

(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* 2, 1886 – 1887 June 5, '86 to May 21, '87)

## Editorial

When you enter the dining room of a Hotel ready for your dinner, after a day's work, your interest is naturally centered on the menu. You scan it from soup to dessert in order to make a selection which will please your taste and satisfy your hunger. We have reversed matters in our literary menus, for we first set our dishes out for your enjoyment, and then look over the list and contemplate the richness of the feast we have had. We have had dishes of various kinds, some of them solid, some of them light; but none, I hope, were heavy. These dishes have been daintily garnished by the various authors, so as to give us a variety which is said to be the spice of life. Let us for a moment then, take a retrospective glance at the Club's menu.

During the past year, our travels by land and sea have been extensive. From Hudson's Bay and its territories we have been transported to the Pacific Coast where we have had a delightful glimpse of Frisco and its surroundings, and have rested our weary limbs in the charming quietudes of Santa Barbara. We have had a rough and stormy passage in doubling the Horn, and have drifted four days far out of our course. We have had a vivid and life-like picture of travel on foot in Syria by one who had the pluck to risk its dangers alone; and have peeped into the dwellings of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico.

In our researches for the antiquity of the human race, we have gone to the north pole region, and studied the fauna & flora of that frozen country, and our labors have been abundantly rewarded. We have had a wonderfully realistic pen-picture of one of our sister cities struggling with a horrible plague which threatened to overwhelm it, as well as a graphic account of one of the plagues of the past centuries before medieval times had escaped from the bondage of ignorant and superstitious priests.

We have discussed Civil Service in England, and Socialism and Democracy in America. Diplomatic life in Austria as it is today has been presented by one who speaks from personal observations of the inner life of that court. Frauds and works of art, and articles of curiosity have been ably exposed. The Fish Commission in its interesting details and its prospective benefits to the masses was quite a revelation most of us.

Literary men and literature, religious societies and new forms of religion, school systems and old-time town-systems, student life abroad as well as professional life, curiosities of mental development in children, – these have all in turn been presented to us in a most attractive manner.

We have ascended volcanoes, have been caught out in a Colorado blizzard, and have inspected the weather Bureau for the latest reports. Withal, we have not forgotten the best interests of our city in its various relations, nor overlooked the good influences of her early settlers who helped to make her what she is.

As our menu provides for drink but once a month, your editor can only say that it has been palatable, full of variety, with many sparkling gems worthy of any club. While the

retrospect is pleasant, our prospect is equally promising. The club was never stronger than it is now in devoted members as is shown by our average attendance last year. Our bank account is on the right side, and that enough to make us feel comfortable. From a political stand-point, we are in a most enviable position. We never discuss politics, we talk it sometimes in a mild way. We seem to have a corner on judicial appointments; and it does not make much difference which party wins; the club comes out ahead. – I need not refer you to our illustrious list of members. They have filled and are filling many prominent positions.

We are adding year by year men who will do us equal honor as time rolls on. Let us keep the standard to its highest point; let us infuse new and rich blood; let us work harmoniously for the best interests of the Club, so that we can look upon our evenings spent here as pleasant oases in our business life.

A word to our ex-members: We welcome you most cordially here to-night. This is essentially your night. It should be the night of reminiscences. It is the occasion when we unite those who were once active members to meet those who have succeeded to their places. We want you to see that the club still lives and flourishes, and we want you to understand that you are not forgotten. After we have partaken of our lunch, we want to hear your voice is once more. Give us a speech or a song; a recitation or a story. Show us something of the old time Clubs spirit. The floor is yours, and the time is yours, and we want you to occupy it.

S. C. Ayers

Mr. S. C. Ayers,  
President Literary Club

1530 K St. N. W. Washington.

My dear Sir:–

I regret extremely that I will not be able to accept the kind invitation of the Literary Club to be present on the celebration of its 37th Anniversary, Oct. 30th inst.

Very respectfully yours,

N. L. Anderson

Public Library Chicago  
Oct. 25th 1886

S. C. Ayers Esq.  
President Cincinnati Literary Club  
Dear Sir:

I beg to thank you for your polite invitation to be present at the thirty-seventh anniversary of the Literary Club on the 30th inst. – I had a pleasantest associations connected with my membership with the club, and regret that my engagements will make it impossible for me to be absent from this city at that time. With much respect

Your obedient servant,  
W. F. Poole

508 Fifth St. N. W. Washington

Oct. 27th 1886

Dear Doctor:

Very many thanks for your kind invitation to attend the reunion of the "Old Club" next Saturday. It would give me great pleasure to be there; but aside from other considerations, I can't be there and attend the legal conference I have to attend here that same day and evening. It would require of me that I should be in two places at once; and that, as dear old Sir Boyle Roche said "a man can't be[,] barring as a bird." And I'm no chicken anymore! for it is over a quarter of a century since, so far as I am concerned "the club" became a memory, cherished and hallowed indeed, but a memory. To be sure, the memory has been a constant one, and twice I believe in that time it has been permitted to me to revisit the glimpses of the room (that was all I could see of that memory through the smoke) and made night glorious in the new club rooms -as Shakespeare said or tries to say. Twice since my sojourn in Washington, the Washington contingent of the club has met and remembered the parent body. Once at Haynes (it were an unpardonable violation of etiquette to put a handle to a club-man's name!) a memorable occasion, when, as Mr. Evarts said of the regime of the administration of which he was Premier "water flowed as freely as champagne," and once at Rogers's when water didn't flow, being used chiefly in its congealed state to cool Catawba, the standard lubricant of the club in antebellum days. I believe it was at Rogers's that the story was told of Haynes's introduction by some club man; or was it Strong's introduction to Schweiger and Lager. After he had taken a sip of the one and a bite of the other, he said: "Ah, I see the appositeness of their combination; you take one to kill the taste of the other, and you take the other to kill the taste of the one you have just taken."

Think of it! Lager and Schweiger being novelties to club men. And I being an associate of theirs. No: I shan't come to the club lest some one spring up and declaim Webster's noted period at me: "Venerable man, thou hast come down to us from a former generation!" Nor shall I send you as you ask a club sketch for fear that I shall excite the "tintinnabulation of the bells that so musically wells" as the cry of chestnut! swells. You've all heard 'em 100 times. I mean all I could tell you. Do you still laugh at them? Are they so everlastingly funny to you as they are to me? All alone by myself without any company, I laugh and laugh at them. Once in a while I talk courage enough to recall one to Spofford, and his caccatenation shakes the half a million books he has at last got a home appropriated for.

Mr. President, you mildly suggest an Army sketch. Good heavens! Would you ruin the "Century"? What kind of a man do you take me for? I am the Father of a family. Surely you would not have those innocent children bear through life the stigma that one of their parents was the "author of the real story of Shiloh!" Like that lawyer of whom Choate said that having first tried to get on, and afterwards to get honor, he was last of all trying

to get honest. I'm trying to keep a good name for my progeny. You, Sir, would rob me of it and have me write and Army Sketch. Really, you are worse than that cavalry of whom Gen. B. F. Kelly spoke the other night. He said there was always during the war a controversy between the infantry and the Cavalry as to which were the better fighters, the more effective arm, and the superior forager. Once, he said, one of his infantry brigades came to a pretty well-stocked farm, and halted long enough to relieve it of the contraband bacon quartered in the smokehouse, the defiant chickens, the hostile eggs and the warlike cattle, helping themselves to sundry flaunting rags and other apparel.

At length the old lady who "ran" the place in the absence of the men-folks (all "strong union men" by the way and Stonewall Jackson's division) came out to see them leave. "Wal you've took my milk; you've took my critters; you've took my best bonnet; you've took my hay; you've took my oats; you've took my corn; but there's one thing you can't take from me." "What's that?" Asked one of the pillaging infantry. "My trust in the Lord," was the reply.

The soldier paused a moment, looked serious and remorseful perhaps that anything had been omitted, and then "Well old woman, you'd better look sharp for the cavalry's just behind."

Do leave me something dear Doctor, and don't ask Army Sketch of

Yours and the Club's

R. D. Mussey  
(Lawyer)

Pomeroy O. Oct. 27, 1886

Dear Sir:

I should be glad to be present at the 37th anniversary of the Literary Club. I have pleasant recollections of former meetings. I can not be present, but I can and do wish the members happy lives and the club continued prosperity.

Yours truly  
V. B. Horton

Cincinnati Oct. 25th 1886

S. C. Ayers Esq

Dear Sir:

Yours of the 4th inst. has been received and I owe you 1000 apologies. I would be pleased to attend the anniversary of the Literary Club and it might be that I could entertain the Club with a reminiscence of 30 years ago as to the "Tribulations of a Green Hand."

I have no ambition to do so, but if called on, I could not refuse. I will gladly attend, and will gladly avoid giving expression to my experience.

What shall I do? I appreciate the compliment conveyed by your note, but would gladly avoid it; but if drafted, I would unwillingly serve.

Yours Truly  
Wm Disney

195 Broadway New York

Oct. 25th 1886

My Dear Sir:

I regret that my engagements are such that I shall be unable to accept your invitation to be present at the 37th anniversary of the Literary club, Oct. 30th.

On some future occasion, I hope to be able to look in upon you, and see how the new generation compares with the one in control when I was an inhabitant of the Queen City. The roll of those that are gone is becoming a long one.

Very truly yours,  
Wm Henry Smith

S. C. Ayers, Esquire  
President

Southside, Oct. 23rd 1886

S. C. Ayers, M.D.  
Pres. Literary Club, Cincinnati

My dear Doctor:

In reply to your kind invitation, I regret that I can not attend the Anniversary meeting of your club, to be held on the 30th; nor can I furnish you with a "short reminiscence." When I was a member I esteemed the honor; but did not, to any great extent, avail myself of the privilege of taking part in the debates and other intellectual exercises of the club. Possibly I did not look upon myself as an Oracle, and was too diffident to bear the exposure of my ignorance and inability among those who knew so much, and hence such capacity for imparting their knowledge. There were always enough surcharged gentlemen able and willing, if not eager to impart unlimited information and argument to such as would listen. I listened, and I thought I was being educated up to a high plane. Listeners and learners are as necessary to the life of a Literary Club as talkers and teachers. Hence I filled a niche in the Temple of literature, humble, but important, and feel a certain pride in my contribution to the existence of your celebrated club. I even hope that some of the old prophets occasionally recall my intent look as I sat under their fulminations, and have a glow of gratitude come over them for my eager and trustful attention.

As I recall the past, the club was composed chiefly of doctors, lawyers, artists, and editors; who were, as a rule bright fellows, possessed of a mission to instruct the world. What the doctors did not know about law could not have been familiar to Blackstone. The lawyers were well up in art, and the artists were regular literary fellows. As to the editors, well, all that can be said is, if they fell short of Omniscience, the fact was not apparent to themselves. In short, the members of the club were far from being “prophets not without honor save in their own country.” They honored themselves and asserted themselves, and it is established by ancient history that quite a number of people took them at their own estimate.

When the war broke out, the club was found to have immense dormant martial genius, ready to be developed. Military matters were the one thing the club had to admit it did not know all about. It was not above being taught for once. The members seized their Enfields, and soon learned the manual of arms. They were drilled by Col. Constable, who caught the literary infection, and afterwards wrote a book. Ere long, the members began to volunteer to serve their beloved country – as officers. None that I ever heard of forgot his exalted position as a Literary Club man so far as to enlist in the ranks. It is too true some of us continued to serve the great cause of “Liberty and Union” in the Home Guards; but that was for the obvious reason that there were not enough officers to go round.

If the club still has faith in its mission, it may retain its vitality unimpaired, and live to instruct the ignorant unborn, and to supply posterity with unlimited lawyers, doctors, artists, and editors.

Wishing the club a happy anniversary, I am

Very sincerely yours,  
Robt W. Carroll

1527 Locust St., Philadelphia

Thursday, Oct. 28th 1886

Dr. S. C. Ayers

President of the Cincinnati Literary Club

Dear Sir

I was much pleased to receive your cordial invitation to the Thirty-Seventh anniversary of the Literary Club. My associations with the club during the years of my residence in Cincinnati I now look back upon as the most agreeable in my life.

I can not but regret that my engagements, professional and professorial, so occupy my time that I am compelled to deny myself the enjoyment shared by all those who have the good fortune to be present at an anniversary. Please convey to the Club my thanks for the complement of an invitation, and my sincere wishes that its prosperity will be maintained,

and an uninterrupted series of anniversaries be enjoyed.

Very truly  
Roberts Bartholow

Little Rock Arkansas, Oct. 23rd 1886

SC Ayers Esquire  
Secty. C. L. C. Cin. O  
My dear Bro:

Yours extending to me in behalf of the members of the old "C.L.C." an invitation to be present on the occasion of the celebration of the 37th Anniversary of the Club, at hand for which please accept my most sincere thanks.

I regret to say that I find it impossible to be present in person; but in spirit I feel that I will be in your midst, as in the days of "Auld Lang Syne." Please be so kind as to remember me tenderly, if you please, to the "old boys," whose genial and loving faces I often recall in my far off "Arkansau" home; more often perhaps the dear faces of those who have crossed the river, gone before. God bless them, yea, all.

Love to one and all.

John Karr

Chillicothe Ohio Oct. 29th 1886

My dear Dr. Ayers:

I am under many obligations to your kindness in sending me a special invitation to be present at the anniversary meeting of the Club, I know of nothing more calculated to tickle the cockles of one's heart and make him feel glad he is alive than one of these meetings. Speaking for myself at any rate, could I be with you on Saturday night, I am sure I should find the occasion one worthy a white stone; but circumstances beyond my control will prevent.

Then as to your request to furnish something for your paper. The spirit has been more than willing; has been anxious to comply with the requests so complementary, but the flesh has been weak. You doubtless remember the story Hawthorne tells of himself in Our Old Home. It seems he was invited to a public dinner whilst he was consul at Liverpool, at which many distinguished people were expected to be present. He would agree to except only on the condition he should not be called on to make a speech, – a performance is great modesty led him to hate intensely. The pledge was given, and he attended. In his own security he represents himself as enjoying the perspiring efforts of the unfortunate victims selected for after dinner responses. But in the midst of this feast of reason and flow of soul, (as Artemus Ward would say "this is sarkastical") in violation of the pledge he had received, his own name was called. He says: "I knocked on the door

of my mind and found there was nobody at home.” Such has been my unfortunate, though I can not say unusual condition ever since I received your request. I have not rested with knocking once, but have repeated the operation many times, with no other result, however, than that of a lonesome empty sound. You can't get something out of nothing, however determined you may be.

I congratulate you on your elevation to the presidency of the club. It is a distinction that would confer honor on any man. One who has had it can rest content, for earth has nothing higher for him. I don't know how you look at it, but the feeling seems a natural one to an ex-president, and one of the mildest sort at that.

With a slight addition, permit me to give you Rip van Winkle's toast: “Here's to you, your family, and the Club; may you live long and prosper!”

Very truly yours,  
John Hancock

16 Marlborough St.  
Boston 28 Oct. 1886

S. C. Ayers, M.D.  
President of the Literary Club,  
Cincinnati O.

My dear Sir:

I wish it were possible for me to accept the kind invitation of the club to be present at the meeting of the thirty-seventh anniversary of its organization. It would be delightful to listen to the wit and wisdom, and the interesting reminiscences, of the occasion.

The club is entitled to be congratulated in this remarkable prosperity. Thirty-seven years constitute about one third of the period of our national history, but they are really much more than a third when we consider what events have occurred, what beneficent inventions and discoveries have been made, and how wonderfully the political, social, and intellectual life of the American people has been elevated and strengthened. In all this not a few members of the Club had a part— an honorable part.

Please do me the favor to convey to the Club my hearty wishes for its future prosperity.

Very truly yours

A. H. Hoyt

3223 Lucas Ave., St. Louis  
Oct. 7th 1886  
Dr. S. C. Ayers  
Best. L. C.  
Cincinnati.

My dear Sir:

Will you please to accept my thanks for your kind note of the 2nd inst. It was a great pleasure to me to realize from it that I am still kindly remembered in the old Literary Club, to belong to which I have always considered an honor.

The mere mention of it recalls to me some of the happiest times of my life, and brings before me the faces of old friends whom I have always loved. I therefore again thank you for your note.

I shall be present on the anniversary if it be possible for me to go, and whilst I probably may not be able to furnish a paper on the occasion, I shall promise an auditor in other people's papers, who will be at least interested in all he hears and sees among you.

Sincerely yours,

Ino. Pope

My dear Sir:

Up to this morning I had hoped to be with you tomorrow night; and I do assure you that it is a grievous disappointment to me that I am not able to leave home at this time.

There is nothing; the remembrance of which I cherish with more heartfelt satisfaction than my connection with the Literary Club of Cincinnati and with its members so long ago and its so critical period in the history of the country.

It is a source of profound pride and satisfaction that nearly every member of your club was loyal to his Government and nearly every one of them not only bore arms in its preservation, but attained high position and well-earned fame in the ranks of the Union Army.

I am very sure from all that I have heard of it since the war that its present membership and management well-maintain this high standard, and hand over the club to their successors with untarnished record.

Sincerely yours,

Ino. Pope

Dr. S. C. Ayers

Prest L. C. Cincinnati Ohio

Washington, Oct. 25th 1886

Mr. President:

Honored by your invitation to attend the 37th anniversary of the Club, or to send a brief token of my regard, I will give you a fragment of reminiscence. Having been one of the original Forty Niners, who founded the Club in that year of our Lord, I cherish a lively memory of all its members, during its first decade. Our early meetings differed somewhat from the order which has since become current. Debates, or oral discussion on the topic chosen a week or two in advance, was the leading feature, and written essays occupied a secondary place. Almost from the beginning we celebrated the last Saturday in every month (as you now do) by an "Informal" gathering in which songs, stories, and recitations, preceded by a "Paper" of miscellanea, read by an Editor, chosen for the occasion, were the order of the evening. Refreshments on these convivial occasions were simple, seldom extending beyond sandwiches and Catawba, or crackers and cheese; the only more elaborate banquet being reserved for the Anniversary evening in Oct.

The early debates were very diversified, covering, in the questions canvassed, a wide field of literary, historical, and social topics. As nearly all the members were young, the discussions were animated, and often ardent, though never once degenerating into wrangling or personalities. At the close of each debate, the president of the evening was expected to sum up deleting arguments advanced on both sides, and to render a decision as to which side had been best maintained. This was followed by a *viva voce* vote upon the question in which the members recorded their real opinions, which were sometimes the opposite of what they had been so zealously maintaining in debate.

Among the early members of the Association whose figures rise freshly in memory though separated by more than a generation in point of time, are Henry A. Warriner, a keen idealist, the subtlest brain among us (now departed) Algernon S. Sullivan, the jaunty and chivalric orator, whose white head now ornaments the New York bar; Salmon P. Chase, who spoke but once in the club, but spoke so well that we wished he would speak always; Murat Halstead, rosier of hard-worked editors, a happy compound of the Philistine and the wag; C. C. Hine, the most guileless of radical reformers; Edwin D. Dodd, earnest and hard-headed, whose one song The Tall Young Oysterman of Oliver Wendell Holmes always brought down the house; Robert B Warden, a notable spinner of stories at Informal, and the weaver of webs at regular meetings; Nelson Cross, the bright and witty young lawyer; Charles P. James, slow and deliberate of speech, but keen and clear of mind; Wm. C. McDowell, a brilliant and fervid speaker, with fine powers of mimicry, often exercised for our entertainment; Edward Mills, and his brother Lewis E., now both gone over to the majority; Dr. S. G. Menhies, a born Conservative, and Dr. Wm Owens, a born Radical; Edward F. Noyes, whose fine, orotund voice was never happier than in a poetic recitation; Charles P. Pierce, a dark and solitary soul, who vanished from amongst us, no one knew when or where; Isaac C. Collins, the genial, the ever-ready, the lamented, Frank Collins, his high-spirited brother; T. Buchanan Read, poet and artist; Rutherford B Hayes, who some thought inclined to ignorance, but who was sometimes aroused to earnest and glowing eloquence; George A. Strong, author of many exquisite parodies, written for the Club, of Longfellow, Tennyson, and Bryant; Dr. F. Roelker, the genial, scholarly, and gentle humorist; Henry B. Blackwell, a fertile, erratic, luminous intellect; James Warnock, astute and long-headed; Bill McConkey, scholar, artist, wit, whose inimitable imitation of Mr. Emerson's style is still among the archives of the club; R. H. Stephenson, high-minded and whole-souled, now no more among us; John W.

Herron, whose strong, sledge-hammer utterance always bespoke the man of clear convictions; Wm K. Rogers, mildest of metaphysical philosophers; William Gilford, printer and poet, now in the Register's office at Washington; Manning F. Force, a careful investigator, master of the art of pure reasoning; W. J. Flagg, wit and writer; Wm Ferguson, heavy but reasonably safe in argument; Dr. H. P. Gatchell, man of many hobbies, and brilliant regenerator of the world; Edward P Cranch, a wandering escaped angel from another sphere, whom we used to entertain unawares; and who, on much persuasion, would sing a comic song so unutterably droll that some of us rolled off our seats; Dr. N. E. Soule, a clean-souled, pale visaged scholar; Thomas Ewing, Jr., a shrewd and rather speculative mind, with a strong bent toward politics; J. Bloomfield Leake, afterwards US District Attorney at Chicago; J. D. Buchanan, printer by profession, and hater of aristocrats and capitalists by instinct; Patrick Mallon, the genial, quick witted, ever popular genius of good humor; Wm Miller, the little artist, whose song "The Widow McCree" always used to convulse the room; Will Dixon, of emphatic opinions, emphatic expression, and emphatic manners; R. D. Mussy, the stalwart, good-humored, ever-ready speech-maker; Thew Wright, our old-school cavalier, who used to delight in prodding every Quixotic novelty that lifted its head above the horizon; Wm B. Wright, one of our nimble wits, whom the Fates have translated into a Boston Clergyman; Will Bateman, the hard-headed persistent hammerer at an argument; A. F. Tait, and James F Beard, artists both, who migrated early to Eastern cities; C. A. L. Richards, poet and literary artist, who took to the pulpit spite of Thew Wright's emphatic warning: "If you do, you'll dry up sure as you are born;" and M. D. Conway, a born literary man, whose multifarious writings have reached the people of two worlds.

This is more than half a century of names; yet I must have omitted some equally notable members of the years before the War, for I have no list of the club, and write from memory alone.

Looking backward to the many serious as well as joyous hours spent in intellectual companionship with the men I have named, I do not hesitate to reckon my twelve years' membership in the Literary Club as the most valuable part of my education.

A. R. Spofford

Ayers, Editor

Oct 30 1886