

urally infer that his family must have been connected, but how nearly or remotely we know not, with some of that name who hold honorable relation to the "Old Dominion." Mr. Burnett, however, never boasted of his "descent from one of the first families of Virginia," nor did he depend upon the merit or fame of his ancestor to give him an honorable position in society. He depended upon his own merits, arising from his own native talents, acquirements, enterprise, worth and industry; and whatever he was in the estimation of others, he claimed to be "a self-made man," having, as the Sage of Ashland once said of himself, "inherited nothing from his parents but existence, ignorance and poverty."

His father emigrated to Bourbon or Spencer county, Kentucky, when Thomas was but a child. From his letters I learn that he had three brothers, George W., William, and John C., and one sister, Emily A., who married J. H. D. Street, now of Iowa.

His education was such as the common schools of the country then afforded, with an academy at some county seat. He was raised to farming, but aspiring to the profession of the law, he sought a suitable education with that view. The circumstances of his father not admitting of his aiding his son in his laudable design, he, like young Webster, was thrown on his own resources to obtain it. But not having the New England colleges to repair to, he availed himself of an academy, with some private instruction from gentlemen who delighted to aid him in his studies. He wrought with his own hands a part of the time, to obtain means with which to attend school the other part; and when he was sufficiently advanced to teach school, he did so a part of his time, prosecuting his studies as best he could when not so engaged.

While reading law, he was favored with some minor offices, such as constable, deputy-sheriff, sheriff, &c., from the fees of which he derived a scanty means of support. Soon after he was admitted to the bar, he settled himself in Paris, Ky., and commenced its practice. Here he was often compelled to encounter some of the ablest lawyers in that chivalrous state. This, how-