

THE UNION LEAGUE.

Among the great charities which have marked the liberality of this people during the fearful period of warfare just passed, a high place must be accorded to the Union League Association, of Philadelphia. Although partially of political origin, yet its chief work has been to support and sustain the strong arm of the government during the struggle of the nation with slavery, and this bond of sympathy has drawn to its membership men of all parties, patriots whose love of country and sense of her needs outweighed all considerations of former prejudice, men of noble hearts and generous souls, who have freely given their influence and treasure to bring the contest to successful issue. We have hardly time here to mention the work which this organization has achieved during the past four years, forming regiments for the field, and otherwise contributing substantial aid and influence in carrying forward the war. Their good deeds will outlive their memories, and when they rest from their labors, their works shall follow them.

"Come," said a friend, grasping our hand as we stepped from church on Fast day, where we had listened to a noble tribute to the memory of our martyr President, "Come and see another of the great records which this war has left on our land—the new club rooms of the Union League."

It seemed a fitting day for such a visit, a day sacred to the memory of the great dead, whose desponding heart had been so often comforted, and his weary arm sustained in cheerless days of gloom and doubt by the cordial sympathy and ready action of this patriotic association. We did not wait a second bidding. A few minutes' walk brought us to the handsome edifice, now just completed, which is an ornament to the city, and very justly a source of pride to those individuals for whose gratification it has been erected. It is a large double house of four stories in height, and is situated upon Broad street near Walnut. The outside is richly ornamented with brown-stone trimmings, a handsome porch protecting the front entrance, approached on either hand from the street by a flight of massive stone steps, with heavy balustrades. The work is rich and costly, though perfectly free from ostentatious display. Inside the same good taste is displayed in all the appointments of the building. The furniture is of heavy black walnut, carved in most elegant designs, soft velvet carpets cover the floors, rare bronzes and statuettes grace every niche and corner, fine paintings and engravings adorn the walls, from marble and canvas the familiar features of our statesmen and heroes greet us on every hand, and the picture of luxurious comfort is repeated at every turn in the large mirrors, stretching from floor to ceiling.

* Reading and lounging rooms are fitted up, with the same degree of taste. There is no gaudiness, no tinsel, no showy gilding. It is solid, substantial, sumptuous and complete. But the banqueting hall, par excellence, is the grand "triumph d'art" of the institution.

Here, as becomes the place, the embellishments are of more striking and brilliant character. The carpet is of light blue ground, besprinkled with stars. A rich border surrounds the room, the design being completed by a large eagle in each corner; the sideboards of black walnut are elaborately carved, handsome chandeliers overhang the festive board, the table-furniture is of the finest porcelain glassware and silver, all marked with the initials U. L., interwoven in a graceful pattern. The arrangements are perfect beyond criticism. We found a polite descendant of Ham (as was highly appropriate) the custodian of this chamber of revelry, who with much evident gratification, displayed the various treasures committed to his protecting care. The billiard rooms, the restaurant, and the culinary department, each perfect of its kind, did not come within our tour of inspection on this, our first visit to the Headquarters of the "League." Those who have enjoyed the benefit of these departments testify most cordially to their fitness for the purposes for which they are designed.

There are many cavillers at this, as at every other enterprise, who stigmatize the expenditure as wasteful and extravagant, its purpose as useless and selfish, crying out in the same spirit which animated those sordid minds of old—"Why was not this money given to the poor?" The free-hearted charity and former liberality of this organization is a sufficient reply to all doubts of its future generous action. Embracing within its numbers very many of the wealthiest of our citizens, it will have means sufficient for this gratification of personal comfort and aesthetic taste, as well as for great projects of benevolence, while as a rallying point for the patriotic and Union-loving citizens, and as a place of entertainment for those whom as a nation "we delight to honor," the fact of its usefulness will soon be placed beyond a doubt.

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