



CHAPTER X

AN unwritten law of the club which has been obeyed without infraction from the earliest days down to the present time is that the term of office of its presidents should be one year only, the brief first season of organization alone being excepted, or not counted. For the season of 1891-1892 Rev. Dr. Clinton Locke was elected its presiding officer. At the annual dinner in October, 1890, when Mr. Head delivered his inaugural address, Dr. Locke was one of the members called upon to make an after-dinner speech. He responded with a short address abounding in characteristic pleasantries none of which was intended to have any significance other than pure fun, but in the course of it he remarked that the Chicago Literary Club was the one place in Chicago where one could go and not hear the question asked: "How is beesness?" "These words," Sigmund Zeisler says, and his report of the occurrence is confirmed by Dr. Dudley and others, "were spoken with an intonation and accompanied by a gesture supposed to be characteristic of Jews. Emil G. Hirsch, deeply offended and aching for a chance to reply but loath to volunteer, got Julius Rosenthal to rise and propose that Dr. Hirsch be called upon for a speech. This having been done by the president, Dr. Hirsch, made an impassioned speech in which he resented what seemed to him Dr. Locke's assumption that sordid materialism was peculiar to or characteristic of the Jewish race. In a burst of eloquence

A MEMORABLE SALLY

he traced the contribution of the Jews to the cultural possessions of mankind—to literature, art, science, philosophy, etc.—from the earliest times down to the present.” Dr. Dudley says: “The speech of Dr. Hirsch was one of the most forceful and impassioned pieces of oratory I have ever heard. His eloquence was almost superhuman. Like Lincoln’s speech at Gettysburg it was received in silence for the moment and was then followed by an outburst of prolonged applause. At this point there was no doubt where the sympathy of the club rested.”

The sequel came a year later when Dr. Locke rose to deliver his inaugural address as president. “I hesitate to begin,” were his opening words, “and I must be careful about what I say, bearing in mind how a year ago I got into trouble with my unfortunate little *jeu* (pronounced Jew) *d’esprit*.” The laughter with which this witty neutralization of his *faux pas* was greeted fairly shook the room. “Dr. Locke’s sally,” says Rev. Charles F. Bradley, who was one of the members present, “had the form of an apology and the appearance of a new affront. But in effect it was like the plea of an irrepressible but thoroughly good-hearted and good-humored boy; as if he had said: ‘You ought to have known me better than to have thought I meant anything offensive. It was a bit of rollicking fun. I am made that way. I can’t help it and here I go again.’” That Dr. Locke’s words were taken in that spirit by all his hearers the writer can testify, having in mind the broad smile by which his face was overspread as he uttered them. His extraordinarily keen sense of humor and the quickness of wit that accompanied it were perhaps his most salient characteristics. One thinks

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of him as in many respects unlike any one else, yet as pre-ordained by nature to be a clergyman. He was devoted to his church work, was an effective preacher, was zealous in the performance of his parochial duties, and was beloved by his parishioners. But the spirit of fun for which there was no outlet in the pulpit had to find expression elsewhere. He was a jolly companion, uncommonly fond of making jokes and swapping merry tales, and if they chanced to be a bit salacious that did not dull his enjoyment of them provided they were really amusing. The subject of his inaugural address was "The Making, Giving, and Receiving of Taffy." To assert that he wrote whereof he had intimate knowledge is not intended to imply any derogation, but should be taken as a recognition of the innate and unfailing tact with which he softened some of the asperities of intercourse with those with whom he came in contact.

Early in Dr. Locke's administration the question of whether the club should arrange to move from the Art Institute Building became so acute that the business meeting on November 23, 1891, was entirely given over to its consideration. Arthur D. Wheeler as chairman reported that the only rooms at all suited to the purposes of the club which the committee on rooms and finance had been able to find were in two office buildings then in process of erection, and were held at higher rentals than the club was then paying. Plans for the arrangement of the available space in both buildings were submitted, but the committee made no recommendation, not regarding the quarters obtainable in either building as satisfactory. In the general discussion that followed the relations

CONCERNING CLUB ROOMS

of the club to the Art Institute came up for consideration as it appeared that a sale of the Art Institute Building to the Chicago Club had practically been completed without any arrangement having been made for the cancellation of the lease held by the Chicago Literary Club, which would not expire until April 30, 1897, and on motion by James L. High it was "Resolved that it is the sense of this club that we are willing to surrender our present lease provided satisfactory quarters can be substituted for our present rooms upon such terms as to save this club substantially harmless from any loss during the remaining term of our lease."

During the remainder of the season the rooms question was frequently under discussion. Several meetings were devoted to its consideration and the rooms and finance committee made diligent efforts to solve it without success. The city was growing with great rapidity and in anticipation of the Columbian Exposition there was an active demand for all unoccupied space in well-located buildings in the central business district. As the end of the season drew near and the need of the Art Institute to have the question settled was urgent, finally on June 6, 1892, the board of directors of the club was authorized to surrender the lease to the Art Institute for the sum of ten thousand dollars, it being apparent that no smaller amount would save the club from loss, and the directors were given full authority to arrange for temporary or permanent quarters for the use of the club during the ensuing season. There was some feeling at the time that the club had not been quite fair to such a worthy institution as the Art Institute and had insisted upon needlessly

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hard terms, but the experience of subsequent years has plainly shown that without the income derived from the investment of the proceeds of the lease and of the Crerar bequest, mounting rentals and other expenses would have necessitated raising the dues to a figure beyond the ability of some of our most desirable members to pay.

Gifts made to the club in the course of this season were a plaster cast from Jules Gelert's excellent bust of John Wellborn Root presented by Charles C. Curtiss, and a framed photograph of James Russell Lowell given by George A. Armour. On March 28 an amendment to the by-laws was adopted making the term of office of the members of the committee on arrangements and exercises begin immediately on the adjournment of the meeting at which they are elected. The literary feast provided at the meetings was fully up to the high standard set in previous years, but it would unduly expand this history to describe the papers in detail. One, however, because of its unique character cannot be passed without mention—the story entitled “Mr. Jones' Experiment” read by James Norton on May 2, 1892. The experiment consisted in always telling the plain unvarnished truth on all occasions and never resorting to even the whitest of white lies whatever might be the consequences of “letting the cat out of the bag,” or of exposing sentiments that are ordinarily concealed. One day's experience proved enough to convince Mr. Jones that “the man who gives way to his sincerity as a regular habit is marked for destruction.” This paper was printed in the memorial volume of “Addresses and Fragments in Prose and Verse,” a copy of which is in the club library.

CONCERNING BELOVED MEMBERS

Among the thirty-three members admitted during the last two years of our tenancy of the Art Institute Building Walter L. Fisher, Martin A. Ryerson, George E. Dawson, Ingolf K. Boyesen, Julian S. Mack, Dr. Charles J. Little, and William Rainey Harper became most closely identified with our organization. Ten of our members died within the two years. Of these the Rev. John C. Burroughs was one of the founders. Samuel Bliss and Henry T. Steele were among those who never missed a meeting that they were able to attend, and Steele's last thoughts were of his friends in the club he loved so well. George Driggs, though he had been a member during less than four years, had made an enduring impress upon the hearts of all of his fellows. John W. Root also, and Edwin H. Sheldon, Henry Field, Dr. Hosmer A. Johnson, and General William Emerson Strong, all men of mark and staunch supporters of the club, were good comrades and dear friends whom we grieved to lose. Doctor Johnson in especial had endeared himself to us, and those of us who were privileged to know him can never forget what manner of man he was, high-minded, clear-sighted, broadly sympathetic, dignified in bearing yet always affable; it was impossible to withhold respect for his mental attainments or to resist the attraction of his winning personality. General Strong had also made a warm place for himself in our hearts. As was well said by Colonel Jackson in the memorial biography written for the club, "He was a unique character: a noble type of the American citizen" and "the beau ideal of a soldier." In the Civil War his record was "gallant and captivating." In the club his magnetic personality was always inspiring: his jovial

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good nature was of the contagious sort: his deeper interests were in literature, art, and music. Many of his fellow members deeply mourned his early death at the age of not quite fifty-one years. Not less keenly did the friends of John Wellborn Root feel when he died at the age of forty-one. It was not only that he was a man of rare attainments, an architect of unusual ability who had achieved wide fame and whose career gave promise of still greater things in the future: it was the man himself who was missed, the delightful companion to whom we were attached by the bonds of esteem and affection.

The opening of the season of 1892-1893 found the club without a home, and it is difficult to say where the meetings could have been held had not the directors of the University Club come to our rescue and offered us the use of the large dining room on the sixth floor of the building at 116-118 Dearborn Street, between Washington and Madison Streets which was then its club house. This courtesy was greatly appreciated and gladly accepted. At the time the offer was made negotiations were begun looking toward a more permanent arrangement. This could not be brought about unless the University Club were enabled to make some extensive changes in the building. Fortunately the Chicago Literary Club was in a position to assist, and on January 23, 1893, Lewis H. Boutell who was then the president of our club announced that the boards of directors of the two clubs had reached an agreement. To help the University Club to make the necessary alterations the Literary Club would lend it \$14,000 for ten years at six per cent interest, the loan to be secured by the mortgage bonds of the University Club, and would be given a

A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE HOWLAND

ten years' lease of either the second or the third floor as it might elect, which would be divided into rooms in such manner as would best meet its needs, suitable provision being made for the termination of the lease and the payment of the loan in the event that the University Club should sell the building. As the changes in the building could not be made until May after the expiration of the leases held by tenants who occupied the second floor, the covenants were not finally ratified until April. Then the loan was made, and the fitting up and decorating of the new rooms were placed in charge of the writer of this history. Later, when the club received the Crerar legacy the loan to the University Club was increased to \$20,000. It was repaid in 1906 when the sale of the building again compelled us to seek other quarters.

At one of the first meetings of this season it was the painful duty of President Boutell to announce the death of George Howland. From the beginning Howland had been the most familiar figure at our meetings. Besides the sense of personal loss felt by each one of us his passing away meant that without him the club could never be quite the same. Well did the authors of the memorial biography printed by the club say of him: "Perhaps no member of the Literary Club more appreciated its purposes and privileges, and more identified himself with all its interests than did our lamented friend George Howland. He was one of the founders of the club, and for nearly twenty years was the member most constant in attendance at its meetings, and ever ready to participate in the literary exercises. He had the affectionate regard of all the members who were drawn to him by his refined

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and gentle nature, his charming social qualities and his wide and generous scholarship. The club bestowed on him its highest office. He was a man of rare accomplishments: and, by his life-work as educator, he secured a local and national reputation which reflects honor upon his associates in the club which he loved and with which he was closely identified."

Despite the convenient location of the University Club there was a further falling-off in the attendance at the meetings in the season of 1892-1893. As many of us were members of both clubs the absence of the home feeling that is so important was not marked. But in one way or another most of us were affected by the preparations for the Columbian Exposition and the many distractions incident thereto. As the University Club Building had to be closed while the alterations were being made, the season was ended with the meeting held on May 8, 1893, when Paul Shorey read a paper on "Dion Chrysostom" and Horatio Loomis Wait was elected president for the ensuing year.

During the season two more names were added to the roll of members deceased, those of Thomas F. Withrow and the Rev. John H. Worcester Jr. Both of these men were valued members who were deeply attached to the club. In the months between October 1, 1892, and May 1, 1893, only ten members were admitted, but among them were Edgar Addison Bancroft, Rev. William Horace Day, Frank O. Lowden, Sigmund Zeisler, and the Rev. Dr. William W. Fenn, all of whom became actively identified with the club and have contributed to its welfare in many ways.

DEATH OF EDGAR BANCROFT

While the proof sheets of this book were being read, word came from Karuizawa, Japan, telling of the death of Mr. Bancroft. Although the date of this sad event does not fall within the period of the club's first fifty years, this history would not be properly rounded out unless a record of it and a tribute to the memory of Bancroft were included, for he was not only dearly loved and highly esteemed by his fellow members, but he was one of those with whom they must always feel proud to have been associated. He was elected a member of the club on November 28, 1892, just eight days later than his thirty-fifth birthday and only a short time after he had come to Chicago from Galesburg, Illinois, where he was born and where, after his graduation from Knox College in 1878 and from Columbia University Law School in 1880, he had attained an enviable reputation as a lawyer and as an accomplished and effective public speaker. Alert, affable, vivacious, and having a keen sense of humor, he quickly made a place for himself in the club, and during several seasons he was a regular and most welcome attendant at our meetings. Gradually, however, as the years went on, the pressure of professional duties and absence from the city made his attendance less and less frequent, greatly to his regret and ours; but the thoughtful papers with which he favored us from time to time, as well as words spoken by him to the writer, testified to his interest in and his attachment to the club which continued to the end of his life.

The high honors that came to Edgar Bancroft in his later years were richly deserved. His career as a lawyer was a distinguished one and brought him national fame.

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To whatever he undertook he gave the best that was in him; close study, penetrating insight, unremitting care. Mental integrity, steadfastness, and sympathetic understanding of his fellows, were among his most salient characteristics. And, while tenaciously adhering to opinions that he believed to be well grounded, he always strove to preserve an open mind, free from petty prejudice and misjudgment. These qualities inspired confidence in all with whom he came in contact; and his magnetic personality and courteous bearing won for him many close friendships with men of the highest type.

In selecting Mr. Bancroft to be the Ambassador from the United States to Japan, President Coolidge made an exceptionally wise choice. No man could have been better fitted for the post than he: none could have acquitted himself with more credit or greater honor to his country than he did in the all too brief period that he held it before his life was cut short by an ailment from which he had long been a sufferer. His death called forth many expressions of grief from the people to whom he had been accredited. The Premier, Viscount Kato, spoke of it as "a staggering blow." The Foreign Minister, Baron Shidehara, said it "could not be described as anything but tragic," and he added: "During his services here he not only endeared himself to all with whom he came in contact, by his sympathy, enthusiasm, and readiness to accept other points of view than his own, but he won universal respect by the clearness of his mind and the steadiness of his purpose." In the tributes the Japanese paid to his memory all precedents were broken. The funeral services in St. Andrews Pro-Cathedral were at-

TRIBUTES TO BANCROFT

tended by the Imperial Princes, the Premier and Cabinet Ministers, and many others. When the casket containing his body was taken to the Tokyō railway station to be transported to Yokohama and thence to America, arrayed along the line of march were the regiments forming the entire division of the Imperial body-guard, save the lancers who led the cortege as an escort of honor, and the casket was carried into the station through the entrance reserved for members of the Imperial family. And as the cruiser bearing it sailed away, "a series of clear notes" by an unseen bugler, "the Japanese military salute to one who has died in the service of his country, echoed across Tokyō Bay."

Of all the words that have been written about Bancroft since his death, none are more touching than those penned by a writer in the New York Times, who must have known him well. They are also so apt that the present writer feels that they should have a place here, and they are therefore, quoted in extenso.

The body of Bancroft is today being borne on a catafalque high above the waves on a Japanese cruiser across the Pacific. Bancroft was of the highest intellectual ability and of the deepest human sympathy. In his prize oration on "The Loneliness of Genius," he used the figure of the eagle soaring alone. He had a genius that would have given him a lofty loneliness had he chosen to live apart in the realm of a purely intellectual life, but he was a great humanist at heart; he loved the comradeship of men and was ready to give himself even beyond the limit of his strength for the public good. He never sought office for himself, but he was a fearless fighter for the causes in which he believed.

He is being borne by the Japanese to whom he went on his high mission, as was King Arthur upon the "dusky barge," not, however, to the island valley of Avalon,

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Where falls not hail or rain or any snow
Nor ever winds blow loudly,

but back to that windy, rain and snow-swept valley lying in the heart of his own country. To it his death has bound the little island empire whose people he made his friends, and so the friends of the United States. It is a moving answer that the Japanese have made to the America that sent its squadron to knock at the closed door of Japan seventy-three year ago. More effective for the peace of the world than all the visitations of friendly war fleets is the voyage of this lonely cruiser with its one home-bound passenger.

Tennyson's "Morte d'Arthur" has given the lines with which best to describe his home-coming:

And all the people cried
"Arthur is come again: he cannot die."
Then those that stood upon the hills behind
Repeat, "Come again, and thrice as far,"
And, further inland, voices echo'd—"Come
With all good things and war shall be no more."