

Northern Kentucky
Views presents . . .

Colonel James Taylor

TAYLOR, COL. JAMES, son of Gen. James Taylor, was born August 9, 1802, at Bellevue, the residence of his father, near Newport, Kentucky. (See sketch of Gen. James Taylor.) His mother was Keturah Leitch, *née* Moss. She was brought to Kentucky, at the age of eleven years, by her uncle, Mr. Easton, who first settled near Lexington, in 1783. She was married to Major David Leitch, who had been an officer in the Revolutionary army, and, in 1791, removed to the Block-house, at Leitch's Station, five miles from the mouth of the Licking river, in Kentucky. Major Leitch died in 1794. In the following year, she was married to Gen. James Taylor, and their oldest son, and only living child, is the subject of this sketch. Col. Taylor entered the school of Rev. Robert Stubbs, two miles from Newport, in Campbell County, in 1811, and remained under his tuition for several years. He also spent the years 1813 and 1814 in the Pestalozzian school of the celebrated Dr. Joseph Buchanan, near Lexington; and, in 1818, entered the Freshman Class at Transylvania University, then under the presidency of Dr. Holley, and graduated in 1822. For some time subsequently, he occupied his leisure hours at home, in literary pursuits. At this time, he joined a Thespian society; constructed a theater in the old Government barracks at Newport; became quite conspicuous as an amateur actor; acquired considerable distinction as Sir Edward Mortimer, in the "Iron Chest;" and his great delight in the sport induced him, in March, 1824, to personate the character of Zanga, in Young's tragedy of "Revenge," at the theater in Cincinnati, for the benefit of Capt. John Cleves Symmes, who was then making arrangements to enter his superb imaginary world under the North Pole. Throughout his life he has taken great pleasure in the drama, and yet recites Shakespeare and Byron with unsurpassed power, for the entertainment of his friends. In 1823, he entered the Law School of Transylvania University, when Hon. William T. Barry and Judge Jesse Bledsoe were professors, and graduated in the Spring of the following year. In the Spring of 1825, he was admitted to the bar, but never entered on the practice of his profession. He immediately took an active part with his father, who had been, for many years, extensively engaged in the location of land warrants in the military tract in the State of Ohio, and who was then prosecuting numerous claims in that State. He was thus engaged, for many years, bringing his legal knowledge and rare business tact and skill into requisition before the State and Federal Courts, in Ohio; and not only acquired a handsome estate, but also the reputation of being one of the first business men of Kentucky. In 1848, his father died, leaving him executor of the whole complicated land estate lying in Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana. Much complex and protracted litigation necessarily accompanied his administration of the affairs of this estate, requiring great labor and skill. The greater part of the litigation he mainly conducted himself, usually with favorable results to his cause; and probably no man in the West is better posted in land law, or is better able to manage an intricate case before any court. He is exceedingly skillful in the preparation of a case, letting no point of law, for or against him, escape his notice,

his inexhaustive and ready memory serving him in every matter of detail. The legal arguments in which he often indulges, especially when he thinks his associate unprepared for the emergency, are of the highest type, exhibiting great research and legal tact; and are often accompanied by his inimitable oratory, displaying him to great advantage before any tribunal. In politics, he has voted with the Democrats since 1861. But his first Presidential vote was cast for Henry Clay, in 1824; his second, for Andrew Jackson, in 1828; and, in 1848, he voted for his relative, Gen. Z. Taylor. In religion, he is an Episcopalian. Col. Taylor is a speaker of uncommon ability, and would have made his mark at the bar or in politics, had fortune been less favorable. On the stage, he would have been equal to Forrest, or any of the great actors who have attained the highest histrionic fame; and, in any avocation, would have been successful. He is rapid and accurate in his modes of thought, active and quick in his movements, with elegant manners and admirable bearing; is nearly six feet in height; is, mentally and physically, wonderfully vigorous for one of his age; and, altogether, is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable men now living in Kentucky. Col. Taylor was married, May 20, 1824, at Frankfort, to Miss Susan Lucy Barry, eldest daughter of Hon. William T. Barry, then Secretary of State, of Kentucky. They have now living three daughters and two sons; their son John B. Taylor being President of the banking-house of James Taylor & Sons, in Newport, Kentucky.