



CHAPTER X



AT THE first meeting of the Club on October 7, 1935, George Burwell Utley became the sixty-third President for the sixty-second season. (The apparent discrepancy is due to the fact that there were *two* presidents for the season of 1896-1897.) After the usual dinner (we were still meeting on special occasions at the Chicago Woman's Club) President Utley made appropriate allusion to the recent death of Henry Wolf and then read the following informal communication from our William E. Dodd, U. S. Ambassador to Berlin. The Club voted to have this *Appreciation* spread on the minutes of this meeting. This was done. Your historian hereby transcribes the document in its entirety:

HENRY MILTON WOLF

I became rather intimately acquainted with Henry Wolf the evening when I read my first paper before the Club, October 28, 1912. The subject was the puzzling American leader of Civil War times, Robert J. Walker. [See Chicago Literary Club Publications, No. XIV.] As the Great War came on, and the changes of our economic relations with the world were evident to all, we had many occasions for intimate exchange of our views. He was more sympathetic with Germany than I during those days, he of a German family, I a student at Leipzig about 1900. As Woodrow Wilson developed his world peace and freer trade policy, we came almost to agreement. At the same time Mr. Wolf developed an intense interest in College and University education, and was generous enough to give the History Department of the University of Chicago one thousand dollars a year to support a Chicago Fellowship in German Universities. It was a most stimulating gift, and a number of very able young scholars and teachers in our country were set upon their careers in this way. Spending some months in Japan while Edgar Bancroft, a member of this Club, was U. S. Ambassador in Tokyo, Mr. Wolf became so interested in Far Eastern life and politics that

he gave the History Department thirty-five hundred dollars a year to help establish a Chair for the teaching of Chinese-Japanese history; and Professor Harley F. McNair came to the University of Chicago as a result. There was never a hint from the donor that the Chair of Far Eastern History should bear his name, though I feel now that such a reminder of Mr. Wolf's generous interest in the University of Chicago ought to appear in the catalogues. Although I do not know the exact terms of his now famous will, I am convinced that the University was not forgotten.

When I left Chicago in June, 1933, our friend showed a troubled interest, and we talked over certain problems more than once. He was a little doubtful then of my happiness in the troubled realm of Europe; but his generosity toward distressed Germans was equal to his generosity toward the History Department. When I saw him again in the spring of 1934, our interests were the same as they had been for years, and he seemed so well that my former uneasiness as to his health almost vanished. And a little later I learned of his election to the presidency of our beloved Literary Club, and I expected to see him and meet with the Club in January, 1935. Unfortunately I was seized with Influenza about the middle of the month, our whole family similarly ill, and I was unable to visit Chicago. It was one of the great regrets of my life. In June, 1935, the sad news of his death reached me here (Berlin). A twenty-five year friend had passed away. He was an honest, able, and frank lawyer of high attainments, and I think his life and work will long be remembered in the Club and in our city. His gifts and his will are marvellous reminders to men of wealth how much one may do for the advancement of the fortunes of his fellows and his people.

At the request of President Utley the members stood in silence while the Secretary read the names of the four members deceased since our May meeting: Francis M. Arnold, George E. Dawson, Otto L. Schmidt, and Henry M. Wolf. The President then read his Inaugural essay entitled, *An American Collector and His Bag*, an account of the life of Edward E. Ayer and his fine collection of Americana, artifacts and books, now in the Field Museum and the Newberry Library.

During the summer of 1935 our Club Rooms had been enlarged by the addition of an extra room, which made for much greater convenience.

The outstanding papers of this season, besides the Inaugural address, were these: *Petronius*, by Theodore A. Buenger, an account of the life and works of the famous Roman Arbiter; *Zeitoun*, by Dr. Percival Bailey; *A Lawyer Looks at Life*, by George Packard; *Arthur Symons. The Aetiology of a Literary Crush*, by Dr. Sanford R. Gifford; *A Modern Aspasia*, by John M. Cameron; *A Literary Hoax*, by Ward E. Guest; *A Doctor Looks at Communism*, by George Halperin; *A Predatory Prince*, by Dr. Charles B. Reed (the *Prince* being a black wolf of the North Woods, whose history was fascinatingly told in vivid language); *The Mystery of Light*, by Harvey B. Lemon; *The Arithmetic of Choice*, by Billy E. Goetz (his first paper before the Club); *Going West to the East*, Ladies' Night address, March 30, 1936, at the Woman's Club, by Bernadotte E. Schmitt; *Black and Tan: the Jamaican Melange*, by John R. Heath; *A Domestic Tragedy* (previously mentioned in this history), by Frank J. Loesch; *Tolerance*, by Judge William H. Holly; and the final paper of the year, *Hugo Grotius*, whose great treatise on International Law is his chief claim to fame, by Casper W. Ooms.

At the close of the exercises on this last evening of the season, May 11, 1936, a resolution was offered to the effect that the Club consider holding its Annual Reunion at some place where members, who wished, might have beer, wine, or cocktails with the dinner. The resolution was carried by a resounding *viva voce* vote.

Walter L. Fisher, who has been mentioned before in these pages, a member of the Club for forty-four years, died on the ninth of November, 1935. At the meeting on December second, a memorial to Mr. Fisher was read by Judge Cutting. We quote the following excerpts:

This Club has lost in the death of Walter L. Fisher one of the most brilliant and powerful men that have ever joined its ranks. He was our President for the season of 1913-1914. . . . He was a lawyer of distinction, and as the wielder of a logical, vigorous, well-stored wit, he probably had no equal at the Chicago Bar. His

strongest weapon was a satirical sting with which he clothed his unusual faculties of analysis and elucidation. . . . Those of us, however, who were in a position to know him in his less tense activities will always recall with delight the exercise of his striking store of accurate information that his unusual memory swung into action to the discomfiture of those who ventured to disagree. He was as skilled in playful dialectics as he was in the serious business of his profession, and with quite as much success. . . . This Club mourns with everyone in Chicago capable of intellectual appreciation, the passing of this valiant, honorable, able, and outstanding man.

Walter Fisher was Secretary of the Interior under President Taft, and many of us recall his connection as "expert-extraordinary in the tangled traction and railway terminal affairs of this community." It seems quite probable that two of the most powerful intellects the Club ever had were those of Paul Shorey and Walter Fisher. Their temperaments were very different—Shorey's was gentler, Fisher's more violent; but both were men of facile wit and astounding memory, and invincible in argument. Verily *eo tempore erant gigantes!*

On January 13, 1936, after the exercises, many of the members, in response to an invitation read by the Chair, went into the Cordon Club adjoining our rooms to view an exhibition of paintings by Mrs. Irwin T. Gilruth, the wife of our esteemed member. We were received most cordially by the artist and admired her work.

Frederick William Gookin died on January 17, 1936. He was eighty-three years old. He joined the Club in 1877, so was thus a member for fifty-nine years. The service he rendered to the Club during that period of nearly three score years cannot be evaluated in concrete terms, for it was a great and invaluable service, beyond normal estimate. He was elected Secretary and Treasurer of the Club in 1880—we may say that he was *Executive* Secretary—and for forty years was the Club's pilot, guiding the Club safely through its adolescence to maturity. All his records are marvels of accuracy and penmanship. He was an artist not only with the pen but with the brush. For many years he embellished our

Club publications and the Yearbook covers and pages with designs of his own, no two ever alike, both in black and in colors. They were truly works of art. He was a man of wide culture, though not a college graduate. His early banking experience, and the diligent cultivation of his natural artistic ability made him a notable authority in finance and art criticism. He wrote and read before the Club twenty-one papers, most of which dealt with either finance or art. His last paper was read to the Club in 1927.

Mr. Gookin's crowning achievement was his History of the Chicago Literary Club, covering the Club's first fifty years. This was a monumental piece of work, that could have been done only by a man thoroughly familiar with Club affairs to the last detail, who preserved a huge file of correspondence, enjoyed intimate personal relations with the members, and was blessed with an accurate and retentive memory. He writes with deep feeling, touched at times with emotion, of members and events of the early years of the Club. That early period, the first twenty or twenty-five years, let us say, was characterized by many more conspicuous happenings than were the next twenty-five. Small wonder that Mr. Gookin laid special stress on those formative years of rapid juvenile growth, of strain without and within, of futile but humorous attempts to entertain visiting English dignitaries, of the necessity of moving Club headquarters every little while. But the years grew quieter, bizarre events ceased to occur, and Mr. Gookin apparently sensed the fact that the Club had reached maturity, and had settled down to its real business of cultivating *belles lettres*. The final paragraph of his *Foreword* is just as true today as it was when he laid down his pen:

"The personnel of the Club is of course constantly changing from natural causes, yet the Club itself has changed little, if any, as the years have slipped by. The distinctive character that was given it in the beginning has always been maintained. New members take the places of the old but the Club remains the same."

The greater part of Frederick Gookin's life was the Chicago Literary Club. His Fifty-year History alone confirms this statement.

At the final meeting of the Club on May 11, 1936, the annual report said:

"Retiring President Utley has been faithful in attendance and in the discharge of all his duties. It may safely be said that the most hazardous feature of a presidential regime, next to preparing the Inaugural Address, is being regularly present. This obstacle has been but a low hurdle for the highly esteemed occupant of the Chair this past year."

The same report also let drop the following general observations for the purpose of allaying certain misunderstandings and fears that had arisen on the part of our newer members regarding taking part in the exercises:

"It may be well to remind ourselves 1) that it is a distinct honor to be elected to membership in this Club; 2) that the Club does not consist of a Doctor Johnson and a handful of stooges; 3) that participation in the exercises is purely voluntary, that is to say, an invitation to contribute is not to be construed as a royal mandate, but to be accepted only at the convenience of the member invited; and 4) that the Club thus guarantees the freedom of each member, freedom of action, freedom of speech, freedom of conscience."

The sixty-third season opened on October 12, 1936, under the most favorable auspices. Our affairs were in strong executive hands, hands familiar with the requirements and obligations of the presidential office. The Chair was well endowed with dignity, wit, and the gift of wingéd words. The Program Chairman was suffering from an embarrassment of riches: he had more voluntary contributors on his hands than there were dates to be filled! And, quite as important as anything else, we were gathered where total siccidity did not prevail, namely, at the University Club at Michigan Avenue and East Monroe Street. (This was in accordance with the resolution passed at the last May meeting.) It was a highly agree-

able and most acceptable change. An excellent dinner with wine and a cognac cordial was served in the College Room on the eighth floor. President Irwin Thoburn Gilruth, after being introduced by ex-President Utley, made an appropriate speech of acceptance, and then called on John M. Cameron to read a memorial to the late John J. Glessner. This was a beautiful tribute, beautifully written. Mr. Cameron was one of our best artists in words and phrase-making. President Gilruth's Inaugural bore the title, *The Last of the Victorians*, a dissertation on Kipling. It was unanimously agreed that this Reunion was far more delightful than any other in recent years. Others of the same kind were to follow in the future, and in the same place.

The literary high spots of the year were numerous. There was Wilfred Puttkammer's *Princes of Thurn and Taxis*, the story told in the author's smooth and lucid style, of "the creators of the postal system as we know it today, the originators of the organized, systematic, regular transportation of mail nationally and internationally." It was a bit of valuable history dug up out of a field little known to most of us. The paper was printed and published by the Club in 1938 as Number XLI of our publications. Then there were *A Unique Gift* by Louis M. Sears (a non-resident member), Professor of History at Purdue University; a discussion of the *Railroad Problem* by Ex-president of the Santa Fé Railroad, William Benson Storey, a quiet, modest man of high reputation, whom we respected and admired; and Henry Barrett Chamberlin's *Reminiscences of a War correspondent*, an account of his exciting and dangerous experiences in the Spanish War of 1898. A large audience heard this thrilling story. Three years later we heard the sequel to this paper, an equally hair-raising tale. Mr. Storey died in 1940, and Mr. Chamberlin in 1941. Both were men who had lived fully and richly. At the meeting on November 9, 1936, two members, Dr. C. B. Reed and Henri David, both ex-presidents of the Club, were chosen as delegates to attend a Dinner on November 18 to be

given in honor of our fellow member, Carl B. Roden, for many years Librarian of the Chicago Public Library.

A few other papers of the year deserving of more than casual mention were: *Snappers up of Unconsidered Trifles* by George Marsh (one of this learned author's numerous snappy titles, under which he successfully screens his theme); *Arctic Knight Errant* by Charles Yeomans; *The Horatian Trail* by Stephen E. Hurley, a keen thinker and excellent speaker, whose private collection of *Horatiana*, by the way, is perhaps the largest in the country outside of the Congressional Library; *A Rebel Against Reason* (Bergson) by Theodore Carswell Hume, a brilliant young preacher and philosopher, who was shot down in 1942 by an enemy plane on the North Sea while on his way to Sweden as a delegate to a religious conference; and Dean Edward T. Lee's *A Chapter in United States History*, which the author published in brochure form later, a copy of which is in our Club collection in the Public Library.

One of our very largely attended Ladies' Night meetings was the one held March 29, 1937, at the Woman's Club. One hundred and sixty members and lady guests sat down to an excellent dinner at seven o'clock. The main dining room was filled to capacity; many members had brought three and four lady guests. President Gilruth called us to order at eight o'clock, the audience arranged itself to listen comfortably, and the Speaker of the evening was introduced, Dr. Anton J. Carlson, well known Physiologist and Scientist of the University of Chicago, whose somewhat startling paper was entitled *Black Oxen and Toggenberg Goats*. The speaker began at once to rip open, expose, ridicule and refute all the theories and experiments hitherto made involving attempts by pseudo-scientists and charlatans to bring about human rejuvenation. The lecture was forthright, purely scientific, illuminated with humor, prudery-shaming, philosophical, fact-exposing. It was received with applause, especially by the younger generation fresh from school and college to whom the scientific facts set forth by the speaker were noth-

ing new; and with weaker approval by some of their elders, who were as yet not fully conditioned to the constantly broadening dissemination of biological knowledge.

Eighteen new members were admitted during this season, the largest number in many years. Our resident members numbered one hundred and fifty-eight. The deaths of four men should be mentioned here: Charles S. Cutting died in April, 1936; Edwin L. Lobdell in May, 1936; Cyrus H. McCormick in June, 1936, and Paul Steinbrecher in January, 1937. Judge Cutting and Edwin Lobdell had been members for a quarter of a century and served the Club well. The Judge had a fine sense of humor and a genial presence. Mr. McCormick, though inactive in his later years, had kept up his membership for fifty-five years. Paul Steinbrecher, a successful business man, a prominent civic worker for political and social betterment, always found time for mental improvement, was a discerning reader, and acquired a wide knowledge of books. Though with us but a short time he so endeared himself to his fellow members that Mr. Cameron said of him in a brief memorial:

“That for which he will be longest remembered, and most greatly missed, was the charm and the friendliness of his personality, and his genuineness, his sincerity, and his personal worth,” an epitaph of which any man might well be proud.

As a colophon with which to end this pleasant and profitable season may we quote the words of the immortal Marcus Tullius as written in his *De Deorum Natura*: “Life is sustained by three things: food, drink, and the spirit, that is, the mind.” This Club has all three of these things; Mrs. Green and the Fiscus furnish the first two, the members the last named, the *spiritus*, that intangible thing—call it what you will, the soul, the intellect, that mysterious quality without which a Literary Club would be but a collection of witless wights, alive but wholly non-noetic.