

# THOMAS TAYLOR, THE PLATONIST:

*A Biographical and Bibliographical Sketch.*

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*Reprinted from "THE LIBRARY," July and August, 1890.*

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London, 1890.





## THOMAS TAYLOR, THE PLATONIST.

THOMAS TAYLOR, the Platonist, has been variously judged.<sup>1</sup> "To strain human curiosity to the utmost limits of human credibility," says Isaac Disraeli, "a modern Plato has arisen in Mr. Thomas Taylor, who consonant to the Platonic Philosophy, religiously professes polytheism! At the close of the eighteenth century, be it recorded, were published many volumes in which the author affects to avow himself a zealous Platonist, and asserts that he can prove that the Christian religion is 'a bastardized and barbarous Platonism.' The divinities of Plato are the deities to be adored, and we are to be taught to call God, Jupiter; the Virgin, Venus; and Christ, Cupid! The Iliad of Homer allegorized, is converted into a Greek Bible of the Arcana of Nature!"—(*Curiosities of Literature: Modern Platonism.*)

T. J. Mathias styles Taylor "the would-be restorer of unintelligible mysticism and superstitious pagan nonsense," and speaks of—

"The hymns that Taylor, England's Gentile priest,  
Sung spousal at fair Psychè's marriage feast."

Another critic, writing in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1825, said, "The man is an ass, in the first place; secondly, he knows nothing of the religion of which he is so great a fool as to

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<sup>1</sup> The materials for the following sketch are in Allibone's *Dictionary of English Literature; An Annotated Catalogue of an unique and exceptionally complete Set of the Works of Thomas Taylor, the Platonist*, by Orlin Mead Sandford, New York, 1885; also in *Book Lore*, vols. 2, and 3; *The Antiquary*, August, 1888 (by Edward Peacock); *The Survival of Paganism* (*Fraser's Magazine*, November, 1875); Lowndes' *Bibliographer's Manual*, British Museum General Catalogue; Barker's *Literary Anecdotes; Publick Characters, 1798-1799* (this is, if not autobiographical, evidently based on information supplied by the subject; there is a portrait of him, representing a rather ascetic but kindly face); Disraeli's *Curiosities of Literature*; Mathias' *Pursuits of Literature; Nouvelle Biographie Générale*, par Hœfer; *A Brief Notice of the Life of Mr. Thomas Taylor, the Celebrated Platonist, with a Catalogue of his Works*, London, 1831, signed J. J. W. [*i.e.*, James Jacob Welsh.]

profess himself a votary; and thirdly, he knows less than nothing of the language about which he is continually writing." (Quoted by *Dr. Allibone*.) De Quincey also had a poor opinion of him, yet read what Ralph Waldo Emerson, in his conversation with Wordsworth, has said:—"I told him it was not creditable that no one in all the country knew anything of Thomas Taylor, the Platonist, whilst in every American library his translations were found. I said, 'If Plato's Republic were published in England, as a new book, to-day, do you think it would find any readers?' He confessed it would not; 'and yet,' he added, after a pause, with that complacency which never deserts a true-born Englishman, 'and yet we have embodied it all.'" (Emerson's *Representative Men*, London, 1850, p. 39. See also pp. 18, 38, 40-44.)

The singular and interesting man who is known to us as Taylor, the Platonist, was born in London in the year 1758, and his parents we are told were "obscure but worthy." His father was Joseph Taylor, staymaker, of Round Court, St. Martins-le-Grand, where the future Platonist was probably born.<sup>1</sup> He was a weakly child, and signs of consumption induced his family to send him into Staffordshire. He returned to the metropolis in his ninth year, and was admitted at St. Paul's School, April 10th, 1767. His parents designed him for the Nonconformist ministry. His affection for philosophy, as distinguished from the mere verbal acquaintance with classics, was so marked, that when an ethical or specially grand sentence occurred in an author he was construing, the surmaster, Mr. William Rider, would say, "Come, here is something worthy the attention of a philosopher." He early discovered critical powers, which enabled him to notice and correct a blunder in the printing of a Latin Testament. He had now to disappoint his father, whose reverence for the ministerial office led him to regard it as "the most desirable and most enviable employment upon earth, and who was correspondingly troubled when he found that his talented son had no desire to occupy that office, and had so great a dislike to the public school teaching and languages—as it then was—that he begged to be taken home again. He had also been for a time a pupil of Mr. Worthington, the dissenting

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Edward Peacock says that he was born 15th May, 1758, in a street at or near Bunhill Fields, London.—(*Antiquary*, vol. xviii. p. 1.)

minister of Salter's Hall. Taylor was precocious in another direction, for his passion for the lady who was afterwards his wife began when he was only twelve years old.

At home young Taylor picked up a copy of Ward's *Young Mathematician's Guide*, and this gave him a turn for mathematics, in which he afterwards excelled, and to which he himself ascribed no small share of his success afterwards as a translator of Greek philosophy. Owing to his father's opposition his early studies in mathematics were pursued in hours stolen from rest, and he slept with a tinder-box under his pillow. He was sent at fifteen to work under an uncle-in-law at Sheerness Dockyard, but rather than endure this unpleasant situation he attempted to fall in with his father's views and became pupil to a dissenting minister. He studied Greek and Latin in the day, courted Miss Morton in the evening, and at night read Simson's *Conic Sections* in the Latin edition. His judgment on Newton, after reading the *Principia*, was that he was a great mathematician but no philosopher! Miss Morton's father intended his daughter for a richer man, but the young couple decided upon the immediate performance of the marriage ceremony, whilst postponing married life until the return of the bridegroom from Aberdeen University, where he was to finish his education. The step-mother<sup>1</sup> of Taylor found out the secret, and the young couple had a bad time of it. The bride's father was induced when dying to leave any payments to her to the discretion of a relative whose fault was not that of open-handed liberality. For about a year the philosopher and his wife had only about seven shillings a week on which to live. Taylor obtained a situation as usher, and was only able to see his wife upon the Saturday afternoon. He next obtained a position in Lubbock's Bank at a salary of fifty pounds, paid quarterly, and endured great privations from want of money, so that frequently from want of food he would be in a fainting condition on reaching home. Even under these discouraging circumstances Taylor did not neglect study, and turned his mind to the unprofitable consideration of Becker's *Physica Subterranea* and quadrature of the circle. His first essay, a quarto pamphlet, entitled *A New Method of Reasoning in Geometry*, bears upon the last-named subject, and its substance

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<sup>1</sup> It is said to be the mother-in-law in the sketch in *Public Characters*, but the context seems to indicate that it was his father's wife.

is reproduced in a note to his translation of Proclus *On Euclid*. A passage in Sir Kenelm Digby sent him to the writings of Aristotle, and he was soon able to read him in the original. He used to say himself that he learned Greek rather through the Greek philosophy than the Greek philosophy through Greek. The earnest student was always engaged at the bank until seven and often until ten, and in order to continue his abstract researches seldom went to bed until two or three o'clock in the morning. He had that power of abstraction from the common cares of life that is indispensable for successful thinking. The fact that he was accurate and "business-like" in his employment did not in the least prevent him from digesting, whilst walking about delivering the bills of the bank, that which he had read in Aristotle and his interpreters. He paid great attention to the commentaries upon Aristotle. He next proceeded to study Plato with equal or greater avidity. In this new path he soon came upon Plotinus and Proclus, whose dissertation on the theology of Plato he found so profound that it was not until he had thrice read it over that he thoroughly comprehended its abstruse matter.

Whilst engaged with Proclus he had residing in his house Mary Woollstoncraft and her friend Miss Blood. Their three months' company was mutually agreeable. The lady listened attentively to his explanations of Plato, called his study the "Abode of Peace," but avowed her preference for an active, rather than a contemplative life. He called upon her when she lived in George Street, and there drank wine with her out of a *tea-cup*; Mrs. Woollstoncraft observed at the time, that she did not give herself the trouble to think whether a glass was a necessary utensil in a house. He has also heard her say "that one of the conditions she should make previous to marriage, with the man she intended for her husband, would be this—that he should never presume to enter the room in which she was sitting, till he had first knocked at the door."

After six years at the Bank, the drudgery proved too much, even for the philosophic spirit of Taylor. Nights of arduous study following days of uncongenial employment had injured his health. He had a notion that a perpetual lamp might be made, and he gave an exhibition of his invention at the "Freemasons' Tavern." He found that oil and salt boiled formed a fluid vehicle, which when phosphorus was immersed in it, both preserved and increased the splendour of light. Unfortunately, at the exhibition

the phosphorus took fire, "and thus raised a prejudice against the invention which could never afterwards be removed." The failure was not, however, without result, for it attracted the attention of Mr. George Cumberland, who, with other friends, enabled Taylor to leave the bank "and procure subsistence for himself and his family by literary toil"—but of what nature is not stated. Flaxman, the sculptor, induced him to write twelve lectures on the "Platonic Philosophy," which were read at the artist's house, where he had amongst his auditors Sir William Fordyce, the Hon. Mrs. Damer, Mrs. Cosway, Mr. Romney and others. Flaxman also introduced him to Bennet Langton, who thrice mentioned him to the king as "a gigantic reader." George III. expressed his admiration of Taylor's ability and industry, but did not take any further notice of his Platonic subject. But if royalty was not liberal another patron arose. A wealthy man, Mr. William Meredith, of Harley Place, who had become acquainted with Plato in the fine translation of Sydenham, took him by the hand, and enabled him to print his translations of the *Hymns of Orpheus*, the *Commentaries of Proclus on Euclid*, and the *Fable of Cupid and Psyche*. In William Meredith and his brother George, who was one of the architects who early studied Gothic, Taylor had liberal and sympathetic friends.

It was at this period that the Marquis de Valady lodged with Taylor. The extraordinary letter in which the marquis introduced himself is dated "12 Xbre 1788, vulg. æra," was printed by Taylor, and is quoted in *Fraser's Magazine*, Nov., 1875. The Frenchman professed to be a Pythagorean, and thought that the philosophic doctrine of community should be extended to the conjugal relations. He asked the English Pythagorean's opinion; but Taylor severely condemned the loose morality of the suggestion.<sup>1</sup>

Taylor had the true literary dislike of critics. Dining once at Mr. Bennet Langton's, with Dr. Burney and other eminent scholars, he exclaimed to his friend, as soon as he left the house, "God keep me from critics!" This was occasioned by a dispute which arose at that time, respecting the pro-

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<sup>1</sup> There is a biographical sketch of J. G. C. S. X. J. J. Izarn de Valady in the *Lives of the Remarkable Characters of the French Revolution*, and it is limned in very dark colours. "The persons to whom he was known assert with him madness was the result of immorality, not immorality the result of madness." He acted with the Girondins, and was arrested at Périgueux, and condemned to death, 5th December, 1794.

priety of the epithet *ocean stream*, which Mr. Taylor had made use of in his translation of one of his Orphic hymns. Mr. Taylor urged, in his defence, that this epithet was employed by Homer, Hesiod, and Plato. To this Dr. Burney replied, that Homer indeed had the expression ὠκεῖνός ποταμός, *the ocean river*, but that a *river* was not a *stream*. Mr. Taylor then observed that these words were considered as synonymous, by no less poets than Milton and Denham. By Milton, when speaking of the leviathan (*Paradise Lost*, Book i.) he says:—

“————— or that sea beast  
Leviathan, whom God of all his works  
Created hugest, that swim th’ *ocean stream*.”

And by Denham, in the first of his famous lines on the Thames:—

“O, could I flow like thee, and make thy *stream*  
My great exemplar, as it is my theme.”

Soon after the departure of the marquis, Mr. Taylor and his wife became possessed of six or seven hundred pounds, by the death of one of her relations. A great part of this he spent in relieving some relatives, and the rest he lost in a loan to one of his early friends. The transaction was creditable to his heart if not to his head. Five or six years after he was again in embarrassment, and in seven months translated some of the abstrusest of the *Dialogues* of Plato and then sold the copyright for forty pounds. For his versions of Sallust *On the Gods and the World*, the *Pythagoric Sentences* of Demophilus, the *Five Hymns* of Proclus, the *Two Orationes* of the Emperor Julian and *Five books* of Plotinus he received twenty pounds. His translation of Pausanias was the work of ten months. When the work was undertaken Mr. Samuel Patterson, the literary auctioneer, said of the task that “it was enough to break a man’s heart.” “Oh,” replied the bookseller, “nothing will break the heart of Mr. Taylor.” He injured his health by the execution of this task, for which he received £60. One result was that he lost the use of his forefinger in writing.

Under the encouragement of an anonymous patron Taylor undertook to translate all the Platonic dialogues that had not been turned into English by Mr. Sydenham. For this purpose he visited the Bodleian at Oxford in 1797, and was “handsomely treated” by the University. The Merediths engaged him to

translate Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Thomas Brand Hollis was another of his friends.

The elder Disraeli wrote a now forgotten novel, entitled *Vaurien*, which appeared anonymously in 1797. In this there is a satirical sketch of the Platonist. It is not easy to select passages from it sufficiently brief and unobjectionable. Vaurien waits in conversation with the wife of the Platonist until he has completed his morning worship:—"By this time the Platonist had concluded his long hymn to Apollo. Vaurien now ascended with difficulty. At the bottom of the stairs was a large kennel of dogs of various nations, who lived in a good understanding with each other, excepting when a bone was thrown among them, for then the dogs behaved like men, that is, they mangled and tore each other to pieces with sagacity and without remorse. Monkeys and apes were chained on the banisters. A little republic of cats was peaceably established on the first landing place. He passed through one room which was an aviary and another which was an apiary. From the ceiling of the study of the Platonist, depended a polished globe of silvered glass, which strongly reflected the beams of the sun. Amidst this aching splendour sat the Platonist, changing his seat with the motions of his god, so that in the course of the day he and the sun went regularly round the apartment. He was occupied in constructing a magic lanthorn, which puerile amusement excited the surprise of Vaurien."

The Platonist accounted for it. "My dissertation on the Eleusinian mysteries is not all understood. The whole machinery, reflected on a white sheet, will be more intelligible than any I could give on a sheet of paper. In the presence of the gods, in the most holy of the mysteries, dæmons appeared with the heads of dogs; Pletho says this, who lived a thousand years after the mysteries. Then I have 'omniform and terrific monsters;' then the demiurgus, the progress of purgation, inspection, crowning, torch-bearing, and, finally, friendship with the gods. But here is the great difficulty. How shall I represent 'the intolerable effulgence of the divine light?' Much it grieves me, that for this sublime purpose a candle and a piece of coloured tin are all I can get into the lanthorn. The gods

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Peacock states that the translations of Aristotle were published at the expense of the Duke of Norfolk.

are not always favourable to my attempts. After long experiments, I conceived I had discovered the perpetual sepulchral lamp of the ancients. Last week I invited my friends to a philosophical lecture on my perpetual lamp; I triumphed in my discovery; but ere my lecture closed my lamp was suddenly extinguished. Good Gods!"—(Vol. II., p. 192.)

After more, which is best left untouched, we read:—

“Vaurien having felicitated the Platonist on the new world he had opened to himself, said, ‘You propose to overturn Christianity by the publications of the Platonists, and to erect a Pantheon, that the gods may be honourably revered.’

“‘That is my important pursuit; I have already prepared the soaring and ecstatic Olympiodorus, the noble and obscure Heraclius; I join the Asiatic luxuriancy of Proclus, divinely explained by Jamblichus, and profoundly delivered by Plotinus. Plotinus, who was surnamed ‘Intellect’ by his contemporaries, such was the fervour of his mind, that he was accustomed to write without attending to the orthography or the revision of his works, which perhaps occasions their divine unintelligibility; for the celestial vigour rendered him incapable of trifling concerns, and he therefore committed them, as fast as he wrote, to Porphyry, who, perhaps labouring under the same divine influence, was equally incapable of orthography or sense.’ The Platonist concluded this conversation with an invective, of which the style appears to us so curious that we shall give the exact expressions, as a specimen of the Platonic effervescence in a Ciceronian period:—

“‘I have long perceived the ignorance and malevolence of Christian priests, from the most early fathers to the most modern retailers of hypocrisy and cant; every intelligent reader must be alternately excited to grief and indignation, to pity and contempt, at the barbarous mythological systems of the moderns; for in these we meet with nothing but folly and delusion, opinions founded either on fanaticism or atheism, inconceivably absurd, and inextricably obscure, ridiculously vain, and monstrously deformed, stupidly dull, and contemptibly zealous, apostolically delirious, or historically dry, and, in one word, such only as arrogance and ignorance could conceive, impiety propagate, and the vapid spirit of the moderns be induced to admit.’

“‘My dear Platonist,’ exclaimed Vaurien, ‘if you can roll periods like these, your genius will be rewarded by yourself

being chosen by the nation to lay the first stone of a Pantheon in London, for "the ascent of excellent dæmons"." (Vol. II., p. 213).

There is nothing to show that D'Israeli was personally acquainted with Taylor the Platonist, and the sketch in *Vaurien* is too obviously caricatured to be worthy of much attention.

Taylor, after leaving the bank, "had a place in one of the public offices, to the fatigues of which, finding his strength by no means adequate, and the employment appearing to him at the same time extremely servile, he relinquished it almost immediately after his nomination," and composed the following lines on the occasion :—

To ev'ry power that reigns on high,  
 Swifter than light my thanks shall fly,  
 That, from the B \* \* \* dark dungeon free,  
 I once more hail sweet liberty !  
 For sure, I ween, fate ne'er me doom'd  
 To be 'midst sordid cares entomb'd,  
 And vilely waste in groveling toil  
 The mid-day blaze and midnight oil,  
 To some poor darkling desk confin'd ;  
 While the wing'd energies of mind  
 Oppress'd, and crush'd, and vanquish'd lie,  
 And lose at length, the power to fly.  
 A doom like this be his alone  
 To whom truth's charms were never known ;  
 Who many sleepless nights has spent,  
 In schemes full fraught with *cent. per cent.*  
 The slave of av'rice, child of care,  
 And lost to all that's good and fair.

Mr. Taylor finally, by the influence of his friends, was appointed assistant secretary of the Society of Arts.

Amongst Taylor's friends was Thomas Lovell Peacock, whose grand-daughter says :—" My grandfather's friends were especially Mr. Macgregor Laird and Mr. Coulson, also the two Smiths of the 'Rejected Addresses;' Barry Cornwall (Mr. Procter), and a remarkable man, Mr. Thomas Taylor, of Norwich, commonly called 'Pagan Taylor,' who always addressed grandpapa as 'Greeky Peeky'; he sacrificed lambs in his lodgings to the 'immortal gods,' and 'poured out libations to Jupiter,' until his landlord threatened to turn him out; hence his nickname of 'Pagan.'"

It is rather amusing here to see Thomas Taylor confounded with Taylor of Norwich, as on other occasions he has been

confounded with Robert Taylor, the Devil's Chaplain, and even with Isaac Taylor! The origin of the story about the sacrifice, which has more than once been taken seriously, was probably no more than a good-natured jest.

Let us now endeavour to chronicle the various publications of this extraordinary man. They are all of them in a certain degree rare, and some of them are so in an exceptional degree:—

No date.

History of the Restoration of the Platonic Theology. London. 4to.

1780.

Elements of a new method of Reasoning in Geometry. London, 1780. 4to.

1786.

A short Essay on the Propagation and Dispersion of Animals and Vegetables. Being chiefly intended as an answer to a Letter lately published, and supposed to be written by a Gentleman of Exeter, in favor of Equivocal Generation. London, 1786. This is included in Mr. Sandford's list, but is not by Taylor but by Elford, and is a reply to William Jackson of Exeter.

1787.

The Mystical Initiations; or, Hymns of Orpheus. Translated from the original Greek; with a Preliminary Dissertation on the Life and Theology of Orpheus. By Thomas Taylor. London, printed for the author, 1787, 1 vol., 12mo.

1787.

Concerning the Beautiful, or, A Paraphrased Translation from the Greek of Plotinus, Ennead 1. Book VI. By Thomas Taylor. London, printed for the author, 1787, 1 vol., 12mo.

1790 or 1791.

A Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries. Amsterdam. Printed and sold by J. Weitstein. 8vo. This was no doubt printed in London. The Dissertation, with additions, appeared also in the *Pamphleteer*, Vol. VIII., 1816.

1792.

An Essay on the Beautiful. From the Greek of Plotinus, London, printed for the author, 1792, 1 vol., 12mo.

1792.

The Phædrus of Plato. A dialogue concerning Beauty and Love. Translated from the Greek. London, 1792, 1 vol., 4to.

1792.

Commentaries of Proclus, Philosophical and Mathematical, on the First Book of Euclid's Elements; to which are added, A History of the Restoration of the Platonic Theology by the Latter Platonists; and a translation from the Greek of Proclus's Theological Elements. Dedicated "To the Sacred Majesty of Truth." London, printed for the author, 1792, 2 vols., 4to.

1792

The Rights of Brutes. London, 1792, 1 vol., 12mo. Said to be a satire on Paine's Rights of Man.

1792.

The Hymns of Orpheus. Translated from original Greek, with a Preliminary Dissertation on the Life and Theology of Orpheus. London, Printed for the author, 1792, 1 vol., 8vo.

1793.

Two Orations of Emperor Julian. One to the Sovereign Sun, and the other to the Mother of the Gods; Translated from the Greek. With Notes, and a copious Introduction, in which some of the greatest arcana of the Grecian Theology are unfolded. London, 1793, 1 vol., 8vo.

1793.

The Cratylus, Phædo, Parmenides, and Timæus of Plato. Translated from the Greek by Thomas Taylor. With notes on the Cratylus, and an explanatory introduction to each dialogue. London, 1793, 1 vol., 8vo.

1793.

Sallust on the Gods and the World; and the Pythagoric Sentences of Demophilus. Translated from the Greek; and Five Hymns, by Proclus, in the original Greek, with a poetical version. To which are added Five Hymns by the translator. London, 1793, 1 vol., 8vo. The version of Demophilus is reprinted in the *Philobiblion*, New York, 1862, vol. 1, p. 152.

1794.

The Description of Greece. Translated from the Greek. With notes, in which much of the Mythology of the Greeks is unfolded from a theory which has been for many ages unknown, and illustrated with maps and views elegantly engraved. London, 1794, 3 vols., 8vo. For this Taylor received £60—the only one of his works for which he was paid by the booksellers or the public. A second edition appeared in 1824.

1794.

Five Books of Plotinus, viz. : On Felicity ; On the Nature and Origin of Evil ; On Providence ; On Nature, Contemplation, and The One ; and on the Descent of the Soul. Translated from the Greek, with an Introduction, containing Additional Information on these Important Subjects. By Thomas Taylor. London, 1794, 1 vol., 8vo.

1794.

Abridgement of the History of the West Indies. By Bryan Edwards, M.P. London, 1794, 3 vols., 8vo.

1795.

The Fable of Cupid and Psyche. Translated from the Latin of Apuleius : To which are added, a Poetical Paraphrase on the Speech of Diotima, at the Banquet of Plato ; Four Hymns, &c., &c., with an Introduction in which the meaning of the Fable is unfolded. London, printed for the author, 1795, 1 vol., 8vo.

1801.

Metaphysics of Aristotle, Translated from the Greek ; with Copious Notes, in which the Pythagoric and Platonic Dogmas respecting Numbers and Ideas are Unfolded from Antient Sources. To which is added a Dissertation on Nullities and Diverging Series. London, printed for the author, 1801. 1 vol., 4to. The dissertation was not included in the second edition, which appeared in 1812 as Vol. IX. of the translation of Aristotle. See under date 1806.

1803.

An edition of Hederic's Greek Lexicon, 4to.

1804.

The Dissertations of Maximus Tyrius. Translated from the Greek by Thomas Taylor. London, Printed for the translator, Whittingham, 1804, 2 vols., 12mo.

1804.

An Answer to Dr. Gillies's Supplement to his New Analysis of Aristotle's Works ; in which the Unfaithfulness of his Translation of Aristotle's Ethics is Unfolded. By Thomas Taylor. London, printed by C. Whittingham, for the author, 1804, 1 vol., 8vo.

1804.

Translations from the Greek, viz. :—Aristotle's Synopsis of the Virtues and Vices. The Similitudes of Demophilus. The Golden Sentences of Democrates, and the Pythagoric Symbols, with the explanations of Jamblichus. By William Bridgman, F.L.S. To which are added, The Pythagoric Sentences of Demothilus. By Mr. Thomas Taylor. London, printed for W. Bridgman, 1804, 1 vol., 12mo.

1804.

The Works of Plato. Fifty-five Dialogues and Twelve Epistles. Translated by Taylor and Sydenham, with Annotations and Copious Notes, in which is given nearly all the existing Greek MSS., Commentaries on the Philosophy of Plato, and a considerable portion of such as are already published. London, printed for Thomas Taylor. 1804, 5 vols., 4to.

1805.

Miscellanies in Prose and Verse. Containing The Triumph of the Wise Man over Fortune, according to the Doctrine of the Stoics and Platonists ; The Creed of the Platonic Philosopher ; A Panegyric on Sydenham, &c., &c., by Thomas Taylor, London, printed for the author, by C. Whittingham, 1805, 1 vol., 8vo.

1806.

Collectanea ; or, Collections consisting of Miscellanies inserted by Thomas Taylor in the *European* and *Monthly Magazines*, with an Appendix containing some Hymns by the same author never before printed.\*\*\* London : printed for the author, by C. Whittingham, Dean Street, 1806, 1 vol., 12mo. In the preface it is mentioned that the volume was printed at the request of William Meredith. It contains a paraphrase of Ocellus Lucanus on the Nature of the Universe, which appeared in the *European Magazine* in 1782, and "is the earliest of the author's publications." On p. 18 is an Address to the British Nation ; on p. 19 On a Text in Hebrews (Heb. xi., 3). On p. 24 is a

letter to the Editor of the *Monthly Magazine*, on p. 29 another; on p. 31 To the Rising Sun; on p. 34 Chaldean Oracles; followed by (p. 38) A Concise Explanation of Chaldaic Dogmas, by Psellus; on p. 45 begins the Oracles of Zoroaster; on p. 63 Chaldean Oracles delivered by Theurgists under the reign of the Emperor Marcus Antonius; on p. 80, Chaldean Oracles; on p. 111 a Letter on Sensual and Intellectual Pleasures; on p. 116 Theodosius and Constantia; on p. 121 The Dream, an Imitation of the beginning of the Eleventh Book of Apuleius; on p. 127 a Letter on the Fables of the Ancients; on p. 135, a Letter on the Name of God; on p. 137 on Alchemy; p. 139 To the Sun. The Appendix begins on p. 147. There were but fifty copies of this printed, at the expense of Mr. Meredith.

1806.

The Works of Aristotle. Translated from the Greek. With copious elucidations from the best of his Greek Commentators, viz. : Alexander Aphrodisiensis, Syrianus, Ammonius Hermæas, Priscianus, Olympiodorus, Simplicius, &c. By Thomas Taylor. London, printed for the translator, 1806-12; 9 vols., 4to.

1809.

The Arguments of Emperor Julian against the Christians. Translated from the Greek Fragments preserved by Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria. To which are added Extracts from the other Works of Julian relative to the Christians. By Thomas Taylor. London, printed for the translator, 1809, 1 vol., 8vo.

1812.

Philosophy of Aristotle. A Dissertation on the four books. London, printed for the author, 1812, 1 vol., 4to.

1816.

Theoretic Arithmetic; in Three Books, containing the substance of all that has been written on this subject by Theo of Smyrna, Nicomachus, Jamblichus, and Boetius. Together with some remarkable particulars respecting perfect, amicable, and other numbers, which are not to be found in the writings of any ancient or modern mathematicians. Likewise, a specimen of the manner in which the Pythagoreans philosophized about numbers,

and a development of their mystical and theological arithmetic. By Thomas Taylor. London, printed for the author, 1816, 1 vol., 8vo.

1816.

The Six Books of Proclus, the Platonic Successor; On the Theology of Plato, translated from the Greek; to which a Seventh Book is added, in order to supply the deficiency of another book on this subject, which was written by Proclus, but since lost. Also a translation from the Greek of Proclus' Elements of Theology. To which are added a Translation of Extracts from his Treatise, entitled Ten Doubts Concerning Providence; and a translation of Extracts from his Treatise on the Subsistence of Evil; as preserved in the Bibliotheca Graeca of Fabricius. By Thomas Taylor. London, printed for the author, 1816, 2 vols., 4to.

1816.

*The Pamphleteer*, Vol. VIII., 8vo., contains the Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries. See under date 1791.

1817.

Select Works of Plotinus, The Great Restorer of the Philosophy of Plato; and Extracts from the Treatise of Synesius on Providence. Translated from the Greek. With an introduction containing the substance of Porphyry's Life of Plotinus. By Thomas Taylor. London, printed for and sold by the author, and by Black and Son, 1817, 1 vol., 8vo.

1818.

Jamblichus' Life of Pythagoras, or Pythagoric Life. Accompanied by Fragments of the Ethical Writings of Certain Pythagorians in the Doric Dialect; and a Collection of Pythagoric Sentences from Stobæus and others, which are omitted by Gale in his *Opuscula Mythologica*, and have not been noticed by any editor. Translated from the Greek. By Thomas Taylor. London, printed by A. J. Valpy, and sold by the author, 1818, 1 vol., 8vo.

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The Rhetoric, Poetic, and Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle. Translated from the Greek. By Thomas Taylor. London, 1818. 2 vols.

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Miscellanies in Prose and Verse. Containing The Triumph of the Wise Man over Fortune, according to the Doctrine of the Stoics and Platonists; The Creed of the Platonic Philosopher; A Panegyric on Sydenham, &c., &c. By Thomas Taylor. Second edition, with additions. London, printed for the author, 1820, 1 vol., 16mo.

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Commentaries of Proclus on the Timæus of Plato, in Five Books; containing a Treasury of Pythagoric and Platonic Physiology. Translated from the Greek. By Thomas Taylor. London, printed for and sold by the author, 1810, 2 vols., 4to.

1821.

Jamblichus on the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Abyssinians. Translated from the Greek by Thomas Taylor. Chiswick, printed by C. Whittingham, for the translator, Manor Place, Walworth, 1821, 1 vol., 8vo.

1822.

The Metamorphosis, or Golden Ass, and Philosophical Works of Apuleius. Translated from the original Latin, by Thomas Taylor. London, 1822. 1 vol., 8vo.

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Political Fragments of Archytus, Charondas, Zaleucus and other ancient Pythagoreans, preserved by Stobæus; and also Ethical Fragments of Hierocles, the celebrated Commentator on the Golden Pythagoric Verses, preserved by the same author. Translated from the Greek by Thomas Taylor. Chiswick, Printed by C. Whittingham, for the translator, 1822, 1 vol., 8vo.

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The Elements of a New Arithmetical Notation, and of a new Arithmetic of Infinites; In Two Books; in which the series discovered by modern mathematicians, for the quadrature of the circle and hyperbola, are demonstrated to be aggregately incommensurable quantities, and a criterion is given, by which the commensurability or incommensurability of infinite series may be accurately ascertained. With an Appendix, concerning some properties of perfect, amicable, and other numbers,

no less remarkable than novel. By Thomas Taylor. London, 1823, 1 vol., 8vo.

1823

Select Works of Porphyry. Containing his Four Books on Abstinence from Animal Food; his Treatise on the Homeric Cave of the Nymphs and his Auxiliaries to the Perception of Intelligible Natures. Translated from the Greek by Thomas Taylor. With an Appendix explaining the Allegory of the Wanderings of Ulysses. By the translator. London, 1823, 1 vol., 8vo.

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See Pausanias, under date 1794.

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The Mystical Hymns of Orpheus. Translated from the Greek, and demonstrated to be the Invocations which were used in the Eleusinian Mysteries. By Thomas Taylor. The second edition, with considerable Emendations, Alterations, and Additions. Chiswick Press, 1824, 1 vol., 8vo.

1825.

Lost Writings of Proclus. The Fragments that remain of Proclus, surnamed the Platonic Successor. Translated from the Greek. By Thomas Taylor. London, printed for the author, 1825. 1 vol., 8vo.

1830.

Arguments of Celsus, Porphyry and the Emperor Julian against the Christians, and also extracts from Diodorus Siculus, Josephus, and Tacitus, relating to the Jews. Together with an Appendix containing the Oration of Libanius in Defense of the Temples of the Heathens. Translated by Dr. Lardner; and extracts from Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church, London, Thomas Rodd, 1830. 1 vol., 16mo.

1831.

Ocellus Lucanus, on the Nature of the Universe. Taurus, the Platonic Philosopher, on the Eternity of the World. Julius Firmicus Maternus of the Thema Mundi; in which the Positions of the Stars at the commencement of the several Mundane Periods is given. Select Theorems on the Perpetuity of Time, by Proclus. Trans-

lated from the originals, by Thomas Taylor. London, printed for the translator, 1831, 1 vol., 8vo.

1833.

Two Treatises of Proclus, the Platonic Successor; the Former consisting of Ten Doubts concerning Providence, and a Solution of those Doubts; and the latter containing a Development of the Nature of Evil. Translated from the edition of these works by Victor Cousin, by Thomas Taylor. London, printed for the translator, and sold by William Pickering. 1833, 1 vol., 8vo. Re-issued in 1841.

Thomas Taylor died at his residence at Walworth, 1 November, 1835. The cause of death was a disease of the bladder, borne with stoical resignation. Some days before his death he asked if a comet had appeared, and being answered in the affirmative, said, "Then I shall die; I was born with it and shall die with it."

He was buried in Walworth churchyard, but no stone marks the spot, and the resting place of the Platonist is unknown. (*Notes and Queries*, 7th S. IX., 194). He was an enthusiast, and only an enthusiast could have done his work. His translations represent a side of Greek thought that but for him would be unrepresented in English literature. The sneers at his command of Greek are evidently absurd, for surely no man's mind was ever more thoroughly suffused with the very essence of Neo-Platonism. Whatever failure he may have made in unessential details would be more than compensated by the fidelity with which his sympathetic mind reproduced the spirit of the Pythagorean philosophers with whom he dwelt—apart from the noise and turmoil of the age in which he had been cast. His books remain a mighty monument of disinterested devotion to philosophic study. They were produced without regard to, and hopeless of, profit. They are not addressed to popular instincts, and there is no attempt made to give them clearness of style or to present their thoughts in an attractive fashion. The gold that was in them the Platonist thought deserved the trouble of toilsome digging.

The life of Thomas Taylor, the Platonist, is one which will receive a tribute of admiration from the thoughtful. However much of an anachronism a Pagan philosopher may seem in the London of the nineteenth century of Christianity, it must be acknowledged that a man who devotes himself to poverty and

1834.

Translations from the Greek of the following Treatises of Plotinus, viz.:—On Suicide; to which is added An Extract from the Harleian MSS. of the Scholia of Olympiodorus on the Phædo of Plato respecting Suicide, accompanied by the Greek Text; Two books on Truly Existing Being; and Extracts from his Treatise on the Manner in which the Multitude of Ideas Subsists, and concerning The Good; with additional notes from Porphyry and Proclus. By Thomas Taylor. London, printed for the translator, 9, Manor Place, Walworth, 1834, 1 vol., 8vo.

study in an age and country famous for the pursuit of wealth ; who has the courage to adopt and the sincerity to avow opinions that are contrary to every prejudice of the time ; who runs the risk of persecution and imprisonment ; a man who "scorns delights and lives laborious days," is entitled to our admiration and respect. And such was Thomas Taylor, the Platonist, whose name should be remembered by all friends of learning and freedom of thought.

WILLIAM E. A. AXON.

