

Chicago Lit. Club



TO THE MEMBERS OF
THE CHICAGO
LITERARY CLUB.

The Chicago Literary Club was founded March 13, 1874. In a few weeks it will be twenty years old. Yet in all that time the only contribution to literature which has been printed under its auspices is the record of the "Bryant Celebration," issued during its early infancy. Many and interesting as have been the papers read at our meetings, the Club has never printed even one of them; nor has it in its archives copies of any, except a few which the authors have had printed, or which have appeared in the pages of popular periodicals. Scoffers who are without the fold have been heard to proclaim that the Chicago Literary Club is not a literary club in any true sense of the word. We who enjoy the privilege of membership do not need to be persuaded as to the truth, nor need we consider the slander. Yet, for the benefit of the Club and of ourselves, some of our members feel that in entering upon its third decade the Club should give the lie to any such charge in future by printing every year a few of the papers read at its meetings. It is for the purpose of ascertaining how generally this meets the wishes of the members that this circular is issued.

In the first place it must be stated that the current income of the Club over and above its necessary expenses is not large enough to cover the cost of carrying out any feasible plan. If undertaken at all it must be by voluntary subscriptions on the part of the members. After carefully considering various plans the officers of the Club recommend the following, which, in their opinion, presents fewer objections than any other :

1.

All papers printed by the Club to be issued separately in small volumes, or booklets, uniform in size and in the very best style so far as paper, press work and the general make-up are concerned. In other words, the books in their outward appearance, as well as their subject matter, must be creditable to the Club and such as to please book lovers.

2.

The volumes to be charged to subscribers at actual cost.

3.

No more copies to be printed than actually subscribed for, except ten copies for the Club for its library, or for exchange or such other disposition as may be ordered, and five copies for the author, in each instance, or seven should he desire to take out a copyright. In every volume issued shall appear a statement of the number of copies comprising the edition.

4.

The books to be issued in paper wrappers and the cost not to exceed seventy-five cents each. No book to be printed unless enough subscriptions shall be received to bring the cost within that sum. Exceptions as to the cost may, however, be made in the case of papers which it is desirable to have illustrated; but in all such cases subscribers shall be invited to express their preference before the additional expense of illustration is incurred.

5.

The selection of papers to be printed shall be made by a Committee on Publication to consist of three members, who shall be appointed each year by the President of the Club.

6.

Recognizing the fact that many of the papers read before the Club are on themes of transient interest, or such as to interest but few of our members; and that others are prepared in such haste that their authors would not care to have them printed; and that it is desirable to make the standard of papers printed by the Club as high as possible, the Committee shall not authorize the printing of more than seven in any one year, unless the conspicuous merit of a larger number and the abundant subscriptions received shall make it appear unquestionably wise to do so. They shall be under no obligation to authorize the printing of any greater number than they see fit.

7.

In making their selections the Committee shall be guided by the expressed wishes of the members present when the papers are read before the Club, but shall be free to disregard such expression concerning any paper they may deem unworthy of the imprint of the Club. Slips shall be provided upon which the members present at any meeting of the Club may vote in favor of printing the paper to which they have just listened; but they must sign their ballots and indicate the number of copies they will subscribe for in case the Committee decides favorably and a sufficient number of subscriptions is received to bring the cost within the limit. A locked box or boxes shall be provided in the Club rooms in which these ballots may be deposited; or they may be sent to the Chairman of the Committee after the meeting, to facilitate which a supply of ballots shall be sent to each resident member. The result of the ballot shall in all cases be kept secret by the Committee.

8.

In form the ballots shall be substantially as follows :

CHICAGO LITERARY CLUB.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION :

In my opinion the paper by.....
which was read at the meeting on.....at
which I was present, should be printed by the Club.

If it should be decided to print it, I hereby subscribe
for.....cop....., it being understood that the price
will not exceed seventy-five cents per copy.

CHICAGO,.....189..

9.

At such intervals as may be convenient, say every two or three months, if the Committee has selected any paper or papers to be printed, they shall send a circular to all the members of the Club inviting subscriptions therefor, in addition to those already received. They shall not authorize the printing of any paper unless sufficient subscriptions shall have been received to bring the cost within the stipulated limit. When any paper is finally ordered printed, the members of the Club shall be notified either upon the regular weekly postal cards or otherwise, and the subscriptions shall thereafter be considered binding.

10.

In future a copy of every paper read before the Club shall be preserved in its archives. It is therefore recommended that the authors be requested to place their manuscripts in the hands of the Secretary, who shall cause type-written copies to be made upon paper of uniform size, suitable for binding into quarterly or half-yearly volumes; such copying to be done at the expense of the Club.

The officers have considered the desirability of modifying this plan so as to provide for furnishing every member of the Club with a copy of each paper printed. They are of the opinion, however, that this is inexpedient unless the entire cost can be defrayed out of the general treasury of the Club, which is at present impracticable.

Another plan which has been suggested is that the Club print its "Transactions," say quarterly or annually. To do this, however, would entail considerable expense, and necessitate either a subscription from every member or an increase in the annual dues. The plan recommended seems to the officers likely to prove more creditable to the Club, as papers of merely ephemeral interest would be excluded.

Members are invited to express their views as to the desirability of adopting the plan as outlined in this circular, and for that purpose a card is enclosed. Answers need not be restricted to it, however, and any suggestions looking toward improvement or the substitution of some better plan in its stead will be thankfully received.

At the business meeting of the Club held on Monday evening, January 22d, this circular was approved, and it was ordered sent to the members; the subject to come up for further action at the next business meeting.

In order to test the question practically, the Secretary was authorized to invite subscriptions for copies of the following papers:

"A True Love Story," by David Swing. Read at the meeting on November 13, 1893.

"A Deserted Village," by Henry S. Boutell. Read at the meeting on December 18, 1893.

Should enough copies be subscribed for to bring the cost within the prescribed limit, it is proposed to bring these papers out in such style as to be in every way creditable to the Club, and to serve as a guide for the future. It may be that the price can be made considerably less than the sum named, but as the cost depends so much upon the number of copies printed, no estimates are possible. This subscription is not limited to the members who heard the papers read before the Club.

F. W. GOOKIN,
Secretary.

Chicago, February 6, 1894.



Should enough copies be subscribed for to bring the cost within the prescribed limit, it is proposed to bring these papers out in such a way as to be in every way creditable to the Club, and to serve as a guide for the future. It was feared that the price was too much, particularly from the fact that the cost depends so much upon the number of copies printed, no estimate was possible. The subscription is now limited to the members who signed the paper sent before the Club.

E. W. Coker,

Secretary.

Owens, February 4, 1892.