

BYRON J. ABY.

Among the active, prominent and enterprising citizens of Mifflin township is Byron J. Aby, who was born on the 29th of March, 1856, on the farm on section 22 where he still resides. His father, Isaac Aby, was born in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, May 9, 1821, a son of Jacob and Elizabeth Aby, also natives of Lancaster county, while their parents were emigrants from Germany, who came to this country at an early day and spent the remainder of their lives in the Keystone state. In 1825 Jacob Aby came to Richland county, Ohio, and located upon the farm of one hundred and sixty acres in Mifflin township, where the family have since made their home. He had three children,—Ann, Ephraim and Isaac,—all now deceased.

Isaac Aby grew to manhood upon the home farm, and as a young man was engaged in the distillery business, in partnership with Henry Kising. In 1850 he became one of the California gold-seekers. Taking passage on the steamer, John L. Stephens, he rounded the Horn, and for two years was engaged in mining in California, being reasonably successful in his search for the yellow metal. In 1852 he returned home, but in the spring of the following year again started for the gold fields, this time by the isthmus route. Finding the mining district overrun with prospectors he did not remain long, returning home in the fall of the same year.

With his savings he purchased eighty acres of the home farm lying south of the road, and on the 10th of January, 1854, married Miss Sarah J. Clugston. They began their domestic life upon his newly acquired farm,

and in connection with the cultivation of his own land he farmed his father's place on the shares, the latter having reached that age when he wished to retire from active labor. This he continued until the death of his parents, when he purchased the remaining eighty acres of the heirs, and successfully engaged in agricultural pursuits throughout life. Although he began his business career empty handed, prosperity crowned his well directed efforts and he became one of the well-to-do and substantial citizens of his community, owning three hundred and nine acres of valuable land. He was a stanch Democrat in politics, but never an office-seeker, and was highly respected and esteemed by all who knew him. He died March 3, 1899, leaving two children: Byron J., our subject; and May E., the wife of Wesley Koogle, who resides on a portion of the Aby farm.

Mrs. Sarah J. Aby, the mother of our subject, was born on the 27th of August, 1831, in Franklin county, Pennsylvania, of which her parents, John and Jane (Martin) Clugston, were also natives. Mr. Clugston's father and mother were from Scotland and Ireland, respectively, while his wife's parents were both from the Emerald isle. In 1847 John Clugston, with his family, moved to Ohio and settled in the village of Mifflin, better known among the old settlers at Petersburg. By trade he was a wagonmaker, at which he worked, and in conjunction conducted a hotel for many years. (This hotel is still standing.) In 1867 he removed to La Grange, Indiana, where he resided up to the time of his death, dying there at the advanced age of eighty-three years, while his wife died at the same place, when sixty-five years of age. In their family were eight children, seven of whom are still living, namely: Franklin, George A., Johnson, Sarah J., Martha, Margaret and Amanda.

The early education of Byron J. Aby was acquired in the district schools near his boyhood home and during his boyhood and youth he assisted his father in carrying on the farm. On the 27th of February, 1879, he was united in marriage with Miss Anna E. Keffer, a native of Mansfield and daughter of Henry and Elizabeth (Kisling) Keffer. Her father, who was a well-known merchant of Mansfield, is now deceased. By this union were born four children: Floyd E., Gladys M., Vera M. and Myrtle F., all at home.

After his marriage Mr. Aby took charge of a portion of the home farm, which he cultivated for his father until 1898, when the latter deeded his present farm to him. In politics he is a Democrat, and for seven years he most acceptably served as township treasurer. Both he and his wife are prominent and influential members of the United Brethren church and have

taken an active part in its work, he having served as a trustee and the treasurer for many years, and also as the Sabbath-school superintendent. Fraternally he is one of the charter members of Ruffner Grange, No. 1433, P. of H., and for the first three years of its existence he served as the master of the same. He is also a member of Mifflin Tent, No. 306, K. O. T. M.