

WORDS OF COMMENDATION

for

Dr. E. J. Wilson

Delivered at a meeting of the Kit Kat Club, Columbus, Ohio,
Tuesday, October 8, 1935, by Hervey W. Whitaker, M. D.

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By your leave and will, the following extract is taken from one of
the Columbus papers, having the date of Thursday, August 29, 1935:-

"Dr. Wilson dies at the home of his son. Former president of the
school board, passes at 82.

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"An illness of two years ended in death, Wednesday, for Dr. Edward
J. Wilson, aged 82, prominent physician in Columbus for many years, and
former president of the board of education, at the home of his son,
J. Tudor Wilson, 594 East Town Street. He had been retired five years.
A graduate of Long Island College, class of 1878, Dr. Wilson served his
internship in Long Island Hospital, and later became a member of the
teaching staff at the old Starling Medical College. At the time of his
death, Dr. Wilson was Vice President of the Midland Mutual Life Insurance
Company, and director emeritus.

"He was a former president of the Kit Kat Club, and a member of the
Ohio State Medical Association and the Goodale Masonic Lodge.

"Two other sons, Dr. Philip D. Wilson, New York City, and Dr. Edward
Harlan Wilson, 181 Stanbery Avenue, and eight grandchildren survive.
Funeral will be held at 2:30 P. M., Friday, at the residence, followed
by burial in Green Lawn, by Schoedinger and Company." - *Dispatch*

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Certain subtle influences and unexpected circumstances with which I
had nothing to do, imperfectly understood and not appreciated, seemingly
were causes which pre-ordained that I should give up a chosen position.
Apparently, this same Guardian Angel co-ordinated and directed my affairs
without my conscious knowledge, ordaining that I should move to Columbus,
Ohio. Events did occur unexpectedly. Their culmination, however, resulted
in my being landed at Columbus, where I was to spend the greater part of
my professional life.

Arriving at Columbus, practically an entire stranger, and wholly
unknown to the Medical profession, we found the changed situation a lone-
some one. But, fortunately, it now becomes my pleasure and gratification
to relate that among those of the medical profession I first met and have
known intimately was Dr. E. J. Wilson. At that time, Dr. Wilson was al-
ready well established and he was extensively known as one of the "up-and-
coming" physicians of Columbus, whose future success was assured. These

conclusions were based upon the fact of his personality, capacity, and his integrity, and justifiably, because of the reputation that he had established for honesty and sincerity, and for the attainment of more than ordinary medical discrimination.

Moreover, as naturally would be expected, he was also enjoying in full measure the fruits of his worth among a host of appreciative patients, good friends and followers, whose confidence he justly deserved. To my belief, it may be stated that he never abused this trust. From certain dominant characteristics of his make-up, along with other attributes, difficult to define, but with and after due deliberation and contemplation, one is now permitted to understand just "why" Dr. Wilson worked his will and way so successfully, and kept the spell which continued with him all along the many years of his laudable endeavors and unflinching service in his chosen profession.

Considering his time and the available opportunities for study and perfecting himself, to me it does now occur that Dr. Wilson fortunately belonged to, and was a part of the medical profession which has almost entirely disappeared from the annals.

After considerable meditation, it may be confidently asserted that Dr. Wilson rightly and justly belonged to the order now known as "the old school of medicine." The time of separation of the old school from the new school may be considered as definitely setting in along about the year 1890. Since that time, be it understood, new ideas, new methods of teaching and instructing medical students have been in active swing. In reality, a sweeping change has been in progress. The determining factors which have caused this change may be attributed to several things. Probably a few of the important ones may be mentioned:

- First - The germ theory of different diseases.
- Second - Theory and practice of asepsis.
- Third - Discovery and isolation of the tubercle bacillus.
- Fourth - Successful and brilliant investigations of Pasteur, the French scientist.

To this list, a larger number of other important developments and discoveries might justly be added to different fields of scientific investigation. It may also be noted that the present day medical attitude is hopelessly involved and absorbed by research investigations all over the world; that the drift into laboratory work with test making upon all the patients apparently dominates all other thought.

Before leaving the subject, another salient but no less important feature of "the old school" is to be noted, because of its historical value, and also incalculable benefits to the prospective medical student, - the Preceptor, whose office was to train and help prepare the young student for his medical college education.

The tenure of the Preceptor was for two years' time, during which the student occupied himself with the study of six branches of medicine. Now the student of medicine is class taught and instructed mostly in laboratories, without the influence of any other experienced medical personality. It should be remembered also that the Preceptor was an important factor of his time and age; that his influence was far-reaching and his moral power all for good.

Now, this factotum has been eclipsed for all time, and will no longer shine luminously in medical astronomy.

We must remember also the lilt of time to understand the customs of education when Dr. Wilson elected to become a physician. He was both wise and fortunate in selecting for his preceptor a person of unusually strong personality and impressive character. By mere chance, it became my good fortune to have known this person. He was New England born. He inherited, in large part, many of the sturdy characteristics of his forbears and undoubtedly he must have had considerable influence in shaping the mind and ethical attitude of Dr. Wilson's life. To my mind, it would be inconceivable for any young person to fail in receiving benefits from being associated with such a person. It is a known fact that by association and precept we become like those we associate with. So, it must have been equally true in this instance.

Dr. Wilson's life was active, full and busy. He was temperate, abstemious, and he lived without ostentation. Rightfully, he was entitled to all he received, and made a part of his own life. It now becomes a pleasurable recollection to have known him; to have not only been in consultation with him many times, but to have had him meet me in consultation, also. His medical ideals and opinions were a comfort to me, and a solace as well to his patients. He was not radical. On the contrary, he was conservative. He was frank, dependable and cheerful as well as inspiring. His presence in the sick room was consoling, strengthening and exhilarating. When he went from the room, he left an atmosphere of cheer and a sense of consolation with his patients. He made them feel better because of his presence, which, after all, is one of the chief offices of the real physician. Whenever possible, he offered hope to the sick ones.

All of us know he was a long-time member of the Kit Kat; that he was one of its presidents; that he always held in his mind high ideals for it; that he worked for its good and betterment; that he invariably manifested a sympathetic interest in it; that he was an active member; that he served long and faithfully in the administration of its affairs and assisted in its management.

As time wore on, Time wore on him, also. With the passing of years, to the critical and observing eye, it became gradually apparent that he was no longer rugged; that he was becoming physically enfeebled; that his co-ordination was difficult; so that eventually his attendance at meetings became irregular and then he appeared at longer intervals of time.

Finally the meeting went on, just the same, without him, but he was missed by his old friends. His place has not been filled!

It is now remembered that some time after he continued to be absent from club meetings, he one day called me over the phone to offer his felicitations concerning certain unimportant civic events. During the short conversation, he gave expression of his opinion of himself, in a quiet tone of voice and dignified manner; also he made reference to his probable future in no unmistakable words. Philosophical recompense - if such an expression may be used - filled his words without perceptible emotion. Concluding the interview, he observed that he would no longer be able to meet with us. He bade me be of good cheer, to carry on as best I could, to preserve a cheerful mental attitude and to keep the body wholesome.

In his going we have lost a good member; a valuable asset, because, in reality, he was a valued member. Dr. Wilson was honest; he was dignified; he was a gentleman; he was an accomplished physician. He possessed individuality; he possessed sympathy; he had the mental acumen and, to a marked degree, the dexterity of the real physician.

Now, as he wanders down the purple shadowed groves of Elysium and through the fields of green, made bright by the effulgence of immortality, perfumed by and with sensuous odors from many kinds of different exotic flowers, brilliant, beautiful and radiant, may he graciously condescend to look down upon us all here, and bestow on each of us his gladdening benedictions. We ask this because of his gracious presence now remembered. May he have eternal rest in the depths of quiet, scented forests, where the peace and beauty of the world was, and is, an ever present witness to the majesty of God.