

STEWART MITCHELL

Robert Stewart Mitchell was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on November 25, 1892, a son of Charles Lucius and Mary Piatt (Suter) Mitchell. From the Franklin School in Cincinnati he went to Harvard, where he took a B.A. *cum laude* in 1915 and an M.A. in 1916. His first job was teaching English at the University of Wisconsin where he had an unhappy experience with a politician's son who should have been flunked, an experience which gave him a permanent prejudice against public educational institutions. Disgusted, he returned to Cincinnati and enlisted in a field artillery company which saw active service in France. Discharged a private, he became for a year the managing editor of the *Dial*. The chief result of this year was the publication of a volume of his poems and the development of a desire to see Europe under better circumstances. After two years spent in travel and in study at the University of Montpellier and at Jesus College, Cambridge, he returned to New York to settle down with his aunt, Mrs. Georgine H. Thomas, and to read French literature and to study Greek for another two years. In 1925 he returned to the Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences where, having been distracted by appointment to a tutorship, he finally took his Ph.D. in 1933. His dissertation, a biography of Horatio Seymour, was published five years later.

In 1928 Stewart became editor of the *New England Quarterly*, and the next year he went to the Massachusetts Historical Society to succeed Worthington C. Ford as editor. After eleven years of service he resigned, to be recalled in 1947 as Director and editor. It was as an editor that he was at his best. He recognized that Ford's type of editing, which set the first draft of a manuscript and did the revising in galley, was no longer possible, and set up new, more

practical, and sounder practices, which in turn had become hopelessly slow and expensive by the time that he edited the *New Letters of Abigail Adams* for this Society in 1945. To be fair about it, Stewart's high editorial standards were achieved only because he had a dual personality in office, the other one being Miss Marjory M. Bruce. Even with her help the output of his years in office was pitifully small because he worked only when the spirit moved him.

The decision which shaped Stewart Mitchell's life was made in our graduate student days. Those were lean years for young men in our field, particularly those with families to support. Mrs. Thomas offered to settle a life income on him if he would forego marriage and be her social companion. So he moved out of our graduate-school world and became for our children an out-of-season Santa Claus who used to come in a big chauffeur-driven limousine. After the death of Mrs. Thomas he developed serious personal failings which were a trial to his friends, who never ceased to regard him with exasperated affection. His health failed swiftly after his retirement from the Massachusetts Historical Society, and he died on November 1, 1957. C. K. S.

WILLIAM HUTCHINSON PUTNAM

William Hutchinson Putnam died at Hartford, March 10, 1958. Only a month before his death he was honored on his eightieth birthday as "Hartford's Number One Citizen," at a testimonial dinner attended by some eight hundred government, business, and civic leaders. Forty years of his life were given to advancing the civic life of the city of Hartford. He once listed his principal interests as "Hartford Hospital, Hartford parks and horticulture, education of women at Connecticut College, major improvements in the

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