

**CLUB-LAND OF THE TOILER:  
EXEMPLIFIED BY THE  
WORKMEN'S CLUB AND  
INSTITUTE UNION, PP. 1-102**

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Club-Land of the Toiler: Exemplified by the Workmen's Club and Institute Union, pp. 1-102 by  
T. S. Peppin

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# CLUB-LAND OF THE TOILER

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INSTITUTE UNION*

*about* BY  
T. S. PEPPIN, B.A.

WITH A PREFACE BY

CANON BARNETT



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*NOTE.*

*My very cordial thanks are due to Mr B. T. Hall, Secretary of the Workmen's Club and Institute Union, and to Mr J. J. Dent, the late Secretary of the same, for help and information which have been most valuable to me in the preparation of this little work.*

*T. S. PEPPIN.*





## P R E F A C E.

THE *Life and Leisure of London* offers a problem as difficult as that of the *Life and Work* which Charles Booth is doing so much to solve—How do people who have no work to do spend the long hours of the day? How much time goes in lounging—how much is killed? How do workmen spend the leisure they gain with shorter hours of labour? What do members of the building trades do when they knock off work at four or five o'clock in the afternoon? What sorts of pleasure and recreation are possible, what are those they actually enjoy?

The problem is obviously full of difficulty, but its solution would throw light on a path in which we are feeling our way. If it were known how the rich who have no employment spend their wealth, it would be easier to decide whether the common good demands more or less taxation of that wealth. Perhaps, too, the analysis of the time spent on dressing, eating, lounging, or in frivolities of reading, playing, and sight-seeing would rouse some who are guilty to a more useful life in a society which cries out with the hundred voices of suffering and sorrow for others' service. If, on the other hand, it were known how the workmen use the leisure they have gained—the knowledge of the hours spent in sleep, in public-houses, in unskilled games, in seeking for excitement, would both hurry the movement for making more leisure, and also make it clear that other means of pleasure must be provided. Perhaps, too, the revelation

of the number of hours spent aimlessly and vainly in athletics, in gambling, in swaggering show, would stir some young workmen to more efforts at self-improvement, and to a more generous use of their money and time. The problem, however, has not yet been attempted, and no one knows how the leisure of London is spent. Mr Peppin in the following pages offers a small contribution. He describes the workman's club in which he tells us 34,000 men take their leisure.

Mr Peppin speaks with the authority of a man who has himself lived for some years in the midst of the clubland of which he speaks; he knows the "feel" of a working class district, the depression of its monotonous streets, the dull grey of its atmosphere. He, as their neighbour, has learnt something of the thoughts which lurk behind words, and are not easily caught, either by kindly visitors or clever special correspondents. He, himself, has been for some years both a member and almost a nightly frequenter of these clubs, going in and out among the members as a mate and a friend.

Readers may be warned that they must not judge clubs as if they were missions, or in any way reforming agencies. Clubs have been developed by workmen to provide for themselves means of relaxation. As Mr Peppin says, no one asks of a West End Club—"Does it promote sobriety?" "Does it raise the tone of its members?" A club in the east or in the west is simply the outcome of the needs of the society around, and as such affords an insight into the life of that society.

Workmen's clubs are very expressive of working-class thought and feeling. They are not exclusively formed of Unionists and Friendly Society men; many of the members are neither one nor the other. The clubs are thus representative of that large body which will not fall into line with either of these organisations. Working-class thought is often sought among Unionists or friendly societies. It is not discovered if account be not also taken