



CAPTAIN CHARLES L. MITCHELL.

## Mr. CHARLES L. MITCHELL.

A Hero of Two Wars—The Idol of Garrison and Phillips—a Man of Many Honors—Boston's Most Representative Negro—An Interesting Life and Character.

The story of Captain Mitchell's life is an interesting one. He was born in Hartford, Conn., at about the middle of the present century. His father, Mr. William M. Mitchell, was a deacon in one of the churches of that city, and the family is known as one of the best families of color in the state. At the age of 17 the boy became an apprentice in the printing office of Mr. William H. Burleigh, publisher of a Hartford abolition paper entitled the Charter Oak. Two years later Mr. Burleigh sold his office to Mr. Baldwin, afterward editor and senior publisher of the Worcester Spy, and for several years representative in congress of the Eighth Massachusetts district. With him Mr. Mitchell completed his term of apprenticeship.

In 1853 he came to Boston and worked at his trade in various offices, including those of the Riverside press at Cambridge and the Liberator. He was regarded by Mr. Garrison as one of the best compositors in the city. In the congenial and inspiring atmosphere of such an office he naturally grew into vital touch with the principles of universal freedom proclaimed by its proprietor, and when the days of strife came and Massachusetts led the van in enlisting colored troops, he united his fate and his fortune with the Fifty-fifth regiment of infantry, one of the two Massachusetts colored regiments, and enlisted as private July 1, 1863.

He did not long remain a private, however, but was rapidly promoted for bravery and meritorious service. One month after entering the army he was made corporal, and on July 20, 1864 he became sergeant. For several months he served as sergeant major. His knowledge of his trade opened up for him temporarily a wider sphere of usefulness. In the early months of the fall of 1864 he was detailed for duty as post printer at the headquarters of General John P. Hatch, at Morris Island, S. C. In setting up the orders issued Mr. Mitchell saw that the union forces were on the eve of a movement that would mean active work in the field for the command. He therefore urgently requested Major L. B. Perry, adjutant general of the United States Vol., for

permission to rejoin his company in the Fifty-fifth for the purpose of taking part in the expedition that terminated in the battle of Honey Hill, S. C. Permission was granted reluctantly, because it would be difficult to find a successor to so valuable a man, and Mr. Mitchell rejoined his company on the eve of its departure for Hilton Head.

It was in the battle of Honey Hill, one of the most disastrous conflicts on the southern main in which one-half the officers and one-third of the men in action were killed or wounded, that Sergeant Mitchell, while charging a battery in aiding General Sherman in cutting through the railroad, received the cannon shot which deprived him of his right foot.

The fortitude with which he bore his wound was equal to his bravery. As they were carrying him past his lieutenant colonel on a stretcher the young sergeant, forgetting it all as he saw a strong regiment go by to make a fresh charge rose up, saluted and cheered him, and bade him "go ahead." For this display of gallantry, which created much favorable comment in the national press at the time, he received from Governor Andrew, at the request of his superior officer, a second lieutenantcy. Mr. Mitchell was one of the few colored men upon whom this distinction was conferred.

During the war he served also in the siege of Charleston, S. C. In the battle of James Island he assisted in capturing two Napoleon guns and turning them upon the fleeing enemy with their own ammunition. He was placed in command of the detachments to serve these guns, which were afterwards placed as trophies at headquarters of the Fifty-fifth regiment. He was honorably discharged from service Oct. 20, 1865.

Returning to Boston, with as Wendell Phillips said in describing him "that added grace, the halting which is the stateliest step of the soldier," Lieutenant Mitchell received from Collector Russell an appointment in the Boston custom house to the inspectorship for mercury held by the Rev. J. C. Lovejoy. Subsequently Collector A. W. Beard promoted him to a clerkship at an increased salary. For 30 years he has been employed in the custom service and his efficiency, intelligence and fidelity to principle have won for him much esteem.

In 1866 he received fitting recognition of his services and suffering for his country in the Republican nomination as representative to the Massachusetts

legislature from ward 6, Boston, the home of Governor Andrew, and the wealthiest ward in the state embracing "within its limits more literary culture and more literally educated men than any other representative district" known. He was cordially supported by the union papers of Boston, and was elected by a handsome vote. Upon him and upon his colleague, Mr. E. G. Walker of Charlestown, "devolved the duty not only of representing the districts from which they came, but the far higher and more responsible duty of representing a race about entering upon a career of equal citizenship."

Capt. Mitchell enlisted in sixth Massachusetts infantry and was made captain of Co. L. The recollections of the struggles of the Union forces in the 60s to liberate the oppressed slave, made the desire even greater to help Cuba free herself of Spain's yoke of slavery.

The Captain was a prominent figure at the Boston meeting, being chairman of the committee on reception. His life is one which has in it every phase of a good life, from the dramatical to the to the general common place every day sphere of life; an inspiration to the colored youth of the land as well as those of any other hue or nationality.

Several years ago Mr. Mitchell was married to Miss Nellie Brown of Dover, N. H., whose prestige as a musician and whose ability as a teacher have made her as dear and as familiar to the public as is her husband. Her voice has received enthusiastic comment from the press throughout the country, and among her delighted auditors have been General Grant and others of equal note.

Not the least of Mrs. Mitchell's achievements is the invention of the phoneterion, a silver device for the use of those among her vocal pupils whose purity of tone is impaired because they cannot keep the tongue in place while singing. Mrs. Mitchell's modesty has made her husband the nominal inventor and patentee of this instrument, but the title is a nominal one only, and the right of discovery lies wholly with Mrs. Mitchell herself. The device was awarded the prize medal and diploma at the 16th exhibition of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanics' association in 1887, and was exhibited by Mrs. Mitchell at the 19th anniversary of the Music Teachers' National association convention in New York last year. It is much used by musicians, and is especially helpful to those inclined to a throaty intonation. The instrument is destined to be more widely known. Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell's policy in recommending it only where they know it is needed, rather than in promiscuously advertising it, has made it advance in public favor slow and certain, but has also, as their friends assure them, obscured a light which is just beginning to shine.

Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell have a delightful home at 24 Sherman street, and their charming hospitality has been extended to many. Capt. Mitchell holds his custom house place and is one of the fixtures there.

## A Resignation.

Dr. E. D. Scott has tendered his resignation as clerk in the office of the Auditor of the Post Office Department. Dr. Scott has an extensive practice in the northeastern section of the city and finds it necessary to devote his entire time to it.

Messrs. A. B. and J. B. Christian, of Shaw and Slater schools respectively, stopped over a few hours recently while on their way South, having spent the summer with their parents in Brad-dock, Pa.

## Mrs. Terrell's Return.

Mrs. Mary Church Terrell has returned from a most successful lecture tour in the West. She has also just received an invitation to address the American Missionary Association at its annual meeting which will be held October 23d and 25th inclusive at Springfield, Mass. No other woman of the race is in such demand as Mrs. Terrell as a speaker and writer.

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