

the confidence and good will of the community in whose upbuilding he so ably assisted. He was a staunch adherent of the Democratic party and both he and his wife were zealous members of the Christian church, having been organizers of the church of this denomination in Leonard and having contributed liberally to its support. In 1840 was solemnized the marriage of Benjamin Van Vacter to Miss Anna Smith, who was born in Ireland, and whose death occurred about 1901. They became the parents of five children, and the three surviving all continue their residence in Shelby county, namely: Joseph H., Benjamin F. and Robert O.

Benjamin Franklin Van Vacter, to whom this brief sketch is dedicated, was reared on the pioneer farm, to whose work he early began to contribute his quota of aid, and he continued to attend the district schools in Taylor township, at varying intervals, during the days of his boyhood and youth, laying in these primitive institutions the foundations for the broad and practical knowledge he has since gained under the direction of that wisest of head-masters, experience. He continued to be associated in the work and management of the home farm until the death of his honored father, after which he engaged in farming and stock-growing on his own responsibility on a farm of 120 acres deeded to him by his father at the time of death. This homestead, in section 20, Taylor township, continued to be his place of abode and the scene of his enterprising and successful endeavors as a general agriculturist and stock-grower until 1884, when he sold the property and removed to the

village of Leonard, where he entered into partnership with Theodore P. Manuel and engaged in the general merchandise business, under the firm name of Van Vacter & Manuel. About four years later he sold his interest in this enterprise to his partner, and since that time he has given his attention principally to the dealing in real estate in the state of Kansas, in which connection his operations have been of no inconsiderable scope and importance, and have been a source of distinctive profit to him. He is one of the substantial citizens and business men of his native county, was one of the organizers and incorporators of the Farmers' Bank, of Leonard, in which he is still a stockholder and of which he served as vice-president for a short period. In politics he is a staunch adherent of the Democratic party, and in earlier years he was a zealous and effective worker in its local ranks. He is a member of the Christian church and is active in the support of the various departments of its work. Mr. Van Vacter takes a loyal interest in all that tends to advance the material and civic prosperity of his native county, and measures and enterprises of a public order receive his earnest support.

#### LUTHER KEMP.

This well known citizen of Taylor township is the owner of a fine farm of 220 acres and is contributing his quota to upholding the prestige of the great industry of agriculture in Shelby county. He has been a resident of Shelby county since his boyhood days, and in the section in which he was reared and is best

known he enjoys the most unqualified popularity and esteem, showing that he has directed his course in such a way as to merit this pleasing recognition.

Luther Kemp claims the staunch old Hoosier commonwealth as the place of his nativity, as he was born in Dubois county, Indiana, on June 21, 1869, being a representative of one of the pioneer families of that state, as his grandfather, William F. Kemp, was an early settler in the county mentioned, having there been engaged in agricultural pursuits until his death. In the same county also was born James L. Kemp, father of him whose name initiates this article, the date of his nativity having been 1846. The father was reared to manhood in Indiana, was there married and there continued to devote his attention to farming until 1874, when he removed with his family to Missouri and settled in Clay township, Shelby county, where he purchased a farm of eighty acres, to whose area he later added until he had a total of 138 acres. He made excellent improvements on his farm, and there continued to be successfully engaged in the carrying on of diversified agriculture and the raising of live stock until his death, which occurred in the year 1882. In politics he gave his support to the cause of the Republican party and he was a loyal and upright citizen, commanding the respect of all who knew him. In 1868 he was united in marriage to Miss Caroline Griffith, who was born in Ohio, and of their five children, two are living, the subject of this sketch being the elder, and William G., also being a prosperous farmer of Shelby county.

Luther Kemp was five years of age at the time of the family removal from Indiana to Shelby county, Missouri, and here he was reared to manhood under the invigorating influences and labors of the home farm, while his educational opportunities were limited to a somewhat desultory attendance in the district schools, which he attended at intervals until he was sixteen years of age. He was but thirteen years old at the time of his father's death, and after leaving school he found employment on neighboring farms until 1888, after which he rented land and engaged in farming on his own responsibility for three years. Thereafter he was again employed by others until 1893, and in the meanwhile he was frugal and industrious, saving his earnings and formulating his plans for a future of independence in connection with the branch of industrial enterprise in which he had been trained. In the year last mentioned Mr. Kemp purchased fifty-three acres of land in section 26, Taylor township, and he has since added to the area of his holdings until he now has a well improved farm of 220 acres, representing the tangible results of his careful and well directed endeavors. He is one of the substantial and successful farmers and stock-growers of the county, is appreciative of the many opportunities here afforded in his chosen field of endeavor, and is essentially loyal and progressive as a citizen. His success is most gratifying to contemplate from the fact that it has been gained through his own exertions and ability, and he well merits his prosperity, as does he also the esteem in which he is held by those most familiar with

his life and labors. He is a stockholder and director of the Farmers' Bank of Leonard, is a Republican in his political allegiance, has never been a seeker of official preferment, though he has served efficiently as school director of his district, and he is affiliated with Cherry Box Lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. He is liberal in his support of the work of the Methodist Episcopal church, of which his wife is an earnest member.

On January 31, 1893, Mr. Kemp was united in marriage to Miss Martha Hamrick, who was born and reared in this county, being a daughter of William F. and Martha J. Hamrick. Mr. and Mrs. Kemp became the parents of eight children, all of whom are living, namely: Olin, Vincent, Freda, Ruth, Theodore, Elsie J., Richard and James.

#### FORREST G. BODWELL.

Dependent largely upon his own resources since his boyhood days, it has been given Mr. Bodwell to achieve a success of no stinted order and one that stands creditable to him as one of the most earnest and indefatigable workers of the world. He has been a resident of Taylor township for more than forty years, in fact since his boyhood days, and here, beginning with no financial reinforcement or fortuitous influence, he has directed his labors with such discrimination and ability that he is now numbered among the substantial agriculturists and stock-growers of the county, being the owner of a well improved farm of 240 acres—a palpable evidence of his success and independ-

ence. He has not, however, hedged himself in with the confines of mere personal advancement but has stood exponent of loyal and liberal citizenship, has guided his course along the lines of strictest integrity and honor, and thus has merited the staunch hold which he maintains upon popular confidence and esteem.

Mr. Bodwell is a scion of families founded in New England in the colonial epoch of our national history, and is himself a native of the old Bay state, having been born at Haverhill, Massachusetts, on February 9, 1851, and being a son of Aaron G. and Lucy (Howe) Bodwell, whose marriage was solemnized in the year 1843. His father was born in Massachusetts, on August 7, 1818, and his mother was a native of New Hampshire, where she was born on April 9, 1818. The father, who was a shoemaker by trade, came with his family to Missouri in 1854, settling in Lewis county, where he continued in the work of his trade until his death, which occurred in 1859. Of his four children, the subject of this sketch is now the only survivor. In 1861 the widowed mother became the wife of James W. Jeffries, and they took up their residence in Shelby county, where Mr. Jeffries was engaged in farming until his death. Mrs. Jeffries is still living, having reached the ripe old age of ninety-three years.

Forrest G. Bodwell was about three years of age at the time of the family removal to Missouri, and was only eight years old at the time of his father's death. He came to his stepfather's farm in Marion county in 1861, just