

## HON. JOSEPH M. HUNTER.

“The Farmer in Politics” would be an appropriate title for a book which, if planned on a comprehensive scale and carefully prepared and edited, would be a valuable contribution to our political history. The number of farmers who have attained eminence in national affairs and prominence in county and state affairs is so large that it would scarcely be guessed at with any approach to correctness by one who had not given some thought to the subject. Hon. Joseph M. Hunter is a leading farmer politician of Richland county, Ohio. He was born in Blooming Grove township, Richland county, Ohio, April 29, 1814, a son of James and Mary (McLees) Hunter, who had seven children, as follows: Joseph M., who is the immediate subject of this sketch; Mary J., who married William R. Long, a farmer of Cass township, Richland county, Ohio; Dorcas A., who married James W. Haun; they are both dead, leaving four children, viz.: George B.; Ella F., who married John Saum; John L., of Shelby, Ohio; and Harry D., of Rome, Richland county; Charles S., who lives at Rome, Blooming Grove township, and is a justice of the peace and an ex-school teacher; Hester J., who lives with her sister, Mrs. Long; and Johannah C., who is dead.

James Hunter was born in Columbiana county, Ohio, April 5, 1814. He acquired a little education in the schools, but by a course of reading, carefully selected and pursued thoroughly and systematically, became a well informed man. In 1833 his father, Samuel Hunter, came to Richland county and entered a quarter-section of land near Rome in Blooming Grove township, which is now owned by the heirs of Joseph P. and Benjamin Hunter. James Hunter came with him and remained two years. In 1835 he returned to Columbiana county and married Mary McLees, and returned immediately, bringing his bride with him. Not long afterward Samuel Hunter bought a farm of eighty acres in section 21, in Blooming Grove township, which was heavily timbered and unimproved. On this James built a log cabin for himself and wife. He improved the place and developed it into a profitable farm and lived upon it until his death, which occurred November 3, 1864. He was a Democrat and a citizen of much influence, and filled the office of justice of the peace for six successive terms, the last of which was cut short by his death. A man of much native talent, who took a broad view of things, he was self-

educated to an extent which gave him a recognized supremacy among his fellow men, and his public spirit led him to identify himself with every movement tending to benefit his township and county. He was born and reared in the old "Seceder" church, but after coming to Ohio drifted into the Presbyterian church and was for many years one of its elders.

Samuel Hunter, the grandfather of Hon. Joseph M. Hunter, was a native of Washington county, Pennsylvania, and was a son of George Hunter, who with two of his brothers fought for American independence in the Revolutionary war. Some time after the war George settled in Washington county, Pennsylvania, his brother James settled in Virginia, and Joseph, his other brother, settled in Georgia. Samuel Hunter was a veteran of the war of 1812 and spent the winter of 1812-13 at Camp Council, Richland county, Ohio. He and Henry Paul were comrades in arms and became such devoted friends that they entered into an agreement each to marry the sister of the other, and this agreement they carried out upon their return to their old home. Mary McLees, mother of Hon. Joseph M. Hunter, was a daughter of Charles McLees, of Columbiana county, Ohio, who was a native of county Antrim, Ireland, and was married there, but emigrated to America soon afterward. Mrs. Mary (McLees) Hunter was born in 1813, and died in 1889, in her seventy-seventh year, in Blooming Grove township.

Joseph M. Hunter was reared to manhood on his father's farm and was educated in the public schools. At the time of his father's death he was nineteen years old, and being the eldest of the family he willingly assumed the burden of the family's support which naturally fell upon his shoulders. Not long before his death his father had purchased additional land, involving some obligations which the young man assumed also. He was the head of his mother's family until 1874, when he married Miss Alice Miller, a daughter of Michael Miller, of Blooming Grove township. Michael Miller was a native of Dauphin county, Pennsylvania, and was one of the early settlers in Richland county. Now, in his eighty-sixth year, hale and hearty, he lives with his son-in-law, Dr. O. L. Hoffman, at Galion, Ohio. After his marriage Mr. Hunter settled down on the home farm, which he managed successfully and incidentally looked after the affairs of his mother's household. From his youth he has been an ardent Democrat and for years he has been a leader in party councils. April 1, 1883, he was appointed superintendent of the county infirmary of Richland county. His wife died in May, 1888, and he wished to be relieved from the responsibility of the management of that institution, but the directors insisted upon his remaining and he filled the position until April 1, 1890, when he returned to Blooming Grove town-

ship and bought a farm of eighty acres of his father-in-law, on which he lived until 1894. February 15, of that year, he married Mrs. Alverda Chew, the widow of E. M. Chew, formerly Miss Alverda Ferrell, and moved to his present residence. In 1898 he bought the old Hunter homestead, which is managed by his son, Claude M., who has achieved an enviable local reputation as a teacher. His daughter, Anna, married M. D. Ropp, a farmer of Blooming Grove township, who lives on the old Ropp homestead. Fenella is an accomplished teacher, who has taught four terms in district No. 2, Blooming Grove township. Allen G. T. and J. Garland Hunter assist their father in the management of his farm.

In 1897 Mr. Hunter was the nominee of his party for representative in the general assembly of Ohio. He was elected by a handsome majority, carrying every precinct, and became a member of the seventy-third general assembly, in which he served with great ability and credit. In 1899 he was re-elected to the same position, becoming a member of the seventy-fourth general assembly. He was a delegate to the Chicago convention in 1896 and helped to nominate Mr. Bryan for the presidency. As a servant of the people, Mr. Hunter has never for a moment considered any question of expediency, and his only inquiry concerning any proposed measure has been as to its honesty and to its adaptability to the needs of the people. He is a model citizen, a model farmer, a model husband and father, such a man as benefits any community by association with it, and bravely accepts and faithfully fulfills every duty of life.