

## THE "UNICORN" COFFEE HOUSE, PILTON.



On Monday next the old "Unicorn" Inn at Pilton will be re-opened under new auspices. As announced in our columns some weeks since, Colonel and Mrs. Hibbert of Broadgate, have been to the expense of extensive alteration and restoration of these ancient premises with the intention of opening a temperance house and reading room for the benefit of the working classes of the locality. In the neighbourhood of the inn a large number of factory hands are employed in whose welfare Mrs. Hibbert has manifested especial interest, and one of the features of the Coffee Tavern is the extensive provision which it contains for the creature comfort of this particular class. The work to which Colonel and Mrs. Hibbert have given much time and money is one of practical philanthropy, and the purpose which they have in view is of such laudable character that it is sincerely to be hoped the new institution will be highly appreciated, as it deserves to be, and extensively patronised. The donors have laid out the premises in a very thorough and discreet way. The bar and suite of rooms have a most attractive appearance, and in every particular of their accommodation indicate thoughtful consideration for the comfort the patrons of the house.

The old inn must have originally been very curious structure. Its architecture is of rambling and eccentric character. Odd bits of wood carving, floriated friezes, carved borderings and protruding beams meet the eye of the visitor here and there. As it is, the present premises are very quaint in character, preserving good deal of the antiquity and curiosities the original. It abounds in the snug berths and cosy corners which are characteristic of the older race of inns. Instead of removing these peculiarities, Colonel and Mrs. Hibbert have pursued the wiser policy making them lend themselves to enhancing the attractiveness of the tavern, and they have succeeded admirably so doing. The exterior of "the Unicorn" presents the appearance of a low and long two-storied dwelling in which our remote ancestors somehow contrived to lead gay, if

short, life. The metamorphosis which the inn has undergone first announced in the sign, in which the fabulous beast is depicted with a warmth of colour that may be taken as a "gentle hint" of the nature of the reception to be met with within. There will be many a customer at the new tavern who will re-echo the tribute of the poet who received his "warmest welcome at an inn."

A smart bar first entered, on the right of the front door. Here the mineral waters of the local manufacturers and Beckett's Celebrated Drinks make a bright array, the bar being fitted up with tea, coffee and cocoa urns, and the room provided with generous seating accommodation. At the back of this there is recreation room, well supplied with indoor games. Upstairs, on the right, there is a capital club-room, 14 ft. by 25 ft., which is particularly well furnished; and next it, on the left, a reading room. Three large bedrooms, and the necessary domestic offices, complete the accommodation.

The Club Room, which will comfortably seat numerous audience, hung round with pictures, &c, and is a most comfortable chamber. By special arrangements with Messrs. Baylis and Co., of the Pilton Glove Factory, the girls in their employ will be accommodated here at meal times during the day, the room being let for meetings in the evenings.

Soup will be on sale at all hours, and, for the use of the charitable, books of tickets for refreshments of various values will be supplied, with which the deserving poor and the visitor whom we have always with us, the ubiquitous "tramp," may be "relieved." Though, as far as the Rooms are concerned, the law, "all intoxicating liquors abandon ye who enter here," will be as inviolable the edicts of the Medes and Persians, the line will be drawn at the "fragrant weed," the use of "tobacco, cigars and pipe" being permitted. The premises will opened at 5.30 a.m., and from that hour up to 12.30 breakfasts and "luncheons" will be the order; hot dinners, from 12.30 to 2.30; and tea from 2 p.m. to the closing hour of 11 p.m.

The management has been entrusted to Mr. George Chewter, who comes, highly recommended, from Guildford. He is rather a noted athlete, and one of the attractive features the Reading Room and Library will be his display of plate, &c., won at athletic meetings. The urbanity and activity of the manager promise well for the success of the undertaking. It is intended that the institution shall be self-supporting, and, in the event of their admirable generosity being appreciated to this extent, Colonel and Mrs. Hibbert will probably extend the accommodation and increase the attractiveness of the tavern. They hold the premises upon a lease.

Mesdames Hibbert, Wallis, Nicholson and others have presented a good selection of books to the library, and pictures, engravings, and illustrated works have been given by the same ladies. The instigation deserves and should command the sympathetic support of all interested in practical promotion of sobriety and habits of thrift and decency among our working population. A hearty invitation is extended by the management to all interested in the work to visit and inspect the premises; whilst the invitation to the class whom is especially sought to benefit cannot be better put than in the lines which figure on the sign-board of like institution elsewhere:

*"A public house without the drink,  
Where men may sit, read, talk, and think,  
And safely home return.  
A stepping stone this house you'll find,  
Come, leave your beer and grog behind.  
And truer pleasures learn."*