

other along the ordinary track frequented by the loungers of Bond Street or Rotten Row, of gaiety, dissipation and slightly veiled profligacy.

The changes have been great since Dickens and Thackeray, as painters of manners, were in the flush of their fame and popularity. So far as I remember, no one of Dickens' middle-class characters belonged to any club, except Joe Bagstock, who, having come into a comfortable independence, when his brother died of Yellow Jack in the West Indies, must, of course, have belonged to the Service. Both novelists were, almost *ex officio*, members of the Garrick and Athenæum, but Dickens was never much of a clubman, and Thackeray, to the last, had a predilection for the free and easy symposium of the back kitchen. The tone of the clubs has refined and sobered down since he satirised the notorieties and celebrities in the "Snob Papers." Self-assertion of every sort is discouraged by opinion. Unfortunately the bore is always with us, and there are loud-voiced members, but Jawkins no longer takes his stand on the rug, laying down the law on European questions. No man dares to monopolise the papers like "Old Brown"; nor have we ever seen a Captain Shendy in the flesh, blowing the staff of the coffee-room sky-high because the mutton-chops were underdone. Nowadays the captain quietly backs his bill, and in due course his complaint is submitted to the committee. Indeed, I remember a case where the servants complained of the conduct of a baronet, "a harbitrary gent," who, among other things, had ordered a waiter to stand on a special square of the carpet and not to move without permission. The upshot was a special general meeting of the club, as amusing as any farce at the Palais-Royal, when correspondence was read and evidence taken. The meeting laughed itself into good humour, but the offender, who was fortunate in having two popular brothers, narrowly escaped expulsion.

Walker, in "the Original" writing of clubs as they were then, strikes the true note when he says that they are an