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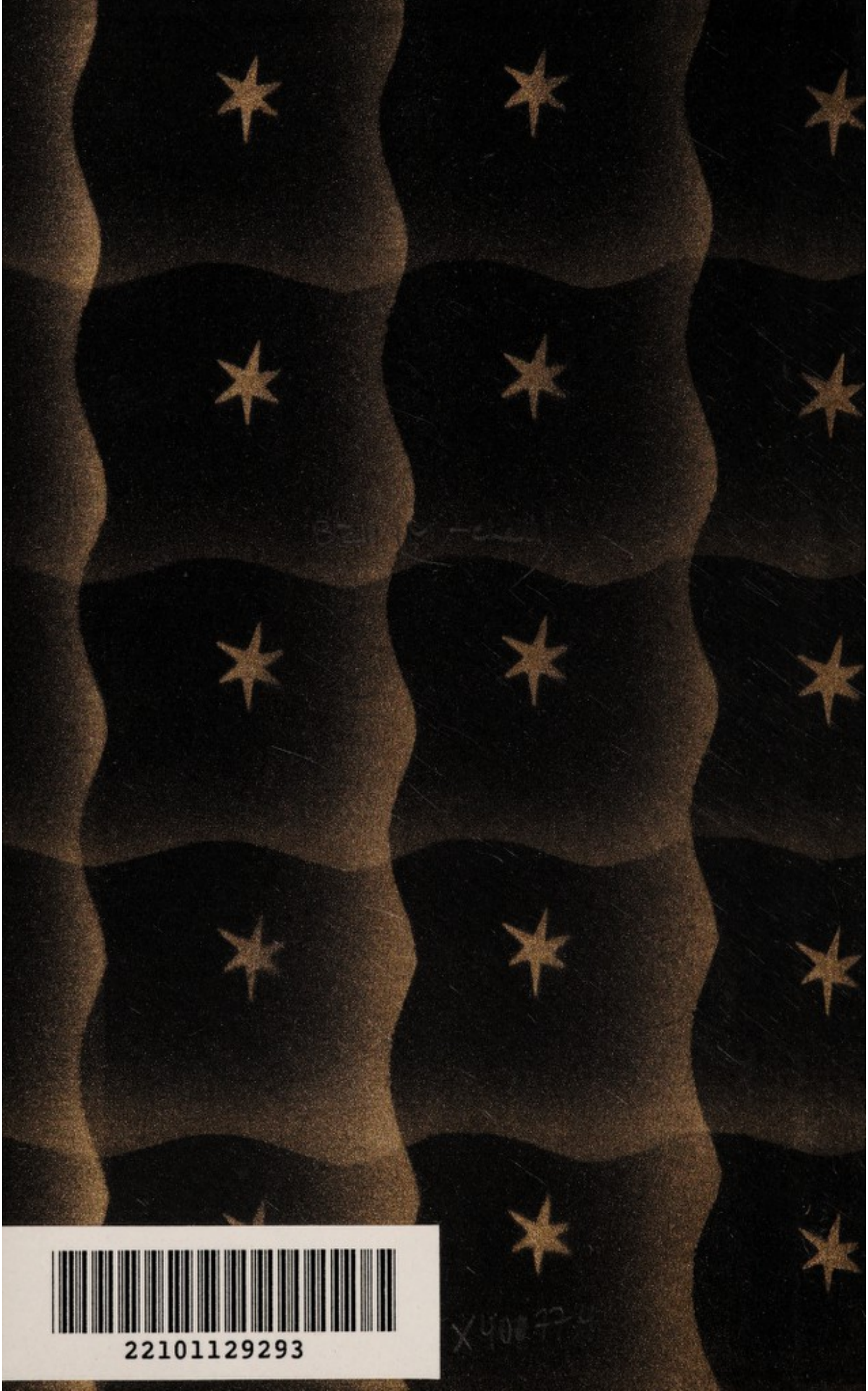
WEIR MITCHELL

HIS LIFE AND LETTERS



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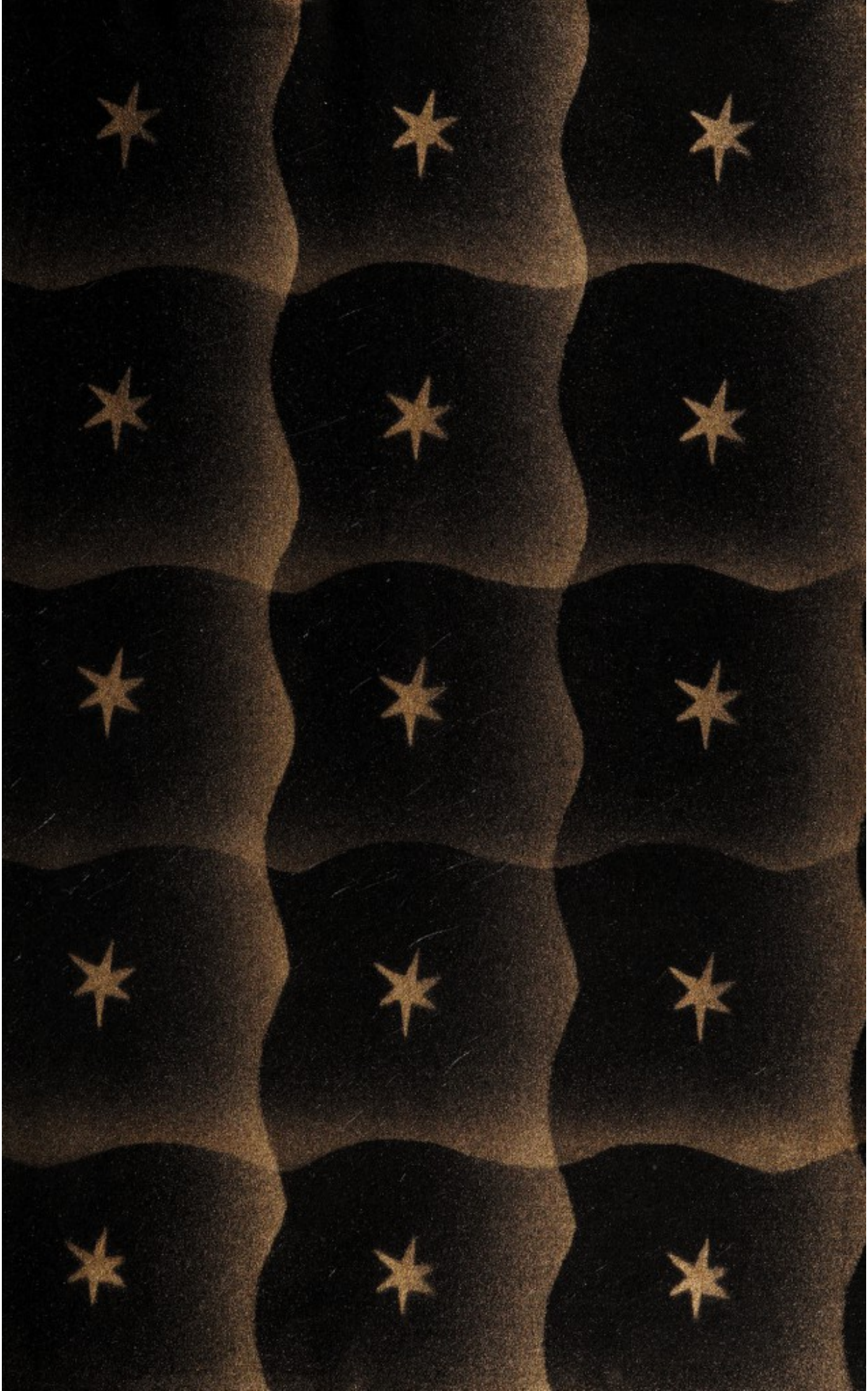

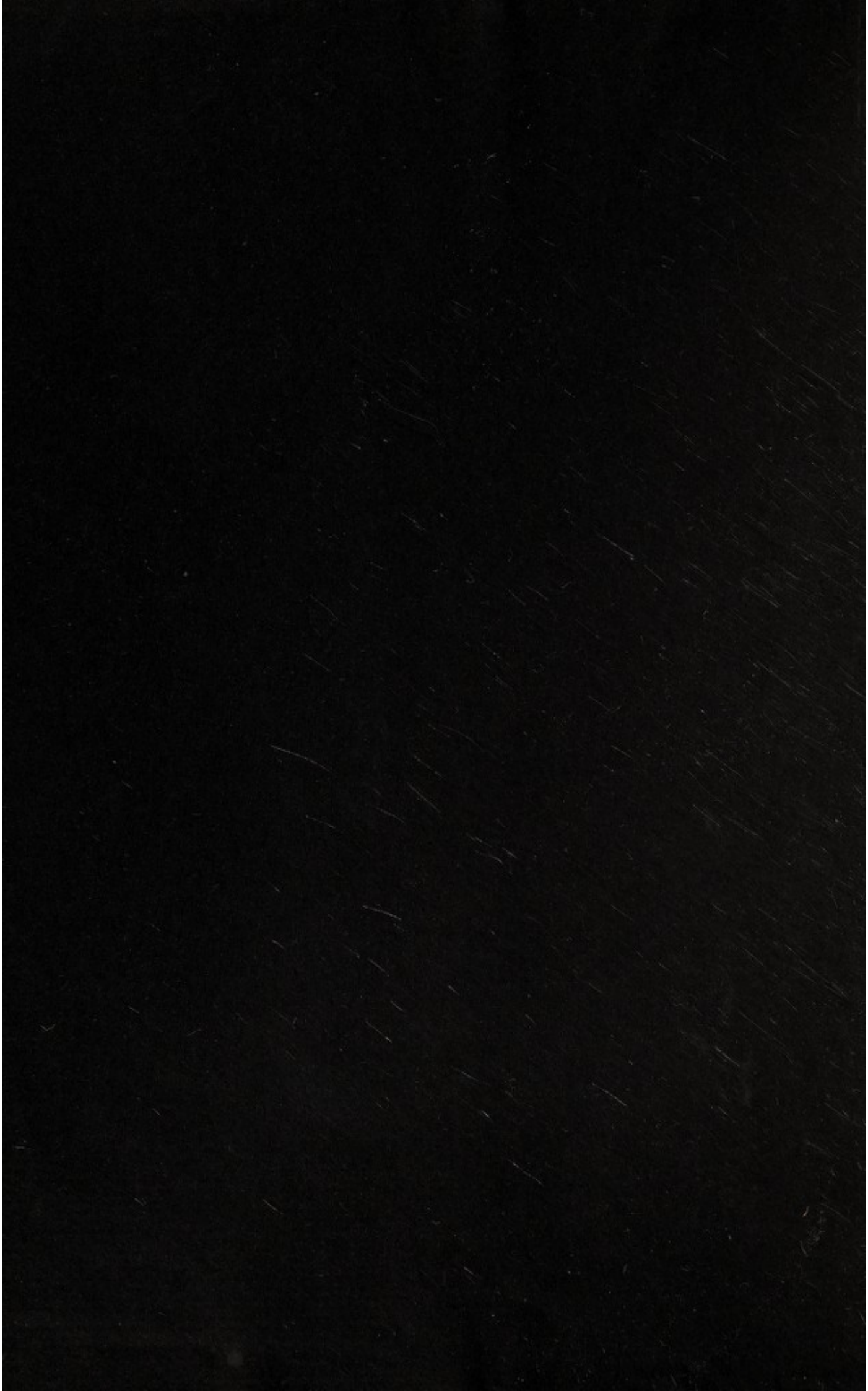

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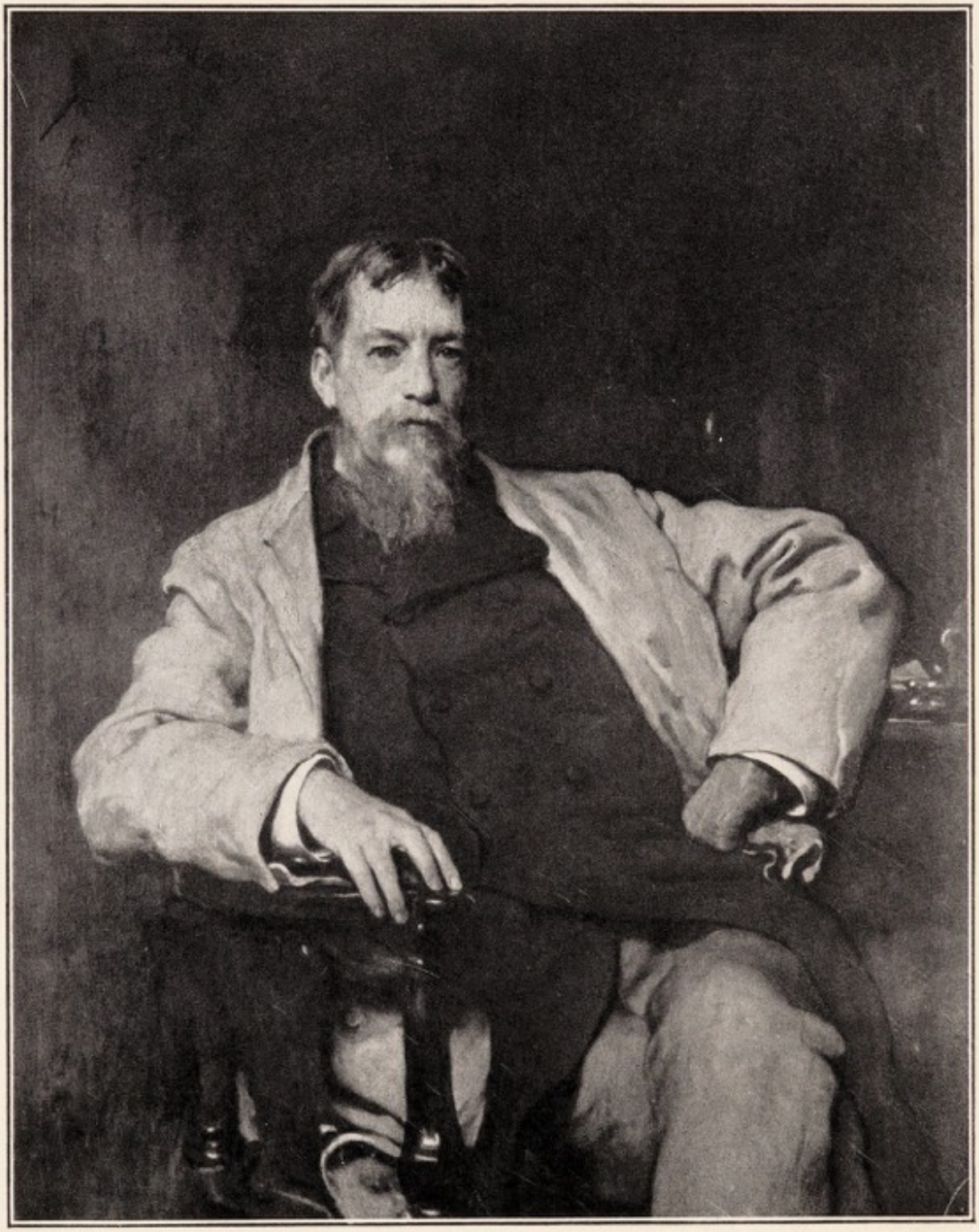

The Holl portrait of Dr. S. Weir Mitchell

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WEIR MITCHELL

HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

BY

ANNA ROBESON BURR

DUFFIELD & COMPANY
NEW YORK CITY
1929

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"This cheerful laborer, drawing his motive and his plan from his own breast, tasked himself with stints for a giant and without relaxation or rest except by alternating his pursuits, worked on for eighty years with the steadiness of his first zeal."

Representative Men.

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Introductory Note

DR. WEIR MITCHELL left among his papers the fragments of an Autobiography which it was the original intention of the present writer to use as written. Close examination showed them to be inaccurate as to date and in many parts sketchy and unfinished. "My memory for dates," says the doctor frankly, "is feeble and being a sensitive man I am glad that it is so." The plan, therefore, was changed to include only certain sections of the Autobiography—in particular those relating to childhood and youth—condensing others and supplementing them with letters. Thus the method and manner of this book were in a sense predetermined by the character and career of the subject, stated in his own words and by the effect he produced upon his world.

His was a life which could not, without grave injustice, be set down in day by day annals, for his occupations formed but a small part of that he truly was; while his own estimate of what he set out to accomplish, as well as his own summary of what he did accomplish, were exceedingly important. Moreover his profession, exacting an equal proficiency in art as in science, tended to develop the personality which became so large a factor in Dr. Mitchell's success, a personality so definite and highly colored as still to be vividly remembered.

To allow the man to reveal himself has been therefore the writer's first aim, a second was to try and see his figure by means of the memory of others. In this, she has been

wonderfully helped, both by the written tributes and memorials—far too many to quote—and by the spoken reminiscences given her so freely and kindly by his friends and colleagues. Warm thanks is due them; due also is her acknowledgment that she invariably found what she felt about Dr. Mitchell had been said for her—and much better said—by some distinguished member of the medical profession!

Every human being who is worth it, lives a second life after the first is ended, in the hearts of his friends. Here Dr. Mitchell still exists and whatever of value is in this book has come from these affectionate memories. If the writer can succeed in bringing old days to mind or in making this figure perhaps, once more walk the familiar streets, she will be glad that she too has looked back upon that past.

WEIR MITCHELL
His Life and Letters

I

"Good master, you and I were born
In tea-cup days of hoop and hood,
And when the silver cue hung down
And toasts were drunk, and wine was good."
To George Bancroft.

AT the time of the War of 1812, a tall, ruddy, young gentleman, with an open blue gaze and most engaging manners, was traveling by stage from Ayr to Edinburgh in Scotland. The night was cold and stormy, the coach was full and when a poor woman with a baby sought an inside place, none was to be had. So the young gentleman, who we like to know was born in the United States, insisted on giving her his seat and on spending the night, warmed no doubt by the glow of his kind act, on top of the stage. Next morning, the woman having alighted at her destination, he resumed his place and fell into talk with a fellow-passenger, an elderly man who praised him, his son writes, "for what did not seem to the young American more than such kind courtesy as any woman had a right to expect." The youth apparently had no suspicion as to the identity of this new acquaintance, whose strong, fine face, with the long upper lip and the big eyes was not yet familiar to the whole United Kingdom, although legends of encountering him at inns as a Stout Gentleman, or walking the hills with his plaid and his dogs, were even then circulating among an eager public. We can see the youth, blushing with surprise and pleasure,

as the other said to him "Come and see me," and put into his hand the card of Walter Scott.

From what we know of the hero of this adventure, we are confident that he felt as much rewarded by the invitation as ever was Prince Giglio by the Fairy Blackstick. The name of our Prince Giglio was John Kearsley Mitchell. He was of Scots parentage as well as of Scots education, for his father Alexander Mitchell, born in 1766, had emigrated to Virginia from Ayrshire, somewhere between 1786 and 1789. There he married Elizabeth Kearsley, of a Pennsylvania family, also settled at Shepherdstown, Va., and there he practiced medicine for the short span of life that was left him.

Most Americans are ardent genealogists—seeking out the links that bind them to the older countries and Dr. Weir Mitchell's love of history heightened this natural interest, so that to the end of his life we find him pursuing the Kearsleys and the Mitchells of Ayr through a maze of parish registers and private letters. A few of these researches are needful to the study of his personality, for the character of his forebears greatly serves to illuminate his own.

The Ayrshire Mitchells were prosperous farming folk. One John Mitchell, father of that Alexander who settled in Virginia, was Collector of Excise at Dumfries. Legend has it that he was the friend of Burns, loaned him money and enjoyed the fame of having Burns dedicate to him the poem "The De'ils awa' wi' the Excise Man." Unfortunately, several other John Mitchells lay claim to the distinction, which the biographer cannot authoritatively confirm as a fact, while yet acknowledging its fitness. Love of poetry and sympathy

with poets are as definite a trait of the Mitchell family as their connection with the medical profession. Dr. Weir writes of his father. . . . "He became a physician, the sixth in two generations. . . . Since then I have trodden the same path and my son after me, eight in all."

There is an interesting letter from that Alexander Mitchell, who became the first American of the clan, describing his life in Virginia and incidentally mentioning the birth of his son, little John Kearsley.

Alexander Mitchell to his Mother

Shepherdstown, 11/28/1793.

"My mind much agitated since I reached America, begins to resume its former tranquility on the approaching prospect of rendering that assistance to my dear Father which I so justly owe him and which my inability to comply with has robb'd me of quiet for many years; my situation here is now on such a footing as will I trust enable me to supply all your wants and remove all your difficulties in a short time. I wrote you some time ago an account of my family, but I am doubtful (from the number of French privateers on this coast & from which few British vessels escape) of its having reached you. On the 17th of last May, my wife was delivered of a fine boy, which had very baneful effects on her constitution. Indeed I had lost all hopes of recovery. However, her health is now greatly restored, but she has not been able to suckle her child. It would surprise you to see the dear child sucking a negro, the only alternative we had as no white nurse could be got. . . . Mr. John Kearsley, my wife's father, has lately erected a great Tann yard which he

will carry on extensively and to much profit. He still continues in the mercantile line and I think will make a great fortune in a few years which he will divide equally among his children at his death. The family is very affectionate. . . . Mrs. Kearsley is one of the finest women I ever knew. They are very fond of John; that is the name of your grandson, in compliment to my dear Father and in remembrance of my brother.

"I have lately commenced farming, which I find profitable and no interruption to my profession, and should a war take place bt. Britain and America will be of great advantage to me. The yellow fever which raged in Philadelphia for some months past with all the violence of a Constantinople plague, is now almost entirely vanished; what number have fallen victims to its resistless fury is not yet ascertained, but we hear from six to seven thousand. . . ."

The writer's fears for his wife's health were justified. She died in 1797 and Alexander Mitchell remarried to live but a few years longer, dying in his thirty-sixth year. "All his Estate, books, silver, etc., was placed by his Executor, one Caldwell, clerk of the Supreme Court, in the Court Room chambers at Washington, which was burned by the British in 1812."

Thus tragically orphaned, little John Kearsley was placed in the charge of his maternal grandmother, since his father's second wife had a child of her own to care for. In a letter, he speaks of himself as "wandering from protector to protector," so we know the grandmother soon died and the little boy was shipped back to his father's people in Scotland. He

cannot have been more than twelve or thirteen when he set out on that long journey. An uncle William, his father's brother, met the ship at Leith and took the child home. It must have been a tremendous experience for the lad, but always he knew how to make friends. At Ayr he attended the Academy, an ancient and honorable school, and won prizes and medals four years in succession, 1807-'08-'09-'10, in French, Greek, Latin, Mathematics, Philosophy and Bookkeeping.

"During these years," we are told, "he roamed about Ayrshire and took part in grim stone battles with the town boys, until, a strong, handsome lad of seventeen, he was sent to Edinburgh with a letter of introduction from the rector of the Academy to the well known Francis Jeffries. While taking courses at the University, he became, despite his youth, a social favorite. The only American in Edinburgh, he remained there of necessity during the War of 1812.

"Among those who befriended the young stranger were Jeffries, the brothers Smith of the 'Rejected Addresses' and Mrs. Grant of Laggan. One of his most cherished recollections was of the 'Ettrick Shepherd' Hogg, who taught him the many Scotch songs with which his admirable tenor voice used to delight my childhood. It was then the best society of Great Britain, and in it he cultivated the social graces which made him in later days a favored guest and ever welcome comrade.

"He wandered far and wide afoot in Scotland, twice with Hogg, knew well its tongue and made friends wherever he went. At last he resolved to remain in Edinburgh and entered the office of a writer to the Signet. The monotony of

a clerkly life soon ended his desire to become a lawyer, and nothing was left of its training except the beautifully legible writing his office work had taught him. Next, excited by the wonderful charm of the Kembles, he went to see John Kemble, and, being strenuously counseled against becoming an actor, gave up all idea of the stage."

In that fateful year of 1814, which marked the abdication of Napoleon, as well as the end of the War of 1812, John Kearsley Mitchell returned to his birthplace. When he landed he was almost penniless, for nothing was left of his small property but two or three negro slaves, whose rental had helped pay his college fees in Edinburgh. It is characteristic that he very soon set them free, and with all that courage, industry and hopefulness which dominated his nature, he decided to be a physician, as his father before him. A Kearsley kinsman provided the funds and in 1815, we find the youth studying at the University of Pennsylvania.

John Kearsley Mitchell was bound to make friends and the hospitable town which was now his home, gave him a warm welcome. Good-looking, energetic and extremely intelligent, he had a charm of manner that never left him. Always he liked people, shone in society, enjoyed the good things of life and moreover knew what these were.

The Autobiography thus describes him:

"I have a miniature of him in his first suit of red boy clothes. The hair, which too is red, became in time a deep chestnut brown and never grew gray. His eyes were clear *bleu de Saxe*, his face rosy, and he never knew the need of a dentist. He was a strongly built man six feet tall, a great

shot, skilful in all games and an ever gay and resourceful companion. He lives in my memory as a model of manly beauty, of perfect courtesy, quick to resent the least imputation upon his honor, believing that there was only one way to settle serious difficulties among gentlemen."

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century a degree was not the absolute pre-requisite to medical practice. Some students found a year or two of study sufficient, nor need the years be continuous. Thus, although John Kearsley graduated in 1819, presenting a thesis entitled "Proximate Causes of Febrile Reaction," yet he was absent during 1817-1818, on the first of his four voyages to China. Travel was no new experience to this young man and a China voyage was very profitable financially.

His teachers ever spoke highly of him and during these years he owed much to the help of Mr. John Lisle and of Dr. Chapman "for whom he always retained a loyal affection."

"It was the custom of physicians at that time to take students into their offices, but Dr. Chapman did not do so, recommending my father instead to a Quaker physician, Dr. Griffiths, then in large practice.

"While studying medicine and afterward, my father went to China four times, once with Captain Edward Donaldson, for whom he later named a son, and once with Captain Israel Barr. During these long voyages my father kept himself busy making a beautifully written-out dictionary of quotations, using the first edition of Johnson's poets. Thus was won an intimate knowledge of the poets, but to the last,

the men since Byron and Campbell were for him unreadable."

Strong literary inclinations and love of reading had always distinguished him.

"Poetry," he writes to his friend, Henry Reed, in 1841, "has been from my childhood my favorite amusement and its authors my companions and friends. No recreation is to me so restorative as the perusal of some beautiful verses and no task so agreeable as the composition of some little song or ode."

In his flowing Italian script, as if etched in brown on the linen pages of his Chinese blank-books, we can still read his favorite passages, all classified alphabetically under Avarice or Ambition, Love or Religion. A special group of references to medicine in literature shows an active and allusive mind. Naturally the Eighteenth Century predominates and its influence is marked on his own stately style. He could not read or admire the poetry since Byron any more than his son, Dr. Weir, could read or admire Henry James. Indeed, there is much in his letters and in the Chinese journals which reminds one of the author of "Hugh Wynne." The son's talents are seen to be a direct, if heightened, inheritance and show Dr. John Kearsley Mitchell to be the first of that pair of poet-physicians.

The Autobiography, from which we have so freely quoted, gives certain incidents of his travels:

"At St. Helena on one of these voyages, Dr. O'Meara gave him a lock of Napoleon's hair. Their ship, the Garnicliff, came near to an English frigate and, hailing, said they were short of water and wished therefore to land. Being

roughly refused, Barr, the mate, at my father's request, called out, 'How is the Emperor?' The officer replied, 'We don't know any emperor.' 'Ask,' said my father, 'how General Bonaparte is.' Barr did so. 'Oh,' cried the officer, 'he has taken a frolic in the water. We don't bother about him.' (There was then a report current that he had drowned himself.) Barr, a short-tempered man, shouted, 'By God—! It isn't the first Frolic * that's been taken in the water!' "

From his first voyage, John Kearsley returned to his medical studies more energetic than ever. He might not have decided to make a second, but for the usual great event in a young man's life. He fell deeply in love with Miss Sarah Matilda Henry, became engaged to her and was as much occupied by the circumstance as one might expect of a nature so ardent. The young lady was the daughter of Alexander Henry, a prosperous merchant, who lived in a fine house at Sixth and Market Streets and had his own ideas about a future son-in-law. Mr. Henry was a man of competency, dignity and old-fashioned views. There does not seem to have been any personal objection to the match at any time, but a certain doubt regarding the situation of a young medical practitioner without means or definite prospects. Full weight of parental authority was brought to bear on the affair; the young people were forbidden to think of an engagement; and it is characteristic of the period, that although they felt the separation deeply, neither John nor Matilda dreamed of rebellion. The young man did complain, as he put it, that "The open communication of an

* *The Frolic* was an English vessel captured by us during the War of 1812.

honorable sentiment was denied us and we were compelled to hold our epistolary converse by devious channels"; but this prohibition soon gave way to a permission, at least, of letters.

More than ever, the China trip became necessary, and so John Kearsley set sail once more, miserable yet hopeful, on a five months' voyage across the globe. With his attractive combination of personal sweetness and mental activity—and led, no doubt, by that unfailing literary instinct—he set to work to solace himself by composing poems to Miss S. M. Henry and with the ever-delightful task of being epistolary guide and pedagogue to the Beloved's obedient mind.

The correspondence of John and Matilda from 1819 till their marriage in 1822, covering two long periods of separation, is one of those delightful discoveries which occasionally though not often, reward the biographer. If we pass the verses with their echo of Scott and Moore, yet we see how faithfully they reflect the cheerfulness, the warmth and glowing spirit of the young man. His Diary witnesses how steadfastly he thinks of his Matilda, in how many ways he keeps busy. He invents a wardrobe trunk, sketches a water-spout, studies the classification of marine specimens, conjugates Malay verbs and notes how best to keep food fresh at sea. All this is very like his son, Dr. Weir. Approaching China, John Kearsley observes: "Here no associations of moral sublimity wake the eye of Fancy or thrill the heart of sensibility," and we are in another age as we read of his exile.

He longs to hear from Matilda, chiding her gently when she misses the packet, but on the whole he is optimistic. There is much to write, for he is concerned she should be-

come as literary in her tastes as he is himself and most of his letters are occupied with this subject.

Dr. J. K. M. to S. M. H. 1819.

"I hope my dear Matilda will not deem it obtrusive in me to accompany the list of books, made at her request, with a few observations upon the best method of deriving advantage from reading. . . . Now as English literature is a field wide enough to occupy all the leisure hours of a woman who does not neglect her domestic concerns, and is also the more valuable as it affords conversation suited to the great mass of one's acquaintance; I do not think that your time can be better employed than in acquiring as thorough a knowledge as possible of the best authors of your own language, and by a familiar intercourse with the greatest minds both of your own and preceding ages, to fix and establish your opinions upon the great points of morality and religion.

"After the history of the world to which we are journeying, the history of the world in which we journey demands our greatest attention. . . . During your scriptural reading you will become acquainted with a part of the history of the ancient world, and in the interesting work of *Rollin* you will find the best account of the remainder. I feel much at a loss to direct you to a good author for an account of the decline and fall of the great Roman Empire. The otherwise delightful work of Gibbon, does not appear to me to be favorable to the religion we profess, and I dread to expose you to the insidious innuendos of apparent impartiality and affected candour. But, with these cautions and the firm hold which I hope religion will have upon your mind, you may

venture to glance over the pages of Gibbon. . . . As it is very desirable that she who may expect to have the direction of the minds of others, should profess a competent knowledge of human nature, and as it is also desirable that this knowledge should be attained without exposure, I think these objects can be accomplished but by a thorough acquaintance with the works of our immortal Shakespeare. . . . Before I conclude, permit me to point out to you the means best calculated to render your reading profitable. . . . You ought to accustom yourself to reason upon your opinions and to know why you are pleased or displeased with any passage or author. . . . You ought also to carefully distinguish between a sentiment and its garb, nor judge of thought, as some women do of men, by those external decorations which add nothing to intrinsic excellence. . . .

"For my part I have again resumed my studies with a determination to distinguish myself that I may the sooner claim the promise of your father, and lead my Matilda to the Blessed ordinance which will unite us forever. I cannot forbear at times to murmur at the sentence of separation; but hope still holds her golden visions up to check despondency and to point to happier hours. They are all associated with your image. . . . I feel as if I were entering upon forbidden ground and to secure myself from all hazard of breaking my promise, let me assure you that I am

Entirely yours,"

Few women could have resisted the flattery of such exhaustive attention, added to so high an opinion of their mental powers and Matilda Henry was not one of them. Her

nature, if less intense, was sweet and steadfast; she shows a playfulness which her concentrated young lover lacks, but she takes him and his counsel as seriously as he could wish. We are not told what impression was made upon her by Paley's Evidences or Blair's Lectures, and we feel fairly sure that she took no harm when she "ventured to glance over the pages of Gibbon." We do know she "perused" Hazlitt's lectures "with great pleasure" and thought Coelebs "a truly elegant novel." Her letters themselves are not very literary. As they lie before us, in that round, clear script which she bequeathed her distinguished son, they show quickness, courage, patience and some humor. The note paper which she dedicated to "Dr. John Mitchell, Canton," bears the delicate flavor of the eighteenth century; it is edged with seagreen and embossed with a French motto: "Sans armes comme l'innocence, Sans ailes comme la constance, Tel fut l'amour au siècle d'or——" and so on.

When she receives the verses signed *"Mariner"* she signs her own replies *"Pertinacity"* or *"Stoic."* At the beginning, we find her a little shyly addressing her "dear and inestimable friend," exhorting him to courage; but he soon becomes "My dearest John" and even "Best Beloved."

"Be not mortified, my friend," she writes, "at my displaying so much weakness at the moment of parting with you—it is true I tried very hard to suppress my feelings, but to no purpose. I must confess I should call myself a brute if I had not felt greatly distressed. . . . If I had parted in calmness at the moment, I must have banished thought, and

in that I had banished one of the points of difference between me and a brute."

Incidentally, she gives a picture of her life at home and tries with vivacity and gayety to keep up the spirits of the exile. She rallies her dear John on his friends in Philadelphia and upon his supposed interest in the Chinese ladies.

Philadelphia, November 7, 1820.

"Now, my dear John, I would have you summon to your aid all the fortitude in your profession, to bear a stroke sudden and unexpected, another of your friends is about to be married—one whom you have been accused of viewing with a partial eye, and one in whom I know you felt an uncommon interest—you will readily recognize in this sketch your inestimable friend and paragon of perfection Miss F——r of Spruce Street."

Philadelphia, November 20, 1820.

"Your *friend* Samuel G——n left home yesterday for the western country, I sincerely wish he would never return—he was never a very great favorite of mine, but of late I dislike him more than ever—I can never respect a man who would allow himself to take so many liberties with the female sex."

Philadelphia, January 1, 1821.

"On Christmas day our family were all collected together. . . . Your name was frequently mentioned, and at dinner your health was drank more than once,—it is not often

that I taste wine, but when solicited to drink your health and safe return, I could not refuse."

Philadelphia, April 1, 1821.

"I joined a party a few days ago to walk out to Pratt's place—it consisted of five ladies and the same number of gentlemen—your Cousin John was polite enough to bring out a gig for me, and he and I rode home. . . . N. Lisle was of our party and indeed she afforded us a great deal of amusement—she has fallen desperately in love with a young physician who happened to be one of the number, and I believe she never let go his arm the whole afternoon, thus affording us a fine subject for diversion."

Philadelphia, May 12, 1821.

"I would give something for such a sympathetic needle and dial plate, as is mentioned in the Spectator, that we might be able to correspond without being interrupted by distance—but perhaps I am better without it for I should hardly attend to anything else, and we have already what is more valuable, a sympathy of mind and affection."

Evansburg, January 1, 1821.

Mary is very anxious to know how many setts of ruffles you have soiled and rumpled for the Chinese ladies."

From certain sentences, it would seem that time had greatly modified Mr. Alexander Henry's attitude toward the match, for in one dated June 14, 1821, Matilda looks forward to "the many walks and rides which I hoped we

should take during the pleasant month of September" and fears that her John will not return "till the winter setts in and then," she adds, "you will be so much engaged with parties, that I shall but seldom see you and perhaps only for a moment at a time. . . . We have had lovely moonlight evenings . . . and really I enjoy them very much. I walk the piazza for an hour at a time and whilst inhaling the fragrance of the honey-suckle, jessamine and sweet-briar, I think of my beloved John and fancy him walking the deck counting the weeks and days that must elapse ere his Matilda clasps him to her heart."

Yet, when he does arrive, there is still a barrier to break down. This note was probably written sometime during the winter of 1821-22.

"My delight at again breathing the same air with my heart's idol is cruelly broken in upon by the difficulty of seeing her. . . . If no better mode occurs to you of meeting, you will find me between Eighth and Ninth in Chestnut Street on the North Side just after dark. Let no one know of our meeting before I see you as it might have an effect injurious to some plans I shall then lay before you."

What the plans were it is not hard to guess; theirs was a tried constancy and affection and Matilda's father probably no longer even wished to oppose them. He became, as a matter-of-fact, good friends with his son-in-law, who attended him with skill and affection during his various illnesses. John Mitchell had evidently convinced Matilda's family that he had the qualities and the will for a successful

physician and should not long need their—nor anyone else's, backing. Be this as it may, in 1822, John and Matilda were married and went to live at 119 So. Fifth Street, which was then considered rather far up-town in Philadelphia. Under this address we find Dr. John K. Mitchell's name first listed in the Medical Directory in 1824, while two years later, he had accepted the Chair of Chemistry in the Philadelphia Medical Institute. In the 5th Street house were born the first three of his nine children, Alexander Henry in 1823, Elizabeth in 1825 and on February 15, 1829, a second son, named for a brother-in-law of his mother's, Silas Weir.

II

"There are good reasons why the children of a numerous family should excel. The interdiscipline of large sets of children is valuable: it is fine training for a larger world."

Dr. North.

BEFORE we hear what the Autobiographer has to tell us of his happy boyhood, we must follow a little further those two lives which from now on sink into the background of this chronicle. It is pleasant to record that the young doctor and his wife do not lose their attractiveness once they settle down to the business of family life. Their letters long retain that freshness of feeling which in busy people is so quickly lost. Dr. John K. Mitchell began as all physicians did in those days, by teaching. He held the Chair of Chemistry at the Franklin Institute by 1833 and six years later that of Medical Practice at Jefferson College. Meanwhile his practice grew rapidly, but a man of his activities and liberal tastes was not likely to be thrifty and he found it more congenial to take on work than to save money. In regard to work he never lost his zest; he never spared himself. He was often so busy that he must write his eldest son at school between midnight and three a. m. and the letters are not perfunctory, but full of thought and affectionate counsel. By the time he had labored through the dreadful smallpox epidemic of 1825 and the more dreadful cholera of 1832, (of which disease he nearly died), he had become one

Dr. John Kearsley Mitchell, the father of Weir Mitchell, from the miniature by G. L. Saunders

of the foremost physicians of the place. He grew ruddier and handsomer and in due time, portlier. He kept his tremendous interest in life, in people, in intellectual occupation and these extended far beyond the limits of his profession. From his correspondence, a letter is chosen concerning the death of John Randolph of Roanoke.

Philadelphia, 6th January 1834.

"Rt. Rev. Bishop Meade,
Millwood, Frederick Co., Va.
Right Rev. and Dear Sir:

"Your very kind letter reached my house during a temporary absence caused by a visit to Richmond. This will account for the delay of an answer, a delay increased by waiting until Doctor Parrish could find time to copy his testimony for you—although the language of that testimony is not quite as specified as, on so important an occasion, it should be, yet in conversation with the witnesses I discover that Mr. Randolph was 'of sound mind and disposing memory,' when he assembled them to express his wish that all that part of one of his 'wills' which relates to the manumission of, and provision for, his slaves, should be considered as, on that subject, his last will, and he did not therefore enter into details, farther than to specially designate his man servant then present as a particular object for manumission and provision. The witnesses do not seem to have made up a conclusive opinion as to how far the remainder of any will was confirmed by Mr. R. but they are very positive as to the slaves, all of whom were to be freed, and provided for, as set forth in same will.

"Not for the public eye but for yours I may tell that poor R. seemed to bitterly repent him of the sins of his singular life. Not more than an hour before his death he made Dr. Parrish write under his name, printed on a visiting card, the word 'Remorse.' This card, grasped in his skinny fingers, he conned over very slowly 'John Randolph of Roanoke—Remorse. Yes! Yes! Remorse—oh! remorse.' Poor Fellow, he drank deeply at last of the cup of bitterness held by him so often to the lips of others and died penitent. He made those around him read passages of Scripture to which he listened with clasped hands and raised eyes; but true to his unique character, even then, when the icy fingers of decay lay cold on his heart, not unfrequently and even acrimoniously corrected errors of pronunciation. Dr. Parrish read omni*PO*tent. Raising himself from his pillow and casting a keen glance at the Quaker, he said 'omn*IP*otent, sir, omn*IP*otent—read that omnipotent.' The Doctor replied that 'friends' read it in that manner for greater effect. 'That is wrong, sir, it is less effective when badly pronounced —read it *always* omn*IP*otent, sir!' Several other instances of the same kind occurred.

"With sincere affection and great respect

Yours, etc.,

J. K. Mitchell."

Like his son, the elder Mitchell was interested in history, in politics and in literary discussion. The same high sense of duty which caused him as a young physician to go and live in the Almshouse during an epidemic, so he could tend the poor whom no one else would tend, kept him later

in life active on Sanitary Boards and Charitable Committees.

Moreover, he never ceased to compose verses, so that there soon appeared a volume called "Indecision and Other Poems." The refrain which runs—

> *"Oh, fly to the Prairie, sweet maiden, with me*
> *'Tis as green and as wild and as wide as the sea!"*

was sung to the drawing-room harp from Boston to Washington. Certain of these pieces came out in *Graham's Magazine*, whose backers and contributors were among the doctor's friends. The new assistant editor of that magazine once met the boy Weir Mitchell in his father's office—a sallow, thin young man with flashing black eyes and a bitter mouth—Edgar A. Poe, Esq. We know that the doctor was kind to him—helped him with a loan or medical advice, perhaps, and it is plain that Mr. Poe liked him as everybody else did—since he certainly spared the little volume of 1839 that caustic irony he applied so freely to almost everyone else. "Dr. Mitchell," Poe writes, "has published several pretty songs which have been set to music and become popular . . . also . . . a volume of poems of which the longest was remarkable for an old-fashioned polish and vigor of versification."

If the doctor was like his son—and he must have been—he probably valued this praise quite as much as that given his papers on the "Cryptogamous Origin of Fevers"; "The New Practice in Acute and Chronic Rheumatism" or "The Toxicological Effects of Arsenic." By 1853, he is third among the Poets of Philadelphia who were chosen for an interview by

a sheet called "The Saturday Museum"; and he had long been a member of all sorts of literary societies including the "American Whig Society for the Promotion of Literature, Friendship and Morality"—a trinity not nowadays often "promoted" in the same breath. He also made sturdy efforts to "establish on American ground the manly game of cricket," being a great lover of the out-of-doors.

All this is important to the history of his son, since to do a great many different things extremely well, to be always doing them and always find the time and energy to do them, were primal characteristics of Dr. Weir and when we study his father we see whence came the influences which made such a career his natural inheritance.

Dr. John Mitchell was very cheerful and very sociable, his letters to his wife show that he continued to find life delightful. Hers are a thought less bright, for like many a devoted mother, she took things hard and was apt to worry over her brood. Sometimes she is even annoyed by her dearest John's optimism, since he is as disciplinary as he is devoted, bidding her remember that she is "chastened for her own good" by her domestic cares. She complains and is a little melancholy, when, in 1833, he goes to visit his Richmond cousins —his first holiday in twelve years—and he recommends her to divine Providence, not forgetting (the good Doctor!) to bid her go out every fine day and when she has a headache, "to take a little soda in twenty or thirty drops of aromatic spirits of hartshorn"! It must have been about this time that Weir—a sturdy rascal—ran off and got lost "in the Commons near Broad Street, where we found him playing with a kid." Vacations, in those days, were not often taken

by the head of a young family and no doubt Weir's mother had her hands full. But she wrote, in their formal style, her constant letters:

"Accept, my dearest husband, my kindest acknowledgments for your last affectionate epistle, in the perusal of which I had the most pleasing sensations."

She tells him about the babies; makes memoranda concerning the illness of a relative:

"Mother inquired of the doctor whether he thought it was Rheumatism ailed her, his answer was you may as well call it that as anything else and then proceeded to say that some persons must have disease somewhere in the system and if removed from one place it would attack another."

She feels sure that her John would never have made such a remark; (we hope she is right!) then concludes because "The Watchman is proclaiming ten o'clock!"—which sentence brings the dusk and stillness of the little "Red City" vividly before our minds.

Meanwhile, her sociable husband writes a full and vivacious account of the gayeties of Richmond and those delightful cousins he is so anxious for her to meet; he sees everything *couleur-de-rose*, and does his best to have Matilda share his enthusiasm. He touches the city of his adoption to the quick, when he remarks of the easy Virginian hospitality that "Philadelphians lose much of the sweetest enjoyments of life by that kind of pride or vanity which will keep away friends until they can be prepared to show themselves off."

It is during the Richmond holiday that he writes:

"How favorably I am situated as to country! My family

came from *Scotland*, where I was educated. I was born and raised in *Virginia* and I reside in *Philadelphia*. . . . What wonderful favor God has shown me! Appearance, health, mind, enterprise, industry, education, elocution, birth, residence, unmerited (!) reputation, affectionate friends, the kindest and best of wives, good, warm-hearted, healthy children, influential and devoted relations, etc."

And then proceeding to further details of his immediate satisfaction:—

"At dinner we had a saddle-of-mutton, soup, fish, turkey, ham, oyster pie, pies and puddings, jellies, blanc-mange, whips, fruit, confections in great profusion."

All this sounds tremendous to modern ears, nor do we wonder that the doctor had to resort to soda afterwards! He is careful to add:

"Cards are introduced here at every dinner-party and from seven to eleven all hands are thus engaged. . . . I have not seen any gambling. That is considered ill-bred and unfashionable."

Two years later, a visit to New York calls forth a very different commentary:

J. K. M. to S. M. M. in 1835 from N. Y.

"This is a most astonishing place. It greatly exceeded my expectations in size, bustle, beauty, and variety. It is a perfect bee-hive. . . . The rich here live in much higher style than with us. No one spends in Philadelphia more than ten thousand per annum while . . . many here spend twenty or thirty. Their houses are larger, finished and furnished far more expensively and a much larger number

keep handsome equipages. They entertain company much more. . . . Ours is certainly a much more sober city. The physicians here are much better paid than with us. Dr. Mott makes sixteen thousand dollars per annum. I almost wish I had started here—success is easier and better rewarded——."

Later:

"I heartily wish we had begun life here. The velocity suits my taste!"

Mention of small Weir is of course frequent in both parents' letters during this period. "The young rogue thinks he knows everything!" the father writes proudly in 1833, "I am glad to hear that he does not *'det mad'* any more!" And the mother, as proudly responds: "His teacher says he is one of the most affectionate and easy-governed children that ever she saw!" A year or so later, Weir has learned to scrawl a postscript to his mother's letters and to send his father a characteristically self-confident message: "Weir says . . . if you should not return in time to lecture on Monday evening, you may make yourself perfectly easy as . . . he can take your place and lecture *just as you do*!"

Later, during his adolescence, the boy lost this self-confidence, but his family seems to have trusted him beyond his years. When he accompanies his mother to Richmond in 1840, she is delighted with his behavior as an escort and he is hardly twenty before he is intrusted with selling a pair of horses. "Weir is the best judge," his mother observes. The delicacy of his elder brother probably had a share in forcing his development and also the fact that is stated by his sister, Elizabeth, "You are the only one of his children

who resembles Father in these particulars—i.e., vigor of mind and general activity." Yet this appreciation did not mean spoiling; this was a well-disciplined household and we find Weir's mother writing he must be sure to be home on Saturday as "your dear father does not wish his orders disobeyed."

Long ere this, the Mitchell nursery was well-filled, and successive moves to accommodate this growing family are recorded by the Autobiography. The three elder children had been followed by two little girls, Sarah and Letitia, while four more boys arrived between 1836 and 1843. Their names were Robert Walsh, John Henry, who died in early childhood, Nathaniel Chapman, and last of all, Edward Donnaldson—who was especially endeared to his elder brother by cleverness and sweetness of nature.

"We were a goodly family of eight when I first remember anything. That was when we lived on the west side of Eighth Street, the second house below Locust.

"The house was in a good locality, then central, and was built in the usual convenient but not aesthetic fashion, with back buildings three stories high. The front room on the first floor we called parlor. The room back of it was the office, and patients could wait in the front room at need, but office-practice was not in vogue and those who wanted my father's services sent for him, or, in case of lesser needs, asked him to call on them at their places of business. . . . As was not unusual then, the bathroom lay behind the dining-room and was in less frequent use than it would be today, for then it was thought sufficient if children were

washed all over once a week. As Saturday night was chosen for this purpose, the scrub took away somewhat the keen pleasure of that half-holiday.

"I remember less well my sisters and brothers than my own small self, and of the quiet neighbors as little. One who became in after years my friend, a most charming nature, was Dr. Samuel Jackson of the University of Pennsylvania.

"There were others, plain, comfortable merchants, living moderately and in no way remarkable. I remember Nathan Bunker, a Quaker, who for some cause was put out of Meeting, next to which he lived in Washington Street. We boys believed that he had trained his parrot to sit on the fence and say 'How does thee do, Friend?' as the Quakers came out of Meeting.

"The city then contented nearly everyone until after July fourth, when those who desired indulged in a fortnight at Cape May; but after August twentieth it was not considered advisable to stay there or in the country. This might have been wise as to much of our neighboring country at that time, and Cape May chills were considered unusually obstinate, and an autumn stay at any part of the New Jersey seaside was undesirable.

"Streets were very quiet and made good playgrounds for boys, vehicles being rare enough. The city was clean and small, the country attainable by a short drive, and often my father would take two or three of us out of town and turn us out, of a hot July evening, to play by the road side.

"I think that I recall our being sent abruptly to Mullica Hill in Jersey during the cholera summer of 1832. I can

see my father in a bed with chintz curtains in the second-story front room. I was taken in to say good-bye. He was ill with cholera. This may, however, have been an imagined circumstance, founded on what I was told long after, for at the time I was less than three and a half years old. My father was very ill but recovered, and before and after, distinguished himself by the most ardent devotion to the sick poor who died in vast numbers of the epidemic. The city requited him with the thanks of Councils and a silver pitcher, now in my possession."

A second silver pitcher, suitably inscribed, was also presented to the elder Mitchell for similar work during the smallpox outbreak.

"My whole life on Eighth Street is rather dim to me now. We went to school to the Misses Donnaldson in Blackberry Alley, foolishly changed to Duponceau Street, like many of these lesser lanes that bore prettily the names of berries—Currant, Strawberry, and so on.

"I must have been even then an imaginative child. I used to come home and relate things that I had seen but that had no real existence,—once, a gold carriage and ten horses. This was looked upon as a form of falsehood for which, once at least, I was punished."

He was put to bed on bread-and-water for twenty-four hours, for sticking to it that he had seen a pink elephant walking down Chestnut Street! The Autobiography continues:

"One of my greatest joys was to go with my father to his chemical laboratory in Locust Street west of Eleventh, where

he gave lectures in a spring course. My father himself taught chemistry, never having had any youthful laboratory training, and this seems most astonishing, for he wrote many able papers, especially those on osmosis and tests for arsenic and on solidification of gases, characterised by accuracy and originality. He gave up chemical teaching after we moved to Walnut Street, and, with a pang, I can well comprehend, burned a drawerful of memoranda for future research. His practice and the claims of a large family made it needful to abandon pure science, for which he was best fitted. The laboratory was to me like a fairyland, and sometimes I was given chemicals to take home; the joy with which I saw the beautiful colors of the precipitates that I made I can never forget. Once or twice I succeeded in mildly blowing myself up, and my father was quite as unlucky, for on one occasion an apparatus in which he was liquefying carbonic acid gas exploded and nearly caused a fatal accident. Later he came still nearer to death, for, having in his hand, while lecturing, a vial of pure hydrocyanic acid, it broke, cutting his hand badly. He said at once to the class, "Leave the room. It is deadly," and plunged his head and shoulders in a huge tank used to hold gas receivers. He called to his aid, Dr. Evans, to throw water over him and to open the windows. Then he fell senseless. He was blind for some days and very slowly recovered health.

"Ours was an atmosphere of gradually lessening puritanism, due more to my mother's Presbyterian training than to my father, who was rather a liberal thinker for those days. . . . We had no cards until later, and on Sunday no games, and, to lessen Sunday labor, cold roast beef and cold

rice pudding. Always we dined at two, but later, after our removal, at three, and at last at half past five, but this late hour had then for all good Philadelphia a flavor of wickedness.

"When we moved to Walnut Street, we were far uptown. We could skate at Broad and Walnut on a pond, and the pigs used to roam in from the Irish shanties on the outskirts to seek for garbage. Pig-sticking, with pins set in a stout stick, was a famous amusement, to which many narrow alleys and lanes lent themselves.

"At the northeast corner, a vacant lot covered with paper-mulberries extended to the alley on the east, and a little deformed carpenter named Schwarzbach lived in an angle of this ground. One evening some older boys hoisted me over the fence to get a strayed ball and then ran away. I could not find it and tried in vain to get back over the fence. At last came night, and something about the ragged paper-mulberries filled me with fear. As I went to and fro they seemed to move their limbs; I have ever since disliked the trees. At last I saw through the cracks the old watchman come out of his queer polygonal box at the corner to go on his round of lighting the street lamps. I called to him, as we boys all knew him well, and he fetched me out.

"If we were not in rows of our own, we delighted to set the two younger boys at others, and battles among ourselves were not rare. As we grew older, all this rough life passed away. I never believed that the man must be like the boy. Motives multiply with life and are grim schoolmasters.

Mrs. John Kearsley Mitchell, the mother of Weir Mitchell, from the miniature by G. L. Saunders

"As children we were, I fear, a mad set, in constant scrapes, and as Walsh and Chapman grew older, the pests of the neighborhood. I never liked fights nor did Chapman, but Walsh reveled in war, and we were rarely free from vendettas, about which my father was indifferent. Once he ordered me from table when I told him how I had fought a big boy, M., who, to equalize matters, was to have his left hand tied behind his back; and how, the week before, S. and I, little fellows of about twelve, fought him on a challenge in a stable. 'If, sir, you fight, you must do it like a gentleman!'

"I began very early in my life to be disturbed by religious matters. I remember asking my mother what the Holy Ghost was, and as she knew no better than I, I remained with the conviction that it was some form of dreadful apparition which would appear to me at some time in the night; and many a time I lay awake, frightened lest I should see the Holy Ghost.

"It was a too sober life for an imaginative child, and of it and its many repressions I carry away chiefly a memory of hated Sunday School and incomprehensible church; of passionate love for my mother and a sort of veneration for my father, and, over and above all, of wearisome *ennui*, which pursued me long but which in adult life I have rarely felt in the least degree.

"My grandfather Henry was a man well known for his generosity. He gave away before his death an amount equal to that with which he retired from business. He was a very handsome man with a large nose, and gray-blue eyes, and he always inspired me when I was a child with the utmost

terror, although I cannot say why. He talked a great deal about his religion. I remember that, when I was about ten, he said to me he hoped soon to pass from the world and be with Christ. I did not understand, but the next day but one, at breakfast, my father said that he had been up all night with my grandfather, who had been very ill and dreadfully alarmed lest he was about to die. I put these two statements together in my young mind and was somewhat puzzled.

"The old gentleman was in the habit of going to my Aunt Bayard Henry's in Germantown. On one occasion some missionary had sent my aunt a parrot from Africa. This bird had not spoken from the time he had arrived, but when my grandfather went up the back steps of the porch, which was covered with vines, he was suddenly assailed with the most outrageous blasphemy, picked up from sailors on the voyage. What became of the parrot I do not know, but it disappeared."

To supplement this picture some material should be added from the Reminiscences of a sister, Sarah, who became Mrs. William Neilson. She mentions the elder brother Alexander who was an invalid for some years before he died. His room, she says, was the family rallying-place: "On Christmas our presents were there." Of her second brother she records:

"My brother Weir's first surgical practice was on my doll's eyes. I fancied never was there such a doll, yellow satin and lace, red shoes and silk stockings, hair down to her waist, and eyes whose beauty I adored, and the young sur-

geon gouged Dolladeen's eyes out to find how they shut and opened. My heart was broken and I repaired with poor dolly to my faither, and SWM was relegated to his room.

"Weir and I studied in the office sometimes, and I always with fear of 'The French lady,' a skeleton which I knew hung in a closet and into whose mouth, just before my father gave an office lecture to students, Weir stuck a lump of bread.

"I once set my apron afire and Weir put out the flames with quickness that saved my life. Another time in making bullets, I was helping. He upset the boiling lead over his hand, set the table on fire, and I managed to unlock the door and scream for help. I think he has the scar yet. Weir, I remember best as lying before any possible fire and reading impossible books."

The Autobiography continues at this point to describe the family group and particularly the elder sister.

"We were many, and all strongly distinct characters. The eldest sister, Elizabeth Kearsley, was the one who, partly through age and partly from her own preference, was nearer to me than any others. As I recall her, she was slight, with clean-cut, delicate features, very expressive in their play. Intellectually, she was even then remarkable for memory and wit and skill in rapid repartee, which like a sharp weapon tempted her to use it too freely. As a young person she was sensitive, imagined slights or neglect, and was of a perilous temper, and at times immensely obstinate. Like me—indeed like all of us—her powers matured late, and time, trouble, pain and illness developed this forceful

nature. As children we were more together than the rest, for we were both incessant, omnivorous readers and soon fell eagerly upon the newer poetry and fiction. She never, I think, was seriously near to marriage despite many chances, for her personality was very attractive and her talk always brilliant. Even when young she was an unusual person."

Of the two boys next in age, Dr. Weir writes fully, describing Walsh as

"A strong-willed, unruly, excitable person, who read as we all did, remembered as no one else did and could repeat verse endlessly. He was—even as a lad, conspicuous for courage—a lover of danger——" which qualities, Dr. Weir does not add, caused a great deal of anxiety to the family. His next brother, Chapman, was handsome, clever and charming, while the short life of Ned is given in a few words.

"He was very simple, of gentle temper, imaginative, subject to moods of gravity. For general attractiveness and sweetness of disposition with unfailing courage, I have never seen his equal nor for delicate masculine charm. He died before he had come to our normal age of full development, but as I think of him he was, of all of us, the most earnest and perfect character. He was the petted baby and even then a beautiful creature, with a certain rare, spiritual look which troubled one to see. Though slight and not very vigorous, soon after the war broke out, sharing the feelings of the family, he desired to enter the service. . . . As he proposed to become a physician, I suggested that he enter in the medical line and hoped that a year of tranquil life in the hospitals would enable him to take more active service in the field. Accordingly, having already begun his

studies, he accepted the position of medical cadet. He was not more than nineteen at the time.

"After some months of service, diphtheria broke out in the wards and he took it from his patients and was brought home very ill. As Edward got better he began to cough, and Hammond gave him an easy position on the coast of South Carolina, where he soon became worse and was then sent for change to Portsmouth Grove Hospital on Narragansett Bay. Here he was attacked with the sequelae of his diphtheria, became blind and partially paralyzed, and I carried him home, almost a skeleton and literally in my arms. Here later he died, leaving me one of the most acute regrets of my life, which has had many such sorrows.

"Our house in Eighth Street was spacious and before long I was given a room of my own in the third-story back building where my brother Alexander had died. His collection of coins, minerals, and autographs fell to me, but did not long hold my interest after I took to books. Happily, among my first books was 'Robinson Crusoe,' later stolen by a black servant, but years afterward found on a book-stall, where I bought it for my grandson. The 'Arabian Nights' we used literally to devour and conceal for selfish use until my mother, a most tender woman, decided that none of us would study as long as it existed and burned it before our eyes amid loud lamentations. That was for me an hour of despair; I did not know that ever again I could get the book.

"Next I read 'Prince Leboo' (who knows that book now?) and recall the joy of the day when my father took

me in his gig to the old library in Fifth Street. I was free of that excellent collection and spent much of my spare time within the gloom of its monastic alcoves, awed at times by the gray-haired men, managers, who went in and out of the sacred precincts of the librarian's guarded domain and could always take out any number of books. I little dreamed of being some day one of them.

"The first book I took out was Captain Cook's 'Voyages,' and then a huge folio on Peru by Garcilaso de la Vega, and next the 'Conquest of Mexico' by Vernal Diaz del Castillo, one of the conquistadors. My habit was to lie on my belly on the floor of my room and read and read.

"I read no poetry, but fact and fiction came all alike to me, and I had the true book love. Nothing came amiss, from a novel (and these at first were strictly limited) to a dictionary.

"Our library was in the dining room, for at that time the drawing rooms were used only on state occasions. The books were many and good, and we were taught to use encyclopedias, to read aloud, and to talk at meals of our reading. My father's favorite poets were those of the eighteenth century, and this I think turned me from verse for years, because I cared little for Pope and Akenside. On Sundays we were allowed 'The Lady of the Manor,' Mrs. Opie's books, and a religious novel called 'Dunallan.' Of schools then and later I retain no cheerful memories. I loathed lessons and the path of learning led through a vale of tears and fears.

"I was sent to one Enoch Wines at Eighth and Chestnut, an unpleasant humbug, easily seen through by the keen

acuteness as to character that boys possess. All the queer or bad boys were gathered here, all the failures, as well as the bright lads, for Enoch's was to be a model school. Here I first met Charles Godfrey Leland and his brother, Henry, full of large promise and now long dead.

"My next move was to the famous grammar school of the University under the Reverend Samuel Crawford. I thank heaven schools are better now. I may have been about thirteen when I passed under the terrible rule of Crawford. My father had, I think, requested him not to whip me. I was a slight, pale lad of no physical strength. I never had much. Timid and shy, still as always a devourer of books to the neglect of lessons. Except for the stinging whack of Crawford's ruler on my hands, I escaped the brutality with which he treated others. Nevertheless he filled me with terror from the first day I came under his care.

"It is worth while to describe this school. The old academy was in Fourth Street below Arch, west side, and stood back from the street about seventy feet, behind a hundred-foot graveled play ground. Behind it was another large play ground, bounded at the back by the ancient graveyard where reposes Benjamin Franklin.

"C's desk and a raised chair in the center of the great room faced the door. Over his head were ranged a number of rattans, seldom out of use, and four of these Tobies, as he called them, he kept in a long tin box of water to preserve their pliancy. Armed with a Toby, he used to march about, distributing here and there stout whacks on the shoulders of unlucky ones. 'Now, sir, Toby has a good memory.' Sometimes he acknowledged mistakes and then would say,

'Well, that will do for the times when you deserved it and Toby forgot you. Ah, Toby knows the bad boys.' More serious thrashings were usually attended to after school. He wore large spectacle glasses on a hawk-like nose and used to push one pair up onto his brow, forget it, put on a second, push that up when he needed far view, forget it, too, and then add a third; and this was always a signal of gathering wrath. I could never meet him in after years without a certain sense of terror. Nevertheless I learned something here."

III

"Those who remained in the ancient homesteads and lived and died adhesive to the soil, held a certain, distinct social place and position. It was not always easy to see why a few of these breeds had won early in colonial life, and held so steadily their places on the upper levels of society."

In War Time.

THE glimpses of Weir in the foregoing pages show us a blond boy by no means robust, dreamy and withal decidedly diffident. Contradictions, however, always appear to govern the lives of the able, therefore one is not surprised to see the fragility give way to resilient health, the timidity to a steely self-confidence. The child, as he has told us, was one of those indefatigable readers who, like Scott and Macaulay "fed his intelligence with books as one would stoke a furnace," and there was reason to fear his becoming the mere book-worm which some of his relations—including his father, for a time—thought him. Intellectual vitality and creative instinct, however, soon began to show themselves amid this hunger for the printed word, although it was long before there were definite indications as to what they might create. Along with the bookish and poetical turn existed qualities of a more worldly and practical kind. As early as 1840, his father writes to Elizabeth Mitchell, "Weir is a keen politician and regularly studies election returns," and a successful politician he remained to the end of his days.

In 1844, when he was fifteen, the boy was admitted to the University of Pennsylvania, which he calls "at this time a small affair with some good men." He got on fairly well, though not superlatively, with his professors, amused himself a good deal after the fashion of lively youth and started to grow intellectually as well as physically. He writes of that time:

"My set were already too much given to billiards and complete idleness, and some took too much stimulus, but I never except once had the least desire to do so. Then I took too much, and the consequences answered as an enduring lesson. Twice I have felt the abrupt effect when, long thirsty, I swallowed a single glass of white wine. On both occasions it affected only my legs and mostly the left; this is true of all poisons, they never act alike on all organs or on all organs of all men. I have always been able to drop any habit,—coffee, wine, tobacco, and not feel the loss; indeed, the sensation of any form of slavery to habit would be unbearable. All the men I refer to had far more money than I, and that was my salvation. I had an ingrained dislike of debt and a certain modesty, which then was as instinctive as that of a girl. It saved me much. Also, my fondness for books gave me resources wanting to some, though not to all, of these men.

"As I grew older, things at home broadened a good deal. Cards were played and other games. Our reading was freer, and the people who came about us were more varied. Our interesting household grew more so. There were two or three hot tempers among us, and often we appalled my too gentle mother, who may have wondered how we came to

be hers at all. I have always been a nervous, excitable person, needing to have a sudden grip on myself in danger or in wrath. What we were as lads is truly told in 'When All The Woods Are Green.' My sister, Elizabeth, is the Aunt Ann.

"Our physical rows became intellectual. All we older ones loved an argument and my father not less. Then we lived in the simple way of those days. Around us at meals were some two thousand volumes, and often someone would quit the table to find a book and triumphantly refute an adversary. Most of our talks were literary or of travel, history, and so forth. We used to attack my father's antique taste and slyly quote new verse so as to trap him into admitting there had been poets since Byron. This I did of a New Year's Eve by reading Tennyson's New Year verse. I think while I was at college I must have heard all of Akenside, Pope, and much of Dryden read aloud of evenings, when the Scotch whiskey punch was brewed, and songs followed, my father leading in his delightful tenor.

"The informal life of that day kept the family circle much together. We dined at two or half past two, had tea, i.e., supper, at seven. Anyone who chanced in was welcome, but in those days people traveled little and guests were the familiars."

When about sixteen, he spat blood as his father had done and thereafter was given a boat and encouraged to spend more time out-of-doors.

"For four years I rarely passed a week-day without a pull, a sail, or cricket, at which I did not excel. When I was about seventeen, my father bought Glenwood on Schoolhouse Lane, and the Butler girls were at school nearby. The

Kanes lived at Fern Rock on Green Hill. About this time began an intimacy with Robert and Elisha Kent Kane. This open-air existence not only gave me a life-long desire for wood and field but built me up physically. While neglect to study had its evil, as I found out later, it had also its good side, for from my twenty-first year I grew more vigorous.

"My class was a large one for those days. Most of them I looked up to as much my superiors, but success in life may be dependent on many things. I have known lack of manners to spoil a career, or temper, or talk. It is the moral qualifications that fail men. Also, some men—and it is true of all my own people—develop late, and what they are before twenty-five is no test. Above all is the need for persistent energy, not the mere power to spurt; and then come motives, sense of duty, love, ambition, and the happiness found in one's expanding ability. My own morale developed late and brought me a great desire to do right, to help others, and an intense ambition to be at the top."

On the whole, his record for the three years at the University was good if not brilliant, although he notes that as a Freshman, he had been twice reprimanded for disorder and once admonished for deficiency. Rebukes were fewer during the next two years and we find him first in his class in his Sophomore year and among the ten Juniors chosen for Exhibition Day. The oration was entitled Labor and is worthy of its name. Meanwhile, verse-writing had gone steadily on. The year 1846 must have been important to the poet, for were not his verses "To a Polar Star" published in The Nassau Monthly? There were many other such attempts, which were immensely admired by his devoted elder

sister, although we read later what he himself thought of them. Up to this time he had not yet, as he acknowledged, learned to work and was much given to the day-dreaming which is the life of poets.

All this was now to change with the illness of his father on whom the entire family still depended and which brought to the lad, who was affectionate and conscientious, a sharp reminder that he was an eldest son. No longer was he free to have his head "full of fancies," for the younger children were still at home and Weir must take the reins.

"I must now elect what I would do and as to this I had vague notions. I had been a desultory reader but never a serious student. My weak health had in part excused me. I proposed entering a chemical factory, liking chemistry in a way and quite adrift as to inclination. My father objected that he had not the capital that, in time, would be needed. He proposed a mercantile life. I did not fancy that. I had once narrowly escaped it, for, when about fourteen, Mr. Samuel Henry, my mother's bachelor cousin, one of the great firm of A. and S. Henry of Manchester, proposed to take me to England, insure me a place in his house as partner, and make me his heir. The offer was gladly accepted without much consultation with me. Two weeks later, Mr. Henry was lost on the Lexington in the Sound. I still shudder to think that I might have been a millionaire English merchant in Parliament or what not. I think I should have gone to the top finally in any line of life.

"After a while my father more distinctly insisted on a choice, and I at last decided to be a doctor, much to his disgust. He said, 'You have no appreciation of the life. You

are wanting in nearly all the qualities that go to make success in medicine. You have brains enough, but no industry.' I persisted. In fact, I did not know what to choose; certainly I had no leaning towards his profession. 'Well,' he said, 'you have chosen, but let us have no changing. You have always been an undecided person.' He was correct enough but, as I have said, I developed late, morally and mentally.

"At this time I was in better health, slight, blue-eyed, imaginative. I had written horrible verse and some as wretched tales. I knew little Greek and some Latin and read French ill. I used to lie for idle hours in my boat on the reedy river, thinking how pleasant it would be to be this or that. Nature had begun to get the hold on me which since has become so strong that it has made much of life's most innocent happiness. Always I was ambitious but could never give the application that was needed to win a place, either in lesson or in game. It seemed to me I *could not* study. My father's words greatly troubled me. I had a conscience which did, and has had to do, much work. I was always failing from lack of energy and always penitent. I felt that I must win my own way, and I fell to my ungrateful professional labor over the bones with desperate resolution.

"The year that followed at Jefferson Medical College was one never to be forgotten. I had to learn to work, to concentrate attention. It came hard. I used to go over and over some confounded bone and fall asleep. I could remember nothing. I began to see that college life was merely a training. I had lost it. The more abominable those dry

bones became, the more I worked. I used of an evening to fall asleep so often that I would take strong coffee to keep me awake, and at last go to the bathroom and take a cold shower. It was a wretched way to study medicine.

"After six months the fall came and I began to hear Dunglison's lectures on physiology. This was very interesting; although neither he nor anyone else taught it with experiments or illustration, still it captured me. I think I began to develop then the desire to leave no riddle unsolved, and this has made the laboratory a delight to me.

"I began at last to feel an interest in it all, mingled with another misery. I had been placed in Dr. Mutter's office. It was my father's wish that I become a surgeon, but surgery was horrible to me. I fainted so often at operations that I began to despair. Moreover my hands were awkward.

"My father first in Philadelphia used ether in child-bed. Professor Meigs violently opposed it and one day undertook to show its peril to a class of three hundred or more at the Jefferson Medical School. A big billy-goat was brought into the arena, which was called the bull ring, and Ellerslie Wallace, Dr. M.'s assistant, gave the ether. At last, Professor Meigs announced the demise of Billy, and the corpse was taken out and left in a small room at the half-way landing of the main stairway. The lecture over, we were noisily descending to the chemical lecture when Wallace opened the door of Billy's room. Out came Billy, very drunk, charged between Wallace's long legs into a mass of delighted students, and Billy and students went downstairs in one wild confusion. My father was never weary of inquiring of his colleague after this patient's health.

"During that year I studied from ten to fourteen hours a day, including lectures, and in the spring fell ill of liver trouble with severe jaundice, due to overwork and lack of exercise, the first of many illnesses I owe to my profession.

"By this time my father was reassured, as at awful cost I won power to attend to what I was doing, but years passed before mere mental labor became to me the joy it is now. As time went on, I won an increasing interest in my profession, and with it a strong sense of duty and absence of that *ennui* which had pestered me up to this time. Our oneness of work drew me nearer to my father, and I saw what his wants of character were as my own nature throve under a laborious life.

"His energy had begun to give out much before this time, and he ceased to be originally productive, as he had been both in chemistry and in medicine. This period of failure of persistent energy varies with the man. I know of some who were steady workers in childhood only; others ceased to use all their powers at manhood. Some retained to age the possibility of putting their whole capital of mind and body into enduring work. With me, this capacity steadily increased. I was never weary in mind and rarely in body. I have been in fifty-two houses in one day and had *the* great practice.

"I was nearly four years in the study of my profession and was graduated in March, 1850. I had won power to use my mental machinery, and my vaguely directed ambitions were now focussed. I weighed my own force as compared with that of other men, those above me in years, and those of my own time. I made up my mind that by thirty-five I

should have a chair in one or other of the two great schools. In those days, one had to be a teacher to win the larger prizes. I think I was then and long after a very self-complacent person, although I have never been entirely satisfied with my intellectual success.

"I was, then, and always, capable of self-criticism, but I did think more of my bundle of human qualities than was wise, just or true. As time has gone on, I see what a conceited fool I must have been and do not wonder that I was not always liked, and *that* I have always wished to be. Human love seems to me, as years go by, to be more and more desirable.

"The sense of capacity is needed in life, and in my profession there should go with it a desire to know the truth as to disease. There is always a little fog around all our medical conclusions. We can rarely be absolutely certain. The power to act with decision within the limits of the medically attainable, with the attendant knowledge that uncertainty is with us ever, is valuable in medicine. I think I have had this union of gifts; at least I won it at last.

"My father was twice wise as regards a part of my education. He insisted that I should spend part of the spring and summer of two years in a laboratory of analysis; and this I did with Booth, and the lesson in accuracy was just what I needed."

He also, at his father's request, worked in a drug store during one summer, which he states, he much disliked.

"As my work went on, it became more easy as it grew in interest, but all my life I have felt the lack of ease in concen-

trating my attention. I should have been more severely educated. I feared pain and would have worked harder if I had known that certain punishment awaited my failures."

Through this self-analysis we learn something of the inner difficulties of a career which was to seem outwardly the epitome of easy success; while the masses of family letters scrupulously preserved during that early time, show us much of the soil and atmosphere in which this youth was nourished.

The Mitchell family from 1830 till their father's death in 1858, is shown as an unusually active-minded group of young people, quick-tongued and combative, with high, uproarious spirits. "They rioted in high spirits" declares a member of the group. "They liked a row and with them fighting and gayety were one thing. Weir was of all the tribe the most equable in temper and the most controlled, the one who knew best how to conduct his life." If their mother was in general the family disciplinarian, yet it was the father who could quell with a word or gesture, the heated arguments, the teasings, the rows. Early in life they had the immense advantage of meeting in their own house, all sorts of people and in hearing discussed at their parents' table every variety of subject. This made them intolerant of dullness and set a high standard of daily activity before their young eyes. In their own father they had an example of industry and cheery temperament. Naturally they expected much and were apt to have a poor opinion of lesser mortals who could not practice medicine, write verse, discuss history and politics, and carry on constant experiments in what was just beginning

to be called scientific investigation. Undoubtedly his father's example in the amount of daily accomplishment had a marked effect upon Dr. Weir; his admirers, to whom his many activities appeared nothing less than prodigious, failed to realize how his power in this respect had been heightened by his early atmosphere.

Next to his father, Weir owed most, it seems to his sister, Elizabeth, whose portrait he has just painted for us. She was jealously devoted to him and it is to her he writes, during his last college year, a lively description of an escapade concerning the three little brothers, who were growing up to be more than usually mischievous and startling. A love-affair mentioned herein is not heard of again.

S.W.M. to his Sister

Philadelphia, Sunday, January 14, 1849.

". . . However, I can sympathize with you, since I am in love myself,—not half or quarter, but wholesale, neck and heels in, beyond the reach of Doctor or Humane society. 'Miss Chapman is the lady's name, and Doylestown is her station.' She stays at Dr. Paul's, where I spent last evening most agreeably . . . I mean to be intimate there, as the Miss Pauls are pleasant, and—and—as Miss C. is there.

"The Assembly went off well but not with great success. We have the next in February, when I shall appear. I go to two balls this week. . . . Some fall and some rise, and apropos of arising, I begin to be quite proud of the family; and who is the hero? Who but Wally! The other day Father and the three little boys went out to Fairmount dam, and Wally and Chap got off alone at some distance from Father.

Ned and he remained together. . . . Suddenly Father, who was skating, perceived that the ice was in motion, when, not being able to see the other boys, he picked up Ned and jumped from the ice he was on to the main cake, where he handed Ned to a gentleman and took off his skates. A huge mass of ice—say, five or six acres—had broken from the main piece and was moving over the falls almost before it was noticed by anyone. Father was among the first to leave it, but when he had got rid of his skates and was ready to return for the boys, the gap was too wide, and there he stood in despair. Meanwhile, the ice approaching the falls obliquely broke as it jutted over, and a scene of the wildest confusion occurred. At least two or three hundred persons were rushing back and forth, some falling over the dam, some leaping madly into the water, some walking or tumbling along the slippery edge of the dam and others wringing their hands in despair, women yelling, children bawling, men cursing, and in this terrified crowd Wally and Chap ran to and fro asking someone to help them. Father called to them but they did not hear him, and at last Wally, in despair, pulled Chap to the edge of the ice where it was fast nearing the dam. At last it reached the upper edge of the breast, where the water is about three feet deep, the current strong, and masses of ice heaving up and down. 'Now, Chap,' says Wally, 'here take my hand and jump.' 'I can't,' says Chap, and down he sat on the ice. Poor Chap's courage was frozen passive. There were but a few seconds to spare. 'Jump up, Chap, quick. Here, get on my back.' 'Oh! Oh!' was the reply. 'Get up. Do you hear me? Get up. If you don't get up on my back, sir, I'll hit you.' Chap, scared to

death, clutched his shoulders. Wally held his feet fast and at once leaped into the water with Chap thus perched upon his back. They fell forward, amid the people, the crashing ice and the rapid water. Wally picked himself up; some gentleman righted Chap, and together they waded off the verge of the dam to the round summer house which stands at the Fairmount end of the fall. Father, who was half distracted, found them at the Tavern. They were rolled in blankets and brought home blue with cold. Wally certainly behaved most gallantly. So, he is a hero and has been christened Commodore in memory thereof. What is still better, he has not once told his story unasked, and until bepraised to 'flattery's verge' seemed to have no idea that he had done anything very good. . . . And now, dear Old Lady, I have run aground, for I can't write the scandal (of course there is some) and must even come down to the message and love sendings which seem to be the trump part of a letter, to be played when at a loss. With love, therefore, believe me, with the profoundest sentiments of affection, devoted admiration and immeasurable esteem, to be

"Your Long Brother, Poet Laureat to the Yacht Jilt, etc. Oh! S.W.M.

"Pray come home soon, and such is the prayer of your humble petitioner."

The elder Mitchell's rare combination of qualities, both social and professional, with his Virginian hospitality, had brought him a wide acquaintance among the cultivated people of his day. By the very names given his children we learn what manner of men were his friends. One son bore

that of Dr. Nathaniel Chapman, President of the Philosophical Society, and a fellow-Virginian; another was named for Robert Walsh, lawyer, littérateur and historian, whose soirées were supposed to rival the famous Wistar parties. To the doctor's table came these men and many others. Dr. Weir recalls hearing Frank Key recite, with infinite spirit, his new lyric the "Star-Spangled Banner," before an excited young audience, while the Autobiography gives an amusing sketch of two other rich and crusted personalities, long-vanished from the scene.

"Among our stranger guests we were apt now and then, when the Episcopal conventions met, to have with us two or three bishops. The most notable character was Bishop Meade, tall, erect, rather grim of visage, but quietly pleasant. He looked like one of Cromwell's captains but was nevertheless sternly humorous, an implacable man as to duties, very simple and child-like as to the world. The first of him that I recall is his dining in our home. There were half a dozen bishops. As a small boy, I was admitted for dessert. I stood behind Bishop Moore, then Bishop of Virginia, Meade being assistant Bishop, and was seen curiously feeling the long yellow and gray hair that fell on his shoulders. To my shame, I was detected.

"When Meade first dined with us, he said to the old black servant, Johnson, regarding his silver fork, 'Here, boy, take this thing away and fetch me a real fork.' He belonged to an old Virginia family and his father was an aide of Washington. Meade was able to say sharp things. When someone asked him how the Reverend Blank would vote on a

question, he said, 'Joseph is a rainbow of the Lord. He has a coat of many colors.' Overhearing this, I broke into a chuckle. The Bishop regarded me a moment—and we were all in awe of him, in dread almost—'Did you understand me, my lad?' I said 'Yes.' 'Then you are too old for your years.'

"On one occasion he arrived with a broken trunk corded together and a wardrobe of such ragged undergarments that he explained he had waited to buy supplies in Philadelphia. On this he gave my mother twelve dollars and requested her to have the trunk repaired, to purchase twelve pairs of socks, a dozen shirts, and sundry underclothes. When he found them all in a new trunk in his room, he inquired, 'I suppose there was no change left? Cities are expensive places.'

"The memoir he much later sent my father of his first and second wife was a source of boundless fun to us. (He had three wives.) In this book he so praised the qualities of the second as a provider of clothes that one day my sister wrote on a blank leaf:

'Here lies of second wives
The very best.
She made her husband's pant-
aloons and vest.'

This so shocked my mother that the leaf disappeared, much to our sorrow.

"This puritan gentleman used to delight to tell how that, going to Lambeth to dine with the archbishop and to preach in the evening, he carried his gown and so forth tied up in a red silk kerchief. The flunkey, on hearing this tall, gray-clad figure ask for the archbishop, replied that he could see

no one as he was about to dine the Lord Bishop of Virginia. 'I am the Lord Bishop of Virginia,' said Meade, delighted at the servant's consternation, for Meade's manners were stately enough. He was an aristocratic republican, an admirable type. I still have a spoke and a felly of Washington's carriage that he gave us. The vehicle had broken down and was left at his father's house.

"Our frequent guest for many years was Chief Justice Gibson. He was, I fancy, six feet four, broadly and strongly built. He told me that never since he was thirty had he taken less than a pint of rye whiskey daily; nevertheless he lived to be over eighty. He was always a man of many accomplishments, vivacious, never the least visibly affected by what he drank, a user of oaths for which he always apologized, saying it was a habit of his generation. He was fond of coming to tea on certain nights when we were to have buckwheat cakes. On one occasion, having sent his plate for tea instead of his cup, he told us that when young he had been absent-minded past belief, and related the story of sitting up with a dead child and forgetting it, and going away to the next court circuit pursued by the father, and the confession of having locked the coffin in a bureau drawer. This and other hardly less amazing tales he liked to tell us.

"Years after, when he was very ill, I, a student of medicine, was sitting up with him. He said, 'Give me some whiskey.' I poured out a liberal amount. 'Hold it to the light. Now, a little water.' He touched the glass to his lips and gave it back to me. 'You put some drug in it.' I said, 'No.' He tasted it again and said, 'Take it away. I am going to

die. Never before did whiskey taste like that,' and thence on he took no more and died in ten days.

"How Gibson and others endured the amount of whiskey taken I never could understand. I asked the late Judge G. once if it was not the most wholesome of all stimulants. The old fellow replied quickly, 'You see the survivors.' "

IV

"When youth was lord of my unchallenged fate,
And time seemed but the vassal of my will."
On a Boy's reading Henry V.

HOME is more than a background in the composition of some personalities; local characteristics in others are imperceptible. Many able men are citizens of the world—some, of the City of God—Dr. Weir was a Philadelphian. From the place where he was born, where he dwelt, practiced, studied and wrote, he drew so much of his being that people did not readily dissociate him from his native city. Perhaps this fact gave him color; nobody is so drab as a man without a country. Dr. Weir was part of Philadelphia for over three-quarters of a century and after his death, Philadelphia, in his sense of the word, did not long survive him. What remained was just a large and important American city, which had accidentally crystallized around a few little late Georgian buildings.

Changes, however, were beginning to be marked even in Dr. Weir's boyhood. No longer was his birthplace that small Colonial town, low and dignified, whose purplish brick seemed to ripen in the glow of Pennsylvania summers. Since the days when it was the capitol city, Philadelphia had relapsed into its native and more congenial informality. A provincial and shipping town, if not yet a manufacturing town, it was growing fast, it was busy and prosperous. Market Street divided it in half, a broad and

muddy thoroughfare, traversed by mule-teams dragging the new-fangled railroad cars. This division was social as well as geographical. When someone described Dr. Mitchell as "always a South of Market Street person," the phrase had a definite meaning. To Dr. Weir the fact involved responsibility as well as honor, but it remained a fact.

In those days, Philadelphians thought themselves peculiarly blessed in their place of residence, whose very climate evoked paeans of praise, instead of the maledictions of today. Comparison, of course, is a great teacher and climate in the 1830's and 40's was still largely felt through English nerves. One wonders whether, if all Philadelphians nowadays were obliged to spend a winter in London—the praise might not again become fashionable? Surely, as Dr. Weir once remarked "God tempers the heat to the black sheep," and this grim witticism hits several ways. Charles Godfrey Leland writing to Walter Besant calls the place "a sensual Paradise —peaches of the best—such incredible luxury of great watermelons—pears!! Grilled chickens—reed-birds—soft-shell crabs—water-ice!" and he adds, that same autumn, "The weather so far has been like Naples—every day deliciously sunshiny and just October cold." *

That this sensual paradise was founded by and for the Friends was a paradox, yet, with all this abundance, ideas remained austere and religion predominated as an interest among the population. Sects were many, their differences acute and passionate. One is inclined to speculate on the relation of these facts to the tendency toward nerve-strain and the prominence of the medical profession.

* E. R. Pennell: *Life of Chas. G. Leland.*

In his address at the Centennial of the College of Physicians, Dr. Weir Mitchell notes that "from the first settlement until today, the physician has held an almost unquestioned and somewhat curious preëminence. He is and always has been relatively a more broadly important personage here than elsewhere. Numbers of our profession—have been or are, directors of insurance companies or saving funds or even banks. . . . You will find them also in unusual numbers on our college boards. The Philadelphia Library is obliged under the Will of James Rush to have in its direction three physicians."

At the time these words were written Dr. Weir Mitchell himself stood forth as the protagonist and culminating example of this preëminence, no man since Franklin having gained equal prominence in so many different lines. If it be true, as Mrs. Pennell says, "No Philadelphian has ever yet been a genius in Philadelphia," it is as true that this tepid enthusiasm and slow recognition form a perpetual challenge to her citizens. They may win degrees from foreign universities, honors from foreign governments and the friendship of the world's great—these things have never caused their native city to lose its head about them. The attitude became in certain instances, deliberately disciplinary. When Henry C. Lea died—a student whose medieval histories were praised the world over—a chief newspaper printed the headline, "Well-known Real Estate Operator Passed Away!" Certain forms of outside success were indeed held to be a positive disadvantage, as expressed in the phrase "He has a great many New York friends"—heard spoken deprecatingly and even apologetically, of a talented Philadelphian.

Yet this very independence of mind and refusal to be coerced into admiration, had its stimulus for an active mind. In such an atmosphere old friends met, worked, talked without constraint, while the local reputation once gained, was enduring. To the end of his life, Dr. Mitchell liked it best. Praise of his books from England or New England—and this was not to lack—never gave him quite the same gratification as the praise from Germantown, Locust Street or Delancey Place.

All this comes later and we must return to the home of the boy Weir, where he studied, and doubtless, went to parties in private houses, to dance on "linen crash" laid down in the front and back parlor. Sunday afternoons were spent by elderly persons peering through closed shutters into the street, their elbows placed on cushions on the sill and rugs over their knees to keep off draughts! The young Mitchells spent them rowing out to Smith's Island in the Delaware, "a better place for the dog to swim," as Chap Mitchell writes in July, 1845; or scrambling through the wild gorge of the Wissahickon, as Dr. Weir later tramped the Cadillac Cliffs on Mt. Desert.

His schoolmate, Leland, also remembered "the green shade before each door; the fireflies on summer nights; the flowers and fragrance of Bartram's garden; the scent of buckwheat cakes baking in the early morning."* Street-cries sounded up and down the side-walks; under the fan-lights the steps were white as snow and Mr. Horace Binney, the lawyer, stately and handsome, came out from the office-door of his home, as Dr. Mitchell from his.

* Ibid.

No doubt the boy had heard shuddering stories of the "great marble dogs in Race Street who howled when there was a death in the neighborhood" or that the Indians rose from their graves at midnight to hold a market in Independence Square. Six o'clock was the hour for the statue of William Penn to descend from its pedestal in front of the Pennsylvania Hospital—but any scared child who failed to see this happen could easily take refuge in the belief that it was the other six o'clock which was meant. Benjamin Franklin chose midnight by the State House clock to leave his perch at the Philadelphia Library and take an alarming walk around the block. People met him wearing a three-cornered hat, or at least so they told the little boys at home. This was the period when the city was more closely allied to the South than to the North, "when $50,000 entitled one to keep a carriage and be addressed as quality by the negroes, when Fredrika Bremer's novels were popular and young ladies fainted on the slightest provocation. . . . The postman still blew his horn:" * and as we know from Weir's mother, the watchman still called the hour and the weather all night long.

Thus the author of "Hugh Wynne" and "The Red City" had his own memories, beside that mass of family letters, to guide him when he came later to depict the place so closely identified with his family.

Having won, as we see, "at awful cost, power to attend to what I was doing," the medical student graduated in 1850, presenting a thesis "On The Intestinal Gases." By this year, his father had recovered a measure of health so that

* E. R. Pennell: *Life of C. G. Leland.*

the strain at home was somewhat lessened. It grew possible therefore, for Weir to take a year of medical study in Europe, which was then and for long after, held necessary to put the final touches on a physician's education.

A number of letters remain, written by the travelers, (for Weir's sister Elizabeth accompanied him to England) and by the parents to their absent children. Stay-at-homes in those days made the most of their literary opportunities. Weir's father, who signs himself tenderly "Your Friend," does not fail to describe his own trip to "Niagara Cataract" in a letter beginning "My son, this has been to us a day of unutterable sublimity!"

"What a chasm in our means of enjoyment!" he wrote sadly, the next month when the two young people sailed away. Subjects more professional began to fill their letters. The elder doctor had been a pioneer in the use of ether in childbirth, and proudly sets down the list of cases in which it had been useful, while the younger man responds by giving the French statistics on that subject. As a whole, however, it is the Autobiography rather than the letters to which we turn for an account of this year. To keep a journal was a habit of the Mitchell family, who all kept them and showed them to one another, and Dr. Weir thought but little of his own letters. He dismisses them as merely "guide-bookish" and he repeats once more that he was as slow to develop literary style as he had been in everything else.

He was almost all his life seasick and a 1901 letter says:

"I fear the seventeen day voyage with horror . . . always I have a queer wonder if it is some little beginning of the big end."

The Autobiography goes on:

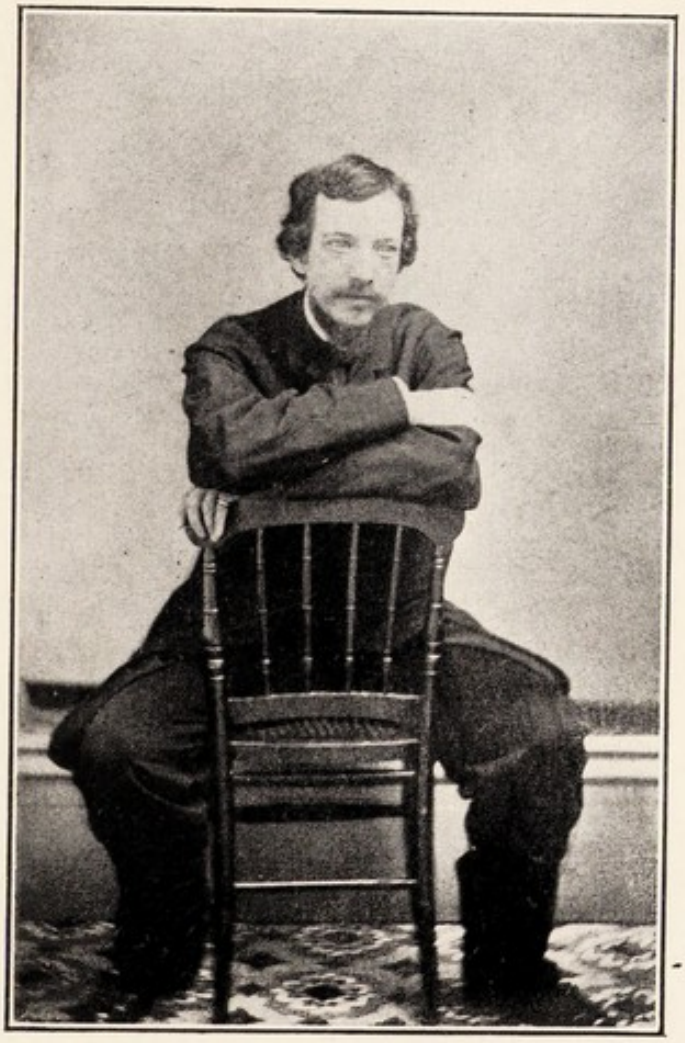
"I went abroad in the clipper ship Tuscarora, a Cape packet, Captain Thurley, with my sister Elizabeth. We had one fellow passenger. In mid-ocean the ship took fire from the cook's throwing, by mistake, a bucket of slush on the galley fire. For five hours we were in serious peril, and had we not had the only calm hours of the voyage, must have lost the ship. Rushing up to the deck, I saw Thurley, a red-faced stout man, giving rapid orders and kicking the cook to emphasize them. I hardly realized the gravity of the event and, as usual, the humor of it struck me first.

"Nevertheless, we made the Channel in fifteen days and were six days beating up to Liverpool. I was seasick all the voyage. . . . I was otherwise unwell, having had jaundice. And I was homesick.

"I left Elizabeth with our married sister, Mrs. Neilson, near Liverpool and went on to Manchester to Woodlands, the country seat of Mr. Alexander Henry, the nephew of my grandfather, Alexander Henry. Mr. Henry (see 'Hugh Wynne' for him) was the most dictatorial man I had ever known. The first evening John and I were in the billiard room. At ten thirty Mr. Henry came in and put out the lights over the table, saying it was time we went to bed. Unused to this, I relit them and went on with my play. He was unaccustomed to resistance but for some reason liked it from me and went out laughing. My cousins were appalled. On my leaving Woodlands, he gave me one hundred pounds as a present to buy books and instruments and ever after showed me repeated kindness."

The present of £100 herein mentioned rather troubled

Elizabeth K. Mitchell
Sister of Weir Mitchell



Weir Mitchell at
twenty-five years

the youth; he writes all about it to "that best friend" his father, who knows his independent ways, yet counsels him to accept it and buy "a fine miscroscope."

In London, the traveler stayed with his cousin, Mitchell Henry, then Assistant Surgeon to the Middlesex Hospital and living in Great Harley Street.

"Paget was then attracting attention and had just written his 'Pathology,' a thoughtful advance. I dined with him and Quain and Carpenter at the house of Dr. Jenner, then an active physician and becoming a consultant. All were much over my age and all have since won the highest rank in medicine. I recall chiefly the talk about the social position of the physician in England. Jenner thought no people were so pleasant to have for patients as the upper class; but this was by no means then Paget's opinion; and I heard enough of the insolence or condescension of the great to make me glad my medical life would not lie among them. Things have altered much since; nevertheless, the M. D. is still low in the social scale on the Continent and in England, and but two sons of peers have become physicians.

"About 1880 I again dined with Paget, Jenner being next to me. Neither recalled the little dinner of '50, and probably to have become a baronet may have changed an opinion. I recall that Madame Bovel told me at the Hague in 1882 that I could enter Dutch society only if I would take the 'Dr.' off my card; and this was but one example of the nonsense of these class lines, the growth of centuries, and to us so strange.

"I spent half a year in Paris at 47 Rue St. André des Arts. Unluckily, I had not been revaccinated and took vario-

loid from the first case I saw in Chomel's wards, where they were put with the other sick folk. The eruption came out fifteen days later and I was very ill and in bed two weeks. But for the care of Barnet Phillips and my constant companion, William Pearce of Providence, I should have been almost friendless. The Walshes were in Paris (Mr. Robert Walsh as consul) and did all they could, but my eyes suffered, and I lost some of my time in France.

"However, I took courses designed for surgical training, but liked better the lessons of Bernard in physiology and Robin in microscopy. I recall one remark of Bernard. I said, 'I think so and so must be the case.' 'Why think,' he replied, 'when you can experiment? Exhaust experiment and then think.' Robin was a bachelor, living on some inconceivably small sum made by teaching. He had but one eye and, when asked by a Western man why he told us to use the two eyes alike and used only one himself, replied by gouging out his glass eye, to our amusement. We all lived in the Latin Quarter and associated chiefly with the internes and agrégés. Robin used to dine with Pearce and me on Sundays at Café Magny and always ate and drank for three."

A lively account of the Bal Masqué at the Opera, comparing the can-can to a Witches Sabbat—is written to his mother, but the letters and the days of this year are mostly filled with work.

"In the late spring my sister rejoined me and early in June we started on a three-months' tour. At Marseilles we boarded the Ercolano and proceeded on to Naples.

" 'King Bomba' was monarch of that place, ruling ty-

rannically a people who hated him. I saw him once when the procession of the Host was passing the palace in the great square. Everybody in the street knelt, including an array of soldiers, and the monarch himself on the balcony fell upon his knees. He was excessively fat and had to be assisted in rising. Johnston nearly got himself in trouble by refusing to kneel. I, of course, did kneel.

"A day or two later we had an unpleasant but, as it turned out, amusing incident. A man driving a cabriolet pursued us, entreating us to employ him. He was so urgent and offensive that at last Johnston said something rather rough, to which the fellow replied with a phrase not possible to repeat, whereupon Johnston, who was hot-headed, dropped his guide-book and umbrella, jumped in behind the cabriolet and, seizing the driver, who was on the elevated front seat, by the neck, jerked him over backwards and hammered him savagely, until the frightened horse was stopped by the police. Meanwhile I had run up and was expostulating in French. It ended by my sister's finding her way home and Johnston and myself being conducted to the guard-room of the palace, where we remained many hours deciding that we did not know any language they knew. Finally I got hold of a young officer and, speaking in French, induced him to send a letter to the American minister, Mr. Morris. The affair ended in our being released, with a distinct warning from the police and our minister that we had better leave Naples, since the man who had been beaten would be sure to stick a stiletto into the back of one of us on his first occasion.

"This was bad enough, but a few days later we had

another illustration of the nature of the country. We had set out for Capri and had stopped near the island, where the platform was lowered for passage to the boats that take tourists to the Blue Grotto. We were bargaining when two of the men seized my sister and endeavored to drag her into their boat. I knew no Italian but talked French and English vociferously. Seeing I was making no impression, I struck one of the men and caught my sister round the waist. The fellow fell backward into the bay. He came up and was pulled into the boat where, with all manner of evil language, he finally rowed away. On our return from the grotto, the engineer—and all engineers in that day were Scotch or English—said to me, 'Are you English?' 'No,' I said, 'American.' 'Well,' he said, 'that's all the same. I want to warn you that that fellow is well known and will kill one of you before you leave Naples.' As this was the second warning in three days, our departure would have seemed reasonable. We did not leave, however, but confined ourselves to keeping out of crowds and remaining at home at night. . . .

"I saw the usual sights, but I saw besides, in what was then the Duchy of Tuscany, a thing I can never forget. Approaching a town, we found ourselves caught in a crowd, which made it necessary for us to pull up at the side of the road and wait. In a field was assembled a regiment of Austrian soldiers. Seeing what was coming, I begged my sister not to look. I stood up in the carriage and saw a young peasant, not over twenty-five, conducted between two men to the centre of the field, where he was blinded-folded, and the next moment was shot dead. I learned that he had been

found carrying into the city arms hidden in a load of vegetables. This long haunted my praedormitium."

As a whole the year was a disappointment. Moods of discouragement fill the letters, together with a deepening sense of family responsibility.

To His Sister Paris, Feb. 2, 1851.

. . . "The little I have done here is child's play. I have learned next to nothing. I feel unsettled, and instead of a year of fair work which could show results, what have I to exhibit?"

To His Mother Paris, March 18, 1851.

. . . "If I can one day see my dear brothers and myself building up a family name and reputation, and such men that at least Father will not be ashamed of us, I shall feel very happy."

Early in 1851, he wrote home doubting the results of his stay and asking if a second year would be possible, since loss of many weeks from the small-pox, followed by abscesses, had cut seriously into his work. Answers from both parents, however, promptly negatived this plan, giving reasons incontrovertible to so affectionate and conscientious a son. "You have received a letter from your devoted Father," his Mother wrote, "declining your wish to remain longer and indeed, my son, you are wanted at home." She goes on to speak of the elder Mitchell's pressure of work, "three or four consultations a day beside his usual practice,"

and points out that he had no one to take the strain from him "when he was tired and would feign (sic!) rest!"

The father's health was in fact definitely declining, although he continued to practice until 1855. There was nothing for it but to return home, so young Dr. Weir took ship in the fall of 1851. He began his medical career as his father's assistant, for although he desired to become an interne at the Pennsylvania Hospital, he never received an appointment, owing to a contest between the elder Mitchell and certain members of the Board of Trustees.

"This gave rise," he declares, "to great bitterness on both sides; . . . hence I never became a resident. . . . As a substitute I applied for the position of physician to the poor at the Southwark Dispensary and there for some years I acquired experience at the cost of very great labor."

The Autobiography is acute and admirable in the following passages dealing with the young man's situation and with the requirements of the profession. During all his life, Dr. Weir's recollection of his early struggle was keen; he made it the subject of some of his addresses and he utilized it in his studies of young physicians, as in "Roland Blake" and "In War Time."

"My father was at that time professor of the practice of medicine at the Jefferson College (1841-1858.) He was anxious that I should be a surgeon rather than a physician. I never thought myself very fit for the former branch of practice but, as he had desired, I trained myself for it in France rather than for medicine. I soon discovered my unfitness, for although I had several operations, one or two of importance, I had neither the nerve nor the hand that was

needed in those days for operations. At last I deliberately gave it up and turned my attention to general medicine, much to my father's disappointment.

"I think my earliest paper of moment, for there were some unimportant ones, was one on 'South American snake poisons, Corroval and Vao.' Somewhat later I was asked by several gentlemen to join in what was then called a summer school, really a spring school of medicine. I was to teach physiology, and this I was glad to do as I always had had some leaning in that direction, and had it not been for the fact that I failed later in my efforts to become a professor of that branch, it would have been my life-long work. I never was a very good teacher, disliked to lecture, partly because of my poor memory. I had to learn things anew each year. My classes, however, were large and attentive."

V

"'Young man,' he said, 'You are too wise for a poet!' and made him the governor of Bagdad."

Dr. North.

AT the period when Weir Mitchell began his medical career, the profession was in a state of transition between the old and the new. Gone was the elder generation of practitioners—those who had assembled to organize the College of Physicians on January 2, 1787. "By the dim light of candles . . . some in Quaker dress, some in knee-breeches and silk stockings . . . carrying the gold-headed cane and the meditative snuff-box" these twenty-four physicians bore the ruddy complexions "of men who lived much out-doors and in the saddle," and wore the grave and weighty bearing of those who build in a new country. Gone was that devoted group, who battled so stoutly with the fearful yellow-fever epidemics of 1762 and 1793, with the smallpox of 1825 and the cholera of 1832; doctors whose courage and sense of duty made up for lack of scientific knowledge. All honor to them—and Dr. Weir was ever foremost in paying it, reiterating in many speeches and writings, the high standards they had raised for their professional descendants.

They had been an energetic full-bodied, choleric set, individual and vital, living well and sparing themselves not at all. Theirs was a tradition of social dignity such as no other city had equalled. We see them giving noble suppers, drinking noble madeira and laboring nobly day and night, in the

awful penumbra of their half-knowledge. A physician was he who stood as the type of colonial Philadelphia hospitality, so that Thackeray (spelling his name *Whister*) refers respectfully to that "hospitable, pig-tailed shade." And these men fought as heartily as they dined, in the continuous Battle of the Schools. Contagion, vaccination, etherization, bleeding, emetics, calomel, these were the problems to be furiously contested for half a century. Wider knowledge has brought greater tolerance; our generation, standing on the brink of marvels, is cautious, but hardly acrimonious, regarding novelty. A century ago, ideas were upheld with religious intensity or combated with religious violence.

To the generation which succeeded Rush, Wistar, Redman and their colleagues, the field of battle had enormously widened. The more far-sighted among them realized that what had been largely a dispute over forms of practice, had come to involve the fundamental principles of their profession. This profession had been held and taught as an art—"the healing art"—from now on it must also be held and taught as a science. In 1851, science had not yet classified its new discoveries nor made them accessible to general medical practice. The profession was floundering in a flood of new inferences—hardly knowing how to use or to master them. Whither did they tend? What new word would next go forth—bacteriology or therapeutics? Must medicine acknowledge the chemical laboratory to be as important as the anatomical theatre? Those great men, whose work was to change methods of diagnosis more in fifty years than they had altered during five hundred, were still laboring over the early stages of their experiments. Darwin was

corresponding with Hooker and collecting data for the "Origin of Species." Pasteur, in his attic, was studying the crystals of tartaric acid and searching for their source in racemic acid. Scientists of the École Normale, and of the Collège de France struggled on in the dens provided for them; Claude Bernard in a cellar; Wurtz in a lumber-room. Jenner had come to his own after long conflict; Lister and Virchow were names virtually unknown.

The general practitioner was bewildered and skeptical. Able surgeons in Philadelphia even as late as the seventies, regarded bacteriology as a new-fangled notion. One of them was followed by puerperal fever, carrying it from patient to patient and obstinately unaware. Wherever men were at work, they must struggle against indifference and inertia, in the effort to obtain some positive results in public hygiene.

Experiment, however, was everywhere, though it was held to be incompatible with private practice. Dr. Mitchell used to tell of the warnings he received.

"The late Professor Henry Smith said to me, 'What nonsense to bother yourself about snake poisons!' And a larger man, Professor Samuel Jackson, warned me that every experiment in the laboratory would lose me a patient. I did not think so."

A practitioner was not liked if he were too scientific. Rather was he expected "to amble around in a covered buggy with a negro lad to hold the horse . . . to have a good bedside manner and a list of acceptable stories." * A little discreet gossip was popular—more popular than send-

* A. Repplier: *Life of J. W. White.*

ing for a surgeon too promptly. People cast their eyes to heaven at the thought of hospitals and cherished the hope of "foreign baths."

Young Dr. Weir carried home with him from France the idea of experiment. It fascinated him, from 1852 when he was twenty-three and published his first paper "On various forms of Uric Acid Crystals." Others followed showing the direction taken by his mind and from 1852 to 1860 there are seven investigations in his listed Bibliography, besides the main subjects on which he was at work. Of his method he says:

"It was my habit to get through work at three or four o'clock; to leave my servant at home with orders to come for me if I was wanted, and then to remain in the laboratory all the evening, sometimes up to one in the morning, a slight meal being brought me from a neighboring inn."

In 1859-60 appeared two important toxicological studies, both with William A. Hammond. The first of these, "The Alkaloids of Corroval and Vao," made a very marked impression, which was confirmed by the second, "An experimental study of the Toxicological effects of Sassy-Bark, an ordeal poison from the Liberian coast."

Meanwhile, for four years of such leisure as he could snatch from building up a practice, he was engaged on his "Researches upon the Venom of the Rattlesnake," a treatise covering one hundred and fifty pages of the "Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge," for July, 1860. The "story of the perils and anxieties of this research," he writes, "embarrassed by want of help and by its great cost, is untold in these pages." Later, as we shall read, he describes how one

summer a man brought a box of rattlesnakes to his door to sell. Hammond, who had been discussing with him the question of antidotes to snake-poison, readily agreed to collaborate in these investigations. They were pursued over many years, published from time to time, and finally embodied and completed, sixteen years later in his "Researches on the Venoms of Poisonous Serpents," with Ed. T. Reichert in 1886. A short section of the Autobiography is devoted to the subject:

"The history of a man's life is in what it produces. I have had four forms of product.

"First, toxicological. My laboratory work began early. The physiological side I do not think of as valuable. I have spoken of my physiological teaching in the summer school and of my defeat at the Jefferson. At one time my scientific work was in the direction of comparative physiology among reptilians, and later, again and again, of researches on the poison of serpents; these were the foundation for more modern study of toxic albumens. My interest in these investigations began with the aid of Edward T. Reichert, Professor of Physiology in the University of Pennsylvania, when my conception of the duality of venoms tempted me; and to this day I find it hard to keep out of it.

"Second, I have in my profession made what I may call practical discoveries or inventions, the history of which as they grew in my mind it is less difficult to state. I have written a host of medical papers and books and given the world some things of practical value.

"Third, I have written verse, almost all of it since I was fifty. This has yet to be judged seriously by time.

"Fourth, I have had at last, what always I was sure would come, success as a story teller.

"Out of all these I have gotten pleasure and brain play, and out of some, profit. In considering them, I see no better way than to take single pieces of work and recall the mode in which they were evolved with greater or less success. As an example, I will take the subject of animal poisons. I was lecturing on physiology in the Summer School when the late Dr. William A. Hammond, afterwards Surgeon General, mentioned to me that when in Texas he had used with success an antidote for snake poison known as Bibron's, a famous herpetologist in Paris. It turned out later that Bibron had never heard of the antidote. Just at this time a man offered to sell me a half dozen rattlesnakes. Instantly I became curious as to the truth of Hammond's statement and bought the reptiles. Several experiments convinced me that the antidote was valueless, and, my curiosity broadening in scope, I found that no one knew anything about the poison of serpents since Spallanzani, who had written nearly a hundred years before. Here was an opportunity, energized by the unfailing curiosity with which I have always regarded any problem in any of my lines of interest.

"I set about examining the poison, physically and chemically, and for several years I gave up all my leisure to this work. That leisure was small or was won when other men were idling or had left town for their summer holidays. In fact, most of my work was done in summer and with great difficulty, on account of lack of money and time. Now here comes one of the peculiarities which I noted. Ideas about snake poison, how to do this or that, the phenomena it causes

in animals, occupied my mind incessantly. I took it to sleep with me and woke to think about it, and found it hard to escape when in church or conversing with people. It is something like being haunted, this grip a fruitful research gets upon you. You come upon a difficulty, try to think a way out of it. This happens continually. You are like a cat at a mouse hole watching for the mouse. All sorts of things present themselves, are tested, accepted, rejected, or set aside, and at last experiments are made following some apparently fruitful idea.

"The process is not very unlike that which is present when in fiction or verse you wait, watching the succession of ideas that come when you keep an open mind. And acquiring the habit of the open mind is not always an easy matter, especially if you have occupations outside of your work. In fiction and poetry, the form of expressing a thing has to be considered. In science, this is primarily of little moment, but always I find that I think best when, having come to a critical point, I state a theory which I am going to accept or reject as experiment decides. I must always write it out, sometimes again and again. This is a favorite method with me for fruitful thought. Above all, when engaged in any form of production, my mind is turned on to it as one winds a piece of machinery and waits to see it grind out results. I seem to be dealing with ideas which come from what I call my mind, but as to the mechanism of this process, beyond a certain point it is absolutely mystery. I say, 'I will think this over. How does it look? To what does it lead?' Then there comes to me from some inward some-

where criticisms, suggestions, in a word, ideas, about the ultimate origin of which I know nothing.

"I may as well say a few words as to the later history of snake poisons. My early work carried me into the war and ceased when I became acting assistant surgeon. I had completed a large quarto, which was published by the Smithsonian Institution in 1860. This enormously advanced the subject of snake venoms. One or two of the smaller papers which appeared before the war were unimportant, or, as I now think, erroneous.

"In 1881 or 1882 my attention was again called to the subject by an extraordinary incident. At the time of which I speak, no one had imagined that the poison of serpents was other than a single poison, varied in different serpents. At dusk one day I was going up the steps of a house where I had once lived, and, being absorbed in thought, I took out my pass-key. Then remembering, I rang the bell. Happening to look down, I noticed the rug on which I stood, which was made of rope, one corner partly raveled and slightly resembling a serpent. Suddenly, there came the idea that the poison of serpents must be a double and not a single poison. Whether this was the result of some past thoughts that had never risen into the region of consciousness, or was one of those swift decisions brought up by incident, I cannot say. It impressed me greatly. I went to my house, asked to have dinner put off, and for ten or fifteen minutes wrote my reasons why snake poison must be double.

"The next day I asked the aid of Professor Reichert. We set about finding serpents, but it was five months before we succeeded in splitting the poison into two or more. This is

now ancient history; it was, however, the foundation of all the work since then. With the exception of a brief but very elaborate paper on the effect of venoms on the blood, by Dr. Alonzo B. Stewart and myself, I have done nothing further, except that I wrote out a series of hints for researches which, greatly modified and pecuniarily and otherwise assisted by me, were worked out by Professor Simon Flexner and Dr. Hideyo Noguchi, with the highly satisfactory result now well known to the world of science."

One effect of the rattlesnake investigation was to bring its author a number of letters from men of science. Fayrer, in London, writes him about them; while in Paris Dumeril expresses interest in "vos longues, savantes et instructives recherches." And there was always the gay, little Autocrat in Boston, whose wit, during many years interchange, played happily over the subject. A copy of *Elsie Venner* was sent to Dr. Weir: with the message: "It's a little bit rattlesnaky as you will find out!"

A letter from Holmes to Dr. Weir's father as early as 1849, shows that the friendship was hereditary. Later, it was easily transferred to the son, with whom the Autocrat had much in common and the younger man often sought refuge in the sympathy of Boston, when his colleagues in Philadelphia shook their heads over the idea of a career uniting medicine with literature.

"As a young fellow I saw Oliver Wendell Holmes at our table. I ventured to say I liked his lines on the Constitution, on which, pleased, he wrote them out. I have them now. I used to joke the Doctor about Boston. One day he asked me what new thing I had noticed in the city. I said, 'Chiefly

the bigness of the feet of the women.' This brought fierce denial. Then I told him I had been interested in the sign on the Common, 'Dogs are forbidden to bathe in the pond on Sundays.' I said it spoke much for the intelligence of the Boston dog. He insisted there was no such sign. But there was. When I came to Boston again it was gone, for which I gave credit to Dr. Holmes. But Agnes Irwin tells me one of the McCooks saw it and, knowing that where he lived in Ohio no one would believe his account of it, went one night and stole it. I wonder where it is now.

"Mrs. Jacob Rodgers told me this of Wendell Holmes' liking to talk. Mrs. Rodgers had a nightingale, caged for nine years, an admirable singer. On Dr. Holmes' telling her he had never heard a nightingale, she asked him to come to breakfast any morning and he would be able to hear the bird at its best. Mrs. Holmes said to him when he told her, 'Be sure to listen and not talk.' At the table he heard the bird break out into delightful music, listened a moment, then began as usual in his fluent way to amuse the company; and that—was the end of the audience of the nightingale.

"My early acquaintance with Holmes ripened into warm friendship, nourished by letters and rare visits. Later he wrote, 'Be sure to see me when in Boston. I am lonely. You are the only friend of distinction left to me.' "

O. W. Holmes to Dr. J. K. Mitchell

Boston, April 5, 1849.

"My dear Sir,

"Many thanks for the copy of your lectures on 'Cryptogamous Origin of Fevers.' I have done what every corre-

spondent does not do, before he answers an author—looked carefully through the book before venturing to thank you for it. My conclusion is that it is a most ingenious and learned disquisition, covering a ground of the deepest interest perhaps of any in theoretical medicine, and going so far to establish a presumption in favor of the fungous origin of malarious and other diseases that the most prejudiced reader cannot but be staggered with the multitude of points at which the hypothesis intersects the long and universally acknowledged facts. I have for a long time been a believer in the organic nature of the cause of the diseases in question. But I had neither read nor thought deeply on the subject and my notions were very vague. Life, growth, germs, swarms, such terms and ideas have always seemed to me involved in the movements of the pestilential disease rather than mere meteorological changes. But I did not realize how complete an argument could be made out for that particular form of life upon which you have with so much reason fixed as the probable agent in these great destructive operations of nature.

"I suppose it would be hardly fair to reproach you for a somewhat liberal interpretation of facts in favor of your theory, in making out what you consider yourself to be an *ex parte* statement. Once in a while, I think you are a little fanciful, as on page 110 for instance, touching the relation of the mushrooms and the ladies, etc. Perhaps, too, it may be thought over-doing the matter to compare the disease occasioned by a cooked fungus taken into the stomach, with that produced by the development of living ones in the body. If a man was poisoned by a dish of eels, you would hardly

compare his case with that of a patient affected with ascarides even if the fish was as much of a worm as he looks like one.

"But there is no need of my laboring to show that I am impartial by attempting to find matter for criticism. The lectures are most interesting, original and agreeable, and cannot but be a very acceptable offering to the profession in this country and in Europe.

"I have noticed two or three errata which I note for correction in your next edition. . . . It is almost absurd to tail off a letter of acknowledgment with such little specks, but I have read proofs for myself and my friends so often that I am wonderfully dyspeptic of errors such as printers are constantly making. . . ."

The next letter shows the Autocrat in a gracious mood, to his friend's son, although he gently reminds the literary aspirant that he is in no way connected with the editorship of the *Atlantic*!

O. W. Holmes to Weir Mitchell

Boston, December 28, 1858.

"My dear Mitchell,

"I have hardly had time to read my correspondence since my return after a week's absence. I must just say a word in reply to your letter.

"I remember well the pleasant meetings at your father's table for I was often there at short intervals. . . . I stopped here interrupted by a visitor and before beginning have hastily looked over your poem. It is a poet's poem—warm, flushed, even, perhaps at some points a little over-heated. It shows skill, grace, feeling, fancy,

"Now whether it will suit the *Atlantic* Editor or not, I cannot say. I must do by it as by everything sent me, let them form their own opinions. The two faults they will find as regards its fitness for the magazine are its length and its too great similarity to Tennyson.

"I will see that it is fairly introduced to special attention, and you will hear from them in due season—you ought to be informed that I am in no way connected with the editorship of the *Atlantic*, though many contributions are directed to me as if I were.

"It gives me pleasure to renew my acquaintance with the father in the son, and if at any time I can serve you I shall be most happy to do so.

"Very truly yours,"

To The Same 21 Charles St., Boston, May 8, 1862.

"My dear Mitchell:

"I am very pleasantly reminded of you by the receipt of your paper on the Circulation of the Snapping Turtle, and perhaps even more agreeably by the spirited lines, 'How the Cumberland Went Down,' which appears as its poem. The union of poetry and science under the same cover reminds me of the time when Ronsard prefixed his verses to the collected works of Ambroise Paré. I only wonder how you can write such good poetry with such a gift for true scientific observation. I was walking here last evening with Agassiz, who had been working out the Neurologia of an—'aluta and an—'ophora (I forget their confounded names) when he asked me how these minute details in a specialty impressed me; as I listened, I told him I liked to

follow the workings of another mind through these minute teasing investigations, to see a relentless observer get hold of Nature and squeeze her until the sweat broke out all over her and Sphincters loosened—but I could not bring my own mind to it. He thought I should not be the poet he was pleased to consider me if I could. However, you, who have a great deal more science in you than I ever had, must remember Haller and Goethe and make the most of both your talents by either of which I have no doubt you can achieve a reputation.

"The researches on the poison of the rattlesnake interested me beyond any paper I had read for a long while. I am delighted to see that the same love for original research and capacity for it which made your father's name early known to the scientific world, are coming out in still greater force in yourself, and as if Nature would not put out one light without kindling another, that his poetic taste and talent bid fair to reach a still further development in his son. It will give me great pleasure to keep pace with your growth and to take cognizance of your efforts in various directions. Hoping that I may have a chance sometime or other to aid you in word or deed,

"Very truly yours,

To The Same Boston, April 29, 1868.

"Dear Mr. Sir:

"I have to receive from you the past tomorrow the phrases —book of the Portugal Language. Walking through the mail-office to Cambridge where I inhabit not, I am wanting it before the day next to this morning's hinder side.. I find

in it much rib movement. The English I discover to be very extraordinary pretty good. The London's native must have was a writer of the vernacular pasts. I respect the ditto well accommodated to the Portugese. To the Joseph Miller book much prefer I this and thank the same for you with all my cordiacsciobicle.

"Make believe I am

"Most Faithfoolishly yours,"*

To The Same 21 Charles Street.

"My dear Dr. Mitchell,

"I received the other day your experimental 'Essay on Respiration in the Chelonia.' I have looked it through, not read it as it should be read, being as is apt to be the case somewhat occupied just now with matters out of town and in, a 4th of July Oration among other things.

"I had the advantage of hearing Wyman talk about your Essay before receiving it myself. He spoke of it in the very highest terms and of course indorsed its very interesting conclusions as to the true mechanism of the respiratory process as proved by your experiments.

"I am much pleased to find that you are going in that path of research which you entered so conspicuously. I could have wished that you had obtained the place we tried to aid you in obtaining, but such labors as yours will sooner or later find their reward. Perhaps it is hardly desirable that an active man of science should obtain a chair too early, for

* Imitation of and reference to the Portuguese Handbook: *English As She Is Spoke.*

I have noticed as you doubtless have, that the wood of which academic *fauteuils* are made has a narcotic quality which occasionaly renders their occupants somnolent, lethargic or even comatose.

"Hoping that you will get *seated* soon enough for your comfort and not too soon for your reputation, and thanking you very sincerely for your admirable essay, I am

"Yours very truly,"

To The Same Boston, May 15, 1870.

"Dear Dr. Mitchell,

"I received the card of invitation to the Reception at the Hall of the College of Physicians on the 18th and wished I could be there to look and listen. Let me thank you and the Committee on invitations for your kindness in sending it and express, though somewhat late, my regrets that I could not be with you.

"I am reminded that I was questioned some weeks since and again this afternoon as to whether rattlesnakes are oviparous or viviparous. Can you not tell me how it is from your experience? From your ophidian fold there must (or may) have been Crotalae in an interesting situation, and upon whom the social obligations of maternity devolved while you were their shepherd—dear little helpless innocent creatures! Did they come naked from their mother's womb into this cold and cruel world, or under the shelter of a calcipede—an egg-shell in short?

"This is the question with which I wish to tax your knowledge, which I believe is more extensive and exact with

regard to these interesting fellow creatures of ours than that of any other living person.

"Yours very truly,
"O. W. HOLMES."

VI

"Luck is the accident that happens to the competent."
Notebook, 1892.

BY means of the Mitchell family letters, it is easy to see much of Dr. Mitchell's life, social and professional. We hear about the yellow fever scourge of 1852, a terrible puzzle for the doctors, who did much toward cleanliness, but knew nothing of mosquitoes and fly-screens. Friends come and go: the handsome George Boker, who was writing plays, and Bayard Taylor, who was writing verse. Thackeray lectures—on which occasion a Mitchell acquaintance behaved with unbecoming levity and Dr. Weir's father, his wife writes, went into "ecstacies over *G*enny Lind." (sic!) Although the head of the family was always fond of music and became one of the group of citizens who decided in 1857, to build the Academy of Music, it was the one art in which his children displayed small interest. Poetry was the air they breathed; they knew limitless amounts of it by heart and regarded with boredom all who did not share their taste, but the household was more scientific, religious and literary than artistic. Meanwhile their city was changing; the streets were better-paved and cleaner and the houses systematically numbered. There were holidays and Newport was mentioned by the elder Dr. Mitchell, as "a queer old place, full of very modern Yankees and very ancient houses, both ready to take you in!"

The subject of our present history was now a tall, young man with big eyes and big features, dominant and strong. To his practice and laboratory work, he added lecturing on Physiology before the Philadelphia Association for Medical Instruction. Other similar appointments succeeded. His output of work of all kinds steadily increased, quite outrunning his own faulty memory, so that when he compiled his first catalogue in 1894, he forgot more articles than he included.

Few of them he thought important, nor did they interest him in retrospect as much as the verse which he still—incredible as it seems—had time to compose. All kinds of writing in fact was beginning to come more easily; simultaneously, he seems to have acquired self-confidence in his profession and in his "scribblings." He tells us that he was always certain he would be a successful writer. The warnings of medical elders not to publish until his practice was established, he heeded by publishing anonymously. Verse such as "Herndon" and other small pieces, hereabouts mentioned, was kept for book publication later. It is unimportant and he himself felt that he only began to write poetry at fifty.

Life moved steadily on amid these many activities. Then came two severe winters, those of '55 and '56 and during the first Dr. Mitchell's father suffered a stroke, from which he never fully recovered. His state naturally occupies the family, who also lament at this time the death of an old friend, the Arctic explorer, Elisha Kent Kane.

During 1856, Dr. Weir met and fell in love with Mary Middleton Elwyn, lovely of face, gentle, vivacious and in-

telligent. Their engagement followed although by the tone of these two letters, written in August, to his sister, we see that he had not been unduly hopeful. His joy was great when the marriage took place on the following September; and it was to the Elwyn home, "Reculver" near Westchester, that the young people went for their honeymoon.

". . . Well, after being ready twice and resolute to go many times, I at last did see West Chester. Worst of all, however, I had to go it blind, as Mrs. Whaley had left there and devil a patient I had in the borough. Estimate now my courage. Admire on the other hand my endurance. I arose at six with that half-done feeling which possesses a man who has had half a sleep, half a wash, and half a breakfast; up to the cars, tumble in, and so two and a half mortal hours to West Chester, where a hotel with a pert sign had the honor to harbor me. I have a good deal to say about this redoubtable town. I sat for an hour smoking in front of the Mansion House and spied out the odd fish. They need, nay, demand a more elaborate exposition than I can offer them just now. All the morning I drove with a guide up and down the Brandywine, through rocky glens, along broad skirting meadows, and over big hills with little hills and valleys endless; beneath them, a charming land in splendid culture, full of streams, dotted with woodland, braided with hedges. Near the Creek, I picked up Charley McEwen in fishing guise. I drove him into town and he dined with me. I invited him to drive out to the Doctor's after dinner, but he declined, naively remarking that he didn't care particularly to talk to Mrs. E. *all* the afternoon, and that that was what it would come to. As such was pre-

cisely what I wanted him for, I gave him considerable credit for penetration. About five I drove out to the E's, was most warmly welcomed, took tea with them and a pleasant Miss Rivinus. Alfred E. drove Miss R. into West Chester about eight o'clock with the moon for a lantern, and such a moon! We, Miss E. and I, accompanied them about half way, one and a half miles, and then walked back by moonlight. Well, my dear, I came again, thereby and thereafter, to that summam principium of human knowledge.

"Wharton knows it. Ask him, if you choose and, please heaven, I won't illustrate it if I can help it. About half past nine my carriage came and off I went. Of course, in my way of open chat with you I have many little things to talk about, but somehow there is an idea of most damnable publicity about letters. Goody! Think, if this were to reach the dead letter postoffice. Ow! . . . Truly Weir."

S. W. M. to his Sister August 23, 1856.

". . . Whatever fortune the future may have in store for me, it is quite certain that thus far she has given me little cause of complaint. I have met with every kindness from the Elwyns and shall certainly visit them again in September. I sent up a basket of flowers today by way of thanks for a very pleasant evening. Perhaps the verses which I enclose may give you a clue to the puzzled mood under whose influence I penned my last letter. . . . Well, it is perhaps fortunate that we can always draw the family bond a little tighter, and thus hold still securely all the rest when one has been taken away. Indeed, now I seem to be brought nearer to you than ever and, should the worst

Reculver—East front
the country home of Mary Middleton Elwyn

Reculver—the South side

misfortune that can overtake a man short of dishonor fall upon me, the bond will be made still stronger and tighter."

His dread, however, vanished when he became engaged, although this great happiness was soon clouded by loss. In 1858 his father died—"my best friend," the son sorrowfully declares and life took on another aspect and entered upon another phase.

The death of the elder Dr. Mitchell produced a situation which is familiar in the lives of many professional men. The Autobiography thus describes it:

"He had lived very freely, after the Virginia method or want of method, and on his death, in place of an ample estate, there was not sufficient for the proper support of my mother and younger brothers, my sisters, with the exception of Elizabeth, having already married. Of this I do not complain. Unless life had so burdened me with duties and obligations, I should have lost an invaluable discipline; but all this made me resolve to secure at least a comfortable competence and taught me lessons of care and self-restraint as to money, for I inherited my father's tendency to extravagance. Towards the close of his life, my own practice had been increasing out of proportion to my years, for, though people saw my father's state of failing health, they believed he was still back of me with any aid I might need. I was making at that time about two thousand dollars or more a year, but the year after his death a large number of persons who had accepted me when he lived left me, and my practice dropped to a thousand dollars, so that I thought that my work had been seriously impaired.

"From that time on, however, my practice slowly in-

creased and I was enabled still, at great cost of such labor as few men give, to carry on some of my scientific work. After the war began I ceased to do much laboratory work and gave myself up to my profession."

Dr. Weir was not wont, as we shall see, to understate any effort or achievement of his own. Yet in these temperate sentences he dismisses a family burden which few men of his years would have borne as gallantly.

He had been but a few months married when his father died and it became evident that in addition to his own responsibilities, he must assume those of that other family. At home were his mother, his sister Elizabeth, in her early thirties, the three younger brothers, aged respectively twenty-two, seventeen and fourteen, who were yet to be started in life. The "invaluable discipline" he mentions above does not refer alone to the financial aid he must provide for these near and dear people—since in that he had some assistance. Mr. Alexander Henry, the English relation, made his American cousins an allowance of twelve hundred a year for some years. The discipline included also the need of tact, firmness, and steadfast affection in dealing with youthful excesses and difficult temperaments. Part of the following letter gives one aspect of the tasks and suggests by its very tenderness, what some of these difficulties must have been.

S.W.M. to his Sister August 17, 1859.

(Eleven months after his marriage and a month after the birth of the below-mentioned John.)

"My dear Sister,

"I destroyed your last letter and therefore cannot refer to

The lane at Reculver, where Weir Mitchell courted Mary Middleton Elwyn; and below their first great grandson in that same lane.

it, but I can say a word or two more about the matters alluded to in both of your notes. I cannot help feeling, when I reflect on it, that a most baseless jealousy has been the shadow of your life, not only now but always. I do beg of you with a sincerity which is most sincere and humble, to guard your own character. If, as I doubt not has been the case, our own dear Father ever pointed out to you the shoals on which he conceived you might drift, recall all that he said to you, and this is not asking too much. My dear, dear Sister, my own study and estimate of a Christian training and its value, if it has any, is not formed by me from watching how it acts on people like my wife, who began young with it, and have not by nature those iron faults to bend which are the growth of natures such as yours or mine, and so I do seriously feel that in the task of self-moulding you and all Christians have a task which becomes most responsible from this point of view. Have I said too much? Well, dear old lady, I am dissatisfied with it myself and shall not read it over; but will you let me say, what the preacher can say once a week and break no bones, that I do miss among Christians the evidence of its utterly penetrating their daily life, of its making their manners and clothing with its unselfishness the whole of their life of relations to others. How sharply I have looked at this in the men who are mixed up with me in life you cannot conceive. I see fighting men and ruffians turned to bigots, men and women made more charitable and more amiable, but I do not see those of our own calibre and mould made unselfish in little things, tender of tongue, and more and more gentle in the social sense of the word. Now please don't say this is a personal

attack. You don't to the parson. Don't say I am unkind. Your first letter cost me some tears, wept inwardly after my heathen fashion. I felt it as a hard thrust, and so did it the honor to think of it seriously. Do me the same honor, being sure that I send this a little nervous about my big sister, whom God guard. John sends his love, or would if he were less of a little Canaanite. Mary does certainly send hers. All are well, but I still at home and likely to be. Write soon, dearest Sister."

If such jealous devotion presented a problem familiar to many, the easy-going young brothers were no less of a responsibility. All three relied entirely upon his strength to support their own weakness, unwisdom, or inexperience. How much he was to them, each one in his own way testifies. "Mother says," writes Ned in 1863, "what would you do without your brother Weir?" and again, "Big Brothers are a special Providence!" which of this one was true indeed. Edward, that "petted baby" caused Dr. Mitchell a special anxiety. Not only because he seemed "of all of us, the most earnest and perfect character," but because that thoughtfulness, joined to a delicate physique made protection in his case instinctive. Chapman, the middle brother, though willing and gallant, was hardly yet mature enough to take his share of the burden. As for Walsh, the wild and courageous, the handsome and daring, his career may be traced through a series of vivid letters—a chronicle wherein we see the hope, the promise, the spirit, the picturesqueness, fade out into the tragic shadows of unsteadiness and failure.

The Walsh story is important because it greatly affected

Dr. Mitchell's early life and because his literary instinct caused him later on to create a legend out of that vanished figure. If this legend was a touching piece of family loyalty, the real career of "Walsh the Filibuster," as his brother called him, was no less touching.

Walsh Mitchell was sent at his own wish to Panama in 1859, from there he writes gaily to "dear old Weir" that he intends to tell him everything. These confidences included an account of his duel with a Spanish officer, bearing the not inappropriate name of Casanova, an affair that made a good deal of trouble for all concerned. Other brawls follow, wounds and fevers are lightly mentioned, difficulties and complications, personal and political, are constantly alluded to in terms uneasily vague. For a time the youth talks prosperously, he expects to send his mother money, he is eager to help Weir by collecting snake-venoms. Perhaps curiosities would arrive from South America, gifts to "Mary" (his sister-in-law) and affectionate messages to Baby John. Sometimes came disgusted and disappointed letters . . . sometimes documents even harder to bear. Walsh's mother writes that in one month of 1861, Dr. Mitchell had paid three hundred dollars unexpected debts, beside getting Walsh's commission, seeing to Ned's college expense, trying to collect one hundred and fifty bills, and giving financial help to her. "Indeed you do not know," Dr. Mitchell wrote his sister, "the hundred cares upon me." Later, he looks back to this time, "when many of my hardest and most burdened years were a hell of anxiety."

Yet on the other side of life's ledger one must not overlook the great happiness of those first years of marriage,

faithfully reflected in the diary of the young wife. March, 1861, she writes: "W. and I are having one of our cosy evenings. It is so cold that we have a fire in the dining-room." These evenings were few, because his practice was steadily growing and was to increase, as we know, until it became one of the largest in the country. Even during the Civil War he was able to invest a little money; and we find him joyously buying "a blue-and-gold Whittier" or taking an occasional vacation, if Dr. Da Costa was able to look after his patients during his absence. These two physicians were friends during most of their lives. Once a quarrel divided them causing a separation from which both suffered and both were glad to be reconciled, before the final separation overtook them.

Character is strengthened by such situations as Dr. Mitchell's, providing it is strong enough not to be crushed by them. Certainly, his matured and deepened. His fighting blood was up and that inconvenient sensibility which had interfered in the beginning with his professional success, had lessened. A temper naturally quick and high was subdued to a remarkable patience. Once in a boat on an Italian lake, he struck a companion who had aroused his anger. The blow knocked the offender overboard, with consequences which, for a time, looked very serious. Dr. Mitchell never forgot the incident. He became from this time on, patient with the patience of the physician, tolerant with the tolerance of the philosopher. The latter was even more unusual since he was at all times extremely egoistic.

That social life, which was to be so long, so brilliant, was beginning at this period. He loved dinners, friends, talk.

"We sat at Whartons from six to eleven and the talk was of the very best, with wide range.". . . And the traditional Philadelphia hospitality, cultivated and dignified—how beautifully he wrote of it—how it weaves itself, like a strain of music through "Characteristics" and "A Madeira Party"; how he kept it alive in his own house and how dull the world seemed to his friends, when that page was turned by the dreadful finger of 1914!

Dr. W. W. Keen tells how he was sitting one day in Dr. Brinton's office with a skull in one hand and in the other a volume of Gray's Anatomy, when the blinds rattled and he looked out between them into a pair of brilliant eyes. A tall, fair, energetic young man was standing on the sidewalk. "Then and there he asked me—*me*, a doctor three days old, to help him in his snake-poison experiments; and when these researches were published my name was as prominent as his. Thus began," concludes the surgeon, "the most powerful influence in my professional life." This generosity to younger physicians was characteristic of Dr. Mitchell. "He was constantly suggesting to them new fields of labor and instinctively knew the lines upon which investigations may be profitably pursued," writes a colleague. He was ever a constant suggester of ideas, in those days "when the front office was full of patients and the back office of rattlesnakes and guinea-pigs." Thus a group of brilliant men was soon formed around him, while friendships, like those with W. A. Hammond and J. S. Billings continued and deepened.

About 1859-1860, he met a friend of his sister Elizabeth, the new rector of the Church of the Advent, a very large young man, with rare humor and vividness in talk and still

rarer goodness and simplicity, named Phillips Brooks. Their acquaintance grew into intimacy. Brooks moved to Holy Trinity and later to Boston, but as we are told by his letters, the friendship lasted until the Bishop's death in 1893.

All these things must be beheld across a chasm which separates them from our generation. That chasm is the Civil War. Before 1861, this young man's busy, anxious life, his marriage, children, friends, activities, are seen as one looks across the Grand Canyon with an opera-glass. There is no hint of what was to befall, when personal life and all its cares and interests must give way to the tremendous events, happening and about to happen. Now came the days when the clamor over John Brown's Raid assumed such proportions that riot followed the poor body on its way to burial. The elections of 1860 were followed by a tension which all felt must snap the cord binding the States together. Then came April 12th and the War.

What this War meant to Dr. Mitchell only those closest to him entirely realized. "Whatever his thoughts henceforth," says one of these, "deep down was that memory perpetual. . . . His tales and poems, no matter what be their subjects all come from a spirit over which has passed the great vision; every drop of ink is tinctured with the blood of the Civil War." When these words were spoken in January 1914, they meant less to the audience who heard them than they were to mean in a few months time, months bringing a sharpened realization of what War had been to the beloved physician, now no longer among them.

The experience shook him emotionally, and roused him intellectually to the highest degree. Unconsciously, all life

seemed to have been a preparation for this. . . . So often it is so with a talented man, who drills himself year after year, moving towards he knows not what. Thus is a fine instrument sharpened for fine work. That ingenious, that fertile brain was now equipped and ready to deal with the material which hospital work would provide—with new possibilities in experiment, with new ideas in therapeutics. As Dr. Mitchell declares, the door of opportunity was opened to him, but to one both sensitive and tender-hearted, the passing through that portal was ineffaceably terrible.

VII

"We who lived through those years remember them as men recall the quake of a convulsed earth and almost are vexed that our children can talk so lightly of what to us was living tragedy."

Roland Blake.

BEFORE reading Dr. Mitchell's own record of the Civil War, it is interesting to see a letter from his English cousin, Mitchell Henry, making shrewd and temperate statement of an attitude, which, to Dr. Weir (and many like him) was so wounding that he could not take pleasure for years after in visiting England.

London, 20th January, '62.

". . . To answer your inquiries I must tell you that there are quite two opinions in England about the American war, and its rights and objects. There is one opinion amongst the great mass of thoughtless people such as compose the chief parts of society and is to be met with at Clubs and dinner parties and so on—from noblemen down to the ordinary mass of genteel people (as they are called), and another opinion amongst the thinking few. The general tone of feeling here is, I am persuaded, indifference, to a degree and extent which would be hardly credible with you. Of course I do not speak of merchants whose commerce is deranged by your operations, but the great mass of society here looks upon this war very much as they do on the war

which is always chronic amongst the Turks and the Montenegrians or on the Mexican Wars. It forms a matter of gossip and that is all. Very few take the trouble to trace out your operations on the map, as they always do in European Wars. And the reason I believe to be two-fold. First, neither side is believed to be sincere in its objects. Secondly, neither side is believed to tell the truth about the result of its battles and skirmishes. Then there is an undefined satisfaction in thinking that a nation (which rightly or wrongly is popularly believed here to be rude, selfish, and over-bearing in its diplomacy to a degree never equalled in the world's history), should be at last quarreling in itself, and weakening its power for evil and disturbance for years to come. Probably you will be surprised to hear that people draw their conclusions as to the civilization and refinement of America more from what they hear of duels and Bowie knives and wars in the Legislature than from all other things put together. The Americans are believed here to be a lawless people, and in England there is an extraordinary reverence for law—as you may see any time on going into the worst haunts of a large town, and seeing solitary policeman quelling a fierce disturbance by his mere presence as clothed with the majesty of Law. You will smile but I verily believe that the stories of the scrambling that goes on at your huge table d'hôtes has a great effect in causing the belief that Americans are not gentlemen—and therefore the people here are quite glad to think that a 'nation of scrubs' are fighting amongst each other. This it is also, which rather inclines the sympathy of many to the South, who are considered from what is seen of them at Paris, to be

much nearer refined gentlemen in feelings and manner than the northerners.

"On the other hand, the thinking few see in this war, the battle of slavery, God or the Devil, and therefore they do sympathize with the North. But your best friends here, have to make many an apology in your behalf. They know that for years you have yielded inch by inch to the slave holders for the sake of peace—now giving up a bit of free soil, now altering a law, and conniving at elections of which you must in your hearts have disapproved, all from a shrinking at fighting out this great question. And then when at length the last concession has been made and if Free America would not become a continent of slavery *she must* fight, people fear that you are only half sincere, and would gladly sacrifice the slave again for peace and dollars. Only raise the intelligible war cry—freedom of the soil to all—and there will be a vast change in European opinion respecting you. But until that is done, depend upon it there will be no zealous partisans for either North or South. Then again you have been very unfortunate in your Statesmen: Mr. Seward *did* say something to the Duke of Newcastle about fighting England, which greatly astonished and disgusted those who heard him. It has been denied, but I have it from the Duke's Secretary who was there at the time and this has been widely repeated and resented in England.

"Then again, Mr. Buchanan gave great offence about the Ostend Conference and your supposed sympathy with Russia during our war did not make Englishmen love you. I know very well that all these things happened because your government was in the hands of the Southerners, but the

great body of Englishmen do not know it, and thus you are not popular with them. I must just add too that the Trent affair has not tended to raise the estimation in which the North is held here. You have no idea how anxious the people were, when first the news of the capture of Slidell & Co. took place, to discover that America had the law of nations on her side, and had consequently only done what she was justified in doing. You will see this feeling faithfully reflected in the Times article, which appeared the day after the news reached England—and you may see as faithfully reflected the subsequent feeling when it turned out that you had not right on your side. Nothing could have averted war if you had kept the prisoners. But what an opportunity Mr. Seward lost! If, on discovering that the seizure was illegal, he had spontaneously released the prisoners, he would thereby have raised a strong opinion here in favor of the North, on the broad ground that America intended to take her stand in law and order, but the fact that, although he admits in his dispatch that the capture was wrong, the American government consigned the prisoners to a felon's prison, has given the impression that America will take advantage of any tricks when she can safely do so. And so I hope you will go on and fight it out with the South, for truth to tell, I do think that your constant compromise with evil in the shape of the slave-question and the South for so many years, has demoralized you as a nation, and that it requires a violent gale of wind to ventilate your moral sense. So now my scolding is at an end. God knows you may find blots enough in our

old England, if you like, but mind, I am not comparing England and America—but only telling, in answer to your request, what people think on this side.

"Your attached Cousin,

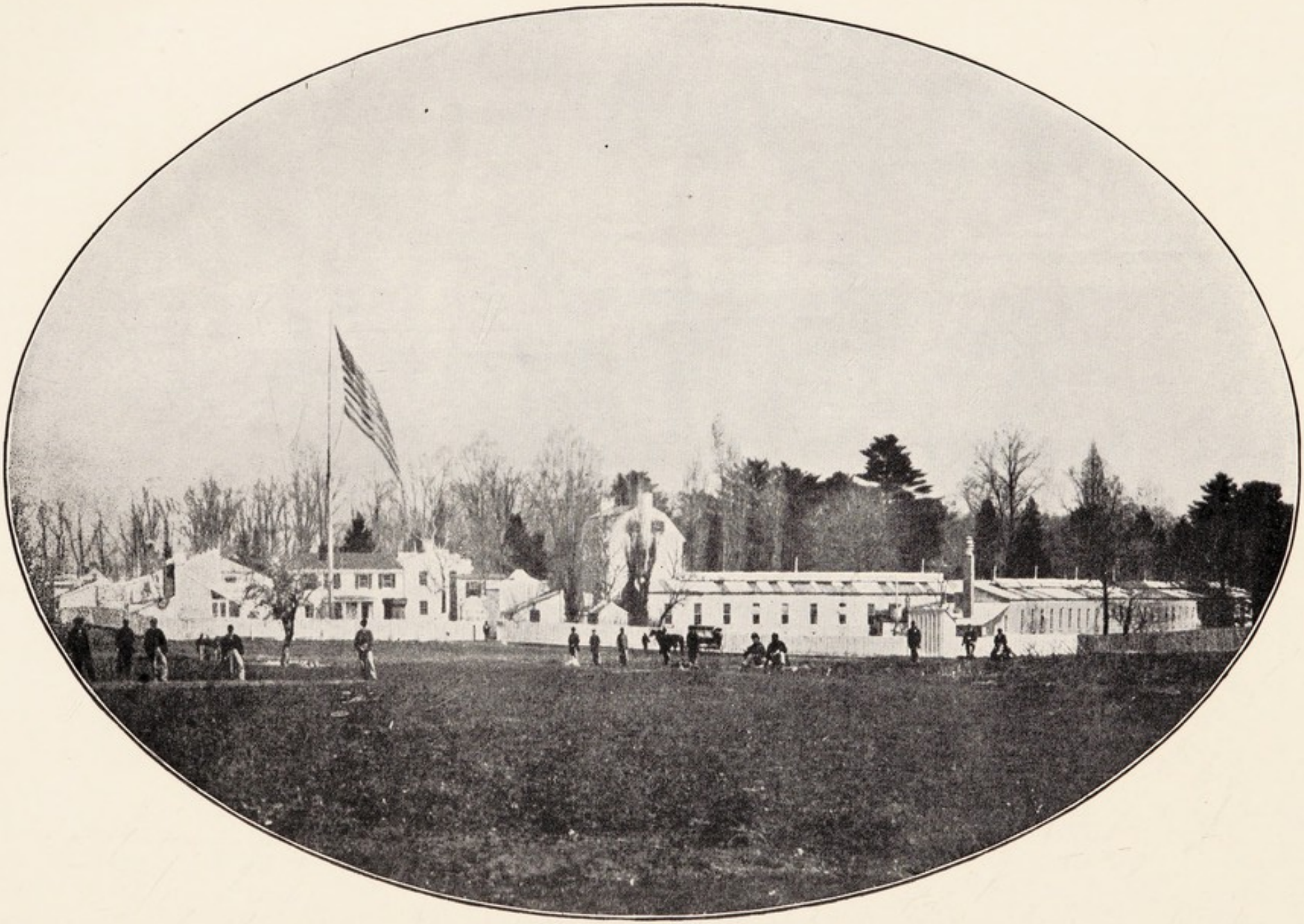
"MITCHELL HENRY."

This letter lends particular interest to his own account in the Autobiography:

"My years in the United States hospitals were confined, except for a few days' work away from home, to the great hospitals surrounding Philadelphia, where in fact there were twenty-six thousand beds for the sick and wounded. I declined the position of brigade surgeon, feeling that one of us ought to be at home with my widowed mother, and that the income I was making was essential. My papers and books represent sufficiently my career as an army surgeon, but as to this a few words may be of service.

"My first appointment in October, 1862, was at the Filbert Street Hospital, of which I have given some account in my first novel, 'In War Time.' There I began to be interested in cases of nervous disease and wounds of nerves, about which little was then known. In consequence, other men who did not like these cases began to arrange transfers to my ward.

"This so interested the Surgeon General that he created a small hospital for nervous diseases in Christian Street, in what was known as the Commissioners Hall in the old district of Southwark. Dr. George R. Morehouse was associated with me in this work. The hospital soon outgrew the building, and again the Surgeon General created a new



The Turner's Lane Military Hospital, Philadelphia, 1862

special hospital of four hundred beds, in an old country seat on Turner's Lane near Nineteenth. Surgeon Alden was in charge. Dr. Morehouse went with me and I asked to have Dr. W. W. Keen as assistant surgeon, a man whose distinguished career all men know and with whom I have preserved constant friendship. Dr. Da Costa had a ward, which afforded him a chance for a classical study of exhausted hearts and for other able papers, but with that exception the place was for patients with nervous disorders or wounds of nerves. There came out of this a series of well known papers and one book which revolutionized knowledge as to wounds of nerves.

"With Morehouse, Keen and Surgeon Alden as Surgeon-in-Chief and by special order relieved of much of the time-killing, red-tape business, we set to work. Both Morehouse and I had at that time increasing general practice, but a morning visit to the hospital disposed of the routine work and about three p. m. or later, we went back . . . worked on at note-taking often as late as twelve or one at night and when we got through, walked home, talking over our cases. Usually the work took four or five hours and we did it all in person. The late hours came two or three times a week and usually followed an inflow of cases of injuries to nerves after some serious battle. I have worked with many men since, but never with men who took more delight to repay opportunity with labor . . . the opportunity was indeed unique and we knew it. The cases were of amazing interest. Here at the time were eighty epileptics and every kind of nerve wound, palsies, choreas, stump disorders. I sometimes wonder how we stood it. . . .

"Thousands of pages of notes were taken. . . . About midway we planned the ultimate essays which were to record our work. . . . In this hospital massage was first used to restore action to limbs in which healing nerve wounds left the muscles palsied or for the rigidity of splinted cases. Here atropine was first employed hypodermically for muscular spasms. Our studies . . . are now a part of common medical knowledge, but then were brilliantly fresh. . . .*

"Besides this service, I was occasionally employed by the sanitary commission as an inspector of hospitals, a serious business in those days. A most interesting opportunity of this kind was a visit, made by order of the War Department, to Fort Delaware, which is on an island some ten miles below Newcastle. There were some nine thousand persons on the island, including the garrison. . . . A number of surgeons were confined in the casemates of the fort. I though their fate a hard one. At the beginning of the war, both parties had returned captured surgeons, but unluckily one of those taken by the rebels was presumed to have been guilty of some crime in Virginia. This led to our holding others; and then our people taken at Winchester were also kept; and in retaliation we held all the surgeons captured at Gettysburg. I knew some of these gentlemen and assisted them at the time of my visit, and later, by gifts of books and tobacco or loans of money, none of which were ever returned to me.

"I shared the excitement caused by the battle at Gettysburg. I went down to that field with Dr. John Ashhurst to

* From S. Weir Mitchell: *Some Recollections of the Civil War.* Trans. College Physicians, 1905.

search for his son, who had been wounded, not badly, on the second day. He passed us, however, on our way down and I went onto the field, a sight I shall never forget.*

"In 1864 I broke down, and, getting a couple of months' leave, went away to France and England. I knew few people in England and absolutely only one who was distinctly on our side, the late Benjamin Ward Richardson. That there were others in high places, like the Queen and the Duke of Argyll, I need not say, but our friends were among the laboring class. Neither in travel, nor in dining at the club that I frequented, a fashionable resort, did I hear a single person who was not our enemy. If I spoke to a man in a train, he was always for the South. All the literary folk, the banking-class, the professions, and generally the titled class, were against us, so that England became at last too depressing for a man in search of renewed vigor.

"I recall one strange adventure. On the eighteenth, I think, of June, the Kearsarge at Cherbourg challenged the Alabama, lying in that harbor, and it was known on Saturday that the fight would probably occur on Sunday morning. I was in the habit of going to eat my dinner at a small club in St. James Street, where a friend had put me up. I knew no one but saw that I was surrounded by young fashionables, guardsmen and diplomats. After dinner those who wished went up to the top of the house to a smoking-

* "July 5, 1863. Surgeon Mitchell and his assistant Dr. John Ashhurst to proceed to battlefield near Gettysburg. Guards and pickets will offer them no hindrance, and employees will tender all assistance the public service will permit.

"Signed: Donn Piatt,
"Lt. Col. & Chief of Staff."

room, which was too small, and so I readily heard the talk about me as I sat, a lonely man. On this Saturday evening these young men were betting heavily against the Kearsarge, taking large odds. I saw a young, good-looking chap of about twenty-four or five whose appearance interested me and who was, as they say, plunging heavily. As he passed near me I said, 'Do you mind saying a word to me when you are through?' He looked at me with the surprise with which an Englishman in those days regarded a man whom he did not know and who had the audacity to speak to him. He said very civilly however, 'yes, in a moment,' and presently sat down beside me and, with some apparent curiosity, asked me why I wished to speak to him.

"'You are betting against the Kearsarge,' I explained. 'Have you ever thought that it is a "regular," so to speak, and the chances are that the arms and efficiency of the Alabama can hardly be those that are found on the Kearsarge?'

"He said, 'No, I never thought of it. Do you know that it is so?'

"'Certainly.'

"'Why don't you bet?' he asked.

"I replied that I never did. He exclaimed, 'Indeed! I think you must be right,' and presently left me.

"To my surprise and a little to my alarm, I heard him betting on the Kearsarge, and when I left at twelve o'clock he was still engaged in 'hedging,' as they call it.

"When I went to dine at the club in the afternoon of Sunday, the news of the disaster to the Alabama was sorrowfully heard amongst our English enemies. Going into dinner,

I met my young acquaintance of the previous night and he said, 'Will you dine with me?' I said, of course, 'With pleasure,' and over the wine I ventured to ask whether he had lost much the night before.

"'No,' he said, 'you saved my life. I did not lose. I won.'

"'May I ask,' I said, 'how much you won?'

"I think he said three thousand pounds. He added, 'It will pay all my debts and set me free.'

"'Oh,' I said, 'I am old enough to say to you, why do you do this kind of thing? Some day you will be ruined at a race and regret it.'

"'Well,' he said, 'that is just what my mother says,' and he would have had me come and stay with him at his place in one of the midland counties.

"I had found in a few days' stay in Paris earlier, that the hostility there was as great, and, indeed more aggressive than what I experienced in England, but then I naturally talked to fewer people. I was glad to go home and I sailed soon after my experience at the London Club. On reaching Philadelphia I resumed my United States hospital duties, which terminated toward the close of that year."

This outline of his wartime life may be fitly supplemented by some of his more intimate letters, which show alike his growing powers and exultation in their success.

To Elizabeth Mitchell August 10, 1861.

". . . About August 20th, I hope to leave but I am not sure. I can find no one to go with me, and I shall look too much on the whole affair as a constitutional. . . . I am not

busy with my practice, but that of others chiefly. On Friday I went at 4 P. M. to Absecon and back at 4:30 A. M. next day. I heard the sea. . . .

"Do you see that we have now black officers, commissioned, I mean? Did you hear that 'Othello' was forbidden in Boston because it was presumed to be insulting to the cullud pussons? Also that in the negro regiments they wear white crape on the arm? Do you know that the aristocratic darkies decline all association with the plebes who enlist, and that it is not true that Dorsey is to be a brigadier general? If I were a nig I should go in for it all, but being white, I decline. For my part, I think all sides are insane. I have sympathy with something of all; entire sympathy with none.

"No physiology this summer but splendid hospital work, and I thank God heartily such wonderful results that I am sometimes amazed. It is such a pleasure to see men who have drifted hopeless and helpless from hospital to hospital, with dead limbs moveless below the waist, to see them walking about and grateful even to tears. I have just cured a charming old naval captain of paralysis from wounds. You never saw a man so pleased.

"Yours,

"S. W. M."

A paragraph in one of these letters shows a reaction from the first impression which Lincoln made upon him.

"Lincoln," he says, "I saw as he passed my house on his way through to take his place as President for the first time. I was struck with his face. It was not common, not usual.

It was large, homely and strange. He had a look of deep melancholy; I never saw him again."

Dr. Mitchell's brother, Edward, however, about this date, had written home of a youthful encounter which may have had a temporary effect on his elder brother.

Edward Mitchell to his Mother 5/23/63.

"This morning I had the honor and felicity to escort around the hospital his Majesty Abraham Lincoln, and of all uncouth, clumsy and ragged-looking specimens, Mr. L. was the greatest. He went all over the place shaking hands with everyone in it, and his manner showed very evidently that he only came for the effect of the thing and that he did not care a button about the soldiers or their sufferings. Altogether, I was not very favorably impressed with our Chief Magistrate."

S. W. M. to Elizabeth Mitchell

". . . It is my office-hour and I am filling the crevices of leisure with notes and letters, of which I have always an awful debt. I wrote first to Chapman, who has been offered a majority in a black regiment and who wished advice. I wrote that he must be controlled by the status of such officers in the West, the army feeling, and the advice of Major Wilson. I am not opposed to black troops now we have them, so I bid him be free to choose, remembering that his future home lay in the West. He will take it, I think.

"Walsh writes that he himself will see the war out and enlist as a private in regular cavalry. As usual he sees one

inch beyond his nose; by that time he will be too old for promotion. Chap will be a brigadier first.

"I leave next Wednesday or Thursday at latest, for the sea-shore if I can get company; and, if not, then somewhere northward vaguely. Mrs. Elwyn is in town with Dr. E., who is in bed with gout; and Mother out of town with the boys. If I could go to bed and sleep these next two months away I should be supremely happy in the suicide of so much of my lifetime. I have many things to say to you, but you must stay away as long as you can, because I mean to have no sick folk this winter.

"Always missing you and ever remembering you in the best way, night and morning,

"Truly yours,
"S. W. M."

To The Same July 26, 1863.

"It is a too busy Sunday on a right busy week. Tomorrow I go to Fort Delaware to inspect that inferno of detained rebels. A thousand ill; twelve thousand on an island which should hold four; the general level three feet *below low* water mark, twenty deaths a day of dysentery and the living having more life on them than in them. Occasional lack of water, and thus a Christian (!) nation treats the captives of its sword. Two weeks ago the rebel officers plotted to take the Fort but were betrayed and carried off to Sandusky. It is very pleasant to be able to be as much of a partisan as Brooks or Cooper or Kane or Judge Woodward. I am more of a Democrat than a Republican and not enough of either to please either.

Ward at the Civil War Hospital

"The thermometer is ninety. Not that I care. It may go up until it requires a balloon to get any higher and not reach my boiling point.

"Attending a mélange of other folk's practice. 'I say, Mitchell, you are going to be in town awhile' and so I am seeing old Bernard Henry for Hollingsworth, and two or three for Paul G. Home 11:30 P.M. Such a Sunday! Saw A. Henry, Small and Fisher, and my dear boys. Up and off tomorrow at seven. No time to say more. No church, hardly time to think. No news, no nothing.

"Yours, S. W. M."

S. W. M.'s Mother to her Daughter July 27, 1863.

"Weir has just taken his departure for Fort Delaware. If you could be here for one day you would not ask why he does not answer your letters. Yesterday, Sunday, as it was, he saw twenty city patients and four in the country. I doubt whether Weir can leave home before the middle of August, perhaps not then."

The passing mention in the Autobiography of studies resulting from his work in the two war hospitals, gives small idea of their value, number or significance. Two of the more important were "Reflex Paralysis," Mitchell, Morehouse and Keen and "The Antagonism of Morphia and Atropia" by the same three collaborators. A remarkable paper followed on "Malingering," with Dr. Keen's name at the head of the trio; while the books on "Gunshot Wounds and Injuries to Nerves" remained definitive for a generation. Dr. Weir's son, Dr. John K. Mitchell, Jr., in 1895, made a

record of the subsequent history in these Civil War cases. For years it was Dr. Mitchell's habit to hold a clinic on Friday afternoons, to which many veterans used to return for advice.

As his scientific side was stimulated by the work at the Turner's Lane Hospital, so was the literary and creative impulse. In his address on his Civil War experiences he observes that he knew no book telling "the personal life of a war-surgeon; what he did day by day, in the field or in the hospital. . . . There are men in our midst who could tell the story . . . it would have its romance, its pathos, its humor."

Plainly Dr. Mitchell had such a book in mind in his novel called "In War Time," which, though it did not appear until 1884, is founded on his Civil War experience. The opening chapter describes the Filbert Street Military Hospital of 1863—the scene of his own labors. We are shown the surgeon in his green sash, standing in the sunshine—the wounded coming in from Gettysburg. "Sometimes a man got out of the ambulance with help and limped eagerly into the open doorway; sometimes, lost to all around him, one was borne in motionless." There are many memories to whom these scenes are more familiar nowadays than they were when the book was published.

Dr. Mitchell was always a personal novelist and much of "In War Time" was autobiographical, reflecting the moods, opinions and reactions of a thoughtful physician. But the hero of the novel is a study of just what Dr. Weir was *not*—the unsuccessful—perhaps one would say the inevitably unsuccessful physician—the man who despite warnings, despite

talents, despite good intentions, falls a victim to his own fatal slackness of character. Admirable are the sentences analysing the effects of war-time practice on a mind of a certain type.

"It is hostile," he says of such practice, "to the calm study of cases and to the increasing exactions which new and accurate methods of diagnosis were then as now making," and shows that while stimulating to the first-rate man, such a life is injurious to the second-rate.

"Like all men who practice that which is part art, part science, he lived in a world of possible and I may say, of reasonable excuses for failure and no man knew better than he how to use his intellect to apologize to himself for lack of strict obedience to the moral code by which his profession justly tests the character of its own labor."

These last words should be underlined because that same moral code *"by which his profession justly tests the character of its own labor"* was from the beginning to the end of his life, his own.

In the stress and strain of passionate work his poetic impulse still survived. His old friend, Dr. William H. Furness, in 1861, had sent one of Dr. Mitchell's poems to Emerson. "They struck me," says Furness, "as smooth and lively enough to grace the pages of the *Atlantic*," and it adds of the author that he was "an unpretending and right loveable man." Emerson carried the verses on "The Strasburg Clock" to Fields, who printed them, as also the war-poems "Kearsarge" and "The Sinking of the Cumberland." All were anonymous, since Dr. Weir still heeded the warning of his elder friends that his winged steeds would not drive well as

a team. Then two little volumes of fairy-tales were issued for the benefit of the Sanitary Commission. Reading the bare record of his activities at this time, there appears in them something desperate, something febrile. . . . For, indeed, these years brought calamities thick upon him and by work he must crowd out grief. It was in 1862 his youngest brother Ned suffered the attack of diphtheria whose sequelae left him but two years more of life.

"A little duty done,
A little love for many, much for me
And that was all beneath this earthly sun."

So the brother wrote, years after, "Of One Dead." The loss to him was bitter. But by the time it befell, he had been stunned and overwhelmed by even greater loss. In 1862, his young wife took the same terrible disease from her eldest child—the baby Langdon being now seven months old—and died after brief illness. It was September at Newport that the child first appeared to be ailing: in her neat, close-written diary we read that John was not well, and she was troubled about him. Yet the final entry does not concern her baby, but the War. There is bad news from Fredericksburg and the last words in that small, fine script are these: *"I have abandoned all hope."*

VIII

"Oppressed with weight of care in these last days,
I seem to see beyond this bitter time."

Francis Drake.

THOSE who knew Dr. Mitchell during the eighties and nineties were wont to speak of him as the embodiment of shining professional success. Good fortune seemed to crown everything he did. His practice was enormous, his cure known throughout Europe. He was honored as a toxicologist, as a neurologist, as a writer. His novels were widely successful, his poetry highly praised. He was much beloved. The community held him as First Citizen, as no man had been held since Franklin; few projects of importance to the city were undertaken without his sponsorship. And all these achievements had been enriched by a personality handsome, distinguished, lordly and not lacking in *panache*, that waving plume of picturesqueness which stands out above a crowd. Good Luck, it would seem, had always been at the elbow of that tall, grey shape. . . .

Memories, even our friends', are short. Few people went back in theirs to the period from '63 to '73, when almost everything in life seemed set against young Dr. Weir, save only his will not to be overcome. Sorrow and struggle were his in a large proportion for a man so young. He was but thirty-four when his wife died, leaving him with two little sons, one still an infant. His sister Elizabeth made it her loving task to care for them and him, but was in poor health

and soon became an invalid suffering great pain. Death was busy among those he loved. His brother Ned died tragically in but a few years, his brother Walsh was to die more tragically still, to be followed by their mother.

Such was the domestic situation, meanwhile the professional underwent a severe set-back. Far from being lucky, in what he most desired, he was to be defeated not once, but over and over again. True, his practice was slowly enlarging after the drop at his father's death, but neither of the Institutes of Medicine in his own city would appoint him to a chair.

Teaching was then considered to be an immensely important feature of a doctor's career; since in a measure, a Chair expressed the confidence of the whole profession in the ability of one of its members. Dr. Mitchell felt bitterly that he failed to win this proof of trust. His first real effort was made in '63, when the Chair of Physiology at Jefferson fell vacant. Unable to obtain it, he made the same year, an even stronger trial for the same post at the University of Pennsylvania. Letters remain to show how staunchly his friends worked to forward these aims, notably W. A. Hammond (then Surgeon-General) who wrote on May 10th, "I am disgusted with everything and can only say that it is an honor to be rejected by such a set of apes!"

Five years later, the same warm partisan was writing to the trustees of the Jefferson, urging Dr. Mitchell's appointment to the Chair just vacated by Dr. Dunglison. The letter is signed also by J. C. Dalton, Professor of Physiology in the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New York and by A. Flint of the Bellevue Hospital Medical College. The elder

Agassiz also wrote from Boston and an interesting extract from his long letter follows, mentioning that struggle in the scientific world which was occurring in one form or other in every large institution.

Cambridge, May 28, 1868.

"My dear sir,

"I feel very unhappy to have been unable before this to write to you about the Professorship of Physiology. You know as well as I do what deep struggle is going on in scientific circles among us, and how deeply the future prospect of science in the U. S. is involved in the contest, though the community at large knows nothing about it. With reference to appointments, there is on one side a set of candidates whose attainments are chiefly based upon the study of books and whose chief claim to success lies in their familiarity with what others have done to advance science to its present condition. These men are generally fluent speakers and have carried the applause of the many; but their popularity hardly ever secures to them the confidence of the original investigators, upon whose effort in reality rests the progress of knowledge. Your friends feel happy to know that you belong to the small band which by original independent research contribute to the advancement of science and may before long place our country on a level with the most progressive nations. But you should not be disappointed if your very eminence in the field of your investigations should be an impediment to your worldly success. It has been so at all times and everywhere and America would at once leap

forward in the great race of intellectual progress, could these claims become the standard of competition.

"I hope in the present case the selection of a professor of physiology in the most important medical school of the U. S. will be influenced chiefly by the opinion of the most competent men of the country, as I am satisfied that in that case your selection would be secure and that being placed in a position in which you can devote your abilities to the further advance of your science, there shall be another centre of real progress in one of our institutions of learning.

"Ever truly your friend,

"L. AGASSIZ."

Dr. Mitchell attributed his defeat to political differences. "I was known to be Republican and a large number of the board had been violently Democratic during the War." Yet looking back over the period from today it would seem that Agassiz had probably voiced the fundamental reason.

On a man so energetic and self-confident, the effect of failure was to heighten his exertions. Maybe he came to feel the truth of Oliver Wendell Holmes' shrewd observations on the subject. "Perhaps it is hardly desirable that an active man of science should obtain a chair too early, for I have noticed . . . that the wood of which academic fauteuils are made has a narcotic quality which occasionally renders the occupants somnolent, lethargic or even comatose!" writes the Autocrat, with consoling irony and certainly the defeated candidate was now able to devote more time to neurological research and to general literature. He felt very much, however, the need of independence which

Mary Middleton Mitchell
and her two sons

Langdon Elwyn Mitchell

John Kearsley Mitchell

men of science require in order to do their best work. This is expressed as late as 1908, in a letter to Owen Wister, wherein Dr. Mitchell says,

"I have been through a time in my life when I was working at scientific problems earning my living, harassed by anxieties, had but slender means and was yet aware that for great scientific research a man ought to have leisure—freedom from care."

The Autobiography devotes a paragraph to the development of his consultation practice, the neurological side of which was now just beginning.

"Shortly after the war I began to find that, in consequence of my published papers, I was being consulted more and more about nervous maladies. This intruded on my morning hours so that my new work interfered with my general practice. This had been enormously large. (It grew to be at one time probably the largest in Philadelphia.) I found however, that my income was not injured by the change, which was forced upon me rather than sought.

"It ended after a few years in my dropping out of general practice and becoming principally a consultant in nervous disease. A book that I wrote during the war on 'Injuries and Diseases of Nerves' contributed to increase this special form of work.

"My income gradually rose until, at a much later period, I made in one year sixty-four thousand dollars, when I determined that I should break down if I continued the amount of labor I was doing. I began to lessen my income and work by making my holidays longer and longer."

Here is mentioned a book which was markedly to ad-

vance his professional career. Its first form in 1864, dealt with Gunshot Wounds and other injuries of the nerves. The amplified volume stated above, appeared in 1872. Dealing with a subject brought into awful importance by the Civil War, it took a place at once as a definitive treatise, passed through many editions and survived to be revised and re-issued by the writer's son.* He omits all reference to the almost equally important study, "Reflex Paralysis" which made its appearance in 1864. By request from the U. S. Sanitary Commission, the results of both these investigations were embodied in their reports of 1866. A letter from Longmore at the Royal Victoria Hospital, warmly endorsed the work and also "the enlarged and scientific views" which had furnished opportunity for such investigation. The same year was distinguished by a letter from the scientist, Richard Owen, who praised Dr. Mitchell's paper on "The Breathing of Chelonia," in terms very gratifying to the writer.

Meanwhile this toilsome life was helping him to recover tone of mind and serenity of spirit, after what he terms, years later, "the horror and calamity of my great loss." Grief, however deep and passionate, does not permanently alter the temperament nor impair the energies of an able and healthy nature. In 1863, a year after his wife died, Dr. Weir writes his sister Elizabeth that he feels he should hold dear the anniversary of his loss, without bitter repinings "and think only with pure thanksgiving of all she was and is." But he wants to go away, if only Da Costa will go with him "and if he knew my reason, I know the good fellow would try and bear me company."

* It was translated into French for use in the Paris hospitals during the World War.

About this time he made some enquiries regarding Mt. Desert Island; how to get there and what sort of lodging might be procured. A letter to Elizabeth Mitchell gives his impressions of a place which was later to be his permanent summer home.

"I could talk a good little bit to you, but poetical 'screels' about scenery are not in my line. . . . Mount Desert is a jolly place, twenty miles long, ten broad; mountains in the middle; eight lakes between them; sea wall all around island, sometimes five feet high, sometimes eight hundred. Lots of caves full of pools; pools full of anemones. Surf breaks over said rocks considerably. I'd rather see it than a circus, wouldn't you? Fare, ahem! $1.50 a day, potatoes and mutton, mutton and potatoes; clam chowder, fish chowder; plum pie, which means blueberry ditto. However, we had a trunkful of potted things, pickles, champagne, whiskey, chocolate, etc. A day's board represents the money value of an acre of land at East Eden.

"My little fairy book goes to press at once. It will be anonymous, of course. I shall get about $200 for my sanitary paper. As for the Atlantic, I have unlimited offers for the future. . . . By the way, I am under the charm of Thoreau at present.

"W."

The little fairy-book "Fuz-Buz the Fly," was one of the two published for the benefit of the Sanitary Commission.

Another letter speaks of his eldest boy and again refers to the book on "Gunshot Wounds" to which the writers were to owe increased reputation. The Autobiography then

follows to take up the story of his literary efforts, much affected and stimulated by his war experience.

S. W. M. to his Sister Probably early August, 1864.

"While I await dinner I may use the moments to write to you. . . . I am embarrassed about my August party. So many folks are going who will never go as to puzzle me.

"I spent the thirteenth with John to his delectation. He had a cake, a drum and boat, and a paint box and what not. He walked two miles the day before, which is pretty well for a five-years-old colt. I never read about children dying that I do not shudder. In Parton's life of Burr is a horrible account of the old reprobate's anguish at the death of his only grand-child. The account of the boy was so like John that I shook.

"Well, the Raid is over and nothing left of it save the wail over stolen cattle and little joke of Harry's:—Why was Solomon inferior to an incursion of rebels? He was not *arrayed* like one of these. Here's another:—Tennyson's new books is 'The Idylls of the Hearth.' 'Them's the Lares and Penates,' says Wharton.

"My book, also finished, is in Lippincott's hands."

Of this book "Gunshot Wounds and Other Injuries of Nerves" by S. Weir Mitchell, Morehouse and Keen, he wrote:

"It is difficult to analyse this small volume. It almost may be said to have created a novel symptomatology for nerve injuries, adding a large number of interesting facts in regard to nutritive changes in joints, skin, nails and hair. Here is advised the local use of massage in such cases, of

injections of atropia for spastic states, and here are the first hints as to ascending neuritis. Two thousand pages of notes were taken in two years, and from these the cases of this book and of some later works were largely taken. *I so much dread to find increasing practice or other cause removing from me the time or power to search for the new truths that lie about me so thick.* While I debate about new work I read endlessly,—travels, biography, novels—not many of these, I've read them all; history also.

"Folks have paid up well, but bless me, how it goes! Four hundred dollars for a substitute; three hundred and seventy-five for a carriage. Mother says, 'Take mine.' I don't tell her that a mighty sum is to go to paint houses, etc., and that she won't be able to afford this luxury.

"Yours, W."

The italics above indicate the deep and full current of mental power which was beginning to move his mind in certain directions. He continues:

"If I had not had to earn my own bread and that of others, it is probable that I would have given my life to literature; but I am also quite conscious that the enormous amount of material furnished by a doctor's life, his contact with tragedies, with varieties of character, above all, his knowledge of women, have contributed something to my novels.

"One night soon after the war I was conversing with my friend, Henry Wharton, on the subject of the loss of limbs. I mentioned the singular phenomena connected with this injury and spoke of a man who had lost both legs and

both arms in the fight at Mobile Bay. Wharton, who was fond of such talk, laughingly suggested that possibly a man might thus lose a certain part of his consciousness of his own individuality. After he left, I began to amuse myself by writing the history of such a person. I was at a loss for a name until one day, standing on a step in Price Street, I saw on a jeweler's sign, 'Dedlow.' I thought this a good name for a man who had lost his legs, and so I called the tale 'The Case of George Dedlow.' I lent the manuscript to my friend, Mrs. Caspar Wister, who gave it to her father, the Rev. Dr. William Henry Furness. Then I forgot all about it. I was a busy practicing doctor, and it had been but the amusement of one or two evenings. Dr. Furness sent it to the Rev. Edward Everett Hale, then editor of the *Atlantic*, and to my surprise and amusement I received a check, I think about eighty dollars, and the proof of my story. So important was it considered that it was made the leading article in the next number but one. It attracted immense attention. So real did it appear that subscriptions were made for the unfortunate man, directed to what was known as the Stump Hospital in Philadelphia. For a long while no one knew who had written this marvelous history!"

Dr. Keen, who was the author's confidant on the subject of "George Dedlow" and his fortunes, wrote a note of congratulation saying that he knew his friend Mitchell had crossed the Atlantic, but not that he had fallen into it! This success and others following it, confirmed in Dr. Weir the habit of giving up a portion of every holiday to the intense enjoyment of making stories.

"My winters have never been without their work in my profession, but as my holidays grew longer I felt increasingly that I must have some occupation in the mornings. Something to do had, by the ferocious appetite of habit, become necessary to my comfort. Science was out of the question, and it occurred to me to see if I could write a story in my idle hours. Either success or failure would have made me try again. Some natures have both spurs. I think I am so made. I wonder what men do with their hours. Utter idleness for a time is a delightful mistress, but not for all day. One can read but not all the time. No games attracted me, certainly not golf where one walks continually over the same ground. I prefer to kick the football of thought over hills, changing spaces.

"Feeling that I could not be injured by literary success, and trusting the good sense of the American people to know whether I was any the less a good doctor because I could write a novel, I continued to thus amuse myself. There is a clinic in every one of these books, as an eminent neurologist has said. Of this I was hardly conscious until late years, but I am quite sure that as pictures of doctors and patients they are not surpassed in English by any except Lydgate in 'Middlemarch.'

"My first signed novel was written in Newport, where we then lived, and was called 'In War Time.' I naturally chose my own home surroundings and used my knowledge of the social life of Philadelphia during the Civil War. It was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in January and December, 1884, republished, and had a fair sale. I do not

remember what I was paid for it,—I think about twelve hundred dollars, and I was given ten per cent. on all after publication of that and of the second novel, 'Roland Blake,' also brought out by Houghton Mifflin, but not as a serial. George Meredith read it twice and characterized it as noble. With the public it had equal success as 'In War Time.' Its plot was founded on what Major Philip Schuyler told me of a Virginia woman, a spy for us, whom he had met at night, as the head of Meade's secret service. Her name he alone knew. At Newport, years after, he was asked to take her to dinner. She knew him at once and grew pale. He said, 'Take care. You are safe,' but did not talk to her at table. I made the spy a man."

S. W. M. to Elizabeth Mitchell September 27, 1867.

"Did you get the *Atlantic*? * I agree with you that it is not so good as 'George Dedlow' and is also none the better for absence of proof-reading. However, this half pays $117 which is well enough. I have just finished a short paper on the nervous phenomena of frozen pigeons. Am working with spare chances at some matters connected with the use of ice to the spine and shall presently write a paper on rattlesnakes for Hammond. Practice is plenty enough and my bank account good, the new furnace in and the painting about to begin.

"The boys came home yesterday. Lany has broken out in the mischief line again. I think John may go to Miss Burns. She has only a dozen scholars, some of them nice children, and is now at 1717 Pine Street. John is absorbed,

* *Autobiography of a Quack*, anonymous in two parts, October and November.

"I found the woman perfectly exquisite" . . .
Lena Wadsworth, née Peters

or was absolutely lost, in one of Cooper's novels.* As to Lany, Chap says, 'If he isn't a boy, they don't make 'em.' I do not think he develops any cleverness, but this may come with time and pantaloons.

"News I have none except that I am engaged again, I forget to whom. Phillips Brooks, Morton Henry and Wharton dined here on Wednesday. The dinner was absolutely perfect in every way. This new cook is a treasure; long may she last! Mrs. Kemble is here.

"S. W. M."

To the Same July 11, 1868.

". . . Cooper and Phillips Brooks dined here yesterday, but no one was very jolly except the Colonel. . . . I met Miss Lena Peters at Cadwalader's and we went a little on the war path. Robeson writes me today asking with the kind regards of the C's, if my scalp is still in place. I found the woman perfectly exquisite from her singular society training and amazing tact in talk. It was hard to say what it was that charmed one so, but you can't always just put your finger on a butterfly. But it's a gray old scalp mine and won't dry in any woman's wigwam. Had a delightful visit at C's, even with the thermometer at 96. I think you would like the queer wooden house rambling over the ground and shaded by great locusts; the rooms paneled, and the hospitable Master the best fitted to the place of all its inmates, courteous, old-fashioned and kindly. I greatly en-

* John is eight, Lany five years old.

joyed my visit and am not clear if it be Emily, Mary or Maria. Couldn't you assist me? *

"As to the bills, they foot up about $7,500, despite 650 gratuitous visits. I have received $2,400 so far. Monday is Jack's birthday, and on Tuesday I must go to Torresdale, so that the laboratory does not flourish. In fact, I have worked there a good deal, but so far to little good. Think my cerebrum is softening."

July 14th, 9 A. M.

"I have been to see the boys, all well and happy. Jack tells his Grandma: 'Whether or not humming birds live on honey has been a subject of dispute ever since the time of Pliny.' 'It is still an unsettled question,' say I. 'Now,' says Brooks, 'if I did not know Jack I should say, "What an odious child!"' P.B. smoked here last night; thermometer 99 in the shade.

"Got an anonymous letter of advice to get married, stating the person and mentioning that there would be no difficulties.

"Yours S. W. M."

The name of Mrs. Kemble in the first letter recalls a vanished personality, which seems, unlike many stage-folk, to have been quite as delightful off the boards as on. Actresses in private life sometimes appear disappointingly diluted; Mrs. Kemble was intelligent and flavorous. The daughter of Charles Kemble and niece of Mrs. Siddons, she had made a dazzling debut as Juliet, in Covent Garden.

* It proved to be Mary who, seven years later, became Mrs. S. Weir Mitchell.

Her Portia, Beatrice and Lady Teazle were equally successful. Then followed marriage to an American planter, Pierce Butler, which was not happy, and some years later she returned to London till her death in 1893. Her daughter, Sarah Butler Wister, frequently appears in the Mitchell letters, for she was a cousin by marriage and tried friend of Dr. Weir's, especially during that difficult period after his wife's death. Mrs. Wister had the highly-colored personality one would expect from her parentage which was always delighting and amusing Dr. Mitchell by its manifestations. Her husband and son, both named Owen, became his friends also in due course. The Autobiography says of Mrs. Kemble:

"Among the people of distinction I have known best, Mrs. Kemble holds a very prominent place in my memory. I was too young, fortunately, to take sides in her difficulties with her husband, Pierce Butler. He was a person who always fascinated my youth on account of his singular beauty and a certain refined charm of manner. He had the perfect amiability of a selfish man. My friendship with his daughters originated in my young days, and, unbroken, has been added to by marriage. Mrs. Kemble remained for my children 'Aunt Kemble' and retained always their friendship and mine. Some incidents in regard to her may be worth repeating.

"Long after her separation from Pierce Butler, with whom also we had constant and kindly relations, she lived for a while in the little cottage opposite Butler Place, known to us all as the York Farm. At this time, as for many years, I was a constant horseman, and in early June, when my

family were away, I was in the habit of riding out to see her. I remember one amusing incident. She kept no man servant; I tied my horse and went to the door, where she met me saying, 'Have you come to dinner?' I said, 'Yes, I have been to Sarah's' (her daughter) 'but she is dining out, or at all events has no cook at present.' Mrs. Kemble laughed, 'I hope at least she has a butcher, for I have none. When I ordered veal he brought me turkey, and when I ordered turkey he brought me veal, and so we parted; but as I still have a cook, perhaps with her and Sarah's butcher I may be able to give you a dinner.' I told her I should not exact hospitality under those conditions and would dine at the club. After talking with her for some time I rose to go, but she said, 'No, do not go yet. I am old and lonely, and never again will you have these chances to talk with a woman who has sat at dinner alongside of Byron, who has heard Tom Moore sing, and who calls Tennyson, Alfred.' I recognized the claim and stayed for another happy hour to hear her pour forth her reminiscences of the past.

"My son Langdon when in London was fond of getting her to read Shakespeare, an incomparable treat. His stratagem always succeeded. He would quote improperly a line or two. She would insist that he was wrong; he, that he was right. Then she would command, 'Give me that volume, Lany.' And when it was brought she would fall upon the book and go on reading, to his satisfied delight.

"I do not know anyone else I have ever met who was equal to Mrs. Kemble in her best moods. She had a singular charm, due partly to her rich voice of many tones and

Fanny Kemble as 'Beatrix' by Thomas Sully

to the constant little surprises of talk she sprang upon you.

"Speaking of Mrs. Kemble, I am reminded of one of the happiest periods of my life, in which she figured largely though only for a while. She occupied rooms in the same house where Phillips Brooks had his bachelor chambers, and these two most interesting people saw much of each other. Before and after this time, my sister's charm of wit, humor, intelligence and learning, with her fondness for social life, despite her constant illness and depressing pain, brought about us a society not equalled in memory.

"The nearest approach to true social life that I have ever known was at Newport, where we lived modestly on the shore for many years. At that time I rode constantly, usually with Bancroft the historian. Persons like Colonel Higginson, Colonel Waring, a delightful companion; Alexander Agassiz; my wife's cousins, the Willings, and her uncle, George Cadawalader and his wife, constituted our large, highly-cultivated, intellectual life.

"This reminds me to speak of American society and to say that, with the exception of Washington Society, which lacks permanence, there is no such thing in the best sense. The life in the capital has a value none other possesses. Wealth means less than it does elsewhere, and that definite position which is required is given by official station, depending however for its development upon the women in political life. To this day, Washington society is more scientific than that of any university, has the value of a foreign element, and the advantage that every stranger visiting America sees Washington."

The departure of Phillips Brooks to Boston in 1869 was a great loss to Dr. Mitchell and his circle of personal friends. References in the letters to "P. B. dining" or "Brooks here" are frequent. How close the intimacy was is shown by their letters, which grew less full, of course, as both men became more and more occupied in the work of their distinguished careers. The following shows that the clergyman was not yet quite happy in his new honors and still a little home-sick for his Philadelphia parish and parishioners.

Phillips Brooks to S. W. M. Boston, November 26, 1869.

"My dear Weir,

"I will not go to bed tonight without doing on paper what I have been doing inside for the last few days, thanking you for your goodness in sending me your letter of last Sunday. It was mighty good to get. I wish you were here so that we could talk over our pipes instead of having to put things on the sheet, which is so slow and unsatisfactory. I would talk in the singular number right along and you should be troubled with no mystical vaguenesses that should distress your scientific mind. I assure you that every one of those plurals which you object to, has a hidden meaning to him that is of an understanding heart. But what do you expect? I came from this Boston and now that I get back here I realize that it was not a good place to come from. It is the queerest city that Providence or the Devil, whoever makes the big cities, ever made. Boston takes a pretty large-sized man to stand it. The moderate-sized men or women who make up the ninety-nine hundredths of the place are awful failures—'priggish, prudish,

pedantical, pragmatical,' as the dear old lady who discoursed from the throne on the sofa behind the table last winter, said. When I give this view of Boston, I wish distinctly to say that I think I am finding out that I am not the right size for the place and I shall undergo the degradation that it works on my size very rapidly and you will find me detestable when I come back.

"I am living what I should call a very lonely life, if I wasn't so used to living alone and so wretchedly content in it. I have no prospect of intimacies that seem likely to be even a shadow of what I have left behind me. I have been spending a couple of hours this evening with Horace Gray whom you know and whom I like and hope you like very much. It has been a little more like comfortable talking than anything else that I have come across here yet. Last Saturday I dined with Père Hyacinthe at Mr. Winthrop's, which was funny and very interesting. He is a queer mixture of honesty and craftiness—by no means without guile —but very hearty and generous in his ways of talking. Agassiz was there and put the father through a course of catechizing which evidently delighted the monk and which he parried beautifully. He came to Trinity the next day but I fear his unfortunate ignorance of our tongue prevented his getting the full benefit and edification from my excellent remarks which might have been desired.

"My Parish looks better than I had supposed. There is more youth and spirit in it than I thought and when I get over the wretched business of picking up the reins over the dasher, I dare say I shall drive on very smoothly. Fortu-

nately the old thing don't roll on very fast so that the picking up process is not very difficult, though not pleasant.

"I have talked all about myself which shows how much I trust your friendship. I should be better tonight for half an hour of Jack and Lannie but that sort of boy hasn't turned up here yet. If you knew how much good your letter did me you would write again. At any rate, I am always,

"Your friend, P. B."

There were other friends of whom Dr. Mitchell speaks with warm affection.

"Leidy I greatly loved and honored. He had no literary tastes and could not see why a man should say in verse, with difficulty, what in prose he could say with ease, but he was an unsurpassed observer and a joyous comrade, one of the Biological Club which arose out of the Academy of Natural Sciences. In another air many of these notable men would have had far higher distinction. We had science of the highest; good talk; never were gayer dinners! The club lasted thirty years with no death."

He told his younger son: "Leidy is a great man . . . when he speaks at my table, listen!"

Apropos of Leidy and Mitchell at the Biological Club is a story told by Talcott Williams. The Club was organized as much for dining as science and was greatly given to what a ribald fellow citizen used to term, the "Worship of the Sacred Tortoise." At one of the dinners when this rite was under way, the lawyer Franklin Gowen, leaned forward and said across the table to Leidy:

"How did you find the dozen terrapin I sent you a month ago?"

Leidy raised his great head. "Magnificent, Gowen! I dissected the entire twelve and discovered in the twelve intestines, three parasites previously unknown!"

"My God!" exploded Gowen, "is *that* what you did with that dozen——!"

"Gowen," said Dr. Mitchell, "never give Leidy anything that is edible and worth dissecting. We all know where it will go!"

These gatherings of friendly discussion constituted his chief recreation. One marvels that he had energy left for them after long days of concentrated labor. But Weir Mitchell was always a gregarious man, whose friendly nature drew large inspiration from human contact, yet who never dreaded solitude because he filled it full from the stores of his own memory and observation.

IX

"With a feeling of being braced up anew by wholesome example the young man went on to his task."
Roland Blake.

EARLY in his professional life, Dr. Mitchell had been struck with the inadequacy both of the training provided for nurses and the means of acquiring their services when needed. When he was appointed to St. Joseph's Hospital in 1858, this state of affairs much engaged him and he started in with his usual energy to remedy it. He writes of this and his hospital work as follows:

"This was when we had no trained nurses except sisters, who could hardly be said to be trained. The service was never a very satisfactory one in those days, and it is really true that I have seen people sacrificed to the presumed necessity of attending religious services. The class of women was not very high. They were first trained in the kitchen, brought thence into the wards under an older sister and left pretty much to pick up the business as they could. We had a number of unfortunate accidents in this hospital, owing to the fact that the rule of the sisterhood forbade a man to live in the house with them, hence in any emergency they had to send out for a physician, there being no resident doctor. Appeals were made in vain and I finally resigned in despair.

"Soon after we began the system of training nurses, and in my opinion a trained and paid nurse is better than any of the sisters, who in the Roman Church in America are by no

means as well trained as are nursing sisters in the Protestant sisterhoods in England and Germany.

"Many years after (1892), while lecturing at the Orthopaedic Hospital, I spoke of these matters and said even at that time there was no scientific training of the Roman Catholic sisters and that they were by no means as good as our trained nurses. This got into the newspapers, and I was abused in every Catholic journal in the land. My friend, Dr. Keating, wrote me a very savage letter about the matter but afterwards confessed that he had been wrong and I right. Archbishop Ryan wrote me deploring my strong language. I told him that I had tried in vain to bring about a change in the sisterhoods but had not succeeded, and perhaps now they would better their ways. That indeed did happen, but even now I do not think the training is what it should be. Our surgeons, I believe, revolted at last against the unsanitary dress of sisters and obliged them to alter their habit for the operating room.

"My appointment to the Orthopaedic Hospital came in 1870. At that time it occupied two small rooms on Ninth Street south of Market, over the shop of one Kolbe, a maker of instruments. After a few years in this work, we moved to an old house at the corner of Summer Street and Seventeenth, and as my services had developed a clinic of great importance for nervous disease—the name of the institution became the Orthopaedic Hospital and Infirmary for Nervous Diseases. There I continued to serve until my resignation and appointment as consultant and manager in 1902. During this period I succeeded in having placed as physicians in this hospital Dr. William Osler, as first consultant; Dr.

Wharton Sinkler, Dr. Morris Lewis, and finally my last assistant, Dr. John K. Mitchell. This hospital owes its success first to its creator, Dr. Thomas G. Morton, and secondly, I may say, to myself.

"The clinics of this hospital deserve a word. In most institutions, the out service is conducted by juniors; but from the beginning of the Infirmary, both surgeons and physicians, I mean the seniors, have carried on this service themselves, except in summer. My own assistants have been among the ablest men of the profession and have all had an unusual amount of success. The influence of this clinic in Philadelphia has been very great, owing to the unusual care and the amount of attention given, which could not be exceeded had the patients been millionaires."

A colleague describes Dr. Mitchell's work at the Orthopaedic—"Here for over forty years he taught and worked, creating a school of able investigators and clinicians, who brought renown to American medicine," and in the increased number and importance of Dr. Weir's original studies we see the effect of the opportunities with which this clinic provided him. The list includes one hundred and nineteen neurological, besides fifty-two physiological, pharmacological and toxicological papers, and almost as many addresses, historical, pathological, biographical and miscellaneous writings. Words such as industry and energy are wholly inadequate vessels to carry the reality of labors like these.

But we run ahead too fast. The summer of 1870 was appallingly hot: in Dr. Weir's office the thermometer stood for eleven successive days over ninety-three at four o'clock. One

is not surprised to hear that he was forced to seek a complete rest and change. By the next year however, he was once more working at full speed as the following letter to his sister shows. It is dated 1871. The book which he speaks of, entitled "Wear and Tear," was to prove a milestone in his career.

"This A. M. I insured my life $10,000 in your favor. This will make necessary that, to avoid all chance of accident, you should make a will on your return giving this to my children, as I could not fix it so as to give you only a life-estate. This and other things will a good deal shorten my income, as thus:—Walsh $720, Insurance $660, interest on that blessed mortgage, $600. However, if I die the insurance clears my estate of the debts of folly, fraternity and good humor, and if I live it can make no 'differ' as the Irish say.

"I am amused to watch the 'Wear and Tear' business. It brought me twenty-five dollars yesterday; then the day before three reviews and a long letter from a Mrs. Howland of Orange. No one can be more surprised at this odd little bit of success than I am. To have done so much right honest work without anybody knowing or caring, and then to have one little flirtation with popular literature written about and talked about from Maine to Georgia. Get the *Inquirer* and see the review in it of the nineteenth.

"I do not leave till on or about the first of August. My clinic keeps up, to my surprise. Had a droll scene here yesterday. A lawyer from central Pennsylvania, having wisely read 'Wear and Tear' (after writing to me as *Wear* Mitchell —was it a joke?) came down. He was awfully deaf and his

head out of kelter. I found his ears filled up and, of course, syringed them, so that suddenly he heard, not as you or I do, but a whisper across the room. His own voice was terrible and the street noises thunder. After leaving me he came back faint and begged to rest awhile before venturing into the tremendous row of the streets.

"Am I not a good boy?

"Yours, S. W. M."

During these two years the correspondence with Holmes continued and was followed by a visit, described in a letter.

O. W. Holmes to S. W. M. Boston, March 27, 1871.

"My dear Dr. Mitchell,

"I will give you my own experience very briefly and then that of another which came to me with the most singular 'aproperity' as one of my young barbarians has it.

"I cannot work many hours consecutively without deranging my whole circulating and calorific system. My feet are apt to get cold, my head hot, my muscles restless and I feel as if I *must* get up and exercise in the open air. This in the morning, and I very rarely allow myself to be detained indoors later than twelve o'clock. After fifteen or twenty minutes walking, I begin to come right, and after two or three times as much as that I can go back to my desk for an hour or two. In the evening it is different. I always try to stop all hard work before eleven o'clock and take a book of light reading to clear my mind of its previous contents. So it is that I can hardly say I ever have a proper 'brain tire' because the other systems give the alarm first. I should say

rather that too long brain-work gives me a sense of disgust like over-feeding than one of actual fatigue. It sometimes happens that my brain gets going and I cannot stop it, a very common experience, and then I lie awake, but *this* again is different from physical fatigue of the thinking organ. I want to sleep and cannot; I count; I do sums; I repeat passages from memory but the underthought keeps grumbling on like the bass in a Beethoven symphony. In a word, my brain, as a rule will not let itself get fatigued. It becomes *disgusted* rather and throws up work. In composition, especially poetical composition, I stand on the bank of a river and hold myself very still watching the thoughts that float by on the stream of association. If they come abundantly and of the right kind, there is a great excitement sometimes an exalted state, almost like etherization, incompatible with a sense of fatigue while it lasts, and followed by a relief which shows there has been a tension of which I could not be conscious at the time. So much for myself—while your letter was in my hand Dr. Edward Clarke, our first medical practitioner, professor of Mat. Med. in our school came in, and knowing him to be a thinker I questioned him.

"He was the first scholar of his class in the Academic Department at Harvard, the only first scholar I remember who ever studied medicine. He studied too hard in the first part of his course, and was restricted by his advisors to two or three hours work a day. The effect, he tells me, was this.

"He learned to work his brain *very hard* during the short time he gave to study, a habit which he has kept up to this day, so as he says he can get up a new lecture of an hour in less than an hour's time, which for such a lecturer to say

means a good deal. As a consequence of this forced labor he experiences a distinct sense of cerebral fatigue. There is a kind of pressure he experiences such that he habitually clasps his hands over his head as if 'to hold his head down'; *after such severe mental labor he wishes to lie down and rest.* But after moderate, prolonged mental work he likes exercise as I do. He is very averse to the crowded hour or two's work on account of the effects which he describes. To return to myself, I cannot express the loathing with which my mind turns away from a subject it has got enough of. I like nine tenths of any matter and study, but I do not like to lick the plate. If I did I suppose I should be more of a man of science and find my brain tired oftener than I do. Mental nausea takes the place of mental fatigue with me. I believe in the depleting nerve-straining qualities of our climate, etc. Brown-Séquard told us his animals do not *bleed* so much in America as they did in Europe! Is not that a startling statement?

"Pardon my hasty letter written only an hour or two after the receipt of yours, and believe me always,

"Truly yours."

O. W. Holmes to S. W. M. Boston, March 30, 1871.

"Dear Dr. Mitchell,

"I think with a blush of ingenuous modesty from hearing my name connected publicly with the idiosyncrasies I told you of in my free and easy letter. The *facts*, of course, you can use, if you can disguise them so as not to have them fastened upon me. But I felt as if I were condemning my own intellect according to the judgment of many persons.

I have often regretted not having forcibly trained myself to the exhaustive treatment of some limited subject, and if I thought I should like to be a hundred years old, I would devote ten years of the time, as it is, to such specialized study. You remember the story of the grammarian who had given his life to the study of certain nouns, and who regretted on his death bed that he had not restricted himself to the consideration of the genitive case. When I read your paper on the poisons of the rattlesnake I felt that such a labor as that, patient, thorough, leaving nothing to be gone over again was just the sort of work I ought to have been compelled to begin, and led by other influences to carry to its completion. But my nature is to snatch at all the fruits of knowledge and take a good bite out of the sunny side—after that let in the pigs.

"A thoroughly detestable statement, but let it stand for there is too much truth in it. You can see I do not want to have it shown up as my particular form of mental weakness —shall I say, or only special development. It seems like putting a master key to the strong box that holds my intellectual treasures, such as they are, into the hands of any malignant, and I think we have such who like to use anything they can get hold of relating to any of their betters.

"Enfin, I think you might use my experience, as to the surfeit of a subject coming before the sense of fatigue without making it clear who the person was that made this revelation.

"Nobody but myself could tell it in full with all the reservations, qualifications, conditions of every kind, compensations, philosophical justifications, crack-puttying sub-

terfuges, and counter-claims to discursive intelligence which renders life tolerable with such a vicious and kicking brain as I have described my will as bestriding.

"I am glad my discourse interested you, and though I am afraid you will not think much of me after these two letters, you must remember that I have at least the merit of appreciating your sincere and thoroughly satisfying labors.

"Very truly yours."

Newport, August 27, 1872.

"My dear Sister,

"After church, I went to see Holmes who had been recalled from Newport by the sudden death of an old servant. Then his son's wife fell ill with rheumatic fever, and he himself with some dyspepsia and so was forlornly glad to pour out his woes to me. I twice rose to go but always he held on to me and talked the last text and so on pleasantly enough until he sat on his top step and chatted a good ten minutes and at last made chirpy remarks to me until I was out of ear shot and far away up Beacon Street. He thinks Christianity a failure because of its want of power to relate itself to social and other science of today but considered Unitarianism as fast on the decline in Boston, leaning (?) on one side to unrestrained free thought and on the other to Episcopalianism, the easy liberalness of which latter he saw and understood. The talk was one-sided because it came so fast, but was worth hearing—much more of such talk is done in Boston than with us, I fancy—I liked his saying that Presbyterian preaching was Tubercular. In the evening I chatted with Homans and so to bed and off at 8:30 A. M. in

the cars for this. Lost a corner of heart on the way to a married woman who had with her two fine boys. I helped one of them who had a cinder in his eye and was thanked with a certain graciousness that reminded me of Sarah. The woman looked like some family-made thoroughbred and was not even handsome—and as this is all, you see how deeply impressed was I. Soon after I espied Mr. Geo. Ward and went over and talked with him. I took him for Sam Ward which some one does every day. He explained that he was not his own brother from *one* point of view, an obvious proposition. Like most New England men he had a little mystic or metaphysic corner. By and by, he rather reluctantly broke out about the present marriage relation and its failure today as an institution. He talked well, earnestly and radically enough, even with some physiological knowledge—but when shall we find a Philadelphia Banker able or willing to think or talk originally? A tanner in Boston saw in a paper that an Egyptian museum was for sale in London and that Mr. Perkins despairingly wished some one would give the amount, whereon he buys it, and dying soon after, his son gives it to the Art Museum as his father had meant to do. As to myself, even Field has not the face to tell me what they say of me, but only says that Longfellow and Lowell and Howells and so on have all kind of nice things to say. All this for you. Field's I reached at dinner time and after drove to the Fort. I saw Mrs. Peters here yesterday. She claimed cousinship, to my bewilderment. She is seventy-four and active as a witch.

"Yours, S. W. M."

During the summer, 1872, Dr. Mitchell's mother died. She had made her home with him since his wife's death and the parting broke that sequence with the past he cherished so deeply. Elizabeth, his elder sister still remained to direct his household, though in growing pain and weakness, for the two years which were left her.

Earlier in the same year another link had broken. Ever since the close of the Civil War, Walsh Mitchell's existence had been one of increasing irregularity, wandering and uncertainty.

After Panama and South America, there had been more than one apparent reformation, followed by some débacle the details of which can only be guessed. All was instability and uneasiness in regard to his plans and his situation. The one thing of which his elder brother could be certain regarding Walsh was his need of money. His drafts descended pitilessly upon those burdened shoulders: they must be met whatever befall. We see that the item "Walsh $720" is the largest in his modest budget for 1871. Five years before, in 1866, Dr. Weir wrote of "Walsh's deeps of moral degradation" and that he had ceased to expect any change. The burden must be borne.

Since that outburst of bitter disappointment, references to the wanderer are few. For many months it seems that his whereabouts remained unknown to his family. At length he is heard from at Sitka, Alaska, where he is ill and broken. Finally came a letter from Basseterre, on the island of St. Kitts. There has been a severe hemorrhage. Money is urgently needed for eggs and milk and drugs, though the pity-

ing doctor has refused to charge the brother of the famous Dr. Mitchell.

None of the jaunty optimism is left in these sentences: "I am perfectly well aware of the result—these things will come again and again—I don't think it will be long." "You will have your greatest disgrace taken from you," he adds and at the end: "I never felt till now your great goodness and Weir, I could fall down and bless you for what you have been to me."

A pathetic—a terrible letter. What high promise unfulfilled, what fighting spirit overborne, what vitality, what talents wasted! In four months all was over and by our knowledge of Dr. Mitchell, we can guess that his chief sorrow was that he should feel so little sorrow, so much relief. For years this brother had been the source of constant anxiety, of perpetual dread. One never knew what his next demand might be, nor yet what menace of scandal or worse, his next difficulty was to bring. Many brilliant men carry these family burdens and despite his belief in success, Dr. Weir had a tender heart.

Was it this tenderness perhaps, and those childish memories of which he had written so proudly—"Who is the hero —who but Wally?" that led him to make a legend out of the dead soldier, so that for years his sons and friends thought of him only as a heroic, a picturesque figure? Most of them were men before they even dreamed of the menace he had really been. Dr. Mitchell's close friends protested, thinking the heroism lay nearer home, but to create such a myth was imaginative, was protective, like the creator. In nothing so much was he the novelist, in nothing so much the

physician. The sword above his mantelpiece had done clean service and thus he gladly made it the symbol of the bearer, and when his visitors wrote of "the doctor's gallant brother," he was well pleased.

What he termed his "little bit of success" with the book called "Wear and Tear" was showing signs of turning into something more significant. It had been written originally for Lippincott's and was a discussion of the working habits of Americans, their inability or indisposition to play and the perils ahead in the increase of nervous disorders. The author had some difficulty in inducing his publisher to reprint the papers in book-form, being shrewdly aware that there is no literature more popular than warnings in regard to health. The first edition sold out in ten days and Dr. Mitchell was confirmed in his belief that an effort to educate the public in these matters was likely to be successful. His own clinical investigations were now beginning to bear full harvest of data with which he was never niggardly. Today, we are all so accustomed to hygiene articles and health departments in the newspapers—all written in a style which the seventies would have thought alarmingly intimate and technical—that we cannot realize how audacious Dr. Weir's attempt was thought to be. Had Mr. Childs permitted articles on spastic constipation to appear in the *Ledger* . . . (instead of advertisements of remedies!) . . . his famous office would have been raided and all his tea-cups broken.

Physicians, too, for the most part then greatly resented any efforts to enlighten the public in regard to medical matters. In those years the medical guild still spoke its own private language and still maintained that its labors should

concern themselves with disease rather than with conditions which produce disease. A doctor's business was to cure the sick, not to assist the healthy to remain so. Practitioners were apt to be skilfully vague and replies had hardly altered from the "Six Weeks!" as a cure for rheumatism, to the "A little febrile reaction," of Dr. Da Costa. The book on "Wear and Tear" therefore struck a new note and caused a great deal of unfavorable comment from the more old-fashioned among his colleagues. The deadly word *"popular"* was spoken, later it was superseded by *"charlatan."* Other folk beside his neurasthenic patients began to speak of him as Dr. *Wear*. "Wear and Tear" together with the succeeding and more important volume entitled "Fat and Blood," made their appearance at a time when even the layman was beginning to feel the pressure of American life and ask himself how its dangers were to be met. These books are clearly and agreeably written, full of sound sense and reasoned advice and were documented with careful statistics, taken from schools and colleges on matters which had not been previously presented for consideration to parents and educators. If it cannot be said that they were directly responsible for the greater care and attention which is now paid the student's health, nor for all that elaborate apparatus of the physical and psychological laboratory, which greets the bewildered adolescent at the gateway of learning—yet they undoubtedly did a great deal. Warnings have ever been favorite reading of the American mother, who takes a melancholy joy in contemplating the dangers to her off-spring of over-weight and under-weight, of tonsils and acidosis.

Dr. Weir's warnings were seriously thought out and

admirably put; the reader did not have to know the long drill of experiment and observation which had preceded them. He carried on the series with papers entitled "Nurse and Patient—Camp Cure," in 1874 and later in 1888, "Doctor and Patient." The second of these was among the first propositions to treat the sick and feeble by the open-air method.

The result of all these direct appeals to the common-sense and intelligence of the layman at large, had aspects which he had not altogether foreseen and he used jestingly to declare that he reaped where he had not sown. Nerves were just beginning to come into vogue as an occupation for the idle: such books as Augustus Hoppin's "A Fashionable Sufferer" touched, albeit with grace and humor, on the prevailing fad. To distinguish the real patients from the imaginary became from now on, a large part of Dr. Weir's daily task. His mail and his office began to be filled with the activities of the crank, the sensationalist or the morbidly curious and it took all his high vitality and his paradoxical, tolerant patience to deal with this material, which in time came to constitute a valuable mass of data. There was truth as well as wit in the remark of a friend, who alluded to his office as "the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir!"

X

"The physician . . . moves amid mystery. . . . He practices an art . . . based on many sciences. A man may know them all and be a less skilful healer than one who, knowing them less well, is master of the art to which they increasingly contribute."

Dr. North.

FROM the foregoing it must not be supposed that at this time Dr. Weir's writing was confined to so-called "popular" medical books. As a matter-of-fact, he was now launched upon his most important period of original scientific work. Reference to the catalogue of printed papers will testify to the extent and variety of his labors in the field of neurology. In these pages it should be noted that from 1870 to 1877, thirty-four purely neurological articles appeared. Certain among these, as the study on "Nerve Lesions," "Disorders of Stumps" and especially his discovery of "Erythromelalgia," a rare disease of the nerves of the foot, were welcomed as works of the first order, widely read and translated. In 1873 and 1875 respectively, two signficant articles appeared from his pen, the first in the *American Journal of Medical Science*, the second, one of the Seguin Lectures. One discussed "the favorable influence of Rest in Bed in the neuralgia of locomotor ataxia," while the second treated more generally the subject of "Rest in the Treatment of Disease."

Thus appears the first conjunction of the phrase "a long

rest in bed," with the name of Weir Mitchell; the first experiments on what was to be the famous cure. What case or cases actually led to the "cure Mitchell" as the French called it, cannot be definitely stated because the inventor himself ascribed it at different times to different causes. Dr. Keen believes that his friend's "yeasty mind" began to work on the subject after two cases where patients chanced to be afflicted at one and the same time, with an acute nervous malady and a broken limb. The physician had noticed that rest enforced for the mending of the limb had greatly benefited the nerves. On the other hand, Dr. Mitchell gave his friend Dr. Osler a long account of the discovery, dating it from a case which other physicians having failed to cure with exercise, he in despair consigned to bed. Both of these explanations are doubtless true; with a mind so fertile and so powerful the problem had only to be stated and he must inevitably get to work on it. Much water was to flow under the bridge ere these deductions were to develop a complete, constructive system of therapeutics.

In addition to his main train of thought, Dr. Weir continued his active interest in all forms of rare and curious nervous phenomena, and this interest kept up to the end of life. Constantly, we find him alluding to his work upon such questions as visions just before sleep, or the relation of pain to weather—(the lady with barometric corns always met with his most sympathetic attention); or double consciousness, or the hallucinations of persons who have lost a limb and are haunted by what he calls "a sensory ghost," or the fear of cats—(ailurophobia.) These matters occupy his mind and letters with an amazing, persistent freshness, as if

he had nothing else to think about. Here, for example is a casual note, chosen at random:

November 2, 1874.

"I am meditating much work to fill the chinks of loneliness: a paper on sex in education, a paper on St. Vitus his dance; a paper about camp life, and so on."

All this bespoke an energy whose continuance over so long a period was even more remarkable than any actual achievement of the man.

These achievements, however, had begun to bring him definite acknowledgment and a place among the members of his profession not unlike that which had been held by his father. Philadelphia, as Dr. Cushing points out in his fine life of Osler, had become in the seventies the medical center of the country and students from all states came to its two great colleges. Its doctors had always been noted for marked, almost English, individuality and among this group Weir Mitchell had lately come to take a prominent position. About this time the name given him at first to distinguish him from his father, became his by right of affection: hence forward he was Dr. Weir.

Portraits and photographs show that he had developed a hardy and active physique. The slight, pale youth had grown into a tall, lean, muscular man, one who could tramp for hours and had uncommon resilience and endurance. His health was steady, disturbed only by headaches if worried by the troubles of those he loved, or by occasional sleeplessness from overwork, and this a fishing-trip would cure. He had

a powerful, strange head, splendid inward-looking eyes and a beard so fine that it did not hide the outline of the jaw. Here was a person of great concentration, with a good deal of manner, so-called, who seldom seemed in a hurry, yet never wasted a moment. The portrait by Frank Holl, painted a little later, with coat thrown open and hand on hip, gives more than a hint of the picturesqueness that distinguished Dr. Mitchell. Yet this picturesqueness had nothing of the *précieux* about it. Dr. Weir rejoiced in the uncensored tastes of the seventies, when there was no one to frown at the number of big, black cigars he smoked, nor at the sausages and buckwheat cakes he devoured at his unregenerate nineteenth century breakfast. He drove a good horse to his "buggy," often taking one of the little boys along for a driving lesson, and he loved nothing so much as a rough camping-trip for a vacation.

Town life was more easily and unforcedly social in those days and while his practice was growing to be really important, he gathered people about him by a personal, centripetal force. However egoistic or self-centered, he was a man whose friends always played an immense part in his life and his house was ever a meeting-place and a focus for their activities. By this time, he had moved to 1332 Walnut Street, in an airy and dignified quarter, next door to a convent "where the nuns used to walk sedately among the flowers." Across the way, in the yard of the big yellow Dundas Lippincott house, an elm drooped over the street, and a beautiful magnolia raised its huge, creamy plume. This background and his figure walking about in it, are still the treasure of many memories, who cannot forget

"the dear Doctor," his sympathy with their sorrows, his earnest zeal in their fortunes. By such qualities his nature was kept sweet and wholesome, despite the flattery and the vanity of his great success. We are anticipating, however, for during the seventies Dr. Mitchell was only one of several important Philadelphia physicians and had as many critics as followers. He was a member, of a small society, as loyal as it was old-fashioned, maintaining an attitude of self-sufficient cohesiveness and exercising an authority that was almost tribal. Held to be the very essence of provincialism, this attitude had the advantage of adequate mutual support within its own group. Thus families were more content, even those who had very little to be content about, because they felt secure of some place in the scheme of things. Protected in this way, people did not have to resemble one another and individuality was as rampant as in the House of Lords. Mr. Richard Vaux, that magnificent figure with a head of hyacinthine curls, was still to be seen on the street, renowned for having danced with Queen Victoria. Someone asked his gentle Quaker mother if her son's dizzy eminence did not alarm her, but the reply was tranquil: the Queen was the most virtuous of women "and my Richard would never marry out of meeting!"

It is a thousand pities that this Age of Innocence—and the innocence was genuine in Philadelphia—had never its chronicler to do full justice, with sympathy as well as satire, to the passing of the Quaker bonnet and all that lay under it. A mystical, quietist creed was strange foundation for great commercial success and the Philadelphian as a personality was the product of unique ingredients. These were the

days when "the peculiar people" still gave their tone to their world and Dr. Weir had only to look back a little way to see many characteristics that he put into Colonial dress in "Hugh Wynne." Loyalty sustained and secured this world and it was utterly unwilling to admit that its members could change. A certain stately old gentleman in his ninety-second year, heard that one of his friends with whom half-a-century before he had "valsed" on linen-crash and driven out to the Fish House, but had not met since,—was passing through town on her way South. Although he lived in retirement the news aroused him to social duty and excited him by pleasing memories. The brougham was ordered; a nephew was summoned and the visit was paid. But on the way home, the old gentleman was depressed and whistled "Too-too-too," as his white hands played on the gold-headed cane. Then he broke the long silence. "It's such a pity but—have you noticed, Frank, that after eighty a woman is apt to go off?"

No: nobody expected or admitted change. . . . They kept to their houses, their friends, and their interests more steadily than do their descendants. Dr. Weir's group, forming about this time, made a small, intimate body of certain families, certain individuals. . . . There were Campbells and Cadwaladers and, of course, Biddles. There were the two Miss Irwins from Washington, Philadelphians by heredity and adoption, who admired Dr. Weir enormously and corrected him firmly whenever they thought he needed it. There was Dr. Horace Howard Furness, whose scholarship, in the words of his grandson, had "ineffable comeliness" and with whom Dr. Weir loved to talk of poetry and poets.

There were the two Mrs. Wisters—Mrs. Caspar and Mrs. Owen—both of whom valued him highly and told him what they thought he ought to do or not to do, long after no one else dared. Mrs. Owen, the Sarah Butler Wister of the letters, made him laugh by her various audacities. He delighted—though this was when both of them were old—in Mrs. Caspar Wister's delicious violence of language, which came with such piquancy from her rolling chair and large, handsome, pale face, like some carved marble prophetess of antiquity. The writer once timidly asked her, if so and so really was a bad character? "Oh my dear!" came the answer, "Hot from the pit!" and the little girl felt as if she had been shot!

These were the days "when snow fell with old-fashioned violence and everyone went mad about Offenbach and started for New York from the Walnut Street ferry." * The Amateurs gave "The Mistletoe Bough" at the Little Theatre on Seventeenth Street and the Centennial was being talked about and planned for. Mr. Dickens came and read amid vast applause, but some of Dr. Weir's group thought the great novelist melodramatic and lamented his loud clothes. Others, be it said, did not share the doctor's admiration for Mrs. Kemble, but thought her pompous and exaggerated. Philadelphia, like Boston, reserves the right to measure by its own canon of taste what the rest of the world (and particularly New York,) admires.

In this society, which appears to us very prosperous, happy and not too busy, Dr. Weir was now a sought-for personage and need never have dined at home unless he

* E. R. Pennell: *Life of Charles Godfrey Leland.*

wished to do so. He drew stimulus from good talk and good companionship and joined all those clubs where business is carried on by dining. The Round Table, the Mahogany Tree, the Biological Club, the Triplets—many titles with but a single purpose. A second group combined insurance with monthly dinners, as one sat under the Green Tree or with Hand-in-Hand affectionately clasped. What signified the initial reason for the gathering so long as there was talk and terrapin, Mitchell and madeira?

Other cities too, claimed him from time to time. Dr. W. A. Hammond in New York had a house filled with interesting things, where he entertained interesting people and there were always Medical Congresses and trips to Boston or to Washington. During most years Dr. Mitchell was too busy to journey far, but later, in 1879, came a trip to Yellowstone Park and during the eighties vacations took him still further afield.

One might not have realized how amid all this, Dr. Mitchell was moving steadily onward to his chosen ends. Concentrated as he was, he was able to turn to society for change and his richness of thought and of talk was always noteworthy, even when he absorbed more attention perhaps than was strictly his share. Not till later was he to grow a trifle arrogant in his leadership; at the time of which we write, he dominated men chiefly by caring more about the reform or the project than they did. He would take hold of an idea—be it a registry for nurses or a memorial to Franklin—and push it through, because he wanted it. This self-confidence at moments was overweening; tinctured undoubtedly by a lack of a certain sense of humor. . . . Such

Sarah Butler Wister

A hitherto unpublished portrait by B. G. Porter

faults were accepted and understood in one so brilliant, who was tender-hearted, and devoted to his friends.

At heart, he was a lonely man and when in 1874 he lost his sister and companion, who ever since his wife's death had devoted herself to him and his children, this loneliness became more marked. His sons, promising, and warmly affectionate, had now reached the school age and must be much away from home. His relation to them was close; it was that of comrade and friend. Not only does he counsel and criticize, he also shares the details of his daily life with them and enters gladly into theirs. At interesting dinners in his house, the two boys came down, sat while the madeira was being drunk, listened and were obliged to speak up when some question was put to them. As visitors were many, physicians, scientists, writers, parsons, poets—they profited by this experience. He asks their opinion, he consults with them—he reproves a fault—oh very lightly!—yet seriously discusses poetry or friendship. There is a warm quality about these letters which shows a true simplicity of heart.

S. W. M. to J. K. M.

"My dear Jack,

"I am well pleased your little row ended no worse. Next time take off your glasses when you mean to hit a fellow, and above all in a row never slap anyone's face. If a blow be needed, strike hard with the fist. The insult is no more and it prevents or interferes with a return. If it be worth while to hit, it is well to hit hard. I remember your good

grandfather giving me this advice and I hand it down for your benefit."

The warmth of affection is never-failing, nor is the enjoyment of their society: the father is as much absorbed in Jack and Lany as if he had no enormous practice, made no new discoveries, had no novels or poems or such-like interests in that busy brain of his. . . .

"Work hard; play hard. Do work at German hard—advice is not cheap from good Dads. They don't last for always."

Again he writes:

"Remember also that no detail of your daily life, your hopes and fears, your games and your opinions can fail to be to me of the deepest interest."

These letters stand as a rebuke to the mechanical paternity of such men as think that their business excuses them from entering into the lives of their children. We find Weir Mitchell tender, high-minded and insisting "on the extreme, the pressing necessity of a wise conduct of life." They form an intimate and beautiful series, which almost more than any letters of his deserve to be known.

To J. K. M. 1873.

"I believe everyone I know is more or less selfish save you and me and Aunt Lizzy—small praise to you and me to whom the virtue is stupidly natural, and is in action only a form of revolt against one manner of meanness. It seems

odd to you that I should talk of myself as unselfish, or as having any special virtue, but I do so that I may say to you who are so like me, that I have nothing in life to look back upon with more comfort than acts of self-sacrifice, big and little—when the choice comes to you in life, recall these words for if it be well to lay up treasures in heaven as we all do know, well is it also to lay up in one's own memory such thoughts of things done for others as shall make one's back-look along the way of life not altogether unheavenly. This is quite against the teachments of many people who seem to think that a man should be forever thinking himself intensely wicked and finding no flavor of goodness in anything he does, whereas I think that if a man knows that he is capable of some special virtue he need not publish it, but he may do well to look and see how in some shape it has brought himself (as well as others) happiness at least in the long run. Also I say all this because had I been distinctly selfish I should now have been quite easy in circumstances. If I died tomorrow folks would say I must have lived too freely which would be untrue, yet I want to put it on record for you, now that the last constant drain on me in poor Walsh is gone, that I have no regrets for past spendings and think that money sometimes buys many more things than are just always presently visible to the giver. This seems a queer letter to write to a boy, but that will depend upon his own nature somewhat, and perhaps more often if you like it, I may say in my letters something of my own life and youth which you may be glad to keep and read over at some far off day with the larger power

of wise commentary which manhood will bring to you. Just now we will drop the ego."

November 16, 1873.

"Dear Jack,

"Sunday p. m. from two to four often finds me free of flies in the office web—and—it is the only day when there comes in a daylight segar and a very brief sense of nothing to do—which is sweet and full of comfort. Then if the sense of virtue be powerful, I write to you, and by the way let me say here that I often write to you of things in my letters as to which you should say something, for you are old enough to have your own thoughts and what I would add is this only, that when you have things to say to me, as every growing lad may have, which you had rather I only saw, put private at the head of your page, and it will be sacred from all eyes save mine. As to your composition on choice of occupation, I like the subject. I never really chose mine until I was eighteen years old; at fifteen I came near to being a merchant. Later I hankered after manufacturing chemistry, and all along played with the notion of literature as a life-pursuit; but all through life it has been to me a real comfort, for to sketch with words is even more useful than with pencil, more useful, and as pleasant. So all along I have never let go of literature and the skill of pen I have won has been of great value when I came to put the graver things of science on paper. Books which I learnt young to love have also never failed me. They are like other friends, well able to hurt or help. And I may say of friends for you that I got in my *young* life more hurt

than help out of mine. But books you do not have to make love you in order to get the best of them, and in time of sorrow or sickness and amidst all the worries and inevitable disappointments of life, they are noble helpmates, honest counsellors, sweet, trustful friends. I well recall that when I was last beaten for a professor's chair and the world seemed at an end for me, I took upstairs with me a little book of verse, by Clough, and lost my cares before sleep came in his charming *Bothy na Vuolich*, which I bought again yesterday, and which sometime you will like, I feel sure. Look up among Macaulay's poems his verses in praise of literature, written after he was beaten for the Oxford membership of parliament. . . . The value of learning to look at all phenomena closely and to learn a habit of mind which excludes nothing, need not to be dwelt upon, but few are aware of how much it adds to the beauty of nature to acquire this. For to learn to see everything and to notice the changes of light and tints of sun and cloud and leaf and flower, is to insure yourself new and never-failing sources of pleasure. I have found artists the best of open-air company on this account, and really it is amazing how much more one man will see than another. I suppose that the acquisition of the skill to see things minutely and as they are under all the varying moods of nature, is delightful for the deeper reason, that it is in a measure the pursuit of truth. . . . To stand face to face with something which before you God only knew—that is what I mean—I hope you will like my letter which rambles a bit, but you may like a ramble in new lands. Work hard; keep your eyes open; choose friends and books wisely and God bless you.

"Yours,"

November 29, 1873.

"Dear Jack:

"This is your paper and costs two stamps, and no one uses such nowadays except doating dads, and lovers, I suppose. This is the Sunday calm of my office, your time I may add, when I think of you, and to you, which may not be English but is good and true. The day outside is gray and threatens change, and I have on me my Sunday mood, which is grim enough, and has been so for years—yet why I can hardly tell, since on the whole life ought to satisfy me, but does not. Indeed I have had great luck to have had to work always, for otherwise the sensitive side of me would have so grown that I might have come to be a morbid sort of man—which I am not I think, save for times and not long then. But enough of self. . . . There is a carriage at the door, and I suppose a call, or a fly for my web. Only think it takes about three hundred visits to pay for the school and clothes, etc., of a boy name of Jack, whose reports, (we stick to the rascal through good report and evil report,) are not superb. By the way, isn't it steady application that you fail in?

"Think what an absurd thing has happened to me. I met last summer Mrs. Cotton, an English woman whom I liked very much and to whom I ordered my old fairy-tales sent sometime ago. The same day I told the clerk at Lippincotts to send copies of my book on nerve wounds to Dr. Radcliffe and Dr. Jackson both in London. The clerk sent the fairy tales to Dr. Radcliffe and the nerve book to Mrs. Cotton who was vastly amused, and writes to ask if the

American children habitually read fairy tales about the nerves. Wasn't it funny? . . .

"Unless you speak easily and freely of what is in my letters, we can never carry on a correspondence which doesn't correspond. I hope you really work hard and try to get along. It is almost a dreadful thing to carry so great a freight of love as you do. So as I said above, do not fear to talk yourself out to me, and over all remember that to talk of Aunt Lizzy freely and simply as if she were here pleases me as it would do her—as possibly it does do. I have none of the horrible maukish fear of death. Why cannot we learn to think of it as only a mere act in one long drama? Mrs. Morris who has all her life had the dread of death which came to us from the monk's torture of Christian beliefs, says that your Aunt's death-bed at once and forever cleared away for her the morbid fear of death. I do not think any of us come to quite accept the idea that death is as much a normal part of existence as birth. . . .

"Today I am awfully alone, a fate for which few men are so ill-fitted as I. How much I yearn for you—how eagerly I shall welcome the clatter of those great feet of yours—

"Good-bye, darling."

September 27, 1874.

". . . Langdon and I wandered away yesterday over the park here and there where fancy took us, until we ended at George's Hill—I was singularly struck with the vast number of expensive turn-outs and with their want of taste or finish. However, their owners looked contented and even pleased or conscious of their swell horses and liveries. Lany

and I, not being troubled with the like vanities, went along on our thorough-breds at a good pace and talked men and things and kept our eyes wide open and saw as much, I suspect, as any man who walked the park that sweet, hazy afternoon. We came in facing a level ruddy moon, Lany happy in the present, I grieving that these hours with him are few and far between. We growled both of us, a liberal growl that Jack was not with us, and so home to work sweetened by such joyous hours. We have had, too, a noble afternoon with the bears, kangaroos, etc., at the Zoo Gardens. The elephant got his skin at a bad slop shop and the kangaroos are manifestly bits of two animals put together at the midriff. The prairie dogs we esteemed to be the most conservative of created fourpeds, (good and short that.) We twopeds came away delighted. Tonight the unspellable came for L. to tea with him to my honest sorrow, as I had come home pleased with the idea that L. and I should read some good verse together, but I let him go, and am here alone and most unspeakably alone. If you know how bitter is the sacrifice I make to send you away, you will surely do your best to get out of it all you can. It seems to me I shall never, never get used to that empty chair on the far side of my table. It seems long to wait to know what it all means.

"Yours,"

Tuesday, April 13, 1875.

"Private.

"I have just now received your last letter when about to write to you on a matter in which we are both deeply interested and which probably will much surprise you. At

first thought it will not please you, until you come to reflect on the sadness and loneliness of my life and to know as you hardly do yet what an endless sacrifice it has been to others. I write first to tell you what no one else knows, that I am going to marry Miss Mary Cadwalader. If, my dear boy, this gives you any sudden sense of hurt, don't hide it from me but write it out as friend to friend in honest trust. Your dear grandmother is fully satisfied. Not only that I am about to do what is wise, but that for you and Lany as well it is a wise step. For present and future as far as you are concerned there could be no better thing happen than my marriage, and when once the idea grows familiar it will, I am sure, be only a pure pleasure to you to know that I am to have a fresh hold on life. . . . But over and above all, do be honest in writing to me of it, saying without reserve what you feel and letting me answer you as freely. As to my best and nearest friend, I write first to you. Drop me a line on receipt of this.

"God keep you——

"P. S. As yet this is between us—how I yearn to have seen you and talked myself out."

In this last letter, which tells great news, the sensitive solicitude that his boy shall have no hidden hurt is surely very sweet and touching. The letters continue with a new note in them, but chiefly now to the younger son at school first in America, then in England.

S. W. M. to Langdon Mitchell 6th April, 1876.

"My dear Lany,

"If you go on getting reports, etc., like some I know of—and do not begin to use those clever brains of yours, you will get sent home. Now open your eyes to the situation, and try to see what you can do to prevent a catastrophe which would not be quite enchanting to you or to me. If you work half as hard to stay at Dr. C's as I have done to get you there and to keep you there, I shall be altogether satisfied. I am so weary of work and the endless run upon me that I mean in the middle or end of April to see you both and at the same time secure a summer home at Newport. Today came your little note about sister Maria. She has nameless tints in her eyes and looks like the Gouverneurs, that is your Mama's mother. I am now writing a story which amuses me much. Also the buds on the horse chestnut across the way are a little pink—blushing we will say, because the warm south wind is whispering soft things about their lover the Spring. Tell dear old Jack I shall write to him soon. I told him of Mr. Sturgis' death and now I must tell you that your friend Cuyler's Father is also dead very suddenly! I hope, my son, you try to see all you can of your brother Jack—and who have you found to call friend by this time, and have you made any verses? I have written a wretched disjointed letter but it has taken four days—and nevertheless you are in my thoughts hourly.

"God keep you,

"W."

S. W. M. to L. M. 20-21 November, 1877.

"My dear son,

"Pluck wins in the long run. I am sure Dr. Coit does not think you bad company, and *I* think you first rate society and don't consider myself a bad judge also. As to marks, well, they don't matter much if only a fellow can justly mark himself high. I too had a hard time when I was a lad. I tried hard and succeeded ill—but I did try. I believe you are doing your best and don't let yourself give way and imagine that justice is not done you. I waited many a day to have justice done me and it came as it comes always to the strong and the patient—full measure, running over.

"Marks should be meant to enable a boy to compare himself with himself. As to his relation to others, let him do his duty to his own soul; let him cultivate his mind by the training of mental labor; let him keep his passions down, as we keep a mob down—and remember that it's his duty to transmit wholesomeness to those to come after him. I am sorry you get so little out-door life. But it is not far to the holidays and you know how glad we shall be to have you at home. What am I to give you?

"And did you get my verses? Often I cannot tell whether or not a letter reaches you. Thus I never knew if you got a long screed about the strike. Always glance over my last letter before answering it.

"Your last letter which came on Tuesday to your Mama is the one I am now replying to. You do not tell me if you get the *London Times*. If you wish also the *Nation* next term you may have it. I see the Russians have taken

Kars which should end the Asian campaign and set free Russians to aid in European Turkey.

"W."

S. W. M. to L. M.

"My dear son,

"It is 5:15 P. M. Sunday and this must be the first tranquil five minutes I have had in a week. I have been run down with professional work and had besides all manner of engagements as director of the library, Trustee of the University, etc., besides letters to write and a lecture to finish, with also some unavoidable social engagements. I dined last week next to Charles Leland (Hans Breitmann.) We went to school together and he now lives in London. He was pleasant enough, but says that coming back here after ten years he is disappointed at the want of beauty. I told him his standards were ruined by living in England. I was amused at this also. I was commenting on the lack of readiness of the English to take the fun of a jest, and a moment after I quite lost the sense of a joke I told him, as being one which a clever English woman had failed to take in. Tomorrow I have to dine the Prof. of History at Harvard, Kirk, who wrote an able life of Charles the Bold, Prof. Leidy, Miss Agnes, etc., a very able and clever party. Your Mama says clever parties are not always the brightest and it is true. Ease, readiness, desire to please, and be pleased with mere smartness (not quite the word) will often make a pleasanter dinner than mere genius—or great talent alone. I have just received yours from Leamington and hope to know of all your doings there before long. How much you

must enjoy it all. × for kiss which Ba has just put there. As to Gettysburg you may use my ideas as you like. I thought of an old man in years to come standing in the moonlight and telling his memories of the battle. I could send you a little guide book of it all. Did not I tell you as a subject for a dramatic poem—the great Kaiser Maximilian giving orders for his monument and watching its erection in Innsbruck where it is in the alte Kirche? The Kaiser kneeling and all his allies and ancestors, twenty-eight colossal bronze knights surrounding him, and how it was said that the man Caspar of Nuremburg made the beautiful statues of Arthur and of Alric and also of the Kaiser, whose grim visage he builded too like to be pleasant to the Emperor. I can imagine a quaint brave man defending his view of the business. I once began a poem about it but it faded out like most of my poems of that sort.

"It is cold today, clear, sharp and a wind that smites into the teeth of which I rode this p. m. with Mr. Rawle until we were both as red as roses and warm with the tussle with horse and wind. Really, old man, the time runs on and I get or seem to get no nearer to the seeing of you. I sent to take my passage in June yesterday. I cannot tell you how glad I shall be to see you once again. Your Mama should sail about May 15th to 20th from here with Ba-ba and you will have to take care of her at Chertsey and in London. She sent you a crimson at Jack's request. I began on Sunday and resume on Tuesday between patients who will be rare, as there fell six inches of snow last night and today it rains and blows, a ferociously ill-tempered time—Item, I find my guide book and send it, but do not let *Nation* or books

take you from the training of systematic study. I had it not and the one, one, one thing you get out of it is power of concentrating attention. This scrappy letter seems fated never to get done. We had our clever dinner and it was a success—I recall but one or two remarks. Craig Biddle said that the discontented classes in this country are the gentlemen, and I made out this point that the life of families in history was as durable in republics as in monarchies where a title and lands protect them. It made a great debate. Mr. Kirk said the history of Holland and of Switzerland proved it to be true.

"Some one complained about the quality of milk and Wharton said that the cows were distracted from their proper functions by the business of vaccination—one of those incongruous absurdities which make you laugh despite yourself, like what Wharton said of Chapman as having been first a Colonel and then in sugar business. 'His prentice hand he tried on man and then he made the 'lasses a,' or Mrs. Gillespies about her ugly cook, 'a creature not too fair or good for human nature's daily food' or mine, please, when the bumble bee got into your Mama's clock and I said he must have been improving the shining hours, I fancy it isn't only the world known wits who say the brilliant things. You see at last I have gotten this letter well along and it shall be a warning to me how I venture again on such a sheet. Have you forgotten about the servants and a line to Martha—or don't you want to? I do not wish to urge it but whatever of graciousness we can do to lighten the lives of old servants seems to me nice to do.

"Yours, WEIR."

S. W. M. to L. M.

"Dear L,

"Your critical notes made me happy. I wish I could see things in MS. which are revealed by the cruelty of print. Every point you criticize I have seen of late only too plainly, and I am queerly conscious of that want of permanent style which makes a Master. If I had been a right poet and not a mere 'prentice,' the Regicides would have been a sonnet. I guess some of the pin-feathers are wanting out of my wings, and even Cervantes might have been thus condensed."

XI

"Nature gives to one man curiosity and little means to gratify it. To another she gives desire to know and the organization which can answer its demands."

Roland Blake.

ONE of the chief tokens of ability is to have plenty of time for everything; your competent worker has ever an empty desk. Dr. Mitchell was now entering upon the busiest period of his life, yet the more he did, the more he seemed able to do. True, struggle in the commonly accepted sense of that word had been left behind, his profession was bringing in a large income which later in life his novels were greatly to augment. As regards his work, he might do as he pleased and what he pleased to do was significant. That "fresh hold on life" which his marriage was to bring, meant a heightened energy through a new sense of happiness. His wife was not only a devoted companion, but a nature as loyal as his own and one of rare character, judgment, straightness and strength. Her goodness was generally recognized and is still affectionately remembered. She made no pretense at brilliancy; her first thought was to be a foil to her husband, whose talents she appreciated without flattery. During the later years, indeed, she was almost the only person who did not flatter him, and in her sturdy independent way paid him honor without a sacrifice of individuality. To Mrs. Mitchell's practical conduct of their life, Dr. Weir owed everything; that large and complicated es-

1524 Walnut St.
Philadelphia

The home of Thomas Cadwalader from which his daughter, Mary Cadwalader was married to Dr. Mitchell. A year later they moved into it, and here he lived and labored until his death in January, 1914

(During the War it became the Philadelphia Headquarters of the Belgian Relief)

tablishment which included office, home and incessant hospitalities, ran on, under her direction, without a jar. More than this, she took upon her own shoulders whenever and wherever possible, the various jolts and disagreeable tasks of daily life in order that his mental activities should remain undisturbed. Yet she never shirked criticism when it fell due and never grudged direct praise when his work deserved it. The atmosphere of steadfastness she gave was just that needful to a sensitive man, and thus the part she played in his successful career was incalculable. No wonder these years were happy, especially since, in 1876, a daughter had been added to the family group. Now Dr. Weir could work as never before, medical articles, lectures, essays, verses, tales, and fill in his so-called "leisure" with delvings at the "Historical Society" and outside projects of all sorts. Nor does he ever seem to have been tired and cross, except when unwary correspondents spelt his name "Wier."

Early in 1877 he moved his family into the large double house at 1524 Walnut Street, which bore thereafter his nameplate on the window. Here was the core of work, the center of hospitality, which seemed almost to epitomize that of his city and his generation. This social life seemed always fullest when professional labors were most crowded, yet there is no record that Mrs. Mitchell, upstairs with her hand on the wheel, complained of her very large share in these activities.

Eighteen-seventy-seven was to prove a crucial year in Dr. Mitchell's life, as it was to make public the results of the practice he had been steadily building up and which was to furnish results unexpectedly important in the eyes of the

medical profession. That its members were becoming aware of what was being accomplished at the Summer Street Infirmary for Nervous Diseases was inevitable, since these things travel by a hundred highways of print and professional intercourse. A group of younger physicians, able and enthusiastic, were attending Dr. Mitchell's clinics and discussing his ideas. His gift of drawing young men about him was one of his great assets, it was founded on generosity and absence of that pettiness so often seen in those who are pushing their way. Through this group, Dr. Mitchell's theories were reaching the profession at large, so that when he accepted the invitation to be chief speaker at the Annual Meeting in Baltimore of the Medico-Chirurgical Faculty of Maryland, a good deal of general interest was aroused. Many doctors wished to see and hear a colleague so distinguished. The word *"charlatan"* had reached their ears; doubtless some of them expected to see some mystery-doctor—one who would use an obscure technology and whose shallowness they should at once penetrate. On the contrary, they saw an impressive person and heard a speaker who though convincing, could not have been called particularly persuasive or magnetic. The voice was strong—rising at need to a sort of commanding harshness—but the articulation was faulty and later in life when deafness began—delivery was apt to be a sort of gobbling. Certainly, there was nothing in this speaker—except possibly the earnest concentration, to suggest an empiric, nor could anything have been more characteristic of the man than the address itself. The title was "On Extreme Measures in Therapeutics," and the orator wasted no time in pretending

that what was desired of him was merely to review the work of others. "What you ask of your orator," he began, "is, of course, something which shall have a flavor of the man himself. . . ." Thus, in so many words, he let the audience know that he knew that what they wished to hear was something regarding this new medical treatment of his, —was it of real, scientific and enduring value, or was it just another fad, to run its little day?

If the introduction was characteristic, what followed was even more so. "Weir is a great politician," said his sister, when he was eleven. The article fills eighteen pages, but there is no mention of any observation resulting from his own experience till the foot of the thirteenth page. After running easily and by no means profoundly through topics familiar to his audience, the rise and fall of various therapeutic measures,—such as bleeding, baths, certain drugs, and dietaries—Dr. Mitchell devotes a scanty five pages to a clear, almost a casual description of his own successful treatment of functional nervous cases by rest, diet and massage. The adroit simplicity and directness of attack is extremely skilful, but above all the effect of placing his own discovery under the caption that he used was exceedingly disarming. From the first paragraph to the last there is an absence of obscure technology; any well educated person could understand what it meant as well as the learned body to whom it was addressed.

In nothing Dr. Mitchell ever wrote was his literary gift so purely indicated; for to concentrate on a result, to present it convincingly and comprehensibly, holds more of literature than science. This eye on the object was ever one of

his chief talents; to it was joined the practical faculty of wasting no time in attaining his end.

Dr. De Schweinitz tells a story of being asked by Dr. Mitchell for an opinion about the eye-condition of a patient. The opthalmologist, being young, wrote a long and technical report to which he received this note in reply. "Thanks. *What I want to know is: Does the woman need glasses*?"

The question expressed the chief pre-occupation of Dr. Weir's mind with each new patient. What interested him first and foremost—as stated by Dr. Keen and other physicians who worked with him or around him—were the therapeutic values. These he sought for ahead of the merely scientific aspect of each case, since, by this time in his career, he perforce had ceased to undertake scientific experiment for its own sake.

The short study entitled "Fat and Blood" appearing this same year, gives full and detailed account of the treatment announced in the Baltimore oration. Dr. Mitchell terms it in his catalogue, "the first effort in book form to spread the full knowledge of rest treatment before the profession. This treatment was received with incredulity and my results seriously questioned or ridiculed. It was a long while making its way in America—far longer in Europe. This book has gone through many editions and has been translated into French, German, Italian and Russian."

The French translation appeared in 1883. It was by Dr. Oscar Jennings and is entitled "Traitement Méthodique de la Neurasthènie et de la Hystérie."

The major treatise "Fat and Blood" had been, as we have seen, preceded by a number of minor studies on special

forms of diet, treatment in nervous cases, and special characteristics of drugs and remedies. Dr. Mills, in his article on the subject, says, that Mitchell's mind was "always plastic and responsive, like some great men in pure science, Faraday for instance, when engaged in a physiological or clinical investigation who, with every step taken, saw new radiations of the subject in hand. One observation or discovery indicated to his alert mind other possibilities. This is illustrated in many of his studies which had a tendency to follow each other along expanding lines, as in those on the effects of accidental or surgical nerve section, on the psychic phenomena shown in cases of amputation, on the influence of barometric and other weather conditions in nerve injury and disease and in his elaborate research with Morris Lewis on the physiology of the knee jerk and muscle jerk."

"Mitchell," Dr. Mills continues, "added to our knowledge of the use of drugs and other remedies as in his observations and investigations on morphine and atropine, his recommendation of nitrate of amyl to abort epileptic attacks, his suggestion of lithium bromide as the most valuable of the bromine salts, his use of splints to procure local rest . . . of ice and sprays to reduce pain and relieve local spasm. He was among the first to promote the rational use of massage and Faradic electricity and made . . . valuable suggestions as to surgical procedures, like nerve-section and nerve stretching, at a time when such suggestions had the merit of originality."

Dr. Mills' general summing-up came, of course, much later, after the Rest Cure was established—whereas, at the time, "Fat and Blood" contained a challenge to existing

ideas which it became necessary for the author to maintain by hard fight. He loved nothing better: and his engagements and occupations from now onward indicate the impetus necessarily given to his professional career. Phillips Brooks writing in February, 1898, observes; "Weir Mitchell has been here, curing all the dilapidated Bostonians. His coming makes a great sensation for he is a very famous man. I felt as though I were a nerve doctor myself with all the patients that swarmed about the house!"

Dr. Mitchell always insisted, from that introductory oration to the end of his career, that his responsibility for the Rest Treatment lay merely in coördinating systematically various curative measures which had been independently used for some time. Each one of the separate factors of his method were well-known to have value, it was only their united employment to which as a discovery, he laid claim. He believed that the properly combined use of rest, isolation, overfeeding, massage and sometimes electricity, obtained a much higher percentage of cures than seemed possible when he studied the result of these treatments used separately.

"It remained for Mitchell to convince the world," says Dr. Wilson, "in properly selected cases of functional nervous disease, of the systematic and routine use of non-medicinal measures." This was the synthesis in which he demonstrated his high quality of scientific imagination, and the further history of the Rest Cure demonstrated the aim as well as the quality of that scientific creative faculty.

At their anniversary, the Neurological Society of Philadelphia paid tribute to their founder, by showing how much

psychoanalysis owes to Mitchell, while warning that in Mitchell's hands psychoanalysis rested on a secure foundation of physiology. In later years, since the doctrine of focal infection which tries to remove the sources of poison, has superseded the earlier methods of fortifying the blood to resist it—the Rest Cure has come to take its place among the treatments of the past. Yet everywhere physicians are repeating that the Mitchell Treatment is not so much actually superseded, as incorporated into the body of present day medical knowledge. There is no careful doctor today who does not, under given conditions, make use of it, with such modifications as are inevitably required by his more recent scientific knowledge.

From 1878, for twenty years or more after the initiation of the Mitchell treatment, "Philadelphia was the mecca for patients from all over the world"—a constant chorus of praise arising from the younger physicians whom Dr. Weir had gathered around him—an equally constant chorus of warning and opposition from members of the profession who regarded the Cure as revolutionary, or foolish, or even hurtful. A cry of charlatan had started as we have seen, at the appearance of "Wear and Tear" and "Fat and Blood," largely because they were written in a style too simple, direct and popular to please maître Purgon and his confrères. As Dr. Mitchell's practice grew enormous, success added as always to the cohort of critics and unbelievers. Naturally, this practice possessed a full share of those cases afflicted with that odd malady of wishing to be treated by a fashionable physician. Some of these he handled as they deserved and when dismissed, they did not hesitate to lie about him

and his methods. A story is told by Dr. Edward Jackson of a woman whose violent nervous attacks always came on when her husband, who was an army officer, was ordered from home. "Weir Mitchell stalked into the room, where she lay apparently unconscious and turning, asked in his loud, harsh voice: 'What did you say was the lady's name?'

" 'Mrs. Wiley, Dr. Mitchell.'

" 'I see. Wiley by name and wily by nature!' "

It was her last attack but she was not grateful for the cure. Dr. Mitchell did not hesitate to employ such salutary roughness as he felt might help his patients toward self-control. This led to comical incidents, which sometimes the patient remembered when cured with humor against herself, and sometimes with an undying rancor against her physician. On one occasion, he had struggled unsuccessfully for many weeks to persuade an inert lady to walk a certain distance daily. She chanced to be in his office when his carriage was at the door so he asked her to get in. The patient, supposing she was to be taken to her house—a long way—obeyed; but at a given distance, Dr. Mitchell stopped the carriage and sternly bade her alight and walk home! Then there was the patient who insisted on eating with her eyes shut, and the famous story—which went all the rounds amid much laughter—of the woman who refused to get out of bed. Dr. Mitchell had run the gamut of argument and persuasion and finally announced: "If you are not out of bed in five minutes—I'll get into it with you!" He thereupon started to remove his coat, the patient still obstinately prone—he removed his vest, but when he started to take off his trousers—she was out of bed in a fury!

"The old wizard" as he was affectionately termed on occasion, acquired an insight into temperament and character which was little short of genius. "With his patients," writes Dr. Thayer, "he was natural, direct and easy." Sir William Osler, in an article entitled "The Faith that Heals," (January, 1910) says: "I had the good fortune to be associated for five years with Weir Mitchell and saw much of the working of that master-mind on the sisters of Sir Galahad and the brothers of Sir Percivale, who flocked to his clinics." For, in this, more than in any other type of practice, the personal handling was the whole matter. Dr. Weir drew unhesitatingly on the resources of his own personality for success in treatment. If his scientific imagination invented his Cure, it was his literary imagination which helped make it so vast a success. "The part played by suggestion and tact," wrote Dr. James C. Wilson in reviewing the Treatment, "a knowledge of human nature and a dominant will . . . must not be overlooked." When we follow into the sick-room that lean, concentrated man, with his reverent young assistants, we see his literary sense, his dramatic sense, his psychological knowledge, each serving him in turn. If the patient was bumptious, the doctor was dictatorial: if timid, the doctor would be reassuring. Of one case he would ask not a single question, while he would encourage the next to give a full account of her symptoms. While thus adapting himself to several needs, he was quick to detect any mere whimsy and kept an iron discipline in the sick-room, exacting complete obedience.

Very rarely, yet once in a while, the patient would get the better of the physician and if she chanced to have a love

for literature or poetry, her day might be occasionally brightened by the strictly illicit joy of "talking books." Perchance, at another bedside, he would raise the invalid's interest by dropping into a chair and reading a verse or two of his own. Who knows how much good that flattery did or how long and gratefully he would remain in his patient's memory? In such instances solid friendship often resulted, as in the case of Mrs. Mason, his correspondent of many years.

Woman is the grateful sex and her reaction to the healer is more personal than man's. Dr. Mitchell experienced this gratitude in an increasing measure, and the resulting flattery was not without effect. For many years he resisted, but the time came when he accepted it as logical. His days were filled with admiration, which his mail re-echoed.

In 1885, a correspondent writes, "I wish to make some testimonial to the value of your great work in the world—some recognition of the peculiar blessing you have conferred on sufferers everywhere"—and proceeds to offer a contribution of ten thousand dollars "to your project for the benefit of nervous women."

Not only did they offer him checks, and beg him to run for President, but a big envelope remains to show that they wrote him poems! One of these jingles is well worth reciting, since it gives in little, a clear glimpse of the Rest Cure itself.

> "In the City of Penn, by the Schuylkill's dark waters,
> A world renowned rest-system has its headquarters——"

the verses begin and go on to the admission of the patient:

"Then comes Dr. Kane who will take your case history
The questions he asks often seem quite a mystery;
Your symptoms and trials, your ancestors' diseases
Are poured out for him to write out as he pleases. . . .

(Next Dr. John Mitchell arrives on the scene.)

"He studies the case and decides they can cure it.
At worst, they can give you some strength to endure it.
He plans out the treatment and keeps patients to it,
And those who don't mind him will certainly rue it!

"At last some bright day at your door will appear,
The famous neurologist, great Dr. Weir,
A poet and writer of much versatility,
Producing fine books with the utmost facility.
Dr. Mitchell's opinion! You quake to receive it,
He says you'll get well and you'd like to believe it!"

XII

"During my winter's work all day long I examine the witnesses we call nurses or patients and try with much use of skilled labor to get at the truth."

Dr. North.

DESPITE the drain on time and energy by medical practice, medical articles and literary work, Dr. Mitchell did not slacken his interest in certain institutions of his own city. Chief among these was the College of Physicians. His connection with this institution is a matter of history, yet should be briefly recapitulated in these pages. Fellow in 1856, he became President just thirty years later and was re-elected in '87, '88, '92, '93 and '94. In 1880, he started the Weir Mitchell Library Fund with an initial contribution of one thousand dollars, later increased to five thousand. Three years after, he made an additional contribution of seven thousand. In 1882, he established in the College a Directory for Nurses, which was at that time a decided innovation. In 1878, the year after the Rest Cure announcement, he presented to the College two beautiful copies of the portraits of Harvey and of Hunter, whose originals hang in the National Gallery, London. The Letter of Bequest accompanying these is one of his most charming pieces of occasional writing.

He was also the driving force in the project for a new building and this he carried out, despite the inertia of many colleagues, until he brought it at last to splendid realization.

Besides giving pictures, instruments, money and energy to the College, he gave books, and constantly, over many years, at home or abroad, he bore the needs of the College Library in mind. This taste, with other congenialities, was now to bring him a new friend.

In 1884, the Canadian professor of Medicine at McGill University tossed a coin to decide if he should accept a Chair at Montreal, or agree to succeed Dr. Pepper in the Chair of Clinical Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. Philadelphia won and William Osler arrived to take up his life there. A small, dark, brilliant young man, he was possessed of many tastes which made him congenial to Dr. Weir Mitchell, although he was also ridden by an imp of jesting which the latter never understood. The Canadian had heard a good deal about the stately and impressive Philadelphian and among other things, that Dr. Weir said there was only one way to determine the breeding of a man who applied to succeed Dr. Pepper, which was to offer him cherry-pie and see how he disposed of the stones. "I had read of the trick before," said Osler, "so I disposed of them genteely in my spoon—and got the Chair!"

Notwithstanding a good deal of difference in temperament and outlook, the two men became friends and it was during the next five years, until he went to Johns Hopkins, that Osler speaks with such admiration of Mitchell's clinics for the "Sisters of Sir Galahad and the Brothers of Sir Percivale."

If the perpetual joking with which the younger man enlivened his daily grind was somewhat bewildering to the elder, yet he respected and appreciated the ability of the

Osler who wrote "The Principles and Practice of Medicine." The two also had a great bond in the love of fine, old books, with the search for which their letters are chiefly filled. Dr. Osler was a frequent guest at the Mitchell table, being very apt to run up from Baltimore and join his group of old friends and colleagues in Philadelphia.

When the Canadian left the new world for Oxford and a baronetcy, letters continued, and visits whenever possible. Twenty years after, Dr. Weir expressed his affection for Osler in certain charming verses and a stanza may be not amiss:

> "Show me his friends and I the man shall know,
> This wiser term a larger wisdom lends,
> Show me the books he loves and I shall know
> The man far better than through mortal friends."

There were many occasions when these two eminent persons were to exchange compliments. Osler, in 1890, presented Mitchell's portrait to the College of Physicians and a year or so later, dedicates a monograph to his elder colleague. At the same time, being an incurable tease, Osler takes every opportunity to rally the Philadelphian on his foibles, his social habits and his love of dining out. In his letters, however, he displays less of the wit and apothegm that we find in Dr. Mitchell's—for, pen in hand, Dr. Osler became business-like. Here he treats of the matters they both loved:

Dr. Osler to S. W. M. July 25, 1903. Glen View.

"Dear Dr. Mitchell,

"Reading the Ethics of Aristotle this evening in Bk. VII, Chapter V, I came across the statement 'There was a man

again who, by reason of disease, was afraid of a cat.' He is speaking of excessive cowardice. It may interest you in connection with your inquiry into morbid dread of 'the harmless necessary cat.'

"After three weeks in Paris, we came here for tranquil solitude. I saw a great deal of the work at Bicêtre and Salpetrière. At the former, Marie has an extraordinary collection. I very often remarked to Jacobs who was with me, 'I do wish Weir Mitchell could be here.' The varieties of Syringomelia were most instructive.

"With Dejerme we saw an interesting group of rest cases —seclusion (round the old-style bed-curtains) and suggestion by reasoning, with a milk diet. He had some very interesting cases of what he called his 'modified Weir Mitchell cure.' Raymond Charcot's successor has equipped the old clinique in a remarkable way, having spent some thousands upon making it the most complete of its kind—electrical, psychopathic, photographic X-ray, anatomical, and chemical departments all in charge of young experts. He has organized a most valuable Charcot museum, specimens, photographs, etc.

"I did not pick up much in the way of books in Paris—could get no originals of Gui Patin. I got a Rabelais, edition of the aphorisms of Hippocrates, and a couple of early Avicennas. In London I got the Editio princeps of Celsus, a beauty. I missed a Grolier Rabelais—which went far beyond my purse. I had a sore disappointment in a reputed Harvey portrait at Sedelmeyers—a Jassen, 1656—a splendid picture. I took a photograph to London and submitted it to Cust, Powers and others and looked up the reputed pedi-

gree. It could not have been a Harvey, much to my sorrow, as I had determined to take it.

"With love to Mrs. Mitchell in which Mrs. Osler joins,

"Sincerely yours, WM. OSLER."

The eighties are filled with work, medical and literary, and while conceding that the first was now being accomplished more rapidly than formerly by means of his corps of assistants, yet Dr. Weir's industry remained abundant. Not all of his medical publications are short papers; some he values higher than others. Certain studies, such as those on "Knee-Jerk and Muscle Jerk," the author held to be a definite contribution on an obscure subject and "its interesting and as yet uncontradicted facts." A volume of his scattered verse made its appearance in 1882, entitled "The Hill of Stones." This was alluded to in a Philadelphia newspaper as "The Hell of Stoves" and Dr. Weir cherished the following effusion thereupon, from the editor, a brother poet, Harvey Watts.

"I don't know who the original genius or head devil may be who invented the apt title, which will be forever

"Typographically lined

"On the tablets of my mind

"Though the yesterdays may fade from out the page.

"Indeed, I think it is only a Jabberwock poem that can do justice to the collocation. For instance,——

> " 'Twas brillig and the 'Hell of Stoves'
> Was glowing like a furnace grate;
> Whilst Typos fed on fiery loaves
> And murdled o'er untimely fate.

"I asked the poet as to why,
He guffled in his ghoulish glee—
'The printer's devil on the sly
Got in his deadly work on me.'

"'Twas brillig and the 'Hell of Stoves'
Still glimmbered in that fatal print,
All gloomy were the borogoves
As editors tied up their lint."

Poetry, during these and the following most busy years, was bringing into Dr. Weir's life joyous interludes, never-failing solace and renewal. His verse, read in the light of the writer's occupations, reflects the man's intense enjoyment of nature, his gallant and happy outlook. It stands in full sunshine and spreads wings to the wind. . . . Long hours might be spent among the morbid and the miserable, helping them to bear those "thoughts that ever had black shadows to them," as one said to him, but the Muse ran about out-doors, on the hills or the sea. If one chose at random such verses as these:

"the asters cast
Their purple coronets and below
The brown ferns shiver in the blast,
And all the fretted pool aglow,
Reflects the cold, clear, yellow sky——"

Or this, from his favorite, "The Sea-Gull":

"Gray mariner of every ocean clime,
If I could wander with so sure a wing
Or beat with yellow web the pathless sea,
I too, might cease to sing!"——

Who would believe that the writer spent much of his time in an Infirmary for Nervous Diseases? When he writes:

> "The lusty north wind all night long,
> His carols sang above my head,
> And shook the roof and roused the fire,
> And with the cold, red morning, fled."

we share a zest and re-capture a mood that no exhausted mind nor careworn nature could have roused in us.

As regards prose, a short novel had appeared—"Hepsibah Guinness," followed in 1884 by the better-known "In War Time." The latter ran as a serial in the *Atlantic Monthly* and is the first of his stories to show power of character-drawing, against a well-considered background of the Civil War. Its reception prepared the way for "Roland Blake" in 1886, which George Meredith admired the most of Dr. Weir's performances. As we shall see in his letters, the English novelist held both of these books very high.

Dr. H. H. Furness, Jr. tells a story illustrative of Dr. Mitchell's conversation and method of work, that incidentally refers to this novel. The two men sat together at one of the Philadelphia Library dinners and the elder had been speaking of titles, saying that they should be chosen from the name of the protagonist, while this latter must always be the subject of great care. "Now," said he, "here are some questions for you—as a test! If asked to name the particular figure in chivalry standing for all that was noble, pure, brave and gentle, whom would you select?"

"After some hesitation in favor of Bayard, I chose Ro-

land. Dr. Mitchell fairly beamed at me. 'Good. . . . Now, if you were asked to name one who was both poet and artist, mystic, eccentric genius and sentimentalist——?' "

" 'There's only one I can think of,' I began. . . . 'William Blake!' "

Again Dr. Mitchell beamed. "Now," triumphantly, "you can see, can't you?—why I named my hero, Roland Blake?"

One would naturally expect the history of so chivalrous a transcendentalist as this well-sponsored hero, to be of a highly romantic cast. Yet the interesting thing about both these Civil War novels is that they portray a state of mind and nerves freshly familiar to our literature of the moment. A great war—whether fought with horse and musket or with tank and gas-bomb—repeats an universal human experience, expressed in the self-same human way. The characters in "Roland Blake" are just those presented by young writers of today—who have not had the advantage of training as professional neurologists. In such matters, Dr. Mitchell the novelist is instructed by Dr. Mitchell the specialist, so that he walks open-eyed among the shadows of the border-land.

The hysterical family tyrant, who sacrifices everybody and everything for the sake of a vicious and dishonorable brother; the helpless group around her, succumbing to the strain of her diseased nerves; the vigorous action of soldiers and surgeons and the effect of a campaign on the sensitive hero—how well our own generation has known such things—how it shrinks from their memory! "There was no escaping," as the author says, "these persistent echoes from distant battle-fields."

It is as the mirror of a dreadful and crowded scene that "Roland Blake" has value and it suffers less than some of the others from lack of terseness. The story held one of two studies of morbid female psychology—the only ones in which Dr. Mitchell made any profound use of his professional knowledge. "Constance Trescot," the other, is even more heightened and deepened as a portrait and he claimed it as his best. Temperamentally, we see he preferred sunshine and health to disease and darkness. Thus we find him in November 1896, offering to George W. Cable, a horrific plot concerning maniacal jealousy, because he doesn't like the subject. And he does not fail to add a P. S. "My dear Fictioner, you will need some coaching on insanity and if in any way I can help you, I am at your disposal. I presumed the tale would scare the boldest novelist!"* Cases occur in all his novels, but with these two exceptions, they are subsidiary and unimportant.

Meanwhile Dr. Mitchell had sent his volume "Doctor and Patient" to Holmes, who wrote enthusiastically that it was "A book after my own heart, learned enough without any idle display, evidently the result of abundant experience, familiar, with no loss of dignity . . . and with nothing condensed into obscurity."

Among other letters during the eighties, we find an appreciative note from J. G. Whittier and a delightful one from his old friend Phillips Brooks. The Holmes correspondence was drawing to a close. Apropos of the publication by the Smithsonian in 1886 of the definitive work by Mitchell and Reichert, "Researches on the Venom of Poi-

* See *Life and Letters of G. W. Cable* by L. L. C. Biklé.

sonous Serpents," Dr. Weir had presented the Autocrat with a beautiful snake-skin and the recipient responds with all his old-time verve.

When it came to verse-making we see that the younger man did not fear "that he would spoil himself for a doctor!" His feeling about all these activities is best given in a sentence written to Mrs. Mason in which Dr. Weir says: "I have no intention of giving up and hope to drop between the traces and die with the sweat of work on!"

Mt. Vernon St., Boston, March 2, 1887.

"Dr. S. Weir Mitchell,

"I have been reading with great pleasure thy little volume of Poems for Poems they certainly are. They prove as in Dr. Holmes' case, that science and medical skill are not incompatible with the true poetic feeling and rhythmic felicity. Let me mention 'The Shriving of Genevieve,' 'Kearsarge,' 'Milan,' and all the out of door pictures of the Camp Fire lyrics. I heartily congratulate thee!

"Thy friend,

"JOHN G. WHITTIER."

Phillips Brooks to S. W. M. Trento, Tyrol, Sept. 19, 1885.

"Dear Weir:

"What a good fellow you are! and, dear me, how many years ago it is since you began to be a good fellow, or rather since I began to know what a good fellow you were when you were a young doctor and I a young parson and the world so much less aged than it is today. Something well over twenty years ago. Certainly it is since you did me your first

kindness, but you never did a kinder thing than when you offered me your house and home, bed, board and cook for a three months convention time—not that I can accept it. I am bound already to Cooper and MacVickar each of whom has claimed me for half of the time that I am to be in Philadelphia. But I thank you just as truly as if I had been able to come and break all your choicest furniture and drink all your rarest wines. You do not know what you escape by my being unable to do the tempting thing which you propose. Think of what your house would have had to undergo after we left it! You would have found fragments of broken dogmas under the chair cushions and skeletons of sermons in all your bed room closets. No, my dear Weir, I must not put your friendship to this test—and besides Cooper and MacVickar are expecting me. But I do thank you and your wife with all my heart.

"And I am so sorry that I shall not see you on my visit. I want to get you by the hand and it must not be long after my return before you give me the chance.

"My best remembrances to Mrs. Mitchell and Miss Mitchell and Jack and Lanny.

"Ever affectionately yours, P.B."

O. W. Holmes to S. W. M. May 18, 1882.

"My dear Dr. Mitchell,

"You could not have pleased Mrs. Holmes and myself both at once better than by sending her your poem. She read it—and I read it—and just now I have taken it up again and read it aloud to her.

"IT IS A BEAUTIFUL POEM. The measure is quite new to me and I wonder we stupid rhymesters have never thought of it. It is musical and effective, the duplicated rhymes tell on the ear very agreeably. The story is told simply, unaffectedly and with pathetic tenderness. If you go on writing such charming verse, you will spoil yourself for a doctor, for nobody will believe you can do two things as well as you can do this one thing.

"I enclose my remarks about Emerson read at the meeting of the Massachusetts Historical Society day before yesterday, which you may like to run your eye over, or even to read if not too busy.

"Mrs. Holmes desires to express her grateful acknowledgments for the compliment you have paid her in sending her this lovely poem."

O. W. Holmes to S. W. M. Boston, January 13, 1882-1883.
"My dear Dr. Mitchell,

"My letter of thanks for your beautiful volume of poems must have crossed you enroute. You have it, no doubt, before this time.

"I am mightily interested in your snake experiments and hope to have a full account of them by and by. Do send me that snake skin you speak of and perhaps I will wear it for a neck-tie.

"Don't let 'em bite you! Remember poor Dr. Wainwright and how near you came to being crotalized into Hades by that fellow that turned round in his box. If you play any such tricks with your 'worms' as Bacon calls 'em I won't

write your obituary for G.W.C.'s paper.* Good luck to you and the varmints.

"Faithfully yours."

O. W. Holmes to S. W. M. Boston, March 1, 1883.

"My dear Dr. Mitchell,

"I am reminded of Pope's line

'Pleased with a rattler-tickled, etc.'

I don't think I have it quite right, but anyhow I am both pleased and tickled with my rattler's integument. It is magnificent: not Tofana or Madame de Brinvilliers in all her glory of silks and satins was clad like one of these! But what a parlous worm it was, to be sure! I didn't know that poison serpents ever grew so big as that. He must have shed venom as a milch cow does her amiable secretion. I have got him hung upon my revolver (book shelves, that is) and he hides a library of volumes. And when he rattled how he must have waked the slumbering watchman, if any such were within range!

"I should greatly enjoy a short biography of this individual specimen of a race which owes so much to your pious labors.

"Well, well, asps and vipers and copperheads, and cobras, and rattlesnakes, of reasonable dimensions, I know, but a crotalus with the length and circumference of a boa constrictor is a new acquaintance, whose bark if I may so call his integument—is much more welcome than his bite would be——! Always and this time, thankfully,

"Yours,"

* George W. Childs' *Public Ledger.*

Oliver Wendell Holmes

(Courtesy of Houghton Mifflin Company)

From The Same Boston, March 25, 1885.

"Dear Dr. Mitchell,

"I may have read your first edition of the 'Lectures on the Nervous System,' but if I did I have pooled the knowledge I got out of it with the rest of the information. So this second edition was as good as new to me, and although I did not begin and read it page by page, I have read a good deal of it and with great satisfaction. No medical book since Dr. Charles' 'Visions' has interested me so much and I have not half done with it. I have seen something of hysteric and nervous complaints while in practice and incidentally know not a little of them since. This book of yours was not needed to increase your reputation as a practitioner, but it will be with its additions and improvements a most welcome addition to the libraries of great numbers of the working men of the profession.

"I am very much obliged to you for sending me this copy. I keep my medical library on my shelves and your book shall find a place of honor on them if Hippocrates has to squeeze Sydenham to make room for it.

"Always truly yours,"

Finally comes a sad little note with an apologetic postscript and Dr. Weir must have hated to see the shadow creeping over the cheerful spirits of his old friend.

From The Same Boston, January 9, 1888.

"Dear Dr. Mitchell,

"You see what a state I am reduced to. One eye will not

read at all and the other is getting dim—— I expect to come to a staff and a little dog if I live long enough.

"Thanks, many, for the copy of 'The Morning Visit.' I have not read it for many a year, but I will now and hope I shall like it well enough to put it in a little volume which my publishers expect to get out for me in a few months.

"Kindest remembrances,

"Faithfully yours."

On the inner sheet is printed:

"Dr. Holmes regrets that impaired eyesight and the large demands made upon his time by distant and unknown friends oblige him to contract his hitherto extended correspondence, and to avail himself of the services of an assistant in writing. Boston, November 1st, 1887."

XIII

"Men say that Luck, a liberal jade, has poured
Her favours on you: lordships half a score
Castles and lands,—that vineyard on the Loire . . ."
François Villon.

NINE years after the Baltimore orations, in 1886, Harvard bestowed an LL.D on Dr. Mitchell. He was now fifty-seven and entering upon the golden harvest of these last busy years. They had included much beside professional activity for, in the phrase of a friend "This rich and manifold career, child and pattern of the spacious Renaissance rather than of our own specialized days, added to medicine, letters, affairs and the fine art of friendship, the capacity for organization. . . ."

No capacity is more quickly recognized or more readily honored by our people, who do not, however, so quickly see the value of those silent labors through which the student and the scientist create the matter to be organized. Dr. Mitchell's public spirit and energy in affairs, as well as his work in science, brought him many of the world's tributes —expressed in Honorary degrees and appointments. These begin to arrive too thick and fast for separate mention. And he was of a temperament fitted to enjoy them—no music was sweeter to his ears than that of well-deserved praise. These occasions pleased his literary and artistic sense. He liked to walk, stately and dignified, in academic processions —that fine head under a mortar-board or velvet *beret*; he

liked the impressive hush when he rose to speak before some crowded auditorium. All this his soul loved, but what marked him out from others was that he never forgot those younger men who would come in time to stand where he did. He never forgot them; he never refused to help them toward the goal he had himself achieved. He praised their work far oftener than he condemned it, and during all his life he gave money, personal sympathy, personal influence, steadily, constantly, kindly. . . . We shall hear more of this later on.

The same year as the Harvard degree, Dr. Mitchell was first elected to the Presidency of the Philadelphia College of Physicians and in 1887, at their Centennial, delivered a charming address about those early physicians, which has been already mentioned in these pages. The summer of 1888 brought an interesting experience, when he was commissioned to represent the Smithsonian Institute and the National Academy of Sciences at the Eight Hundredth Anniversary of the University of Bologna. He describes his arrival in a letter to his wife:

"I woke up about three at Bologna. Ten ant nests would not describe it. It rained hard; busses full; people here and there; bags everywhere; and the noise and bang-bang of these voices and cracking of whips. We found a cabriolet, which broke a spring; and so, at last, a spacious hotel where two rooms were ready. How I did sleep! At 9:30 a very cold bath, then down to café 'complete' in a court where Sam. Dickson soon came. There we found Crane and Lowell in the porter's house and had a good chat.

About twelve we went to find the University. No one was provided for. No one knew anything. Flags, people, pretty women, students, soldiers, amusing and confusing! We found an office where they took our testimonials and said they would send us every needed document. Next home to lunch, Lowell evidently not much pleased at being described as Professor and not otherwise cared for. On the list I am Mitchell Weir of Washington. Buenos Aires is described as being in Canada. The occasion is what Fanny, our cook, decribed as 'upsettin'.' It is thirty-seven years since I stood in the great square but a lad and looked forward into life. Much memory of it came back to me, and I walked away with a strangely solemn feeling as to the crowded years which separate this from that."

S. W. M. to Mrs. S. W. M. Bologna, June, 1888.

"At eight in the morning we were all at the Civic Palace, and each delegation waited under its banner till the cards for tonight's Syndics dinner were given us. Universities from Melbourne to Harvard were represented by costumes past belief—gowns red, yellow, black, hoods of all tints, orders! One man must have had thirty. Then we marched through the crowded streets to the University. The hall was a vast open court-yard, two arcades high, filled above with men, women and uniforms, the pillars covered with lilies, roses and marguerites. The throne twenty feet from us. Then came the King, Queen, and Prince of Naples, he a pale lad with legs too short, an unwholesome looking boy; she, a lovely woman, not beautiful but simply handsome and sweet of face, in a changeable silk dress, bonnet

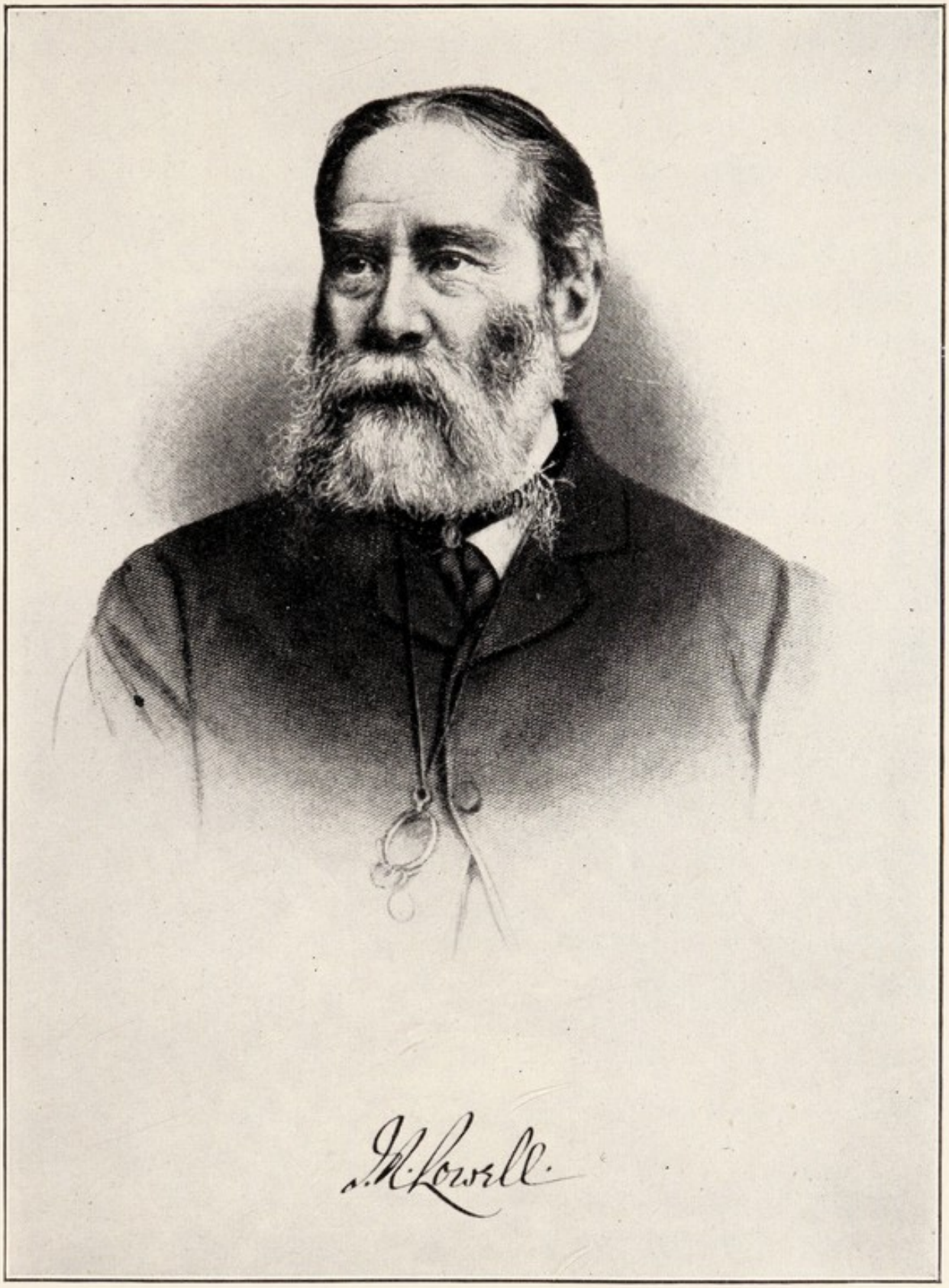
of straw with red roses, and a great fan, which she used steadily, the heat being awful. The King is very plain but has a strong face and a mustache to beat Willy Fisher's, an anxious, worried face. After the songs and music, we went up by nations, one man, (Story, for us) spoke. We were presented to the royalties, shook hands with the rector, bowed anew and fell back, and so on till two.

"Last night at the Syndics' reception, I talked a while in English with the Prince. I told him that when last I was here the Austrians were reviewed in the Plaza. At this he said, 'Well, we smashed them,' which, with French help, was true more or less."

S. W. M. to Mrs. S. W. M. Bologna, June, 1888.

"Last evening three hundred and fifty dined in a great hall and dined well. I was fed inside and out, as a waiter spilt about a half tumbler of melted meat jelly on my head. I bent over and let it drip on the table. Such a mess! 'Non mea culpa,' he cried. Six waiters then made my toilet.

"Today at nine we all met again in the covered court. The Deans of faculties standing beside the Rector read each a brief Latin exhortation, and then came a list of the laureati —First, Letters, and our Lowell got a degree; Second, Law, some dozen; Third, Pure Science; Fourth, Medicine. The greatest names in Europe were shouted in turn and applauded, Charcot, Virchow, and so forth. In the middle of the reading, Lowell, who was as nice as possible, said, 'There, that is your name.' So I got up and passed through the mob of gowns seated thick before us. As I reached the open aisle I saw my error, but as it was well to get near



James Russell Lowell

(Courtesy of Houghton Mifflin Company)

on account of the indistinctness of the Italian rendering of names (Lowell was called Signor Russell), I pretty coolly walked on up to the Rector on the left of the Queen. Capellini smiled and called me to a seat where I waited, close to the Queen and a little below.

"I remember how as a mere boy I had wandered through these streets, little dreaming that some day I should stand as I did today to receive such recognition with the greatest names in European science."

This trip to Italy was followed by others and his letters therefrom showed the impression he ever drew from that country. To Talcott Williams in 1891, he writes, "I left my heart in Italy upon the gray lagoons—a fragment on the hill at Assisi—bits along the Umbrian plain—all of the ventricle on the Campagna—about the Campagna there is a mystery of charm which is almost sensual. The first time I saw it was at evening and it disturbed me emotionally almost to tears."

The Bologna honors had led to a closer acquaintance with Lowell, who dined with Dr. Weir in Philadelphia early in the year 1889. While never intimate friends, the two had tastes in common, which makes this letter interesting.

J. R. Lowell to S. W. M. 68 Beacon Street, 2nd April, 1889.
"Dear Dr. Mitchell,

"Your letter of Saint Valentine's day would not have waited so long for answer, had the address on the cover been in your own handwriting. As it was I too hastily con-

cluded the missive to be from an autograph hunter; one of those perverse persons who seek for a sign and to whom no sign shall be given. I tossed it among a heap of others on the top of a revolving book-stand at my elbow and there it lay all these weeks without any sign of ill humor. But yesterday as I reached for a book, one letter disengaged itself from the rest and fell on the floor at my feet. I picked it up, observed that it had never been opened, again took it for an autograph beggar, and was about to toss it back among its fellows, when it struck me that it was too thin to contain a stamped envelope. So I opened it and there was your Valentine. The thing struck me as odd. There was a heap of letters; this one was not on top, and yet was the only one that struggled forth and fell. How explain these mysteries? Chance is a mighty clever fellow!

"I was deeply interested in your pamphlet. I think it lays most of the ghosts, perhaps not all, I believe them all (so far as they seem to be objectively visible) figments of the brain. But my doubt is whether there must not have been some preceding impression of the nearness of that person whose eidolon seems to be seen in order to produce the image. Given that impression, the imagination sees that person (with all the accidents of gait, gesture, dress even) as the eye had been accustomed to see him when in the body. (I am thinking of a German ghost which paraded in a bottle-green coat with brass buttons.) To be sure this perhaps is only proposing an alternative explanation of phenomena better, at least more simply, accounted for by your cases. I have long believed my own visions to be ALL MY EYE though I cannot remember when they were ever

followed by headache. Those could be shut out by closing the lids. But what of those I see with my eyes shut, that come and go and change without my will or even in spite of it? Is everything one has ever seen laid away in the eye as a photographer stores his negatives? And is there something analogous in the mind's eye, the memory?

"I was particularly struck with the case of the lady who observed that the movement of her sister's image was governed by that of her own eye. What a happy example of the difference between lookers and seers, between the ordinary and the scientific habit of mind!

"By the way, have you sent your pamphlet to the psychical research men? To William James, for example. To me a physical marvel is as interesting as a spiritual one, though in a different way. Pardon my garrulity, busy man that you are, and with kindest regards to Mrs. Mitchell, be sure that I am,

"Faithfully yours,"

European vacations became more frequent for Dr. Mitchell after the Bologna degree and he records an interesting encounter with Herbert Spencer and George Meredith. The former never corresponded with him; but the acquaintance with the latter led to several letters.

"When in Europe, I saw Dr. Hughlings-Jackson, my old friend in London. Considering his great distinction as a medical thinker, it has always surprised me that he was not rewarded or that a title was never given him by the Government, while in my time a dozen or more men already

forgotten have been made baronets. He told me that he was forty-two years old before he made enough to support himself and his wife. He had no more family. On the occasion I mention, he asked me to tell him whom I should like to meet. I said, 'Of all people I desire to meet Herbert Spencer.' He said, 'He will not dine anywhere away from home.' But it turned out that Spencer had been a little curious about the meaning of a passage in my book about wounds received in war, and especially in regard to the feelings of persons who had lost legs. Perhaps this or some other reason made him more willing to break his rule. The next day Hughlings-Jackson said that Spencer had consented to dine, provided no one should appear in evening dress. Well, this from a man who had written a book on ceremonial was to me amazingly amusing. It was in several ways significant. Of course, I went in the best clothes I owned, and so did others, with the exception of Jonathan Hutchinson, who, being a Quaker, may not have been in the habit of wearing dress clothes. The dinner was most interesting, and at the close I said, 'It would be most agreeable to us, Mr. Spencer, if you would come over to America and visit us. We are rather hospitable people with those we like.' 'I know that,' he said, 'but I do not mean to come because I fear that I would share the fate of my friend Tyndall, who on his return was deluged with letters of introduction from persons in America, who, having entertained him, had delivered to their friends letters to him in return.' I thought this remark bad manners but said, 'You may be sure that if you come to America and will say that you do not desire to be entertained in any way,

the request will be sedulously carried out.' He did make such a visit and was certainly not bothered by me, or by anybody else that I know of.

"Lowell, I long knew by letter; in 1888, as I have said, we met in Bologna, and later he was our guest for two weeks. He would dine out daily and, coming in late, light a clay pipe and wander about my library, taking down books, talking of them. One night he took up a volume of my verse and read aloud 'A Medal,' which he thought my best poem. Once when I dined with him and Browning alone in London, they quoted merrily queer parts of 'The Sweet Singer of Michigan'; but of this, as of many notable dinners, I recall nothing. Lowell had a little circle of adoring women after dinner and talked as no one else could. Except George Meredith at his best, I have never heard so good a talker.

"This reminds me of other visits to London when, I came to know Meredith. Even as early as this, he was becoming crippled with a spinal malady. I saw him at his home, Box Hill, Surrey, and dined once at the Garrick Club with the staff of 'Punch' and Meredith. He talked much and well, without the peculiar qualities of his written style. On my first visit I said to him, 'I have failed to get "Richard Feverel" in London.' 'If I had a copy,' he said, 'I should give it to you. It has had a *succès d'estime*; no one will part with it and no one will reprint it, no one, as it is with all my books.' I said that some day he would write a novel that would capture a wider circle, and then all his books would be reprinted and sell. Since 'Diana of the Crossways' this has happened. When last we met he was quite

crippled and did not rise, but held out both hands and said, 'Oh my dear Weir Mitchell, how good of you to come to see me!' The affectionate welcome reminded me of Holmes. I had lunched with Sir Trevor Lawrence and walked over to Meredith's with Miss Lawrence. He said with an air of surprise, 'What! You keep autographs? Oh, surely not.' I said that I did not, but that in turning to a book, to have dropped out a note or a letter of the author always seemed to bring him into nearer relation. He said, 'Take it,' and I did. I placed the three pages in his great novel, 'The Ordeal of Richard Feverel.'"

George Meredith to S. W. M. England, April 2, 1885.

"My dear Sir:

"I have not written to thank you for your volume 'In War Time' and the apology will, I know, be accepted. It is owing to the serious illness of my wife that I have been scarce able to do my common day's work. I have at last read the book, and I find it a piece of psychology wrought into a production of art. The story is excellent; and you have done what I constantly protest should be done to give a fruitful repast to cultivated readers. You have evolved the story from the characters. I look about me in my country vainly for an author who is up to that high-water mark of fiction. The characters are so clearly drawn as they are forcibly conceived, and for that reason the crux of the position between the young medicus and Mrs. Westerley, (to whom my heart is vowed) has the stamp of highest nobility. Readers cannot meditate on it without elevation. I am warmly in your debt. My wife, my girl, my friends, the fair

and the masculine alike, are of my mind that the book is both noble and interesting.

"Speaking of it to a lady beside me at a dinner-table, I was met by the exclamation, 'Why, that must be the Dr. Weir Mitchell of Massage!' I praise it on all hands. I shall consider it a privilege to read more of your work and to meet you again. Believe me,

"Most Cordially yours,
"GEORGE MEREDITH."

From The Same Box Hill, July 27, 1885.

"My dear Doctor:

"Wild clematis and willowhart tell me that you are in the spring, if not flying, and it is from the Soudan to the top perch of Europe I breathe in the thought of it. Here our tragedy labours on. I keep myself in some working condition by extreme rigour. The buttermilk is good regimen. Still the pendants are rather heavy; and the flow of the system tardy. But considering the trials, I do fairly well. Yesterday in the afternoon I was half paralyzed by Mariette's running to me with a message from the nurse, to come instantly. My poor soul was in one of her fits. It lasted several minutes. She is able to come down-stairs today. No sign of speech.

"Let me hear from your Engadine. It will refresh me. I wish you the gladdest of excursions, and in all ways a profitable return.

"Yours warmly,

From The Same Box Hill, Dorking, June 23, 1898.

"Dear Dr. Weir Mitchell,

"'Hugh Wynne' has come to me, with the recollection of 'Roland Blake,' I am assured that whatever you put your hand to write will have the stamp of noble on it, and that carries to me more than any amount of tearing incident. It speaks well for your public that this is appreciated. As for the War of such mighty import to America and the world, we are with you heart and mind. How you endured the friction so long has been a marvel. Sentimentalists here and anywhere may be for the Land of Cid and the heroical posture against odds. Let them vapour. There is, except in the countries bound to Spain by investments, a healthy view of the facts. I wish there had been no talk of alliance. That will come when comes the strain demanding it, and the word, as a cry, does the mischief of an empty word. I trust to the fraternal sympathy of a common righteousness of aim. Meanwhile your President's humaneness in hurrying to rescue the starving Cubans brings your troops into collision with the Cuban climate. I am anxious, though not as to the main result.

"Please remember me to your son, and know me ever your true friend,

From The Same Box Hill, Dorking, December 7, 1907.

"My dear Weir Mitchell,

"The number of the *Century Magazine* has come to me, and I rejoice to see that your unfailing prose pen is not more vigorous than your poetic. But as to the prose, what am I to say of your recent work, the largely popular, in comparison

with the unpopular foregoing work, which won my admiration for its nobility of aim and fine execution. What am I to say of your public, which prefers cleverness to thoughtfulness and sheer excitement to lofty imagination. The marvel is that you still have the joyous heart and mental vigour to continue writing. Part of it may come of your physical powers. And besides you have the commendably pretty wish to please—long since lost to me. It is true that I would rather see it productive in this fashion than barren. But pardon me for regretting the days of Roland Blake.

"With affectionate greetings.

Meredith's praise of "Roland Blake" recalls our attention to the novel-writing. This went steadily forward, mostly in summer and was generally regarded by the author in the light of a holiday occupation. But with the turn of the nineties what had been a more or less limited and moderate success in this field began to widen. In "Characteristics" he struck a new note and evoked an instant response. This appeared first as a serial, written in a less formal and conventional mode and it displayed, as did the sequel "Dr. North," qualities congenial and flavorous. On a thin thread of plot, Dr. Weir strung the flotsam and jetsam of his wide experience. Stories, anecdotes, letters and talk, his father's China journals and his own office-hour, provide the material and it is all rendered conversationally, with an air of almost casual verisimilitude. Interest was greatly raised and as the serial progressed, he says it brought him "The most interesting correspondence—and many curious ghost-stories."

No novels are more personal. The author put into them

his wide reading, his medical experience, his relish of the human adventure, the pleasant discursiveness of many dinners. The pages hold the champagne-mood and the madeira-mood, the tobacco smoke of Wistar parties, the salt breeze of Mt. Desert, all the kindly tolerance and some of the vanity (as when the author admires his own poems), and the splendid, vigorous enjoyment of life. Both "Characteristics" and "Dr. North" set forth the "fruitful repast for cultivated readers" which George Meredith urged, but at the same time give that repast a flavor of personal idiosyncrasy. They quite overshadow the novels and shorter pieces which preceded the publication of "Hugh Wynne."

Dr. Weir's view of his writing is best given in these sentences, written to Mrs. Mason, in 1888.

"I send you Essays and Poems—both. There is growth in both, I hope, but as Holmes wrote me, in substance, the world does not take seriously the side careers of men. My real honest pleasure is in the work as I do it."

His medical work and the investigations connected with it were still his main preoccupation, his success therein his chief ambition. If one met and asked him—as many did—what he was writing now? he was more than likely to answer, with a twinkle: *"Prescriptions!"*

XIV

"It is not the versatility that amazes me so much as the power to apply variously a certain affluence of energy."

Dr. North.

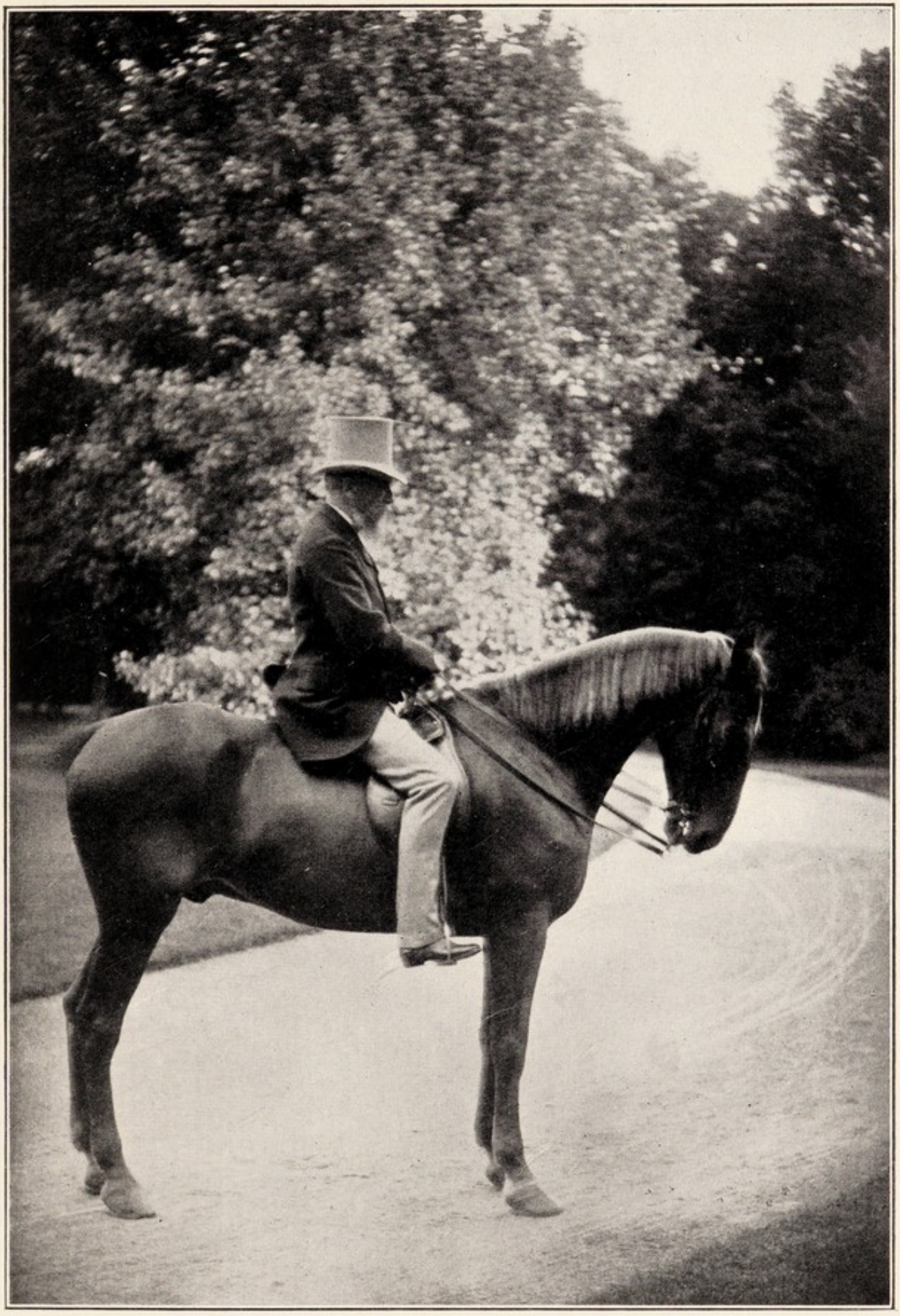
THOSE holidays of his—which we see so crowded with absorbing occupations—had been spent from 1877 to 1892 mainly at Newport, where a group of old friends still lingered. His regular vacation was generally preceded by a month at the Cascapedia Club on the Restigouche where the active delights of salmon-fishing were combined with much verse-making and good talk. Many a note of thanks remains to tell of noble salmon despatched to intimates and relatives. His companion on these trips was apt to be his brother-in-law, John L. Cadwalader, a slight man, with handsome regular features, a diplomat and collector, sympathetic, accomplished and charming. Tradition says that he did not at first like his sister's marriage to the doctor, but in a short time the two became close friends and dear companions. In one of the hardest corners which Dr. Weir's life had to turn, his brother-in-law, as we shall see, came to his aid with the most loyal readiness. At the Cascapedia Club, they would sit up half the night together, while each looked forward all the year to the fishing-trip in the spring. Sometimes one of Dr. Weir's sons would join the holiday, of which the following gay letter to a young niece gives a picture.

S. W. M. to Hester Hone Wednesday, July 6th.

"My dear Hester,

"We are just now in from fishing and are sitting in our shirt sleeves, looking very lazy and as brown as King Alfred's cakes. I got one salmon but he was as troublesome as a young lady and did require a great deal of attention before he said yes. After all he weighed only twenty one pounds. Last night we were well frozen, the thermometer being at 27 degrees—and now it is 74 degrees for variety. Ah, if I could have you in a canoe for an afternoon and let you take a thirty pound salmon—and learn how beautiful the woods are and the river when the sun is low, all a rolling surface of blue and green and gold with bits of brown and changing purples, although dear Mardy says I can not see purples. Here comes our man to see me. I went out and there was a quite pretty girl, a teacher from down below and would Monsieur assist because and because—they did have so little money and sans doute (here her English gave out) Monsieur est riche et Monsieur has a good heart. When I asked in my best Philadelphia French how many more teachers were coming—she being the third—she assured me that she was the last. I gave her five dollars and had a big salmon put on her wagon. She thanked me in a very queer French of Canada and drove off with her young man quite happy. Perhaps your mamma may like to know how we live. For breakfast, omelette, coffee, cream, griddle cakes; for dinner —yesterday, Puree of Salmon, Irish stew, croquettes, macaroni, rich fresh strawberry ice cream, cakes and lemonade.

"You will hardly have time to answer this. Indeed I owe you a letter and this must be in place of today's which other-



Dr. Mitchell on Jerry at Newport in the early Nineties

wise is by right Aunt Mary's. I hope to be able to read with you at Bar Harbor. Perhaps we might read aloud Francais. . . .

"Yours with love,
"UNCLE WEIR."

The early nineties were filled with verse-making and with his sympathetic interest in the verse-making of others. Poets predominate among his correspondents and among them Tennyson, who the year before his death wrote appreciatively by the hand of his son Hallam, to thank the American for a tribute to himself. This was contained in certain stanzas of Dr. Mitchell's poem, "A Psalm of Deaths";

"The larks of song that high o'er head,
Sung joyous in my boyhood's sky,
Save one, are with the silent dead—
Those larks that knew to soar so high.

"But still with ever surer flight,
One singer of unfailing trust
Chants at the gates of morn and night
Great songs that lift us from the dust."

Dr. Mitchell's mail-bag from 1890 until his death grew heavier and heavier. The day's catch, as he triumphantly called it, might be any subject, medical, literary, personal, poetical. Maybe his English cousins thank him for the gift of what they called "head-cheese"—but which in reality was terrapin of the lordliest! Perhaps the Princess Schakowsky-Strechnoff—who takes a scientific interest in her own neu-

rasthenia—discusses through many pages the advisability of taking "La cure Mitchell chez moi."

Meanwhile, nearer home, Phillips Brooks is to be made a Bishop and in 1891 there was a great gathering of notable physicians at the Congress of the American Physicians and Surgeons of which Dr. Mitchell was President. There had been, at an earlier Congress in 1885, what Dr. Harvey Cushing calls "a lamentable altercation regarding the invitations" and this time nothing must be left undone to have them properly sent. Answers are duly received. Lister thanks him but can't get away and Lauder-Brunton is doubtful. Then Dr. John S. Billings, an old friend in the Surgeon-General's office at Washington, was preparing to resign and Dr. Mitchell was backing him for an appointment as Professor of Hygiene at the University of Pennsylvania.

These two doctors, Billings and Mitchell rise before us in the memory of a mutual friend, who used to see them driving about Washington together "in a queer, ramshackle buggy with an indifferent-looking nag, Billings holding the reins and applying the whip." This occurred during meetings of the National Academy or of the Carnegie Trustees. Their friendship was constant and Dr. Mitchell gave evidence to all who saw them together, of his esteem and affection for Billings and his trust in Billings' judgment. For the rest, Washington found the Philadelphian "an essential aristocrat, in his temperament, taste and way of envisaging social and political problems" if not in his talk which was "quizzical, forthright and frank." In that city of evanescent reputations and incessant social changes, memories are necessarily brief, but still is Dr. Mitchell remembered, even to the courtly man-

ner and the somewhat noble gesture of lifting his tall hat when he took leave. He was much in Washington during the early nineties; but of course he was occupied also by many other matters.

Mrs. Piper the medium, had to be given a sitting to satisfy William James: and when Dr. Mitchell dismissed the result as "inconceivable twaddle" James never forgot it nor forgave him. From Thackeray's daughter, Mrs. Richmond Ritchie comes news of English friends and Sir Julian Corbett the English writer is interested in Dr. Mitchell's *Drake*.

This last dramatic poem was one of the writer's favorites; he read it to the Contemporary Club just after it came out in 1893. Though imitative in form, *Drake* has music of style and romantic quality. Some verses: . . .

> "How huge and bloody-red the moon tonight!
> This utter quiet of the brooding sea,
> I like not over well; nor yon red moon."

as Dr. Mitchell read them, linger in the memory.

Phillips Brooks to S. W. M. Boston, June 6, 1891.

"Dear Weir,

"I thank you with all my heart for your good letter. My Episcopate would not have been at all complete without your blessing. Now it seems very pleasant and attractive. I hate to give up my parish and to turn my back upon so much which has made the happiness of the last thirty years, but I do not think it is a bad thing to make a change, and when I turn to the new life and work they are full of attraction and interest. And so, if the approval of a majority of

the Bishops comes, I shall be a Bishop—and very much the same kind of fellow, I fancy, that I have been all along.

"I wish I were in Venice with you this bright morning. The gondola should take us to Torcello and we would forget a thousand things and remember only how good it is to be alive—and have nothing to do.

"Since I may not have the enjoyment with you, I rejoice that you at least are having it. God bless you in it.

"My kindest greetings go to Mrs. Mitchell and to Maria and I am, ever and ever,

"Your friend, P. B."

Anne Ritchie to S. W. M. Kensington, August 8th.

"Dear Doctor Mitchell,

"I have been wishing to write to you for a very long time, ever since J. T. Field was so kind as to send me a charming little book and to tell me of a kind letter which had come to me from you. That I have not written before seems less ungrateful by a good deal than I feel, I am often ill and unable to write and when I am well there is such a rush of neglected things that I often don't do that which I might and would like to do for fear of getting laid up again. But today, at leisure in this kind home, I do feel that my pen and paper, which are Tennyson's own, will be a sign between us that you forgive and will still kindly remember me: your pleasant little music book brings back that meadow and the brook and the wild flowers and Grindelwald, in which time for me so much has happened both of sorrowful and happiest things. I found my happiest things being treated to the most delicious gingerbread by a friend of yours the other

day, a kind young lady, Miss Meredith, to whom I began giving such a very long message for you that she laughed and said it was impossible I really must write it all down.

"Mr. Tennyson looks very well, tell Mr. Field and it is always a pleasure to come to his mountain top and hear him talk and see him smoke his pipe. Mr. Lowndes seems to go on supplying him with tobacco that can only be had by Ambassadors. The day before yesterday Mr. Tennyson tells me, he (Alfred) went to Osborne and had a long talk with the queen whom I rather pity for not seeing him WITH his pipe ruminating calmly. His two dear little grandchildren are here, the youngest is about the age of my little boy. Little Alfred with his chubby face said to me yesterday, 'I don't think I'm so wuzzy like grandpapa, do you, Aunt Anne?' . . . When shall you and Mrs. Mitchell be coming over?

"Yours sincerely,"

Julian Corbett to S. W. M. May 20, 1894.

"My dear Sir,

"I have been waiting to answer your kind note in hopes of being able to acknowledge the receipt of the pamphlet of which you speak. But it has not yet come to hand and I fear must have miscarried.

"I am very glad to hear the project for the purchase of Raleigh Fort has been carried through. Although he is no great favorite of mine, I fully feel the importance of his life. No better monument could be found for him than the one you have.

"Lady Drake I know and have stayed with at Nutwele Castle and dined with all Sir Francis' royal presents on the

table. She has there a number of his silk ship flags and the splendid carved bed belonging to Don Pedro Valdes which he captured with the flagship Nuestra Senora del Rosario after the first action with the Armada of 1588. The Drake family is really extinct. The present baronet is Sir F. Fuller Eliot Drake, i. e., Fuller married the heiress of Eliot * (whose mother was heiress of Drake) and took the name and arms of Drake. Again the only child is a daughter who has married an Irish peer, so the house will now disappear.

"Believe me,

"Yours very faithfully, J. C."

From The Same Evanger, Norway, August 5, 1895.

"My dear Sir,

"Your very kind letter enclosing Professor Davidson's has just reached me here, where as usual I am spending my late summer in a campaign on the salmon. I am so much obliged and shall look forward with great interest to Mr. Davidson's communication. I was quite unable to clear up the point, when writing my small book on Drake and would gladly devote an appendix to your friend's researches, if he would be kind enough to furnish me with his results. All uncertain or disputed points I treat in this log so that the narrative may flow without interruption. I have already made considerable progress with the work, but have been unfortunately stopped by illness. In this grand air I hope to begin again with impunity.

"Lang's criticism does not at all surprise me. Sixteenth

* Lord Heathfield, one of the Defenders of Gibraltar.

Century fencing is a hobby with fencers and literary men here, and two of his colleagues on the *Saturday Review,* Egerton Castle and Pollock, are the chief exponents of the learning that has been spent upon it here in recent years. I myself felt the jar of your anachronisms, for I too am a little crazy with the fascination of the obscure subject. In my own 'For God's Gold' you would see I have used contemporary fancy slang, to an extent which none but the initiated could understand. Exhibition of rapier and dagger play and the other old forms are pregnant here. Irving gave one at the Lyceum, Egerton Castle lecturing. It is a charming thing to see, but Irving still does his Hamlet fencing in Eighteenth Century small-sword style, which makes the change of rapier ridiculous and impossible. The book on the subject and a very charming one it is, Egerton Castle's 'Masters and Schools of Fence.' From the point of view of art perhaps you were right to keep to known phrases but I am too much of an historical puritan not to feel you lose something in not letting your readers picture the slow formal rapier play. At the time of your story the school which Shakespeare ridicules had not been established with England. Your hero would probably have used his edge only and parried with a buckler, unless he had acquired the cut and thrust abroad.

"With my thanks,

"Yours faithfully."

Drake is also mentioned in the following note to Mrs. Mason, written while Dr. Weir was visiting Mr. Cadwalader.

S. W. M. to Mrs. Mason New York, January 7, 1894.

"I am here to get a little change on account of this infamous influenza. I am with my nearest friend, a bachelor brother-in-law, and now in a study the walls covered with a wonderful collection of the Colonial prints of the early years of this century, Morlands, etc. Presently we are going to lunch with a pleasant woman, and then to call on St. Gaudens and Hopkinson Smith and Millet. I am glad to hear of you as better too. Do you live up in the air? Are you a 'cliff-dweller.' Terrible book that! Able, imaginative! . . . Dreadful indictment! Howells praised it as realistic. I told him that he and Zola and this man were all imaginists, and that Ibsen . . . blank him! is the only realist and I loathe literary photography. All which is Langdon Mitchell's thunder, not his Pa's. His book is in press. I will send you "Drake," no one buys it, so the merit is small. I have a novel of out-door life done . . . it is in a drawer; also a poem of Elizabeth's day on top of it. I wish you were where I could ask you about the novel. Two clever people say it is a failure, but I have had the fun of it, and it may rest. I have no critical opinion of it. I have just made a Catalogue of my Medical Work, and am glad to see how little there is to be ashamed of in the one hundred and ten essays, books, etc.

"You like talk about W. M. and have HAD it. At home I should have replied to your pleasant letter with ten lines. Here I am an idler, and you have the result, with my con-

essays, books, etc.

A long intimacy ended in 1893 when Phillips Brooks died. Dr. Mitchell always loved and cherished the wit, the warmth and goodness of the big, genial churchman. With this affection in mind, he contemplated for some time publishing the Bishop's letters written in earlier days, to his sister Elizabeth Mitchell. They held so much intimate confidence that Dr. Mitchell felt them to give a nearer portrait of his friend than other letters, while he also believed it was more vital for the Bishop's memory that he should be seen as he was—not always secure, but subject to the same doubts and despondencies as his congregation.

Every religious leader must doubtless choose whether his appeal should be to those already grounded in faith, or those yet to be so. Is he to stand watchful besides his flock or is he to leave them while he goes in search of wandering sheep? Bishop Brooks had ever seemed the radiant guardian of the fold, but it seems that in reality he too had passed through his period of doubt and sorrow—from which he had emerged, (in his own phrase), bearing the Candle of the Lord. For some strange reason—but the ways of congregations are mysterious ways and their logic is far to seek—this fact, that their Bishop was like other men, was held best concealed and the rumor that these letters were to appear brought a great buzzing about Dr. Mitchell's ears. From certain quarters, male and female, it was suggested that their publication might "injure Dr. Brooks' reputation"—although why it should injure any man to have shared the uncertainties of youth in regard to religious faith is hard to understand. A great many people made an absurd fuss; the sort of people, it is presumed, who place a churchman on a

pedestal and think it derogatory to him to be like anybody else. Nothing seems more natural than that the young rector should have shown a certain side of his nature—not perhaps so inevitably cheerful—to an invalid parishioner, years older than himself, whose courage, intelligence and sympathy he valued highly. The Bishop suffered, if posthumously, from the clerical handicap of having remained a bachelor, with no domestic authority on the subject of his inner life. Dr. Weir—being a good deal bored by the curiosity aroused and disinclined to accede to the request of Dr. Brooks' relatives just "to run their eyes over the letters" and see what dangerous matter they might contain—promptly closed the incident by burning the correspondence. Doubtless most of it portrayed only a good man's reactions to various trials. He writes Miss Lizzie from London to say he didn't value his brother clergy very much—is disappointed in Stopford Brooke and heard Stanley at the Abbey preach "a good plain, sensible, commonplace, utterly unenthusiastic sermon."

His letter of condolence to Miss Lizzie's brother is given, while one from Dr. Mitchell to Dr. Brooks' biographer remains a fit supplement.

Phillips Brooks to S. W. M. Boston, May 26, 1874.

"Dear Weir,

". . . My dear fellow, I cannot tell you how it seems to me as if Miss Lizzie's death made a great change and a new beginning in my life. I had no idea how much she was to me, how the present duty and how her first wish about any of her friends was that they should do what they

Phillips Brooks

(Courtesy of E. P. Dutton and Company)

had to do zealously and well and I began to realize how much help her memory and inspiration might still do for us all. What a continual stimulus she was, and how she made one ashamed of shirking and dawdling! She was so much more than the brilliant companion that people thought her. There never was such intelligent and conscientious sympathy. It was a friendship that few people ever have and that nobody ever has more than once in a life-time. If God never gives me anything more, the privilege of having known and trusted and been trusted by her is enough to make my life very rich and thankful. . . ."

S. W. M. to Dr. Allen Philadelphia, Pa., Xmas, 1900.

"My dear Dr. Allen:

"I have read through your biography of my friend and desire to thank you for a life-picture which must, I think, rank with the few competent histories of a great man. My opinion of Brooks has been only reinforced by what you have said and gathered. The verse is even to me an amazing product. He never spoke of it and I had seen only one sonnet. He asked me to write a Xmas hymn and when I said I could not, he was a little vexed, and said then he must. Whence 'The Little Town of Bethlehem.' I am glad I said no! At his best, he was in the highest rank of talkers. His friendships were singular. Many were with quite common-place people, but, I am of the belief that he never found in Boston what he possessed here. He used to say that he was our 'house-dog' and in fact would come in four or five nights out of seven and sit silent with his pipe at the fire, or if we were at leisure pour out a flood of talk.

We made together a sermon I suggested on the text of Saint Paul about the relation of hand and head. I wonder what has become of it? It was as well not to illustrate with examples his power of sarcastic wit. In the letters to my sister he spoke at times with terrible freedom, as when he said 'yes, Mr. ——? has all the characteristics of a pig, except the probability of ultimate usefulness! Mrs. ——? is an east wind of an woman,' etc. Your book ought to be in a number of handy octavos. It will live. I thank its author and am gratefully in his debt.

"WEIR MITCHELL."

XV

"Today is an acquaintance,
Yesterday a friend,
Tomorrow a stranger."

Notebook, 1892.

DR. MITCHELL'S holiday trip of 1895 was marked by two pleasant happenings. At Edinburgh, he received an honorary LL.D. from the University, being presented by Sir Ludovic Grant. The latter, after recognizing Dr. Mitchell as "the chief ornament of medical science in the new world," added a playful word as to his literary tastes, saying that "his poems and novels may be safely recommended even to those in good health!"

In London, there was a dinner by Dr. Hermann Weber, where the American renewed acquaintance with such English friends and colleagues as Paget, Hughlings-Jackson, Dyke, Duckworth and Lauder-Brunton. The latter he had known for some years; they corresponded often and met whenever possible and it was Lauder-Brunton who at Dr. Mitchell's death paid perhaps the most striking of all the tributes to his career.

Another English friend was Sir Frederick Treves, but the intimacy slackened at length for reasons which each man attributed to the other. Dr. Mitchell felt that a recently-acquired title had unduly elated his brother physician; Sir Frederick, on his part resented a certain irreverence for British institutions. Dr. J. William White mentions one

occasion when Sir Frederick had been deeply offended by Dr. Mitchell's "powerful and pleasing argument in favor of breaking eggs into a glass!" *

During this and the preceding winter Dr. Weir was interested in the conduct of insane asylums which he felt were much in need of reform. He obtained a series of opinions on the subject from leading alienists and others, among whom were Doctors Billings, Dana, Dercum, Draper, Eskridge, Folsom, Gray, Jacobi, Loomis, Hammond, Lyman, Mills, Osler, Putnam and Sinkler, using this symposium as the foundation for an address before the Medico-Psychological Association and for an Introduction to Billings and Hurd, "Suggestions to Asylum Visitors." This took a good deal of time, yet these two years produced also poetry and fiction and were especially marked by the appearance of his small, yet highly-individual sketch called *"A Madeira Party."*

Into this tiny book is woven the very fabric of his friendships. Of all his shorter pieces it is the most flavorous, a repository of forgotten lore and vanished hospitality, leisurely in manner, yet concise in form—a thing that Lamb would have loved. A life-time of friendship lies therein, rising like a distilled essence—we feel that a generation, nay even an era, had contributed to its ethers.

"A Madeira Party" shows that forty years or more after he had begun to write, Dr. Mitchell had at last attained to literary individuality. What he had written hitherto might conceivably have been done by another—this and perhaps "Characteristics," could be the work of no one but himself.

* A. Repplier: *Life and Letters of J. William White.*

And now at the age of sixty-seven, he was to win even greater success in a new field; after becoming known as a poet, and a physician who wrote fiction—he was suddenly to become *the* American historical novelist who practiced medicine!

Of all the forms his literary impulse might have taken, this one is the most surprising, for the man was at his apogee as a practicing neurologist and to set gaily forth upon the enormous labor of a thoroughly-documented historical romance could not have been by most people regarded as a recreation. Can it have been that as he told some students once in an address, "he wrote novels because, having read all there were, he desired more?" Whatever the cause, his letters for years past testify to his extreme interest in historical details. Between 1877 and 1887, he corresponds with George Bancroft on the subject of Washington's health and later, with Paul Leicester Ford on the question whether Washington's mother ever smoked a corn-cob pipe! Another friend, Charles Francis Adams, theorizes regarding the General's military ability—and writes several letters giving his analysis of Pickett's Charge. In the last quarter of Dr. Mitchell's life the fascination of historical research is still so strong that he wrote articles on the youth of Washington, the characters of the two Benjamins, Franklin and Rush and the names of the Streets of Philadelphia.

"Hugh Wynne" was the starting point of these new interests and he had been collecting his materials for years, though when it came to writing, his own hand finished it in six weeks. Here his Autobiography is useful to give an account of the book.

"It is worth while to say a word about the novel which

established, for a time which no man can set, my reputation as an author of fiction. I had for a long while intended to write a novel of the Revolutionary War. The principal ones were by Cooper and scarcely deserved critical attention. I do not know of any other worth a word.

"For many years I had spent a good deal of my small leisure in the library of the Historical Society. At last, after some six or seven years of thought and collection of material, I had a hundred pages of notes, which prepared me for my welcome task. By this time I was so informed about Philadelphia that I felt, if transferred in mind to the date of my story, I would know where the principal people lived, who were their children, what they ate and drank, what were their ways, their talk and their dress, and the political feeling of the chief families, which, I may say, were much divided, father against son and brother against brother. To my knowledge, only one family of note, that of my second wife, was altogether on the side of the Colonists.

"Thus equipped, I began to write the story of 'Hugh Wynne.' My object was to write an autobiography, to let a man tell his own story. My trouble was, however, that he would not know parts of his own history that were known by others and could not be known by himself. I wanted in some way to get in that third person who hears and knows things that the other cannot know.

"I wrote a third of the story in '95, I think, and tore it up dissatisfied. Then one day, while walking over Newport Mountain, there came to me the idea that this man might inherit the diary of his friend and find in that things that he could not say for himself and that he could not have known

at the time. This satisfied my view of the double requirements for such a book.

"In the following year I began again. I wrote the whole of it in six weeks, but I need hardly say that there was enormous revision. I wrote the first chapter four times, and every important chapter was rewritten from beginning to end, with the exception of one that I scarcely touched. That was the interview between Hugh Wynne and Washington in regard to the death of André.

"There is a curious story connected with its appearance. After I wrote 'Hugh Wynne,' I made a long statement of what it was and sent this to Gilder of the *Century*, saying that if they would begin to publish within six months they could have it, if, on reading it, they liked it. He replied that they could not break up their arrangements, as they had a novel of Marion Crawford's on hand.

"I then sent the scenario to Harper, and thirdly, to Scribner. None of the editors asked, as a condition of acceptance or refusal, to read the original book, each one having as usual, plans for his magazine so as to cover the next year or eighteen months.

"An extraordinary thing happened in regard to the English edition, which was published in the summer of 1897 by T. Fisher Unwin. While it was in press I had a letter from the firm saying that there were a number of statements in the copy that would not be agreeable to English taste. I replied that I was not writing for English taste, did not care a penny whether it sold in England or not, and was surprised that anyone had bought it for English publication at all. When I opened my copy, I saw to my horror that

the first introductory chapter was left out. Now as Hugh Wynne there explained the book and how it came to be written in its present shape, and as this chapter had a little good honest expression of love of country in it, I was not pleased at having it omitted. I wrote that the book could not be published in that form. They were appalled, having already printed five thousand copies. I threatened to get an injunction in an English court and stop them. They appealed to my American publishers who had sold them the book, but of course the Century stood by me. Unwin had then to print an introductory chapter and rebind the whole edition. It had a good sale in England."

The Autobiography, as we know, is fragmentary and in no sense chronological. Therefore it must here be supplemented by certain letters, two to Mrs. Mason and one to John Hay. He writes to his friend Sophy Irwin from Munich, August, 1897: "Hugh Wynne comes out in London. I anticipate no success there. I am run down with letters about him, an uncritical harvest of mere praise. Only Langdon has any real criticism to offer. He says it is almost a perfectly real book, but has no great scenes nor reaches the higher levels of characterization. . . . I hope he will write a novel!" Dr. Weir adds indignantly, "and let me get a whack at him!"

S. W. M. to Mrs. Mason Philadelphia, January 9th.

"My friendly letter writing is smothered under the needs of a correspondence which seems to grow like—so we used to say as a boy—like everything. Since 'Hugh Wynne' won

what is really a national welcome, I simply despair of decently answering by letters which I am ashamed to dictate, and which ought to have at least the appearance of being gracious, leisurely and personal. Sometimes, as now, I find an unoccupied Sunday afternoon, then pick out the few letters I like to write and reply to them. . . . Why did you not usefully overhaul 'H. W.' with a cold, critic eye, and say how it fails? I wrote this much to a friend, and she—that the passion my sturdy H. W. had for Darthea was sadly invisible. I wrote 'How could an old man writing for his children speak of his passion for their mother?' She—'you are right, I should have seen it.' The Quakers abuse me and the book roundly, but these were Hicksites, not the real Orthodox Friends, who read not fiction. One of these said to a friend of mine, 'But this book may, perchance, be of the nature of an allegory.' I do swear he had read it. Aldrich writes me: 'there are two great American novels "The Scarlet Letter" and "H. W."' By George! A. does not speak lightly; it took me in the throat. I have many such letters from men who do not print their opinions. Except Ch. D. Warner in the January 'Harper's,' 'The Nation,' and 'Atlantic' are not so sweetly pleasant and I have waited for something which should weigh the book and appraise its defects, without the patronizing Boston tone or the habit carp of the 'Nation.' I am tired of a selection of inaccuracies being set forth as criticism. Think of an 'Esmond' packed with historical falsehoods, and oh, the charm of it!

"I have egotized for you at sad length. Please to like the art and style of François' trip to the footlights. I wish

you 'were weller' as Jack's little girl says. To feel the music in you and not to be able to get it out—Eheu! I pray that '98 be kinder.

"Yours truly, WEIR MITCHELL."

Philadelphia, January 18, 1897.

"It is good to get a touch of your friendly hand now and then even if it does use pale ink—anemic ink.

"'H. W.' is in print in two volumes, and were you here I might lend it, but Gilder makes a great fuss over the book, and I am under bonds in a way. However, Aldrich and Mabie and Gilder have read it all and are so wild in their criticism as to give me a queer feeling of dread as to the general opinion, which is, after all, the true verdict, or apt to be. Gainor is pure creation, I know no one like her, and so are the others—I cannot tell where I got any of them. Aldrich wrote Woodberry that people would think him crazy were he to say what he as a critic thinks of 'H. W.' It has rained congratulations. Admiral Meade writes me that his ancestor, William Coates, a stiff Quaker, married a French Quaker of the Midi, who was over gay and never shed her Gallic ways. Their son was a free Quaker, entered the army and was on Washington's staff—an extraordinary coincidence, as I imagined my whole story.

"S. W. M."

S. W. M. to John Hay

Paris, 19th Oct., 1897.

"On the wing.

"My dear Hay:

"I cannot let a letter like yours go by without a word

of glad thanks. That the opinion is in the whisper of a letter makes it for me the more pleasant. Yours is the first LETTER I have had from any competent critic. The press opinions from home came to me last night in a ten day accumulation of mail matter which awaited our return from Touraine. My wife read me the longer reviews, where a dozen or more of able writers told me that I have written a book in the highest rank of historical novels. I can say most honestly that, while I knew the book was good, I was totally unprepared for the unanimity of the praise with which it has been received.

"Yours very truly."

After thirty years, it would seem to a modern reader that Mr. Langdon Mitchell's opinion of "Hugh Wynne" is definitive. That long, slow, stiff novel remains as almost a compendium of the War of Independence. Sincere in tone, accurate in detail and admirable in atmosphere, its effect is cumulative and moves to its end in a manner, dignified and contemplative, suited to the protagonist and to the times. Dr. Weir had never a nervous style—as a friend and fellow-novelist has pointed out—his English is apt to lack crispness and distinction, but in "Hugh Wynne" he has a faithful seriousness which comes near to the heart of the subject.

He was himself in many ways sympathetic to the Colonial type; thus he was at home in "Hugh Wynne" and successful with that close and crowded canvas. The book was over-praised in its day, perhaps—later critical opinion cannot maintain that it surpasses *Esmond*—but it has made its

place and will not readily be forgotten. It may not be amiss to add that the story sold well over one hundred and eighty thousand copies, besides its great success as a serial. The author's preceding earnings from fiction had been small, but after 1894 they averaged over ten thousand dollars a year from the Century Company alone, "Hugh Wynne" being always the most popular. Until 1919 they were still making good returns.

The years of 1896-1897 are much taken up with the increased correspondence brought by the novel's success. During the months "Hugh Wynne" ran as an anonymous serial and when the two volumes with illustrations by Howard Pyle followed, thousands of people read it devoutly as it was meant to be read. Schools gave it to classes, historical societies annotated it, advanced students at Stanford University analyzed its sources and sent their labors to the author. Many friends gave it extravagant praise and strangers with distinguished names joined the chorus. There was in some quarters an almost affectionate response, such as no writer had evoked since Holmes. A lady writes from Skagway, Alaska, to say, "We are your debtors, my family and I . . . for hours and hours of happiness, of the best kind that can come to men and women—the happiness that broadens and makes beautiful rugged and narrow ways."

On the other hand, certain Friends were grievously offended; a meeting, held at the Race Street Meeting-House in 1897, holds the book in its handling of the Quaker a wrong to their sect and unworthy of its author. Dr. Mitchell's old acquaintance, Ellis Yarnall, thereupon wrote an anecdote to console him:

"Meeting many years ago in the West a descendant of one of two brothers who came over with Penn, I said: 'Your family hasn't held as long to Quakerism as we have.'

"'Sir,' said the old gentleman, 'my father committed two offences—he shed his blood in defence of his country and he married out of meeting!'"

Dr. Mitchell, however, always hated to hurt anyone's feelings and so he hastened to soothe the outraged body; but the incident shows how he must always be writing letters. He who was so widely appreciated, did not forget to appreciate others and whether it was a young medical student, or the President of Princeton, that kindly hand—now beginning to show a tremor—was steadily busy. We are not surprised that he was endeavoring to refuse new burdens. "I fear," he wrote, in 1893, declining the Presidency of the Municipal League, "to weight myself any more heavily." Yet Owen Wister strikes the keynote, when he exclaimed of Dr. Weir that "he never talked about the *sacredness* of labor, but only the *joy* of it."

Woodrow Wilson to S. W. M.

Princeton, 25th October, 1896.

"My dear Dr. Mitchell,

"Your generous appreciation of my address has heartened me more than I can say. I wanted very much to say to you in person how it had cheered and fortified me, but was prevented by the hurrying engagements of the Celebration. I know of no one whose praise I would rather have than yours, and I hold the doctrines of my address with so deep a conviction that to be told that I expressed them adequately

gives me the keenest pleasure. 'The form of sound doctrine' seems to me of the utmost consequence. 'The impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science,' 'the breath of the finer spirit of all knowledge,' the education and enfranchisement of the spirit, seem to me the real stuff alike of culture and of intellectual power; and I only wish I could have given such a view of the truth as it would be impossible to forget:—for a man has such an audience only once in a lifetime.

"Most sincerely yours,

"WOODROW WILSON."

The Autobiography is regrettably sketchy in the section dealing with the novels; but a few notes should be copied, if only to show something of the writer's method and ideas. There is no doubt, that with the success of "Hugh Wynne" he came to regard them no longer as a recreation but a career.

"There is but one of my novels that can be labeled picturesque, and that is 'François.' For it, I read enormously everything I could lay my hands on about the French Revolution, and more than one historical writer has said that the picture it gives of the real Paris of that day is such as is not found in any history. My own knowledge of Paris was intimate. I had lived there a year and Paris does not alter much.

"I ought to say that I have several times printed four or five copies of books before finally considering them, since to see a book in print is to enable you to exercise powers

of criticism which sometimes fail, at least for me, when the book is typewritten or in manuscript. 'Constance Trescot' had been three years in my hands and was in its fifth copy when it went to the Century for their decision. This book, a tragic novel, founded on fact and dealing with a complicated lawsuit brought about by a change in the course of the Mississippi River, is I think my best example of characterization. The newspapers having said that such a vendetta was absurd, I received letters from a number of women as to efforts brought about from different circumstances to avenge themselves of wrong. These I cannot put on paper without permission, but some of them were extraordinary."

XVI

"A soldier and a poet, dowered, I think,
With all the gentle gifts that win men's hearts."
Francis Drake.

THIS was 1897. Dr. Weir had climbed a long road up to that pleasant eminence.

Though he was close to seventy, there had been small physical change. The tremor was more marked—there was a slight deafness, but no perceptible loss of energy, physical or mental. He fished, rode, climbed as well as ever, spoke quickly, moved quickly. "A lean man," thus "Dan" Wister describes him, "tall, vigorous, alert and gray . . . distinction beaconed from his whole appearance." The head, thrust a little forward, with broad and heavy brows, was on the Pan order, the eyes were still bright and concentrated, the "spun-glass" hair, as Sargent termed it, was silvered.

These good looks were well set off by the careful dress, the velvet office-coat, the long, fine hand with its ring. Very fastidious was the owner regarding gloves and handkerchiefs —the latter often redolent of cologne. "Weir—how can you?" Mrs. Mitchell would say, condemning this boyish excess. A nice sense of color was fulfilled by a liking for red neck-ties; these must be had from a certain shop in Boston. . . .

He had grown astonishingly even-minded for a man of so many occupations, moving in well-ordered rhythm through the "*vertiginous*" catalogue of his activities to the

music of men's praise. He was a regular, concentrated, but not a tense person; he burnt up no energy within—every ounce was used. All about him of course, had been for years conducted to that end, his work; but Dr. Mitchell was no slave-driver. His servants, who may have been a little afraid of him perhaps, went to him at once in trouble. This tender-heartedness did not exclude a certain hardness, even ruthlessness, if he thought he was right. When it came to pushing a project or getting things done on some Committee, he did not hesitate to use a certain arrogance of manner and method. Few people could stand against that driving power but they sometimes resented it. And he could be very haughty if he did not like you, or if he thought you encroached. Moreover there is no doubt that Dr. Mitchell did not expect and did not forgive failure. Success might take a long time but come it *must*, otherwise he lost interest.

The man had strong love of fun, high spirits and appreciation of wit, but had he owned a keener sense of humor he might have been less constant in pursuit of his ambitions. "He had no more sense of humor than a poker," said one who loved him well. No doubt this very lack made him so sure of himself—gave him so completely the grand manner. Yet one must not forget the sense of order, strongly marked. He detested seeing trunks about, for one tiny item. Then his tastes ran to the usefulness of things—books he collected for what was in them. And he was not very self-indulgent—his pet cigar—his little bottle of champagne at dinner, after a heavy day. . . .

Since he had become First Citizen, he spent much time in the Chair and on the platform, yet it was at home that

one truly found the man. His house was square, double, the type called in England a mansion, and bore his name-plate on the window at the left of the front-door. Entering, there were the two large offices and across the hall, a small reception-room. Anxious relatives waiting for a verdict, will remember that little room, which was only used on special occasions. They remember too, the delicate fragrance of orris that lingered in the air.

A carriage and pair usually stood in the sunshine before the front-door and the small impatient knock of a hoof on the asphalt was one of the characteristic noises of that block. Here in this house, Dr. Mitchell saw his friends. Let one of them recall the interior and the owner.

"He would sit of a Saturday evening for a gossip in that noble room which looked out on a rather large city yard and garden, through long windows, where he had introduced a glass reflector, the better to light the often dusky interior. The light was made dim by wine-colored hangings at windows and doors, and while there was room enough for a cluster of chairs at the hearth, almost every corner was overflowing with books. The desk, square and ample, with green baize top, was opposite the hearth, with the folding door behind it which led into the dining-room. On each side of this there were book-cases and cabinets, in which were kept autographs and scrap books. Across the book-case by the window, hung the sword and other accoutrements of the Doctor's well-beloved brother, and against the opposite case hung a pencil drawing by Dance of Charles Lamb as a young man. The Hallock portrait served as a pendant to this on the other book-case, and, as well, a pastel of Wash-

ington by Sharpless. There was a relic which the Doctor much cherished, a marble copy of the face of Guidarello Guidarelli of Ravenna in 1502, a thing of medieval beauty to which the poet, who was also a physician, wrote a ballad that keeps the spirit of knighthood. Between the windows was a grave, colored bust of Dante.

"But the object which the Doctor as poet, loved perhaps the best of his possessions, was a plaster cast of the face of Keats which had come to him through W. W. Story from Rome. . . . The face of the living genius taken, it is supposed, by his friend Haydon . . . it looked down from the case in which it was kept, with that half-tender smile. . . .

"Into this charming room under the lamp beside the radiant fire, would gather of a night those spirits whom the Doctor liked to withdraw into his own sympathies. . . . There was nothing formal . . . the host would wear a velvet jacket and he would smoke and talk and listen in the luxury of companionship. . . .

"There would be Charles E. Dana—friend of many congenialities; Talcott Williams; Felix Schelling, Morris Jastrow, full of the lore of books ancient and modern, and Dr. John K. Mitchell, a sort of second host. There would be others to drop in occasionally . . . but this little group were the constants and I have heard the Doctor say to the butler when one or the other was announced, 'That's lucky' and then rise and offer a cigar and thrust into your hand a new book just received from the author. . . ."

These Saturday evenings grew famous in Philadelphia and expressed nearly thirty years of hospitality. Of this the same friend shall tell:

"His kindness to young men in whom he found congenial tastes, was almost lavish. He would bring them together or introduce them to older associates of his who could advance them by influence or advice. . . . If he thought you would be advanced by a dinner . . . you would find yourself slyly placed by the man or woman whom you most ought to meet. . . . If he felt you could be spurred by the larger life . . . elsewhere, he would contrive to take you there for a holiday . . . he would throw the right books in your way and lend his own without stint . . . when he felt you were neglecting your talents, he would rap you gently . . . or if he felt you were losing opportunities or suffering unwarranted neglect, he would put forth his energies for you and try to save and encourage. . . . The doctor's life was so rich in experience and so overflowing with mental and intellectual wealth, that he thought nothing of the golden shower of helpfulness which he lavished on his friends."*

This tribute should go far to outweigh another impression of Dr. Mitchell's social life at this, his shining meridian. It was true he had always been as was said, "decidedly a South of Market Street person," and unquestionably there were times when those who loved and honored him felt daunted by the naif display of this classical Philadelphianism. But Mr. Morris's account, supported by many letters, shows us that it never went too far. His was the temperament that holds to an established order—which included an established church and an established social body. When

* From *S. Weir Mitchell* by Harrison S. Morris, U. of P., Alumni Register, Feb. 1914, Vol. XVI, PP. 319-320.

it came to ambitious youth, however, all this was promptly laid aside—and the only question Dr. Weir's mind would ask was what the man himself might be.

The year of *Hugh Wynne*'s publication must have touched high happiness. He had always hoped for a great success in literature; now he had it. There was no lessening of medical reputation; all his world looked up to him. As one of his friends expressed it: "Jenner's inkstand stood on his desk, from his wall hung the brasses of Byron's gondola." His family lived nearby; the sons were now men and married. The elder, known as "Dr. John" to everybody, was his father's skilled and devoted assistant, loyally standing by to take the weight of that enormous practice on his own back when it grew too heavy; the younger, Langdon, the "Lany" of the letters—himself a poet and playwright, was full of congenial tastes and talents. Dr. Mitchell's young daughter, his "little Maid" as he named her, was now grown to the age of gaiety and there were often excited young voices in his house.

Among the letters to Talcott Williams full of historical questions about Washington and the Huguenots or of vexation at the errors in the newspapers, there is one concerning an effort to find "something clean, and fit and reasonably interesting" for his girl's matinée party. And the preoccupation is much like him—who took so keen an interest in those near to him that by their losses or ill-health the Doctor would be very much depressed.

These were the days of hospitality, which shone most radiantly during that last decade of the nineteenth century. His house was a center for the entertainment of his friends

in a manner personal at every detail. Who has forgotten those dinners—with Dr. and Mrs. Mitchell presiding over the terrapin and the champagne? At dessert the cloth was lifted, folded and carried away in the good old fashion; the wine circulated—to the left, of course—the Menteiths, with their madeira glasses, stood between the guests and the silver and mahogany reflected the candle-light. With the decanters the talk became fuller, quip and anecdote, anything and everything, old and new, literature, art, science. . . . Outside, Dr. Mitchell tended to be in Mr. Furness' phrase, the Autocrat of the Dinner-Table, sometimes if the subject wasn't to his liking he would get up and change his seat . . . but in his own house the guest had always a chance.

There was a great deal of dining out, for Dr. Weir was a gregarious man, one who liked to say nice things about the other fellow's work and hear nice things about his own. He had a round of talkings—at the Franklin Inn, of which he was President; at the Round Table in New York, where the other talkers would be Cleveland, Choate, Agassiz, W. D. Howells, Henry James, and John Hay. The Mahogany Tree was another and more have been already mentioned in these pages. Some of these gatherings were long remembered. Dr. Thayer tells of sitting next Weir Mitchell and Leonard Wood and admiring the art with which the elder physician drew out the physician-soldier. He asked Wood to describe the most exciting event of his life and Wood told of being rowed across a lake in the Philippines by terrified natives in a leaky dug-out, while he kept the crocodiles at bay with a revolver. Mitchell responded with a tale of

being shut-up with a homicidal maniac. The whole table listened, breathless. . . .

Sometimes, especially with intimate friends, there were amusing alarums and excursions. The doctor did not always have everything his own way. Once Horace Howard Furness, having become interested in homeopathy, wrote an article on the subject and suggested sending it to his friend Mitchell. "It might interest you?"—"Not at all!" replied the doctor magnificently, "Literature is your line, my dear Horace. Keep to literature. . . . Shoemaker, stick to your last!" Dr. Furness said nothing, biding his time. Then came "Hugh Wynne" and the author offered his friend a copy, "It may interest you . . .?"

"Not at all, my dear Weir! Medicine is your line, you know. Keep to medicine. Shoemaker, stick to your last!"

A letter to Harrison Morris, of about this date, is high in spirits and energy.

S. W. M. to Harrison Morris

Deer Park, Maryland, August 29, 1899.

"Dear Harrison,

"It would be rather a lark, and if I was a real industrious person I would do it, but I am having an unusual half holiday and have all I can do—exempla gratia. I am just finishing for J. B. L. and Co.—(Lord knows, it isn't for me!) the revision of a new edition of S. W. M.'s book 'Fat and Blood' which I promised months ago and could never get at but it will be done in a day or two. Then I must take up the re-reading and completion of an article, an important one, read last spring and promised the American Journal

of Medical Science for October, and I am under contract to provide by November 1st a book of one hundred thousand words or more, which isn't even framed yet. Thank you all the same—my recollection is that Pater Patriae was pretty dotty anyhow and his M. D. bled him. Remind whoever does do it for you to look up Glentworth M. D. and how he operated on G. W.'s piles which incommoded said G. W. sadly in the saddle.

"Ask Gould or Walter Pyle, they are students of the curious antique—Bless you——

"I haven't seen the B. K. poem but I heard it went magnificently and was much praised.

"Yours pegasically and otherwise

"S. W. M."

It was, after all, his own intimate group that he most enjoyed and sought—even more than entertaining distinguished strangers or being made the object of youthful pilgrimage. Flattery we know he loved, but when all is said, the nearest were never, as happens so often, forgotten. Sons and daughters-in-law would be summoned to companion a walk—or old friends like Talcott Williams, had kind, brief little notes left at their doors. After church, (St. Stephen's) there used to follow a walk uptown, often with the Rector, for an hour's chat with the Irwins in Delancey Place. He never liked to miss that. And then home to luncheon through the Sunday quiet, lifting his hat with an especial gesture of greeting and in turn being greeted with an affectionate appreciation rare in Philadelphia—apt to be the last to know what her citizens have done.

A schoolgirl used to walk on bright afternoons up the western stretch of Walnut Street, from her class to the Square —crossing by the Brock house, with its two huge, marble spheres which she could never pass without a push, trying to roll them from their pedestals. Usually, she entered her playground at the corner dominated by the "Swan" house, so-called from the white marble bird that arched its neck in an upper window. Always she had played in the Square, from the days when it was circled with a high iron railing like the Squares in London. Now these were gone; gone too the gravel that had skinned her knees. This child highly approved of the asphalt for games and roller-skating and once her feet touched it, she ran to meet her mates, gathered there discussing, in this case quite literally—Shakespeare and the musical glasses.

Very often—as they played and rushed and shouted—a tall, gray figure would brush by the group, wearing a cloak, the head thrust forward, as the owner hurried, hurried with his quick step, into the cold, yellow sunset. A doctor—well, that didn't mean so much, perhaps, at that age, not to her, for whom Dr. Da Costa, small and kind and anxious, arriving in a shiny brougham and pair, remained the incarnate symbol of help, of safety. . . . But an author—ah—that meant everything! A novelist—a poet—and a doctor—Dr. Mitchell—! One just turned to stare after him in a pause of Prisoner's Base and wondered what it must feel like—to be so great.

And then, as often happens after a big success—Fate struck him down. His little maid. . . .

She had come late into his life and had ever been dear

and delightful to him. She was only twenty-two, much sheltered, much cherished, and she died of diphtheria in January, 1898. There remains a pathetic memory of the poor mother, longing at the first shock to turn her face to the wall and die too, yet pulling herself together, "because the Doctor will need me." He did need her. A letter to R. W. Gilder, dated in February, says simply: "No one out of my house can imagine the completeness of the calamity which has fallen upon us."

A younger doctor and friend met him in the street and seeing his face, cried out: "Is there anything I can do?"

"Can you mend an old man's broken heart, my dear?" the other said and passed on.

Dr. Mitchell was never quite the same: his glory was dimmed. Yet as this was no shallow reservoir of power, the habit of a lifetime's industry stood faithful. In a comparatively short time, he was once more hard at work. What the tragedy did was to take from him some of that radiancy of happy labor, of interest in life. He writes thus the first sentences of his Autobiography.

"I am moved to set down some remembrances of my life by the fact that certain people who are dear to me desire me to do so. This is not on the whole unpleasant because I have had, as I now see it, a prosperous and, as things go, a happy life. I would, I think, be willing to live it over, but tomorrow I might not." Later this is interlined: "*No, not since Maria died.*"

These five words tell all. Again, we feel a stab of that old, new grief when he writes at the head of his Diary for 1901: "Jan. 1: The new century came in with God knows

what in its shut hands and was welcomed. We may entertain devil or angel unawares. The noise was enough to scare him back into the womb of time. His ancestors were unkind to me and as I take stock, it is the sorrows he brought or those which I remember—*My poor little Maid.*"

XVII

"Only the dead are unchangeably our's."
Dr. North.

DR. MITCHELL went away for a time with his wife and tried in this and various other ways, but principally by long, intimate talks with those he loved, full and deep, to discharge his heart of the first misery of grief. The creative faculty was stunned for a time but when it did return, came in the old comforting form of poetical expression. To take refuge in verse was natural and his sorrow found voice in what was to be his best poem, the "Ode to a Lycian Tomb," first privately printed and not published until 1899. There are stanzas in this elegy with a music and a feeling which the author had not before reached:

"Cold mourner 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 re-born that mocks my feeble art
With that too human wail in pain expressed,
The parent cry above the empty nest!"

or this:

"Thou who has wept for many, weep for me,
For surely I, who deepest grief have known,
Share thy stilled sadness, which must ever be
Too changeless and unending like my own.

Maria Gouverneur, the daughter of Weir and Mary Cadwalader Mitchell

(From the portrait by Mrs. Merritt)

Since thine is woe that knows not time's release
And sorrow that can never compass Peace."

A healthy nature and upright mind may lend themselves trustfully in sorrow to the aid of time and Dr. Weir's own wisdom taught him his best recovery. He knew full well, as he writes,

"The years that come as friend and leave as foe,
The years that come as foes and friends depart,
Leave for remembrance more of joy than woe,
All memory sifting with Time's gentle art
Till He who guides the swallow's wintry wing,
Gives to our grief-winged love as sure a spring."

We are not, therefore, surprised to find certain passages in the Autobiography which discuss the composition of the "Lycian Tomb" and other verse from the point of view of the psychologist. They are valuable enough to be quoted entire, if only for comparison between the poetic and the scientific creative process.

"All my best verse—why, I cannot say—has been long in my mind in summer time and has found expression in the fall, but this applies less to the drama poems, which were summer products and, like all verse for me, hard labor. Now and then a line or two comes easily, but as a rule it is slow, patient biding on the shore and waiting to see what cargo the ships will fetch me for choice. About the value of certain medical gains which the world owes me, I am serenely sure—eye-strain, headaches, rest-treatment, and so forth—but of the relative value of my verse I have no assurance.

"I wish to put on paper the process by which a poem originates in my mind and is carried to such completion as I am capable of. I do not know what others say about this. First, there is the belief that certain things can be better said in verse than in prose; that what is said competently in verse means the higher thought in the best form of the most condensed English. Also I state my belief that a man who can write in the language of poetry must, as soon as he begins to deal poetically with a subject, think in rhythms. At least that is my own case. The moment the thoughts begin to assume form, they assume rhythmic form. For the choice of forms of rhythm I find it difficult to state reasons. Sometimes one gets caught in a rhythm not suited to the subject, or, as did Browning, he misses the best form, but as a rule one finds the right rhythmic instrument through which to develop ideas.

"Take now the 'Lycian Tomb.' I saw the tomb in the Constantinople Museum; 'Les Pleureuses' it was called. Earnestly observing it, I said, 'It is not mourners. It is one woman.' This was the germ thought. It excited me pleasantly as a critical conception, and I decided the figures to represent a widow who grieves for her husband's death in a dozen attitudes, from profound despair to attained serenity. This memorial, I then reasoned, must have taken a year or two to make. The sculptor must have seen during that time the phases of the woman's grief and foreseen the final serene facing of life and duty.

"Now this seemed to me to suggest a statement in verse. Here comes in the choice of subject. Then arises also, a condition common to poets, the fact that what so presents

itself takes a long while before it can be written about. In my case it was many months.

"What comes next is difficult to state. It is the further train of thought suggested by this wonderful monument, how it must have affected persons in grief, as it did immensely affect me, so that as I thought of my own dead, the thing became, as I began to deal with it, really elegiac, which I had not meant it to be.

"In scientific matters, it is a matter of continual summoning of thoughts, clothing them in suitable language, accepting them or rejecting them as unsuitable, with ever the feeling that the intense statement possible in poetic form may be just that inevitable mode of stating the thing which is at once felt as an immense joy by the creator of the expression. Now there must be some difference between this and scientific discovery. That consists of the presentation and rejection of hypotheses, and the testing of these by thought or by experiment. The use of hypothesis in poetry consists in comparing statements of a thought judged to be suitable and the rejection or acceptance of that thought and its presentation in forms found to be satisfactory.

"I have often considered it a pity that we had not the history of some great poem, say, Keats' 'Ode to a Grecian Urn,' from the egg down to the final development and ultimate corrections. No such documents exist that I know of.

"After all I have said, there lacks some definition of the scientific mind as opposed to or different from the purely poetic mind. That is the difference between Shelley, we shall say, and Laplace or Newton. I do not know anything that could ever have made Shelley scientific, a discoverer

in science. I cannot imagine a Newton a poet. In attainment, in high set verse, the sense of complete capture is felt, as a friend says, like a physical orgasm, a kind of mind rapture.

"I have made verse in my sleep, but could only thrice recover enough to assure me that I did make it; I am, in my dream, surprised at the ease of the making. In Florence I received, 'Come let us be the willing fools of April's earliest day.' Once a verse on General Meade's funeral; this I have lost."

At this sad period in his life his friends were very close to him and strove in all ways to show their affection. He has recorded this of one of them:

"After the death of my daughter, my wife, desiring to have a fitting expression of her grief, asked me to write to Saint-Gaudens. He replied that he was oppressed with unfinished orders and could not possibly undertake anything new. This did not surprise me, for he was never satisfied with his work. My wife thereupon wrote him a letter which I did not see. Whatever she said, it went to his heart, for he replied at once that he would drop all other work until he had executed the memorial she desired. It resulted in that most beautiful and satisfactory bas-relief, 'The Angel of Purity,' which is in St. Stephen's Church, Philadelphia.

"I never knew a man of greater sweetness of character than Saint-Gaudens, more gentle, more magnanimous, nor one whose face so expressed the character that endeared him to many. . . . It must be quite eighteen years since he made a relief of me in bronze, a standing figure which I think never entirely satisfied him, for he once said to me at my

table, 'That was one of the failures of my youth.' It was hardly of his youth, but it was not one of his best works. While he was making it—and I could only rarely give him sittings—we used to talk about what he was doing, and he showed me in clay the wonderful monument to Robert G. Shaw, now in Boston. When it was said to be complete I asked to see it. He said, 'No. I never show it, and I will not until it is in the bronze.' Then I laughed and said, 'Well, I have my own ideas of how I should make this relief.' When he became curious, I said, 'I should make a simple young figure on horseback, looking forward; and behind him, the black men of his regiment with bayonets crossing, somewhat as one sees the background of lances in the famous Velasquez of the surrender of Breda.' 'Well,' said Saint-Gaudens, 'that is exactly what I have done.' I laughed. 'Once you showed it to me, ten years ago.' This amused him greatly.

"When Saint-Gaudens received the order for the statue of Lincoln at Chicago, he told me that his first idea was to show Lincoln at the end of his life, standing on a rock, a tired worn man, and at his feet, far below, Lincoln as a lad, leaning against a fence, his foot on a log, an axe in his hand, pausing to think of the future. This eloquent and expressive thought of a man who put a good deal of poetry into his sculpture was, of course, not to the taste of the Committee and a great opportunity was lost."

In the spring the Spanish War broke out and Thomas Bailey Aldrich deals with it in a letter. Two follow it from the doctor to his son, Langdon.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich to S. W. M.

Ponkapog, Mass., May 3, 1898.

"My dear Mitchell:

"I have moved inland and burnt my ships (my books) behind me. I have three collections of Sill's verse (one privately printed); none of them contains a poem on Lexington; but I have a vague—the vaguest—impression that he did write something of the kind. Have you tried the back volumes of the *Atlantic*?

"I think you must have coined your word from *becquetement*. It is good and descriptive. The sound of an old woman's stick on the flags would be exactly that of a woodpecker's bill tapping against a tree—a nervous old lady moving quickly. I am saving 'François' for next winter, when it will probably be in book form. I haven't the patience to read a serial. How the serials used to drive me distracted in my editorial days! Please look up the misplaced poem for me. I should like to see it.

"I knew of your grief, and was made sad in hearing it, and wished that I had a magic word to send to you——.

"I don't think that Boston or Massachusetts was hot for a war; but now it has come, everybody has fallen into line, excepting Norton and two or three others who don't count. Massachusetts was the first State with her regiments on hand—as she always is—1776—1861—1898. War with Spain was written in the book of Fate. I have got myself laughed at many a time these passed few months for saying so. War was declared at half-past nine that night the Maine was blown up. Whether the explosion was inside or outside did not matter a pin. The time was come for Spain to quit.

"Weyler treated Cuba as Alva treated the Netherlands. Cuba was too near out coast for us to stand that. So I am for war and Cuba libre!

"Faithfully yours,

"T. B. ALDRICH."

S. W. M. to Langdon Mitchell Chamonix, August 18, 1897.

"Dear Lany,

"Being here sets me to thinking of you and of that absurd adventure you had when the hotel declined to receive you. I shall freshly remember the place because here we received yesterday news that the *Philadelphia Times* saw fit to print the statement that I am or was dead. This is my third demise! It cost some distress, especially to poor Mrs. Combs who gave up a western journey and wired Jack to learn if I were alive! When one thinks how careful all decent-minded folks are as to what they say or report, the calm indifference of the average editor to the consequences of a paragraph seems most amazing—an editor is a gossip-hag and devours any garbage. Me it disturbs not at all except with desire to get scalps.

"We have had great luck as to weather: rain during rail travel, sunshine when we drove or walked. Yesterday I walked half of the Tête Noire and at the top of the pass, looked back. The green hills fell together, one behind another in darkening lines, until a square transverse hill closed the vale of the Rhone, so far away that the barrier hill was only a hazy mass of purple and blue haze over which rose snow white, the long range of the Bernese Overland, brilliant peak on peak shining in the level sunlight. I think

I scarcely recall a thing so entirely beautiful or so solemn. I went off the road and sat an hour waiting for the carriages to come up. It was far lovelier than Mt. Blanc and that was and is today at its best without a cloud. Here we rest until we go to Paris and I on to London. M. and I will walk a little, not of course the big walks. My two ends, legs and head, seem about as good as ever—perhaps the head is even better and certainly my imaginative capacities gain with the years, also I am as brown as an Indian. I have been of late reading *Sainte Beuve*, as Miss Child chanced to have it with her,—two volumes of Causeries. His immense painstaking industry strikes me. He talks of reading for a ten page essay on Camille Desmoulins, twelve volumes of his revolutionary gazettes and pamphlets, or it is ten solid volumes of Frederick the Great's letters and diaries. Then how decent he is, how intellectually and morally charitable. The little essay on Rabelais is fine. In it he speaks of Etienne Dolet, who was burned as having written a Latin poem, in which a thief about to be hanged solaces himself because after death he is to be glorified as the subject of an anatomical demonstration by Dr. Rabelais. One wishes Villon had had this comforting idea—I must see that poem. If everyone were thus used after death the probabilities of ultimate usefulness would be largely extended.

"It is today raining as if with down-right good will. Yesterday I walked to the glacier des Bossons through the woods; and now how it rains! I have a small private cascade I see every morning when I walk. Now it is a torrent. Our walk took us along the white torrent of the stream, which issues from the ice caves of the Bossons. It

goes down the hill with a roar, hoarse and terrible, like that of a great lion and with a look of white anger in the fury of its great leaps. For want of clearness (transparency) the beauty of it is lessened, but perhaps the terror of it is made to seem greater. The rain is still such as to make a walk out of the question; and I have been downstairs to look among the tumbled torn volumes in the reading room for a book. I find the dubious plays of Shakespeare with which to solace the wet afternoon's enforced leisure. Also Jean Ingelow's verse. She is just now dead. There is charm in some of her work and she seems to be at times on the verge of saying that precisely right thing which cannot be bettered. Some one says of her neatly that she was a poetess but never a poet. What a ragged letter, but it has been necessarily a thing of shreds and patches, and for the product of one not alive, may answer.

"W. M."

To The Same B. H. October 1, no Sept. 30!

". . . The woods are this year wonderful, never was autumn so glorified with color and never was I more reluctant to leave it. Nowhere else can it be so grandly set with evergreens and gray granites for backgrounds.

"I am the more grieved to go because now it is unpeopled and the woods your own. I ride the bicycle daily with my 'cycle groom,' Parker, a long-legged, well-knit, handsome swell with a nose which ought to be in the peerage, a sweet, rather sad smile, and a low clear voice. Why, with a nose like that of your Lord Steyne he has had no success

in life is hard to say—but the very successful and the unsuccessful interest me as the folk in between do not.

"I hear all over from man and newspaper that *Becky* is a popular success, I felt that it would be. Cannot you send me to Deer Park post registered care I. K. your type copy? Poll will never I know enter a theatre and she wants to hear it.

"For another reason I dislike to go from here. I am in that queer mood when one thinks in rhythms and is capable of begetting verse. It resulted in the 'Ode on a Lycian Tomb.' I may have mentioned it. I wrote it very rapidly in two or three mornings—one hundred lines or more—but have rewrote it six times as it got emended past reading. A man's judgments as to what he writes are at times to be trusted. As to my books I have always known which would take the public and to what degree. As to verse, I am, often, I fear, wrong, for it so sets one a vibrating with sense of creative maternity that the mother feeling seems to affect the critical powers. Therefore I say nothing but shall leave you to judge.

"I hope you feel and know how much pleasure your well-won triumph gave me. Where did we get this energy and where the power to grow resolute in defeat?

"Yours always, S. W. M."

Various depressing influences during the year, caused the Mitchells to decide on a further trip, this time to Turkey and Egypt and they set sail in the autumn. Just before leaving, Dr. Mitchell had this letter from James Whit-

comb Riley, to which are added a pair of later letters showing much of the Hoosier's quality.

James Whitcomb Riley to S. W. M.

Buffalo, N. Y., October 30, 1898.

"Dear Friend:

"Your recent hail has just reached here, to cheer me in my pilgrimage out in the awful world—for I'm again on the road—a sort of literary François, as cheerily and featly capering as my wits and often faint heart will permit. The book has been received at home, but since my absence, so as yet I've been denied the studious and contemplative enjoyment of re-reading the delectable and wholly novel performance. As I write I recall (among a long list of invariably applausive reviews of it) at least two in this City's papers of this morning, the which I will clip out and here inclose to you, with just indorsements of their very highest praises together with my best congratulations. When you speak of journeying away from home again I am made still more wistful of the desire and hope of seeing you and talking with you; and now, moving in an orbit which ere many weeks must encompass your near vicinity, I have been *visioning* my very meeting with you and the tangible delight that should be mine in that event, however brief an audience you might accord me. But whenever and wherever you go, know that my halest thoughts and wishes are mounting every train you may select and taking passage with you any boat!

"As ever gratefully and truly yours."

J. W. Riley to S. W. M. Indianapolis, December 3, 1902. (Private)

"Dr. S. Weir Mitchell:

"With all heartiness I thank you for your acceptance and bestowal of the child-book which I have only dared send to the older friends who still possess the true child-heart—as I read between their noblest lines.

"It is, evidently, of my secretary and very zealous friend, Mr. Dickey, you make just inquiry regarding his singular request of you for copies of any letters of mine. A worthy and an honest man, but alas! he is writing a biography. Of course I am aware of his intent, in a general way; but at times as now, all innocently he brings embarrassment upon me. He has heard me speak of you—your works, your gifts and uses of them, *all* from which I could but make a rounded estimate—and that too he knows. Thus, without consulting me, he has ventured all thoughtlessly to address you. So I reason the matter alone (for he is absent and I miss him) and—well! I have long known and liked him. I can forgive him, but can *you*? I pray you will.

"As ever, gratefully and truly yours."

From The Same Indianapolis, August 24, 1908.

"Dear Dr. Mitchell:

"With all my heart I thank you for the fine tribute stanzas to the child-book—lines so *kin* to the ever tender theme, and so artlessly uttered into song's best art, that already they are haunting me with their pure human sweetness.

"And the poem inclosed with it 'This for Remembrance'

—how saintly beautiful it is. Only in your kindly, most forbearing presence could I hope to express to you my just appreciation of the poem and the sacredness of my joy in reading and re-reading it. Am I to retain this copy sent? Have just dared to send a song of my own to the magazine. Maybe some line or thought in it might pleasure you, 'O gentlest of my friends.'

THE OLD DAYS

"The old days—the Old days!
So ever dear and fair!
The old days—the lost days
How lovely they were!
The old days of Morning
With its dew drench on the flowers
And apple buds and blossoms
Of those old days of ours.

"Then was the real gold
Spendthrift summer flung;
Then was the real song
That the robin sung!
There was never censure then—
Only honest praise—
And all things were worthy of it
In the old days.

"There bids the true friends—
The first and the best;
There clings the green grass
Close where they rest . . .
Would they were here?—No:—
Would we were there!—

The old days—the lost days—
How lovely they were!

"Yours always gratefully, faithful."

On his return from the Near East, Dr. Mitchell wrote his old friend, Mrs. Mason, concerning the "Ode to a Lycian Tomb" (which he called "a poem on the higher levels of English verse") and the sources of its inspiration.

Philadelphia, November 10th-11th, 1899.

". . . When I take a big sheet it means that it is a letter I mean to write—what I call the other thing I do not know. I have been away eighteen months save for six weeks last fall and four days in June. To be in Egypt is to seem to be in some timeless other world. I yearn for it, now as never before for any land once seen. I would go every winter, if I could.

"Gilder bothered me into rewriting the 'Quack.' I did it disliking it, and deeply interested. I shall not live to 'do' a real doctor, but I have him in mind. I will send you soon a bit volume of verse. Some of it will be new to you, and all except the title poem is above the modern levels. But the best I have done or shall do is a long ode to or on the famous Lycian tomb at Constantinople, Les Pleureuses. This I will not put in a magazine—you will see why. I rarely strike any self-personal note, but this time it ran off my pen somehow. I wrote on the next two or three verses, then was used up. Probably this is a great poem? Certainly not anywhere else in verse have certain emotional products of power been so reported——ahem!

"Gilder and the publishers are in a sad quandary about 'Doctor North and his Friends!' G. says 'A unique book.' Several people wrote it—to wit, a poet, novelist, physician, and a sort of social Ulysses who has seen men and cities. The success of my son's play has, of course, pleased me. It is better even than the acting, which is very good.

"This is all my news. I was in New York last week—when again, I know not. I do not quite agree with you. Some people rot morally if steadily poor. Prosperity agrees with, sweetly ripens some. It is a question of temperament, etc. Do you mean money when you says prosperity? I would give all I have to get back my child. The years have made me too tender—things hurt so.

"I shall look out for the story and wish it were a novel.

"Yours sincerely,"

XVIII

"There was a pretty interchange of letters."
Dr. North.

DURING the period of struggle and development, a biographical study is best given chronologically, in order that the reader may walk beside the subject and see him as he really was. But in every long life there comes a pause, when the cumulative effect of many influences, work, character, human relations, must be presented as a whole. Dr. Mitchell had reached meridian. Let us stand awhile beside him in that sunshine.

He is most truly seen through the eyes of many friends, in a light that is reflected from many letters. Some of these have been given, others deal with their own affairs and thus receive answers in the same strain. General correspondents were few, nor did Dr. Mitchell freely give himself to many. If we wish to see his life in most of its aspects during its last quarter, we find it fullest in the series to Mrs. Amelia G. Mason. Mrs. Mason had first met Dr. Mitchell as his patient; they kept up a correspondence thereafter for many years. He may have had a low opinion of the female intellect; he undoubtedly kept his scalp through life tight on his own head, yet women were among his best friends and most constant correspondents. Mrs. Mason had congenial tastes and love of literature, so their letters are full of characteristic matter.

Dr. Mitchell examining a Civil War veteran at the Clinic of the Orthopædic Hospital, Philadelphia

S. W. M. to A. G. Mason New York, October 27, 1901.

". . . Your welcome letter caught me here on our way home. We left it for Japan in March, and returning in July found my wife's brother very ill on a friend's yacht, and so to the fine climate of Bar Harbor, where we literally pulled a most valuable man out of the jaws of death. I am well rewarded for a summer well lost, for I have helped to save my dearest friend. Apropositely, some of the friends of my youth I have outgrown or they have worn out or slipt away. The better chosen of mid-life have for the most part been taken by death, men like Brooks and Holmes. Only with one man, my friend, did I ever part in anger. We—indeed, I—made it up, but we were neither of us quite as before, and we knew it. I ought not to have broken with him; we could have over-lived it with less pain. 'He who would keep his friends must stomach that they lack!' I could say something of the person you mention; I will not. Your offer, your gift of your book, gives me courage to send you mine, which I meant not to do, because it is not all I desired it to be. I shall probably write no other novel. I foresee now the rise of the wave from the romantic to the novel of manners and character, not that character need be no part of the novel of adventure, but that it is rarely that. . . . Ah! the critics! I do not at all know if I have written poetry or not. I am, however, sure that the new man Moody is a poet. 'The Masque of Judgment' has serious defects, but if the man gathers self-critical capacity as he strengthens, he has a distinct future. I should have liked to blue-pencil the proof of his 'Masque.' I am glad to be honored by the gift of your book and promise myself pleasant hours. Why must you be

so weak and unable? I reproach myself and my art that you were so little helped. Why was it so?

"I misuse the glorious liberty of the letter sometimes, but I like it, and so I leap to advise you to read 'Kim.' It is a narrative, not a novel. I doubt if he can write a novel. I wish you would take a big stick and lay about you on them that write nowadays. . . . I fancy big sales are damning and make some men think they have attained. I am, I fear, in the grip of the other peril; I am never satisfied. I would like to rewrite 'H. Wynne.' In my bits of undisturbed summer I wrote eight little stories, some only three foolscap pages long. Several of these I have written from three to six times. Few will guess it, you might. And now to end.

"I have just read the fifth volume of Byron's letters. It is brutally edited and is as nasty a book as I know. Byron was really a splendid beast. By this you have had a dose of

"S. W. MITCHELL."

Philadelphia, November 8, 1910.

". . . My delightful arrangement by which I should be reminded in your letters has gone with other good propositions where the good resolutions are supposed also to go. After all, if the infernal regions are paved with good intentions, I would like to know what paves the other place. I recall at least some stray things from your letters, and will look up the missing documents by and by. I *can* make answer to your question as to why there is not a library edition of my books. Please, ma'am there is. As you may doubt this, I shall order the Century Company to send you the full set; and then you will be in the devil of a fix, because you

will have to read them all or say you have. If you don't get them very soon, it will be my secretary's fault, because she has forgotten to write to the Century Company and give them your new address.

"The novel is finished. I shall know better what it amounts to when it has attained adult qualities in the form of a trial print, which I shall soon receive. At all events, it is not a pot-boiling business. It is a book sure not to be very popular.

"Who sends me the queer little 'Evening Post' from Chicago? I suspect you, only because there is so much good review in it and such open-handed freedom of hitting right and left. If you know the editor, tell him how much I like his attack on 'collections of stories' where the title was given as if it were a novel. I have fought this over and over, and my publishers have always invited me to say how I would get out of it. It was difficult to put the whole four titles of my stories on the back, although this might be done.

"Now to get away from personal matters, I spent a delightful afternoon with Horace Furness yesterday, and we personally agreed that we did not want to know any more about Shakespeare than we did at present, that on the whole it would be more agreeable to know nothing about him except his books. I told Horace Furness that I had the joyous intention of writing a paper in defence of my opinion that Queen Elizabeth wrote Shakespeare's plays; as for Bacon, that is over and done for; indeed, the fat so to speak, is in the fire, and it is hopeless to get it out. Please to observe the relation between Bacon and fat.

"I asked Horace which of Shakespeare's plays he liked

best, and he said 'Always the one I read last.' He thought 'The Tempest' the most intellectual play, and the most interesting play, curious to add, 'Troilus and Cressida,' unless my memory fails.

"I have written you a deliciously long letter, and would never have done so except for the happy art of stenography. But I must remind you of an interview I had with John Bigelow, who told me that he was fifteen years older than I am. I said it was impossible. He showed me, however, of its truth, and that he had attained his great age and present competence by taking neither tea, coffee, tobacco, or wine, by not walking at all more than the ordinary needs of life required. Then he asked me how I had attained my present competence, and I told him by doing everything a man ought to do, and everything a man ought not to do, in the use of what you call matters preservative of health. I ate and drank what I pleased, smoked when I wanted, less in winter than in summer, and usually walked two or three hundred miles in the summer, and less than I should in winter. In other words, I lived my life reckless of all the laws of health. He said that it was incredible, and that if I did not take care, I would not live to be old. So here is some fun for you.

"Yours very truly."

Philadelphia, June 5, 1911.

". . . Houghton, Mifflin Co. have just sent me 'The Long Roll' by Miss Johnston. In the first place I have always thought that Stonewall Jackson was an insane man with a genius for war; in the second place, I think he was brutal.

He proposed at one time to give no quarter; and he had at one time the insane belief that his right leg was hollow and made of glass, and that everything he ate went into it. This a connection of his told me. To my mind he is amazingly like (think what they would say in the South of this) John Brown. They were both crazy, they both had wild views, they were both fanatics in religion and war. Probably the one had a smaller mind than the other, and perhaps lacked genius. Now, I am asked to give my opinion of this book for use in order to hasten its sale. I simply wrote back that I never do this, never have done so, and that I could not break my rule.

"Hoping to continue this letter at some time, I am

"Yours."

Philadelphia, Pa., January 27, 1912.

". . . It is snowing steadily and I am likely to have to my relief, an empty office, and so take occasion to dictate a reply to your letter.

"I am sorry you have had a cold and are laid up in bed, although that in itself is no great misfortune, except as it limits your power of reading and writing.

"I got from you about 'Constance Trescot' just the kind of thing I never get from anybody but you. You state the character as I drew her and as I meant to draw her. Two or three or more such women I have known—passionate, selfish, capable of immense sacrifices for their one love, able to love only one person at a time. The crumbling of the moral side of such women under circumstances like those I describe is perfectly certain to occur, and I may say that the

facts of the book are taken from life. There was a young women, a school-teacher not of the social class to which Constance belonged, not rich, but whose husband was brutally murdered before the Great War in a southwestern town, because he talked about slavery imprudently. She came back a year later and haunted the murderer, a lawyer of distinction. When under the influence of a religious revival he became pious and went to church, she too went to church and haunted him there and in his court life and at political meetings, until she drove him out of the town. She had not the means to follow him up, and wanting this stimulus to action, she became hysterically incapacitated.

"I think my story is absolutely true to life. It is not the kind of tragedy where an inevitable outside fate pulls the strings of human puppets. I have myself read the book recently; I could not better it. I frankly think it is the best American tragic novel, and I think it is the best of my own novels. It is certainly not the most pleasant. In this book it is the characters of the players that lead them toward tragedy, and if character stands for fate, such an ending was inevitable.

"I have been very occupied lately. Yesterday, I received, at the Franklin Inn Club, that amazing Academy of Arts and Letters. I believe that I am the only person in America who does not belong to it. I declined. I join no more societies, not even the 'Optimist League,' which I believe has its headquarters in Chicago.

"I did not realize until lately how uncomfortable is the process of becoming deaf.

"Yours very truly."

Philadelphia, March 24, 1912.

". . . A perfect day—sun and temperature of fifty, but I miss the lazying damp warmth of the still vexed Bermudas, where we have had two adorable weeks of painted days, snow-white houses, flowers, palms, bananas, bougainvilliea vines (violets all the year, I hate that), hills one or two hundred feet high, and the sea, translucent turquoise blues, emerald over the shoals, or ruddy on a reef of blues. No climate for any chronic disease like rheumatism, for which I took thither Mrs. M. with no gain, for a rather troubling rheumatism. It was a mistake.

"Now for your letter. I am as inapt at answers as you are apt at queries. Now your last, 14th March, you say, I ought to be very happy. Well, yes! but the years which desensitise some have made me more sensitive, and I have great capacity to be made *un*happy by the calamities, etc., of those I love. Then the fiend Imagination whispers suggestions of worse to come, etc., etc. Except as my personal haps disturb others near me, I am not easily disturbable by illness. Your own patient endurance of such crippling things as have befallen you fills me with wondering admiration. Autobiography?—John Sherwood—no. Incidents of my childhood?—yes, accurately told. The half-educated iron-master tells his life, and carelessly too.

"The address you will get. Now for February queries. No, tired of sick women? Not I. Of women who are well? Of sick women never; they are doubly interesting. Tell me that extraordinary story you mention. Yes, Constance's love was animal, self-full. She would have died for him because he was her man. She loved ignobly and

did not know it. Her love of country was because it was her country. Such women ruin the lives they cling to. A great love in a fine temperament radiates affection from the unequalled central sun of a matchless love. The lesson of C. T.'s life is plain to read. She lacks motives. Women without religion suffer for it far more than men. I think (under the rose) that C. T. is much the best of my novels. 'Science and imagination at war?' Why? The latter is the very soul of the former, but one must here classify imagination. See Ruskin, Vol 1 'Modern Painters.' . . . Did I send you some gay verse on a love affair? Three people write to me for friendliness, you, Miss Lawrence, and now and then Lord Grey. I had asked what privilege went with the gift of the freedom of London. He writes me, 'Freedom from arrest in London—but how useful to a suffragette!' Why do these women fight the consequences of their own acts? Men rob, rebel, etc., but take then the logical sequence. Is it feminine to fight jail rules and refuse food? I would leave a quart of milk and depart. She would drink half and fill it up with water. I have seen this done.

"Yours truly,

"Please Ma'am to send me—lend me—your critical study of my work.

"Yours as you behave about this——"

Bar Harbor, August 27, 1912.

". . . The Meredith letters do not astonish me because they are like Meredith outside of the covers of his books. He was the most brilliant talker I ever heard among men. Among women—well, Sarah Wister, Mrs. Helen Bell, of

Boston, Agnes Irwin. I have some letters of Meredith, one or two, and they are very curious. In one he speaks of having read my novel, 'Roland Blake' three times and asks if I do not wonder at his choice, but says, 'I read it because it is so noble.' Also, he speaks of our war with Spain, and he wonders how we had the patience to stand that cat in the back yard so long. In the other, he speaks more seriously, though, of course, then, as always in our critical times, England has not been with us in feeling, and I have some curious evidence to the effect that the King of England, who was then Prince of Wales, believed—in fact, said before a woman whom I think I can trust—that our Navy was no match for that of Spain.

"I would like to see that paper of yours and its criticism, but do not send it to me here, not till I get home in the fall. I wish I myself had the courage to write a critical examination of the novels of Hardy. I have now read three, because I always read novels or verse a little before going to bed at night, and they are very curious to me. Sometime I will tell you why.

"I have no more time to write to you. The weather has been one long continued April with very little what I call walking weather. Either the hills were soaking wet or it was raining. Now today the sun is out and I propose to tramp over a mountain top and shall digest in mind a difficult scene in the book of which I have written about one thousand pages of manuscript.

"Yours always,

"As to your other letters, I do not know, but you are always in a questioning shape, like Hamlet's father."

"We had a talk a few days ago about what are the most beautiful passages in English. I said some verses of the Bible. One was in Exodus which I use in my novel as the text of a sermon a man preaches after Lincoln's death. I did not give the sermon, but it is related by a girl to a young man. The text was 'I bore you up on my eagle and then I took you to myself!' What a noble text! The one I heard Phillips Brooks use for a like occasion was, 'The common people heard him gladly.' He said, 'Not people who are common, but that which is common in all people of the best.' The two sentences I chose were, one from our service, 'Therefore with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven,' which always seems when I hear it as if angels and archangels were like the clash of cymbals. The other I cannot remember all of, but you will find it in the last volume of Sir Thomas Mallory's 'Arthuriad.' It is where Lancelot, I think, laments over the grave of his friend, Gawain, 'Here thou liest who were first of Christian knights,' etc. Perhaps you can contribute others.

"Yours always."

Bar Harbor, July 16, 1913.

". . . I have sent 'Westways' to the printer. I enclose what the 'Centurions' say of it. One of them quoted what John Hay said of 'Hugh Wynne'; 'It is written with the power, charm, and certainty of genius, and the reserve of a gentleman.' That last did please me. I think this much applies to 'Westways,' which is full of tempting opportunities to be excessive, and has scenes of passion easily vulgarized, and so now I am at home without a task except a brief

memoir of John Billings for the National Academy. Alas! a dear friend since 1862. Two men are left—John Cadwalader, an ideal gentleman, a republican aristocrat, best American type; and Talcott Williams now seized on by the octopus of New York, a most winning personality. Neither has had the bodily vigor to be all they could have been in life. How one wanders! That is the liberty of the letter. A real correspondent, I turn to yours of June 15th, and take its subjects in turn. Clubs? You sit and dine, or fall a prey to someone. Men worth while are busy; I fall back on the society of women—a few. I have lost the brilliant kinswoman, Mrs. Sarah Wister; the gipsy Kemble cross on the Irish aristocratic Butlers created the most interesting woman I have ever known. We had many contentions and never a quarrel. Mrs. Casper Wister, too, I loved with a difference. Well, I have you, and the Irwins, and others. The poem and the Swinburne essay did not please—the music did. 'The Pilgrim's Chorus?' I never even heard of it, but I am tone deaf, denied that joy. That you have and more which few possess. Next, my vision? I wrote of it long ago. On the abrupt news of Phillips Brooks' death I saw his face smiling and it never left me for a week. Now I can easily visualize it as seen. It was seen on the left only. Such visions are seen before certain headaches; one may not have the sequent pain, and behold, thus, some ghosts. My only one—this. I believe the evidence conclusive for the appearance at distance of persons about to die. I know of one which stands every test—too long a story to relate here.

"I read Miss Glasgow's book, and you judge it correctly.

I wrote her a gentle reproach for its long sadness; I could have added also lack of humor. It will not be fairly judged. The boy should have rewarded the mother by a life compensatory, so far as life can be. An obvious, unjust, tract novel, is Winston Churchill's last, also without a trace of humor and with little real knowledge of our varied life. Roosevelt + Churchill on the common-sense religion of Christ! Oh, your clergyman! But—well—if you have never read Phillips Brooks' sermons, *read them*. This is malapropos, but do it. You want a strong novel? Woe is me! Wait for 'Westways,' or buy 'Fortitude' by Walpole, not over pleasant and still very English and unendurably modelled on Dickens. Story? Yes. Pleasant? No. I have followed your last letter line by line. If it please you, my reply has done what I meant it to do.

"Yours with constancy of regard and esteem."

Bar Harbor, August 21, 1913.

". . . In summer my correspondence gets well cared for, because I am not as in winter jostled by a mob of duties; but your letter of August 4th has remained on my table, reproachful, because I am in the bait of a long contemplated temptation to use for verse the strange subject of Barabbas, probably destined to be crucified as a leader of revolt against Rome, and set free because Christ was the chosen victim of the priesthood and, as I think, Barabbas' release would set at liberty a patriot Jew. The story pursued me night and day and in my lonely mountain walks, but now it is being typed, some forty pages, all blank verse and lyrics, to be worried over and chastened by the critic friends of

intellect and the quick-eared muse of rhythmic music. Having more or less satisfied my hunger, I shall lay it aside to digest it until I can return to it with a freshened appetite; I may then print it privately, for to do more were useless. I have had my lesson of neglect, and the real joy is in the use of the creative power, something like the indulgence of an instinct.

"And now, to take up your letter. Yes, some of me is very young. Humor, romance, delight in adventure and imagination, which is the winged angel of intellect (at its best.) Phillips Brooks, the most truly great man I ever knew who kept it muzzled and let it out—and almost only—in his letters; and such a true loving nature with a face that like Lincoln's gave one the impression of unearthly strangeness. I like very few clergymen. Why I do hardly know. . . .

"Women of intellect with a normal background of governed passions, I like. See Leila Grey in my new book, which goes to you soon. Criticize it horribly, fearlessly. It is my last. I have, as you speak of it, made two good women alive in 'Westways'—real. Women of today? Their dress is more demonstrative of immodestly exposed form than is the man's, which they think they imitate. The dances I do not see, but the waltz was considered indecent, *vide* Byron, who was an experienced judge, but could not dance; but I too am old-fashioned.

"No, I shall not forget you, as this long letter proves. We are in the midst of a wild Southeast storm, and I fancy that the trees like the exercise they are getting. Even the great arms of the pines are swinging in the wind.

"As when a giant's mighty length
Doth beat with joy the rolling sea."

August 22nd.

". . . Lord Grey sends me a delightful book—*Watts' Life*, the painter, and writes me witty and most kindly letters, almost as good as yours."

XIX

"He had the courage of his vanity. Very few strong people are fearless enough to tell you their honest self-estimate."

Dr. North.

THE success of "Hugh Wynne" and the celebrity following it, had a determining effect on Dr. Mitchell's literary projects. Up to this moment, fiction had been merely a recreation, nor had he regarded it as anything but a leisure occupation. Even at the end of his life when asked, "Would you rather be remembered for your literary work or your medical work?" his answer was prompt. "Medical, of course!" For many months of each year he was absorbed in practice and gave no thought to story-writing, no matter how often his mail reminded him that he was a novelist.

After 1898, however, there was a change. For some years the literary impulse had been gradually increasing, so that now he was putting into fiction all the creative energy which heretofore had gone into scientific investigation. What had been a side-career became a main ambition. Perhaps the more direct rewards in money and celebrity and admiration, were welcome to a man who had had to fight for his medical pre-eminence every step of the way. The word *"charlatan"* was never used about one's novels. It was delightful to give pleasure and to be constantly assured how much pleasure one gave. It was gratifying to be so sure of success, a large success—when in one's profession

this was eternally questioned, jealously watched, scrupulously measured. Dr. Mitchell was a shrewd man and one word from a colleague would out-weigh all those facile outpourings from the public which each morning brought him, but experiment and research were past for him now.

Thus the business of literature more and more absorbed him; while the astonishing fact remains that at seventy he was taking on more work—though work of a different kind—rather than letting it go. This enormous capacity for intellectual labor remains, when all is said, the true genius of the man. How was he physically able to accomplish what he did? A friend points out that his mind possessed to the highest degree, "order, precision, punctuality and readiness." Each new subject filled it to the brim, before giving way to the next. And in this power there seemed no slackening as the new century came in.

Like many a diffident person whose self-confidence had been painfully acquired, Dr. Weir was a little awe-stricken at the marvel of his own success. From now on, he talked of it a good deal: he was joyous over it. He was like the gardener who takes one out to look at his vegetables and will not let one go until he has expatiated on the tenderness of his peas or the tapering bigness of his asparagus—whose just pride is mingled with wonder at the operations of nature. As we read in the Autobiography such phrases as "I was always a very self-complacent person" or "I think I should have risen to the front rank in any walk of life," we are not surprised to note the growth of this self-esteem. Walking once with his old friend Sarah Butler Wister, Dr. Weir pointed to a big St. Bernard over-topping a group of

terriers and remarked, "I want to stand out above my fellowmen the way that dog stands above his fellows." Her reply was quick, "Oh, I never want to see as much of anyone as that!" But he did not take the hint, much as he valued her opinion.

By late middle life his vanity indeed, though quite innocent, had become colossal. It was fed by torrents of adulation, incessant and exaggerated, every day, almost every hour, and when we watch it grow upon him, we must not forget the provocation. He had helped so many people and pleased so many! Doubtless they would have loved and praised him even if he had done much less that was worthy of their love and praise. As it was, they wrote him poems, letters, and eulogies, as many as indiscriminate. Who can blame a man for self-conceit, when critics so lost their heads as to assure him that *Hugh Wynne* far surpassed *Esmond*, that *François* gave a better idea of the French Revolution than *A Tale of Two Cities* or that his *Ode to a Lycian Tomb* was finer than *Lycidas?* He comments on this with all his own directness in a letter of November 2, 1907.

"I came by chance on the judgment of three partial friends in the 'Bookman'—well, there are queer surprises in life—one, when you are called middle-aged, one—old, and one—startling, when deliberately on paper you are called 'a genius.' I rub my head and wonder if——?"

But there was no *if* at the bottom of his soul.

When we look at this vanity of Dr. Weir's—and it must be looked at, since it was as much a part of him as

the handsome head—we must look also at the flattery which met with little counteracting sense of humor, by which it might have been neutralized. For years he received letters like the following: (1892)

"Whilst laid by the heels in a country-house with an attack of grippe, also an invalid from gastric affection, the weary eyes of a sick woman fall upon your face in the *Century* of this month—a thrill passed through me—at last I see the true physician!"

Or this:

"I saw you today and without a doubt America could well substitute a Weir Mitchell (sic) for Mr. Taft as the ruling power of our glorious country. Our President-elect may be the best . . . but he cannot stand in comparison to our most honored American in your person. Why? Dignity, personality, culture, intelligence and a whole lot more in wise experience—which you have expressed in your several works!"

The wonder is, not that Dr. Mitchell was vain but that he ever did a stroke of work or thought of anybody but himself. And we know he thought of many, that he remained generous, sweet-natured and tender-hearted to the end of his life. "Beau-père, you should not be so vain!" said a daughter-in-law and she was answered with a twinkle "My dear, I have something to be vain of!"

The manifestations of this egoism remained naïf and stories regarding it are classics still in Philadelphia. Some are delicious, as when Dr. Mitchell insisted on reading his poems to Dr. Pepper (a man himself not unduly modest),

before starting the business of an important Committee. Strangers had to be warned, lest they should miss that expectant look by which Dr. Mitchell waited for the due meed of praise.

A colleague recalls giving a dinner to a distinguished Englishman by whom he placed Dr. Mitchell. During their talk he heard the latter say in his marked, expectant way, "There are three things worth-while in life—to rise to a foremost position in the profession one has chosen—to write a good novel and to catch a salmon in the summer!" Followed a pause—the host caught himself almost hating the English guest for his slowness, but the answer came at last: "What an interesting life you must have had, doctor!" and all was well.

Thus it was true of Dr. Mitchell's friends that they sheltered him more or less from the results of his self-conceit, knowing that it never stood in the way of public duty nor interfered with his mental activity. It had for them too a quality of leadership—a romantic quality, which they rather enjoyed—it was never hard or cruel. Among his friends on his Saturday evenings, he drew everyone out, he made them talk, he enjoyed their small triumphs and in the glow of their sympathy and affection he seemed to stand like a gorgeous peacock in the sun.

Moreover all his friends and most of his acquaintances knew that this personal vanity was not corrosive and never dulled the edge of intellect nor that of true sympathy. He seldom lost a friend—and he worked hard for those he loved. Among younger men he constantly made new and devoted adherents. Of himself he gave lavishly, stimu-

lating, suggesting, ready with the largesse of new ideas to the man who was clever enough to make use of them. Moreover, he never lost interest in new ideas, new investigations; of his younger friends he kept asking "Now—what's new?" He never grew too old to learn. Weir Mitchell had some foibles, but he escaped the paralysis of thinking that he knew everything.

As to friendship, his letters give aspects of it few people knew of. His friend Dr. John S. Billings for example, was constantly in his thoughts; he spoke wittily at a testimonial dinner for the latter in 1895; or he uses all his influence to obtain a professorship which he felt would give Dr. Billings greater scope.

Few men have earned such a letter as the following:

". . . One by one," wrote Dr. Billings in 1904, "the majority of my old friends have passed away, but so long as you remain, life is still worth living for me. . . . When I think of you it is not as a great physician—or as a poet—or as a leader in science—but as 'Weir,' just 'Weir'—And I have a comfortable cardiac (or pre-cardiac) sensation in the thought that I have the right to call you 'Weir.' May you live long to enjoy life as you do and when the end comes—may it be painless and prompt! I mean by this the end of this life—yet I don't think that will be the end for you—but rather that it will be a new beginning. I suppose you have had beginnings before the Nineteenth Century—probably Philip Sidney may have been one of your trial-trips. Be that as it may, you have been mine in a sense for forty years now—in a rather special way—and I am *yours*, J. S. B."

This letter shows the sensitiveness of Dr. Mitchell's friendship and there is another in which we find that he has lent a friend sixteen hundred dollars, then torn up his note and writes to apologize lest the debtor be angered or his pride hurt! Dr. Mitchell once remarked that a biographer's first task should be to examine the stubs of his victim's check-books and surely the speaker need have no fear of the result.

For instance, we know that on a very wet evening in the first year of the century, there came to see Dr. Mitchell a poor and intense young Japanese named Hideyo Noguchi. Struck by the high promise and character of this student of twenty-four, Dr. Mitchell gave him immediate help and zealously set to work on his behalf. Mr. Carnegie became interested; later the Rockefeller Institute enrolled the young man among its band of research workers. He owned a pair of marvelous crippled hands and early had developed a high technique in miscroscopy. On September 4, 1903, writing to congratulate Dr. Flexner on his approaching marriage, Dr. Mitchell mentions that Noguchi's income for the next year is to be increased to fifteen hundred dollars. The following letters, touching and charming in their alien English, show the further steps in the promotion of this distinguished soldier in the army of Science—who was to die at length on the field of battle.

One, which is omitted, contains a technical report, afterwards printed by Mitchell, in connection with Noguchi's investigations upon the composition of snake-venoms, already the subject of the elder doctor's monograph with Reichert.

Hideyo Noguchi to S. W. M.

"My dear sir:

"I have read your separate note with greatest respect, and learned that through your influence I am going to be honored with a grant from the Carnegie Institution for another year, even with the increase of the sum. Please permit me to thank you for your ever so generous support to this minor creature. How greatly happy I am I cannot express with any language. I know only to thank—thank forever—for your tireless mercy. I pray and ask for new Power and Energie to enable me to deserve this grateful prize. Every cent of this fund contains Mr. Carnegie's benevolent soul and is direct by your unsurpassed love for Nature. May I remain a brave soldier to fight to the end, like the one who dies on the honor of his general. I know that my power is still too weak to do what I wish to accomplish, but I will utilize it to the end—slowly and steadily—and the strange inspiration induced by the great souls will help me in carrying all my undertakings."

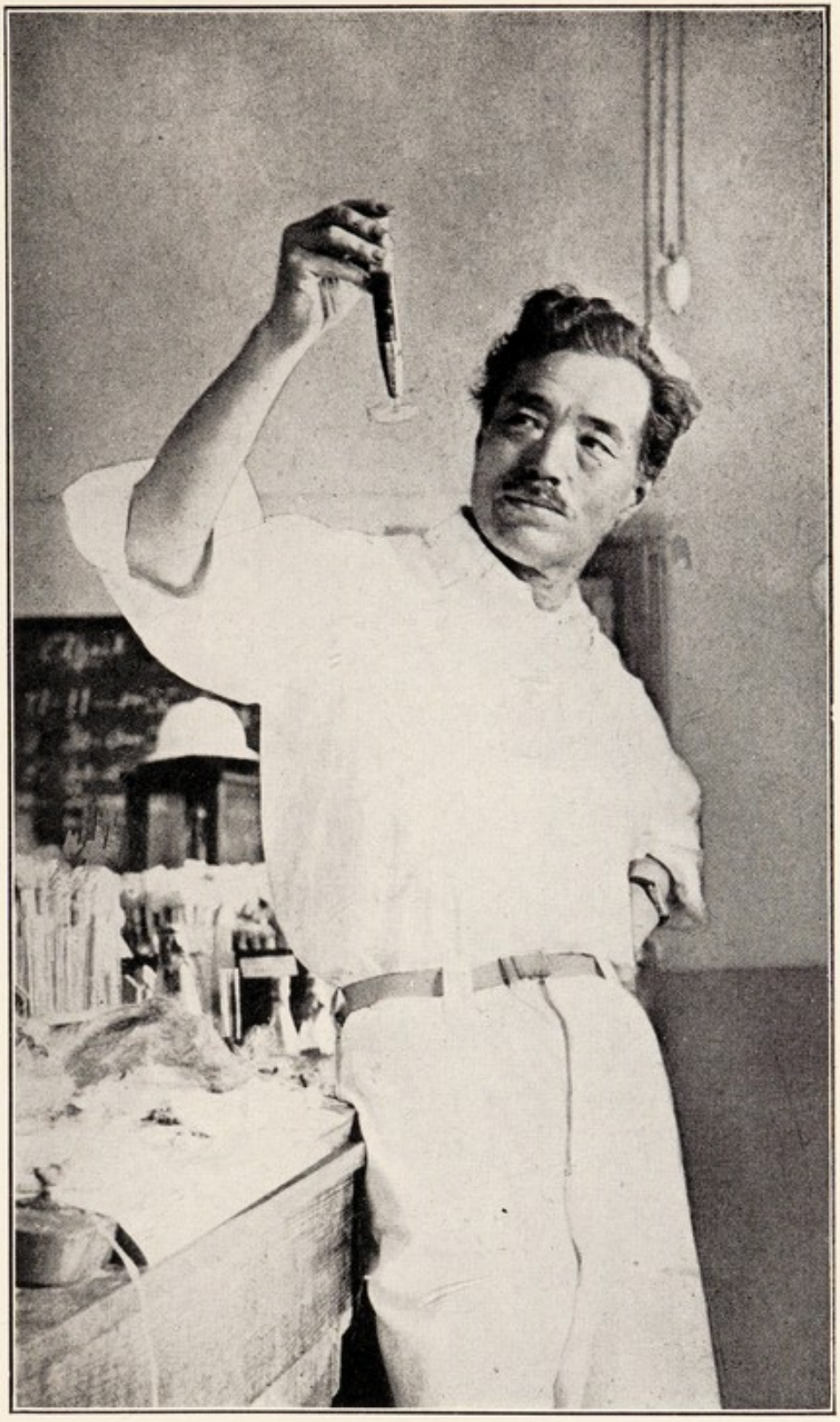
From The Same

"(Written upon receipt of your letter)

"My dear Sir:

"Your kindest letter of October has reached to me this morning, when I was about to mail out the enclosed letter with the money order to you.

"The happy tidings from you appeared to me as if a dream. I am too much excited with them and cannot stop the involuntary trembling of my hands. 'Ich zittere noch vor Freude.' I do not know how to thank you. Please



Dr. Hideyo Noguchi

(Courtesy of The Rockefeller Foundation)

perceive and share my happiest feelings. A gift—the gift from you—from a world-renowned scientist! I will *attempt not to kill the gift*, and so I dare to accept this most grateful donation with my sincerest thanks.

"You told me in your letter that upon my return from Europe I may be honored with a diploma—perhaps Doctor of Science. I am extremely pleased to learn this prospective honor and will work hard to bring back here enough result in order not to blame such a high Academic title.

"Today I will see Mr. Takata and will let him write you about the matter you wanted to know.

"I remain

"Yours most respectively,"

From The Same New York, November 18, 1913.

"My dear Doctor Mitchell,

". . . I thank you very much for your very kind letter on my recent work on rabies. As you have noticed in your letter my article was rather too short and incomplete, but it was only an abstract of my long article which will be published very soon. Nevertheless I believe that every essential fact of observations is in that brief note. I have demonstrated my preparations abroad and every investigator was convinced of my findings. Is it not curious that I should have been lucky in finding something new in that particular line of subject on which you have contributed so much and helped to develop, namely; the diseases of nervous system? I am happy to feel that I have been instrumental in bringing out these results to clear up some problems in which you have taken a special interest and of

which outcome I owe so much to your unceasing patronage ever since my arrival in America. You see that we now know the etiological agents of General paralysis. Tabes Dorsalis, Poliomyelitis and Rabies, all within the last eighteen months.

"In my brief sojourn in Europe I received a splendid reception at different centers of medical science. I am enclosing a brief memorandum of events during my trip and hope that you may find it interesting. At the earnest invitations I had to give lectures and demonstrations in ten different cities where I was dined by thirty-eight different parties and societies. In London my time was so limited that I could not go to Oxford to see Prof. Osler. Prof. Osler was asked to two different dinners at which I was the guest, but on both occasions he had to decline as he himself was guest of some Historical Societies in London. Please do not trouble yourself to return the memorandum.

"During the week following the Christmas I expect to visit Philadelphia (there will be a meeting) and will have an audience with you at your home.

"Please give my best wishes to Mrs. Mitchell,

"Your most humble

"HIDEYO NOGUCHI."

It is not certain whether the friendship with the Japanese scientist started before or after a journey which Dr. Weir made to Japan in 1901. The papers in Tokyo reported a wonderful reception given him by all the physicians and scientists of that country and he added to his store of many tastes, a love for Japanese art and Japanese fans. The

Autobiography reports for the same year a dinner in Washington, "which," he writes, "happened to be on my seventy-second birthday. Eighty-two people dined in the long corridor. I was at the end of the table with Cabot Lodge on the left; on his left, Miss Root; next to her, the Korean Minister; on my right, an old general, who I think, was Miles. We had an interesting time, as the Korean spoke no English and Miss Root no Korean. I tried the General on many subjects but could not get him to talk till Miss Root happened to remark that dining was like gambling, you never knew who would sit next to you or what chance would be afforded for good talk. The old general caught the word 'gambling' and immediately became excited. He said, 'I saw the greatest gamble on earth. It was when I commanded a brigade sent to hunt for Jefferson Davis. A few miles out of Richmond we saw several wagons overturned by the roadside. My soldiers pillaged them pretty thoroughly. That evening there was so much noise in camp that I complained, but the officer of the day asked me to come out a moment. I found the men around the camp fires, very merry. One fellow would call out, "I bet twenty thousand dollars." Another would shout, "I see you and raise you fifty thousand," and so on up to half a million. For a moment I was bewildered. Then I discovered that they were betting with Confederate notes they had found in the wagons by the roadside.'"

During the first years of the twentieth century, Dr. Mitchell had several sets of literary correspondents. Among these a group of short letters from Andrew Lang are full of quality. This cultivated and delightful Scot, "dear Andrew, with the brindled hair!" had the same love of histori-

cal and literary research as the American physician, besides a large store of classical and anthropological knowledge, very fascinating to the latter. In the two final letters, mention is made of a study Dr. Mitchell was writing on "cat-fear," or "ailuraphobia."

A. Lang to S. W. M. St. Andrews, April 1st.

"Dear Sir:

"It is very interesting to hear that you once saw Edgar plain. At Oxford an old fellow of my college had been at Eton with Shelley. He said 'Shelley was not a clever boy, he never was sent up for good'—that is for a good piece of Greek or Latin prose or verse. Perhaps Poe could have made a livelihood more easily in England. But if it really was a case of whiskey, unless he had been backed by friends as Coleridge was, he must have been a failure. I hope you will publish 'St. Erkyweld.' Bad as our literature was before Chaucer, it was worse between him and Spenser, except the ballads and mysteries by nameless people. 'No muckle better than our ain' as the caddie said, in a golfing contest.

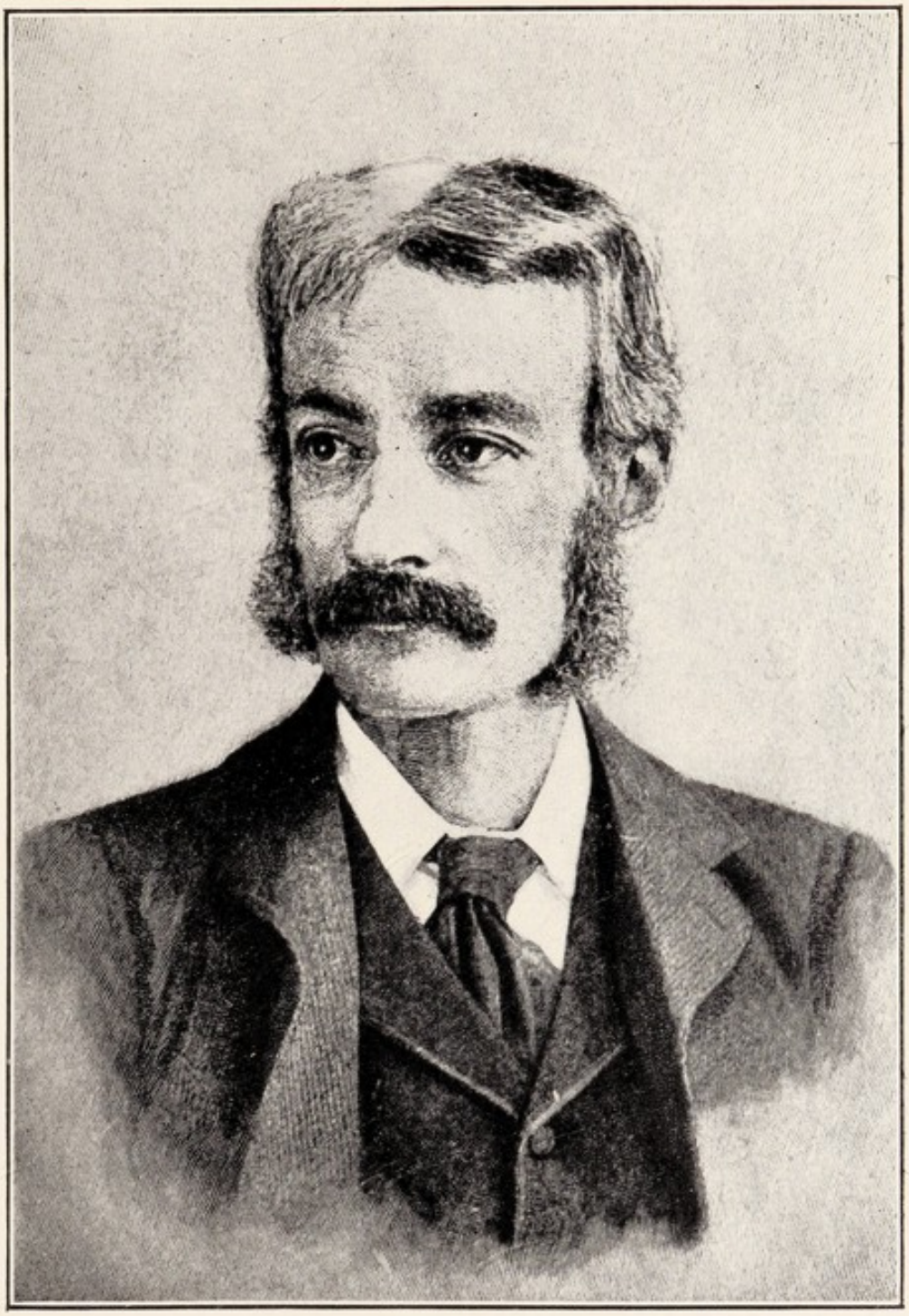
"Believe me,

"Faithfully yours."

The Same to The Same 1 Marloes Road, W., April 4th.

"Dear Dr. Weir Mitchell,

"Very many thanks for your book which arrived as I left my native country, and is following me to London, with my Homer, so you are in the best company. Mr. Holmes wrote no preface, and was pirated 'all the time.' But my Helen is



Andrew Lang

(Courtesy of Charles Scribner's Sons)

not much more remunerative than your poems. 'The world willingly let her die' and I don't wonder at it. Yet it is no worse than Davenant's 'Gondibert,' which lives in histories of English literature.

"If you have an opportunity will you lay me at the feet of Miss Repplier, from whom I never hear, and of whose well-being I am always anxious to hear. To Mr. Furness my behavior is worse than that of the beasts that perish, because I never *can* remember his address. I know it is Wallingford, but whether Va. or Ga. or Me., or Vermouth, I cannot tell: or Pa., or Ma! Please let Mr. Furness (he is a Dr. but so even are you) hear of my geographical weakness. I once met an American lady who was shocked by my not knowing where Vermont or Vermouth is, but *she* had never heard of Moidart, a region much more famous. Dr. Furness can read my more than Minoan characters. Believe me,

"Sincerely yours."

The Same to The Same London, June 14th.

"Dear Dr. Weir Mitchell,

"The cats are most curious. I have writ a little article, with analogies from divining-rod people. But nothing explains why cats cause terror, and not dogs, mice, etc. Mice frighten women, for obvious reasons, about a cat there is no obvious reason. The Persian kitten book is delightful. I get no fishing and I grow very aged and prosy.

"Ever very sincerely,"

The Same to The Same. St. Andrews, Scotland, June 28th.
"Dear Dr. Weir Mitchell,

"Your pamphlet will interest me much: I took for granted that Lord Roberts was an ailuraphobe. I have just met what Queen Mary's court called 'the New Acquaintance' influenza, and was much interested in the hypnogogic illusions I saw whenever I shut my eyes. They were pictures of many drawings executed in styles from 1500 to Turner's date. I had a splendid collection, though I cannot visualize 'for nuts' normally. I suppose the subliminal eye does it?

"Believe me,

"Yours very sincerely,"

XX

"And now a score of years has fled away
In noble service of life's highest ends . . ."
Books and the Man.

AMONG literary correspondents of the new century, Charles Eliot Norton holds high place. The interchange between him and Dr. Mitchell is especially delightful, retaining for years, a freshness of interest and affection. A selection follows, made difficult by an embarrassment of riches.

Shady Hill, February 1, 1902.

"My dear Weir Mitchell:

"I have been thinking of you and wanted to send you affectionate messages of good will, but letting trifles interfere with my doing so, when here comes your note, a most welcome New Year's present—and I (2nd Jan.) was interrupted here. And since I was interrupted I have had an experience so unusual, so delightful that I heartily wish you could have shared it with me. It was the being present at the opening of Mrs. Gardner's music room last night, to which all the fine arts contributed, and which was as highly-civilized and beautiful an entertainment as genius controlled by good taste and having wealth at command, could devise. As we were driving home at midnight my daughter said to me: 'I wish one could have chosen from the world over the people who would have made up a company fit for such an

entertainment.' And I said, 'Well, whom would you have had?' 'Dr. Weir Mitchell for one,' was her reply.

"I am glad you are working at Washington. . . . The right word about him is waiting to be said by you. I find Washington a very interesting person. Most men have characteristics, traits of character; he had character.

"I send you all good wishes, and am

"Always most truly,

"C. E. NORTON."

Ashfield, Mass., June 2, 1903.

"Dear Mitchell:

"It is not my conscience but my heart that reproaches me for my long silence toward you. At Shady Hill I often wish that you could come into my study, and that there, with the companionship of books and pictures, we might talk of the matters which most interest us, and of which it is not worth while to write; for it is only in speech, face to face, that the thought gets its proper interpretation through glance and tone and manner and mutual instant sympathy.

"Your admirable Washington address came to me when I was ill with an attack of the grip—a slight attack in itself but one which left me listless and lacking in energy;—left me, in short, feeling more than before it clutched me that I was an old man. But are we as old at three score and ten or four score as our Fathers were? I do not think so; and yet this may be a pure delusion. It seems to me that we bear our years more lightly than they used to do. But, perhaps, we seem as old to the young, as fifty or sixty years ago men of our age used to seem to us. I wish that the younger generation had poets writing for them as Tennyson and Browning

and Matthew Arnold wrote for us. If we liked their new poets and did not feel toward them as our Fathers did toward our poets, we might have confidence that we were not losing the spirit of youth. Kipling hardly answers as a test. No man who has not lost the zest of life but must listen with delight to him when he is at his best. I have lately been reading the new discovered Seventeenth Century poet Thomas Traherne, the worthy associate in poesy of Herbert and of Vaughan; but of a different temperament from either of them. He is a precursor of Blake, of Wordsworth, and even more of Emerson himself in his splendid mystic exaltation of the relation between God and man. The range of his thought is narrow, but his vision was above all heights, and dives into the depths of all delights.

"If you could come here for two or three days in the course of the summer, it would give me the greatest pleasure."

S. W. M. to C. E. Norton Bar Harbor, July 14, 1903.

"Dear Norton,

"I took away with me your letter of June 2nd to the woods of Canada, and as I was poled up the lonely water way of the Cascapedia, I read it with a dozen less agreeable. Three asked for autographs. It is a queer disorder. I am brutal about it nowadays and never reply. . . . This brings me to your words about Kipling, who refreshes me so surely at times that I want to like him personally but cannot and never wish to see him. He was very ill-mannered to me once, and I imagine him brutal on some sides and self-full.

"You invite me to visit you. I fear that may not be. I

leave my wife for a toning month of woods and river and the excuse of salmon fishing. After that I abide here and keep her company, for we are quite alone since my daughter died in 1898, and my two sons live far away and I see no grandchildren in summer. You speak of Washington. I see that Charles Eliot said of him that 'he never showed a spark of genius but was only sober, sensible, honest and brave.' What a queer verdict! Are all the valets of history dead? It seems not. Courage is common, and Charles Eliot must know a hundred men who are also sober (minded), sensible and honest. I think my address answers his characterization. The phrase is a historic outrage and disparages both the judgment and knowledge of a man who could when using it believe that he spoke the truth.

"Yours faithfully,

"WEIR MITCHELL."

Shady Hill, March 5, 1904.

"My dear Mitchell:

"It was a pleasant deed of yours to write to me of your seventy-fifth birthday, and to give me a chance, (though belated, but none the worse for being so) to add my good wishes and congratulations to those of the friends who have a special and private right to celebrate it. It is a good age to which to have lived, with all one's faculties alert and vigorous and obedient as ever. And the seventy-five years over which your life extends have been on the whole the most interesting and the most important period in the whole history of man. The changes in the material and in the moral world alike have been far greater and more essential than in

any corresponding period in the past. While the limits of the Universe have been inconceivably extended, this little trifle of an earth of ours has been steadily shrinking in size. There never was such a breaking down of old creeds, such a dispelling of the phantom army of the gods, and such a generally agnostic regard toward the great Unknown and Incomprehensible. The discovery of America, the invention of gun-powder, the printing press, wrought no such effect upon the lives and thoughts of mankind as the compelling of steam and electricity to man's use have done. And so on—but how about the individual man? It seems to me that but a few have been able to take advantage of these changes and make the best of them, and that the many have suffered morally for the time being.

"But all these thoughts require expansion, and are fitter for an essay than for a birthday letter. What should the good wishes be for his seventy-five years old friend, of one who is himself seventy-six? They should be what he would wish for himself—first, health; second, freedom from heavy sorrow; third, life so long as the grasshopper does not become a burden; fourth, a painless death and a happy memory in the hearts of a few friends.

"If you have any other wish for yourself, I wish it for you, and am now and for the rest of life,

"Yours most truly,

"C. E. Norton."

Shady Hill, November 27, 1905.

"Dear Mitchell,

"You tell me what I had forgotten, that I spoke of foot-

ball as the chief industry of the University of Pennsylvania, and to rebuke my wanton speech you send me a paper showing that 'it is a centre of great mental activity.' I have read this paper with attention and instruction, and shall henceforth be as little likely to speak disrespectfully of your University as of the Equator—for I have learned among other things of the doing of which it has to boast during the past year, that it has discovered fifteen new gods, no, 'no less than sixteen new gods,' that it has been compiling references to seasickness in Greek and Latin authors, that it is preparing an edition of the critical works of Dennis and one or two other writers of equal importance, that it is continuing its investigations of the knee-jerk, and in brief is displaying an intellectual life of at least as high an order as the physical life which has won it its proud position in athletics! I am glad to scramble out of the pitfall into which my ignorance of these things precipitated me.

"You choose a Middle English epithet for these glorious days, and promise me a letter before long written in Middle English! A letter from you in whatever dialect or tongue could not but be welcome—, but keep for my sake to that modern English of which you are a past master. I feel toward Middle English as the scholar felt toward the Latin of the Middle Ages, when he translated the title of DuCange's invaluable 'Glossarium Medici and Infirmae Latinitatis.' No more! It is time to dress for dinner.

"Yours ever most truly,

"Please make my best regards acceptable to Mrs. Mitchell."

Shady Hill, December 22, 1905.

"My dear Mitchell:

"I write on the rebound my thanks for your letter while my heart is still warm with the pleasure it gives me, and that my Christmas good wishes may reach you before the day itself has passed. How slowly Peace makes its way on earth! The song of the Angels has not lost its sweetness, but its tone is full of a deep sadness. Happy we who have a share in our own homes of the peace which is so scanty in the world! A couplet of George Wither's has been running in my head all day:—

'So I within be still
Let men without me keep what noise they will!'

But at this blessed season the noise will break in to disturb not the tranquility of the soul but the quiet of the heart! Nowhere are peace and good-will toward men—no, that is rhetorical exaggeration—but as George Sand says 'rien ne soulage comme la rhétorique.' So I bid dark thoughts vanish, and wish you most heartily a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

"I wonder if, now that you are passed three score and ten, whether you find as I do that the days seem to have fewer hours, and the hours fewer minutes than they had in earlier years. I lay out a day's work in the morning on the old scale, like this——and in the evening find I have accomplished something like this—. I take comfort in the thought that more or less is of little consequence now. I rejoice in the unabated power of work in a man like Howells, nearing the end of youth. What an incomparably sweet and delightful

nature he was blessed with, and how faithful he has been to it! I never can cease to regret for his own sake that he had so late a coming into his rights as a novelist. He should have been born into the purple of the kingdom of good letters. Neither he nor Henry James, have been as good as they would have been if they had been trained with some acquaintance in childhood with Homer and Virgil and the historic stream of imagination in literature."

Shady Hill, January 31, 1907.

"My dear Mitchell,

"I wonder if you have seen the extraordinary work which that tasteless and pedantic scholar, Dr. Paul Haupt of Johns Hopkins has lately done on Ecclesiastes. He succeeds in taking the poetry out of it and in turning the delightful chapter which was in my mind just now into a detestable physical discourse. Think of his transmutation of the fine phrase 'the doors shall be shut in the streets' into this, which is one of his notes: 'the exits (of the body) are barred, secretions are insufficient or vitiated, or cease. He begins to suffer from retention (ischuria) and intestinal stenosis'; and 'All the daughters of music shall be brought low' is interpreted as 'He is unable to hear sounds distinctly and becomes hard of hearing'; also, 'When they shall be afraid of that which is high' is to be understood as 'He is afraid to climb a hill, or to go upstairs, because he is short of breath.' Can anything be more humorously German or more grievously incapable than this? Why is it that the German race has from the beginning shown itself devoid of the sense of beauty in every art, and of the capacity for truly poetic imaginings? Com-

pare Faust with any one of the greater Shakespearean tragedies. It may, though I doubt, surpass them all in the region of the understanding, but there is more of poetic imagination in a single scene of Hamlet or Macbeth than in the whole play of the greatest of the Germans. When the reaction comes against the materialism of the present time and its mere intellectualism, as it will come in the course of ages, I do not believe that Faust will hold the same place in the regards of men which it seems to hold today." (*"Nor I"—W.M.*)

"What an interesting illustration Kipling affords of the poetic imagination working under difficulties. There is nothing to nourish or quicken the spiritual side of his nature, but he has done a better work for his time than any other man in treating through the poetical imagination the material conditions which surround us all; and with what magnificent success he has done it!

> '. . . and all unseen
> Romance brought up the nine-fifteen!'

And how splendid is 'The Miracles':

> 'I sent a letter to my dear—
> A thousand leagues and more to her—
> The dumb sea-levels thrilled to hear,
> And Lost Atlantis bore to her."

And what a marvel of expression and of picturesque presentation of the fates and fortunes of Englishmen is 'The Song of the Banjo!'

"His book 'Puck of Pook's Hill' has been lying on my

table for the last two or three months unread, but I happened to open it the other day and came upon a little poem so charming—such a Nineteenth Century version of Herrick—that it at once drew me to the reading of the whole, and the book is well worth reading. If it does not yet lie on your table, look at it the next time you go to your booksellers, and turn to page 123 and read the little poem, and then I am sure you will carry the volume home.

"I wish you would come to the celebration of the Longfellow Centennial which we are to have here two or three weeks hence. Longfellow deserves all that we can say in his praise; and this reminds me that one day a good many years ago Rudyard Kipling and I were talking together of the poets and agreeing that all of them, even the best, had written far too much, and that we would gladly, were it possible, diminish Shelley, for instance, by half, and Wordsworth by three-fourths, and so on, until at last Kipling said:

" 'Yes, but there is one poet of whom I will not give up a line.' I said, 'I have no idea who that can be,' and he replied, 'Why, Longfellow, of course.'

"For a moment this seemed strange but on reflection it was plain where the attraction lay.

"Affectionately yours,"

S. W. M. to C. E. Norton Philadelphia, Pa., 1907.

"Dear Norton,

"I have adopted your opinion that there is no such thing as owing a letter, and so I come to regard a letter as a gift, and to be acknowledged gratefully, not paid.

"My letters are commonly written in bits, sandwiched—

(alas for my spelling! I am like my son, Langdon, who says no fairy cast a spell over his cradle) sandwiched between my interviews with hysterical women and neurasthenic men. Alas! Here has just come and gone an epileptic tailor; my son, John, who sends him for consultation, says a 'misfit' would be valuable. Alas! It reminds me of a sign I saw in the Bowery and which I advised a legal friend to adopt, 'Suits pressed while owner waits.' Where then is the 'Laws' delay'—I wanted to say here 'apropos,' and paused for an English equivalent. What is there? 'In this relation?' Hardly. 'Apropos' has a certain ease and brevity which makes it often of use.

"However, I took your letter to Lindenshade and read to Horace the charming things you say of him. He is all Shakespeare, and it is unsafe to jest about any Shakespearian property. I used to mock him with invented quotations but found that it troubled him; I bait him now no more.

"The little book has come and, as I am in the house with a game leg, so soon as the morning work is over and I have lunched, I shall take a segar and smoke and talk with you and Macaulay, who in the flesh would have given us small chance.

"No, I have written no verse this summer; in fact, have amused myself with two or three stories and generally idled in the hills with a book in my pocket. But now I am lame for weeks, I fear. At Bar Harbor I sat in the air, with a world of beauty to comfort me; but in town I have only tasks and contrive to exist until the summer arouses my mind from its winter hibernation and I come to life again.

"Yours,

"Weir Mitchell."

S. W. M. to C. E. Norton

Bar Harbor, Maine, October 2, 1907.

"My dear Norton,

"I have been on the point of writing to you sometime; now and again the letter impulse becomes strong on a day of rain, and disappears when we have normal fall days and I can get five or ten miles of mountain tramping. But I hear that you have been ill and this troubles me, and I must write that you or someone give me news of you. I feel as did Holmes, that although there are many who love me, the friends who are men of distinction have come down to a small count of veterans. In fact, there are you and Henry Charles Lea and Horace Furness and William Doane—I had like to have left out a man very dear to me, Dr. John Billings. But this taking of the census of friends when one is old, or worse, *aged*, is a sorry business.

"I have had a lazy summer with no work done, except an address to nurses on graduation and two stories, with which I played the game of involving people in improbable situations ingeniously constructing modes of escape. I am ashamed to think of the novels I read and forget. If one could entirely forget them there would be economic value in the loss of many.

"Murray's translations of the *Electra* and, above all, of the *Trojan Women*, seem to me remarkable; the latter really disturbs one with its grim sense of a reality almost too pathetic and simple—all of it, so simple. No other high literature has got grip of me this summer, except Turner's last volume, which revived a daring controversy with him in regard to my medical views of the case of Lady Mac-

beth, who had acquired, *I* think, what is known to medicine as the mania of impurity.

"If you are using your pen, send me a reassuring word.

"Yours truly,"

Meanwhile, Dr. Osler had been spending five important years at Johns Hopkins, within easy dining distance of Philadelphia and the friendship with the Mitchells remained unbroken. It is true that the famous paper *"Aequanimitas"* annoyed the elder man, who, conscious of no remission of energy, was outraged by Osler's proposition that the elderly were quite without use to the modern world. "It's a lie!" he observed, "and I'm the proof . . . I told him so. . . ." he paused and then, meditatively,—"Yes, I'm sorry for Osler!" In August, 1905, when there came a letter from Baltimore announcing Osler's appointment as Regius Professor at Oxford, the response was prompt, warm and characteristic. Dr. Mitchell calls him "An American physician—yes, American!" and hopes he'll never come to say " 'raily' for really or 'Gawd' for God." He adds with a touch of sadness, "one by one the older men who shared with me the fates of war and the contests of Peace—have died"—and goes on to say how much this break depresses him. A farewell dinner followed in May, 1905, when Mitchell spoke with "appropriate, amusing and affectionate phrases" and thereafter the meetings were fewer although the letters continued. One contained news of a fresh honor for the Philadelphian which pleased him very much.

Wm. Osler to S. W. M. Oxford, Saturday, May 23, 1908.

"Dear Dr. Mitchell,

"I cabled you on Friday that you had been elected a Foreign Fellow of the Royal Society. I am delighted. Brunton suggested it two years ago but your name was not brought forward. Ferriar is on the council this year and with his support and Rose Bradford's you went through swimmingly. It was between you and Ehrlich, I believe There are only four or five Americans on the list—Agassiz, Geo. Hill, Michelson, Newcomb and Pickering. It will be most gratifying to all your friends, and is a most welcome recognition in this country of your great services to science.

"You will get, of course, official notification, but as the formal election has to be made by the Fellows at a meeting I added in my cable not to make any announcement before you hear. I was greatly pleased as at the last meeting a few weeks ago the general impression was that Ehrlich would have the nomination. Drop a line to Ferriar who has been most kind in the matter (Dr. David Ferriar, Cavendish Square, London.)

"With love to Mrs. Mitchell and Jack.

"Sincerely yours,"

"Upon my word," Dr. Mitchell writes in December, 1910, "what the deuce is happening to you in England? I don't like it. I want the House of Lords preserved, I want the old houses preserved and I want some of the old things guarded for the enjoyment of the American of this later day. As for your Mr. Asquith, it seems to me he has the characteristic political morals of a ward politician!"

Wm. Notman & Son, Ltd.

William Osler at 59

(Courtesy of The Oxford University Press)

This outbreak of the writer's literary and historical instinct, tinged with the conservatism which was deepening in his latter years, is an accurate reflection of the American point of view as to things English. It did not, however, extend to the bestowal of a Baronetcy on the Regius in 1911. Dr. Mitchell thinks "of less importance is it that you are a Bart. What is that to me, for whom you are long ago high in the peerage of friendship? Time has terribly dealt with that splendid peerage!"

A letter of the elder man's during this same year shows the loyal intimacy and gives the news of his resignation from his Trusteeship at the University. When one considers his eighty years and manifold activities, the wonder is he had kept the post so long.

Philadelphia, January 3, 1911.

"My dear Osler:

"I have been expecting to hear from you, but this is not a reminder of failure to reply, but a simple New Year greeting to a friend.

"As for news here, you may have heard or not that I have resigned my Trusteeship at the University, after thirty-five years' service. There is the usual constant hot water in the Faculty, and I believe this is the case wherever doctors are associated together in teaching positions. What causes it? . . .

"Reichert is doing another wonderful piece of work, on what he calls the 'starch crystals' that is to say, starch grains. I believe that Woodward, of the Carnegie, thinks it even more interesting than his work on the 'Blood crystals' which

he will take up again as soon as the present research is over.

"Getting out of the University relieves me from Committees. In fact, I have said to my wife, if I died, she must put over my grave 'commite'ed to the grave,' since it seems to me I do nothing else except attend committees.

"I suppose I have a thousand things to say to you, but they escape one in this process of dictation. I have finished a novel which has been on my desk more or less for three years. As usual there is a medical sketch, that of a paranoiac. Also I have been thinking of writing sermons, and I put forth my claim to a title 'Sermons from the Pew,' which is all I have done as yet. I think the pew has something to say to the pulpit, and apropos of this (why have we no English for apropos?) thank you for your sermon.

"There are many things more I would say, which must (as my Scotch ancestors would have said) bide a wee.

"Give my affectionate regards to Mrs. Osler, and rest assured that you have my best wishes for the year and the years to come. Some day I must make acquaintance with your boy. If you see Sir William Markley, say a kind word for me, and to any other Oxford friends.

"Yours very truly,"

XXI

"What is it?" said I.
"Oh, Xerxes has revenged himself. I was sure he would!"
Dr. North.

LITERARY and medical works continued without slackening during the first decade of the new century. A long and varied list of medical papers includes certain more important studies, such as "Muscular Factors Concerned in Ankle Clonus," 1902 and "Reversals of Habitual Motions," 1903 and 1904, as well as occasional addresses, shorter pieces and the re-editing with new data, of former publications. The literary catalogue contains verse and collections of verse, short stories, essays on historical matters and three separate compositions concerning Washington,—a poem, written in 1902 for February 22nd, but not actually published till 1907, "Washington in his Letters" an address in 1903 and "The Youth of Washington." The latter ran as a serial in the Century from April to October, 1904, and brought some unfavorable criticism upon the author for his use of an autobiographical form. Two long novels, "Constance Trescot" and "The Red City" made their appearance in 1905 and 1907. They were very popular; the serial price paid for "The Red City" was twelve thousand dollars the highest the author had so far received.

Both of these books sold approximately fifty thousand copies. "Constance Trescot," which Dr. Mitchell held al-

ways to be his best characterization, re-captured the mood and heightened the feeling of "In War Time." The theme is presented with an intensity his work as a whole lacks; the morbid revenge is told with due meed of nervous horror, and the heroine was a type none knew better than he.

Of "The Red City" he says:

"'The Red City,' like many of my novels, simmered in my head for some three or four years, and for it, slowly at intervals, I collected material. At first I called it 'René, Vicomte de Courval' but changed the title to 'The Red City.' In the first chapter, a French emigré, approaching Philadelaphia, observed its general color, for then it was almost entirely built of brick. Except Amsterdam, it is the only thoroughly red city known to me.

"I was tempted to use this period because of the material furnished by the French emigré and the savage party strife, as well as by the interest of the historical characters involved. It was made possible to me by a free use of the diary of Elizabeth Drinker, which covers this period and far more. This Quaker lady seems to have attracted many by her intelligence and education, and in her diary I found ample material, which I used with the freedom of a writer of fiction. The episode of Edmond Randolph's supposed treachery was difficult to deal with but enabled me to make out of it the quite romantic episode of what is known as Dispatch No. 10."

This story, (which with "Hugh Wynne" is still read by the historically-minded), begins with a liveliness which is not sustained. There is an accurate account of the yellow fever in Philadelphia, but it falls short of the horror with

which Charles Brockden Brown, in "Ormond," that forgotten masterpiece, describes the same epidemic. Like "Hugh Wynne," it was charmingly illustrated and with true Colonial feeling.

The above is only a selection from the mass of work which fills the note-books, catalogues and letters for these years. His mind was still fermenting with ideas, projects, suggestions. As Trustee of the Carnegie Institute from 1902, he keeps finding things which it would be well to accomplish and taking them on with the ease of youth. In 1904, a letter from Senator Hale speaks of Dr. Mitchell's work for an adequate memorial to Franklin. In 1906, Dr. Mitchell is writing to Dr. Thayer and others, to remark that for many years he had heard of no case of exopthalmic goitre in the negro! Joining a Committee of members of the Philadelphia Bar, he is interested in bringing on the body of James Wilson, for burial with due ceremony, in Christ Church-yard. At seventy-six, he tells Mrs. Lyman, "I detest all games except the game of life and I sometimes get tired of that." Sometimes——!

Various delightful letters came to him during these years. Two are from Henry James, whose literary distinction impressed Dr. Mitchell, despite the fact that he could not enjoy what the other wrote. He tried—he made the effort, just as he had earlier for Walt Whitman, of whom he wrote Stedman: "I immensely admire a good deal of Walt Whitman, but do not call it poetry." In 1901, Dr. Mitchell sought "The Sacred Fount" and, he says, "read most of it. It seemed to me to have the fascination and the annoyance of a cat's cradle (!)"

Yet he would not have been Dr. Weir had he not felt great curiosity toward the workings of that very special mind, and the movement of a receptive mechanism so intricate and delicate. Hence his invitations to Henry James, which bring these characteristic replies. Dr. Mitchell's bewilderment in front of this novel literary manner, as shown in his note to Dr. White, was the cause of concern to certain young friends, who made a valiant effort to overcome it. But the elder man had crystallized as regards literary standards, and neither could nor would admit of change. The exposition of Henry James here given in "Dan" Wister's brilliant letter, deserved to be more successful than it was and Barrett Wendell follows with a James' anecdote which is apropos.

Henry James to S. W. M.

Lamb House, Rye, Sussex, May 28, 1904.

"Dear Dr. Weir Mitchell,

"Kindly forgive this vulgar machinery, which I am reduced to being obliged, for the present, by a particular reason, rigorously to dictate—and which is a great improvement on my own bad hand! It is most kind of you to ask me—especially after all sorts of damnable lapses of acknowledgment, on my part, in respect to other kindnesses shown and beautiful volumes conferred—to pay you a visit at Bar Harbor. I am sorry to say, however, that when (and if!) I go to America it won't be till quite at the summer's end, and *will* be, alas, under the severe necessity of 'staying' with no one at all: with no one, that is, save my brother William, with whom I am absolutely committed to spend the few first weeks of my sojourn; going straight to him and sticking

as close as possible. I shall have to have a method for the madness of the U. S.; and I fear the 'non-staying' must be the very root of it. I have had to give that up here, completely, and have ceased, unamiably, barbarously, to be at all capable of it. But I shall see you at Philadelphia, and my pleasure in doing so will be great. I congratulate you meanwhile heartily on your youth, valour, and perpetual high accomplishment.

"Believe me, dear Dr. Weir Mitchell,

"Yours most truly."

From the Same to S. W. M.

New York City, December 30, 1904.

"Dear Dr. Mitchell:

"Don't take it ill of me that I resort, for expedition's sake, to this rude short-cut; being in a great press of engagements, violently thrown back upon it. I thank you kindly for your letter of the 23rd, and am particularly sorry to lose the prospect of seeing you in Philadelphia. The glimpse would have been most pleasant to me . . . but I console myself with the thought that it would have been *but* a glimpse. I am condemned, for the moment, to spend only that night, the 9th, there—through complications elsewhere that drag me on further. These I haven't even time now to attempt to make specious or convincing to you, and must trust to your imagination and general sympathy to do them justice. Meanwhile, I shall be very glad to receive the book you offer to send me, and shall do my best to capture the right hour for taking possession of it. Be indulgent, please, to my raw haste, and believe me constantly yours."

S. W. M. to Dr. J. William White

Bar Harbor, Maine, Sept. 23, 1905.

"My dear White:—

"Thank you for your second letter, this time of September 11th. I think you had pleasantly lost memory of having written to me before which is rather nice on the whole.

"I was very glad to hear news of Henry James and when he comes to write what my son John calls his 'depressions of America.' I shall be interested to see what he will say about his historic visits with you and me.

"I have read his last book with bewildered amazement. Since I played cat's cradle as a child, I have seen no tangle like it. To get the threads of his thought off his mind onto mine with the intermediation of his too exasperating style has been too much for me. A friend of mine says his 'Wings of a Dove' are unlike any dove she ever saw for it has neither head nor tail. However, I am too old to learn a new language and still struggle to write my own with clearness.

"My regards to Mrs. White and believe me

"Very truly yours,"

Owen Wister to S. W. M.

Court Inn, Camden, February 30th.

"My very dear Kinsman:

"Your account of, and accounting for, the collective ugliness of the assemblage at the Academy made me shout—and thank you for the whole of your kind letter. Henry James is in essence inscrutable; but one thing of him I

know: our language has no artist more serious or austere at this moment. I explain to myself his bewildering style thus: he is attempting the impossible with it—a certain very particular form of the impossible, namely, to produce upon the reader, as a painting produces upon the gazer, a number of superimposed, simultaneous impressions. He would like to put several sentences on top of each other so that you could read them all at once, and get all at once the various shadings and complexities, instead of getting them consecutively as the mechanical nature of his medium compels. This I am sure is the secret of his involved parenthesis, his strangely injected adverbs, the whole structure, in short, of his twisted syntax. One grows used to it by persisting. I read 'The Ambassadors' twice, and like it amazingly as a prodigy of skill. One other thing of signal importance is a key to his later books. He does not undertake to tell a story but to deal with a situation, a single situation. Beginning (in his scheme) at the center of this situation, he works outward, intricately and exhaustively, spinning his web around every part of the situation, every little necessary part no matter how slight, until he gradually presents to you the organic whole, worked out. You don't get the organic whole until he wishes you to and that is at the very end. But he never lets the situation go, never digresses for a single instant; and no matter how slow or long his pages may seem as you first read them, when you have at the end grasped the total thing, if you then look back you find that the voluminous texture is woven closely and that every touch bears upon the main issue. I don't say that if I could I would work like this, or that the situations he chooses to

weave into such verbal labryrinth are such as I should care to deal with so minutely and laboriously, even if I had the art to do so; but I do say that judged as only any works of art can ever be judged, viz: by *themselves*, by what they undertake to do and how thoroughly they do it, Henry James' later books are the work of a master. Langdon would agree with me absolutely if he knew the books I speak of. 'The Awkward Age,' 'The Wings of the Dove' and particularly 'The Ambassadors.' But he has not read them. I read aloud to him last year at the Hot Springs a shorter story, 'The Turn of the Screw,' which is a perfect example of all that I have said, and he would tell you that he thought it a masterpiece. It is an awful story, quite the most awful story I have ever read; but that is another issue, and touches the question of selection, and not at all the question of execution. I don't ask you to read the longer books I have named—you tried 'The Ambassadors' I remember; but if you want a concrete demonstration of the method and the perfected art that I have been speaking of, then by all means read 'The Turn of the Screw' some evening in your study, alone.

"To return for a moment to the inscrutable in Henry James, I don't understand at all the kindness and affection which he shows to many people, the warm-heartedness that I have seen in him myself for many years, and the detached coldness and cruelty in his attitude toward life and people which one feels in his books.

"Well, I must stop and go to bed.

"My best love to Cousin Mary,

"Your affectionate,

"Owen Wister."

Barrett Wendell to S. W. M.

Paris, February 17, 1905.

"Dear Dr. Mitchell,

"Your delightfully welcome letter, with its kind words about my Cambridge lecture, brighten this gray, sullen French morning. The one unwelcome feature of our Parisian winter has been the lack of sunshine. The two most puzzling facts in historical psychology to me are French gaiety and Venetian energy. They go dead against James' notion of 'milieu.'

"I need not try to express the pleasure which your greeting has brought me. Such friendly words are always stimulating; and when they come from one who really knows that whereof he reasons, they bring a deep encouragement, too. I must fall into French phrase: *merci bien, cher maître.*

"What you say of Henry James reminds me ironically of the last time I lunched with him in London, two years ago. It was at the Athenaeum, and as we went in together, he was in the midst of an unusually parenthetic experitus, of I forget what. This was interrupted by the porter, who looking only at his countenance presented him with a very large letter. James' interjection—'No! No! Not for me!' implied such deep repugnance that I could not help glaring at the rejected address—of which I made out only the first words. These were 'The Right Reverend The Lord Bishop of' something I could not discern. But you see the effect his shaving has produced on the trained eye of England?

"This French experience has been deeply interesting, and may prove more so during the months to come. For

after ending my lectures at the Sorbonne, I am to lecture at six provincial Universities—Lille, Caen, Bordeaux, Dijon, Lyons, and Grenoble. We will take till the end of June; we shall not come home until September. To everyone's surprise, lectures in English concerning America have proved very popular in Paris; I have already given twenty-four; and the smallest audience on the rainiest day has not been under four hundred.

"My wife joins me in every cordial message to you and to Mrs. Mitchell.

"Sincerely yours,

"Barrett Wendell."

On Washington's Birthday, 1905, Dr. Mitchell was chosen as spokesman to bestow the Honorary M.D. degree of the University of Pennsylvania on Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States. Now, as a matter-of-fact, he disliked Roosevelt as he did very few people in his world. The antagonism had its origin some time back when the physician desired a naval appointment for a young protégé and was a good deal surprised and outraged to be refused. Dr. Mitchell was not at all accustomed to being refused anything which he was convinced was right. His feeling shows when he writes in his diary:

"I like some people I do not respect, and respect some people I very much dislike; as for example, Mr. Roosevelt.

"10/15/01—I would like to get disagreeably even with R. It is not revenge one wants but the opportunity. Then to give it up is easy. That is the worst of getting your face

slapped when time leaves you so small a margin for retributive justice."

Nor is he much placated by a later letter.

"10/23/01. Letter from Roosevelt re-stating his views. The real questions is whether a dead man's wish should continue to act. R's act is honest but unfair, discourteous to me and showed a want of sentiment."

On another occasion, Dr. Mitchell, characteristically energetic, bestirs himself in a plan to return the Mexican flags to their own country, to which Mr. Roosevelt objects and is decidedly blunt in saying so. Matters were hardly improved by this incident and the feeling persisted. Even a request from Mr. Roosevelt in 1903 for Dr. Mitchell's autograph did not placate him, and as late as November 7, 1912, he openly rejoiced, in a letter to Osler, over the defeat of T. R. "whom I dislike personally, politically and every other way!"

Friends were familiar with this attitude, yet Dr. Mitchell's position at the University made it incumbent upon him to introduce the recipients of the Honorary Degrees. Any excuse or non-appearance on his part would have been impossible and might well have been construed as an unpardonable discourtesy. The recipients, moreover, included such diverse personages as Senator Knox, Professor Woodward, Mr. Watson, Rear-Admiral Clark, Sir Mortimer Durand and the German Emperor, each of whom must be introduced in a brief speech. When it came to the President, the last of the candidates,—certain persons among the audience felt curiosity and excitement as to what Dr. Weir was

going to say. Tall, magnificent, gracious, in those sweeping robes which always seemed his fitting wear, he spoke a few words—variously reported—but in substance these:

"Theodore Roosevelt—

"On the 4th of July, 1783, the University of Pennsylvania conferred the Degree of Doctor of Laws upon the *first* President of the United States. The Trustees of the same University do now, after one hundred and twenty-two years, request the Provost to honor with the same degree *you*—our latest President. Comment is needless."

A roar of applause swept out in response and he waited, standing before it—a beneficent Pan, smiling a little. . . .

XXII

"A more commercially-minded man would very early have presented to himself the embarrassments which arose out of this calamity——"

In War Time.

ANOTHER honorary Degree (LL.D. Princeton) was bestowed on Dr. Mitchell in 1906, but there was little else about that year that he cared to look back upon. Midsummer brought a painful and embarrassing experience, which caused him to make a rueful revision of his boast about physicians becoming directors of financial institutions. He found, as many a busy man has found, that he could not do everything and yet be sure of the result. The year was one of strain in business and in August a large Trust Company of which Dr. Mitchell was director, failed, with all the usual tragic and menacing accompaniments.

He was at Bar Harbor when the telegrams reached him and at first the misfortune seemed complete. "Disaster has overwhelmed us," were the words of a co-director. Like all men whose capital is chiefly their own ability, Dr. Mitchell tended to over-confidence, to over-optimism, although he had never been anything but courageous. The blow roused him to put forth all his strength and those who thought him inclined to avoid the disagreeable or to slide away from the unpleasant, saw no such inclination at this crisis. He met the trial with courage, patience and power, unhesitatingly accepted his full share of responsibility by pledging practi-

cally his entire fortune and was astonished by nothing in the affair save the loyalty of his friends.

Of this we hear in family letters and in others to Charles Eliot Norton and to J. William White. His brother-in-law, John C. Cadwalader cabled, offering unlimited aid. His wife and children heard of the misfortune with serenity and assurances of affection. No wonder he could write to his brother-in-law: "I lose a good deal, but it is not ruin and there are things I do not lose and some things I have gained."

A letter to Gilder regarding forthcoming work for the *Century* shows his hopeful spirit:

January 1907.

". . . In fact all the money I can get is a convenience. I may say to you, however, that at the end of this year, I shall probably be in a position to feel less the embarrassments which have made friendship seem to me so real a thing. . . ."

In another note to his son Langdon he comments on the way his "side career," fiction, stood by him at need.

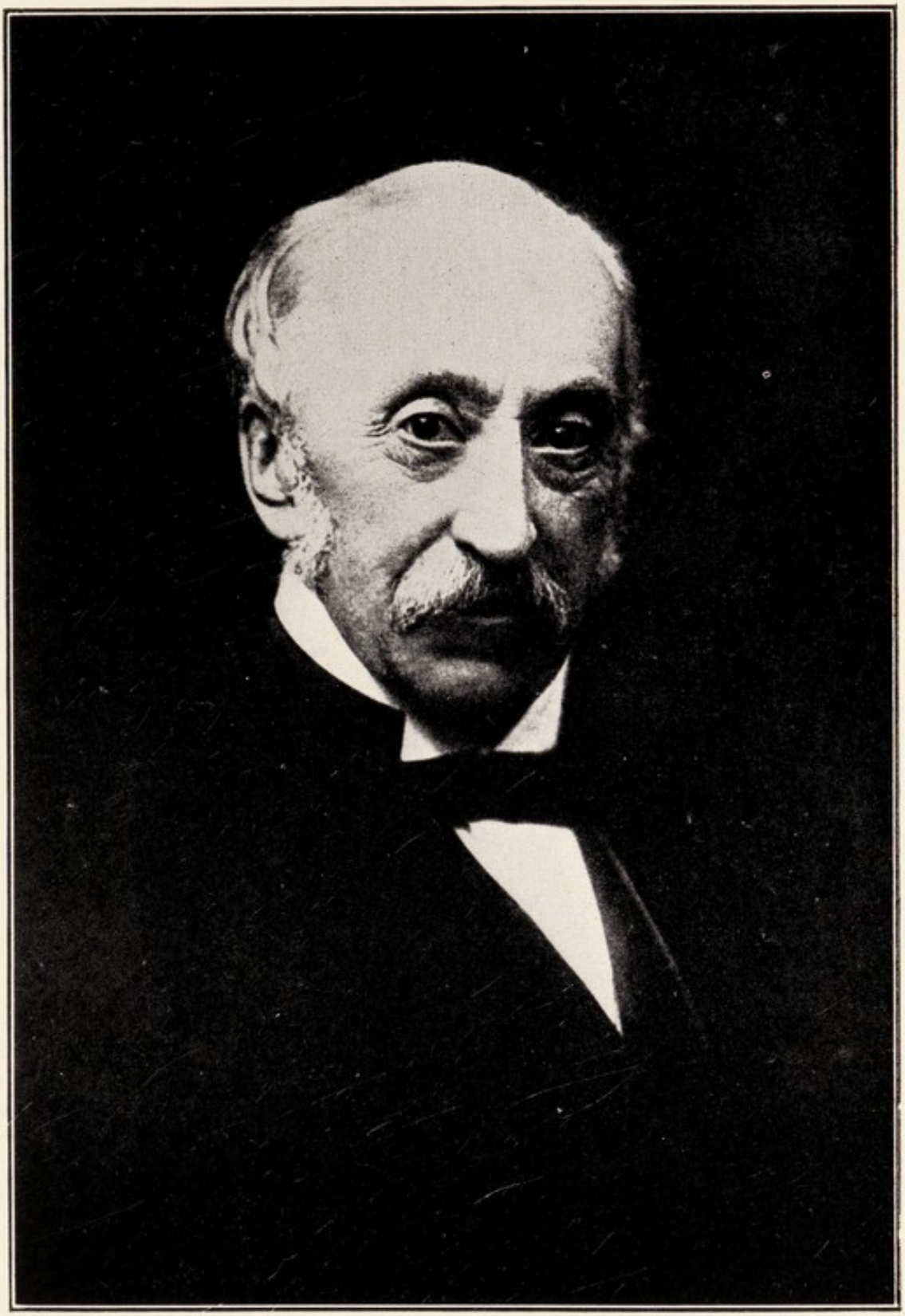
S. W. M. to Charles Eliot Norton

Rockingham Hotel, Portsmouth, N. H.,
October 12, 1906.

"My dear Norton:

"We are here for a few days, as Mrs. Mitchell wished to see some of the interesting old houses.

"Returning from a fruitless ride to Kittery Point in search of Howells, I find your very kind letter. As a friend (and I grieve a little for the years when I could not yet claim that relation), I may say to you that I am by no means



Charles Eliot Norton

(Courtesy of The Harvard Graduates' Magazine)

ruined and that there is every prospect of still better things. I like to say too that when the bank failed, the directors, of whom I am one, did the unusual thing of personally paying the more recent and poorer depositors at once and practically giving a very large sum to rehabilitate the Company. As directors, we, of course, were pleasingly dealt with by the papers, but when we so pledged ourselves with small hope of return, we were suddenly described as financial angels. I assure you the wings were costly. In fact, there was no legal responsibility, and our action was simply in obedience to a code of honor, rare under like circumstances. When at first a heavy loss was generally taken to be ruin, I experienced what is worth winning at almost any price. One man wrote that he was glad at least of a chance to show me his affection in material form and that literally he was prepared to ask me to accept half of a large estate. A woman came a long way to say, 'Whatever sum you require for whatever period you need to see you through, is yours. I mean,' she said, 'not a little but a great deal.' I had five other offers of loans. It is a coarse test of friendship, or is it? How often it fails! As dear to me are letters like yours, and I have had many, so that I have been ingeniously questioning myself to know how I have come to win so much affection from so many people. Certainly the bread comes back on the water very big loaves indeed. I have written you with frankness because of my great regard for you.

"Very surely yours,"

S. W. M. to Dr. White. Philadelphia, Pa., October 24, 1906.
"My dear White,

"Thank you for your remembering letter of October 12th. The Trust is on its legs once more and will in time reward the care given its crippled state. When you damn the over-pious——, you have to consider too a man in all outward seeming as to observance, etc. who all through this matter has set an example of scrupulous self-sacrificing honor. . . . In converse—I grieve to hear of you as being less well, but indeed any grave operation takes a year for entire recovery and I envy you Egypt.

"My summer presented me with a gall stone and relieved me of some sixteen pounds, now coming back, mysteriously returned by conscience-stricken nature and no questions asked. Then a dear friend was killed and on top of all, while I was of the colour of a bad lemon and could have quoted Beppo—this damn Trust must go and bust.

"Generally, everyone is dead. The library board lost in eighteen months Judge Hare, Wister, David Pepper, Bispham and Yarnall. I don't mind death, but I am like that duchess of Guise who didn't mind death but couldn't stand pinching. I fear pain. My regards to Mrs. White and let me hear of you as better,

"Yours,"

Situations met in this spirit often turn out better than is feared and by the end of the year he was able to write Norton more cheerfully:

". . . As to money losses, they disturbed me little and are likely to come out better than was to be expected. Altogether, my epitaph on 1906 will not give him a good character. I am thankful that it has all left me health and competence for work, of which there is abundance. I see sick folk, avoid public engagements, dinners which I dislike, and at night play piquet with Mrs. M., read an hour, any novels except Henry James's. I am at rare times altering a book, now in galley sheets for such study. I wrote it amid illness and disaster last summer. It is a novel of the date of 1792 to 1796, Washington's second term of office, and will appear in the *Century* next autumn.

"I have sent you a melancholy screed, but really I am not as sad as my letter. Let me end, as does Harvey's letter prettily, *Vale, mi sic amantissime*

"Tuus ex anima,"

"December 20, 1906."

The above shows that about this time, the writer was beginning to slacken public engagements and remit some of the heavier civic burdens he had borne. This at seventy-seven, it was time to do. Yet in the April of that year he had helped to organize a celebration of Franklin's Two Hundredth Birthday—where he had read a poem and for which occasion Mr. Root came up from Washington to be his house-guest. The two men were in no sense strangers; they had met, talked and corresponded for several years. Dr. Weir sent Mr. Root a letter from Noguchi regarding further discoveries in snake-poisons and had received from Washington a note of thanks about "the antidote for rattle-

snake venom. It occurs to me that a supply might be useful in American politics!" added Mr. Root, with characteristic irony. The following "bread and butter" letter followed the Franklin celebration.

Elihu Root to Mrs. S. W. Mitchell

Department of State, Washington, August 29, 1906.

"Dear Mrs. Mitchell,

"You already know that I reached home or rather my present place of confinement, in safety after my visit in Philadelphia.

"You do not know, however, the real pleasure I had in the visit or the kindly and grateful feeling with which I look back at the hospitality of the Doctor and yourself.

"It was a veritable oasis in the political desert through which I pursue my daily task. In the desert congressional cacti are always sticking their thorns into my legs and foreign serpents hissing in my path and lost Americans demanding that water be drawn from rocks; but with you everyone was interested in such delightful things and so sane and kindly.

"I never before realized how wise Franklin was when he had a chance to choose a birthplace for himself.

"There are, I suppose, inflexible and disagreeable characters not much affected by their surroundings.

"Thank heaven I am not one of them and that my surroundings have included 1524 Walnut Street.

"With kind regards to Doctor Mitchell, I am, dear Mrs. Mitchell, always,

"Faithfully yours,

(Signed) "ELIHU ROOT."

Each year or so now was bringing its honorary degree and in 1907 the University of Toronto bestowed an **LL.D.** This was in all ways a pleasanter year than its predecessor. Dr. Mitchell's novel "The Red City" brought him the largest sum his pen had yet earned in serial rights. He also brought out a collection of fugitive verses, which if less financially successful, continued to win him golden opinions and new correspondents. An amusing exchange of letters with Mr. Bok of the *Ladies' Home Journal*, belongs to this year and gives a touch of Dr. Mitchell's quality. It is through such little incidents that we get our best view of him as he lived, and certainly the "vinous emasculation" of life as well as literature would never have been contemplated by him with patience.

Ed. W. Bok to S. W. M. The Ladies' Home Journal,
Philadelphia, September 3, 1907.

"Dear Doctor Mitchell,

"I am enclosing herewith a proof of the first installment of 'A Christmas Venture' for your reading, and beg to call your particular attention to the drinking references. Of course, I know that our wish to omit these will make you smile, and perhaps seem inconsequential to you. At the same time, it is absolutely necessary that there should be no mention of drinking in our magazine, and you would know from your experience with the madeira article that you are not an exception to that rule.

"I have tried to point a way out to you in each reference, but, of course, my way out is simply suggestive.

"May we have these proofs back as early as possible?—

and believe me, with the hope that you have had a pleasant summer,

"Very sincerely yours,
"EDWARD BOK."

Bar Harbor, Maine, Sept. 5, 1907.

"My dear Bok,

"I return proof with some minor corrections. I accept the consequences of the sale of my story—but I will not personally sin against my own beliefs and habits nor will I violate my sense of literary fitness—cut out as it seems best to you. It will quite ruin the final scene.

"Why, when you first read the story did you not tell me of this limitation—and if drinking is *never* to be *mentioned*, not even a temperance essay is possible! You could not have printed 'Hugh Wynne' and yet I have had letters telling me of lives saved from drunkenness by the earlier scenes of that book.

"When you send me the other proof vinously emasculated, let me have the manuscript, because when we make of it a little book I shall want to replace these vinous allusions to the ways of another day.

"Yours very truly,
"WEIR MITCHELL."

About this time there fell into Dr. Mitchell's hands a small book of verse by which he was greatly struck. The name of the author, Major Ronald Ross, was, of course, familiar to him as that of the brilliant scientist whose investigations in the malaria districts of India had resulted in the

discovery of the disease-bearing mosquito. Since the beginning of the century, Dr. Ross—now Sir Ronald, had returned to England where he first became Lecturer on Tropical Diseases, Liverpool, then was lecturing at King's College, London, and finally Director of the Ross Institute and Hospital for Tropical Diseases and the winner of the Nobel prize for 1902.

That Dr. Mitchell should have been impressed by the work of this brother-poet and physician is not strange, for apart from the directness and excellence of his verse, there is a strong parallel between these two personalities. The "Memoirs" of Ross is an extraordinary book, as self-confident, as forcible and as poetical as Mitchell's might have been. The writer says of himself at seventeen: "I had formed for myself a definite though audacious programme—that I should seek every possible experience and try my hand at every possible art . . . but should not attempt to form conclusions or publish results until I was at least forty years old." This reminds us of Bacon's: "I have taken all knowledge to be my province;" the remarkable thing is not the project, but rather the degree of its fulfilment. Not only did Dr. Ross reach a high point in bacteriology and medical research through his achievements regarding malaria; but to a lesser degree, he seems to have fulfilled all the other numbers on his programme. He won honors in higher mathematics; published a number of novels, short dramas and verse; in musical composition attained the point where certain of his pieces won a public hearing and did even better than this in sculpture and painting! In fact, he seemed to have expressed as an ideal the wish to learn "Something of everything and

everything of something," which was the witty motto of a contemporary. In his Indian life, he was soldier and administrator and his book testifies on every page to the vigor of his personality. Ross' verse has simplicity and ardor and such stanzas as this cannot be lost:

"For in this desert soil,
A blessing comes unsought—
Space for a single toil,
Time for a single thought."

The quotation from Dr. Mitchell's review of "In Exile" shows how he valued it and is followed by their letters. In these it will be noted that both discuss poetry more ardently than science.

"In Exile" by R. R. 1906, Privately Printed. I am at liberty to say that the author is Ronald Ross. It is a sad account of labor in the terrible heats of India when the sweat from his forehead rusted the screws of his microscope. . . . The following verses were written on the day when he found the zygotes and the final key which makes it possible to lock the Pandora box of malarial maladies.

This day relenting God
Hath placed within my hand
A wondrous thing; and God
Be praised. At his command

Seeking His secret deeds
With tears and toiling breath,
I find thy cunning seeds,
O million-murdering Death!

I know this little thing
A myriad men will save.
O death, where is thy sting?
Thy victory, O grave?

Before thy feet, I fall,
Lord, who made high my fate;
For in the mighty small
Is shown the mighty great.

(Jour. Amer. Med. Asso. Sept. 7th, 1907, S. Weir Mitchell).

Ronald Ross to S. W. M.

The Incorporated Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.
May 17, 1907.

"My dear Colleague,

"I received your very kind present of the *Selections* when I was away fishing in Scotland, and since my return have suffered the usual penalty of holidays in being too busy to do anything agreeable. I had determined not to write and thank you until I had read the book thoroughly; but this I have not yet been able to do; so that I feel I must not delay an acknowledgment any longer. I already possessed a copy of the previous selections of which I admire every piece. I think I like best (if you will allow me to choose) the Lycian Tomb (which I saw last year in Constantinople) the Sea Gull, Evening, and Guidarello. The first especially contains many perfect verses. Personally, I wish that every man of consequence would follow your example and give us his thoughts in verse! You might say the Public would complain; but after all it is not worth while writing good matter, outside of science, in mere prose! I am making a collection

of modern poets in consequence—including the innumerable submerged; and find they give great satisfaction, although critics deride. In this collection your two books hold a highly honored place; and I shall shortly be able to do them justice. I shall probably be going to Mauritius and then to Panama, and always take my poets on voyages for company! Please in return accept some more things by me, including a number of verses I wrote when doing my Malaria researches in India. Owing to the cutting out of many incompetent stanzas, the remaining ones have a certain air of melancholy which I did not at all intend to give them, and which please excuse. Although I have been guilty of novels, I have never, like you, been fortunate enough to make them pay. With many compliments, believe me,

"Very sincerely yours,

"Ronald Ross."

S. W. M. to Ronald Ross Philadelphia, May 27, 1907.

"My dear Major,

"I think I should rather write Doctor——

"I have so long a letter to write to you that I prefer the pen of another to my own less readable script.

"Last night about eleven o'clock I fell on to your lecture and read it straight through into the small hours of the night. Surely, a wonderful story! Of course it was well known to me as a whole, but I found the detail most interesting; the personal element agreeably present and altogether it seemed to me to have the air of adventure into the Fairyland of Science. Your discovery had the delightful peculiarity of being at once therapeutic in the best sense and I read

between your lines the joy which is felt by a man when he comes face to face with the secrets of the Almighty maker.

"I thank you too and warmly for the little book of verses. I could say a great deal about it because it is a very unusual book. There are verses in it which are really brilliant; there are verses three or four together which say things better than anybody else has said them, and then I think there have been intervening times when either what you wanted to say was not clear to you, or that you were using an unfamiliar form of expression. It would be really worth while to take this little book and spend two months over it, cut out a good deal and pull it together, and leave a thing for which the profession should be as proud as we are of your scientific work. There are three or four verses at the close along which you had written a line as to the discovery of the Zygotes and this makes my book a book forever precious to me. I was asked by a distinguished clergyman to whom I showed the verses if he might have a copy of them. I said I would ask you whether I was at liberty to copy or give away these special lines which so pleased him and me.

"I send you a little book of memorials of William Harvey which I think will give you great pleasure.

"I am with much esteem,

"Very truly yours,"

"P.S. Come over to see us. My country home at Bar Harbor would be glad of you. I forgot you had had the Nobel Prize—they were right this time. W. M."

Ronald Ross to S. W. M. April 29, 1910.

"My dear Dr. Weir Mitchell.

"Very many thanks for your book of poems. I would have written before, but have been so busy with writing my book on the Prevention of Malaria that I have not had time to read them. I have now only read casually through them. Your preface is most amusing, and I was delighted to see again your beautiful poem on that urn at Constantinople. Every one of the verses shows excellent workmanship such as we expect from you. I like the lines to Dr. Jacobi particularly. You should give us some medical verses—only about medical subjects. Then every doctor would buy a copy. If you do not, I will, when my dreadful book on the prevention of malaria is finished.

"You ask me for some specimens or drawings of the mosquito. I will gladly send them to you if you will kindly excuse some delay. I have no time for anything until the end of the book is reached. Please accept my warm compliments. We see very little of Osler here. I am trying to persuade him to take to a flying machine.

"Hoping to write again to you in about a couple of months, believe me

"Yours sincerely,"

"P.S. John Murray is bringing out my book of verses called 'Philosophies.' Please excuse a typed and hurried letter—which is only an excuse for not writing more."

Dr. Mitchell's office at 1524 Walnut Street

XXIII

"Incredibly delightful," said Mrs. Vincent,
"Here is the mail—I must see my letters!"
Dr. North.

IT is difficult to choose from the rich harvest of Dr. Mitchell's own letters and those received by him during these last years, yet certain correspondents deserve more than passing mention. The exchange with Mr. Andrew Carnegie, for instance, gives an amusing presentment of both men—Mitchell so affable and interested, and the hard jocosity of the generous iron-master. That the millionaire should have been converted to simplified spelling seems at one with the other aspects of his remarkable personality.

Andrew Carnegie to S. W. M. New York, January 14, 1908.
"Dear Friend,

"If you have any spare time at your command, will you kindly give me an answer to this question:—

"If you had say five or ten millions of dollars to put to the best use possible, what would you do with it?

"Prize given for the best answer.

"Always very truly yours,

"I always admired the Doctor of the body more than his 'brother Doctor of the soul.' If many of them die without leaving means for wife and daughters why couldn't they be pensioned, as Professors are now by the 'Foundation for

Teaching'?; of course each case would have to be judged upon its merits.

"A. C.

"You are suspected of absent-mindedly putting dinner cards into your pocket at the dinner here, many missing, we are having duplicates made for the losers—so all right—don't trouble. Keep those you have and we'll not expose you."

S. W. M. to Carnegie Philadelphia, Pa., January 16th.

"Dear Carnegie:

"These cards accumulated in front of Collyer and when he left them I of course fell heir.

"Answer——

"You ask if I had five or ten millions what I would do with it?

"Is it a personal answer you want—a serious one?

"I should realize the vain dream of my life—hospital wards and rooms for my 'Rest Treatment' for the poor—a means to bridge over the time of people leaving the hospital and not yet able to work.* Two millions would be enough for me. The rest would go to increase incomes of college teachers—say in the five great Eastern Universities. This is my serious personal reply.

"My critic on a proposed gift to pauperize my profession? I dictate: My advice is that which Punch gave the young man about to marry—'Don't.'

* Such a convalescent hospital was later given and endowed, not by Mr. Carnegie but by Mr. and Mrs. Dunwoody, patients of Dr. Weir, and Dr. John Mitchell. It is called The Dunwoody Home, at Newtown Square, Pa.

"In fact, my dear king of givers, you are not to be trusted with money. Yes, you ought to be made a trust, with two or three of us to run the concern.

"Yours sincerely,"

Andrew Carnegie to S. W. M. New York, March 16, 1909.

"My dear Friend,

"Delighted to hear that you have finisht the bilding, which you have so much at hart. You are a very expensive luxury, but you are worth it.

"It seems a long time, however, since we had the pleasure of meeting you. Somehow or other we miss. I wonder whose fault it is.

"You are not too old yet to pay us a visit at Skibo and until you see us there at home, you do not know one-tenth part of our attractions, not to say virtues.

"Always very truly yours."

A. Carnegie to S. W. M. New York, October 3, 1909.

"My dear Friend:

"I take it you would rather have me for the tenth, going over on morning train, arriving at your house in time to attend the two o'clock ceremonies, also the evening Banquet, altho I should like to hear your address next day, I could hardly remain over that night. Maybe Billings and I could return Wednesday eve before the Banquet.

"Billings I saw this morning and we'll go over together Wednesday morning, going direct to your house in time for lunch and going with the household party to the bildings.

"It will be a rare pleasure for us to be under the roof of the First Citizen and First Citizeness I assure you.

"Tho not much together still can truly say you come up often in my thots and always in saintly venerable garb, Philosopher, and saint judiciously mixt, forming a rare blend.

"My cordial greetings to your dear wife,

"Always yours."

A. Carnegie to S. W. M. New York, November 17, 1909.

"My dear Friend,

"Thanks for the 'Centuries' sent me. I have red your article and find it most interesting. I establisht the Hero Fund off my own bat, having herd of a serious mine accident which occurred at Pittsburgh, in which the former superintendent hearing of it, traveld over twenty miles to reach it. Altho not then in the service of the company, he volunteerd to descend to rescue the entombd. This was accomplisht, but unfortunately he lost his own life. A similar disaster happened near Dunfermline, my native town, in which several men showd great heroism.

"I am very sorry that I have torn up this morning the comments of at least twenty newspapers on the recent distribution of hero medals or money to be applied in instalments for the support of widows and the education of the children of heroes. The editorial comments of the newspapers are more and more enthusiastic each year. At first there were some who were disposed to ridicule, but now they are converted.

"I think you should keep one copy of the 'Century,' be-

cause those who come after you will find it precious. You are one of those whose soul is to go marching on after the body rests. I am therefore returning you one copy, which please preserve with your numerous treasures.

"Always very truly yours,"

"My greetings to our hostess. Enjoyed my visit to you greatly. Off tomorrow for Norfolk to join President. A. C."

S. W. M. to Carnegie. Philadelphia, Pa., November 22, 1909.

"My dear Carnegie.

"I think you would be lavishly grateful to me if you knew how many people I have kept from writing to you or calling upon you. No week passes that I have not stood resolutely between you and some clamorous claimant of endowment. Occasionally there is something to which I have to yield, but when I distinctly feel and believe it to be a good thing, I shall have no hesitation in saying so to you.

"Two things appeal to me very warmly, and ought, I think appeal to you, because we are both rather sentimental young fellows and sometimes are apt to come to the same conclusions.

"You will have an appeal made to you on account of Christ Church, Philadelphia. This is a sort of little Westminster Abbey for Americans, with its half-dozen signers of the Declaration buried in and around it, and with countless memories of Washington, Franklin, and Wilson. What they will ask of you is, I fancy, a very small affair. It is not as a church I address you at all in regard to this, but as a national monument, in a good deal of peril from the neighborhood of surrounding combustible buildings. I feel

very warmly about it myself, and if I were able would do something far beyond what I feel myself able to do.

"Yours truly,"

A. Carnegie to S. W. M.

Skibo Castle, Dornoch, Sutherland, June 21, 1910.

"My dear Friend,

"What you have done for the Carnegie Institution ensures that you may expect me, upon any and all occasions both in this world and in any other that I may have to figure in, to do my very best for you. I shall urge that every sin you ever committed be forgiven; no questions askt—pass right in. The literary treasures you have been getting your compeers to authorize are no doubt remarkable performances. I have enjoyed many a laugh at the idea of a Chaucer Dictionary. I who believe in Simplified Spelling cannot understand what on earth we want with anything in the old form. In regard to the 'Arthuriad,' I have a crank friend in Yates Thompson of London, who is wild on such things. He bought the celebrated Ashburton curios and is not happy without something very old turning up. He volunteered to say to me the other day that all collectors owed a det of gratitude to the Carnegie Institution for this new work. I told him it was all owing to a fellow crank author and doctor in Philadelphia. When I mentioned your name, he knew about your writings, and if you two meet I am sure you will shake each other cordially by the hand. I shall stand by and smile.

"Wish you would come over to Skibo. Surely you could stand the journey.

"Pray remember me to your dear wife, and believe me,
"Always your devoted and indeted friend forever,
"Don't you resign until you can't help it, and then don't.
"A. C."

Space is not adequate to include in these pages the long and intimate family letters which Dr. Mitchell delighted to send and to receive, nor the budgets contributed regularly by certain friends and colleagues. One or two to Miss Louisa Minot should not be forgotten.

Philadelphia, Pa., May 5, 1910.

"My dear Miss Louisa:

"I am looking forward with eager anticipation to getting away from the city and into the woods. Every green thing I see lures me, and in the city at this season the dust is intolerably death laden and I long to get away from it. If I had been in the country, I should have long ago shaken off the consequences of my influenza.

"I have been an unusually busy man this winter. Just now, when my son John is absent as Vice-President of the American Neurological Association, I am still more a captive to work. Moreover, I do not complain. If labor was a curse to Adam, I have no doubt that before he died, he grew to like it, and with me it has become a necessity.

"I have been reading with great interest a little in the Life and Works of Robert Burns, and I am astonished at the intellect of the man apart from his wonderful fertility of product.

"The tempting edition of the 'Arthuriad' printed by the

Carnegie in old French is too hard work for a man who desires to lose himself in what he is reading. That is now my trouble with the Latin poets. One must have immense familiarity with the language to enjoy its poetry.

"I had a curious incident the night before last. I was asked by my brother's regiment, the Sixth Pennsylvania Cavalry, to come to one of their monthly meetings, far away up town in an obscure hall. I found about one hundred grey-headed men, who made me very welcome. We discussed the placing of Lee's statue in the Hall of Fame in Washington. I think they were little satisfied with my conclusions, which were that having invited the States to place there their greatest men, we could not quarrel with them for choosing Robert Lee. My own feeling would be, if they had elected to put him in United States uniform it would have been an insult; but as he was to be put there, Confederate uniform was that which he ought to wear, not that which he deserted. I said, however, these questions had become happily academic. There was a little doubt in my mind whether the word carried any meaning for these veterans. They understood me, however, when I said finally that I thought it was time that 'the dog on top quit barking.' They ended by making me honorary member of the regiment and relating stories of my brother's gallantry and bits about the war which seemed as if they were telling tales of something which had happened yesterday. Well, it was a very gallant yesterday, and I am glad to have lived in and through it.

"Yours very truly,

"WEIR MITCHELL."

Philadelphia, Pa., November 6, 1911.

"Dear Miss Minot:

"I am in my usual condition after I get home, of a couple of weeks of more or less depression. I used to think this was due to a return to the horrid conditions of city life, but I know it is not that, because the same thing attends my change to 'wood life' in the summer. It is something which psychologically I have never been able to understand, but it has grown upon me as the years pass along, with a certain over-sensitiveness about everything that concerns the welfare, health and prosperity, of my own people and my friends.

"Yours truly,"

Philadelphia, January 23, 1912.

"Dear Miss Louisa:

"There is nothing new here. Horace Furness is to read 'Henry V' for the benefit of the Church Home for what I call 'endless children.' My wife, I believe, calls them friendless. I fear that he is not very well. To be left alone as I am being in what I called the 'arctic loneliness of life' is not desirable.

"I am to lecture on Washington, before the Johns Hopkins intellect, on the 22nd of February. Johns Hopkins has destroyed the charm of Baltimore. The terrapins used to wallow on the front door steps, canvas back ducks to fly down at call in the back yards, and the madeira to flow like the springs of the Promised Land. The young people did know madeira from cider, and the women were beautiful and the men delightfully ignorant, and there was no in-

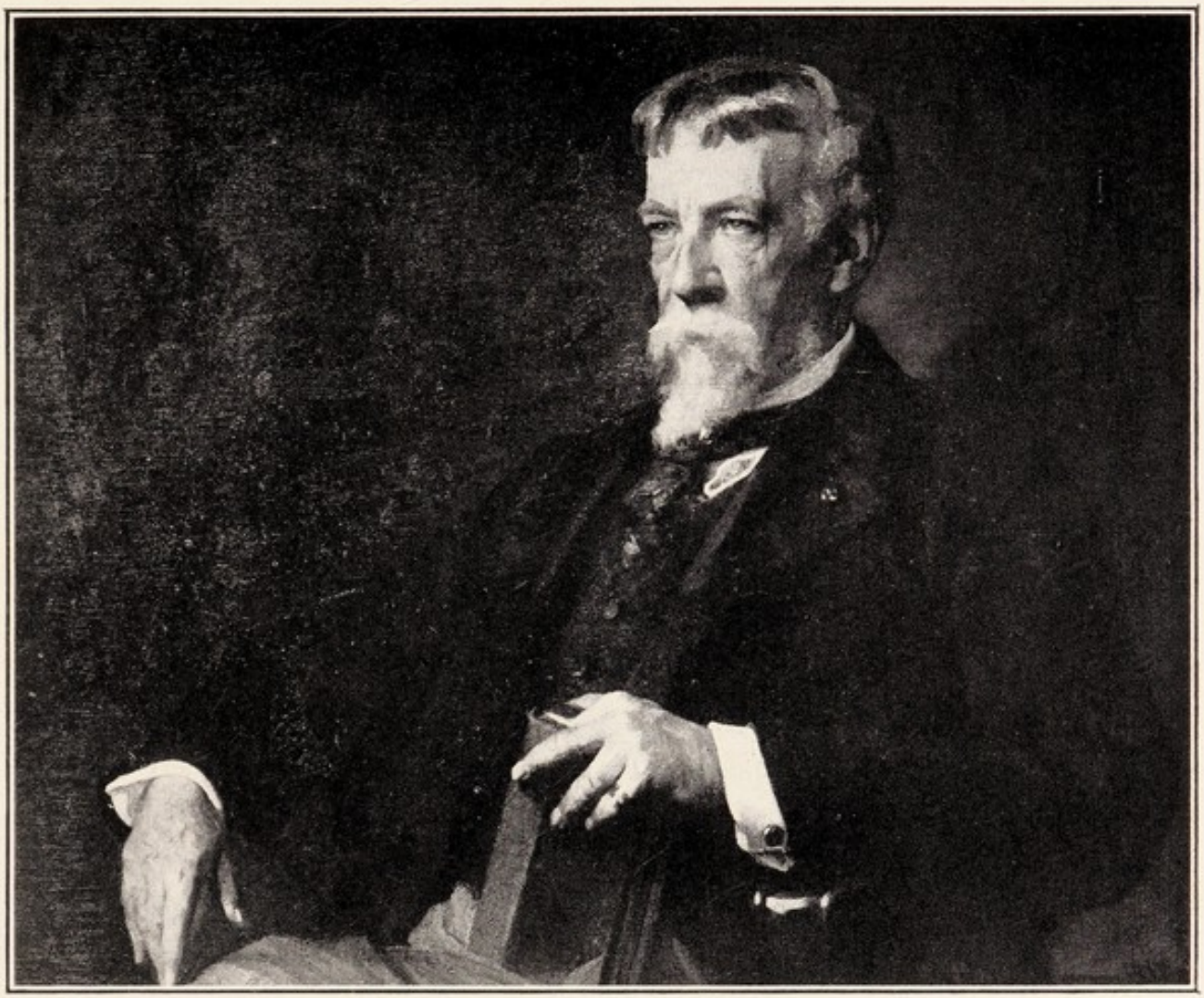
tellect in Baltimore, but the charm of a highly refined society. This is a beautiful piece of poetic exaggeration, and shows the dampening effects of intellect and what is called culture.

"Yours very truly,"

Mention of one of his old friends and correspondents Dr. Horace Howard Furness, makes needful a word of commentary. His grandson has drawn so true and adequate a portrait of Dr. Furness that it requires no addition other than our desire to recall the figure of a gentle, vanished scholar. That sturdy shape, with the round, strong face and white hair, dressed with old-fashioned particularity, wearing buckled shoes and carrying the green bag which contained a silver ear-trumpet, was well-known to Philadelphians as it crossed Washington Square.

Of an exquisite affability and with all the graciousness of the old school, his rhythm was slower than the physician's and he had the reserve of that New England from which he came. His sense of humor being keener, he had a stronger appreciation of the "vanitas vanitatum"—which often attends the worldly rewards of intellectual achievement. An almost complete deafness rendered Dr. Furness somewhat less gregarious; much of his life was spent in retirement in his home, "Lindenshade," at Wallingford, near Philadelphia, where his tranquil days passed in the deep satisfactions of scholarship.

These two men, Mitchell and Furness, differed widely in temperament but were united in affection and in the give and take of real friendship. Dr. Furness, as we know,



The Vonnoh portrait of Dr. Mitchell now in the College of Physicians, Philadelphia

delighted to trip his agile, but innocent comrade, and when he succeeds, records the fact with glee. Thus in 1897, he tells his sister how he had written out the plot of the *Winter's Tale* as a medical case and despatched it to Dr. Mitchell, telling him that they both knew the parties concerned. He was amused and delighted when Mitchell answered, "The sad case of which you write is by no means unique" and gave a parallel from his office files; while Dr. Horatio Wood who had received the same enquiry, "asked confidentially for the names of my friends!"

"Would you not think that Weir and Wood had mother-wit enough to recognize Leontes?" asks the Shaksperean.

Again Dr. Furness writes his "Dearest Weir, in hot haste lest you should join the band of innocents who write about 'Hamlet.' If my brother were lying *in articulo mortis* and I were told his life could be saved by writing an essay on Hamlet, I would immediately exclaim, Let him die! Let him die!" *

Dr. Furness valued his friend, yet did not ignore his foibles. "I saw W. M. at the Library Dinner," he writes in 1897. "He was insatiable for praise of 'Hugh Wynne'." An interest they held in common is shown as early as 1885, when the Shaksperean scholar asks the doctor about the vexed question of Desdemona's death. Might it not be explained by supposing that at the words "So—so," the playwright intended Othello to use his dagger, thus her last words are not wildly impossible? Dr. Mitchell's opinion, with others, will be found in its place in the Variorum "Othello."

* H. H. F. Jayne: *Letters of H. H. Furness.*

It appears he did not think the stabbing theory would cover the facts.

Some years later Mitchell wrote his friend a lyric, to express his pleasure in hearing Dr. Furness read Shakespeare, while his letters are constantly seeking aid from the scholar in literary difficulties.

Philadelphia, Pa.

"'Fore God it was a gallant sight
To see that fleet of argosies,
Blown by the noble wind of fame,
Sail down the stormy centuries.

"Lo, the 'Great Harry' hath the van
The royal banner o'er her set,
And peer and peasant throng around
The Lion-Lord, Plantagenet.

"A larger fame today is theirs,
No more of mocking time the sport,
The blazonry of Shakespeare given
Hath twice ennobled Agincourt."

"Dear Furness,

"I wrote in my journal that never to be forgotten night these three verses and meant to send them to you, not because of their being good, but to show you how I felt the stormy splendor of it all—Read and burn them; with time which now I have not, they could be bettered into poetry—now they be verse—and no more.

"Yours,

"WEIR."

15th January, 1896.

S. W. M. to Dr. Furness

Philadelphia, Pa., November 9, 1910.

"My dear Horace,

"I think I must have seemed very unintelligent to you on Sunday when we discussed the pronunciation of 'Jacques.' I said that I did not understand the reference in that book of Sir John Harrington's where the maid will not use the word Jacques (Jakes) in introducing the gentleman but prefers the word Privy. I did not know then (stupidly)—of course you did—that the word Jacques (Jakes) was the name in common use for what we call a water-closet. I find it, however, in the Oxford Dictionary so used, and accidentally I came upon it in a queer little book. This is called 'A Treatise on Diseases of Tradesmen,' Ramozzini, Professor of Physics at Padua, dated 1705. This book was one of those chosen by Franklin in the earlier lists of books selected by him for the Philadelphia Library. I found to my surprise that we had this book at the College of Physicians, and came across the reference in the chapter on 'The Diseases of the Cleansers of Jakes.'

"Now again comes up the question whether, knowing this other meaning of the word, people with sons called Jacques *would* have pronounced it 'Jakes.' I leave this for your honorable consideration.

"Apologizing for my stupidity, and feeling a little illuminated by my final thought of the decencies of pronunciation, I confide this to your charity and attention.

"Yours always,"

The final letter herewith given refers to Dr. Mitchell's pending investigation into sleep, its phenomena and disorders. On this subject he had been collecting data for years, and among the Holmes letters of the eighties one will be found discussing it. Many friends try to answer his enquiries regarding their experience of what he named the *"praedormitium"* or the state just before sleeping and there were others who felt a little impatience as to the value he attributed to phenomena of that borderland. Dr. Furness for example, dryly observed that "the praedormitium state is not one to evolve a coherent, rational idea of Hamlet!"

Philadelphia, Pa., March 3, 1911.

"My dear Horace:

"Please don't answer this letter if it is going to bother you, but if you can sit down with a stenographer and a typewriter, and let me know whether your experience corresponds with mine, I shall be indebted, as I have to speak on the subject of dreams and some conditions related to sleep.

"All my life my dreams occasionally, though rarely, have been related to things recently occurrent in my waking state; most of my dreams, however, have had no such relation. My dreams in childhood, and I have always been a dreamer, were exceedingly vivid, and repeated over and over, sometimes the same dream at intervals recurring for two or three years.

"Of more interest is the condition of mind in the praedormitium, except rarely now and then a face, a bit of landscape, an animal, anything. To hold these always results in

their disappearance. To be passive in mind retains them longer, and then they are gone.

"Also, dreams have lost for me their vividness, although I never pass a night without dreaming. They have become vague, pass, are gone, and have no interest. Occasionally I make verses in sleep. Twice I have recovered verses thus made; usually they are lost like other dream stuff.

"This, in brief, is my experience as to dreams and the visions seen when the eyes are closed and we are in that border land between waking and sleeping.

"This whole subject of dreams and the praedormitium has not been enough studied in relation to the individual and his work and character.

"I should not have written this to you had not your son assured me that you would like to give me the fifteen or twenty minutes with your stenographer that would suffice to deposit in my mind your own experience.

"Yours always,"

XXIV

"Here have I wandered oft these many years,
Far from the world's restraint, my heart at ease,
With equal liberty of joy or tears
To welcome Nature's generosities."
The Comfort of the Hills.

WE see that Dr. Mitchell had come to achieve in the eyes of his fellow-countrymen at large, a peculiar position, combining the functions of oracle, tale-teller, philosopher and beloved physician. Hence the letters given in preceding chapters form but a small part of the immense correspondence which, from 1897 till his death, occupied him and his secretaries. Some of these bear well-known names in literature, science and art; others come from strangers entirely unknown. So many people wrote him for so many reasons, that it is amazing to think he should have taken them all so seriously and answered them so carefully. The following is a specimen of his quality to one of these unknown ladies.

Philadelphia, Pa.

"Virginia Q. McNealus,
"2912 Gould Street,
"Dallas, Texas.
"Dear Madam:

"I read with interest and naturally with pleasure your interesting essay.

"Americans are by degrees acquiring literary courage. I always found *The Virginians* a dull book—*Esmond* with all its sad lapses from good taste—will always interest. Indeed apart from comparisons, I agree with you as to the Virginians. Thackeray told Motley that he wrote the book first and after that was putting in the colonial atmosphere. It did not get in. There is more fact in François than I shall get credit for, until I tell the real story, and that I shall never do.

"Again my thanks.

"Yours truly,

"WEIR MITCHELL."

Yet the would-be authors were but drops in the stream that poured upon his desk.

To give any adequate idea of this correspondence, one must consider the people whom he had never heard of and who were anxious to discuss with him everything on earth and much in heaven. Voltaire's letters, we know, occupy fifty volumes, yet cover no greater variety of topics than did this Philadelphia doctor's. People wrote to tell him their dreams, their 'phobias, their mother-in-law's peculiarites. They wrote to praise, to question or to criticize—to thank, to request, or to remind. They asked about cats, rattlesnakes, colonial wines, Philadelphia alleys, fishing, history, Washington, pain in the wrist, visions before sleep and whether their ancestor had attended the University of Pennsylvania in 1802. They wrote of everything and Dr. Mitchell always answered. There he sat and matters historical, genealogical, biographical, political, toxicological, medical,

psychological, and poetical, flowed from that wise and tireless pen.

Let us be concrete in this. Naturally the letters fall into definite groups, medical, literary, historical. With certain colleagues, such as Osler, Billings, J. W. White, Brown-Séquard, Lauder-Brunton, and others, there was a steady interchange over many years. Literary matters occupied another group—Mrs. Mason, Miss Minot, Dr. Furness, Owen Wister, Andrew Lang, C. E. Norton, R. W. Gilder, etc. A number of special letters, however, remain to be dealt with. Picking these up well-nigh at random and in the compass of a few years, we find Ambassador Jusserand discussing Villon; Hugo Münsterberg, G. T. Ladd and Robert Treat Paine writing of dreams, while James G. Blaine offers a special passport and William James is impressed with Dr. Mitchell's father's lecture on Animal Magnetism. President Cleveland thanks for a book; President McKinley writes about his wife; President Roosevelt asks for Dr. Mitchell's autograph; President Taft asks his help to induce a candidate to accept a Judgeship. Henry Irving hopes he will come and "crack a bottle"; Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward begs help for her insomnia. Senator Lodge is interested in Washington; Earl Grey, the Governor-General of Canada, is enthusiastic about a fishing-trip; George H. Lewes wants information about the Trent affair; Charles Francis Adams corrects Dr. Mitchell on Pickett's charge; General Lew Wallace offers him a "Hoosier welcome"; Goldwin Smith asks about the relation of diet to climate, while Mrs. Humphry Ward talks about the doctor's novels and her own.

Mrs. Humphry Ward to S. W. M. December 23, 1908.
Stocks
Tring.

"My dear Dr. Weir Mitchell,

"It was so kind of you to write to me about *Diana* and for many weeks past I have had a letter to you in mind. But since September I have been absorbed in the fatal illness of a beloved sister, much younger than myself and letters have been hard to write. She died three weeks ago, and though at the time there was relief, for she had suffered much, all the wheels of life move very heavily still, and I sit often and stare at my paper without a word to say. I wanted so much to thank you for the two books you sent me in America, both of which I enjoyed—particularly 'Constance Trescot' which interested me greatly by the study of an ungoverned temperament, and its many shrewd sayings on life and character; and now you have sent me another for which my best thanks, as it has taken me back to Washington and Mount Vernon, and revived all your impressions of your great man which our spring day in that beautiful place had left in my mind. I cannot but look back on the year which has just closed as one of great enjoyment and a wonderful new experience—before it was all overshadowed by an irreparable grief. Our six weeks in the States, and then the journey across Canada and back—life must always be the richer for that, for the thoughts roused, the sights seen, the friends made. Perhaps in a little while one may realize it more.

I am so glad you like *Diana.* As to Oliver's illness, my cousin Dr. Fleming Sandworth, once of Cairo, whom I think you know is largely responsible. At any rate, I told him I

should say so! He gave me the remarks about the railway accident, and the simulated special cases, and I made what I could of them, more I am afraid than a doctor will. One can only be a Nun to glide lightly *sans appuyer*.

"Yours very sincerely,

MARY A. WARD."

The correspondence with John Hay shows the progress of a delightful friendship and incidentally discovers that Dr. Mitchell was the first to make the suggestion resulting in the removal of the body of Paul Jones to its final resting-place in Annapolis.

John Hay to S. W. M. Washington, August 8, 1880.

"Dear Dr. Mitchell

"I send you by mail to-day, as part of my 'case,' a speech I made in Cleveland last week. The curious thing was that while I was much bedevilled all day before it was delivered with quick pulse, malaise and mortal terror, I was perfectly at ease when I got before my audience and felt no fatigue whatever afterwards though I spoke nearly two hours to a great crowd. I have lost no weight this summer, and feel in general as well as usual. I shall leave this place on the 4th of next March at farthest, and shall then come to you to be measured for a new constitution, if you think it worth while.

"King beguiled me into taking a big house here last Spring and then a few weeks later levanted—the fickle fair one—and left me doubly widowed. He was last heard from on the Pacific Coast heading towards Mexico with a geologic gleam in his eye that boded ill for the Sierra Strata.

"I do not know where you are, but I trust these lines to Judge Key's tender mercies, knowing you are too conspicuous a mark to be missed by any epistolary shot. A letter once reached Humboldt addressed simply Europe.

"Yours sincerely,

"JOHN HAY."

John Hay to S. W. M.

5 Carlton House Terrace.
S. W.
October 15, 1897.

"My dear Mitchell

"The moment I had finished 'Hugh Wynne' I went to the Berkeley to tell you what I thought of it—but you had gone and I have been brutally busy since then.

"I can hardly speak calmly of the book. It is little to say that it is the best historical novel I know, written in our generation; it ranks with the best in our language. It is a picture—at once broad and minute—of a most interesting time and place, painted so lovingly and well that nobody need try to do it again. It is full of characters that stand and walk by themselves and take their place at once among our life-long acquaintances. It is written with the freedom of a master and the reserve of a gentleman.

"I congratulate you with all my heart, and thank you over and over for a great pleasure.

"Yours faithfully,

"JOHN HAY."

S. W. M. to John Hay 1524 Walnut Street, Philadelphia.
December 1st, 1900.

"My dear Hay:

"If I knew the Secretary of the Navy I would write to him of a matter in which many citizens and Naval Officers feel deep interest.

"Our first great sea Captain—Paul Jones—lies in an obscure Paris graveyard. If the government were to send a battleship to France and bring back in it for burial at Annapolis the relics of that marvelous seaman it would be a vastly wise, just and very popular thing to do.

"It has been long in my mind to speak of this, but I felt it well to wait until we had settled the election. I trust that you will think it desirable to bring this matter to the attention of the Cabinet. It would capture the imagination of the American and add to the memorable illustrations of our present Administration.

"I may add that when Jones died it was meant to bring him here, but for what reason I know not it was set aside and forgotten.

"Yours sincerely,
"Weir Mitchell."

"John Hay, Esq."

John Hay to S. W. M. Department of State, Washington.
October 24, 1904.

"Dear Dr. Mitchell:—

"I think, on the whole, you are the most impossible man of my generation. With the enormous amount of work which you do, you always seem ready for any additional

task, and keep through everything the spirit and the fire of a boy. I was greatly impressed by your speech at the Clark dinner. How you manage it is a mystery to a doddering old man like me.

"Yours affectionately,
"JOHN HAY."

Letters from Richard Watson Gilder of *The Century* are naturally much concerned with business, but the following give interesting points of view.

R. W. Gilder to S. W. M. Editorial Department, *The Century Magazine,* April 26, 1905.

"You know how much I care for your poems. I rank them very high indeed, and in that I am not singular, for the best appreciators of poetry in this country have the same opinion of them. As to prices, that is, from a purely business point of view, our publishers are not favorable to high prices for poetry unless it should come from some extremely popular source, like Longfellow or Tennyson, where the mere announcement is a business asset. In other words, they do not think it possible to make a money-gage for high poetic value without wide poetic popularity, i.e. looking upon the whole matter as mere business. They would say, probably, that a story by Weir Mitchell is assuredly marketable; a poem by Weir Mitchell has not the same marketable value as book form.

"If I may be personal as regards my own experience, I may say that, notwithstanding I have published seven books of verse, when I gave my brother, partly for his sake, the

opportunity of disposing of what I supposed to be some of the most important, from a literary point of view, of any I have ever done, the highest price he obtained and this is in some three or four cases, was 50 dollars. This is what Scribner's paid for a poem which some of my friends think the best thing I have written in years, even from the point of view of general acceptance. (I do not mean that that is *our* limit of price, by any means!)

"So, as I say, when you warn me beforehand that the poems are 'dear,' in order to avoid any misunderstanding you must tell me what those prices are, I have not seen any of the new poems of yours, but I dearly hope that we can print some of your poetry next year.

"Sincerely yours,

"R. W. GILDER."

On receipt of this letter Dr. Mitchell decided to *give* his verses unless the price he asked for them was paid without demur, hence the following:

R. W. Gilder to S. W. M. Editorial Department,
The Century Magazine, May 29, 1905.

"My dear Dr. Mitchell:

"The 'Indian Summer' has come to hand. Very many thanks. We must find some way to reciprocate. I wish I could present *you* with an original poem that would do you any good, but I fear this would not be a fair exchange!!!

"Sincerely yours,

"R. W. GILDER."

Note by S. W. M.:—"This letter acknowledges the first poem *given* to the *Century* without payment."

R. W. Gilder to S. W. M. Editorial Department,
The Century Magazine, October 31, 1901.

"My dear Dr. Mitchell,

"I am thinking of that 'It's awful,' story. Good people and sensible people and intelligent people would find perhaps no—or little—fault with it. But lots of 'heads of families' etc., would think it gross in suggestion, and instead of winning friends, in these days of intense competition, we would probably lose some. It would be OK. in a book. I wish an equally strong little piece were in its place. Perhaps you will take this view of it—and send me another 'little gem' for it.*

"Sincerely yours,
"R. W. Gilder."

From Booker Washington comes a grateful letter.

Booker Washington to S. W. M. The Tuskegee
Normal and Industrial Institute,
November 28, 1911.

"Dr. S. Weir Mitchell,

"Here at Tuskegee we are trying to turn out a set of young men and women who can perceive and appreciate the obligations of a state of freedom. Now that the country is

* *Note of SWM's.* We differed as to the propriety of printing the little story of "The Sins of the Fathers." Finally Mr. Gilder decided against it . . . Never was I more glad to say a bold word.

rid of the existence of slavery, it is one of the purposes of the work here to try to build up a more perfect Union.

"It has been my privilege during the past four or five years to make a sort of educational campaign through several of the southern states. In this way I have come in contact with all classes of both white and colored people. I have talked to them in a free and frank manner of their duties toward one another. I believe that such trips have resulted in good to both races."

Notes of thanks are innumerable; for influence, for books, for money. They are signed by all sorts of people, among whom are W. H. Lecky, Mary Anderson de Navarro, as well as Hideyo Noguchi, and Booker Washington. Often thanks deepen into gratitude, warm and lasting. Poor Mrs. McKinley writes from Canton, Ohio, in 1907, sending the pair of slippers she had worked for her kind physician, and a gentleman from Boston writes his deep thanksgiving, for his wife is sitting up beside him after a year and a half in bed. Meanwhile, John Hay from Washington, reports disquieting symptoms and shall he disregard them? They did not, alas! disregard him. An Englishman named Sykes is convinced that human milk is a certain cure both for tuberculosis and anemia. A friend from Venice writes to say that she is sending Dr. Mitchell all that remains of Byron's gondola. The head of Wanamaker's Book Department asks where may she find the Persian verses Dr. Mitchell recently quoted? and John Sargent writes notes regarding the portrait he was painting for the Green Tree. Sargent, who was a close friend of Osler, and White, was less congenial with Mitchell, and

the portrait fine as it be, is by no means one of his best. The painter had the delightful custom in his letters of using a red stamp with *DAMN* all over the sheet when his feelings overcame him, and Dr. Weir's 'spun-glass' hair doubtless cost him many *DAMNS.*

Among the letters, one from Homer St. Gaudens repeats an anecdote of his father, the sculptor, which also came from the distinguished head of Harvard. Augustus St. Gaudens was to receive an Honorary Degree, but only agreed to come to the formal dinner on condition that he need not speak. So he sat, chin in hand, gazing around the room and when Eliot asked him what he was thinking, the answer was, "What heads!"

A note of the elder St. Gaudens' is sensitive and charming.

A. St. G. to S. W. M.

Aspet, Windsor, Vermont, June 6th, 1909.

"Dear Doctor

"Your book of poems I found on my return here yesterday and I do not know what to say in appreciation of your reference to the line in the fourth page. It is a gratification if I have been able to express at all what I know you and Mrs. Mitchell feel so deeply.

"I have the book by my bedside and shall read it as one reads the words of a friend.

"Affectionately yours,

"AUGUSTUS ST. GAUDENS."

The letters of two Presidents display a contrast of temperaments.

The White House, Washington.

"Dear Doctor Mitchell

"I am very sorry, and so is Mrs. Taft, that we were not permitted to see you on Wednesday afternoon. The stupidity of an usher as to persons cannot be insured against. I am constantly finding and constantly protesting against the distance between the vestibule or outer office of the White House and the rooms where we live. Try again when you come to Washington and drop me a note that you'll be here so that I can shoot down in cold blood those who would keep you out.

"Sincerely yours,
"Wm. H. Taft."

Theodore Roosevelt to S. W. M.

Executive Mansion, Washington, October 14, 1901.

"My dear Doctor Mitchell:

"I have read your letter of October 11th carefully. I appreciated entirely your feelings, and I trust I understand the great services you have rendered to our country. But remember that if I take the latter into consideration in your case I must take the same into consideration in all other cases, and that would mean once for all, the giving up of all the rights of the sons of army and navy officers. There is, or at least may be, a geographical reason why, in order not to deprive the South entirely of appointments, one or two should be made therefrom; but in the North there is absolutely no such

reason of sound public policy. All that could be said is that in one instance, for a very distinguished and able man, as a matter of favoritism, we departed from a given rule. It would mean that the son of the dead Admiral Phillip, who fought the Texas at Santiago, should be passed by and after him the son of Admiral Taylor, who fought the Indiana; the son of Sharpe, who commanded the Vixen, etc., etc. These were men wholly without political influence, who devote their entire lives to the country; men of small means, to whom such an appointment is more upon every account than it could be to almost anyone else.

"I am exceedingly sorry but I do not see how, with my present knowledge, I could deviate from the rule I have laid down.

"Very sincerely yours,
"THEODORE ROOSEVELT."

Besides all this, there was always some project afoot to benefit the College of Physicians or a similar institution; there were books always being bought or given away. Cranks, too, should not be forgotten; they afforded amusement to the Mitchell family if not to the doctor himself. The person who wanted the doctor to run for President kept turning up and inevitable were such writers as a Pennsylvania country-boy, who said of himself "I am called by all who know me, a wonder—a *genious* . . . I am a single man greatly admired by all women!"

Sometimes rebukes must be administered—as the following:

S. W. M. to Public Ledger. November 5, 1910.

"Editor Public Ledger,

"Dear Sir:

"If you are a wise editor, you will promptly get rid of the reporter who credits me with saying some perfectly absurd things in your issue of November 3rd. It is useless to go into details. They have been productive of much amusement to the profession in Philadelphia, and will be, in all parts of the country where doctors chance to come upon them.

"He credits me among other amusing statements with having said that 'I like to call neurasthenia anesthesias'; which is very delightful. Also, with having said that 'I had yet to see a case of neurasthenia in which no anesthetic had been used.' A worse mix-up I have never seen.

"I do not ask you to print this. You never will, and I do not think the editor lives who would print such a statement of the absurdities of his own paper; but really, the next time we have a meeting at the College, send somebody who knows his business.

"Yours truly,"

Again, he wants the newspaper to know that he has not retired from practice, isn't an Englishman and does *not* live on the Wissahickon in a palatial residence. "These slips," he winds up, "are well-named!"

Mr. Owen Wister in his tribute to Dr. Mitchell, makes the admirable comment that nothing showed so clearly his healthy and happy nature as the fact that as a novelist he made such kindly use of the material acquired as a neurologist. "Consider what we should have had if Balzac or Flau-

bert or Zola had known what Dr. Mitchell knew about women!"

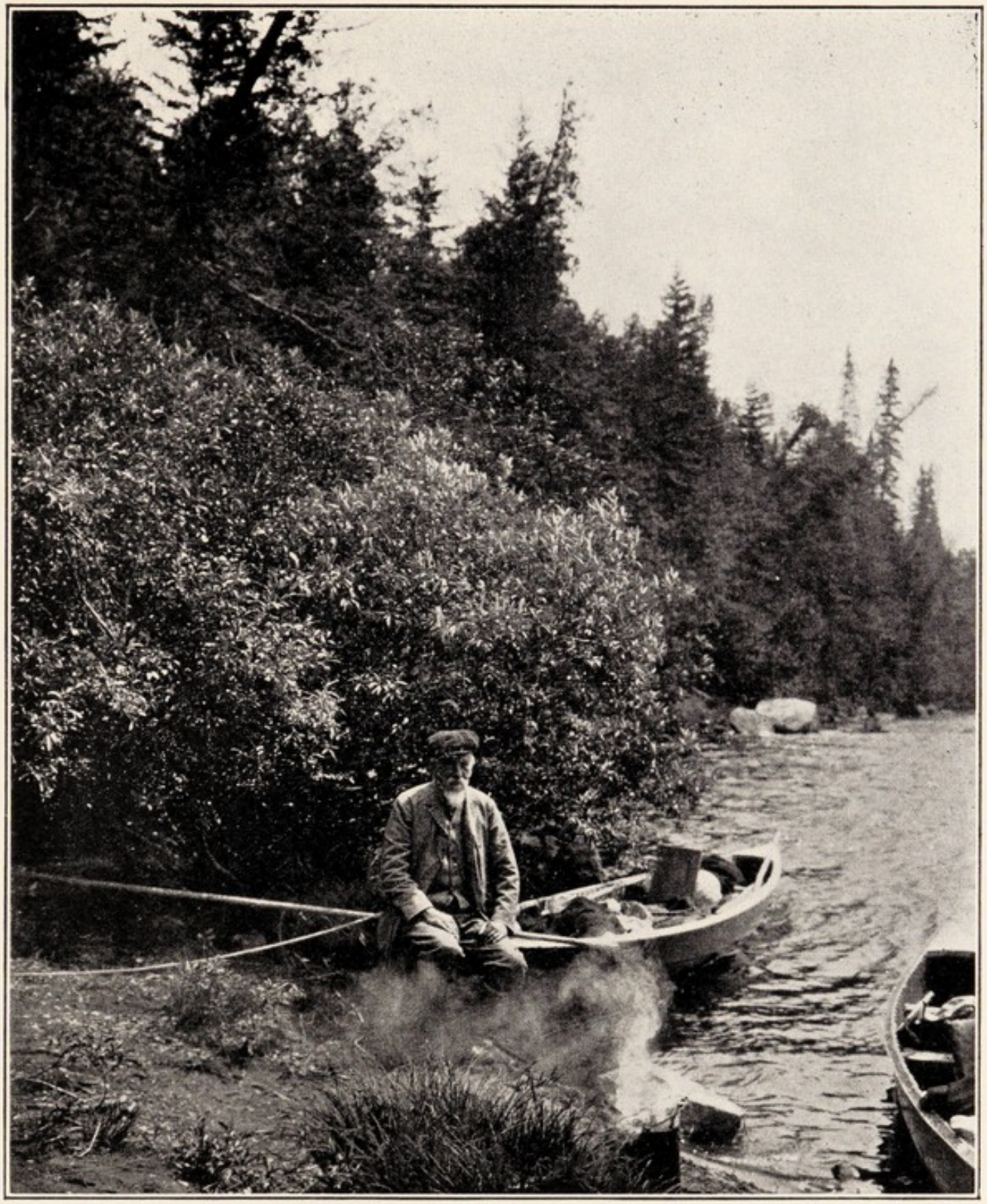
This wise and gentle tolerance of nature is one of the main impressions we gain from all this correspondence, but it must not close our eyes to another aspect of his mind. For years, his knowledge of woman had come largely from seeing her as a patient and this fact naturally colored his attitude toward her and her problems. Inevitably, he came to associate her with weakness, till the association crystallized into a cliché. The ideal he had for her was earlier than early Victorian and far earlier than early American—it was the ideal which Adam and not Eve set up after exile from the Garden of Eden. Even in later years, when certain friends and colleagues tried to show him that further knowledge had come to change the statistics in these matters, he obstinately clung to his own view. And this did harm because of his great reputation, so that even now, here and there, it is amusing and touching to find his opinion against training for girls triumphantly produced as final.

Nothing could be less true than to assert that Dr. Mitchell had a low esteem of women—the contrary was the case; the odd fact remains that with so high a view of women he should have ignored the need for improvement in education which the times had brought about. The truth was his standard was extremely conventional; his ideal woman was the well-sheltered woman and this view at his age was unlikely to change. Even with an old friend so much admired as Agnes Irwin, Dean of Radcliffe, he had many a tilt on the subject and she found in time she had better leave it alone.

But she had him address the Radcliffe students, which he did most charmingly, in words of wisdom and warning, ending with the hope . . . "that no wreck from these shores will be drifted into my dockyard. Sometimes I can re-fit the ruined craft. Alas, sometimes I cannot!"

It was the knowledge that lay behind that "Alas," which caused Miss Irwin to abandon a useless fight; since to have made any impression on Dr. Mitchell's opinion would have required a readjustment of his long, professional experience to meet ideals which he disliked. Nowadays both his approvals and his antagonisms were somewhat less reasonable than they had been. So those who loved him felt it wise to turn the conversation whenever it drifted dangerously in the direction of the New Woman.

Even on this vexed point a retort courteous delighted him. The writer once walked with him upon the hills of Mt. Desert, accompanied by a youthful cousin, as slim and gay as a leaf in the wind, but who as the doctor regretfully heard, chanced to be a student at Bryn Mawr College. Secure in his deafness, he launched into a diatribe on his favorite subject, citing the disadvantages, warning against the dangers and proclaiming the general hatefulness of all her tribe. Finally, he wound up by declaring, in his very dominant voice, that he had never met a college-bred woman who had either adroitness or grace! Whereat, without a word, the girl then and there upon the path turned two or three handsprings so quickly, so lightly, that she was right-side-up and laughing, before he could say a word. And few people had ever seen Dr. Mitchell laugh more heartily than he did then.



Dr. Mitchell on the banks of the Restigouche River, Canada, his favorite retreat

Such an attitude was perhaps a part of the general conservatism which age is apt to cause, but which Dr. Mitchell's unusual mental energy made more surprising somehow and unexpected. This manifested itself as well in other ways, such as a strong distrust of certain modern writers, like Edith Wharton or Henry James. True, he had written to Gilder in 1905, "The House of Mirth is a great novel on the uplands of fiction," but even Mrs. Mason could not make him appreciate "Ethan Frome," from whose piercing veracity he turned in dislike. A taste in reading that sought to avoid the unpleasant had been for years his literary standard, while the atmosphere of adulation and affection in which he lived (Mrs. Mitchell called it his "warm bath"), caused him to shrink from these harsh and searching winds. He was occasionally shocked by literary frankness and took small interest in literary experiment. It is true of Dr. Mitchell—though it is as strange as true—that he who had been a pioneer if not a radical in medicine, should have remained so deep-dyed a conservative in literature.

And now it was to literature he chiefly turned for his pleasure and partook of the Comfort of the Hills in a spiritual as well as a physical sense. His summers in Mt. Desert had come to play a large part in his activities. They were passed in a house he took near the water, and which rejoiced in the inappropriate name of "Far Niente," to the great amusement of the doctor and his friends. There——

> "Where those gray summits give the unburdened mind,
> To clearer thought in freedom unconfined"——

he worked hard and long.

The move to the Maine Coast came in 1892 after those earlier years at Newport, where he rode with George Bancroft and wrote *In War Time*. When the routine there grew too formal, Bar Harbor gave the bracing air and outdoor activities he needed. Before very long he was First Citizen there too, throwing himself into the island life and problems with all his wonted enthusiasm. His name stood on all Committees formed to serve the community or to protect the beauty of the place and he resisted to the last all attempts to cheapen or spoil that unique land of holiday.

Those blue-and-gold afternoons, how they dwell in many memories, with his figure moving about in the foreground! Almost indeed, it embodies a past era, cherished and delightful. He loved every day spent on the Island—loved its soft fogs, sparkling northers, crashing nor'easters. His verses, his letters are full-flavored with a zest of them that never lost its edge. That lean, active, knickerbockered shape might be met with on all the stiffest trails, cutting new paths, planning new vistas.

A bronze tablet to his memory is a well-deserved recognition that he discovered and opened the romantic Cadillac Cliffs; while the Weir Mitchell Station for Marine Biological Research is also fittingly named in his honor. But whether it was the geology or botany of Mt. Desert, or just its beauty and inspiration, the delight never failed. His house in Bar Harbor was always a refuge, if by no means a rest as most of us interpret the word. Journeys, as he grew older, never meant the same. A diary entry in 1901, at the end of a European trip, shows the feeling.

"7/ 9/01. What you need is change and rest,
but the car porter got the change
and my banker the rest."
"7/29/01. Bar Harbor. In my house at five.
Oh, Lord, I am glad!"

There must, of course, have been some remission of activity, but it shows very little. At eighty-two he is writing to Osler.

August, 1911.

"I have been and shall be absorbed this summer in a novel I began last year in order to fill up my vacant hours, for indeed I wonder what people do with their time in resorts like this."

Or again in the same summer:

"I have had a dozen schemes in mind about medical papers of the kind you and I like to write which are of the life of professional great men."

"There is no dearer lover of lost hours
Than I——!"

sings one of his little poems, yet who shall say of Dr. Weir's hours that they were ever lost?

Certainly he would never count them so if they were spent with old friends. At Mt. Desert most of these had homes. The Ladds lived at Hull's Cove, the Coles's and Mrs. Markoe at Point d'Acadie; and there were many others. Often they would find him sitting on the porch in the ruddy afternoon glow, book in hand and full of the last thing he

had been reading. Frequent were drives to North East Harbor, where Bishop Doane, Mrs. Caspar Wister, the Misses Irwin, had cottages. *Drives*—(let us emphasize the word, for he fought motors to the last!) to take lunch or drink tea or join a tramping party for a long afternoon, winding up at Jordan's Pond. . . .

One used to mark those arrivals—in the days when Harbourside was a cottage Cranford, almost every place in the settlement being owned by women. The Mitchell carriage would draw up and the Misses Irwin were out on the path at once to welcome their guests. There would be joyous greetings and "Oh, my dears!" so that the young, tramping homewards on the opposite side of the way, rather wondered at the stir caused by the arrival of one old gentleman! Other cottage doors opened and their owners came hastening down the path, for the good news had gone forth. . . . Then the Irwin door closed and the chimney flung a fresh plume of smoke into the golden air, as the talk within began.

In those days the whole island resembled a miniature firmament, starred with conversational luminaries, who attracted around them various minor planets, asteroids and other celestial satellites. Comets of varying magnitude blazed in the skies now and then during brief visits, otherwise these solar systems pretty well maintained their integrity, summer after summer. All of them had one thing in common—a love of the holiday that was Mt. Desert's glory to provide. Active outdoor life—exercise both for brain and brawn; "talk and walk" as the motto was—nobody asked for more. Whether you saw Dr. Mitchell in tweeds on a mountain top or Bishop Doane acting coxswain to his grand-

children in a sort of archepiscopal barge, you had the same effect of vivid enjoyment. These two remained "Weir" and "Billy" to one another, and were the last to use the names.

The latter will be long remembered as foremost in that ecclesiastical conclave, for during at least one summer in the writer's memory, Northeast Harbor might have repeated the Trial of the Seven Bishops in its dramatis personae. Many were the stories told of the effect made by Bishop Doane's dress on a community largely congregational and how one small boy, meeting him, gasped out, "Say—won't your Ma let you put on long pants?" This was at first. After a while, the woods were full of gaiters and aprons, with the golden-haired Gardiner children as bodyguard and His Grace of Albany's great Dane as outrider. Sometimes Mr. Morgan's yacht lay in harbor, huge and mysterious, circled by the children of the place in their row-boats, with cautious and awe-struck curiosity. Important parties would then take place; the Mitchells would come over from Bar Harbor and a cut-under conveyed the majesty of Harvard from its cool, retired cliff. Anxiously the whole community waited the Sunday following the Morgan visit, when almost invariably Bishop Doane, in his rich and rolling voice, would announce some gift of importance to the little wooden church he loved. Others too loved it; the stone building that succeeded was never quite the same. The dog never strolled in to search for his Bishop-master during service, as sometimes occurred in the first rural sanctuary.

Then the dinners! In those days they were noted not only for the goodness of their lobsters and the puffiness of

their popovers—but for the quality of those who sat down to them. A German Exchange Professor on a Mt. Desert vacation once proclaimed the fact, when he solemnly observed:

"I haf nefer met so many people of heartfelt reputation in von place gathered!" This was the same gentleman who enormously amused Miss Irwin by asking how her *husband* bore his arduous duties as Dean of Radcliffe—a lady-Dean being plainly beyond his mental compass to conceive!

All these friends saw much of each other and the "Twenty-two Mile Drive" was no barrier to frequent intercourse. Mrs. Caspar Wister too, held a sort of Court in her house "Journey's End," while a number of agreeable ladies circled about in orbits regular or even eccentric. Dr. Furness was sometimes prevailed upon to visit his sister, (although he found the climate chilly) and his arrival was made an excuse for large, animated gatherings. Mrs. Wister adored and reverenced her scholar-brother with all the concentration that was her's by nature and on one occasion, as he was settling himself on the platform about to read "Hamlet" and she was gazing at him with intensest admiration, Miss Sophy Irwin leaned over to whisper with an ironical reminder——

"You know, Nannie, he didn't write it!"

This group of highly-colored individualities gave each other delightful parties, where the talk and jesting ran high —seasoned with excellent wine, which had just that special zest in prohibition Maine, which it came to have later in prohibition America. These were the days when whiskey (though never Dr. Mitchell's) journeyed up the coast in barrels labelled "Rockland Illuminating Oil" and gave no more trouble to get than made it worth while.

If the doctor was ever an honored guest, yet it is true that "Dear Weir" occasionally suffered discipline at the hand of "Dear Sophy" or "Dear Agnes." These delightful ladies had kept school for so long that they sometimes felt all the world to be their pupils. The Dean was no flatterer, although her sister tempered the pedagogic strain with the soft pedal, and both naturally spoke with due reverence, to a mere outsider, of the author of "Hugh Wynne." Their small Mutual Admiration Society—though at times it amused their acquaintance—paid high dividends in satisfaction to all the members.

As for Mrs. Caspar Wister, she was nothing if not frank and the novelist sometimes got real criticism, when what he wanted was admiration. She was a valued proof-reader and liked to remind the author that he couldn't spell. Her granddaughter remembers seeing the pair in conference over a manuscript and Dr. Mitchell's rueful look as Mrs. Wister drew a pencil through the page saying in her most decided voice, "Bad grammar, my dear Weir—bad grammar! It won't do!" But it is not likely Dr. Mitchell took the advice, for all his gentle acceptance of it. A good deal of family joking occurred over his habit of reading his manuscript to lovely ladies—to whose criticism the author would listen with deference—only to take it on, in turn to the next. He enjoyed talking about his work to his friends, but it was *his* work and not apt to be altered to please anyone else.

In these last years he seems to have roused in his friends and colleagues a tenderness that is lovely to look back upon. We like to think of him striding the forest-trails—talking of this and that, throwing out suggestions for new projects, new

research, new discoveries, new ideas—that tall, active man—keenly enjoying his eighty years of youth. The trail is growing dusky now and fog—the fog over days gone by—is closing in.

XXV

"When night is come,
And all these mighty spaces overhead
And all this vast of sea lie motionless,
God seems so near to me, ill deeds so far
That all my soul in gentled wonder rests."

Francis Drake

DR. MITCHELL had rested on the summit longer than is granted to most of us. Now the downward slope lay before him. A gentle descent it looked: the valley below lay in benignant shadow. What was to fear there for one who had had the day?

Of the pitfalls in this decline none knew better than he. Diary entries speak of them:

"11/7/01. When young I used to think of the old as sedately sure of themselves without moral temptings. I know better. Each age of life has its trials and special temptations. To be magnanimous in act I find easy, to be it in thought hard. Irritability of age, tendency to accumulate money, fear of loss of mental and physical competence."

"14.—See Diary 11/7. The little vices of age, irritability, avarice, dread of lessened importance, from all which I pray deliverance."

There are many such notes, self-measurings, self-communings. He had been too much a fighter to be introspective, but now deep thoughts were rising. His religious

feeling had ever been of the simplest, with church—the habit of a godly generation, the duty of an established order—drawing him to his pew Sunday after Sunday. Now he seeks further:

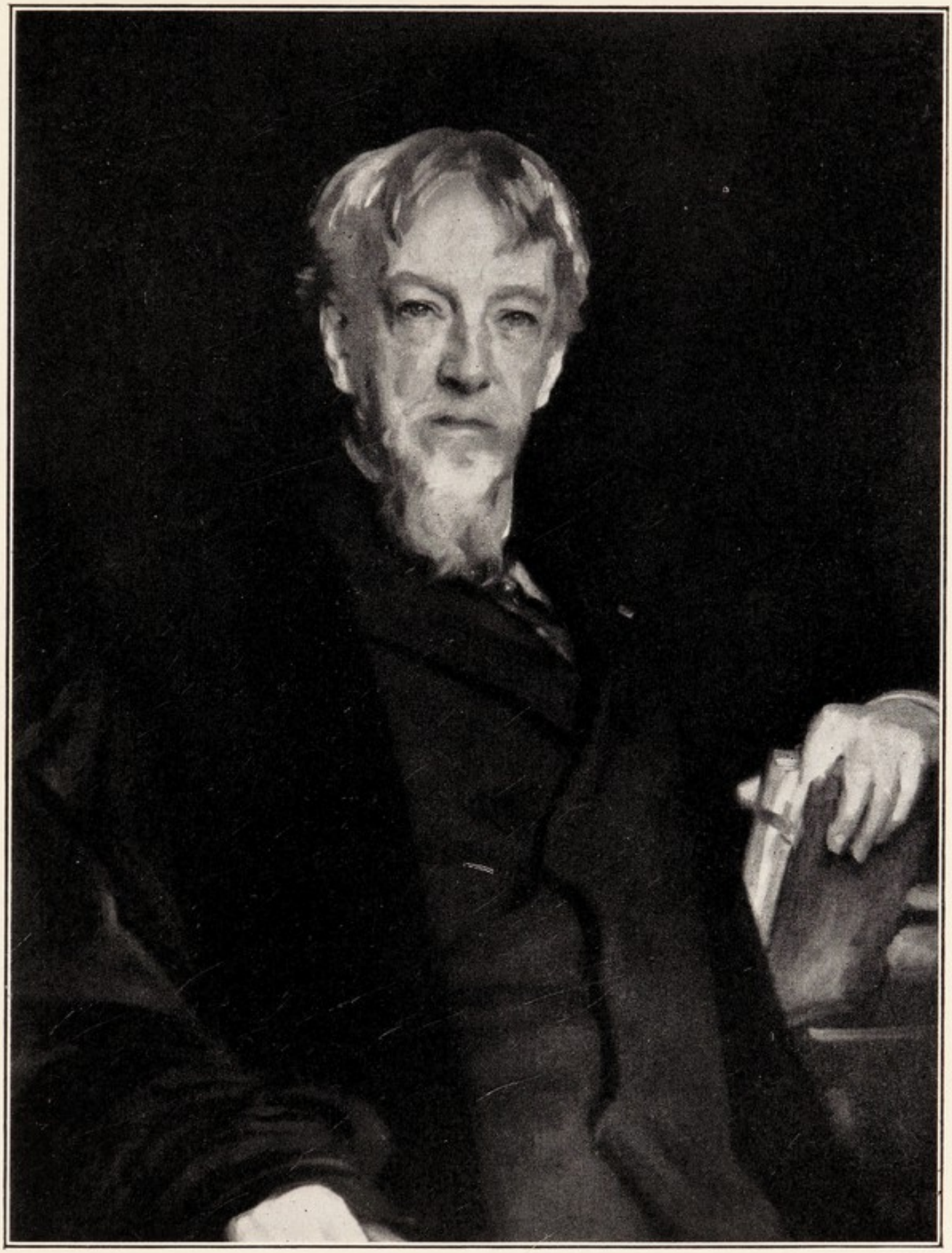
"Astigmatic minds, can't know, they do not see . . . if God is a spirit, His must be that relation to matter which soul holds to our brain . . . that I ask if God created us in any sense, who created God, shows how vain is our logic, how vain our thinkings. Oh, to think I may never know."

A princely tolerance gave him the kind gaze with which he watched his fellow-men. "Some love God with their weakness, some with their strength," writes the tremulous hand and again: "God buries the future, let us bury the past."

There was no melancholy in his thoughts. Why should there be? He was very busy, full of new plans and projects. In 1912, he writes Osler. "It is an abominable thing that one is not twins—in fact I should like to be numerous!"

Dr. Thayer of Johns Hopkins said "It was impossible to tire Weir Mitchell at eighty-two." He enjoyed rare good health: "I have none of the ills of an old man." His youthfulness of spirit made his company still delightful even to the young. A little mild tyranny in the family circle was always accompanied by generous presents. From a granddaughter comes the delightful picture of "grandfather-friend" big and smiling, and the sacred study, which awed and delighted her.

Nothing could be more natural than that family and friends should cherish him and stand between his age and all that might depress and overtax.



The Sargent portrait of Dr. Mitchell

(Courtesy of The Mutual Assurance Company of Philadelphia)

His able and faithful doctor son was at his elbow and this meant more, as age drew on, than the world could know. What that tie had become when strengthened by a life of devoted service which hesitated at no personal sacrifice, even to the refusal of one of the most brilliant positions America has to offer a member of the medical profession—(its acceptance would have necessitated his leaving Philadelphia and so, also, leaving his father)—cannot be better expressed than by the closing sentence of a letter Dr. Mitchell wrote just a month before he died. After expressing his complete and abiding confidence in the ability, judgment and wisdom of his son both as man and as physician he ends with these words, "I leave you my love. I have never loved any man as I have loved you. I shall love you still. WEIR MITCHELL."

In these affections, he was wrapped warm against the winter of life. No one now questioned his medical eminence: no one whose opinion at least he valued—questioned his literary eminence. In the praise by which his life was surrounded no dissentient voice was heard. He need do nothing but reap the rewards of a long leadership and these he found very pleasant, loving personal attentions. On his birthdays he had Round-Robins—once in 1909, a poem from Owen Wister, from which we take a happy stanza:

February 15, 1909.

"Light ye no candles for his cake,
The shafts of time pass harmless thro' him,
His age's measure none can take
For none can hold a candle to him!"

The next birthday, his eightieth, brought a shower of telegrams. "O king live forever!" says a friend in one. From Washington, Mr. Root sends best wishes "to the young man of eighty from an infant of sixty-five!" Osler offers congratulations from Oxford; George W. Cable cheers him on from Northampton, Mass.; while J. P. Morgan's "many happy returns" came from New York, adding the desire "to shake you by the hand and tell you so face to face."

The list of degrees continued to grow. Toronto bestowed an Honorary LL.D. in 1907, Jefferson College in 1910, Johns Hopkins in 1912. Osler heard him speak at the Pathological Society dinner in 1907 and they met again in 1909, when Mitchell spoke at the Dedication of Osler Hall in Baltimore. Sir William writes of his friend that "Weir Mitchell is wonderfully well." There is a long list of further addresses, some of the most characteristic and valuable are to the Trained Nurses at their Graduation. Nor did his pen flag. New collections of poems—of reprints—followed each other rapidly. There were a couple of short tales "The Guillotine Club" and "A Venture in 1777," and two long novels "John Sherwood" and "Westways" in 1911 and 1913. A Weir Mitchell Calendar bearing the familiar countenance, above suitable quotations, made a Christmas appearance. Everybody in Philadelphia, and thousands elsewhere, owned one of these.

Meanwhile, the doctor was continuing his study of the medical treatment of epilepsy, and his work on the long and confused trail of family genealogies.

A short trip was made to Bermuda in 1912 and both in that year and the next he went to Virginia Hot Springs,

visits paid on account of his wife's health not his own. For indeed 1913 found him particularly fit. In April the Oslers came for a visit and what turning over of old books followed—what renewal of old contacts! There was much dining with long hours of satisfying talk. Dr. Mitchell was especially full and mellow during this time; especially interested in his paper on the names of the Philadelphia streets.

It was strange, though how natural only this generation can know, that his mind should have been much occupied with the Civil War Period: he had been working upon a Letter about the Hospitals of Gettysburg, with lists of the Medical Cadets of the Rebellion. An article on the Medical Departments in the Civil War lay among his finished but unpublished papers. Never had his mind been more "yeasty." Dr. Keen remembers a talk with him barely ten days before his death—a talk so fertile, so stimulating and suggesting so many new ideas in surgery and medicine, that the younger man returned home to a sleepless night. Dr. Weir's tongue too had not dulled or lost its edge. A prolix colleague was mentioned and was brushed away with the phrase: "He is the sand in my joints!"

On November 22, 1913, the Historical Society gave a dinner in honor of John Bach McMaster, where Dr. Mitchell appeared in good health and spirits. Christmas came and he wrote his usual greetings, one of which reached Osler in Oxford. In his own hand he wrote letters concerning the arrangements for the annual Franklin's Birthday dinner of the Franklin Inn Club. He was President there, had been for years and greatly enjoyed the meetings. It is good to think that these last weeks were full and happy.

"I do not fear death," he had written to C. E. Norton in 1904, "but I dread pain and the long, slow descent. Better a sudden precipice."

"Brief be the twilight as I pass" prayed his little lyric and brief it was. He fell ill of influenza on the thirtieth of December. From the first there was small hope for a man of eighty-four. The illness lasted but six days. To his younger son, he said: "Don't come near me—I have an infection and you have much to do in the world." As we have told earlier in these pages, his thoughts, during his delirium, moved back to that crucial experience of his youth the Civil War and once more he combated death on the battlefield. They heard him mutter, "That leg must come off—save the leg—lose the life!"

"During the last five days," says Owen Wister, "this wandering mind returned to those scenes; his wandering talk was of mutilation and bullets; he conversed and argued with that past."

On January 4th, 1914, he died. It is a significent fact and one that completes the story of the man, that nine days later, his wife followed him. She had borne her grief with fortitude, but it was plain to those about her that the springs of life were broken, that she felt her work was done. The friends who came back from the place where the two lay together, spoke of the truth that their passing had ended an era, yet did not realize until later how complete, how final was that conclusion.

For the last and crowning gift of Fate to this successful life was the moment at which it ended. Dr. Mitchell was spared 1914 and we who knew both him and it, know what

he was spared. The next four years would have brought him anguish and all who loved him must have been glad that he escaped their catastrophe. With his life ended most of the things he loved, many of the ideals he cherished. He spoke often of his good luck and it had not failed him.

Six months was hardly enough to hold the praise, the reminiscences and the affection which clustered about his figure. He had been a part of his city and she realized the loss.

"I cannot imagine Philadelphia without him . . . no Philadelphian was more alive, more in love with life, better equipped to enjoy life in the way Philadelphia has fashioned it," says Mrs. Pennell, truly and affectionately.

"He added to medicine, letters and affairs," says another, "and the fine art of friendship, the capacity for organization."

"His impelling instinct," a third points out, "was not, I think, to become eminent in any single line, as to leave no well-marked line of human interest untouched."

Nor was the local praise unsupported from without. The London *Times* wrote, "His work on nervous diseases far outshines all his other achievements. It was pioneer work in a most difficult and treacherous field. He brought to it a steadfast courage and sympathy, which in the end overcame all obstacles and gained for his system the recognition of medical authorities throughout the world."

"In his numerous and varied activities," a colleague declared, "he represented the spirit of the age, but he would have represented the spirit of any age in which he might have lived." Perhaps it remained for Sir Lauder-Brunton

to make the final summing-up of "the most accomplished and versatile physician of his time. . . ."

"Of very few men can it be said that as a young man he took a first place amongst the physiologists, as a middle-aged man amongst the physicians and as an elderly man amongst the novelists of his country."

One still nearer says: "In his home he was a presence of power—a great physician, a great gentleman and possessing one quality of a great man—a certain austerity."

Various memorials mentioned in these pages were immediately started; among them the Out-service Building of the Orthopaedic Hospital, toward which his devoted friends Mr. and Mrs. Ladd contributed more than half the sum raised. By this and other donations, Dr. Mitchell's work is held in continued remembrance.

These are splendid tributes to a man's usefulness, yet somehow they seem to stand for less than the fact that his memory remains so bright and clear to his friends. He is still "the dear Doctor" to many who do not ask whether the Rest-Cure holds its place or if "Hugh Wynne" is still "out" at the Library. What they recall is the rich and undiluted personality, the many-facetted mind, the worker who loved nothing so much as his task, unless it were his friends. Nor can they forget the physician whose pride was in his profession, a pride so sensitive and instant, that when offered presentation at Court on the condition that *"Doctor"* be suppressed, he, whom we know loved society and pageantry—refused at once. Also there remains in memory the friend, whose knowledge of the human heart had brought him infinite patience, generosity, tolerance.

The passing of an industrious and distinguished life startles a community and changes the landscape—"it is as if a mighty oak had fallen." Perhaps for this reason the tendency of those who look back to that sturdy tree is to see it larger than it was. Time obliterates most successes and alters all opinions. New standards rise and estimates of value change with them. Yet truth is essentially a question of proportion and to attain it we must needs look at a career through contemporary eyes. There are not many men who give the complete, rounded impression of fulfilment that Weir Mitchell gave. Thus our final word should be of his three-quarters of a century, spent in work that brought renewed health and happiness to others and by them was richly acknowledged. Few are those who soar into so blue a sky. Few are the men of this or any generation who fold their wings so quietly and go down into the dusk out of the sunshine of happy labor, of many honors, of much love.

The End

HONORS AND MEMBERSHIPS

1856

Fellow, College of Physicians.

1857

Founder of Pathological Society.
Delegate to American Medical Association.

1860

British Medical Association, Honorary corresponding Member.

1861

Member, Boston Medical Society of Natural History.

1862

Member, American Philosophical Society.

1865

Honorary Member, Natural Academy of Sciences.
American Academy Arts and Sciences, Boston: Associate Fellow.

1867

Saint Andrew's Medical Graduate Association, London: Honorary Member.

1869

Pathological Society, President.

1870

Gynæcological Society, Boston: corresponding Member.
Medical Society of New Jersey: corresponding Member.

1871

Société de Medecine de Norvège, Member.

1872

Société Académique du Department de la Loire-Inférieure: corresponding Member.

1873

New York Society Neurology and Electrology: corresponding Member.

1874

New York Neurological Society: Honorary Member.
Member, New York Academy of Medicine.

1875

Elected to Board of Trustees of University of Pennsylvania and Managers of Hospital.
American Neurological Association: President.
University of Pennsylvania, Chairman Committee Department of Medicine.

1877

Medical Society of the State of New York: Honorary Member.

1878

London Medical Society: Member.
Philadelphia County Medical Society; Member.

1880

Association of American Physicians: President.
American Medical Association: Member.

1881

New York Medical Society, Committee on Experimental Medicine: Associate Member.

1883

University of Pennsylvania, Standing Committee on Veterinary Department: Member.

1884

Philadelphia Neurological Society: President.
College of Physicians: Vice President.

1885

Author's Club: Member.
American Academy of Medicine: Honorary Member.

1886

College of Physicians: President.
Philadelphia County Medical Society: Delegate to American Medical Association.
Harvard University: LL.D.
American Association of Physicians and Pathologists: President.

1887

College of Physicians: President.
Loyal Legion: Companion First Order.

1888

University of Bologna: M.D. Hon. Causa.

Royal Academy of Medicine, Rome: Honorary Associate.

College of Physicians: President.

1889

Corresponding Associate des Vereins für unsere Medicin, Berlin.

Clinical Society of London: Honorary Member.

American Physicians and Surgeons: President.

1890

College of Physicians: Vice President and Member of Library Committee.

College of Physicians: Vice President.

1891

College of Physicians: Vice President.

Harvard Medical School Association: Honorary Member.

Royal Academy of Medicine, Rome: Honorary Member.

American Electro-Therapeutic Association: Honorary Fellow.

Congress American Physicians and Surgeons: President.

1892

College of Physicians: President.

Athenæum Club, London: Member.

1893

College of Physicians: President.

1895

Edinburgh: Hon. LL.D.

1906

Princeton: Honorary LL.D.

Académie de Medecine: delegate to Franklin Anniversary.

University of Edinburgh: delegate to Franklin Anniversary.

Franklin Medal.

1907

Toronto: Honorary LL.D.

1908

Royal Society: Foreign Fellow.

1909

German Neurologists Association: corresponding Member.

Royal Society of Literature: Honorary Foreign Fellow.

1910

Jefferson College: Honorary LL.D.

1912

Johns Hopkins University: Honorary LL.D.

New York University Club: Name on Honor Cup.

Association of American Physicians, Washington: Honorary Member.

United States Army League.

WRITINGS

1846—"To a Polar Star," poem, pub. Nassau Monthly.

1850—"The Intestinal Gases," thesis, Jefferson Medical College.

1852—"On Various Forms of Uric Acid Crystals," American Journal of Medical Science.

1854—"On the Influence of Some States of Respiration on the Pulse," American Journal of Medical Science.

1856—"A Remarkable Case of Deep and Long-protracted Sleep," Transactions College of Physicians.

———

Poems, "Lines to Deserted Study," "Elk County" and others.

1857—"Bibliographical Notices on American Memoirs on Physiological Subjects," North American Medical and Chirurgical Review, January.

———

"Herndon," in daily paper, anon.

"Little Gold Dollar," article, Atlantic Monthly, July.

1858—"Blood Crystals of the Sturgeon," Academy of Natural Sciences, March.

"Muscular Phenomena following Blow from Percussion Hammer."

"Inhalation of Cinchona and its Salts," American Journal of Medical Sciences, December.

1859—Notes on effect of alcohol, glycerin, water, gum, am-

monia, on exposed hearts of frogs, turtles, sturgeons, etc., April, Scientific Magazine.

"On Carroval and Vao" (with Hammond), American Journal Medical Sciences, May.

"Experimental Study of Toxicological Effects of Sassybark . . ." (with Hammond), Charleston Medical Journal, November.

1860—"On Alkaloids of Corroval and Vao," Academy of Natural Sciences, April.

"Production of Cataract in Frogs," American Journal Medical Sciences, October.

"Researches on Venom of Rattlesnake," Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge, July.

1861—"On Treatment of Rattlesnake Bites," North American Medical and Chirurgical Review, March.

1862—"Sur la resistance aux effets du curare offerett par la tortue," Journal de la Physiologie de L'Homme.

"Experiments and Observations on the Circulation in Chelonia," American Journal, April.

———

Verses, Atlantic, March.

"Sinking of the Cumberland," verses.

1863—"Researches in Anatomy and Physiology of Chelonia," Smithsonian Contributions, 4th March.

1864—"Reflex Paralysis," Surgeon General's Office, 10th March.

"Gunshot Wounds and other Injuries of the Nerves," Lippincott, October.

"On Malingering" (with W. W. Keen), American Journal, October.

"Enquiry into the Correctness of the Belief that Professor Bibron Was the Inventor of the Antidote which Bears His Name," American Journal, October.

———

Poems published in "Children's Hour."

Poems,"Kearsarge and How Cumberland Went Down."

1865—"Arsenical Albuminuria," New York Medical Journal, June.

"On the Antagonism of Morphia and Atropia" (with Keen and Morehouse), American Journal Medical Sciences, July.

1866—"Paralysis from Peripheral Irritation," New York Medical Journal.

———

"The Case of George Dedlow," anon., Atlantic Monthly, July.

"Fuz-Buz the Fly," fairy tale.

1867—"On Retrogressive and Other Spastic Movements in Birds," American Journal Medical Sciences, January.

"On Nerve Injuries," United States Sanitary Reports.

———

"Autobiography of a Quack," Atlantic Monthly, October and November.

1868—"Contributions to Toxicology of Snake Venoms," New York Medical Journal, January.

"On Reflex Spasms and Palsies Caused by Cold Applied to Skins of Birds," American Journal, January.

"Poison of the Rattlesnake," Atlantic Monthly, April.

———

"A Literary Hospital," Atlantic Monthly, July.
"On Modern Method of Studying Poisons," Atlantic Monthly, September.

1869—"Researches on the Physiology of the Cerebellum," American Journal of Medical Sciences, April.
"On Certain Forms of Localized Neuralgia," Transactions Philadelphia College of Physicians.
"On the Extreme Difficulty of Influencing Birds by Opium," American Journal of Medical Sciences.

1870—"A Study of Opium and Its Derivative Alkaloids"—American Journal of Medical Science, January.
"Bromic Ulcer," Transactions Philadelphia College of Physicians.
"Proposal to Use Lithium Bromide," Transactions Phila. College of Physicians.
"New Observation on Rattlesnake Poison," American Journal Medical Science.
"On Rapid Respiration after Gunshot Wound," American Journal Medical Science.
"Skimmed Milk as an Exclusive Diet in Disease," Philadelphia Medical Times.
"Was He Dead," Atlantic Monthly, January.

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Poems, "Rain in Camp."

1871—"Phantom Limbs," essay.
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