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DR. S. WEIR MITCHELL

MANY days have passed since the world heard of Dr. S. Weir Mitchell's death. From all quarters have come the tribute due to his genius and the praise which his rare personality called forth from all sorts and conditions of men. Yet, although so much has now been said in honor of the man and of his memory, it is fitting that we take this, our first opportunity, to make some record of his relations with the Museum and to express the affection and esteem in which he was held.

Dr. Mitchell was a member of the Board of Managers of the University Museum from the year 1909 until the time of his death on the 4th of January, 1914.

Such an association between a great man of letters and a public institution is rare and when, as in the case recorded here, that association carries with it the close and active interest of one whose personal endowments were of an altogether superior order, his loss is in an unusual degree a calamity.

Among the little group of citizens who have made the Museum's cause peculiarly their own, Dr. Mitchell worked harmoniously and gave unsparingly of his time and of his great parts. It was seldom that he failed to attend a meeting, for the sense of duty was strong in him and his loyalty was a passion. His long and intimate acquaintance with the men and methods of science, combined with his great humanity, gave him a clear insight into the purposes of the Museum and lent weight to his suggestions, many of which have proved of great value in the constructive work upon which we are engaged.

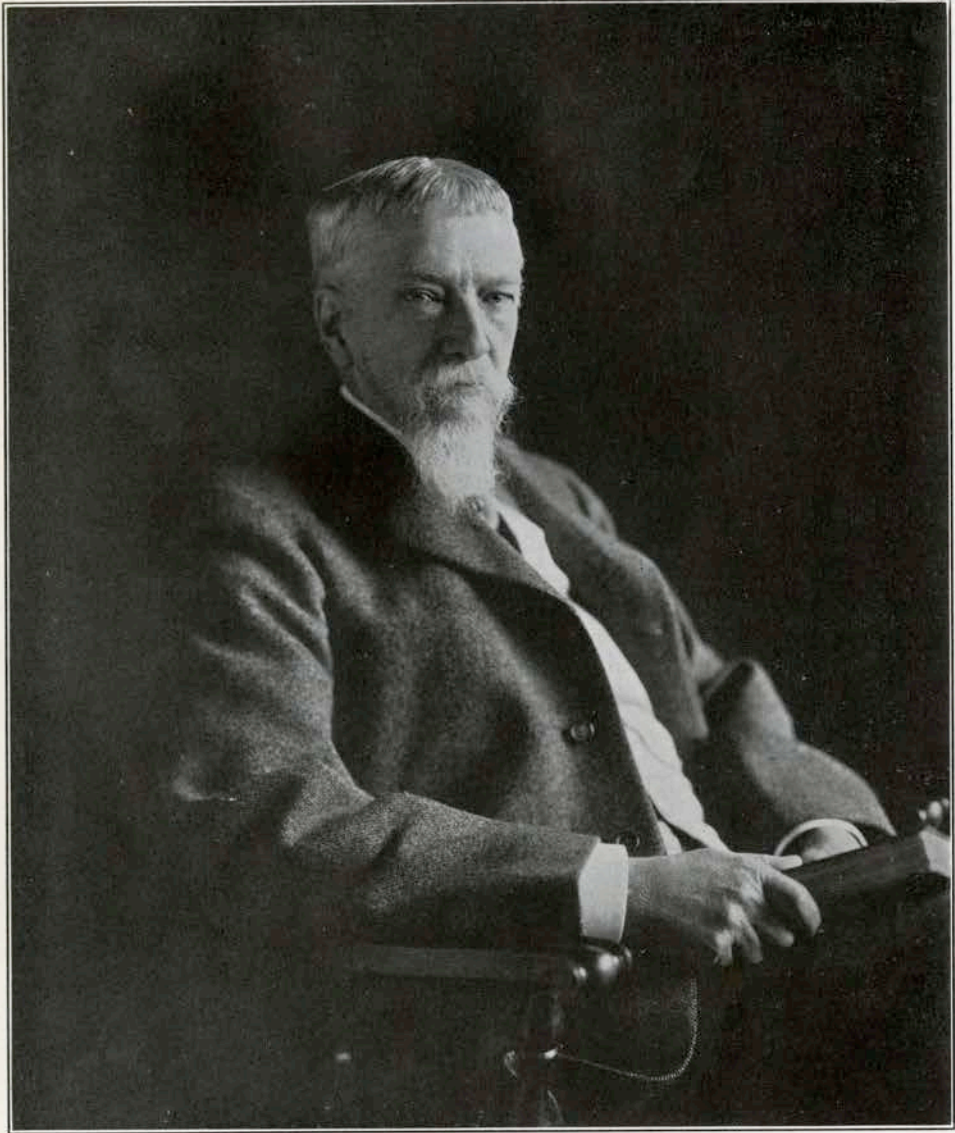
Apart from these official visits when the Board met here, it was his habit to frequent the Museum and to keep in close touch

with its progress. Occasionally he would be accompanied by some distinguished guest for whose benefit the visit was made, but it is for those occasions when he came by himself to pass a half hour in pleasant conversation that he will be best remembered. The Museum had become one of his favorite haunts, a circumstance which gave rare satisfaction to those entrusted with the conduct of its work, for they ever found in this association an influence that was as helpful as it was agreeable. On his part, he found in the activities of the Museum and in the collections that were always coming in, a ready significance. Quick to recognize whatever was appropriate and applicable to his own life and labors, he hardly ever failed to take away with him something which he could identify with his varied interests and especially with his literary pursuits. His versatile mind thus caught many suggestions which became part of its rich endowment and sometimes found permanent expression in his writings. His later works bear witness in more than one instance how faithfully his literary genius reflected these observations and recorded his impressions.

His distinguished figure and kind gray eyes had grown so agreeably familiar that his appearance was always a gratifying sight, for he had a pleasant smile and a word of greeting for everyone.

Sometimes on these visits he was accompanied by a little granddaughter and those who saw him then may well like this recollection of him best, for there was a rare charm in that picture of the venerable old man, with tender affection explaining to the child, from the abundance of his knowledge, the objects that appealed especially to her.

Another recollection that will not be forgotten is that associated with his frequent Sunday visits. On these days between the hours of two and six, the Museum is generally filled with people who have no opportunity of enjoying the collections at any other time. The extraordinary helpfulness of the man to his fellow men on these occasions deserves to be recorded. As he walked through the halls in his customary suit of quiet gray, he himself became, quite unconsciously, a center of attraction for the crowd who, not knowing who he was, yet seemed always to recognize something of *what* he was. It was his custom at these times to speak politely to such visitors as might have chanced to attract his attention. He was quite likely to pick out for these little conversations people of the humbler ranks and especially the children. The persons thus



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addressed, invariably found themselves in an agreeable way, engaging the friendly interest of a total stranger. Many times, after the brief conversation was ended, some poor man or woman, still under the charm of his presence and the spell of his rich, strong voice, would watch the retreating figure as long as he remained in sight and then seek some one in order to ask his name. It is not difficult to imagine that these visitors went away feeling happier and better for the encounter.

One of Dr. Mitchell's particular interests, a movement which he inaugurated and into which he infused something of his own character, was the co-operation between the Museum and the public schools of Philadelphia. The plan has already brought thousands of school children with their teachers repeatedly to the Museum to see the collections and to have these explained to them in a simple and agreeable way. This educational work has grown and is destined in the future to grow to still larger proportions.

It was at the end of his long life that the Museum came thus into close relations with Dr. Mitchell and had the advantage of his precious personality. During these last years his helpfulness was not diminished and his hold on men's minds was not relaxed. More and more as he grew towards the day of parting, his serene bearing and unshadowed spirit quickened our courage and strengthened our faith.

The following resolution, passed by the Board of Managers, expresses the esteem in which he was held by his colleagues.

G. B. G.

RESOLUTION ON THE DEATH OF DR. MITCHELL ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF MANAGERS ON JANUARY 16, 1914.

"It is not possible in a resolution upon the death of Weir Mitchell to express duly the feelings which such a loss brings to his colleagues; but we may at least record our great admiration for the man and our appreciation of his valuable assistance in our work.

"The many fields in which his abilities have been exerted alone attest Dr. Mitchell's wonderful usefulness.

"There was a strength that his mere presence gave to every association of his life which could not be measured, though recognized by all.

"His loyalty to any cause he advocated was of the rarest and most unflinching character.

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"No one ever thought of his advanced age as he accepted to the last every duty imposed upon him, and his punctual performance and attendance were always to be relied upon.

"Dr. Mitchell was truly a great man, but he gave his time and influence so freely and generously to others that they were accepted as they were given, and it is only upon his death that their great value is fully realized.

"In this Museum he took the deepest interest and he felt that no effort was too great to rouse the community to an understanding of what it represents and to enlist the support which it requires and deserves.

"There is a void created by his absence never to be filled, but his inspiring influence will long continue and the memory of his great service and delightful companionship will ever be cherished by his associates in this Board."