

Whitefriars Journal.

NO. II.

NOVEMBER, 1902.

PRIVATE
CIRCULATION.

ANNUAL REPORT.

THE Committee have again the pleasure to present another satisfactory Report.

The Town Membership being limited to one hundred, the Committee are not able to announce any increase in the number of Town Members. There are now twenty-one Members on the Country list and twelve on the Honorary list.

During the past year the following Members have been elected: Shan F. Bullock, author; C. Duncan Cross, journalist; Alex. Mackintosh, London correspondent of the *Aberdeen Free Press*; Haldane McFall, author; James B. Pinker, late editor of *Black and White*; Harold Spender, assistant-editor of the *Daily News*; W. Gurney Benham, editor and proprietor of *Colchester Standard*; W. H. Helm, literary editor of the *Morning Post*; W. R. Paterson (Benjamin Swift), author; G. Moulton Piper, bibliophile; Walter Smith, journalist.

There are still many candidates waiting for election.

The Committee record with very great regret the death of Friars B. F. Stevens and A. J. Fuller. There were few men like B. F. Stevens—sweet-natured, endowed with a fine sympathy, and a cultured scholar. He sent from his sick bed messages to his old friends on the Committee; and he was so interested in our Club and its Friars that up to the last he loved to see from time to time the Agenda of the Committee meetings to assure himself of our continued health and prosperity. Friar Fuller was one of our youngest Members, and gave great promise of rendering valuable assistance to the Club. His untimely death was a keen sorrow to his colleagues. Two former Members have also passed away during the year—J. W. Wells and G. A. Henty. The former had been a great traveller. George Henty was in his time a notable Friar, and for many years a constant frequenter of the Club.

His bluff ways, his disregard for convention, and his humorous reminiscences endeared him to the many Friars who knew him most thoroughly from his old-time appearances in our Club Room.

The Committee arranged for thirty dinners during the year. Our guests at the weekly dinners have been Sir Horace Marshall, Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C., Mr. H. G. Wells, Mr. Holman Hunt, Mr. Benjamin Swift, Mr. Sidney Low, Mr. John Murray, Mr. F. T. Bullen, Sir Clements Markham, Mr. J. E. C. Bodley, Mr. Neil Munro, Mr. Henry Harland, Mr. Moberly Bell, Mr. George R. Sims. Conversations have also been opened by Friars Richard Whiteing, Chas. E. Pearce, Max Pemberton, W. R. Paterson and Harrison Weir.

Among the topics discussed after dinner have been:—“Philistinism,” “The Twenty-First Century,” “The Commerce of Men v. The Commerce of Books,” “The Americanisation of England,” “The Art of To-day,” “Author, Publisher, and Agent,” “Realism and Its Rivals in Literature,” “Penny Fiction,” “Travellers’ Tales,” “How I Got Into Print,” “Shakespeare,” “The Genius of France,” “The Celtic Fringe,” “Americans in English Letters,” “The Ideal Newspaper,” “Dramatic Instinct,” “Slumland in Fact and Fiction,” etc.

An experiment has been tried this year of holding occasional House Dinners with the attendance restricted to Friars. These dinners have proved an undoubted success. The opportunity has been given of discussing the affairs of the Club in an informal manner, and the interchange of views has been of real service to the Committee.

The Christmas Dinner was again a brilliant affair. An interesting musical programme was carried out under the direction of Friar H. J. Brown. The Committee aim at making the Christmas Dinner a family gathering, and consequently no special Club Guests are invited.

The Annual Dinner was held at the Café Monico under the Chairmanship of Friar William Senior, and was one of the most interesting ever held. The principal speakers were the Lord Bishop of Ripon, Sir Edward Russell, Editor of the *Liverpool Daily Post*, and Friar Richard Whiteing.

The Annual Ladies’ Banquet at the Hotel Cecil was presided over by Friar Anthony Hope. The invited Club Guests were unable to attend for various reasons, and at the last moment Mrs. Fenwick Miller undertook to respond to the toast of “Sovran Woman,” which was proposed by the Prior. “Mere Man” was

given by Miss Winifred Graham, and replied to by Friar R. Newton Crane. A reunion in the Grand Hall followed the dinner.

In connection with the Coronation festivities, Mrs. C. N. Williamson gave an "At Home" at the Hotel Cecil, which was attended by a large number of Friars and ladies. Other "At Homes" have been given during the year in the Club Room by Mrs. Senior, Mrs. Robert Leighton, and Mrs. Max Pemberton.

The Committee, in arranging for the Pilgrimage this year, decided on a *rendezvous* nearer home with the view of avoiding the tediousness of a long railway journey. The Pilgrimage took the form of a trip on the Thames on June 21st. Two electric launches were chartered, and a most enjoyable day was spent under the genial presidency of Friar W. G. Lacy. Luncheon and afternoon tea were served on the launches by Messrs. Kingston and Miller. A short stay was made at Marlow, where Friar John Russell photographed the party in a group on the lawn of the Compleat Angler Hotel. Dinner was served at the Red Lion Hotel, Henley.

The Committee desire to put on record their sense of gratitude to Friar and Mrs. Lacy for their joint efforts to promote the happiness of every Friar who attended the Pilgrimage. The measure of their success was the ungrudging appreciation of Members.

A very pleasant feature of the year's arrangements was the visit paid to Friar George Meredith in July. Luncheon was provided at the Burford Bridge Hotel, and Friar Robert Leighton presided over a large and representative attendance. Speeches were made by the Prior, Madam Sarah Grand, and Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., and later we were favoured with a charming little address from Friar Meredith himself. We shall not soon forget the delightful afternoon spent in that beautiful old garden with the Master of our Craft seated under the trees discoursing with his accustomed vivacity on topics grave and gay.

The subscriptions of all town Members have been paid for the year. Including the balance brought forward of £196 9s 5d. the receipts for the year amounted to £742 14s. 4d. The expenditure amounted to £502 13s.

Early in the year the Committee were able to purchase £200 (nominal) of London County Council stock for £198 1s., and when the books were closed there was a balance standing to the credit of the Club at the bank of £42 0s. 4d. The balance, therefore, to-day, without allowing anything for the improved price of the stock in the market, stands at £240 1s. 4d. as compared with

£196 9s. 5d. last year. The balance in 1900 was £118 12s. In 1899 it was £116 10s. 7d., the entrance fees in that year having been £73 10s. as compared with £25 4s. this year. In 1898 the balance was £27 12s. 10d. So in a financial sense the Club is obviously prospering.

The Committee desire to thank Friar J. Russell for the portraits he has presented to the Club during the year, and for the additions he has made to the Club Album. His kindness is very much appreciated.

There have been eleven meetings of the Committee, at which attendances have been as follow:—Friar F. A. Atkins, 8; Henry J. Brown, 10; R. Lee Campbell, 10; F. J. Cross, 9; T. Heath Joyce, 10; W. G. Lacy, 5; Robert Leighton, 8; Kenric B. Murray, 6; Wm. Senior, 8; John A. Steuart, 7; Richard Whiteing, 5; J. Farlow Wilson 7; A. Spurgeon, 11; G. H. Perkins, 9.

The Committee feel that they may be indicted for spreading out something like a peacock tail of feathers in enlarging on the work and events of the year. Modesty in a White Friar is our notable tradition. But even the Committee cannot prevent men speaking well of the Club and its Members. One of our Members has been recently made a Knight, as much for his literary eminence as for other services rendered to the State. Perhaps, the best novel of the year—it will be unwise to particularise—has been written by a Friar.

Our after-dinner conversations, the very antitheses of debates, are continually being bettered in quality, and the Club's guests are usually so attracted that they seek to become Members.

In concluding this cursory survey of the year's work, the Committee cannot refrain from referring to the splendid feeling of comradeship that is and always has been one of the most striking characteristics of the Club.

On behalf of the Committee,

ARTHUR SPURGEON,

November 24th, 1902.

Hon. Sec.

WHITEFRIARS JOURNAL.

GEO. MANVILLE FENN,
W. N. SHANSFIELD. } *Hon. Auditors.*

Awaitea and found Correct, Nov. 24th, 1902.
GEORGE HENRY PERKINS, Hon. Treasurer.

A SKETCH OF OUR CLUB.

Friar Aaron Watson is writing a series of articles in the *Journalist* on "Press Clubs—and Some Others." He starts with the Whitefriars Club. The sketch will be read with interest.

"The Whitefriars is not exactly a Press Club. It is representative of all the intellectual callings. Of late it has been tending more seriously and decidedly towards authorship. George Meredith is a member ; so is Thomas Hardy ; so are almost all the men who are distinguished in English letters ; the Whitefriars Club, however, being also a Club of Journalists in a rather conspicuous way. Almost all its earlier members were both journalists and authors. The names of some of these leap at once into recollection. Charles Williams, the veteran war correspondent, was among the founders ; William Black, journalist and novelist, was an early member ; so was William Sawyer, poet and editor. In those early days the Club was much frequented by Gilbert Venables, a near relative of whom had the honour of breaking Thackeray's nose in a school fight. There are portraits of all the old members, and many of the more recent ones, on the walls of the room of which the Club is the tenant at Anderton's Hotel in Fleet-street. The old journalistic connection has always been maintained. William Black was more a journalist than a novelist when he joined the Club ; Richard Whiteing was a constant and delightful attendant of the Club meetings for years before it was suspected that he would burst on the world with such a book as 'No. 5, John Street.' When William Senior went over to the Antipodes to commence an Australian Hansard, or something of that kind, he dedicated one of his delightful books to 'the Members of the Whitefriars Club, and all friends under St. Paul's.' The late Archibald McNeill, so tragically murdered at Boulogne, was a White Friar. George Manville Fenn, both journalist and novelist, is so old a member that he astonishes all the younger White Friars by the triumphant style in which he maintains an appearance of youth and energy. An active journalist, Mr. Arthur

Spurgeon, is the honorary secretary of the Club. Other journalists connected therewith are Mr. F. Carruthers Gould, Mr. John Foster



[Drawn by Mrs. E. T. Sachs.]

Fraser, Mr. J. A. Hammerton, Mr. R. Lee Campbell, Mr. Alexander Paul, Mr. Harold Spender, Mr. William Hill, and a score of others. The authors seem innumerable, yet the membership of

the Club is limited to a hundred. There are many social functions during the year. On each Friday night from September to May there is a symposium, at which distinguished guests are entertained, and there is an all-round talk on some special and new topic in the world of art, or letters, or journalism. Once a year there is a ladies' dinner, and this is one of the great events of the literary world in London. We reproduce the design made as a souvenir of the last dinner. The portraits on the walls awaken both sad and joyous memories, richly blended. Bacon, the sculptor, is among the deceased members of the club, and Henry Lee, the naturalist, and Robert Brown, who wrote 'The Countries of the World' and large, scientific, and descriptive books innumerable. The actors are represented by Barry Sullivan and Creswick, and one or two forgotten men. Thomas Archer is among the Club's losses, as is Richard Gowing, once Editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and James Walker, one of the wisest of Fleet Streeters."

CLUB NOTES.

Friars are reminded that the Annual Christmas Dinner—a notable fixture in the Club's programme—will be held in the Alexandra Hall, Trocadero Restaurant, on Friday, December 19th. At the request of the Executive Committee, Friar Arthur Spurgeon will be Prior for the day. Ladies are cordially invited. The dinner will begin at 6.30 sharp. The Prior and Mrs. Spurgeon will receive the guests in the Balmoral Room at 6 o'clock. A delightful musical programme has been arranged by Friar W. G. Lacy. A special circular, giving full particulars, will be sent in the course of a few days.

We shall start the New Year with a Smoking Entertainment, to be given in the Masonic Room, Anderton's Hotel, on January 2nd, under the Priorship of Friar Sir William Treloar.

The Annual Dinner will take place in the Empire Hall, Trocadero Restaurant, on Friday, January 30th, with Friar Robert Leighton in the chair.

The Annual Ladies' Banquet has been fixed for May 1st at the Hotel Cecil, the Prior for the day being Friar Max Pemberton.

Friars are requested to make a note of the above dates in their diary.