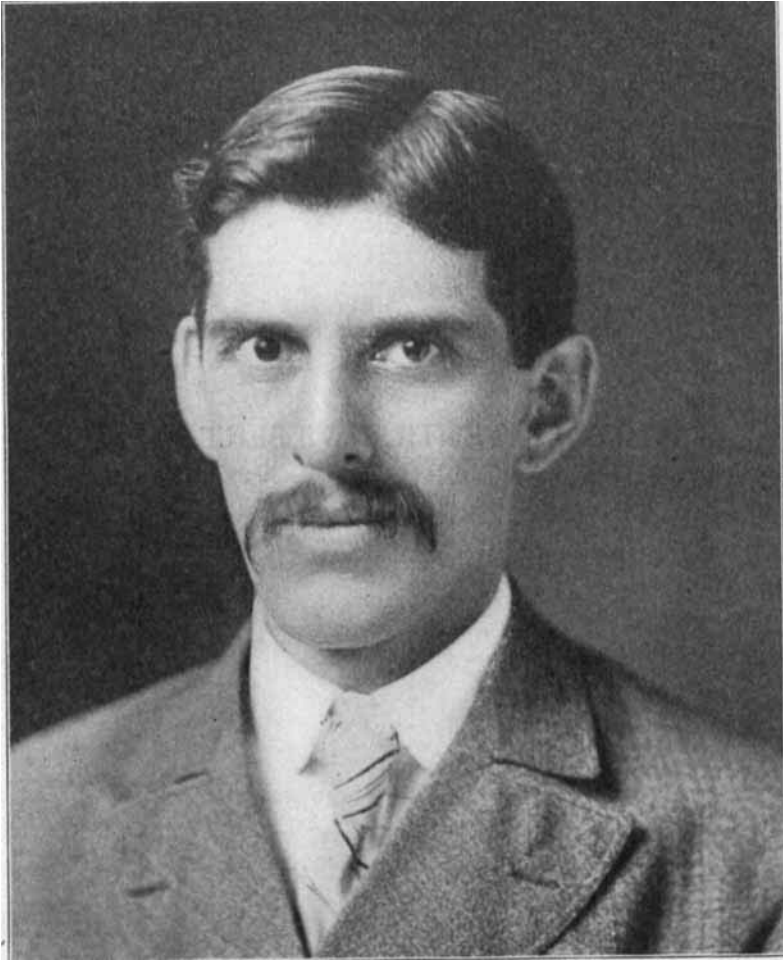


MARTIN INVENTIUS WILBERT, PH.M.

Born June 1, 1865

Died November 25, 1916



MARTIN I. WILBERT

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MARTIN INVENTIUS WILBERT.

Pharmacy has suddenly lost one of its most talented workers in the death of Martin I. Wilbert. The blow, while not unexpected, came like a flash of lightning. A moment before his death at the German Hospital, Philadelphia, he was chatting pleasantly and hopefully, then his head sought his pillow, and with one expiring breath his soul fled.

His one purpose in life was service to his fellows and loyalty to his friends.

Martin I. Wilbert was born July 1, 1865, in the town of Lewis, Lewis County, New York. At the age of four years and two months his education began in a nearby country school; later on he attended a private school in Utica, New York, paying particular attention to the study of German, and then he became a student in Archambault's Academy in the city of Montreal. He returned to Utica and entered the drug business and he soon realized that he needed pharmaceutical education; he then matriculated in the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and was graduated as an honor student in 1890. In the year following he was made apothecary in the German Hospital at Twenty-first and Girard Avenue, Philadelphia. His first duty as he saw it was to improve the service of the apothecary in this institution, and the following years were marked by activity, the managers gave him a chance not only to develop the service, but encouraged him in the wider field of experimental research in improving preparations. The pharmaceutical journals gained an enthusiastic worker in a field which was certainly not crowded with aspirants. He was not satisfied with the honor of the degree of Graduate in Pharmacy, but continued his work and was the first graduate of the College to receive a degree *in course*. He presented a paper on "Aloes" which gained for him the degree of Master in Pharmacy on April 7, 1903.

His duties at the German Hospital permitted him to do a large amount of investigation in pharmaceutical technique, and he was one of the first to study *radio-activity* in which he became an expert. His abilities were soon recognized by the United States Government, and on October 1, 1908, he left the German Hospital to accept a position in the Hygienic Laboratory of the Public Health

Service as assistant pharmacologist, and he became one of the editors of the *Digest of Comments on the United States Pharmacopœia*. Notwithstanding his removal to the city of Washington, he retained in a remarkable degree his affection for the German Hospital, and the associations and friendships there, which was virtually his home in Philadelphia, were continued to the end of his life.

In the American Pharmaceutical Association whenever work and research were needed, the cry went up from all sides, "Let Wilbert do it!" He often refused a position of chairman or president, but accepted that of secretary because he wanted to work. The question of compensation rarely entered into his calculations. It was always, "Where can I be most useful?"

It is quite probable that he realized that he would be taken suddenly from this world, because he suffered all his life from a weak heart, due to the sequelæ of a severe attack of scarlet fever in the early years of his childhood. He realized the force of "Work for the night is coming, when man's work is done."

The American Medical Association, recognizing Mr. Wilbert's ability, elected him a member of the Council on Pharmacy and Chemistry in 1905, and he became Secretary of its Section on Pharmacology and Therapeutics in 1911. The Editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in a recent editorial thus speaks of Mr. Wilbert's work: "Few know the sacrifices of time and efforts Mr. Wilbert made in connection with the Council work. His very life seemed to be wrapped up in bringing about better conditions both in pharmacy and in medicine. He was one of the few men who serve as connecting links between the two professions, and the full measure of his influence at Washington in behalf of the public health will never be fully known."

In 1900 he was elected to the Committee of Revision of the United States Pharmacopœia, and he immediately proceeded to work for the betterment of this National Authority. His knowledge of pharmaceutical technique and his researches in other departments of activity began to produce results, and this with his work on the National Formulary constitutes a most valuable contribution to the uplift of both professions. Members of both Committees were immediately impressed with whatever he wrote and his views always had great weight.

Wilbert never accepted a position for the mere honor of the office itself. *He wanted to work* and cared little for exalted positions without service. He was always loyal to his Alma Mater. In the various College functions he was generally present and he was a most valuable member of its Alumni Association. In the Pennsylvania Pharmaceutical Association he was a power. Everyone knew Wilbert and his contributions in all departments of pharmaceutical activity will be sadly missed. The same is true of his work in the American Pharmaceutical Association. He was aggressive and fearless in condemning what he believed to be wrong and he was a living exponent of righteousness and integrity. No one ever attempted to bribe Martin I. Wilbert. He was never what is commonly called a "kicker." The keynote of his character was optimism. Always opposed to meanness and chicanery, he never stooped to petty methods and a mere desire

for personal revenge. While realizing his own shortcomings, he was more interested in fighting the sin than the sinner.

The records of the American Chemical Society, the American Röntgen Ray Society, the American Electro-Chemical Society, and the Franklin Institute of Philadelphia show that he took an active interest in their proceedings. He delighted to be present at their meetings, and although entertainments and excursions formed a part of their programmes, he never would neglect the business part of the organization to go off on an excursion; but when he did go, he entered into recreations with high spirits and enjoyed the occasions with the rest, and he appreciated the kindly interest of his friends.

Martin I. Wilbert married Elizabeth Watkins, October 31, 1888, who survives him, and their home in Washington was an example of comfort and happiness. Both of Mr. Wilbert's parents still reside in Utica, New York, and they with five sisters are left to deplore their irreparable loss.

When defeated at some project Wilbert never became sour or bitter in his defeat but gathered up the crumbs of comfort and pressed on with more vigor than ever and made the best that he could of failure. The record of his achievements constitutes a bright page in the history of American pharmacy.

JOSEPH P. REMINGTON.

AN APPRECIATION OF G. W. McCOY, M.D., DIRECTOR HYGIENIC LABORATORY.

Martin I. Wilbert never exploited himself, nor would he allow others to do so. His aim was the good of the cause in which he labored and, this accomplished, he sought no credit for his own share therein. He frequently carried the burdens of others without showing his own hand. His originality and clear-headed foresight in outlining problems and suggesting methods and means for their solution did credit to his middle name, Inventius; and he was never too busy to "help out."

Dr. Wilbert's work at the Hygienic Laboratory covered a period of about eight years. During this time he was engaged in the work of the Digest of Comments on the Pharmacopœia and allied subjects, and made numerous contributions to medical and pharmaceutic literature. In this and, in fact, in all that he undertook, he worked harder than any man should work, and within a month before his death he had been admonished to take things a trifle easier; but he could not "let up." He had to work at full pressure in spite of a bodily handicap that would have immobilized the average man.

His loss will be severely felt at the Hygienic Laboratory, and the individual members of the staff have lost a dear and valued friend and counselor.—From a letter to the Editor of the *Journal A.M.A.*
