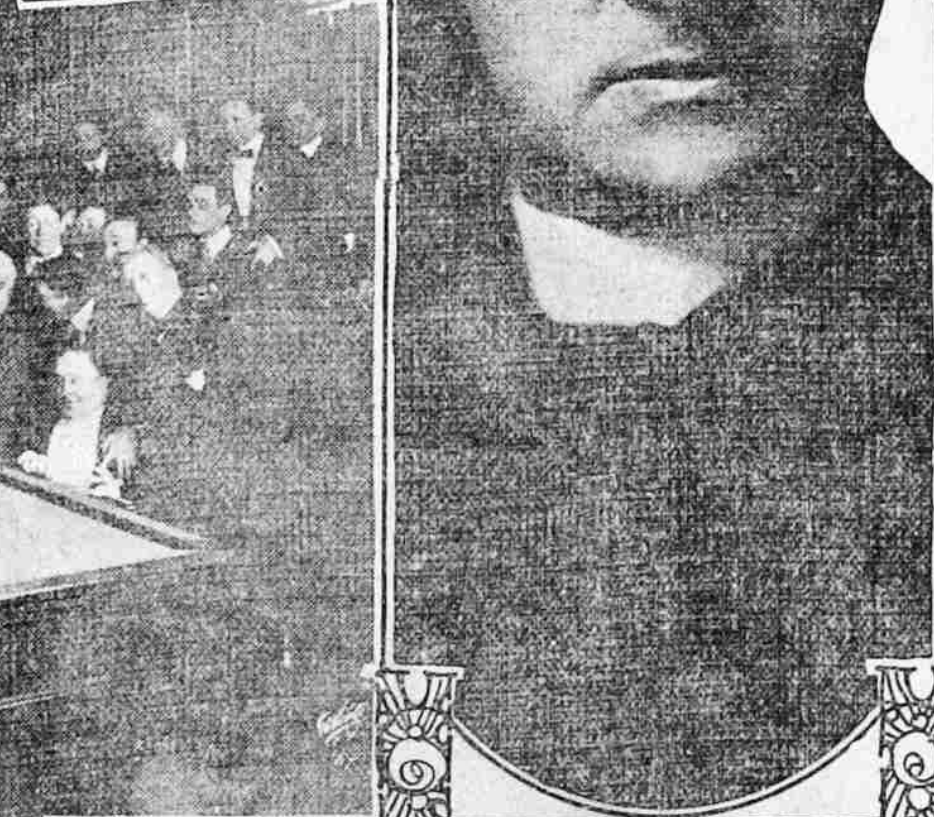
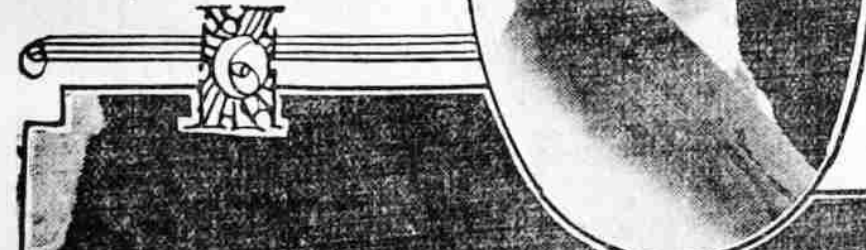


# A Club Which Sprang From Embers

From Fireside Entertainment at Home of Charles Lamb, Club Was Organized. Members are Actors, Writers and Artists



One hundred years ago there used to gather every night in London a group of writers, actors and artists at the home of Charles Lamb and his sister. The Lambs were great entertainers. Their home was always open to congenial spirits and it was the gathering place of many bright minds of London.

There gathered wit and wisdom. There came art of many kinds. When Charles Lamb died those who had gathered around his fireside tried to reproduce the spirit of the old gatherings at the Lamb home. The result was the old Lambs' Club of London and later the club in America. Its members count noted actors, artists, musicians and writers.

You hear of the club spirit of the Lambs, and the layman vaguely wonders what this means. It has a significance that is not easily made manifest, but you cannot enjoy the privileges of the club without feeling it.

This organization of famous actors, dramatists, producing managers, and a few others perhaps not of the theater but whose interests are closely allied, is really the most cosmopolitan club in the world, and from its sedate, though merry fold on Forty-fourth street, New York City, radiate invisible wireless ties of sympathy, which are vibrating today in every corner of the world.

Travel from New York to London, from London across the straits, through the Riviera down into Italy; go through the length of the Italian boot, and from Sicily cross the Mediterranean to Northern Africa; blind your eyes with the glare of the sun on the white sands of Egypt; float with the heavy tides in India; visit the islands of the sea; again enter the domain of the Stars and Stripes at San Francisco and come back to the banks of the Hudson, and all along your path you will find him—the happy wanderer, the universal Lamb.

"The Lambs" is not however a club, where membership of "good fellows," just because they are good fellows, is invited. The waiting list forbids it; for the Lambs fixes its qualification for membership on what a man has done, not on the extent of his bank roll. This makes the club exclusive, since it takes

unto itself representative men of the arts, sciences, and crafts from the whole world; from the theater first, from art and administration next.

Let us try to peep behind the scenes and fathom the force which has held the Lambs together, and made it grow and grow from the beginning. In the years of its charter the club is forty years old. It really dates its origin to nearly a century ago. Everyone has doubtless heard how this odd name came to be selected.

One hundred years ago Charles Lamb lived with his talented sister in cozy chambers on Inner Temple Lane, London. When the coffee houses closed and the theaters were dark, actors, poets and writers gravitated to the Lamb home and there the evening passed in most congenial company. It became a by-word in London literary circles, "Let's go round to the Lambs."

Wordsworth, Hazlett, Leigh Hunt, Coleridge, Southey, Tom Hood, Talfour and George Dwyer were often to be discovered toasting their shins at the fireside of Charles Lamb. The distinguished essayist was inherently fond of the theater. He held actors in great veneration and the players of his day such as Whitfield, Packer, Bensen, Burton and Phillimore were drawn to him.

At the Lambs you would meet also Bunsley and Diekey, Suett and Dodd at their best in the company of writers, poets and musicians held by the genius of one man who loved good company and knew how to attract brilliant people to his home.

Years afterwards when most of the notable personages had joined the majority, the parties of the Lambs were discussed at the clubs and coffee houses of London. It was the tenderness in which these recollections were held that caused a number of young actors and writers, forming a club in London, and called themselves the "Lambs."

Members of this London organization migrating to America, organized a similar organization in New York, which subsequently became the successor of the London club. The Lambs were English actors, Montague, Wallack and Beckett. Following these were Billy Florence, and the line of American play-



ers and writers that have since that time presided over the world-known organization.

It is therefore seen that the Lambs have lined and logical title not only to their name. Much has been written of the evenings with Johnson, Goldsmith, Burke and Reynolds, but it is to be doubted that these nights excelled the brilliance of earlier days of the Lambs' Club when gathered around its tables were Maurice Barrymore, Steele Mackaye, Sydney Rosenfeld, Nat Goodwin, Stuart Robson, Wilton Lackaye, Billy Florence and Beckett.

Many of these men who made the old Lambs famous have passed away, but those familiar with the present membership are confident that the club today needs only a mellowing perspective, deservedly historic. Goodwin, Crane, Lackaye, Warfield, Belasco are there; as is

also Gillette, Collier, McDonough and Hobart, Hopper and Tarkington, Hodge, Lew Fields and a score of others.

At the head of the musicians are Victor Herbert and Reginald De Koven and among the scenic artists are a majority of the famous colorists of America, with Robert Reid, Metcalfe, Simmons, Finn and Remington at their head.

Irwin S. Cobb, in writing of the Lambs Club, humorously compares it with the Y. M. C. A., of which he also is a member. The Lambs naturally meet after all good folk are in bed. So many of the Lambs are actors and their day's work is not done until almost midnight. They do not get up until the next afternoon. Their enjoyment comes in the early morning. He said:

"The big mistake I made was getting into the Lambs and the Y. M. C. A. practically at the same time. I realize now, in the light of second judgment, that I acted too hastily. When my sponsors brought word to me that the council had agreed among themselves to overlook my past life and report my name favorably for membership in the Lambs, I should have rested content with that honor. But no. I had acquired the joining fever. I went and enrolled myself on the roster of the athletic department of the West Side Y. M. C. A. Why I should have done this I do not know; the act was absolutely without explanation, extenuation or excuse. By carefully ignoring all the rules of health as set forth by the leading authorities by drinking whenever and whatever I pleased, by smoking inordinately, by eating absolutely fatal food combinations at any and all times of the day or night, by keeping bad hours, by never taking any exercise of what-

soever character except occasionally to knock wood, I have enjoyed the most magnificent health. Yet I deliberately go, and trifle with my luck by breaking into a gymnasium. For the life of me I cannot understand it. I suppose I'll be joining the Comstock Society next and trying to get a law passed requiring all babies to be born with overalls on."

"From the outset I have found my club obligations conflicting. Dropping in at the Lambs in the afternoon at 1:30, when the early birds are having breakfast, interferes with my engagement with the physical instructor up on West Fifty-seventh street at 4:30. Maclyn Arbuckle will be starting to tell his latest dog story and naturally one wishes to stay for the finish. Or somebody connected with a show which is about to close will be on the verge of beginning an impromptu but spirited address upon the subject of dramatic criticism. Or somebody else connected with a show that is doing well will evince a desire to lead one off to a quiet corner and read one a few favorable extracts from the papers of recent or current date. This perusal of newspaper clippings provides a pleasant means of whiling away many an otherwise tedious hour, not only by the person mentioned therein, but for his friends. Lambs, as I have discovered since becoming one, are great newspaper readers.

The club reading room subscribes for twenty copies of the Morning Telegraph and one copy of the North American Review. Offhand any Lamb you meet is prepared to quote from Acton Davies' latest article or give you from memory the full summary of yesterday's box score of the game between the Giants and the Cubs. Some of them read the politics, too.

"On the other hand, if I keep my date with the physical director, I find that the session with him has temperamentally unfitted me for mingling socially with my brother Lambs. At the gymnasium all the conversation centers about athletic subjects. One fellow is going through a rigorous training to take off weight. He speaks about it constantly.

"I reach the Lambs at the dinner hour. Ben Haggood Burt has just left a call at the desk for 4 a. m., so that he will know when to go to bed. Jack Hazzard has just returned from a road tour, bringing the latest wizzes from Keekuk and Battle Creek. William Collier is featuring the quaintest and newest conceits in snappy clothes for varsity men. George V. Hobart is repeating extracts from his new comedy and going off into peals of laughter. In a dead silence, broken only by the click of ivory against ivory and the rub of chalk against cue tips, a group of the younger members are playing Kelly pool. The attendants with vacuum cleaners are taking up several hundred used and exhausted personal pronouns which have accumulated in odd corners during the latter part of the afternoon. Altogether, everything points to a pleasant evening.

"Oh, time, I sup, I smoke. At 11:45 p. m., when all New York sleeps, I prepare to seek my own bed, and when I measure myself again before retiring, I find I have gained four inches around the waist. So, what's the blooming use.

"Nevertheless, torn between love and duty, I have continued until now to live this double life, going to the Y. M. C. A. to take it off and to the Lambs to put it back on again with accrued interest.

"Y. M. C. A., farewell!"

PORTRAITS at top from left to right—William Farnum, Frank Lator, Wilton Lackaye and Frank McIntyre. Second row—William Courtleigh, John Hyams, David Belasco, DeWolf Hopper and John Philip Sousa. Upper center, in the Lamb's dining room—William Courtleigh on the left, DeWolf Hopper and Digby Bell on the right. Lower left, pool in the Lamb's Club—David Belasco, making a difficult shot. Lower right—Scene in a snuggery. Lower center—Belasco rehearsing a company of stars, from left to right—George Broadhurst, Frank Craven, Digby Bell, Walter Hale, Frank Lator, DeWolf Hopper, Frank McIntyre, William Farnum, Julian Eltinge, William Courtleigh, Eugene Cowles and George V. Hobart.