

## William Revere Wellborn, M. D.



Journey's End came to Dr. William Revere Wellborn of Elkin, North Carolina, May 24, 1943.

"Now is the stately column broke,  
The beacon light is quench'd in smoke,  
The trumpet's silver sound is still,  
The warder silent on the hill!"

The moving lines set down above first fell from the golden pen of Scotland's immortal bard—Sir Walter Scott. They were written in tribute to the memory of one of England's most illustrious statesmen—William Pitt (the younger).

And now this writer quotes the lovely lines again—this time, not in honor of a statesman clothed in high acclaim, but of a Family Doctor robed in the garments of loving gratitude, which vesture is his by gift of men, women, and children in token of the esteem in which they held him.

To live and die in the service of humanity—that is Medicine.

To the sick man the doctor is a father,  
To the man in health—a friend.  
The sickness passed and health restored—  
a preserver.

The family doctor may not leave wealth worth the counting nor writings worth the reading; his children may be none or forgotten; his sense of song and note little better than the tom-tom of the savage, and he may have an unborn appreciation of art, but when he answers his last call and walks out into darkness of night to go on, and on, and on, never to return, the people will realize that during his life he has scattered an influence of kindness, thoughtfulness, and tolerance to all those with whom he came in contact; that he has given something to posterity, valuable and unforgettable, and they will pronounce him a success.

The American family has been losing this best friend, the family doctor. He is the man who knew every member of the family, the life history of each person, their inheritance, their frailties. He knew when medicine was needed and when sympathetic advice was better than medical remedies.

This family doctor was a force in the community with influence beyond his profession. On him the affection of the public for the medical profession was largely founded.

Yes, almost every community in America is familiar with the doctor who has an office, treats patients during the day and spends a good part, or sometimes all, of the night visiting patients and taking care of those who are ill at their homes, or in the arduous and trying task of caring for obstetrical patients. Most general practitioners are heroes. Without acclaim and without medals, they go about their daily work ministering to the sick and distressed, and caring for those requiring medical attention, quietly and unobtrusively.

A doctor with a well-established general practice not only ministers to the sick, but he comforts those who are distressed and aids greatly in relieving the distress of those who are troubled with sorrow or any of the many calamities that befall human beings. He cares for the mother at childbirth and for those who are passing out of this life, a confidant and friend of the families whom he serves.

Every day a busy doctor performs Herulean tasks without realizing it. Only another doctor can appreciate the many things which a doctor does for his patients and the families whom he serves so faithfully. Not only in sickness but in time of other kinds of distress which are becoming so multitudinous, he helps to allay the fears

and anxieties and does much to mitigate the grief and mental suffering of those in distress. Only the Lord and another doctor can appreciate just what an active member of the medical profession, who practices medicine from the standpoint of a doctor and also a humanitarian, goes through almost every day.

The family doctor sees people as they are, and in his daily rounds he recognizes in others the frailties of human nature, but withholds judgment and tries to relieve those things that have been caused by the thoughtless and irresponsible and ministers to the sick all alike. As a one-man life-saving station, the family doctor is an institution himself. He has had a profound influence upon the American way of life and that influence has been for the good of mankind.

Doctors are not always appreciated as they should be. In fact, most doctors underestimate their own usefulness in the life of a community. Only when they're gone do people realize that a calamity has befallen a community.

Dr. William Revere Wellborn, after long years of arduous and difficult practice, developed a heart condition from which he suffered for the last several years of his life. During this period when he was unable to do the heavy work to which he was accustomed he built an office at his home and did principally office work.

Dr. Wellborn was a native of Ashe County, but later his family moved to Wilkesboro. His home at that time was in a grove of mighty oak trees, which stand today.

Dr. Wellborn attended Davidson College, where he graduated, after which he attended the North Carolina Medical College, from which he graduated in 1905. He was a good student and after graduation

took an internship and later post-graduate work in New York.

Dr. Wellborn practiced for a very short time in Coleridge, Randolph County, and then came to Elkin, in 1909, where he built up a large and successful practice. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Wellborn. He was a charter member of the Elkin Kiwanis Club, a member of the Masonic Fraternity, was on the staff of the Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital in Elkin, a member of the Surry County Medical Society, the North Carolina Medical Society, and the American Medical Association.

Dr. Wellborn was an active member and elder of the Presbyterian Church and was one of the members who was instrumental in the erection of the new church building.

Dr. Wellborn was always cheerful and was always keenly interested in every phase of medicine. He kept up-to-date. He was a good doctor.

Dr. Wellborn sleeps. The kindly hands that have brought relief to so many are folded across the tired breast. The strings of the harp of his life are muted; but the memory of his work of love lives on in the hearts of thousands. Once again there has been fulfillment of the words of an ancient seer: "Men of kindness are taken away." Of a truth, this doctor has been "an abiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

In the passing of Dr. Wellborn, the community and the medical profession have sustained a great loss. Others will gradually take up the work where he left off, but there will always be that sense of loss by his people, his friends, his patients, and the community as an invisible but permanent memorial to a good doctor who has gone on.

August 30, 1943

—J. W. D.

# In Memoriam

William Revere Wellborn, M. D.

May 24, 1943