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Beverley R. Tucker.**

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Tucker, Beverley R. 1874-1945.
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Publication/Creation

Boston : R.G. Badger; [etc., etc.], [1914], [©1914]

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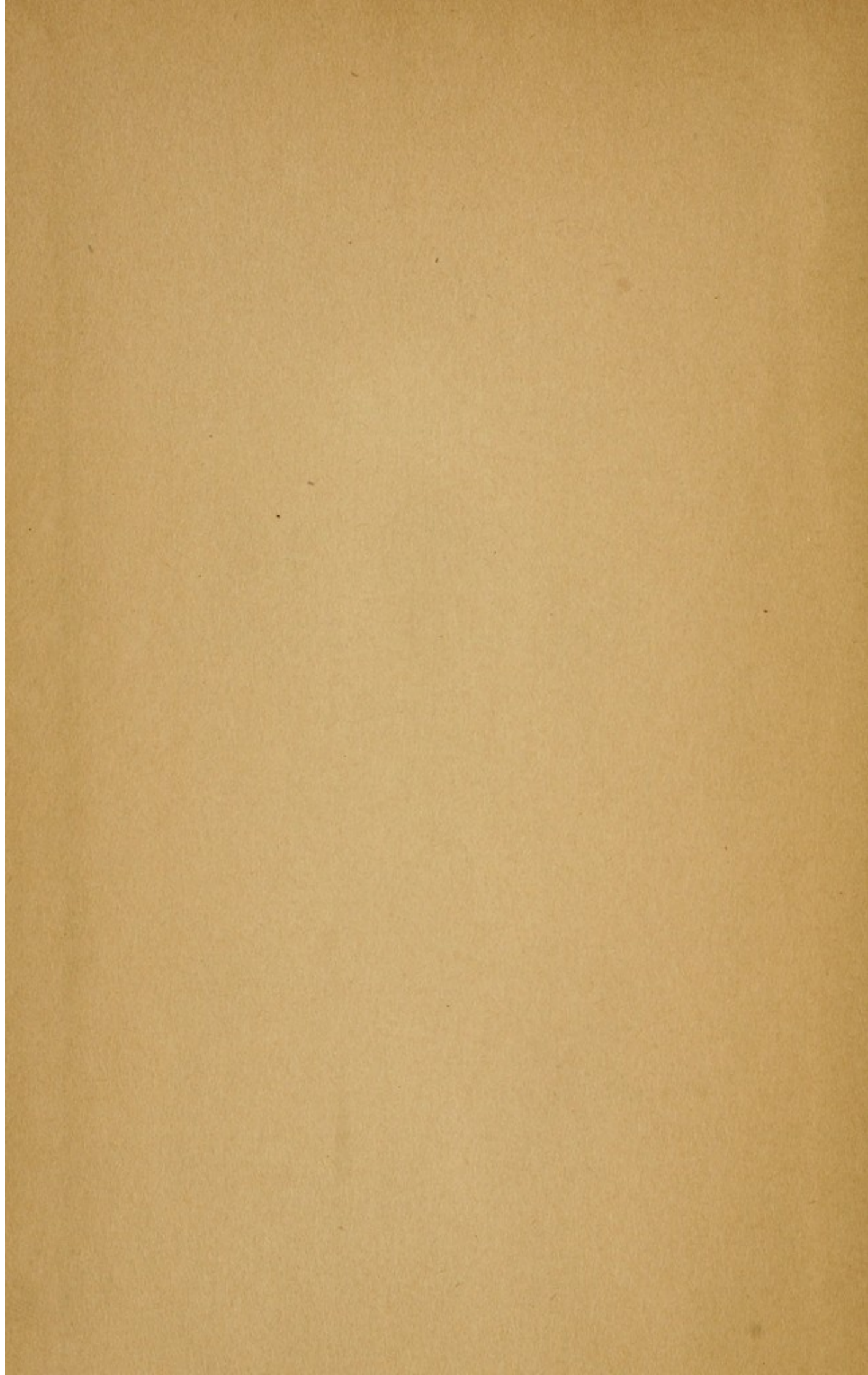
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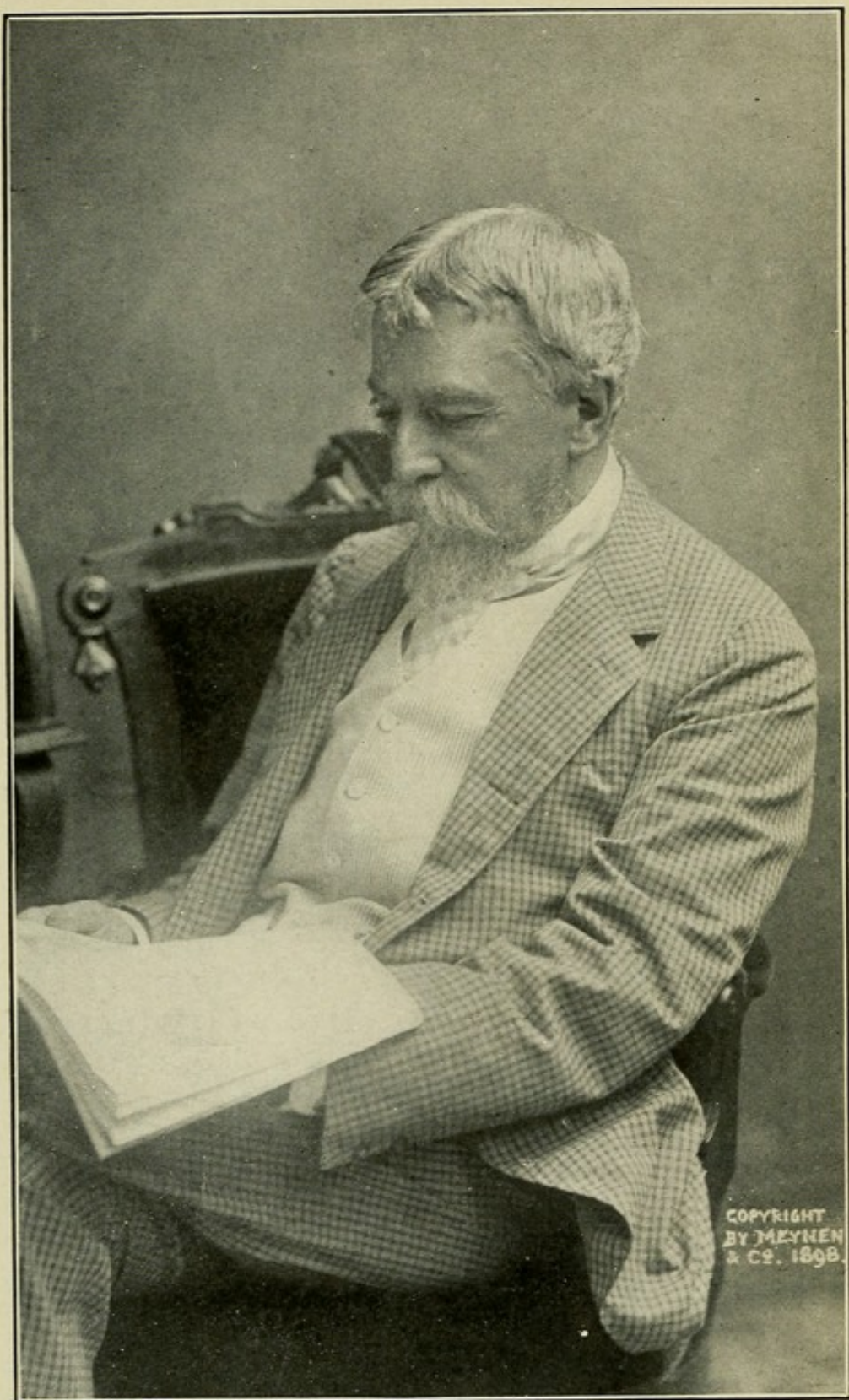
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S. WEIR MITCHELL

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*A brief sketch of his life
with personal recollections*

BY

BEVERLEY R. TUCKER



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THE GORHAM PRESS, BOSTON, U. S. A.

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CHAPTER I

THE first object of this work is to show that the
principles of the theory of numbers are
not only consistent but also that they
are in accordance with the principles of
the theory of sets. The second object is to
show that the principles of the theory of
sets are not only consistent but also that
they are in accordance with the principles
of the theory of numbers. The third object
is to show that the principles of the theory
of numbers and the principles of the theory
of sets are in accordance with the principles
of the theory of the universe.

S. WEIR MITCHELL

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NEW YORK

S. WEIR MITCHELL

IF one were required to write a description of the wonderful rose window of Notre Dame, many difficulties would beset his effort. Every change in the light of the day would bring out new colors and shadows, every inspection would reveal new wonders of technique, every attempted description, while possibly adequate in one particular, would fall short in others of this many colored marvel. All who view it, critic or casual observer, are, however, brought to the one general conclusion that it is a majestic work of art, and all leave with a sense of intense and personal admiration. How much harder is it to depict this many-gifted man; this physician, this scientist, this novelist, this poet, this humanitarian, this friend! Still, I am tempted to lay before you an imperfect sketch of Dr. Mitchell, believing that as you learn more and more of him you will not be so

S. WEIR MITCHELL

much appalled by his genius as drawn and elevated by a feeling of personal admiration for this truly great and learned man.

Silas Weir Mitchell was born in Philadelphia, February 15th, 1829, and died in the same city at his home, 1524 Walnut Street, January 4th, 1914. He was the son of John Kearsley Mitchell and Sarah Matilda, nee Henry, daughter of Alexander Henry. His grandfather, Alexander Mitchell, emigrated from Scotland and settled near Alexandria, Va., and later moved to near Charles Town, then Virginia, now in Jefferson County, West Virginia, where his father was born. His father moved to Philadelphia and was an eminent physician who for years, until his death in 1858, was professor of practice of medicine in Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia. His father also had decided literary taste and published several volumes of tales and poems.

Dr. Mitchell was twice married. His first wife was Mary Middleton, a daughter of Al-

fred Langdon Elwyn, and his second was Mary, daughter of Dr. Thomas Cadwallader. A son, Langdon Elwyn Mitchell, by the first marriage, inherits his father's literary taste, and is well known as a playwright, and his other son by this marriage, Dr. John K. Mitchell, has followed his father's profession and became a noted neurologist. A daughter by the second marriage died some years ago, I understand, of diphtheria contracted while visiting the poor.

In his youth Dr. Mitchell was educated in the grammar schools of Philadelphia and also in the John F. Ferris Academy, one of the old preparatory schools of Philadelphia. He then took academic and medical classes at the University of Pennsylvania, but was prevented from graduating by reason of ill health in his senior year. Later, when his health improved, he entered the Jefferson Medical College, from which he was graduated in 1850.

Here the writer thinks it is wise to get a clearer view of his career, to divide this paper

into remarks on his life as a physician, as a scientist, as a literary man and poet, as a public citizen, and then to give some personal recollections.

THE PHYSICIAN

GRADUATING in 1850, Dr. Mitchell entered the practice of medicine as a general practitioner, and by the time of the war was well known and had built up an extensive practice. In 1862 he was appointed army surgeon in the United States army and served until 1865. During this time he was active in the organization of the Christian Street Hospital for Nervous Diseases, and was later the Acting Assistant Surgeon of Turner's Lane Hospital with Dr. George Moorehouse and Dr. W. W. Keen.

Some years after the war, in speaking of his connection with Dr. Moorehouse and Dr. Keen, Dr. Mitchell said: "It was agreed that each of us should profit by the notes of all of us and that the name of the writer of each essay should stand first on the title page."

Dr. Mitchell's first paper from the volumin-

ous notes of this hospital was on the subject of sudden palsy, the result of gunshot wounds in remote regions of the body. Then came a paper on malingering and the stimulation of paralyses and epilepsies. These studies were especially interesting because of the observations of the staff upon their own efforts to stimulate diseases. In 1866 he published an important paper on paralysis from peripheral irritation. With these papers began his wonderful career as a specialist in nervous diseases.

With Drs. Moorehouse and Keen he wrote on reflex paralysis, gunshot wounds and other injuries of nerves. The publication of these papers made him the greatest authority on gunshot wounds in the world at that time.

Dr. Guy Hinsdale says of Dr. Mitchell's Turner's Lane Hospital experience:

"The Turner's Lane Hospital received a multitude of cases representing almost every conceivable type of obscure nervous disease. The Medical inspectors forwarded from vari-

ous fields and hospitals a vast number of cases of wounds and contusions, including rare forms of nerve lesion of almost every great nerve in the body.

“Few persons have ever at any time had such an opportunity for study, and the mass of material presented was not neglected from any standpoint.

“At that time (1864-65) hypodermic medication was somewhat novel, and in the terrible burning pain following injuries to nerves, which Dr. Mitchell described under the name of ‘causalgia,’ ample use was made of hypodermic injections. It was found that the sub-cutaneous administration of morphine in that affection was more rapid and useful if made near the site of the pain. The combined use of atropine and morphine was here first suggested, and has since been unanimously adopted in daily practice. The effects of each drug used alone were studied, then of the two together, their antagonisms made clear, and also their agreements

in action and in a common tendency to enfeeble the bladder. The narcosis of morphine is lessened by the presence of atropine, but its analgesic power is unaltered.

“The remote after history of the soldier patients suffering from nerve wounds has been an interesting and untouched study, attended by all sorts of difficulties. Dr. John K. Mitchell, his son, has succeeded in securing the history of many of these Civil War cases and recorded them in a volume, published in 1895, entitled “Remote Consequences of Injuries of Nerves and Their Treatment.” This record is of singular value and is not confined to a study of the Turner’s Lane Hospital patients.”

In 1872 Dr. Mitchell was appointed physician to the Presbyterian Hospital of Philadelphia, and in the same year he was appointed physician to the Orthopaedic Hospital, Seventeenth and Summer Streets. The name was afterward changed to The Orthopaedic Hospital and Infirmary for Nervous Diseases. At this hospital,

which at the time was small, he confined his practice to nervous diseases and it was not long before "the tail wagged the dog" and at his death this hospital had grown to be one of the largest special hospitals in the country. It was here that Dr. Mitchell treated many of his rest cases and performed with this treatment and other measures many of the miraculous cures for which he was famed. In 1884 he was made visiting physician to the Insane Department of the Philadelphia Hospital. Beside these hospital appointments, he was connected with many rest houses. Most of these houses were managed by ladies who had been trained under him in nervous work, even before the days of the regular trained nurse.

Dr. Mitchell had one of the most enormous consulting practices in the United States, and it has been said that his income from practice has at times reached \$100,000.00 a year.

Based on these hospital experiences and his enormous private practice, Dr. Mitchell wrote

as many as 150 important papers and made many medical and scientific discoveries. He also wrote short books, among them "Wear and Tear," "Hints for the Overworked," "Doctor and Patient," "Clinical Lectures on Nervous Diseases" and "Fat and Blood." The latter has been translated into the French, German, Spanish, Italian and Russian languages. Dr. Mitchell never wrote a text book on nervous diseases.

I asked him once if he had ever been a professor and he said, "Yes, for five minutes. At a board meeting of the University of Pennsylvania I was asked to retire and while out I was elected professor of physiology. When I returned in a few minutes I resigned." Dr. Mitchell was one of the greatest teachers of medicine this country has even seen, but he consistently refused to accept a professorship. Many of the most prominent neurologists in this country and some who died before himself were his disciples and received their training while

they were his assistants or associates.

Dr. Mitchell left a profound impression upon the medical fraternity. He was par excellence the best type of physician. He was an untiring worker himself and not only required prodigious work of those associated with him but stimulated their interest to such an extent that it was a pleasure to make any sacrifice to work under his direction.

The rest treatment was elaborated by him at the bedside of a patient, an apparently hopeless case. The patient was put to bed, she was not allowed to see her family or receive company or letters, or to read or write. A special nurse was obtained. Full feeding was given to keep up her nutrition. Massage was inaugurated to give her strength and aid in assimilation. Electricity was added later. As she improved she was allowed more and more liberty until convalescence was firmly established. For neuraesthesia, certain cases of hysteria and the anxiety of psychoses this treatment has stood the

test of fifty years and has been far more beneficial than all the other treatments yet introduced. It must be remembered that the measures mentioned do not constitute the whole of the rest treatment, that the treatment is varied to suit individual cases, that the personality of the physician and his comprehension of the reasons for the treatment add both psychotherapy and common sense to it.

The story is told of a Philadelphia gentleman consulting a famous Italian physician. The Italian specialist asked: "But you are from America?" "Yes." "Why, then, not take the Vermichelli treatment?" "What's that?" asked the curious American. "What, you don't know the treatment of the famous Dr. Vier Mitchell, of Philadelphia?" And the American came home to be cured.

Dr. Mitchell's achievements in medicine would be hard to enumerate. Among them, beside the introduction of the "Rest treatment" might be mentioned that he was the first to

point out that ankle clonus was due to myotonic contraction of the soleus muscle. He first pointed out that nerve injuries gave remote symptoms and made other valuable observations upon these injuries. He discovered the relation of eye strain to nervous disorders. He introduced the physiological rest treatment for the cure of sciatica. He suggested laboratory research in insane institutions. He introduced the Weir Mitchell system of massage. He added much to the knowledge of tremors and reflexes and made original observations upon the toxicology of morphine and snake poisons. He did valuable original work upon the physiology of the cerebellum. He has been called the father of neurology as a specialty in America. He was one of the first to introduce the card index for case records. He drew attention to the value of good nutrition for nervous cases and did much to advance physiology not only of the nervous system, but also of digestion. He first described the disease erythromelalgia which is

known as Weir Mitchell's Disease.

He drew attention to the fact that many organic nervous conditions well known among the white races are almost unknown in the negro race.

As long as the history of medicine lasts, S. Weir Mitchell's name will be known through the centuries as one of the world's greatest physicians. His wonderful versatility, his sane mental grasp and his investigative and therapeutic ingenuity and resourcefulness were such as to stamp upon the records of medical history an indelible page.

AS A SCIENTIST

POSSIBLY least widely known of the accomplishments of this many-sided man are his achievements in science. Dr.

Mitchell was a born physiologist and psychologist and an original investigator. He elaborated a system of massage which is unsurpassed, after having studied the methods of massage and remedial movements in many foreign countries. Much of his work in toxicology is a standard to-day. He was an authority on poisons, especially snake poisons. Among his papers are "Experimental Researches Relative to Corroval and Vao, the South American Arrow Poison," published in 1859. In this series of experiments Dr. Mitchell was assisted by Dr. William A. Hammond. To the Smithsonian contributions to knowledge Dr. Mitchell gave, in 1860, a paper on "Researches Upon the Venom of the Rattlesnake." In 1869 he published

another work on toxicology. This was "On the Insusceptibility of Pigeons to the Toxic Action of Opium." Ten years later, he wrote another paper along the same lines. This was entitled "On the Effect of Opium and Its Derivative Alkaloids."

In the field of toxicology he made studies also on the effect of chloral, chloroform and ether hypodermically and otherwise administered, and as many as eight times had himself anesthetized to note the effect.

He investigated the effect of atmospheric pressure on nerves. He invented apparatus for testing reflexes, measuring the time of tremors and making other observations which were original and unique. There is a room in the Orthopaedic Hospital which is nearly full of this apparatus, now out of date, but which has served its purpose well. They were private instruments of precision used for research long before the commercial instruments of precision were put upon the market or possibly even

dreamed of.

As a result of all of this work many honors were heaped upon the physician and scientist. He was trustee of the University of Pennsylvania and of the Carnegie Institute. The degree of law was bestowed upon him by Harvard University in 1886. Two years later the University of Bologna, France, gave him an honorary degree in medicine. In 1896 Princeton added the degree of law and the University of Edinburgh bestowed upon him the same honor. In 1906 the University of Toronto bestowed an honorary degree in medicine, and in 1910 the Jefferson College presented him with a like degree. He was also an honorary member of the French Academy of Medicine, of the British Medical Society and a fellow in the Royal Medical-Chirurgical Society. He was an active member of the National Academy of the United States. He was twice president of the College of Physicians. The S. Weir Mitchell Hall of the new College of Physicians, in Philadelphia,

which he was instrumental in having built, was named in his honor. Besides these, Dr. Mitchell held membership in societies all over the world. These included among others, the National Academy of Science, British Medical Association, American Neurological Association (Pres. 1908-1909), American Philosophical Society, London Medical Society, Academy of Science, Sweden, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Royal Society of Great Britain, Royal Medical Society, Royal Society of Literature, foreign correspondent of Association of the French Academy of Medicine, correspondent member of the Academy of Science of Bologna, Gessellschaft Deutscher Nervenarzte, and the Roayl Medical Society, Norway.

AS A NOVELIST

DR. MITCHELL wrote, "The Children's Hour" during the Civil War and in 1868 "The Wonderful Stories of Fuz-Buz, the Fly, and Mother Grabem, the Spider," two delightful children's books. This statement is made to contradict the rather widespread impression that he did not begin to write fiction until he was fifty years of age. From this time until 1880 we see little or nothing of literary moment except some stories in the *Atlantic Monthly*. The reason for this, it has been stated, is because of advice given him, when he submitted some poems for criticism, by Oliver Wendell Holmes, to devote himself ten years to medicine exclusively. This advice he appears to have taken, and of the poems submitted only one was afterward published.

In 1880 he published a volume of fiction con-

sisting of three stories, "Hepzibah Guinness," "Thee and You," and "A Draft on the Bank of Spain." From now on almost every year brought forth one or more volumes of novels or poems. A list of his principal writing is appended.

It is not my purpose to review these works in detail or to put upon them their proper literary value. That Weir Mitchell was a great novelist cannot be successfully disputed. His greatness as a novelist would be a fact even if his high, correct literary style was not backed by his deep comprehension of human nature and human thought. The powers of the great physician and great psychologist are fully drawn upon in depicting and orienting his characters. His versatility is astounding. Think of the same man writing "Fuz-Buz," the child's story, and "Hugh Wynne," America's greatest historical novel, or "Constance Trescott," the psychological tragedy, and "The Adventures of Francois," the comico-realistical tale of the French revolution, or "When All the Woods Are

Green," and the "Autobiography of a Quack!" Further, he indirectly invaded the field of drama and "The Masque" was dramatized by Wilson Barrett, the great English actor, while "The Adventures of Francois" was dramatized by his son, Langdon Mitchell.

In speaking of his medical knowledge as a basis for his fiction, Dr. Mitchell once said: "Yes, in nearly everything I have written there has been some case traced out, excepting in my book called 'Circumstance.' " The author-physician once said at the University Club of Philadelphia, where a reception was held in his honor, that if he were to choose between abandonment of literary work or the practice of medicine, he would quit the former. "If I could be remembered by but one thing," he said, "I would rather it would be for the work I have been able to do for my fellow-men in the profession of medicine."

To a physician his books present a peculiar charm and the hysterical illness of Anne Pen-

hallow and the gunshot injury of the head in her husband, in "Westways," are certainly two of the best descriptions of illnesses to be found in novels. When one thinks that this book was written when Dr. Mitchell was eighty-four years old, one can but marvel at the brain, untouched by the ravages of age, which produced it. I do not believe there is in all literature another production by a man of this age which can even remotely compare with "Westways."

It has been said: "Dr. Mitchell's style of writing had a peculiar charm which endeared him to his readers. His characters seemed to be living, breathing beings, human in every aspect, and his historical romances teemed with refreshing vigor and realism. This was all the more remarkable coming from the pen of a man whose life had virtually been spent in the clinic rooms of hospitals and in the sober atmosphere of the medical world."

"Dr. Mitchell used almost every known form of literary expression. The novel, the short

story, the essay, the drama, verse, all were at the command of his masterly intellect. He alternated humorous short stories with those of the tragic type. Lyric, romantic and dramatic poetry are also equally represented in his writings."

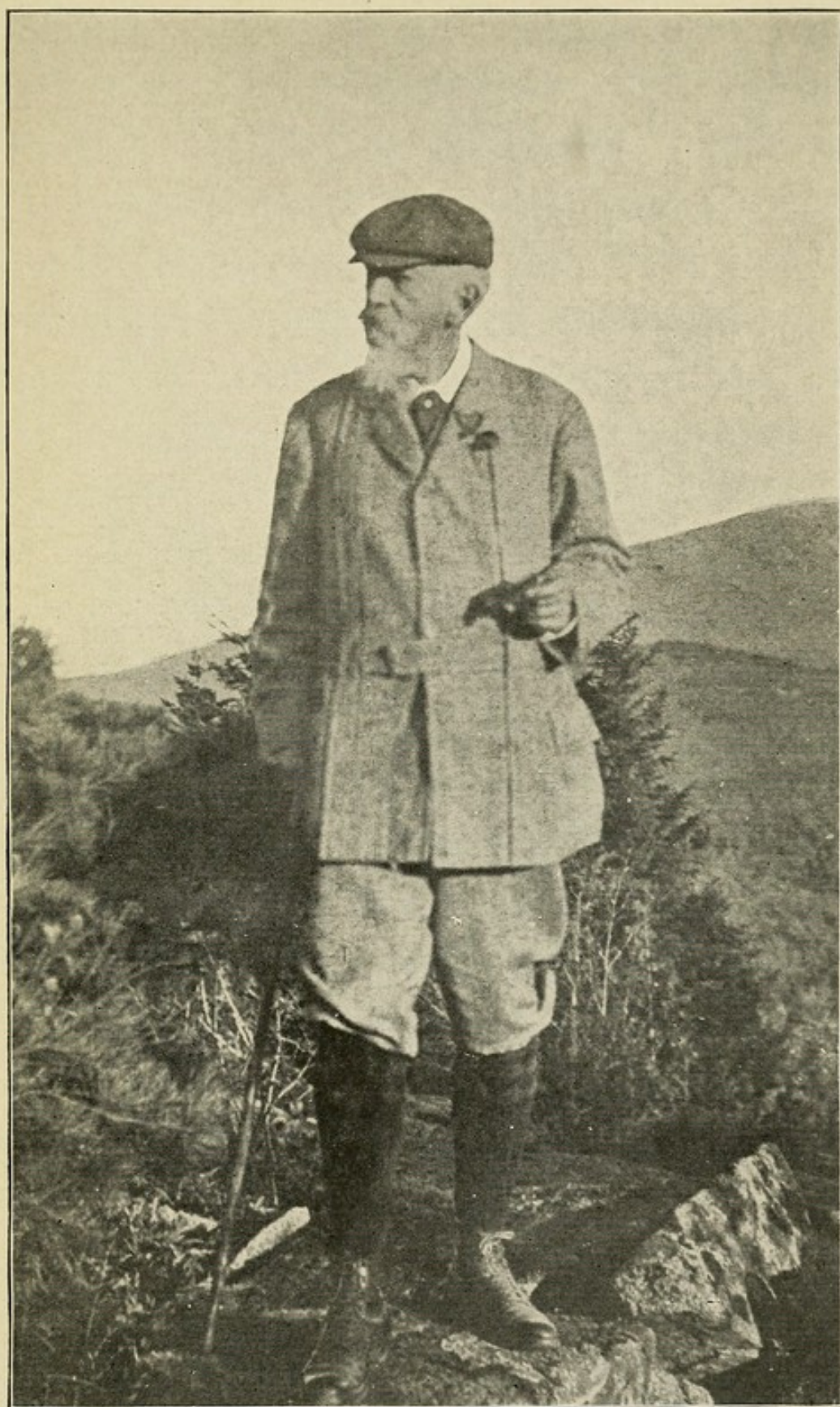
Anyone who has not read the "Youth of Washington" has missed a great deal. In this delightful book you see the foundation upon which was built that great human structure, George Washington, and learn much of the events leading up to the revolution. A charmingly drawn picture is the character of the mother of Washington.

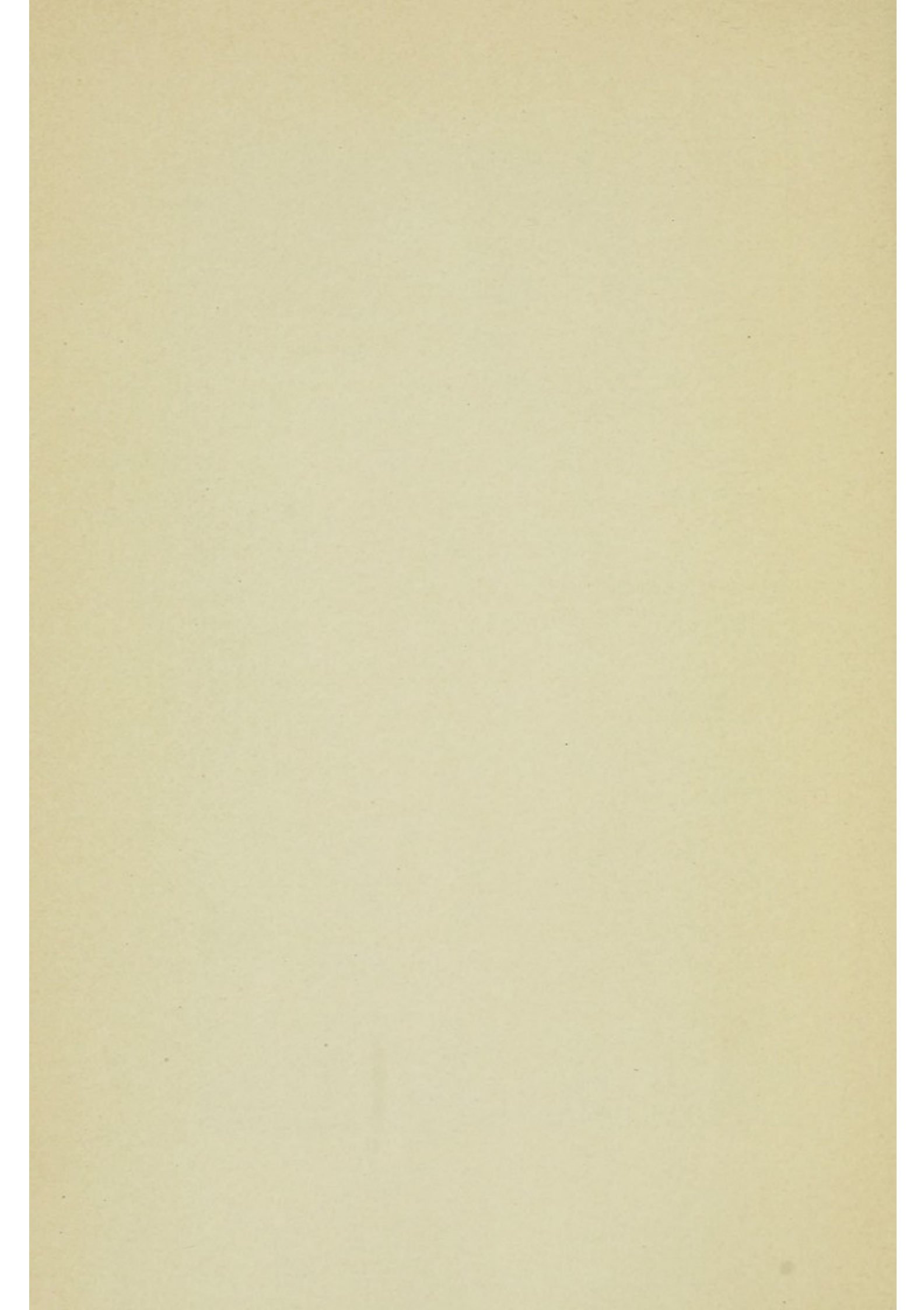
In speaking of one of his first short stories, the following is an interesting anecdote:

The first contribution of the author-physician to a periodical was based upon a humorous discussion with friends whether or not the loss of any member of the body involved a partial loss of individuality. In explaining the circumstances, Dr. Mitchell said to an interviewer:

"I simply wrote out the story of a man whose arms and legs had been amputated and the history of his case. I lent the manuscript, which I did not intend for publication, to the Rev. Dr. Furness, and he in turn gave it to Edward Everett Hale to read. Dr. Hale was at that time connected with the *Atlantic Monthly*. To my surprise, I received a substantial check and saw my paper. 'The Case of George Dedlaw,' printed as the leading article. Well, my poor man was supposed to be at the Stump Hospital (a place exclusively for dismembered humanity), and subscriptions began to pour in for the fictitious George Dedlaw, while the newspapers took up the 'remarkable' case. It was some time before it was understood that no such armless and legless man existed."

It has been a matter of considerable wonder how Dr. Mitchell had the time to write his books and at the same time keep up his practice and maintain his interest in so many other things. This will always remain a marvel, espe-





cially when the fact is considered that for years his hand trembled but in spite of it he wrote all of his manuscript with pen. He adopted a general plan of writing at Bar Harbor or in Canada in the summer and devoting himself to medicine in the winter. In the younger days of his life Dr. Mitchell was almost a continuous worker and he told me that at one time he worked twelve years with only three days holiday. Later, however, he spent considerable time in traveling and fishing but always found time to write. He would go salmon fishing in Canada nearly every summer for several weeks and he would never forget to send the staff at the Orthopaedic Hospital a large salmon. In fact, he was ever thoughtful of those who worked under him.

An idea of his indefatigability as a worker may be obtained from a discussion he once made of his book, "Constance Trescott."

"The main facts of that story are true," he said. "It is based on a woman's vendetta that

actually came under my observation. It was written first as a comparatively short story, about a hundred pages, and when that was finished the larger possibilities were seen in it. The book has been almost completely rewritten three times in three successive years.

"I have everything set in type and study effects from galley proofs. Then I insist upon a complete printed copy, page for page, of the entire work, and when I get that in hand I begin to see my mistakes and get a general effect of the work."

It is unnecessary to go farther into a discussion of his familiar writings. The following list embraces his main literary output since 1880.

There have appeared a collection of short stories entitled, "Hepzibah Guinness," which showed that a new figure had entered American literature. This volume was followed by the first book of verse, "The Hill of Stones and Other Poems," in 1882; "In War Times," a novel, 1885, the first of a long series, the plot

of which was laid in Philadelphia.

Novels and books of verse appeared almost annually afterward, each one increasing the popularity their author had won. In the order named have been published, "Roland Blake," a novel, 1886; "A Masque and Other Poems," 1887; "Prince Littleboy, and Other Tales out of Fairyland," 1888; "Far in the Forest," a story, 1889; "The Cup of Youth," drama in verse, 1889; "Francois Villon," dramatic poem, 1890; "The Psalm of Death," 1891; "Characteristics," 1892; "Francis Drake," dramatic poem, 1893; "When All the Woods Are Green," descriptive of forest life, 1894; "Philip Vernon," dramatic poem, 1895; "Collected Poems," 1896; "Mr. Kriss Kringle," 1896; "Hugh Wynne, Free Quaker," 1897; "The Adventures of Francois," 1899; "Dr North and His Friends," 1900; "The Wager," 1900; "Circumstance," a novel, 1901; "Pearl," 1901; "Comedy of Conscience," 1902; "Little Stories," 1903; "Youth of Washington," 1904;

"Constance Trescott," 1905; "A Diplomatic Adventure," 1905; "The Mind Reader," 1907; "A Christmas Venture," 1907; "The Red City," 1907; "The Comfort of the Hills," 1909; "John Sherwood, Ironmaster," 1911; and "Westways, A Village Chronicle," 1913.

AS A POET

ONLY a few prose writers have been poets of note, but it has been said that Dr. Mitchell's poetry will always live and that his reputation as a poet will grow. His poems range from little Christmas verses sent to friends, to "Francis Drake, a Tragedy of the Sea," the fine, vivid, forceful poem which has been classed with the best dramatic poetry in English literature. His beautiful lyrics "To A Magnolia Flower," and the songs "Good-Night" and "Evening" are well worth one's while. As for Dr. Mitchell's supreme effort in verse, critics like Charles Eliot Norton and Thomas Bailey Aldrich agreed at the time of its publication that the "Ode on a Lycian Tomb" was one of the four or five great elegiac poems in English.

It may be of interest to quote a few of his

verses, especially with a view of keeping his versatility as a poet in mind. In a little poem sent to his friends one Christmas, called "King Christmas and Master New Year," he writes:

King Christmas from his house of ice
Looked out across the snow.
"Hallo, my little man!" he cried,
"Now whither dost thou go?"

"I go, my lord, along the way
That all my kin have gone,
Where you, my lord, shall follow me
Before another dawn."

And closes with:

"Now bid thy gallant company
Ride onward without fear;
For I, the King of Christmas,
Have blessed the glad New Year."

Two verses of "The Song of the Flags," upon the return of battle flags to various states of the Confederacy, are particularly musical and vigorous:

We loved the wild clamor of battle,
The crash of the musketry's rattle,
The bugle and drum.
We have drooped in the dust, long and lonely;
The blades that flashed joy are rust only,
The far-rolling war music dumb.

Blow forth on the south wind to greet us
O star flag! once eager to meet us
When war lines were set.
Go carry to far fields of glory
The soul-stirring thrill of the story,
Of days when in anger we met.

Listen for a moment to the music of "Guidarello Guidarelli:"

Still one hears our women singing,
For a love-charm, so 'tis said,—
"Guidarello Guidarelli!"
Like a love-mass for the dead.

In caressing iteration
With his name their voices play—
"Elli, Nelli, Guidarelli,"
Through some busy market-day.

And to one verse of "To A Magnolia Flower:"

Set wide the glory of thy perfect bloom!
Call every wind to share thy scented breaths!
No life is brief that doth perfection win.
To-day is thine—to-morrow thou art death's.

In the "Ode on a Lycian Tomb" the poet took his inspiration, said Richard Watson Gilder, from the monument which is now in the Museum of Constantinople, and has on its four sides eighteen compartments in which the same woman appears carved in many attitudes of grief.

What gracious nunnery of grief is here!
One woman garbed in sorrow's every mood;
Each sad presentiment celled apart, in fear
Lest that herself upon herself intrude
And break some tender dream of sorrow's day,
Here cloistered lonely, set in marble gray.

O pale procession of immortal love,
Forever married to immortal grief!
All of life's child-like sorrow far above,
Past help of time's compassionate relief:
These changeless stones are treasuries of regret
And mock the term by time for sorrow set.

Cold mourners—set in stone so long ago,
Too much my thoughts have dwelt with thee apart.
Again my grief is young; full well I know
The pang reborn, that mocked my feeble art
With that too human wail in pain expressed,
The parent cry above the empty nest.

This is certainly one of the most beautiful of poems.

AS A CITIZEN

DR. MITCHELL was a man of large views and one much interested in public affairs. He was in demand for lectures and after-dinner speeches. As a member of the Carnegie Foundation, he had to do with the promotion of various educational institutions and at times took great interest in certain reform movements and in local politics, and he always used his influence for the betterment of municipal conditions.

His advice was sought about various and sundry movements for the betterment of humanity and he was consulted by at least two presidents of the United States upon public questions. He did much to preserve the local history of Philadelphia and was also instrumental in having many of the historical places in Virginia properly preserved. He lent books

and gave other assistance to anyone seeking his help, and many physicians, socialists, authors and philanthropists owe to him the inspiration and direction of their work. He did more than anyone else to organize, build and equip the new College of Physicians in Philadelphia and to obtain for them their wonderful library. The Weir Mitchell Hall in this building was named in his honor.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

DR. MITCHELL was known to the writer through generations of family friendship, his grandfather living in Jefferson County, now West Virginia, but then a portion of Virginia, and his father were friends of the writer's ancestors, and during Dr. Mitchell's childhood he spent a good part of several years at the plantation home of Henry St. George Tucker, and thus became a childhood friend of his sons, Beverley, John Randolph, St. George and David Tucker. I have heard my grandparent say that at this time Dr. Mitchell was not a particularly robust youth, that he was fond of fishing and of going out under the trees, lying on his back and meditating hours at a time. Dr. Mitchell never forgot these days and often spoke to me of the family prayers which were held, when my great-grandmother, a very pious lady, kept a green

umbrella by her side with which to poke the boys or servants who became inattentive or drowsy during this daily religious function. He would also recall the days in which, as a boy, he and the others would play circus on the plantation, and it was here that he learned to ride and shoot. With St. George Tucker he went hunting and shot his first squirrel. He said he was proud of his marksmanship until he went to pick the squirrel up, and it bit him through the thumb when he was told he must always shoot a squirrel through the eye! The evenings were spent in reading and conversation.

Several years ago, in going through some of his old papers he found and sent me the autograph of my great-grandfather, Judge H. St. George Tucker, which he had asked for and which Judge Tucker had given him accompanied by the following verse:

"The time has passed, my friend, when youthful pride
A neat fac simile could have supplied.
By time the vigor of the arm's unmanned

And trembling palsy shakes the aged hand.
In second childhood, as in life's first stage,
The veriest pot-hooks mar the blotted page."

At the age of seventy-seven, Dr. Mitchell sent me this verse and autograph, with a kindly note in his own trembling hand.

This childhood friendship continued and when my father, a son of Beverley Tucker, was taken extremely ill with an obscure disease, in the seventies, Dr. Mitchell treated him and it was largely through his advice that the patient recovered, dying unfortunately several years afterward of typhoid fever. So when I went to him to ask his advice about obtaining post-graduate work in nervous diseases, I found a ready and responsive friend and adviser.

I shall never forget my first impression of that visit. I was ushered into the waiting room of his office and residence at 1524 Walnut Street by a door man in knickerbockers with a red vest and brass buttons and a swallow-tail coat. It was after office hours. The room was much

like and still different from the waiting rooms of prominent physicians everywhere. In the corner by a window sat before a typewriter his secretary, a middle-aged lady who had served in that capacity for many years. The room was furnished chiefly in old walnut of several vintages, the book shelves were filled with used books, on the walls hung various engravings and a water color of a huge rattle-snake, while pictures of his medical friends and patients perched on the book shelves, the mantel and everywhere. In the center of the room, which was carpeted, I remember, with a deep red rug giving a sense of warmth and comfort on this cold December day, was a large, oblong walnut table piled with books and magazines. About this time the folding door opened and an oldish gentleman in a brown velvet smoking jacket, a red tie and checked waiscoat and trousers stepped alertly into the room. I also noticed that he had a white, rather scraggly beard, that his white hair was parted in the middle, that he

looked at me kindly with clear blue eyes, and that his feet were exceedingly well groomed and rather small for his size. He was six feet, his head was splendidly developed, he stooped a little at the shoulders and the hand he extended trembled.

I had been considerably awed at the prospects of this interview but I began to feel a little more at ease when he said, "Well, Tucker, I am glad to see you," in a voice which combined kindness and power in a way no other voice has that I have ever heard. He led me into his office and motioned me to a seat, and probably seeing that I was a little embarrassed, instead of taking his office chair at his large, double, handsomely carved, flat top desk, took an ordinary chair, rested his elbow on the corner of his desk, and, as I afterward found his habit was, rested his head upon his hand with two of the fingers slightly back of his ear. I imagined he must be a little deaf, and he really was. He knew that I had come to ask him about getting post-

graduate and hospital work in nervous diseases, for I had written him, and he opened the conversation by asking me about various connections and friends he had in Virginia. He asked me was the old brick wall still around the Archer yard at Sixth and Franklin Streets in Richmond, and if the old sycamore tree was still in the center of the sidewalk by the wall. I told him neither had been disturbed, and he told me that as a boy he had walked along the top of the wall many a time and watched the birds and tame squirrels in the old sycamore. This all made me feel perfectly at home and then he quizzed me about myself—not only my medical preparation, but asked my views on various topics, made me tell him about my life and relatives and told me many little reminiscences of my grandfather and great uncles. During this conversation he offered me a cigar and we smoked. Once he used a slang expression and I found an opportunity a little later and used one also. Toward the end he rang, and when

the man appeared, ordered some brandy and water which he offered me and I took. When Dr. Mitchell took his brandy he looked at me quizzically and said, "I am glad to see you have some petty vices. I hope you have no great ones. I am usually afraid of a man who has no petty vices." He then stood up and leaned his elbow on the mantel where a wood fire was burning on brass andirons and told me he would obtain for me the hospital appointment I wanted. I told him I had some fear as to the wisdom of my attempting nervous diseases as I did not know whether I would be equal to the opportunities he was offering me. He then said something which has helped me in many decisions. "Never fail," he said, "to accept any opportunity which will broaden your horizon."

I left shortly afterward feeling that I had a friend and adviser indeed. I was too taken up with the man to notice much about his office at this time. As I walked out on Walnut Street that winter afternoon, I knew that I had been

in the presence of a great man, but some things about him struck me oddly. His legs and feet were youthful, his hands and hearing aged, his body and mind middle-aged, and his personality adaptable to any age. Fleeting impressions paint true pictures at times though lacking in detail.

Dr. Mitchell once told me that many of the scenes in his novels he drew from real life; for instance, the scene in "Constance Trescott" of old Mrs. Avaril picking roses in her garden was a reproduction of Mrs. Cynthia Coleman, of Williamsburg, Va., culling roses in her garden one summer's day when he chanced to be visiting that historic old town and stopped at the garden fence to watch her.

When he wrote his poem on the return of the battle flags of the Confederacy, he showed the manuscript to a Southern lady patient and was much amused when she told him that she thought the poetry very fine but that the "Yankees" should never have taken the battle flags and that she was an unreconstructed rebel still.

He was fond of champagne and when at a dinner-party one night the lady next to him asked, "Why, Doctor, you do not drink champagne, do you?" he replied, with a twinkle in his eye, "Yes, Madam, for breakfast, dinner and supper."

A prominent minister was among the guests, and after dinner when he refused a cigar, Dr. Mitchell told him that a preacher should have some "innocent vice" and teased him, saying that if he had known how good he was he would have opposed his being called to Philadelphia.

The story of the Northerner learning to shoot and shooting so many people, as described in "Characteristics," was told to him by a former assistant from Arkansas, as true. Dr. Mitchell was fond of telling anecdotes about this assistant who was with him just preceding the war. He "read medicine" in Dr. Mitchell's office. When he came to Dr. Mitchell, the Doctor asked him what accomplishments he had,

and the Arkansan said he had only one, whereupon he pulled a bowie knife from his boot and threw it across the room so that it stuck in the panel of Dr. Mitchell's mahogany office door. The Doctor told him that was fine, but that it was a method of surgery which had not yet reached Philadelphia.

Dr. Mitchel believed in spending money liberally, and once told me that it was a pity for a man not to spend most of his income, and that he believed it was wrong for a physician to charge exorbitantly. He told me of a wealthy patient from Chicago whom he cured of some simple malady and charged him \$100.00. The wealthy patient was astonished at the small fee and told Dr. Mitchell that if he had charged him \$1,000.00 he would have gladly paid it. Dr. Mitchell told him that even if he had he would have gone back to Chicago and never ceased to tell people how exorbitant he was.

Dr. Mitchell seemed to be able to accomplish more, do it more thoroughly and without appar-

ent hurry than anyone I have ever seen. I heard him say that no detail of examination or treatment, however laborious, should ever be overlooked. A patient of his at the Orthopaedic Hospital and Infirmary for Nervous Diseases thanked him one day for taking so much trouble with her case, and he replied, "Madam, you need not flatter yourself. I take just as much trouble with any patient who consults me." As an illustration of his ability to pick out a clue to a case which had been overlooked by others, it is of interest to say that this patient had been brought to Dr. Mitchell by two prominent nerve specialists. I happened to be present at this first consultation. The two doctors referred to had a history of the case consisting of six pages of foolscap, closely written. Dr. Mitchell carefully read this whole history and then turning to the physicians said: "You have no note of the condition of her heart." "No," they said, "we have omitted that." Whereupon Dr. Mitchell listened to the patient's heart and im-

mediately detected a leaking valve. This heart trouble accounted for her symptoms.

In the summer of 1905 a prominent Canadian official talked very freely to Dr. Mitchell about government affairs and then asked him not to divulge anything that was told him, and repeated this request. Whereupon Dr. Mitchell replied that during his life-time he had kept more secrets than any five British viceroys ever heard!

He had a remarkable memory and his secretary once told me when I remarked upon this to her, that a few months before a man came into his office and said: "Doctor, I don't expect you can remember anything about me, for it has been 32 years since I consulted you." Dr. Mitchell told him that he would not attempt to remember his name, but asked him for what malady he had consulted him, and as soon as the man told him, he remembered the whole case and described it accurately, to the great astonishment of the former patient.

Having heard the story of his consulting some nerve specialist abroad and of this specialist recommending him to consult Dr. Weir Mitchell, of Philadelphia, I asked him on one occasion to tell me the true story. He replied that he was in Paris and had been overworked and felt much run-down, so he decided to consult the great nerve specialist, Dr. Charcot. Wishing an independent opinion, he did not give his name. Dr. Charcot examined him and gave a few simple directions, and then turning to him asked him where he was from. Dr. Mitchell told him he was from Philadelphia. Then Dr. Charcot said: "You have a man in Philadelphia who knows more about run-down nervous conditions than anyone else I know of, and I will give you a letter to Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, whom you must consult." Dr. Charcot started the letter. The situation was so ludicrous that Dr. Mitchell laughed, and when Charcot asked him what he was laughing about, Dr. Mitchell handed him his card. Dr. Char-

cot then jumped up, all attention, and spent another half hour going over the case.

Dr. Mitchell was simple in his manners and disliked anyone's cringing to greatness. He said that he had frequently gone into stores and had clerks to wait upon him indifferently, but when he gave his name and address for the purchase to be sent, they changed their demeanor entirely and wished to show him everything in the place. He said he always felt like kicking a man who did things of this sort. I suspect many a clerk has received a good lesson from him.

Dr. Mitchell lived well and was always fond of a good meal. He told me about being in Richmond on one occasion, and staying at the old Exchange Hotel after its better days were over. His wife was with him and they simply could not eat the fare. They were invited to dinner by Dr. Hunter McGuire and he and Mrs. Mitchell ate very heartily. On several occasions I have heard him speak of this meal as

one of the most enjoyable of which he had ever partaken.

He took a great interest in things in Virginia and not infrequently visited Richmond. He once visited Westmoreland County on a yachting trip and took occasion to look up the homes of the Washingtons and Lees. Upon his return he took up the matter of the condition of the graves of these families with the proper authorities and had them put in much better repair. There was hardly a place which he visited which did not profit in one respect or another by some suggestion or at times even by more substantial aid.

The instance related in "Westways" of John Penhallow chasing in a skirmish a disarmed Confederate Colonel to capture him, being too honorable to shoot a disarmed man, and of the Colonel after a hard ride turning as he entered some woods and telling Pennhallow to stop, and calling to him that it was useless for him to follow as there were 10,000 Confederates a few

hundred yards on the other side of the woods, thus saving each other's lives, was a true story and happened to one of Dr. Mitchell's brothers. The Confederate thanked him for sparing his life and Col. Mitchell thanked the Confederate for keeping him from death or capture. They waved their hats to each other and went their separate ways. These two colonels met years afterwards at a dinner in Chicago. Dr. Mitchell finished this anecdote by saying that many such instances of gallantry occurred during the war and that they shed happy rays of light upon that terrible and gloomy conflict.

Apropos of Dr. Mitchell's study of snake venoms, a friend of his told me the following. Someone once sent him a large rattler from Arizona in a wooden box. This was shipped to his office instead of to the laboratory, and Dr. Mitchell let it stay in his office over night to be taken out to the laboratory in the morning. The rattler was six feet long and that night while Dr. Mitchell was reading it got out of the box

without his notice, and climbed up the back of his chair and put its head over Dr. Mitchell's shoulder. The Doctor then noticed it and with rare presence of mind sat still while the snake moved its head back and forth, fascinated by the light of the lamp. The snake touched the lamp globe and this being hot made it mad, and it drew up further and turned its head to Dr. Mitchell's face. They watched each other. Dr. Mitchell slowly and cautiously reached out his hand for a large metal paper-cutter which was on his desk, watching the snake all the time. When he reached it, with a sudden twist of this improvised weapon he struck the snake on the neck, knocking it to the floor, and he escaped from the room. Afterwards the snake was recaptured with a net.

Dr. Mitchell once said to me that he regretted the impression had gotten out in some circles that he was more interested in literature and novel writing than in medicine. He said that literary pursuits were interesting, of course, but

unimportant when compared with medicine, and that he was much more interested in his profession than in anything else.

Dr. Mitchell seemed to have the faculty of a double mental grasp. He could read between the lines and still comprehend the lines. This made him readily understand both what people appeared to be and what they really were. He was hard to deceive.

It was a revelation and a source of constant information to make rounds with him. He had a way of imparting his knowledge succinctly and vividly so that even his minor comments were impressed upon one's mind. Patients consulted him not only from all over the United States, but many from abroad. His observation was acute and he had the knack of arriving at the main clue to a case very quickly. This faculty, however, never precluded a thorough and complete examination. A patient had an attack while waiting on one of the clinic benches one afternoon. A clinical assistant saw her and laid

her out on the bench and made a cursory examination. The attack was thought to be an ordinary hysterical seizure. About this time Dr. Mitchell came in and asked what was the matter with the girl. He was told that she simply had an hysterical attack. He went over to her, rapidly examined her reflexes, asked a few questions of her companion and sent for the superintendent to take her up-stairs and admit her to a bed, and turning to the assistant, said: "You are entirely wrong. This woman is in the last stages of brain tumor, and will die before morning." The various assistants around could hardly believe such a grave prognosis. After the patient was put to bed, she was thoroughly examined and the diagnosis confirmed, and she died during the night.

Everything physiological was of special interest to Dr. Mitchell and he contributed accurate and valuable knowledge to such subjects as the origin of cat and other animal phobias, blood corpuscle conformation in various animals, and

to the hereditary results of intermarriage with relations. I have heard him say, and I think he has published somewhere, that in his observation the marrying of first cousins rarely produced harmful results if the man resembled one branch of the family and the girl the other, but that the children showed more marked defects when such was not the case.

At a dinner party at Dr. John Mitchell's one night, Dr. Weir Mitchell and Dr. Chatham, Professor of Physiology at the University of Pennsylvania, began to discuss the character of blood corpuscles of different animals. All other conversation was suspended while these two learned men discussed this subject and showed themselves equally familiar with the blood of rabbits, chickens, lions, tigers, etc., as with human blood.

An interesting story in this connection is told of Dr. Mitchell. It seems that years ago a certain gentleman 'phoned for the police and said that he was attacked by robbers and that

he had wounded one of them, and showed blood on his premises in evidence of the conflict. No other trace of burglars was found and the attack attracted considerable attention in the newspapers. Within a year the same thing occurred. Again there was considerable publicity but the robbers were not found. Within another year a third attack was reported and this time it was said that the bloody print of the robber's hand was left on the back-yard fence. The police were much puzzled and the papers full of the story. Dr. Mitchell, of his own initiative, quietly went to the premises, scraped some of the bloody print off, took it home and examined it under the microscope. He easily recognized that it was chicken blood and not human blood, and notified the police, telling them to search the premises for the chicken. This was done and the mutilated fowl found in the basement. No other assaults were reported.

When I first went to Philadelphia, Dr. Mitchell told me humorously that he wanted to ex-

tend to me the greatest courtesy that a Philadelphian could offer a stranger, and that was a seat in his pew at St. Stephen's Church.

Dr. Mitchell was fond of entertaining and he and Mrs. Mitchell made as charming host and hostess as I have ever seen. At his table were served the most delicious delicacies and the rarest wines, while good cheer and culture pervaded the atmosphere. His service was elaborate and his butlers always in uniform. The appointments of his dining-room were perfect and the striking portrait of himself by Sargent hung in this room. After dinner it was his custom to take the gentlemen of the party into his private office, where the conversation would become general.

A few remarks about this office will not be amiss. Every room which we enter creates an impression of its own, and this room created a variety of impressions, culminating in the general knowledge that here you were in the "sanctum sanctotum" of both a great literary and

scientific man. In the grate in due season blazed an attractive wood fire. The furniture was handsome and fitting, and carpets, hangings and walls all in harmony. The desk set was of silver, heavy and handsome, and on the desk, without too much regard or too much disregard for neatness and arrangement, were laid manuscripts, books, papers, magazines, and one or two instruments for special examination of patients. It was sometimes ornamented with a vase and a few flowers. On the wall hung a magnificent life-size portrait of Sir William Harvie, and paintings, etchings, engravings and framed letters, each with some peculiar interest of its own. On a stand by the window in a glass-covered case was a death mask of Dante. Books, many of them most rare and valuable, filled the book-shelves, and souvenirs and curios were here and there. One of these struck me particularly. It was a brass boat-plate with the name "Lord Byron" on it. I asked him the history of this and he told me that as a young

man he once went with his father to England. At this time especially he was a great admirer of Byron, and while in England they chanced to visit some of Byron's relatives. In the drawing-room he noticed this brass plate and was told by one of the young girls of the house that it was the boat-plate from Byron's gondola. As they stood looking at it Dr. Mitchell said to his father that he would rather have that souvenir of Byron than anything he had seen in England, whereupon the old Doctor said to him: "Weir, you may achieve success and fame, but every man has his limitations and here is something, a small thing in a way, which no matter how much you desire it you can never obtain." The incident was forgotten. On Dr. Mitchell's seventy-fifth birthday the papers in this country and abroad published an announcement of it with a sketch of his career. The young girl, now an old lady, who happened to hear this conversation between Dr. Mitchell and his father, remembered it and sent him the

gondola plate with a letter, saying that he had achieved so many things that she wished to make this particular desire, expressed in his youth, complete.

No doubt someone will write a complete biography of Dr. Mitchell. These little recollections, however, are interesting as everything about a great man is of interest. Gathered here and there, they are told so as to throw side lights upon the man as I knew him.

We now approach the close of this brief sketch. Dr. Mitchell was active, mentally and physically, up to a week before his death, attending to his office practice, paying outside visits and making rounds in the hospital. He caught a cold to which he paid but little attention. Influenza set in and after a week's illness he died, being conscious to the end, on the fourth day of January, 1914. His funeral was held in St. Stephen's Church. The services were marked by their simplicity. Men of prominence from different parts of the country went to pay

their last respects. Although the church was crowded to the doors with eminent physicians, authors, philanthropists, public men and women and nurses who had worked under him, a remark of his friend, Dr. William J. Taylor, to me during the services seemed to me an extremely fitting comment upon a wonderfully useful life. He said: "In all this vast congregation, I do not believe I see a person whom in one way or another Dr. Mitchell has not personally aided or encouraged in work or ambition."

This fitting verse was written by Richard J. Beamish and appeared in the Philadelphia Press a few days after his death:

THE USEFUL LIFE

The long, lean hands are folded and the rest

He earned lies sweet upon him; all the wise
Sane life, the helpful word, the ready jest

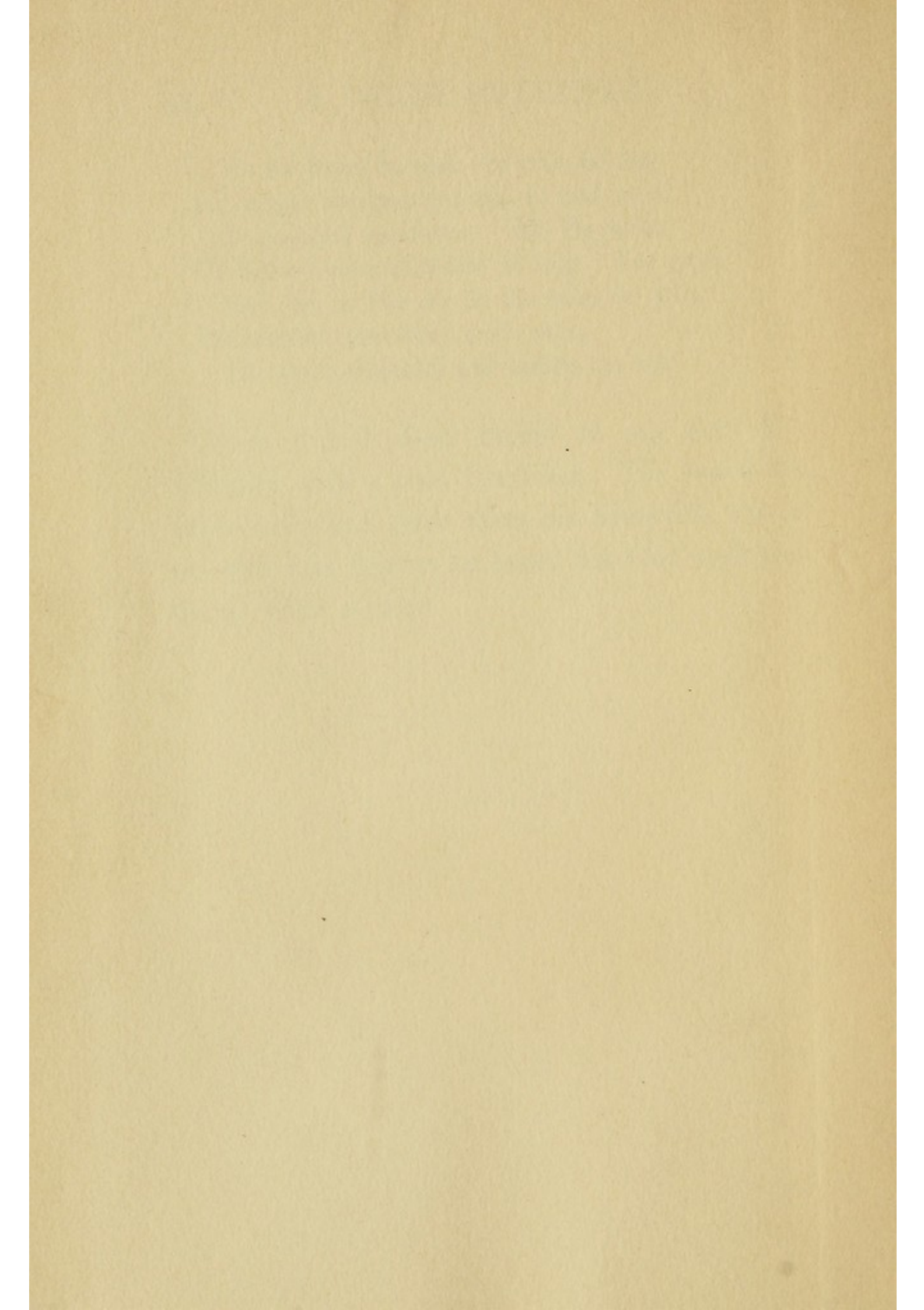
Departed with the light from his kind eyes.
Emancipated from all need of care,

He still took cares upon him for the joy
Of doing. "Make me useful," was his prayer.

To his heart he took the crippled boy.
He taught the tortured soul to find relief
In peaceful relaxation. All the wells
Of history were plumbed by him. The grief
And joy of life are in the tales he tells.
Philosopher, physician, poet, sage,
His work ennobles and uplifts the age.

With this I close except to say that Dr.
Mitchell was a true Christian. He loved his
fellow-men and gave them his life-work, but in
no whit less degree he loved his God and ren-
dered Him service.







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