

in 1934, he read a paper on "John Crowninshield and the Building of the Privateer *Diomedes*." He was also a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society and the Colonial Society of Massachusetts.

Until his resignation from the Institute in 1948 at the age of eighty-one, Corning showed hardly at all the weight of his years. He lived quietly in retirement until his death at Portland on February 3, 1956.

On October 22, 1896, Corning was married at Marquette, Michigan, to Cora Allison Burt. They are survived by three sons, Clarence Hamilton, John Burt, and Howard, Jr.

C. K. S.

### BERNARD AUGUSTINE DeVOTO

"Benny" DeVoto was born at Ogden, Utah, on January 11, 1897, a son of Florian Bernard and Rhoda (Dye) DeVoto. When he entered Ogden High School in 1910 he immediately made it evident that he was more widely read than his teachers, was a hard and unorthodox thinker, and was not bashful. After graduation he was uncertain of his course. He worked part time in a bookstore and as a temporary reporter on the *Ogden Standard*, but in 1914 he entered Harvard in search of intellectual combat. After an academic career interrupted by two years of service as a second lieutenant in the infantry, he was graduated in 1920 as of the Class of 1918. For four years he served as an instructor and assistant professor at Northwestern University, and then returned to Harvard where until 1936 he tutored and lectured, and for a time edited the *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*.

Among the graduate students and young instructors at Harvard, Benny was a maverick. He would have none of

our grinding for a Ph.D. and our patient search for a nice, comfortable, sheltered, institutional job. When he needed extra domestic cash (he married Helen Avis MacVicar on June 30, 1923), he simply dashed off a western thriller for the *Saturday Evening Post*. The rest of his circle watched with awe when he boldly cast off his academic moorings and went out on the ebb tide of the depression to attempt to earn his living as a free-lance writer. At that time such a decision took more courage than Lewis and Clark needed.

DeVoto served for two years as editor of the *Saturday Review of Literature*, and then for twenty years he occupied "The Easy Chair" of *Harper's Magazine*. His first novel, *The Crooked Mile*, which appeared in 1924, was a poor piece of work, but his craftsmanship improved steadily to *The Year of Decision* (1943), *Across the Wide Missouri* (1947), and *The Course of Empire* (1952). In all, he published seventeen books. He won the Pulitzer and Bancroft prizes and the National Book award, received no less than four Litt.D. degrees, and was appointed literary executor of Mark Twain and custodian of his manuscripts.

At the height of his success DeVoto acted with the same brash intellectual honesty which had marked him as a high-school freshman in Utah. His really great modesty was never better shown than in his failure to realize that he was no longer free to speak without regard for the susceptibilities of large segments of the nation. Only his personal friends in Maine and Utah realized that his beratings of those States came from love and not from contempt.

DeVoto wrote speeches for Adlai Stevenson in 1952 and might have become an important figure in politics were it not that he was, as he said, "a good deal to the left of the New Deal," and was too honest to accept such political expediencies of the Democratic Party as 90 per cent parity. He was outraged to see other liberals play party politics.

Toward learned societies DeVoto had a rather exaggerated respect, but the exigencies of earning a living as a free-lance writer kept him from being active in them. In 1945 he was elected to the American Antiquarian Society, before which, in October, 1947, he read a paper on "The Welsh Indians." However, his real connection with the Society lay in the cult of the cocktail, since both he and Dr. Brigham planned to write a history of the origin of the beverage in this country. But neither ever finished their studies.

On November 14, 1955, shortly after a television broadcast, he died of a heart attack. He leaves his widow and two sons, Gordon King and Mark Bernard DeVoto.

C. K. S.

### ARCHER MILTON HUNTINGTON

Archer Milton Huntington, son of Collis P. Huntington, died at his 700-acre Stanerigg Farm at Bethel, Connecticut, on December 11, 1955. For 45 years he had been a loyal member of this Society but had never been able to visit the Library or attend a meeting. His apologies were sincere and profound as, prevented by a "multitude of other matters," "overwhelmed and thus unable to anticipate the visit" he was kept away—often by his many visits to Europe. Four years before his death at the age of 85, he wrote: "I am giving myself the pleasure of believing that some day I am going to see the Library and its work." He made fourteen separate money contributions to the Society and he was ready to join a Committee of Fifteen for a fund-raising campaign when the first World War intervened.

The story of Mr. Huntington's life is one of those rare and fabulous American tales of vast inherited wealth

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