

## THOMAS DICKERSON.

This biographical sketch will be found especially interesting for the reason that, in "beginning at the beginning," it has been found necessary to go back to the days of primitive things in Ohio, when the best houses were log cabins, neighbors were few and scattered over a large territory, Indians were more plentiful than white men, and wild beasts—those now extinct terrors of the forest—were more numerous than Indians and whites together. Those were the days in Ohio's history that literally "tried men's souls."

Thomas Dickerson, a well known citizen of Cass township, Richland county, Ohio, was born near Cadiz, in Harrison county, this state, July 11, 1822, a son of Thomas and Mary (Chew) Dickerson. Thomas was a son of that other Thomas who was numbered among pioneer settlers in Ohio as early as the year 1802. Thomas, the pioneer, came out from Fayette county, Pennsylvania, where Thomas the second was born, and with his family settled in Harrison county. There the younger Thomas grew to manhood, learning not largely from books but much from nature and more from experience, and courted and married Miss Chew. They had seven children, four of whom were sons, and three of the sons are living. In October, 1822, when the immediate subject of this notice was about three months old, his father brought his family and settled in Blooming Grove township, on one hundred and sixty acres of land which Thomas Dickerson, Jr., had acquired from the government by legal entry in 1818. He erected a log cabin,—a primitive affair,—one-storied and with one floorless room. A blacksmith by trade, he had a primitive shop on his farm, and it is related of him that he was such an indefatigable worker that he kept his anvil ringing or was following the plow from daybreak until long after dark. He was the only worker in iron in that part of the county and he was patronized not only by the settlers round about but also by the Indians, who often called upon him to repair their hatchets and metal tomahawks, their knives and other weapons and utensils. This pioneer artisan-farmer died at the age of fifty-

five years,—perhaps not worn out by hard work, but probably years before death could have claimed him had he taken life easier.

As a boy Thomas Dickerson, the third of the name in direct line, helped his father in the work of the farm and the blacksmith shop. All his schooling was obtained in a log schoolhouse two miles from his home. This simple educational edifice had slab benches and was otherwise primitive and inconvenient, but it represented the beginning of the development of Ohio's present splendid educational system, and though the work it did was limited it paved the way for larger and better things. Young Dickerson was his father's assistant until the latter's death, and after that event he remained on the home farm until he was twenty-six years old. He then bought a farm of sixty-eight acres in Cass township, on which there was a log house and some small improvements, including a four-acre clearing. After some years' residence there he moved to a farm in Franklin township, where he lived one year, and then he acquired the interest of all other heirs in his father's old home farm and again took up his residence upon it and remained there until 1897, when he removed to Shiloh. His farm consists of one hundred acres, well improved and productive.

November 30, 1843, Mr. Dickerson married Miss Susan Miller, and she has borne him nine children, named as follows in the sequence of their nativity: William C. (dead), born March 25, 1845; Manuel W., born May 22, 1847; Angeline N., born January 13, 1849, now deceased; George O., born August 23, 1852; Ambrose H., born October 14, 1854; Irene B., born May 26, 1857, now deceased; Mary E., born June 17, 1859; Elmer E., born August 22, 1861, now deceased; and Amon G., born March 27, 1866.

A Republican in political creed, Mr. Dickerson has always wielded a considerable influence upon the affairs of his township, which he served officially for some years as a trustee. He has been for forty years an active and consistent member of the Methodist Episcopal church. His solicitude for the public welfare has been such as to distinguish him as a public-spirited citizen, and he has done as much as any man in his township to improve the schools, the highways and the general administration of public affairs.