

## Jeremiah W. Wilson, M. D.



**D**R. JEREMIAH W. WILSON, who was for fifty years a prominent physician of Contoocook, Merrimack county, was born January 11, 1816, in Salisbury, New Hampshire. He was a descendant of Thomas Wilson, who came with his wife from Exeter, England, in 1633, and located in Roxbury, Massachusetts. The line of descent was continued by Humphrey Wilson, born in 1628, who married Judith Hersey, and settled in Exeter, New Hampshire; Thomas Wilson, born May 20, 1672, who married Mary Light, and continued his residence in Exeter; Humphrey Wilson (second), born December 9, 1699, who married Mary Leavitt, and located in Brentwood, New Hampshire; Nathaniel Wilson, born June 24, 1739, who married Elizabeth Barker, and settled in Gilmanton, New Hampshire; and Job Wilson, M. D., born in Gilmanton, who was the father of Dr. Jeremiah W. Wilson.

Job Wilson, M. D., removed from his native town to Salisbury, where he practised his profession for many years, finally removing from there to the town of Franklin, locating near the Daniel Webster place. He was a very skilful physician, and considered an authority by his professional brethren on small-pox. When that disease was epidemic in New Hampshire, he was employed by the State to take medical charge of the patients. His death occurred in Franklin. He inherited the ancestral homestead at Gilmanton, which was entailed to the children of his son, Dr. Jeremiah W. Wilson. His wife, whose maiden name was Nancy Farnham, bore him seven children.

Jeremiah W. Wilson attended the public schools and the academy at Franklin. At the age of twenty he began the study of medicine under the instruction of his father. Subsequently he attended a course of lectures at Hanover, New Hampshire; and prior to receiving his degree of Doctor of Medicine at the University in Castleton, Vermont, he practised with his father and Dr. Ephraim Wilson, his brother. After his graduation he came to Contoocook, buying out the practice of Dr. Sargent, an old and well-known practitioner; and for the remaining fifty years of his life he was actively engaged in his professional labors, residing for the entire time in the house he at first occupied. His practice extended over a large territory, embracing every town and village in this vicinity, and he was eminently successful. In the diagnosis of the diseases brought to his notice he was particularly fortunate, being rarely mistaken; while as surgeon his skill was unquestioned. He had a rare delicacy of perception, and a refinement of thought and feeling very gratifying to the sick. Combined with these qualities were a decision and firmness of character that inspired confidence, and caused him to be regarded by his patients as a friend and counsellor as well as a physician. A close student, he kept up with the progress of his pro-

profession, and as a rule adhered to the regular practice, although his brother Ephraim, a physician in Rockville, Connecticut, was a warm advocate of homœopathy.

Ever heedful of the call of distress, Dr. Wilson gave his time and skill without making question of compensation; and, being a poor collector, fees amounting to hundreds of dollars, that the debtors could well afford to pay, have long since been outlawed. In his visits to the poor he often contributed necessary articles of clothing or food to needy families, besides gratuitously giving his services to the sick. Frank and outspoken, he never hesitated to express his honest opinion, and defend it when necessary. He bought a tract of land in Contoocook, and for some years did a little farming, intrusting the manual labor oftentimes to those owing him for professional work and unable to find ready money with which to pay their bills. Although other physicians located in the town, he maintained the even tenor of his way, never forgetting the ethics and courtesy of his profession. He never aspired to political honors, but was always an earnest supporter of the principles of the Republican party. He was held in high respect by his medical brethren, and was a valued member of the County Medical Society. For a time he served as surgeon of the Twenty-first Regiment of the State militia, to which he was appointed in 1845.

On March 31, 1847, Dr. Wilson married Miss Elizabeth Gerrish, who was born September 5, 1820, daughter of Thomas and Betsey Gerrish, of Boscawen. She died November 8, 1882, having borne him three children. Doctor and Mrs. Wilson took Miss Martha J. Chase into their family when she was a girl of twelve years. She subsequently repaid the loving care they bestowed upon her by tenderly watching over the Doctor in his declining years. Both the Doctor and his estimable wife were earnest and sincere Christians in the true sense of the term. Though they were connected with the Congregational church of Hopkinton for a period of fifty years, they worked harmoniously with the Baptist and Methodist Episcopal churches of Contoocook. In 1890 Dr. Wilson had a cataract, which threatened his sight, successfully removed from his eye. In the last years of his life his chief enjoyment was the reading of the leading newspapers and medical journals of the day as well as the choice works of the library. He died in Contoocook, April 30, 1896, having outlived by a full decade the Scriptural limit of human life.

