

## [Farmer, Grosvenor Swan]

### DR. G. S. FARMER

Frequently Dr. Grosvenor S. Farmer, dean of the medical profession of New York State, was asked to what he attributed his long life and his answer was: "I tell everybody that they are killing themselves by eating too much. They all died twenty and twenty-five years sooner than was necessary. I firmly believe that the Lord made man to exist in the flesh from one hundred to one hundred twenty-five years." Dr. Farmer died on March 12 at the age of one hundred [and] three years, in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank MacMurray in Watertown. An illness of several months gradually exhausted his strength. Death came rather suddenly but peacefully.

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Dr. Farmer was born in the town of Fowler on January 5, 1850. In 1865, the family moved to Canton where he attended the Canton Academy, graduating in 1867. His graduation from St. Lawrence University occurred in 1871, when the institution had been in existence only fifteen years. Dr. John Stebbins Lee was then its president and the graduating class numbered only twenty-one. His interest was in medicine and he was graduated from the New York Homeopathic College of Medicine of New York City in 1874.

He began the practice of medicine in Fulton, where he served for a year. In 1875, he moved to Gouverneur, where he followed the familiar career of a country doctor, travelling an area of twenty miles by horse and buggy or on horseback over pioneer roads, piled high with the snows of winter or mire by the mud of spring. Generally, it was the physician who opened the roads to travel for there were no snowplows. He served this area for six years and then in 1880, he began his remarkable career in Watertown, as the Good Physician. His marriage to Miss Miriam Conkey of Canton occurred in 1876 and their son is Dr. Harlow G. Farmer, one of the outstanding surgeons of Watertown. Her death occurred in 1881. He married Miss Florence Holden of Watertown in 1883 and their children are Francis H. Farmer of Watertown and Mrs. John A. Remington of Northampton, Mass. Mrs. Farmer died in 1940. Dr. Farmer is survived by the two sons and the daughter.

When Dr. Grosvenor S. Farmer reached the age of ninety, in 1940, he had virtually retired from practice, though he continued to administer to a few families. He had served as the city health officer for a period of forty-two years. He was a charter member of the Black River Valley Club, where in his later years he spent many hours as a most enjoyable companion in conversation and indoor games. He was brilliant in playing billiards and an ardent fisherman. All sports interested him and this interest kept him from growing old. He was for twenty years the city's champion bowler, and in recent years it was his privilege to roll the first ball in the tournaments of

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Northern New York State. On several occasions as city champion he had the honor of playing against Willie Hoppe, the famous billiardist, on his visits to Watertown. He was an ardent alumnus of St. Lawrence University, his alma mater, and in the years when he had the distinction of being the oldest living alumnus, it was his privilege to lead the Alumni Parade at commencements.

He was one of the founders of the Watertown Building and Loan Association and a past president. He served also as president of the Jefferson County Medical Society and the Homeopathic Medical Society, which was composed of homeopathic physicians of the area, when there was opposition to the allopathic medicines.

Dr. Farmer's life extended through the administrations of twenty-two presidents of the United States and the first two months of the twenty-third administration. He cast his first vote in 1872, voting for General Ulysses S. Grant.

He was a member of All Souls Universalist Church in Watertown for many years. He was an ardent Universalist, active in all the affairs of his church. He was a regular attendant at its services. Dr. Harold H. Niles, pastor of this church, conducted the memorial service in the home of Dr. Harlow G. Farmer and the house was filled to capacity. A delegation of officers of St. Lawrence University attended the service. Dr. Farmer finished the course with the highest honors in the affection of his many friends. He lived a full and abundant life, with a glorious faith.

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