

WILLIAM WATSON WOOLLEN.

Let us stop for a moment. I would pay a tribute of appreciation to William Watson Woollen, the oldest of our members.

Our good friend has gone. For some twenty-five years I have had the privilege of knowing him. He was a faithful member of this Academy, regular in attendance upon its meetings, faithful in his duties, enthusiastic in our cause. He was one of the charter members of the Indiana Audubon Society, in which he has filled almost every office. He was the founder of the Indiana Nature Study Club and from its beginning its most enthusiastic and most distinguished member.

He came of pioneer stock, inherited a strong constitution and carried always the spirit of the pioneers. He loved the things of the early days. The trees and woods and their inhabitants were all his friends. He saw with regret the vanishing of our wild life—the wild flowers, the primeval forest and the birds. He believed not only in natural things but also in the simple life. He lived close to nature, a free, happy life, close to the things of God. He was an optimist—a natural thing with one who continually communed with nature. His bit of forest land, in which he had intense interest, he called “Buzzard’s Roost.” Later he gave it the name, “Woollen’s Garden of Birds and Botany.” It attracted much attention both at home and abroad. On one occasion I recall how he showed us with much pride an invitation to attend a dinner at Shaw’s Garden in St. Louis, and speak on the subject so near his heart. Sometime since he presented it to the city of Indianapolis, to be preserved forever as a natural park. He studied much and wrote for the daily press and for other publications. He published an interesting volume entitled “Birds of Buzzard’s Roost,” an autograph copy of which I have. It was dedicated to the children and the birds. His contributions were popular in character and helpful to a wide circle of readers.

He is dead—yet he speaks. He speaks in all the good works he did; in all the manifestations of his unselfish spirit, in the lives of little children whose minds were led into a greater appreciation of the works of the Creator and the rights of His creatures. He was interested in children. The children were interested in him. He easily aroused their interest and gained their confidence. He taught them to be humane, to love the birds, the flowers and the interesting things of nature. The seed he planted is growing and will blossom and fruit. It will go on indefinitely reproducing in the minds of other children the lessons he strove to teach. His message to the children was like a pebble dropped into the water. The ripples it started will spread wider and wider until their influence will reach so far that it can not now be predicted. How far-reaching are the results of such devoted and unselfish effort!

To him, the nature lover, the inspiration to many, the teacher of children, our thoughts turn at this hour. The cause he served has lost a noble advocate, our city and State a useful citizen. Our memories of his service and his helpful friendship we would keep green. With bowed heads and sorrowing hearts we pause to offer a tribute of respect to him.

AMOS W. BUTLER.