



THE NEW HOME OF THE COLONY CLUB

With a Design, Generously Drawn for Vanity Fair, by Messrs. Delano & Aldrich, the Architects

By Arthur Loring Bruce

ONE of the favorite subjects for rural debating societies in the early pliocene period of feminine activities—corresponding, roughly, to the second Cleveland administration—concerned the clubability of women. It has, of course, long since taken its place with other allied mediaeval problems; but it is quaint to recall it in connection with the fact that the Colony Club of New York, only twelve years after its conception, is obliged, by its great success, to move from the beautiful house on Madison Avenue which the late Stanford White designed for it, into the much larger club-house now building at Park Avenue and Sixty-second Street, from the plans of Messrs. Delano & Aldrich.

Eight years ago when the Colony Club first opened its doors to its membership of a thousand women, the air about it was murky with the forebodings of critics and sceptics. The finances would be mismanaged, as a result of feminine incompetence and inexperience. The food would be indifferent. "Climbers" would break in and destroy the club's charm, companionability and peace. Earnestness and "uplift" would do their deadly work of devastation. And so on, and so on, each of the Cassandras croaking according to her (and more especially according to his) pet theory of disaster. To-day no gloomy Cassandras undertake to prove that disaster lies ahead, even though the Colony is embarking upon a fresh venture and one involving a large sum of money.

THE new house, into which the members expect to move by the end of this year, is not only much larger than the old, but it is

larger than most of the clubs in America for men. The activities of club women, it would seem, are both more varied and more concentrated than those of men. The latter, perhaps, have different sorts of clubs for different moods; the members of the Colony plan to have every sort of club under one roof. It is to be athletic—with its gymnasium, squash courts and swimming pool; it is to be gay and frivolous—with its ball room, in which not only the members may dance, but where a member may give dances to which non-members are invited. It is to be serious—with its assembly rooms, in which the thoughtfully inclined may listen to dissertations upon every topic under the sun, or at any rate every topic of current interest.

IN these assembly rooms exhibitions will also be held. In its more restricted quarters on Madison Avenue the Colony Club has already gained an enviable reputation for the quality of these exhibitions and conferences. Pictures, period furniture, pottery, old silver, new and wonderful jewelry, costumes—all sorts of things have been shown. As for the subjects discussed, one has but to run through the program of the Committee on Literature and Art, for the past year, to realize how sincere has been the effort to make the club one of the cultural oases, so to speak, of New York. Ancient Rome, the Currency Bill, the Historical Development of the German Empire, Physical Culture, Greek Thought and Modern Life, French Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, English Flower Gardens and Herbaceous borders—these are but a few of the topics upon which the Colony Club

members have been permitted to hear authoritative and stimulating lectures or conferences. The assemblies have always been conducted with due insistence upon neutrality in all debatable matters. The club, as such, is not on record, for example, as pro or anti suffrage; nor have meetings been allowed which were either pro or anti German.

IN the old club, hospitality has flourished to such an extent that in the new building there are enlarged facilities for entertaining. There are three private dining-rooms in the new building and two large general ones, one for the members only, and one for members and their guests. That for members is on the Park Avenue side and that for guests is on Sixty-second Street; between them is to be a vaulted loggia, open to the air in the summer and glazed in for the winter.

Twenty bedrooms, the gymnasium, and the squash courts fill the upper stories. The baths and the swimming pool—better and larger than the famous ones in the old building—are in the basement, with a separate elevator service connecting them with the gymnasium.

THE new club, which has already reached the steel construction stage, promises to be a splendid addition to the architecture of the city. It is a stately but graceful adaptation of Colonial styles, in dark red brick and white marble, with a roof of deep red mottled slate, above which will tower the big chimneys, also crowned in marble.

The Colony Club it may be mentioned in passing, has, unlike many of the men's clubs, always shown a surplus on its operating expenses.

OldMagazineArticles.com