

THOMAS M. BELL.

Thomas M. Bell was born in Washington township, Richland county, Ohio, September 6, 1870. His father, Robert Bell, was born in Washington county, Pennsylvania, May 1, 1820, and came to Richland county, Ohio, in October, 1821, with his parents, to a farm in section 7, in Washington township, where he resided (except one year in Mansfield) until his death, March 13, 1898. T. M. Bell's mother's maiden name was Elenor Jane Cook, and she was a daughter of William and Eliza Cook.

The subject of this sketch lived with his parents during the years of his minority, working on the farm in the summers and in the winters attending school at the Sandy Hill schoolhouse, and later the public schools at Lexington. He early took an interest in literary work, and for several years was the president of the society at Sandy Hill.

In 1892 he left the farm in Washington township to live with his sister, Mrs. Mary B. Finney, whose husband died in August of that year, on the Cook farm two and one-half miles west of Mansfield, where he continued to reside until 1898, when, being a member of Company M, Eighth Ohio National Guards, he felt it his duty, when the call came for troops for the Cuban war, to go with his company, and in May, of that year, was mustered into the service of the United States and served with his regiment in Cuba. He returned home in September, and was married November 2, 1898, to Georgia May Mosier, a daughter of William Mosier, now living in California. She is the granddaughter of Henry Dickson, of Troy township, with whom she formerly lived, her mother having died when she was less than a year old. Mr. and Mrs. Bell have one child, Lilian Elenor Bell, born May 21, 1900. Mr. Bell is now deputy sheriff of Richland county, and is a capable and efficient officer.

When Mr. Bell's grandfather settled on the Mansfield-Lexington road the county was in its pioneer period,—twenty-five years before the first railroad entered Richland county. The Bells lived on a stage route. The law

of demand and supply governs the world. Hungry passengers and teamsters passed that way who wanted food for themselves and feed for their horses, and the Bells were soon induced to open a public house. Accordingly the sign of "Bell's Tavern" was put out, and stables and feed sheds erected and accommodations provided for "man and beast," as it was idiomatically expressed. This Lexington-Bellville road was a feeder of the State road, which was the great route for both passengers and freight between the north and the south, and teams loaded with grain and other farm products were driven from the Ohio river and intermediate points to Huron and Sandusky, and there exchanged for merchandise, which was taken upon the return trip. This tavern soon became an important way station on the route. Deputy Sheriff Bell has the sign of this tavern, which he keeps as an heirloom. Bell's Tavern was opened to supply a want and served its day, fulfilled its purpose and as a hotel is now no more. It belonged not to the earliest pioneer epoch, but to a later era—to a period that spans the past with the present—to which we can look back at what might be termed the drama of events, without taking the time to unveil the farce of particulars, and be thankful that we live in an age of inventions, improvement and advancement far superior to the stage-coach days of other years.