

Sir David Percival Dalbreck Wilkie

Reference and contact details: GB 779 RCSEd GD/26

Location: RS P3

Title: Papers of Sir David Wilkie

Dates of Creation:

Held at: The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh

Extent:

Name of Creator:

Language of Material: English.

Level of Description:

Date(s) of Description: 2009



Administrative/Biographical History:

The widely held stereotype of the surgical leader as ruthless, domineering, cold and aloof seems to owe more to fiction than fact. While the capacity for hard work and the ability to organise and inspire are essential, many of the great figures in surgery have been notable for their warmth, charm and generosity. David Wilkie had all these characteristics and was one of the great, some would agree the greatest, surgeon produced by Edinburgh in the 20th century.

By any standards he was a surgical giant – an innovator who created, out of very little, a prestigious department which could vie with the best research facilities outside America.

His 14 years as Professor of Surgery in Edinburgh saw surgical thinking transformed from the anecdotal case-report style of the 19th century to the analytical science-based style of the 20th. Yet to those who knew him – colleagues, assistants and students – the overriding memory was of his quiet and courteous charm. He gained his FRCSEd on the 16th December 1907.

David Percival Dalbreck Wilkie (1882-1938) (“DPD” to friends and colleagues) was born in Kirriemuir, the Angus village immortalised as “Thrums” by J. M. Barrie. They were not contemporaries as children (Barrie was 22 years older) and came from very different backgrounds; Wilkie was the son of a wealthy jute merchant whilst Barrie was the 9th of 10 children, living in a small 3-room cottage. Both achieved eminence in later life when they became friends.

When Barrie was appointed Chancellor of Edinburgh University the friendship developed, strengthened no doubt by the bond of common threads in childhood. But there were differences. Barrie never escaped the influence of his formidable mother and part of him always wanted to remain the adored small boy, a part of his character that he drew upon in the creation of Peter Pan.

Wilkie on the other hand was blessed with a less complex personality and a kindly nature. His friend and colleague, Henry Wade, wrote “..... never once did I hear him speak a hard or unkind word of anyone”.

Extracted from: Macintyre, I.M.C. and MacLaren, I.F. Surgeons’ Lives... Edinburgh: RCSEd,2005

GD/26/1-62 Lectures and speeches, mainly undated.

1. Preoperative immunisation
2. Bullet in omentum (incomplete)
3. Acute obstruction of the small intestine
4. Problem of appendicitis in practice – delivered 5th December 1935
5. Handwritten “A Hippocratic Code of professional conduct ...(incomplete)
6. Mitchell Banks Memorial Lecture: Chronic duodenal ulcer
7. Septic hand
8. 1 page handwritten in pencil, on surgery

9. 1 page purple typescript – Cases of jejunal ulcer
10. The surgery of duodenal ulcer
11. The surgical aspects of digestive disturbances...delivered to the York Medical Society 7th December 1829
12. Presidential address...Liberalism in medicine. Delivered before the Royal Medical Society 23rd November 1906
13. Carcinoma of the stomach from the surgical aspect
14. Promotor's address Summer graduation 1930, with Professor Wilkie's compliments (Edinburgh University) [another copy at 23]
15. Pharynx: diverticula by DPD Wilkie and J N J Hartley Br J Surg 1922 **10** 81-
16. [Offprint] Br J Surg 1922 June 10th. Wilkie, DPD. A pulmonary sign in acute infections of the biliary tract.
17. The treatment of fractures, DPD Wilkie M Ch FRCS: a British Medical Journal Lecture. Br Med J 1924 April 26th
18. 7 plates : Liverpool Medico-Chirurgical Journal 1938. Figs 1-7. with 7 pages of galley proof. Chronic duodenal ileus by Sir David Wilkie OBE FRCS, Professor of Surgery University of Edinburgh
19. Obituary in Ed Med J 1938 with photo.
20. Obituary reprint from "The student" 18th October 1938
21. 4 pages typescript: Sir David Wilkie, Falkirk April 26th 1937.
22. Address on Diagnosis in surgery by DPD Wilkie, Assistant Surgeon, Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh
23. Another copy of item 14.
24. 1 page typed; second page th pencilled draft of that. "Medical men dying of diseases described or specialised in by themselves"
25. 3 page typescript pages. Probably a graduation speech to new graduates.
26. 2 page typescript. 2 case notes. Mrs G.W. and Mrs G.D. circa 1930s
27. 9 pages TS. "Teamwork"
28. 2 page speech text. Lister. St Mary's Hospital. "Coronation year"
29. Foreword to Dr Chambers' book on tropical disease in Jamaica.
30. Princess Elizabeth Child garden 1st June 1938
31. Sir David Wilkie on mothercraft
32. Chartered Accountants' Students' Society of Edinburgh 6th November 1936 – speech (2 copies – 2nd numbered 32)
33. Another of item 32
34. Broughton School 5th July 1938 – speech to school leavers
35. Centenary Dinner Webster's Seminary Kirriemuir 3rd December 1937
36. Princess Elizabeth Child garden
37. Nursery schools
38. Carlyle Hotel 22nd June 1938 – university leavers
39. Appeal for funds for Settlement speech (JM Barrie)
40. York Dinner 28th October 1931
41. 1 page on the life of J M Barrie
42. A gathering following death of JM Barrie?
43. Pencil script – pharynx
44. Replying to the toast "Classics in Modern Life"
45. Address to Edinburgh University Church of Scotland Society
46. Some questions of Medical Legal Interest
47. Speech as guest at dinner of Liverpool Medical society December 1935
48. Another copy of item 30
49. Annual Meeting Edinburgh Home for Working Lads
50. Craigmillar College
51. The J M Barrie's Children's Fund: Edinburgh University Settlement

52. Samaritan Society Annual Meeting City Chambers 1937
 53. Nursing Association lecture
 54. Speech re temperance/fitness and housing
 55. Letter from Caledonian Society of London 13th January 1937 to Sir David Wilkie- re his being their guest on 11th February 1937
 56. Carlyle Hostel 22nd June 1938. Speech. University leavers.
 57. Women's Foreign Mission Movement Centenary fair speech. 19th November 1937
 58. Address on science and instinct in medicine
 59. Inaugural address delivered by DPD Wilkie..."The future of surgical teaching in Edinburgh"
 60. Lord Moynihan: his place in British Surgery, by Sir David PD Wilkie...Address. Leeds Medical Society Magazine 1937.
 61. China relief. Address.
 62. Scouting and citizenship
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