



HON. JOHN H. LIGHT,
Speaker of the House.

Hon. John H. Light, of South Norwalk, son of Belden and Annie Light, was born on March 27, 1855, in Carmel, Putnam County, New York, where the early years of his life were spent. When in his teens he came with his parents to Connecticut to reside, and has ever since been a resident of the State of his adoption. He comes of good stock, his father having been a pure bred, typical New Englander, and his mother having been of the sturdy and intelligent Scotch-Irish. When but a lad he determined to acquire a good education and, having completed his course in the public school, started out to win his way. Asking no favors and seeking none, by his untiring industry and perseverance, working by day and studying by night, he constantly advanced and in a comparatively short time qualified for and entered Chamberlain Institute, at Randolph, New York, from which he graduated with honors in 1880. Immediately after graduating he began to study law in the office of Levi Warner, of Norwalk, supporting himself during this time by teaching and by working on his father's farm. In 1883 he was admitted to the Fairfield County Bar, and began the practice of law in South Norwalk. By his integrity, high moral character, and great abilities, he soon gained the confidence of the people of South Norwalk; and in 1884 he was appointed attorney for the city, and has filled that office continuously, under both Democratic and Republican administrations, to the present time. He has an extensive and lucrative practice in all the civil courts of the State. He is a member of the Congregational Church, but is so broad and liberal in religious matters that he has been said to be of the "Church Universal."

In February, 1896, Mr. Light was appointed Prosecuting Attorney of the Criminal Court of Common Pleas for Fairfield County, and held that

office until November 5, 1900, when, by Governor George E. Lounsbury, he was appointed Judge of the same Court to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Judge R. Jay Walsh, of Greenwich. By the last General Assembly, Mr. Light was appointed Judge of said Court for the unexpired portion of Judge Walsh's term, and was also appointed for the full term of four years, beginning July 1, 1901.

As Prosecuting Attorney of said Court Mr. Light gained an enviable reputation as a trial lawyer, and is now regarded as one of the strongest jury lawyers in Fairfield County; while as Judge of the Court his decisions have been abundantly fair, the rights of the state and of the accused having been at all times carefully and conscientiously considered and conserved.

Mr. Light has always taken a great interest in educational matters, having served for years as a member of the Committee of the South Norwalk Union School District, as a member of the School Board of the town of Norwalk and as an Acting School Visitor, and also as Vice-President and Director of the Public Library. To his good judgment and liberal views and education is largely due the efficiency of the schools of his district and town. He is also a Director of the City National Bank, of South Norwalk, one of the Managers and Board of Directors of the South Norwalk Savings Bank, and for a number of years has been and now is Treasurer of Fairfield County. He is a thorough "bookman" and a student of the very best authors, having a selected library of about twenty-five hundred volumes aside from his professional library, which is considered by many to be the best private law library of the county. Mr. Light for a long time has been a Shakespearian student and critic, and his lectures, "The Women of Shakespere" and "The Men of Shakespere's Julius Caesar," have been delivered in various towns and cities throughout the State and have without exception won for him the sincerest admiration and highest appreciation of his audiences. As a public speaker he is always in demand, and for years he has been one of the most popular and efficient political speakers of the State. In 1898 he made the speech placing the Honorable George E. Lounsbury in nomination for Governor, and in the same year he was elected Representative from Norwalk in the General Assembly, where he acquitted himself with the greatest of satisfaction to his constituents. By his speech placing the name of Gov. Lounsbury before the State Convention, and his speeches in the General Assembly on the matter of the repeal of the Charter of the Law and Order League and on the question of Women's Suffrage, he gained the reputation of being one of the foremost orators of the State.

Mr. Light was again elected to the General Assembly for the session of 1901, and so highly was he regarded throughout the State, owing to his sterling honesty, his sincerity of purpose, and his fine oratorical powers, that he became the unanimous choice of his party for the Speakership, and on the assembling of the Legislature, was elected, without any opposition, by the full Republican vote of the House to the office of Speaker. His speech of acceptance, touching upon the vital issues of the day, was couched in beautiful language, was pregnant with rich and elevating thoughts and ideas, and breathed of loyalty, unflinching and unswerving, to the State and to the Nation.

Mr. Light is one whose appearance will attract attention any where and at any time. He is about six feet in height, very erect, and has a fine physique. His face is somewhat rugged, its expression open, frank, and fearless. His voice is powerful, melodious and resonant, possessing that peculiar carrying quality which makes it possible for him to be heard without difficulty in the largest auditorium. His gestures are numerous, but are easy, natural and graceful. He seldom writes a word of his speeches, or addresses, depending almost wholly upon the nature and character of his audiences for his inspiration. His disposition is even and warm, and his self-control remarkable. Even under the most exasperating circumstances he has rarely been known to lose control of his temper or of himself, to which fact, in great measure, may be attributed his marked successes as a leader of men. His purpose in life has ever been to conciliate, if possible; and if not possible, to fight to the last ditch,—his motto being, "Seek not a quarrel; but once in, bear yourself that your enemy may beware of you." He seeks not a quarrel, but once in, he is truly a magnificent fighter.

Mr. Light was married on August 3, 1881, to Ida M. Lockwood, of New Canaan, and to them have been born two sons: Jay Irving Light, who died April 3, 1896, and Freeman Light.