

# The Technology Review

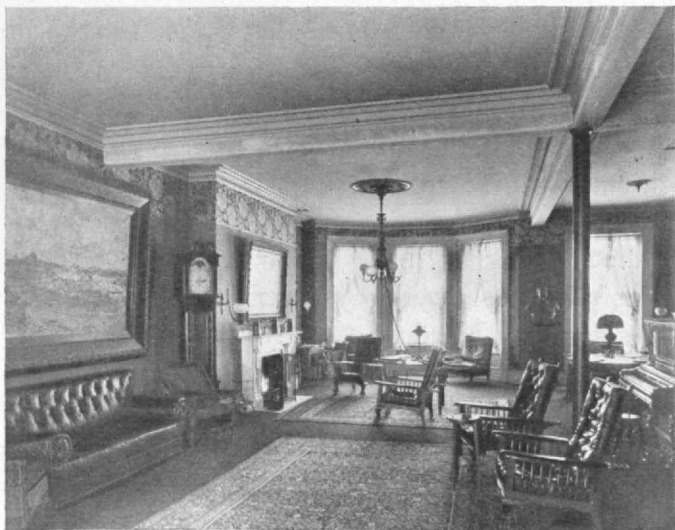
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## THE TECHNOLOGY CLUB

Somewhat more than five years ago a small party of men met in the Rogers Building, in the President's office.



Front of "Common Room."

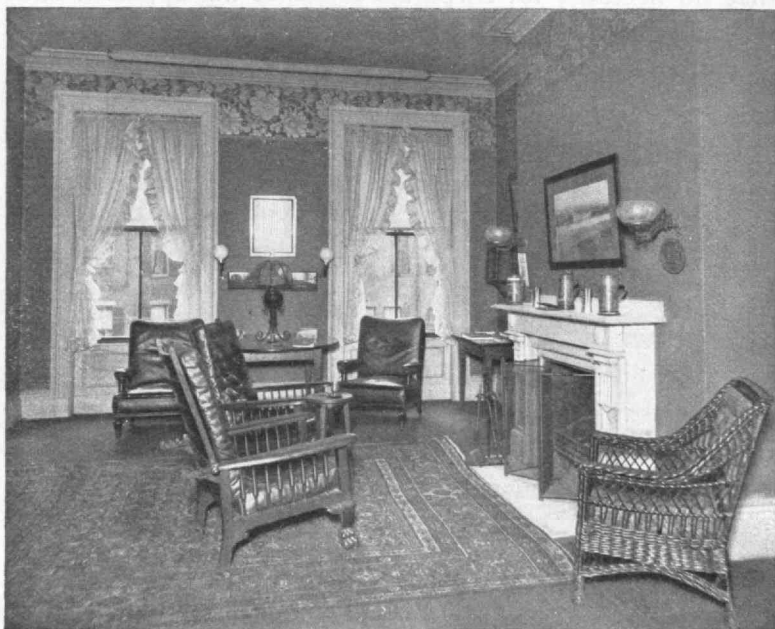
These people gathered in answer to a notice issued April 23, 1896, summoning them, as signers of an agreement to that effect, to meet for the purpose of organizing the

Technology Club. This meeting was held May 1; and among those present were members of the Corporation and the Faculty, a number of graduates, as well as several former students at the Institute who had not become graduates. The scheme was a broad one, intended to include every one who had been definitely connected with "Tech" work, unless the undergraduates should be excepted; and, as to these, the question of their admission was at first left open, although there was from the beginning much sentiment in favor of admitting them to membership. No undergraduates, however, were included in the organizing committee. The policy of the club in this matter was promptly settled just previous to the first annual meeting, in October, 1896, when provision was made for the admission of sixty undergraduates, as part of a total membership limited to six hundred at that time. The policy in this direction thus early inaugurated has been uniformly maintained, and with no prospect of change at the present time.

At the meeting of May 1, officers were elected and measures taken for securing quarters, with the result that at the adjourned meeting of May 7, announcement was made that No. 71 Newbury Street had been secured on lease for five years from September 1, 1896, and with an option to the club for a renewal of the lease. So came formally into existence the Technology Club at the two meetings of May 1 and May 7; and so also came into use the house which has served so well, and which we shall leave, after all, with some regret when we go into our own house and into improved quarters in the fall.

Two matters not of formal record may well be referred to here. The real initiative seems to have been taken by the Alumni Association's Executive Committee of 1896 at

their first meeting, as a result of which a preliminary notice, under date of February 8, 1896, was sent to the officers and some of the members of the Corporation, to the present and past officers of the Alumni Association, to several members of the Faculty and to certain non-graduate



Rear of "Common Room."

alumni, inviting them to come together at a preliminary meeting to be held at the Institute. A second meeting, on March 5, was held at President Walker's house. Next followed the drawing up of the formal agreement to which twenty-five signatures were attached, this constituting the basis for the more formal meetings of May 1 and May 7.

The earlier purpose was to form a corporation at once, acting under the general laws governing the securing of

charters for clubs and similar associations. It was found, however, that some inconvenience would result if all the technicalities necessary were critically observed; and the project of corporate organization was early abandoned in favor of a simple association (largely in view of the fact that no necessity for corporate existence was apparent until the club should find it advisable to purchase real estate), so that corporate organization was not effected for nearly five years, or until March, 1901.

In the formation of the club General Walker took a warm interest from the beginning. Notwithstanding the many other interests he had in hand, busy as he generally was, and, as we now know, even then beginning to give way under the stress of many-sided efforts, he was known to be always available even to complete a quorum of the council, while in matters of policy he took an active and at times a most earnest and vigorous, even a controlling, part in its deliberations.

The preliminary circular from the Executive Committee of the Alumni Association contained the statement that "one of the greatest needs, perhaps the greatest, of the Institute to-day, is not pecuniary endowment, not greater strength or wisdom in its Faculty or its Corporation, but the earnest, active, persistent interest of its past students. On them its future must more and more depend, not only for material support, but for all the essentials of vigorous life." If General Walker's interest in the club was mainly along these lines, as it doubtless was, it is to-day pleasant for us to realize, as we may, that more than anything else in the history of the Institute the Walker Memorial has been the means of demanding and securing from the old students at Tech that "earnest, active, and persistent interest" so necessary now, and that his influence, exerted even

after death, has been most powerful, especially in this recognized direction of the Institute's greatest need.

The Technology Club is unique in many ways: first, perhaps, in the divergent interests of its four elements of membership,—Corporation, Faculty, former students and



A Corner of the Dining-room.

undergraduates,—the only common bond being loyalty to Tech. Again, on its financial side, it has been carried on from the beginning with a courage or a faith hardly exceeded by the Biblical grain of mustard seed. Starting absolutely without capital, its officers executed a five years' lease of its home, practically upon their personal credit. Extensive alterations were made, and the house furnished throughout, not extravagantly but becomingly and attrac-

tively, thus creating an immediate debt, which was carried for two years or more solely by careful financiering and the skilful use of credit; and even then the proposition for a guarantee fund was settled by the more simple device of borrowing from friends the sum of \$1,000, for which two equal notes were given, one of which was cancelled early in the current year, with the prospect that the gain for the present year will be sufficient to take care of the other. What wonder is it that the club, with this experience fresh in mind, could see its way clear to the purchase of a house estimated, with its alterations, to cost not less than \$33,000, although it had not a dollar of cash capital, and no property it could call its own with the single exception of the furnishings for its house.

Some of the earlier deliberations as to the policy of the Club are not without interest in view of present conditions. The first proposition was for resident dues of \$20 per year. The result showed that on \$12 per year the club was run successfully for two years. The fact that a third year showed a loss of some \$600 served to suggest that it is not always possible for the club officers to discover mismanagement the moment it occurs, and to demonstrate the necessity for a larger income, which resulted in the increase of dues to \$15 per year,—a sum which has not proved excessive in view of the maintenance of numbers closely approaching the limit set. In fact, a waiting list of resident members, despite a raising of the limit, seems probable at some time during the first year in the new house.

It must to any one seem now quite absurd that even at the outset there should have been any discussion, as there was, as to the advisability of maintaining a dining-room in the club. Without this it now seems doubtful whether the club could have met a reasonable measure of success.

Of its usefulness there was, of course, never any question. As to the financial stress it might impose, there was at first grave doubt. Even without the sale of liquors (for it has so far been a no-liquor club) the financial burden has been very light.



Strangers' Room.

Of the growth of the club itself, of course there are data. The total membership is now slightly above six hundred. It is somewhat surprising that the membership at the time of the first annual meeting, October 12, 1896, was as high as four hundred and forty-five, and at the end of the year four hundred and eighty-nine. Perhaps nothing shows better than this the value of the efforts put forth to make the club a success from its very start. Of the use

of the club it is more difficult to find satisfactory evidence. A year or two ago the treasurer reported that the use of the house had increased in one year 40 to 50 per cent. During the past year the use of the dining-room has shown an increase of about 40 per cent. above the preceding year. It is safe to say that, both in the number given and in attendance, the smoke talks and ladies' nights of the past year have been more successful than ever before. It would be invidious to draw any comparison as to their quality; nor need we, for they have from the very beginning been most acceptable. Some of the earliest are still remembered as being very delightful. It is hardly necessary to recite here anything as to the character of these entertainments.\* Those who have tried it understand. Those who haven't done so have both a duty and a pleasure in store for them. In the direction of whist and pool playing or of whist and pool tournaments, there has been recently no increase, but rather some falling off in activity. Altogether there seems no doubt that the club is each year filling a larger place, and that its members are more and more finding greater occasion to use it. Tech men are not club men to an extent which makes it easy for them steadily to frequent such places. Engineering means a busy life, with little surplus time for play; and yet to the engineer the real necessity for recreation is greater than for most men. The club furnishes an opportunity for men of this sort, who, however, need some education in this direction before they can come to appreciate the value to them of a Technology Club.

The real importance of the club, however, does not lie altogether in its dining-room, its periodicals, its library, its quiet room, its bicycle shed, its card or pool room, nor yet in its smoke talks, invaluable as the latter are for personal

\* For a list of the "Talks" for the winter of 1900-1901, see p. 340, *infra*.



social contact. Beyond all these, while not apart from any of them, the club has become the fixed home of the alumni, non-graduate and graduate alike. Here are held a majority of the class dinners. Committee meetings and conferences of every kind are by general accord appointed here. Receptions are held, already twice, in honor of incoming Presidents of the Institute, and many times for bodies of teachers and school superintendents, or of others already interested or whom it is sought to interest in the Institute's work. It serves not only to tie together Tech interests, but to bring these into contact with much that is going on in the outside world. Again, the club begot the Association of Class Secretaries, and the Association in turn begot the TECHNOLOGY REVIEW; and the REVIEW here desires, as a dutiful grandchild, to present this modest tribute of honor and love to its grand-parent, the CLUB, albeit the latter is itself of such tender years. The REVIEW, after itself embarking on a venture hardly less hazardous financially than the club had done, finds itself able at last to toddle around without further fear of falling, now well-nigh free from debt, and its condition improving every year,—it is now two and one-half years old,—although, if truth be told, it all but gave up the ghost, at the age of twelve months, from the ordinary perils of an early childhood not favored with excessive nutriment, financially.

Before the next issue of the REVIEW, we shall have parted from the old and have entered the new house, which has been practically a twin to the one now in use. The changes made will, however, make the new house definitely more attractive and usable than the old. Electric lights throughout will prove a pleasant improvement. The common room on the second floor will be substantially the same as now, except that the small room adjoining will no

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