

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers I*, 1885 – 1886 Oct 3, '85 to May 29, '86) The original is very badly faded.

Budget, Ferris Editor
May 29th 1886

A Criticism

In his capacity of Mentor and Leader of reforms, the Editor desires to allude to the slovenly manner in which many of the papers are read before the club. All papers presented here are supposed to be original, and three fourths of them are supposed to be prepared by the reader. Self interest alone would therefore dictate an intelligible presentation. But the Club has also a claim to consideration. It concedes respectful attention, and should exact a reciprocal courtesy; for hesitation, indistinctness, or too great rapidity on the part of the reader are quite as discourteous as sleep, whispering, or other inattention on the part of the audience. While the reading of many of our essays is bad, that of most of the budgets is worse. The several MSS of varying degrees of illegibility present pitfalls into which the unhappy editor is constantly tumbling. He pursues his battling course, however, slurring over this, or making a guess at that illegible word, his momentum carrying him like lightning through an unexpectedly plain sentence, and causing him to swallow entire little articles, conjunctions, and interjections upon the special emphasis of which the pith and force of the paper may depend.

Is it any wonder if the club becomes restive under the inflection, or if the editor therefore finds difficulty in securing contributors? We all of us know that the essential of reading aloud well is a good understanding of what we are to read. We also know how hard it is to acquire the meaning from MSS at sight: hence the necessity of becoming familiar with our papers before attempting to read them to the club. If this were thoroughly done, the halting, hesitating reader who so frequently occupies our platform, would disappear. We all recognize faults in our neighbor, but are apt to be blind to the same faults in ourselves: this is particularly true regarding faults in reading. While we do not aim at elocutionary effort in the club, we ought in common courtesy to endeavor to read in such a manner that we can be both heard and understood without great effort on the part of our hearers; and there is probably not one of us whose reading would not be benefited where he to reflect, upon opening his essay or budget, that the general tendency with non-professional readers is to read too fast, and in too [plain] a voice.

These remarks may seem trite but the manner in which many of our papers are read is certainly a sufficient warrant for calling the matter and its remedy to your attention.

Russell Hinman

