



THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

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agency": "Is the man's house, 'as ruled by her', his castle after all?", and was this the reason behind the Victorian gentleman's desire to escape to an "elsewhere-than-home" at his club? Were the nineteenth century's idealization of family life and the growth of gentlemen's clubs in some way linked? Of course, a man chafing against domesticity still had more power over his home than his wife did, especially before the Married Women's Property Act of 1882 allowed married women to own and to control their own property.

Black deftly reveals how every club is a statement of both exclusion and inclusion; it needs its outsiders to help to define those whom it chooses to let in. She is most interested in those clubs with their own clubhouses, in Pall Mall and around St James's, rather than the less formal clubs and societies that grew up around the Strand and Covent Garden in the early years of Victoria's reign, where likeminded friends such as Douglas Jerrold and G. H. Lewes met in taverns or in rooms above them. The many working men's clubs that sprang up across Victorian London are also not what Black chooses to investigate here. Her chapters on the importance of club culture to the novel and the press are excellent. She makes the point that a newspaper or periodical is itself a kind of club, where the network of like-minded individuals becomes the organizing principle; this has been suggested elsewhere before, notably by Benedict Anderson, but not in the context of Pall Mall's clubland. Black's readings of major novels by Thackeray and Trollope made me think in new ways about old favourites, as did her analysis of the role of colonial clubs in Kipling's short stories. Her chapter on *The Forsyte Saga* betrays its origins as a journal article, but otherwise the narrative flows well, as she moves from the early to the late Victorians.

The idea of the club is sometimes used too metaphorically, as a way of discussing masculine culture in fiction where there