

THE
CHICAGO LITERARY
CLUB

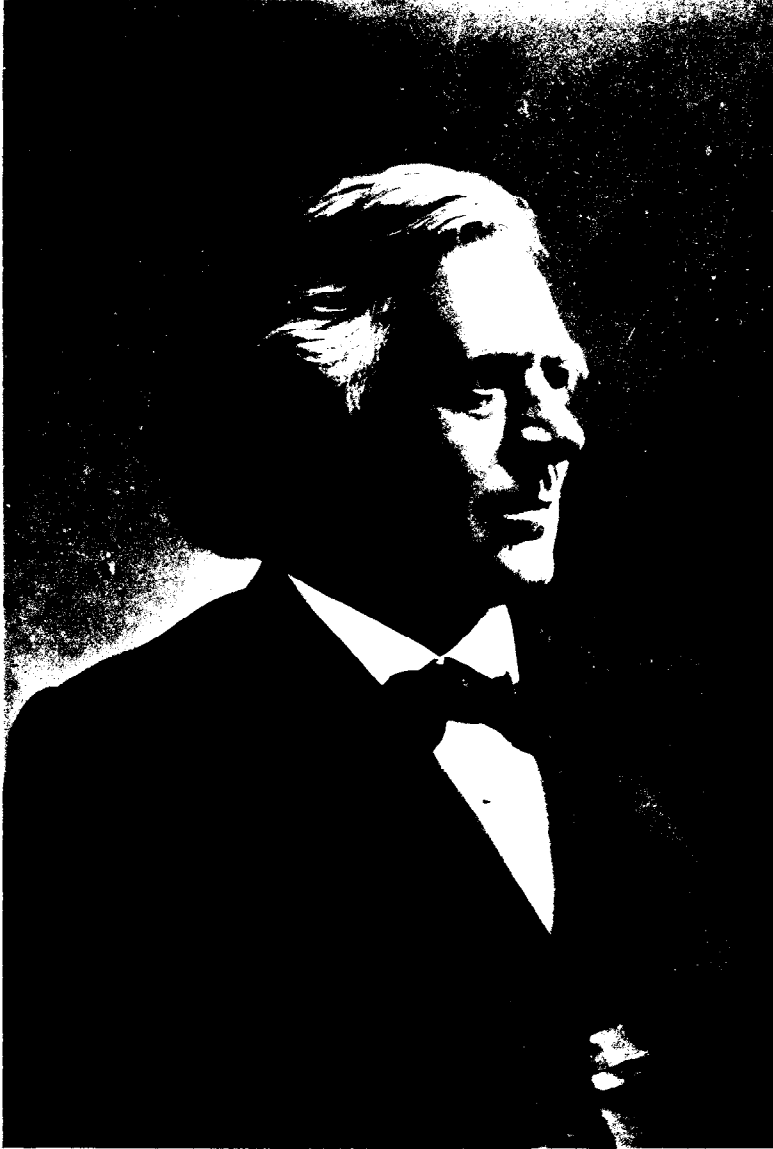
*A HISTORY OF
ITS FIRST
FIFTY YEARS*

By FREDERICK WILLIAM GOOKIN



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THE CHICAGO LITERARY CLUB



REVEREND ROBERT COLLYER



FOREWORD

IN large measure this history of *The Chicago Literary Club* has been made up from the recollections of the writer, augmented by those of several of the early members whose narrations have been built into it. No excuses, therefore, for the somewhat frequent use of the personal pronoun in the recital, need be offered. The account of the later years should, perhaps, be more full; but conspicuous happenings in these years have been comparatively few. They have been years marked chiefly by sustained interest on the part of the members, by the excellence of the literary feast provided at the meetings, by the steady maintenance of the spirit of fellowship between the members, and by the atmosphere that this has created and which has been a distinguishing feature of the club from its earliest days to the present time.

As the roll of members, past and present, shows that resignations were sent in by no less than three hundred and thirty-five of the eight hundred and seventy-seven whose names appear upon the list, it may here be stated by way of explanation, that in a great majority of the cases the reason for resigning was, for one cause or another, inability to attend the meetings. This prevented many from ever becoming in any real sense identified with the club: some of them did not come to even a single meeting, and it is not surprising that, after being enrolled for a year or two, or in some instances, for many years, they dropped out. In contrast to this showing, the devotion of those who did become actively identified with the club has been so constant that during the entire fifty

years the attendance of members at meetings held once a week save in the summer months, has always averaged more than twenty-five per cent. of the number of those on the resident list. This is a record that must be regarded as extraordinary when the facts are taken into consideration that with few exceptions the members were (or are) busy men having many demands upon their time, and that the homes of most of them were (or are) distant several miles from the club rooms.

Of the members who joined the club in its first year, the only one now living is Franklin MacVeagh; and Alfred Bishop Mason is the sole survivor of those elected in the second year. Two who came into the club in its third year, Joseph Adams and Robert T. Lincoln, are still with us, and John F. Schobinger who resigned in 1904 when he became a resident of Morgan Park, is also living and regrets that he is not now in the fold. Of the fourth year members only Clarence A. Burley and the present writer remain; and of the fifth year contingent one alone survives, Charles Norman Fay who made the mistake of resigning in 1903.

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, and it is to be hoped that it will so continue for many years to come.

FREDERICK W. GOOKIN

Winnetka, November 1, 1925.



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