

Information on Nils Remmen

Nils R. Remmen was born May 6, 1863, in Warsaw, Minnesota, where his parents had settled to farm after arriving from Valdres, Norway in the 1850s. After public school, Remmen attended St. Olaf's School (now St. Olaf College) in Northfield, Minnesota. He then studied at Luther College in 1879-1880 and 1881-1884, graduating from the preparatory department and completing part of his sophomore year in college. In 1884, he enrolled in the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Chicago (later the Medical Department of the University of Illinois), and in 1887 received his medical degree. After two years of practice, he spent a year in postgraduate study in Vienna, and went abroad again in 1895, spending most of his time in Copenhagen and Vienna. He practiced general medicine in Chicago until 1896, after which he specialized in ophthalmology. He was an attending eye surgeon to the Illinois Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary, a member of the Scandinavian Medical Society, the American Medical Association, the Chicago Medical Society, the Chicago Ophthalmologic Society, and the American Academy of Ophthalmology. He also served as president of the Scandinavian Medical Society and the Luther College Club. On January 1, 1891, he was married to Inga Kiland, daughter of Gunder H. and Gunhild (Torrison) Kiland. He died February 26, 1926 at Fairhope, Alabama, where he had gone to spend the winter.

Dr. George A. Torrison, who knew Remmen intimately for forty years, said of him: "The personal qualities that went to make up his character and personality were those that go to make up the character and personality of the ideal physician. Generosity, discretion, tact, cheerfulness, kindness, courage and, possibly most important of all, honesty, were some of these attributes...His home, which he loved and where he enjoyed extending hospitality, was a veritable little art gallery. Here he would lay aside his cares and find rest and recreation, surrounded by his beautiful collection of paintings and other objects of art."