Dr. Washington St., Boston, Mass., Dec. 11, 57

My dear sir Thompson,

I am this time address you for something else because I am so glad you received the recognition and also that of the City of this day. Some of us are not used to give the world all that is in us to give, but take the time to make the friends we might like to make and communicate to every favor which may be returned to us in some form. It is a good idea of the objectivity of British diction in recognition that they look at accomplishments and look for it as passionately as they do — that increases the value of the recognition.

Three years of 3 ½ Dec. asking why I recall that some one has taken out the mean age at death of persons dying from cancer relative to smoking habits. I do not. I still, however, make some suggestions around here to see if I can find out for that should be as much interest to you as this matter. Somehow I should expect except for types of persons to be rather shorter lived than more moderate ones, but the exception type may have that additional vitality which will keep them alive longer.

The Doll & Hill evidence that inhalation was not significant and never impressed me greatly. The Schwartz to Derricks evidence that it matters considerably (though not too much place categorize for heavy smokers) also does not impress me as too good. Also I do not understand Derricks finding that smokers of 5-10 cigars daily have a better longevity record than non-smokers whereas those with about a ½ pack of cigarettes a week would have a better record. I have been a cigar smoker but would never have smoked more than 5-10 a day. That whole business is a complicated matter and remains enigmatic. In the main physicians do not know enough statistically to handle it and statistical have very little detailed and reliable data on which to work.

I am just back from Los Angeles, Calif., where C. C. Little's committee had a two-day meeting. The trip out by air was 1 ½ hours and back 1 ½ hours. We had some winds going and helping the returning.
Hill probably recognizes his lack of adequate statistical knowledge whether methodological or data-wise and hesitates to expose himself — or his nakedness — to you. Many react that way in many matters. Year by year he told me he was afraid I am. Which means the same thing. So many of us — probably all of us, each in his different way — are afraid to face the facts. We are even brought up with conditioning against facing some. Maybe it is better so; who knows?

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

Yours sincerely

Edward B. Wilson