

HENRY A. LEE

One of the most difficult tasks is to write an unexceptionable memoir of a living man. If the life is worthy of record there is always danger of offending that delicacy which is inseparable from merit, for even moderate praise, when it meets the eyes of its subject, is apt to seem fulsome, while a nice sense of propriety would not be the less wounded by a dry abstract containing nothing but names and dates. To sum up a career which is not yet ended would appear like recording events, which have not transpired, since justly to estimate the scope and meaning of a history it is important that we have the closing chapter. In writing biographical notice, therefore, the chronicler from the moment he takes up his pen should consider the subject as no longer among his contemporaries, for thus he will avoid the fear of offending by bestowing praise where it is merited and escape the risk of giving but a fragmentary view of that which must eventually be taken as a unit. At some risk, therefore, the writer in this connection addresses himself to the task of placing on record the life and career of a man who, by the force of strong individuality, has achieved success in one of the most responsible and exacting callings, and by sheer force of individuality won for himself an enviable position among the leading men of the city and county honored by his citizenship.

Henry A. Lee is a native son of Indiana, having been born in Hamilton county on November 19, 1854, and is a son of James and Lydia (Anderson) Lee. The father was a native of Indiana and of Virginia descent, and the mother of New Jersey. They came to Indiana in 1821, being among the first settlers of Hamilton county, where they followed agricultural pursuits and were numbered among the leading citizens of their community. They were the parents of nine children, namely: Silas B., Luther, James C. and John M., twins; Elizabeth, Elliott, Henry, the immediate subject of this sketch; Alice, and one other, both of whom are deceased. Henry Lee secured his elementary education in the public schools of Hamilton county, after which he became a student in the Indiana State University, where he graduated in 1878. He then took up the study of law and in due time was admitted to the bar in Hamilton county, where he for a time practiced his profession. In 1885 Mr. Lee went to Kansas, where for seven years he actively practiced law and, because of his eminent ability and high character, he soon attained to a high place in the esteem of the people there, who, in 1889, elected him to a membership in the state Legislature from Kingman county, in which position he made a splendid record. In 1892 Mr. Lee came to Bloomington, Indiana, entered upon the active practice of his profession and has since been numbered among the most energetic, able and successful members of the local bar. Years of conscientious work have brought with them not only an increase of practice and reputation, but also a growth in legal knowledge and a wide and accurate judgment, the possession of which constitutes marked excellence in his profession. In discussion of the principles of law Mr. Lee is noted for clearness and candor and, having once sought and found firm ground, nothing can drive him from his position, though at the same time his zeal for a client never leads him to urge arguments which are not in harmony with the law. By a straightforward and course he has built up a large legal business and is numbered today among the men of sturdy integrity and recognized ability who are reflecting credit upon the profession.

In 1885 the subject of this sketch was united in marriage to Minnie M. Rogers, the daughter of Isaac M. and Emily Rogers, and to them has been born one child, Roger A., who is at home.

Politically, Mr. Lee is an ardent supporter of the Republican party, though never an aspirant for office. Fraternally, he is a member of the Free and Accepted Masons and Modern Woodmen of America, while his religious belief is embodied in the organization of the Christian church, of which he is a faithful member and earnest supporter. Mr. Lee is not only a well trained lawyer, but is widely informed on current topics, honest and upright in all his relations with his fellow men and today few citizens of Monroe county are better known and none more highly respected, for in all phases of his career since making his home here, he has performed his full part as a man among men and has earned and retains the sincere regard and confidence of all who know him. Personally he is genial and unassuming, easily makes friends and enjoys a large acquaintance throughout the county.