

The Canada Lancet

VOL. XLVII. TORONTO, FEBRUARY, 1914 No 6.

EDITORIAL

SILAS WEIR MITCHELL.

In the passing of this distinguished member of the medical profession, science and letters have lost a noted disciple. He occupied a position somewhat similar to that of Oliver W. Holmes. Both made their mark, a lasting one, in the history of medicine and in the world of letters. Dr. Mitchell attained the goodly age of 84, and he used his many years to advantage.

When Dr. Mitchell was a fairly young man he showed a collection of his verses to Dr. Holmes, who told him to keep them by him for forty years, and after that time to publish them if he thought they were worthy of seeing the light. Dr. Mitchell did publish them, many of them after mature years of thought. Dr. Holmes also advised Dr. Mitchell to adhere closely to medicine and not to give much of his time to the writing of articles and books on general literature.

His grandfather was Dr. Alexander Mitchell, of Virginia, and his father was Dr. Kearsley Mitchell, of Philadelphia. When Dr. Weir Mitchell graduated from Jefferson Medical College he settled in Philadelphia and devoted himself to his work with marked energy. He did some original work on snake venom that remains as a standard authority to this day. In 1862 he began his work on the rest cure, and wrote on "Fat and Blood, and How to Make Them." This led him to study nervous disease, upon which he became a world-wide authority.

About 1880 he began to publish works on fiction, and from that time onward gave to the public a number of very attractive stories, such as "Hugh Wynne," "The Autobiography of a Quack," "The Adventures of Francois," "Dr. North and His Friends," "When All the Woods are Green," etc. But Dr. Mitchell was also the author of some really good poetry, and perhaps none of his pieces is finer than the one on the death of Dr. W. H. Drummond, the poet of the French Habitant.

Dr. Weir Mitchell was the bearer of many honorary degrees, among