

JOHN DARLING.

In every community are found quiet and retiring men who seek no public honors or public notice, yet exert a strong influence on the community by reason of their upright lives, their fidelity to principle and their devotion to the duties of citizenship. Such a one was John Darling, who was long a representative of the agricultural interests of Monroe township, and his life in many respects was worthy of emulation.

He was born in Worthington township, Richland county, August 9, 1819. He was the eldest son of William and Mary (Ravenscraft) Darling. His father, William Darling, was born in Hardy county, Virginia, now a part of West Virginia, October 6, 1789, and was the son of Robert and Mary (Passence) Darling. With their family the parents removed to Muskingum county, Ohio, in 1806. This part of the state was then in its primitive condition, few settlements having been made, while the work of improvement and progress was scarcely begun. William Darling remained with his father and assisted him in clearing and improving the wild land until the breaking out of the war of 1812, when he responded to his country's call and served with credit during the term of his enlistment. He came to Richland county in the spring of 1817 and purchased a quarter-section of land, on which a block-house stood, in the fertile valley of the Clear Fork, about one and a half miles northeast of Newville, near the site of the Indian village of Helltown. Soon after his arrival in the county William Darling was united in marriage to Miss Ravenscraft, a young lady of the

neighborhood who was possessed of a strong constitution and such courage as was needed by pioneer women. These qualities rendered her a fit companion for the energetic frontiersman who became her husband, and with him she endured the trials and hardships incident to the settlement of an unimproved region. Mr. Darling was a man of marked enterprise and almost indefatigable industry. He devoted his time to the cultivation and improvement of his farm until met with an accident which disqualified him for hard manual labor. He then turned his attention to the feeding and breeding of stock, which he drove to the eastern markets, making a specialty of fine cattle. He introduced into this part of the state some excellent breeds of cattle, including the shorthorn Durham, being the first owner of such cattle in Richland county. Through the earnest labor, excellent financiering and close application to business on the part of Mr. Darling and his wife they were enabled in the course of time to acquire a very handsome competence. He became an extensive land-owner, his possessions aggregating eleven hundred and eighty-five acres in one body of the rich and alluvial soil in the valley of the Clear Fork. He also made judicious investments in other property, owning a number of farms in different parts of the county and state. It afforded him great pleasure to assist his children, to whom he was very generous. The following is a copy of an appendix to his will: "Having been one of the pioneers in this part of Ohio, the maker of this will, having emigrated from Hardy county, Virginia, in the year 1806, with his father and family to Muskingum county, Ohio, and endured all the hardships, trials and privations incident to the settling and improving of the new country, I do give and bequeath my love, respect and good will to all my associates, and hope by the intelligence, energy and untiring industry of growing posterity the prosperity of my beloved country may continue to increase as surely and rapidly as though the old pioneers were still here to look after their country's welfare, for next to my love for my God and my family is my love for my country, these blessed United States. May prosperity and peace ever be the lot of our happy land."

The above well indicates the loyal and patriotic spirit of Mr. Darling. As before stated, he located on a farm in Richland county in the year 1817, continuing its cultivation until seven years later, when he had the misfortune of having his right leg crushed by the falling of a log. The member was so badly injured that it necessitated amputation. He therefore became extensively interested in stock-breeding, winning through an upright business course a large share of this world's goods. In all transactions he was strictly honorable and he thus enjoyed the unqualified confidence and good

will of those with whom he was associated. Of his family of seven children only one is now living, Catherine, the wife of Aaron Quick, a farmer of Ashland county.

John Darling was early inured to the labors of the farm. Owing to the extensive realty possessions of the father, and to his own inability for farm work the burden of caring for the land devolved upon the sons, and thereby John Darling developed habits of industry and enterprise which became salient features in his own success in later life. The father could never tolerate idleness or indolence, and the sons were early trained to perform the work of improving the fields and caring for the stock. From the time of the early planting in the spring until the crops were harvested in the autumn John Darling was busy in the fields, and it was only through the short winter season that he was occasionally able to enjoy the privileges afforded by the common schools. After his marriage his father gave him one hundred and sixty acres of land on section 36 in Monroe township, and with his young bride he removed to the farm, on which there was much work to be done, for the buildings were old and dilapidated and the fences were down. With characteristic energy Mr. Darling began the improvement of the place, erecting thereon a large substantial barn and making other additions to the buildings, while he divided the place into fields of convenient size by well kept fences. All the improvement and accessories of a model farm were added until the place became one of the most attractive and desirable in this part of the county.

On the 16th of January, 1851, occurred the marriage of Mr. Darling and Mary J. Rea, a daughter of William Rea, who was born in Cumberland county, Pennsylvania, June 23, 1772. He was for a time a resident of Bedford county, Pennsylvania, and in 1816 came to Ohio in company with others, locating in Richland county, where he entered the north half of the southeast quarter of section 35, Monroe township. He provided a home for himself by erecting a log cabin and then began the task of clearing his land for the plow. For a few years he lived alone, and was then united in marriage, in 1821, to Miss Eliza Swendel, a native of the county of Down, Ireland, and a daughter of Richard and Susan (Fox) Swendel. Mrs. Rea came to the United States when but twenty-five years of age. She had a brother living in this country, but several years passed before she was enabled to find him through the assistance of friends. She had in the meantime provided for her own support, manifesting a courageous spirit in meeting with the difficulties which beset her in the new world. With her brother she came to Richland county, where her marriage occurred. Both Mr. and Mrs. Rea were devoted

members of the United Presbyterian church from early life. They spent their declining years with their daughter, Mrs. Darling. The father passed away at the age of seventy-five, while the mother lived to the advanced age of eighty-eight years. The marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Darling was blessed with eight children, of whom six are now living, namely: Mary E., the wife of Charles T. Culler, a farmer of Richland county; William W., a carpenter and farmer of Worthington township, Richland county; Alfred W., who also carries on agricultural pursuits in the same county; Harmon L., who is living on the old homestead; Emma I., the wife of Charles Switzer, of Worthington township; and Effie G., wife of Frank Weingarden, of Monroe township.

In his political views Mr. Darling was a Democrat. Both he and his wife were active, consistent members of the Lutheran church and always contributed very liberally to its support. Mr. Darling took a deep interest in the public affairs in his native county, endorsing all measures which he believed would prove of public good. There was much in his business career worthy of commendation. He applied himself closely to his work and at all times followed business methods that gained for him the confidence of his fellow men. He died March 10, 1895, and in his death the community lost a valued citizen, his church a faithful member, his neighbors an accommodating friend, and his family a devoted husband and father.