

Northern Kentucky  
Views presents . . .

## Joshua Taylor Bradford, M.D.

BRADFORD, JOSHUA TAYLOR, M. D., American Surgeon, and the most successful Ovariologist in the world, was born December 9, 1819, in Bracken County, Kentucky, and was the seventh son of William and Elizabeth Bradford. His father settled in Bracken County in 1790; was a farmer by pursuit; and, while not greatly distinguished, was a man of fine mind, and stood high among the pioneer farmers of Eastern Kentucky. Dr. Bradford received his literary education at Augusta College, Kentucky, and commenced life as a merchant's clerk at Augusta. But he soon after began the study of medicine with his elder brother, Dr. J. J. Bradford, at Augusta, and, after a thorough preparation, graduated in the medical department of Transylvania University, in 1839, and at once entered upon the practice of his profession at Augusta, Kentucky, on the Ohio river, where he continued to reside during his life. He rose to great eminence in his profession, and especially in the line of surgery was unsurpassed, either in America or Europe. He established a large and wide-spread general family practice, in which he was not only successful, but in which he greatly endeared himself to the people; and, after pursuing this, in connection with his surgical practice, for twenty-five years, in 1865, in a printed address to the profession and the people, he gave up, not only his general medical practice, but also a considerable part of his surgery business. At the time of making this change, he said: "In separating from the many families whose confidence and continued patronage have so often warmed my heart by the testimonials of their kindness, there is a feeling of regret, a struggle between duty and inclination, that drapes my heart in sorrow. And every such a fireside where and among whom I have shared their sorrows and their pleasures, their afflictions and their prosperity, I can only forget by a failure of mind and memory—they and their children." From that time he devoted his attention exclusively to surgery and consultation visits. Even then his business was very great, being obliged to make provision at his home for those who came from a great distance to obtain his aid in consultation or difficult surgery. His long and extensive family medical practice, and his almost universal knowledge of medical authorities, rendered him eminently qualified as a consulting physician. Long before he took this step in

life, he had performed all *capital* and nearly all *minor* operations in surgery, and had added greatly to the advancement of his profession. He was the first surgeon to excise the os calcis and cuboid bones successfully, either in this country or Europe, and make a useful limb. This case he reported for the "New York Medical Times," in February, 1862, and it was afterwards copied into "Grosse's Surgery" and "Smith's Surgery." In 1812, he also reported a case in the "Medico-chirurgical Review," of a cure of a little girl at Foster's Landing, Kentucky, in which he extracted a stone from the bladder without cutting, by gradual dilatation and the use of the bougie. For many years he devoted his attention, with wonderful success, to surgical operations for diseases of the uterus and ovaria. Most of his remarkable cases were reported in the "Cincinnati Lancet," in the third edition of "Grosse's Surgery," in the "New York American Monthly," in the "American Chirurgical Review," in the "Louisville Semi-monthly News," and to the medical societies; and recently his great cases in ovariectomy have been fully set forth by Dr. E. R. Peaslee, of New York, in his work on the history of ovarian tumor. Dr. Peaslee's work also contained the substance of some papers which he had written for publication shortly before his death. In 1859, he reported that, in eleven of his operations for ovarian tumor, only one had proved fatal. At the time of his death, he had operated in thirty such cases; and, out of these, only three were followed by fatal results. This was the greatest percentage of success ever reached, in operating for ovarian tumor, in the world. After his successful operation at Paris, Kentucky, in 1869, Prof. James Graham, of the Medical College of Ohio, wrote him enthusiastically: "You have been wonderfully successful. Three deaths in twenty-seven cases! What would the French surgeons say to that? I shall do myself the honor to present your letter, with some remarks, to the Academy of Medicine." In February, 1869, he reported to the "Lancet and Observer" his most remarkable and successful operation for a complete rupture of the perinæum. He had unprecedented success in the treatment of cancer, his methods being the result of many years of study and research. The recipe which he left, he considered the best remedy that had been used at that time for cancer. Besides his great operations, which really distinguished him among surgeons, he performed numberless others of less note, but alike indicative of his great skill. During the civil war, he served two years as brigade surgeon on the staff of Gen. William Nelson. If Dr. Bradford had been an ambitious man, it would have been easy for him to secure decisive recognition of his talents; but, instead of seeking, he rather avoided the ordinary avenues to distinction in his profession. He was twice offered the chair of surgery in a medical school, and but a short time before his

death, was induced to become the successor of Dr. Blackman, of Cincinnati, in the Professorship of Surgery in the Medical College of Ohio, but his Bracken County home had charms from which even greater temptations could not lure him. And thus he passed away, carrying with him a soundness of judgment, a cunning of hand, and a wealth of peculiar experience, which it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the future to supply. He was connected with one or two social organizations; was unobtrusive in manners; was generous to a fault; possessed a high moral nature; was brave and patriotic; if he had salient points in his character, was reticent as to them, being content to do good, enjoy the consciousness of it, and let the world tell the story. To his habit of exhaustive contemplation, depending on his own peculiar judgment, after using the experience and judgment of the wise in his profession, he attributed his great success. He was the most successful ovariologist, and, in many respects, one of the first surgeons, in the world; was an ornament to his profession in America; was an honor to his State, a pride to all who bear his name; and was universally beloved in the community where he passed his useful life. He died at his residence, at Augusta, October 31, 1871. Dr. Bradford was married, in 1845, to Sallie E. Armstrong, of Augusta, Kentucky, a member of one of the old honorable patriotic families of the State. His widow and two children, W. G. and Emily Bradford, survived him, and now reside at Augusta, the scene of his notable career.