one can stay until 6 o'clock in the morning, and the subscription for membership is about *2s. 6d.* a year.

not be tolerated in any reasonably regulated assembly. The comic element, as it is termed, predominates, and the broader it becomes the greater favour does it obtain, any particularly bold indecency being generally received with especial applause. The meeting seldom breaks up without many of the revellers becoming the worse for drink. The "free-and-easies" are a recognized institution in the city, where the young man may take a female employée of his firm or other acquaintance, without the expense of the theatre, music-hall, or dancing academy, which would be too great a tax upon his resources. One may see young men and women in those places first introduced, who have never previously tasted drink, and who listen, at first, to the questionable songs with something akin to pained surprise. Yet as others—men, and women too—will laugh quite heartily, joining freely in some coarse chorus, and giving point to what is most objectionable, the new-comers will soon find their consciences dulled to the necessary level. One may hear these young women boasting of the number of glasses of wine or spirits which they can take without "making fools of themselves."

In the suburbs the same class of entertainment is supplied, though the name is varied. There we find "smoking concerts" or "social evenings" taking place every night of the week. There are some public-houses where these semi-private entertainments are of such a character that they attract young men from distant parts of London. Others have advantages of comfort and decoration which make them favourite resorts for young men with musical

Several houses in various courts off Cheapside, and in the neighbourhood of Foster Lane, and, to a greater extent still, in certain portions of the suburbs have a room reserved on the first floor where social evenings and "free-and-easy" concerts are held. Considerable pains are taken by the proprietors to make these attractive, in order to keep the young men in the city as long as possible after business hours. The proprietor will actually pay good-looking girls to attend, in order to keep the custom of the visitors. Each house is used by its own particular set, and the members after a time come to know one another rather intimately, and can obtain a considerable amount of credit from the landlord. One will have a special attraction for the young girls in these buildings, another will have facilities for those interested in "tips" and the races, another will be remarkable for its barmaids, and so on. In one near St. Paul's we found a dance terminating the musical evening.

These evening parties are much looked forward to by tired and worried warehousemen and clerks. The expense is small—only what may be spent in drink—for no charge is made for admission, the freedom of behaviour is unlimited, a friend is easily made, nobody affects to be better than his fellows, and everybody appears desirous of making himself as agreeable to everybody else as possible. Furthermore, the majority of these entertainments may be attended by the sweethearts of the young men. But the very nature of the arrangements is destructive of morality. Young men and young women are brought together without restraint. The songs sung would

foreigners, some of whom employ barmaids, whilst others rely solely upon their individual exertions, backed up by "large dock glasses for 4d."

Several public-houses in central positions find that it pays them to encourage debating clubs, who meet perhaps twice or thrice a week. There is nothing encourages thirst so much as talking, especially when that principally takes the form of shouting, and the shouting at these debates is sometimes alarming. Angry quarrels arise, which are only terminated by the exhaustion of one or other of the parties, the one who can talk the loudest winning the day. These debates attract a lot of garrulous people, who generally try to talk each other down, and naturally get themselves very hoarse in the attempt. The youth who frequents these places for the purpose of enlarging his ideas will find himself, as a rule, woefully mistaken.

A member of the Stock Exchange keeps a public-house in Clapham. This fact shows the class of men who think it no disgrace to take taverns nowadays.

There are many curiosities in London in the hands of the publican, which it would almost seem should be taken charge of by more responsible people. Such is the last of the city gates, "St. John's Gate." This is rented by a public-house which carries on its business right into the very sacred centre of Dr. Johnson's room. It is necessary to drink to see over it, as it is to witness the delights of "Sir Paul Pindar," "D.D.," and "Daniel Webster," any of which would be worth seeing if "a drink" were not the passport.

honour towards all those who have fleeced them or destroyed them.

The majority of the city drinking-places close by about 7 o'clock, and then the houses in the suburbs commence to get busy ; for, so long as they have money in their pockets, young men must drink at all hours of the day.

There are some drinking-bars in the city which are so irreproachably respectable in appearance that to enter them confers a certain distinction upon the customer. One of these is to be found in Old Broad Street, opposite the National Bank, and has simply the name of the firm over the front, and no sign or other outward mark of drink upon it ; another is in Pope's Head Alley. In these places men in black cut-away coats sell the drinks over the counter, only wines and spirits of good quality being retailed, and there is no gaudy display of cut-glass and other insignia to set the bar off. Here the drinks are always as good as they can be, and the most distinguished city men use these shops without hesitation. Given the necessity of drink, you could not go to better places to get it.

Many city wine-bars are buried deep under ground, and are approached by ladders at a very uncomfortable angle. They are really converted cellars, and the wine is always kept in the casks and drawn therefrom. At such places biscuits and cheese are provided gratis, and the hungry tippler can spend the money on drink that was intended for his food, enjoying meanwhile the provisions so laudably placed at the disposal of casual callers. Most of these underground bars are kept by

We have had many of them pointed out to us, which derive the greater part of their trade from the business resulting from these frequenters. One tavern at Islington is one of the most notorious of this class. Here there is a large saloon bar which, after 8 o'clock at night, is almost monopolized by the class of persons just mentioned. They are allowed to remain there as long as ever they like, and no man is safe from their impertinences, if he once ventures into the saloon. The scenes that may be witnessed here as the hour grows late are better imagined than described. Equally bad is another at Charing Cross, which might almost be dubbed a casual club for these unfortunate creatures. There are others, notably one in Oxford Street, as to which the most disgraceful reports are in circulation; but owing to the nervous care that is taken to keep things from the notice of the stranger, there does not seem to be much to fear, except from those who make a habit of frequenting them. Very truly does Mr. Joseph Ling, of the National Temperance League, say that "there is no safety for any one but in total abstention."

In many public-houses unlawful games of cards are played by those whom the landlords can trust; and very young men can soon get themselves "trusted." We hear of baccarat, ace of arts, faro, passage, hazard, etc., being played between 1 and 3 o'clock in the middle of the day in city taverns, and of youths losing several shillings in their dinner-hours. The public-houses that allow this do not run much risk; for perhaps the chief virtue of young men, whatever their pleasures may be, is scrupulous

the young to adjourn thereto, and smoke and drink for so long as they dare remain away from their stools.

Before we leave the day-time drinking-places we must mention one whose attractions are legion, whose size is like unto that of a small town, and whose frequenters comprehend all the broken down, once well-to-do city men. The whole of it is underground, and it extends from one important thoroughfare to another, a distance of over three hundred feet. A central passage runs the whole length, and is dotted by little cigar-shops and paper-stalls, presided over by women. It is replete with snug little bars, and has more secluded corners than any other restaurant in London. Hither resort, on account of the Stock Exchange prices telegraph, the poorer class of speculators, both in horses and stocks, and several dealers make a scanty living by advising the casual customers on "certainties." In the middle of the day it is crowded with clerks and others for about two hours, who either watch the billiards, or retreat to one of the quiet corners, or get inveigled into conversation with some of the stock-dealers. Any of these proceedings means losing money. Many a young man has been led into time-wasting habits by allowing himself to casually enter this most accommodating restaurant. The biscuits, cheese, and olives that are supplied gratis constitute an attraction to those who wish to drink, but are anxious not to spend too much on their lunches.

The most harmful class of taverns are those which are made the usual resort of women of bad character.

sporting news. It is a usual thing to charge a penny extra for the drinks that are sold in such bars, to compensate for the extra advantages. Many a youth with sporting tendencies will have the necessary "payment drink" to get into these rooms, wherein there is sure to be at least one typical horsey man ready to unload all sorts of turf secrets in return for a drink.

These examples tend to show that although drink-shops are bad enough in their proper characters, they become much more dangerous in the hands of skilful directors, when they are virtually made to comprehend nearly every temptation to young men. If drink-shops merely sold drink there would probably not be so much liquor consumed by 20 per cent. as there is now, and nobody knows this better than the publicans themselves. There are two great attractions for a tavern to possess: the first and most potent is a sporting landlord, with a reputation; the second is barmaids.

The majority of city public-houses have now dining-rooms attached. The man who dines is almost forced to drink beer with his meal. The difficulty of obtaining a glass of water in a restaurant is well known to those who have tried it, and success seems to make the individual feel that he is a kind of pariah at the feast. These little things have much influence over youths who have not sufficient resolution to withstand the frequent repetitions of "Water, sir?" uttered in loud, surprised tones by the waiters to whom the request has been made. There is always a smoking-room to every such dining-place, and the temptation is strong upon

approached by a steep flight of steps. It is beyond the reach of more than a very few rays of daylight, and is lighted by wax candles and nothing else. The effect is unique, and many people take their friends to see it. It will be understood that it cannot be seen without drinking something.

A basement wine-bar in Eastcheap, which had been once or twice cautioned by the police, endeavoured to change its character by dismissing the barmaids and employing young men ; but a month's trial was sufficient for the proprietor, who found his takings fall off nearly 50 per cent., and the old state of things was restored. This almost suggests the idea that if it were made illegal to employ women in public-houses—and certainly one would think these are almost the last places in which they should be employed—a considerable check would be put upon the sale of intoxicants.

There is a public-house in the City Road that is notoriously the resort of thieves ; and there is another near Moorgate Street Station where those "shady" individuals who hawk bits of cloth and wearing apparel from door to door in the suburbs meet for the exchange of articles and to discuss plans. It may not be generally known that these degenerated tally-men work their districts in league, and if they find one class of goods does not sell well in Hampstead they will hand it over to the man who works Peckham or Bow.

There are several taverns in the city that, in addition to the downstairs bars, have private upstairs bars, wherein are fixed telegraph tape machines, that rapidly disgorge all the very latest betting and

their spare day-time in drinking-bars as their night-time. Incredible as it may seem, we have discovered that nearly every drinking-place in the city has its distinctive attraction, and this principally is not in the quality of its liquors, but in something altogether apart therefrom. A few examples will perhaps explain what we mean.

A public-house in Queen Street, distinguished by a name of most significant import, which will be readily called to mind by those who know it, is celebrated for a barmaid with a blind knack of picking out winning horses from the long lists of names published daily in the papers. Middle-aged men, who ought to know better, put trustfulness in her discrimination, and resort to her bar three or four times a day to hear her oracular utterances. She trades upon this celebrity to the utmost, and can nearly always assure that her counter will be well attended. Those young men who affect covert-coats and smooth faces are ever in force here, and are quite willing to entrust their money to her, if she will only do them the honour of taking it. But she will have nothing to do with any who are not regular customers, therefore it is necessary to use the house frequently to obtain the benefit of her guidance. How she gained her reputation nobody seems to know, but there is always a demonstrative person in the bar ready to bear testimony to her universal correctness. She is, of course, invaluable to the landlord as a draw, but many youths have discovered to their cost that she is not infallible.

There is a curious old wine-bar in Hercules Passage, in the city. It is underground, and

enter the fatal door for the lemonade, if for nothing worse than to oblige his friend, though he has not the slightest desire to drink even that, and cannot understand the necessity of drinking just to drink and nothing more. Though he may come out without breaking his pledge or violating his principles, the spell is broken, the dignity of his resolution is broken, and the mischief is begun. Henceforth the access to the bar is rendered easier for him, and in due time the objection to being supposed "soft" will induce him to partake of some beer or spirits. The feeling of elevation resulting from the first drink or two, aided by the loud laughter with which the remarks of those around him are attended, sends the youth back to his dreary lodging with a new zest for life. He sees that instead of monotonously reading in an ill-lighted room, his share of which is only the right to sit upon a chair, or of attending some dull course of lectures, or endeavouring to improve his position by learning a language or shorthand, he can, for a very small outlay, obtain a comfortable corner in a snug room, pleasant, hilarious company, female conversation, hear the latest kind of news that can only be heard amongst young men, and generally feel himself a man of the world. The drink, which at first he would rather have been without, gradually becomes more pleasant to him, until he attains an actual desire for the malt liquor on his tongue, and later may begin to feel restless and uneasy without it.

Our inquiries have tended to prove that there is just as much inducement for young men to spend

spirits cannot repress a shiver when taking them, and this it is the aim of every weak-minded youth to overcome. It is laughed at as a sign of a novice, and is proportionately distasteful to the boy who wishes to appear a man. There are a great number of junior clerks who quickly assimilate themselves to drinking, smoking, and various promiscuous acquaintances; but there are also a considerable number who at any rate make some show of resistance. So long as they rigidly adhere to their convictions they are safe, but directly they endeavour to adapt themselves to the wishes of others their ramparts crumble away and they are left defenceless to the enemy.

The evening stroll, which it is almost impossible to suppress, but which is responsible for most of the deviations of youth, brings two young men together with nothing in common but a desire to kill time. One is a teetotaler; the other is a good enough fellow, but accustomed to allow himself a few glasses of beer in the evening; and on the invitation of the latter the former is induced to enter a public-house, merely to keep him company and drink a glass of lemonade.

Surely our readers will in their own former experience recall many such cases. The one persuades himself that there can be nothing wrong in going into a public-house, if he has no beer or spirits; and besides, if he refuses he will lose his companion, who will assuredly go in without him, and will thus run the risk of wandering about by himself for the rest of the evening. The undesirability of this must be experienced to be understood. He will

pestered by a worrying waiter. He will ring a bell when he requires refreshment, and it will be brought to him. There is a piano, and a prepossessing, well-dressed young lady attends from 7 to 11, who cheerfully accompanies any song or renders a piece at intervals. The young lady may be a perfectly modest young lady, but it is not her policy to insist too much upon this, and when a lot of half-educated youths find a woman amongst them they vie with each other in the rudeness of their attentions.

This is the sort of place which first inveigles the respectable young man into an atmosphere of drink, the place that a drinking man would select to prove the harmlessness of a little amusement to a timid acquaintance, or for the introduction of a young teetotaler with no worse a motive than a sincere desire to give him the least harmful chance of amusement, after the confinement of a long day's work in the city. There is always a friendly young man in each business house, who will take an interest in the new-comer and show him about. He may chance to be a good, sensible, open-hearted, religious young man, or he may, as is more often the case, be the thoughtless or vicious leader of all sorts of dissipation. This is evidence of the care necessary in the selection of first acquaintances. Few young men will take to drink from any particular liking for the liquor itself; in fact, to one wisely restrained by his parents from any indulgence whatever in alcoholic beverages the flavour is at first distasteful. What is jokingly known as "the whisky shudder" is a frequent complaint with embryo drinkers. People unused to

On inquiring at some of the great hotels, more especially those connected with the railway termini, we find that the public bar so prominent at each of these is relied upon to produce a very considerable portion of the whole income. We have been assured in particular cases that more is actually obtained from the consumption of liquor at these bars than is produced out of the rest of the establishments.

Hotel and railway-station bars are presided over by young ladies with faultless figures, but they are of too imposing a character to attract young city men, save on rare occasions. The barmaids are a little too grand in style, and their hauteur of manner is painfully chilling to the clerk who is not at all sure that his collar looks as clean as it might.

Several publicans have informed our Commissioners that they prefer a neighbourhood where there are plenty of young men, as they contribute largely to the success of a public-house. In the Clapham Road there is a public-house ingeniously constructed for the convenience and comfort of the young man from the city. From the proprietor's point of view it is all that money and business tact could desire. A convenient range of private bars with cushioned seats and mahogany partitions, silver-plated tankards with a piece of looking-glass at the bottom as a warning to replenish, are the attractions of the lower portions. Above are billiard and card-rooms with a concert-room, which is kept especially select, none but decently dressed persons being admitted. Here drink is not rudely forced upon the visitor; he may take his seat in a comfortably furnished and nicely decorated room without being

ing of every foot of ground with offices. Frequently in the rear of some large shipping or broker's office there is a gorgeous public-house ; the appearance of gilded column, glittering plate-glass, and drinking groups is suddenly revealed by opening the wrong door. Such places are decorated with a lavish disregard of expenditure. This is more particularly the case with the large houses having a frontage to the streets, such as the "Four Swans" in Gracechurch Street, "Gog and Magog" and "Queen Anne" in Cheapside, with innumerable others in the neighbourhoods of the various exchanges. £200 apiece was given for seven pictures, of luxurious subjects, to a Viennese artist of repute by the proprietors of an establishment in the Strand, which it is the ambition of many young city men to visit in the evenings, when a small but high-class band plays a selection of music. To this place ladies may be taken, and lager beer may be drunk there ; and, for the outlay of about half a crown, the youth may forget that he is a toiling clerk, and fancy himself the gay and rich Lothario, a fancy which seems to him the acme of happiness. But the half-crown is sorely missed all the rest of the week.

Publicans are a prosperous fraternity, notwithstanding their bitter lamentations anent the temperance legislation of recent years. From their really beautiful establishments they dole out their incentives to mental decay, bodily ruin, vice, and violence with much greater rapidity than the medical profession and the police can cope with. Many of the proprietors of these places are among the wealthiest of men, and hold distinguished places in city circles.

mously increased. There are over 20,000 public-houses in London, one to every 200 people. Then there are nearly 4,000 private clubs for young men, such as dancing clubs, social clubs, betting clubs, all relying mainly upon drink for their financial success. These are rapidly increasing in number. The Secretary of the United Kingdom Alliance says, "The greater part of the mischief done and misery caused by drink never comes to light at all, and money is expended indirectly for drink which can never be estimated." An idea of the amount of money produced by this weakness of mankind may be obtained by a consideration of the value of some of the public-houses in the metropolis. One in South London, on changing hands at a recent sale, secured £43,000 as the price of the goodwill and fixtures, which were not of a very imposing character. The "Angel" at Islington far exceeds this in value. For a public-house near St. Paul's Cathedral, £22,000 was demanded as the price of the goodwill and fixtures, the odd £2,000 amply paying for the latter. A public-house near New Bond Street had the large sum of £7,000 spent on its decoration alone, yet it does not surpass many of the elegant city bars. It would astound the uninitiated to know the amounts for which these glittering palaces are assessed, and the rates and taxes they are able to pay in proportion. There are houses in the city rated at over £1,000, and their extreme magnificence and splendour fully justify the assessment. The more magnificent are frequently hidden in courts and alleys. Many of them have most deceptive entrances, in consequence of the overcrowd-

prevented to a great extent by the fear of losing the respect of their family.

The money spent by many clerks and warehousemen upon drink forms an enormous proportion of their wages. We have had instances given us of clerks earning from £1 to 30s. a week spending from a shilling to two shillings every night in beer, and depriving themselves of necessaries in order to keep up the habit. This would not be spent in one house, but in three or four, the youth walking from one rendezvous to the other to meet his "pals," and have a chat either with the landlord or the barmaid. The barmaids at suburban public-houses are frequently the wives or daughters of the landlords, and have to be addressed with proper respect; but so long as this is done, any one may converse with them without the trouble of an introduction. To the youth accustomed to the society of mother and sisters, who finds himself lonely and neglected in his lodgings, the conversation of women is pleasant, and he may thus fall into the habit of going nightly to the same public-house in order to speak to a motherly landlady or a ready-tongued, but otherwise unobjectionable daughter. But he cannot do this without drinking, and the cost of the drink is the price he pays for a relief from the barrenness of home. In this way he slowly drifts into habits of intemperance, without being aware of it himself, and without seeing any sign-posts to warn him of his direction.

Recent statistics show that £125,477,275 was spent in one year upon intoxicating drinks, and 1,461,519 persons were tempted into crime as a result. The number of drinking-houses has enor-

incorporated in a pamphlet. In that he clearly proves the baneful influence upon the action of the heart of drinking even as little as a quart of malt liquor a day. But when a man, in order to pay for the alcohol that he not only does not require, but would be better without, deprives himself of the food that is necessary to keep him in health the effect must be doubly disastrous. Indeed, some men who believe that their business requires them to drink often make a rule of eating a biscuit or something of the kind with every glass, which prevents the liquor having as speedy an effect upon them as it otherwise would.

It has been already stated that if a young man were proof against the allurements of drink he would have nothing to fear, comparatively speaking, from the temptations of London. Strange as this may appear at the first blush, amidst the evidences of falls and sins from varieties of passion, the researches of the Commission prove its correctness.

If drinking is not necessarily the precursor of every vice, it at least accompanies them all, robbing them of their apparent grossness, and "educating" the minds of the young to their enjoyment. That which to the sober man seems utterly hateful and despicable will appear only "good fun" to him whose brain is somewhat fuddled by alcoholic fumes. Nobody gets what is called "jolly" until he has drunk something, and the "getting jolly" is only another term for misbehaviour. Youths who live in lodgings, cheerless and comfortless at the best, are those who are the readiest to "get jolly," so long as the money lasts; young men who live at home are

unable to think of any apposite remarks, and proposing a "drink" in sheer despair. It is the best way out of the difficulty of having nothing to say, without offending either side, and it becomes therefore the universal panacea for a barrenness of ideas. The two young men adjourn to the nearest bar, and drink something which neither of them wants, and which it is a fixed rule that only one shall pay for. "Standing" drinks is one of those senseless habits which no amount of argument can eradicate from the minds of men. If ever two or three acquaintances have a drink together, one of them pays for all. The process of selecting the payer is arrived at by tossing, the result of this very frequently being that the one who least wished for a drink has to pay for two or three others besides himself. But matters are seldom allowed to rest here. Those who have not paid demand another drink, and insist upon the one who has "standing out," which means that he is not to run the risk of being "let in" to pay for another drink, but is only to participate in the pleasure. And so on, until, if there be three of them, each has consumed three drinks, paid for three, and not required one of them. We have had many cases brought under our notice of young men who deprive themselves of their midday meals, so that they may join five or six others in some private drinking bar, and indulge in the pastimes of chaffing the barmaid and tossing for glasses of ale. To appreciate the effect of this upon the constitution, one cannot do better than read Dr. Richardson's speech upon "Moderate Drinking," delivered at Exeter Hall in 1877, and which has since been

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... illustrations by E. W. Kemble.  
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Between Two Little Boys  
A Roman Man-o'-War

