



**M**ITCHELL, WILLIAM (born in the City of New York, February 24, 1801; died while on a visit to the summer residence of his son, at Morristown, New Jersey, October 6, 1886), was the son of Reverend Edward Mitchell and Cornelia Anderson.<sup>1</sup> He stood at the head of his class in the preparatory school of Joseph Nelson, and was graduated from Columbia College with all the honors in 1820. He studied law with William Slosson, and was admitted to the bar as an attorney in 1823, as solicitor in chancery in 1824, as counsellor at law in 1826, and as counsellor in chancery in 1827. He soon won recognition as a learned lawyer. He edited an edition of Blackstone, with American cases, published in 1841, and was recognized as an expert in real estate, probate and commercial law. Appointed master of chancery in 1840, he distinguished himself in difficult cases and acquired a large practice. He was a justice of the Supreme Court for the 1st judicial district of New York from 1849 to 1858, serving as a judge of the Court of Appeals in 1856, and becoming presiding justice of the Supreme Court of his district in 1857.

A most remarkable tribute to his judicial abilities and fairness is the fact that from his retirement from the bench until his death, by common consent of the legal profession of New York City, he was practically continued in the discharge of important judicial duties, holding court almost continuously as referee for the adjudication of cases assigned to him by the judges or referred to his arbitration by mutual consent of the parties at issue. This was a unique distinction in the degree that he enjoyed it. "His reported opinions," says the venerable Benjamin D. Silliman, "are marked by breadth and force of reasoning and large learning, which give to them permanent value."