

# **LITERARY CLUBS OF INDIANA**

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Literary Clubs of Indiana by Martha Nicholson McKay

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**MARTHA NICHOLSON MCKAY**

**LITERARY CLUBS  
OF INDIANA**



# *Literary Clubs of Indiana*



*By Martha Nicholson McKay*



*Indianapolis*  
*The Bowen-Merrill Company*  
1894

TO THE DAUGHTER  
WHOSE PRESENCE INSPIRED AND  
WHOSE HELP LIGHTENED ALL THE WORK  
THIS LITTLE BOOK IS INSCRIBED  
BY HER  
GRATEFUL MOTHER

*Indianapolis, Indiana,  
November 22, 1893.*

31027



# The Literary Clubs of Indiana.

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# The Literary Clubs of Indiana.

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## CHAPTER I.

### FIRST INFLUENCES.

#### *Causes of Organization—Earliest Efforts—Helps and Hindrances.*

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Of all the states, not one was more difficult to make habitable than that ideal home of the Indian, well named Indiana.

The dense forests, later the source of wealth, must by Herculean effort be cleared away that the sun might bring new wealth to the new fields. The settlement of Indiana's towns and future cities was most perilous. At the risk of life, between the dangers of the tomahawk on one side and the deadly malarial fevers on the other, the first cabins were roofed, and the first corn fields returned their harvests.

Later, the opening of the West, and Northwest, caused emigrants to look beyond Indiana. The prairies were bleak and wind-swept, but they yielded crops at once without the infinite labor of clearing a farm.

And so it came that the picturesque trains of white covered wagons—this pathetic history still unwritten—which before the days of railroads were constantly winding from East to West, over the great National Road, stopped no longer in Indiana; but moved beyond her bor-

ders to found the homes which should be the strength and glory of the great nation.

Thus Indiana was often deprived of that most valuable citizen, the New England or middle states settler; while the central and southern part of the state became an extension of Kentucky and Tennessee, the emigrants bringing with them the habits and ideas peculiar to those states.

Yet, as if the law of compensation must be demonstrated in Indiana, we find that, while as a state her growth was retarded by early illiberal tendencies, race prejudices, and timidity in regard to America's chief sin, she held within her borders the seeds of future moral and intellectual life in a far greater degree than her neighbors. The ground-swell of Europe, its significance noted by Kant and later interpreted, somewhat differently, by Robert Owen and his followers, was agitating the new, as well as the old world. While the United States was comparatively little known to European scientists and philosophers, the southern part of Indiana was famous by reason of the socialistic experiment at New Harmony.

It was indeed an enterprise to impress the world, if to the ears of the multitude the purpose could have been spoken; Robert Owen, wearing still the laurels of his wonderful success at New Lanark, emphasizing his zeal by the gift of his fortune, coming to the new wilderness of a new world to apply the Golden Rule to daily life.

The man who counted his friends among the best of the English nobility, and to whom kings and presidents alike had given attentive hearing, coming with touching simplicity to offer all—time, money, ability, unceasing personal effort—to reform the ills from which society suffered.

The material life of New Harmony's Socialistic Experiment had a short and restless existence of three years. The ideas of its founders, with the hopes they sustained,