

EVENING TRANSCRIPT

MONDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1888.

THE ALGONQUIN CLUB.

Its New Home on the Back Bay—An Imposing Structure to be Devoted to Gentlemen's Leisure Hours.

Three years ago, in the autumn of 1885, the Algonquin Club was formed for social purposes. Temporary quarters were occupied in the Crowninshield Mansion, 164 Marlborough street, pending the construction of a permanent home for the organization. Now there has risen to view on the north side of Commonwealth avenue, just beyond Exeter street, the handsome, though not over-ornate, façade of the new quarters of the club. As the structure is yet incomplete, curiosity is aroused, its exterior is closely scanned, and then the portal is crossed. It is essentially as it was designed, a club building, nothing worked over from the palatial mansion, as most other Boston club houses are, but every feature is designed as it should be, for effect combined with utility. The structure has been long in contemplation, and time enough has been occupied in its planning and construction to insure something substantial as well as attractive, architecturally, and with a view to making it a delightful meeting and lounging place for the members of the organization, their business and social friends and ladies. It will probably be completed and dedicated late in October.

THE FACADE

is of Indiana limestone in the style of the Italian renaissance, the example being taken from the front of a Roman palace. It is six stories in height and eighty-two feet long, with modest ornamentation in keeping with the size and rather plain drawings of the lines. Though not standing out boldly as a piece of architectural striving for effect, it impresses one with an aspect of solidity and a suggestion of comfort within. A full description of the exterior was given in the Transcript several months ago; therefore a particularization is uncalled for now. Suffice it to say that the Old World methods have been followed, though not too closely, and it is fair to predict that they will meet with general approval.

THE FIRST FLOOR.

The main entrance is from the sidewalk in the centre of the building. Gates of ornamental open grided iron are first encountered; then heavy doors, faced with English and backed with American oak. In the hall, the visitor treads a floor of Italian marble, bordered by a darker marble from the Knoxville quarries. An elaborate and high dado of alabaster greets the eye on either side, while directly ahead, in the rear, is an imposing open fireplace, with an alabaster mantel-piece, the whole suggestive of hospitality and comfort. Inside the vestibule the walls are lined with yellow Numidian, with panels of St. Baume marble, while the flooring is of yellow Numidian marble, relieved by Levanto marble, and bordered in black. The walls of the hall throughout are tinted in red, making a pleasing contrast with the varied marbles.

The first rooms on the right, upon entering, are those devoted to the reception of strangers or visitors who come by invitation. These are finished in plain mahogany, highly polished. Next is the coat room, and beyond this the office, finished in white mahogany and the walls are covered with cream-glazed tiles. The mantel is faced with Siena marble. Beyond the office is a lavatory with a flooring of Georgia marble the walls being finished in white. At the left of the office begins the broad main staircase of American oak carried in this wood to the fourth story. On each side of this staircase are the elevators, that at the left being so arranged as to be accessible for the use of ladies.

THE LADIES' ENTRANCE

is at the westerly side of the building, leading into an elliptical vestibule, with an oak dado 4½ feet high. The floor is of yellow Numidian marble, with a border of Alps green marble. The vestibule has an ornamental dome ceiling. To the right of the ladies' hall is a cafe for their entertainment. Beyond is the hall, over which is a court extending the height of the house, for light and air, and to the left a lobby leading to the retiring rooms and to the ladies' staircase, ascending to the dining-room floor. The conveniences for the wives of members, their families and friends are perfect.

THE PRINCIPAL FLOOR,

as it is termed, is the second. The main hall, in white and red, is lighted by two courts, one before alluded to as over the ladies' lobby, the other over the office. Opening from the hall toward the avenue is the large high-studded reading room, as it is called, occupying the entire width of the structure—eighty-two feet—with a depth of twenty-five feet. This is finished in oak, the walls are covered with red and gold stamped leather, and the ornamented stucco ceiling is given a yellow tint. The wainscoting is of oak with a base of black Egyptian marble. The mantels at each end of the room are of Egyptian marble flanked by oak columns which are carried at wide intervals around the apartment. The writing-room, supplied with desks and utensils for the convenience of members, is directly off the reading-room to the rear. Opposite to the reading-room, across the main hall, is the billiard-room, designed for six billiard tables and a pool table. This room is eighty-one feet long, and at the westerly end is a raised platform to be utilized as a cafe and an overlook of the tables. It is furnished in simple style, with mantels, at either end, of oak with marble facings, the walls in neutral green, and the ceiling in a warm yellow. A wine-room leads off the billiard-room to the left, from which members are served.

THE THIRD FLOOR

is devoted to the library and assembly room, in front, over the reading-room, extending, as does its compeer below, the full width of the structure. The walls are plainly tinted, but no provision has yet been made for shelves or book-cases, and probably nothing will be done in this direction until the house is fully occupied in other respects. The rear of this floor is divided into four card rooms, so arranged that they can be thrown together or each used separately as desired.

THE SERVICE OR DINING FLOOR,

the fourth, is a model of comfort and convenience. The commodious dining-room is the principal feature. It is the largest room in the building. It is ornamented in keeping with its uses, and promises to be the scene of many notable festivities. Adjoining the dining-room on the front is a breakfast-room, over which are two supper rooms for ladies or private parties. On the dining-room floor are also several private dining-rooms, a large pantry and lavatory, with dumb-waiters and two stairways—one for ascent, the other for descent, to avoid clashes—to the kitchen above. The doors to the dining-room open to correspond with the staircases as to ingress and egress.

THE CULINARY ARRANGEMENTS.

The kitchen occupies the upper mezzanine floor above and in the rear of the dining-room floor, the lofty studding of the latter allowing of its accommodation there. Everything in the way of apparatus and convenience pertaining to a first-class hotel is here to be seen in its latest improvement. A freight elevator on the hydraulic system, as are the passenger lifts, communicates directly with the store rooms in the cellar, and there are also two dumb-waiters between the dining and wine rooms. Nothing appears to be lacking on the fifth floor to meet the wishes of the most fastidious, epicures except the provisions, which will come in time.

THE DORMITORIES

are on the sixth floor, the front devoted to the convenience of members, with stone balconies forming the front balustrade and overlooking the broad avenue and park. In the rear are the sleeping-rooms of those who serve the club. All are finished plainly, and seem admirably adapted to their uses. There is a laundry and drying-room also on this floor, the latter to be used in off weather, as the principal drying is arranged for in the open air in the railed area on the rear of the flat roof.

THE FITTINGS AND FURNISHINGS.

The floor coverings and hangings of the new house will be furnished throughout by John H. Pray, Sons & Co. The best decorative effects in curtains and portières are seen, perhaps, best in the reading-room, where beautiful plain effects in silk shilas that tone in with the mural decorations and the massive proportion of the room are shown. The carpet is a copy of an antique rug, and in richness of coloring is hardly surpassed by the rug itself. Pray & Co. have paid particular attention to the rooms that are to be used by the ladies as private parlors and dining-rooms. The ladies' parlor is a gem in old red-silk damask, with Brussels lace sash curtains. The ladies' café is one of the most attractive rooms in the entire house, furnished in a gold silk damask, Irish point laces, with portières of old blue tapestry. There are a number of other rooms whose finish is worthy of mention, but the above will give an idea of the interior decoration.

The lighting apparatus comes from Shreve, Crump & Low. The principal hanging will be in the main dining-room—an antique Dutch candelabra, dated 1642, from an old Holland cathedral, originally designed for candles, but changed in an ingenious way by Superintendent Ireland without losing its original aspect to allow of gas and electric lighting—the gas below, the incandescent above. The material is old brass, and the new part is made to correspond. Other pendants, chandeliers and brackets in the room are made from designs approved by the committee of corresponding material. The combination gas and incandescent fixtures over the building are in Flemish design.

The reception, dining-room, library and reading-room furniture, barring the upholstery, is in the hands of Leach, Annable & Co., and will consist of mahogany sets for these rooms, with the exception of the private breakfast and supper rooms and chambers, where oak will prevail. A side-board in mahogany for the ladies' café will be a pleasing feature, mounted in brass.

The upholstered work for the reading-room is from H. A. Turner & Co., and consists of elaborately stuffed sofas and chairs in leather of an oaken color. The chairs are of the Marlborough pattern, and the sofas of the Hayles style. Low English reclining chairs in quartered oak are also in the set.

The andirons are furnished by F. A. Walker & Co., and are of both wrought-iron, ornamented and plain, and of brass. Twenty sets are to be furnished.

The entire table linen for the house was made expressly for the club, and imported by C. F. Hovey & Co., who also furnished the towels, bed linen, blankets and quilts.

IN SUMMING UP,

it may be well to say that, while the Algonquin Club does not propose to be ostentatious, it does mean to provide for itself and friends every comfort and inducement to quiet pleasure that are incident to the highest grade of club life, as a relief from the cares of business and other exacting, though it is not to be presumed or hoped that all the members are subjected to the latter conditions. When finally ensconced in their new house, may the Algonquins revel in the delights they seek and have so carefully prepared for.

THE OFFICERS OF THE CLUB

are: President, John F. Andrew; vice presidents, Stanton Blake, William Bliss, John F. Anderson; clerk, Charles P. Searle; treasurer, H. Staples Potter; building committee, Thomas O. Richardson, Asa P. Potter, Eustace C. Fitz, John Mason Little and Jonas H. French. The executive committee in sub-committees took charge of the several departments of furnishing. The architects are McKim, Mead & White, and the contractors are Norcross Brothers of Worcester. The superintendent is Alfred A. Pocock, who has been with the club in its temporary quarters since August. He was with the Country Club from its inception, and has a reputation as *chef* second to none in the country.