



CHAPTER III



THE season of 1925-1926 opened on October 5, 1925 with the usual Reunion and Dinner, held in Recital Hall. Seventy-five members and guests listened attentively to the Inaugural address of President Charles Doak Lowry, *The Working Theory of a Layman*, wherein the speaker outlined and ably defended his own personal religious convictions. Mr. Lowry was (and still is, though retired) a veteran administrator in our Chicago school system with an enviable record for long and efficient service. He has an extensive knowledge of early pioneer history here in the Middle West, especially in the Ohio River States, as two of his later papers attest, *John Rankin, Black Abolitionist*, and *The Imperial Forest*. The Inaugural was followed a week later by a valuable and stirring contribution to Chicago history by Frank Joseph Loesch, a paper entitled *Personal Recollections During the Chicago Fire*. The author's remarkably clear memory enabled him to present details of his many experiences in that historic conflagration with vividness and exactitude, visualizing them for his hearers to a high degree. This quality is markedly noticeable in all Mr. Loesch's other papers dealing with past events, *quorum pars magna fuit*. The following note appears in the record of the meeting at which this paper was read: "This paper was afterwards privately printed by its author and distributed *gratis*."

This season was a particularly brilliant one. As one runs through the record of that series of meetings from October to May, one is struck by the fact that nearly all the papers were done by men whom we remember or still know as scholars or specialists, such men as Paul Shorey, professor of Greek at the University of Chicago; James Westfall Thompson, professor of European History at the University

of Chicago, and later at the University of California (Berkeley); George H. Mead, professor of Philosophy at the University of Chicago; Henry Justin Smith, Editor of the Chicago Daily News, and for a while assistant to the President of the University of Chicago; Francis M. Arnold, professional musician, whose papers were quite often interpreted by himself on the piano; Charles B. Reed, of medical and literary fame, whose *Masters of the Wilderness*, and other histories of early Canadian days, not to mention his memorable stories of the North Woods read before the Club at various times, are works of distinction; William McAndrew, Superintendent of Chicago Schools; William E. Dodd, professor of American History at the University of Chicago, and United States Ambassador to Nazi Germany (appointed by President Roosevelt) from 1933 to 1937; Sigmund Zeisler, well known Chicago attorney, and author of *Reminiscences of the Anarchist Case*, a paper written for and read to the Club on May third, 1926, and published by the Club in January, 1927; and lastly, William Lee Richardson, author and editor, a blithe and cheerful spirit, and to the very end a purveyor and teacher of the best in literature. Please note that these men are no longer with us save in happy memory.

As one turns the pages of this season's record to the date of March 29, 1926, one reads these words by no means unfamiliar to members of this Club: NOX DOMINARUM UXORUM VIRGINUM. . . . Ladies' Night obviously. The record continues: "*Recitavit suum libellum Gulielmus Andreas McAndrew: 'The Wells of Saint Boethius.'*" Moistening the dry Andrewsian humor with frequent draughts from the Saint's *Wells*, The Ladies greatly enjoyed the occasion. If any apology for using a little Latin in a semi-public record twenty years ago is required, let it be said that at that time Latin as a medium of linguistic exchange was still alive, though breathing heavily; whereas today it is in a triple state of coma, disfavor, and disrepute, a casualty of World War II. How much

simpler is the electron than the subjunctive mood, or radar than the ablative absolute!

There is much of interest that could be said here about our honored member William McAndrew, designated in the Ladies' Night record just mentioned as *Imperator Notus Scholarum Publicarum* (violent snorts from Mayor Thompson and Margaret Haley!), but this brief history cannot go into biographical details *in extenso*. One of our long-time members, a public school Principal, has kindly furnished us with copies of a slender publication, issued by and for public school teachers during the spring and summer of 1944, which sets forth the remarkable career of McAndrew from his early days until his suspension by the Chicago Board of Education in March, 1928, and his vindication later by the Board and by the Courts. He was an educator of national renown, kindly, approachable, of unshakable conviction, firm in his methods of school administration, and, though admittedly in the right, was at times accused even by his friends of lacking in tact. In his stormy scholastic career we note that he either had his own way or got out, with a ringing farewell of cheerful defiance. We must quote what he said shortly after his departure; it is thoroughly characteristic of the man as we knew him both in and out of the Club:

"I have been called the stormy petrel of education. It may be a fair name, for there have been, alas, storms in the two school systems where I have spent most of my days. But I never raised a storm; I never started a fight, I merely hung on to the work that seemed worth doing. I never hated anybody. I never could see any reason for anyone's hating me. Chicago fired me out twice, but gave me a delightfully lively time when I lived there. Not a dull moment! Chicago has for years had what seems to me a marvellously high proportion of talent in its schools, and a pitiful and idiotic record of debauching its teachers by Board stupidity and lack of humane consideration . . . I knew the likelihood of trouble so well that when I went to Chicago the second time I had a pretty good opinion that I might last six weeks. I lasted one hundred and eighty-four. Why not let me blow that horn and be thankful for the lively days I spent there?"

That they were lively days we who survive can well remember. In this connection it is pertinent to record here a later incident that had its humorous as well as serious side. On October 17, 1927, a year and a half after his Ladies' Night address, McAndrew read a paper before an audience of more than a hundred members and guests in Recital Hall. It was his final contribution to our Club programs, and came in the midst of his political fight when hostilities had waxed very hot. We entertain a little more than a suspicion, but may be entirely wrong, that he chose his topic with mischief and malice aforethought, knowing that it would probably be misconstrued, as it was. His topic was *Life Among the Bone-heads*. When the announcements came out the week before, McAndrew at once became suspect in the eyes of an afternoon newspaper that got wind of the matter. This newspaper arranged secretly to have a reporter on hand at the reading. But McAndrew saved his enemies harmless. He dealt critically but not unkindly with the various varieties of ossified human crania with which he had come in contact during his long professional career. His paper had no connection whatever with its author's political foes, and was quite void of animus. The next day a garbled account of the paper, distorted to cause the reader to infer what was never implied, appeared in that newspaper. This aroused considerable feeling in the Club. At the following meeting Frank J. Loesch, who was president at that time, made a few caustic remarks anent the affair, and stressed the sacredness and intimate character of our Club proceedings. McAndrew protested, and the Secretary wrote to the editor of the newspaper, whom he knew rather well, asking for an explanation. The reply was more an attempt to justify the newspaper than an apology: "Well, you know it was *news*, therefore grist to our mill." McAndrew joined the Club April 8, 1890, and was a member (a non-resident most of the time) until his death, June 27, 1937, a period of forty-seven years. The Secretary remembers with pleasure the receipt of several felicitous

notes from McAndrew after he left us, which were illustrated with unique straight line drawings of his own design.

To return to the 1925-1926 season. During that year the Club received into membership fifteen men, of whom seven are still actively with us. We lost two resident members and three non-resident. These latter were Dr. Charles Gordon Fuller, Robert Todd Lincoln, and Denton Jaques Snider. Dr. Fuller, a well-known oculist, is remembered as a man short in writing Club papers (he read only two in Forty-three years) but long in his genial contributions to our famous post-exercises aftermaths. As a raconteur he had acquired much fame; his ever-ready humor made him a most welcome companion at all meetings. Robert Todd Lincoln came into the Club in 1876, and was on our list of members for fifty years *without ever having attended a single meeting of the Club*, a record in the Club annals. He had held high Government office—Secretary of War from 1881 to 1885, and Ambassador to England from 1887 to 1893; and was President of the Pullman Company for fourteen years. With Edward S. Isham, also one of our very early members but much more active in the Club, he was a founder of the Chicago law firm bearing their names.

Denton Snider's relation to the Club was a peculiar one. He became a member in 1888 and remained on our list for thirty-seven years. According to the Club records he never read a paper before the Club, but he did write books—books galore; witness that top shelf in the Club's large bookcase, whereon lie at least *forty* volumes in fairly good binding done by this prolific writer—we had almost said hack. It is a fair presumption that these volumes were presented to the Club by the author in accordance with that erstwhile custom already mentioned. Snider had been a teacher in St. Louis; he lectured widely throughout the Middle West. He possessed a large fund of general information, and wrote on a variety of subjects, as one may see by running one's eye over these titles. There are *The Cosmos*, several volumes of com-

mentaries on Shakespeare, Dante, and others, *The Life of Froebel*, *A Trip to Europe*, *European History*, *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, quite a lot of verse, and treatises on Philosophy, which, we are told, was his favorite topic. Contemplating this gallimaufry of erudition one is forced to the sad conclusion that scholarship got lost in the shuffle, and not for the first time in literary history.

The Secretary's report read at the close of this 1925-1926 season ended as follows:

"All Committees have done their work faithfully and well. The papers have been of exceptional quality in most instances, and have uniformly tended to maintain that quiet atmosphere of dignity, seclusion, and enjoyment, which is the chief asset of this ancient and honorable institution."