

(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

### The Club Geologically Considered

The club retains a serene assurance of its superiority, though, having grown older and more sedate, it has lost somewhat of the exuberant self consciousness and effervescent self appreciation of yore. It still points with pride to its record. He has contributed to the nation a president of the United States, and members of the cabinet, a chief justice and an associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, members of the national senate and house of representatives, plenipotentiaries to foreign states, and many officials of subordinate grade. It has given notable governors to Ohio and Indiana, and in comments to every grade of state and municipal office. It is provided presidents, deans, and professors to colleges and post graduate schools. It is given to the world poets and artists, scientists and scholars, – and Julius Dexter. In the war its members served in every place, from private in the ranks, to major general commanding a separate army.

In earlier days, when frankness dominated over no duty, members were wont to say the clubs comprised the modest gathering of men of this or any age: that its meetings exhibited humor without coarseness and without indecency: eloquence without rant, the immense without personality, satire without invective, originality without eccentricity, dignity without pride, profundity without dullness; that all important questions were treated with the most luminous and discriminating wisdom; that all worthy reforms here took shape and substance, and that from the club radiated and ennobling influence which permeated and elevated society.

Such titillating self-contemplation gave rise to a distinct body of literature. There were popular annals, extended histories, biographical notices, statistical abstracts, and special memoirs of the club. There were legends, eulogies, anecdotal memoranda, and dissertations upon the antiquities of the club, and its prospects. The club was treated ethnographically, etymologically, psychologically, aesthetically, ethically, and financially, in elaborate disquisitions upon its past, it's present, and its future, and in orations upon its glory.

But not all was said. Among many omissions, and no one treated of the club from a geological point of view. I beg this evening to touch upon the geological aspect, leaving

other virgin fields for future commentators. —The club, a world in itself has, like the terrestrial globe and its independent creation, its development, stages of growth, and catastrophes. The primordial. Of the club, when it emerged from chaos and yet no fixed abiding place, and no ingredient but unalloyed debate, was its age of primitive rock.

The first terms of social life when the informals consisted of one bottle of strong drink, administered by one common tumbler with a single paper of crackers and a chunk of cheese. This was the early paleozoic age. Then came the epic of the 4th of July celebrations, of high debates lasting a month, and of elaborate informals. This was our carbonaceous Iraq, when the mastodons of the club reveled in its profuse vegetation. Then came the war which was to the club it's glacial period when every sign of life disappeared. The era of spasmodic and faithful life which succeeded the war was the roscene period. When the club subsided into shape & method, and lecturers were appointed to diversify evenings of set conversation, giving a foreshadowing of the present organization, the club reached the miocene and pliocene periods. Then came the migrations and renewed efforts at systematic work which constituted the drift and post pliocene epochs. Finally in its present quarters the club settled into its present order constituting the recent and present geological state. The parallel goes farther. For as in the geological growth of the world the primitive forms are not wholly extinct, but some species which belong to ancient epochs still survive and form part of the life of the present day, so some individuals who belonged to the club in its earliest stages still linger and live among those of more recent development. When curiosity leads us to delve among the strata deposited in the records, and some club geologist digs out an ancient fossil joke, or unearths some skeleton of the debate, as these relics of the past are brought to light, the members of recent creation wonder if Darwin can be true; wonder if they can have been evolved from such crude forms while the old species who still survive, some trilobite Mallonenses, or some brachiopod "Herronii" feel at the sight the chords of memory touched, and finally handled the fragments, murmuring "Et ego in Arcadia."

The extinct species have not altogether turned to fossils. Ancient Saurians, congealed like the ice-preserved mastodons of Siberia have kept, late away in a lawyer's office or some such cavity. It has happened that such have been thawed into life, and have strayed into the club to browse upon the old pastures; but finding the herbage unfamiliar, have sighed for the old carbonaceous days and vanished for another eon. But through all mutations of form, geologists observe a certain structural identity. And so in the club through all ages, one trait has been preserved: – a warm club patriotism, a faith in its growth. And as the Romans at their Centennial celebration invoked the favor of their titular divinity upon the city, so at our anniversaries all members of the club, the youth of the period and the surviving patriarchs alike join in breathing the same invocation: –

Alterum in Lustrum meliusque semper  
Proroget aevum.

M.F. Force