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A RARE MANUSCRIPT OF CHEVALIER TAYLOR, THE ROYAL OCULIST, WITH NOTES ON HIS LIFE

BY

S. WOOD

THE LIBRARY, ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND,
LONDON

ENGLAND in the 18th century has been called the "Paradise of Quacks." Men and women of little or no education set themselves up as masters of difficult branches of the medical art and flourished exceedingly, trusting to a brazen impudence to carry them through the intricacies of a science which few of them understood. Hogarth, in a satirical picture, "The Arms of the Undertakers," perpetuates some of these quacks, the most prominent being Ward, Mrs. Mapp, and the Chevalier Taylor. "Spot" Ward, formerly a footman, invented a pill and drop, and was called to see the King, who, in spite of the quack's treatment, recovered his health: Ward received the thanks of the House of Commons and was given leave to drive his carriage through St. James's Park. A clause in his will is evidence that he was conscious of his great value to King and State, for he modestly desired "to be buried in front of the altar of Westminster Abbey, or as near the altar as might be."

The centre figure in the engraving is that of Mrs. Mapp, or Crazy Sally, the termagant bone-setter of Epsom. She has been termed "a drunken female savage" whose strength of arm was equalled

only by her strength of language. Her journeys to London "to attend the joints of the nobility" were made in a chariot drawn by four horses, with servants wearing special liveries. In spite of her success she died at her lodging near Seven Dials so miserably poor that the parish was obliged to bury her. On the left of Mrs. Mapp is a figure holding a cane with an eye let into the handle to denote the occupation of its owner. This is the Chevalier Taylor, the subject of these notes, who was a shrewd man of the world, endowed with a handsome appearance and distinguished air, which imposed upon those who were unable to penetrate the showy surface that concealed a mendacious quack of unblushing effrontery. He wrote many books and pamphlets and had a selection of them translated into various languages, but apparently the only manuscript to survive, except for a letter to Sir Hans Sloane in the British Museum, is that relating to the case of Princess Narýshkin, a member of the Russian Royal House, which will be described at the end of this paper.

Taylor informs readers of his book that he first saw the light at Norwich, which town, he thought, may one day become famous on that account. It was in that city, he says, "that my mother became acquainted with my existence, and heard the news of the birth of her first dear son"; but he does not think it necessary to put a date to this tremendous event. He claimed to be of noble birth not only by descent but also by virtue of the qualities with which he was endowed. However this may be, it is known that his natal day was August 16, 1703, and that his father was a surgeon highly respected in Norwich, who was so gravely dignified in appearance that his neighbours imputed to him supernatural knowledge, often consulting him as a conjurer when they suffered disaster or loss. His mother was an apothecary, thus it happened that Taylor's early years were spent in an atmosphere of general practice.

In 1722 he became assistant to an apothecary in London, and, according to his book, studied under Cheselden, giving special attention to the eye and its diseases. In this connection he does not square with Johnson's definition of a quack as "a boastful pretender to an art he does not understand," but he brought upon himself the odious name by his bragging words and irregular methods, which could not be tolerated by the medical profession. Dr. Johnson said "Taylor was the most ignorant man I ever knew," which seems to dispose of his implied claim that he was educated at Cambridge University. This criticism of Johnson's had not lost its sting many years afterwards, for the Chevalier's

*Frontispiece to the Royal College of Surgeons'
copy of the "Travels and Adventures
of the Chevalier John Taylor."*

(Hogarth)

ARMS OF THE UNDERTAKERS

grandson retaliates in his "Records" by alluding to the great writer as "that literary hippopotamus."

Taylor's academical education was questioned by Mr. C. H. Cooper, a former Town Clerk of Cambridge, who had apparently been unable to substantiate the statement, for he wrote in 1855 to *Notes and Queries*: "This person says he was educated in this university but his extreme ignorance renders it rather doubtful." Further, the present Registrar kindly informs me that no trace of Taylor is to be found in the University records. But in fairness it should be pointed out that Taylor's actual words were "When I was at Cambridge I met Dr. Desaguliers"; he leaves the unwary reader to infer the University.

For a short time Taylor practised in Norwich but he was soon in conflict with other medical men of the town, who called him an empiric and said of his alleged discoveries "If 'tis his Own, 'twill not bear the Light; if 'twill bear the Light, 'tis not his Own." In the preface to his first book he complained that as soon as he settled in Norwich he was surrounded with calumny, and that a "Party" was raised against him. In the same place he criticised his tormentors in terms that could not fail to render him still more unpopular. "These people," he says "are Dully grave, insidiously serene and carry all their Wisdom in their Mien. . . . An Awkward Saint-like Behaviour, a Solemn Gait, an Hypocritical Elevation of the Eye, and an Affected Religious Grimace, is sufficient to set a Man at the Head of his Profession. Their Pretence to Religion . . . the Canting Custom of Asking a peculiar Blessing on every Thing they undertake, is because they know their Skill will stand very much in Need of it."

He goes on to tell a libellous story of another of these practitioners "some small distance from this place" who, having kept a lady in torment several years, left her as bad as he found her. On being asked why he had failed to cure her when a young surgeon was able to do so in 14 days, he replied after much pressing, "She had money"!

Taylor published his first book, entitled "An Account of the Mechanism of the Eye," in 1727, when in his 24th year. This work, he says, received the favourable notice of Desaguliers, who advised the young author to become a specialist in ophthalmology, since there was wanting in the world a man familiar with the whole of the human economy who would apply himself to the eye and its diseases. In view of the strained relations in his native city, and knowing that any error in his practice would be pounced upon by his enemies, Taylor decided to act on this advice and seek fortune elsewhere. Desaguliers, "that great and good man," is supposed to point out that as a travelling oculist a continual supply of "subjects" on which to practise would be assured him until

perfection in the art was attained. Moreover, instead of being bound to imitate others, he could be a free-lance and operate according to his own theories, being kept informed by secret correspondence as to the results of his previous activities. It is also naively suggested that a frequent change of scene would be essential in order to escape the consequences of possible unfortunate results.

Thus he began his career as an itinerant oculist, in the course of which he acquired many honorary foreign degrees, as M.D. of Basle, Liège, Cologne, etc., which made an imposing array in his advertisements. For upwards of thirty years he travelled over Europe, visiting all the sovereigns of the least importance, from whom he received many marks of esteem, including, perhaps, the title of "Chevalier." He introduced himself to eminent men of all countries and speaks of being on good terms with Boerhaave, Winslow, Hunter, Monro, Linnaeus, and Haller, "who" he says "has taken extraordinary pains to recommend me to the favour of the public in his writings." He journeyed a hundred leagues to see Metastasio, "that no great man might escape me." He also declares that he was in the confidence of the Pope himself and describes a conversation between them:

Pope. "I can see to read without glasses. Would you be sorry if all eyes were like mine?"

Taylor. "I should be very sorry."

Pope. "How?"

Taylor. "Because though Heaven gave you good eyes that you might see that all was right; yet the same Providence made me what I am, and knew that I must live; and I hope that your holiness will not blame me for praying for my daily bread?"

Pope. "These things, my son, concern this world only."

Taylor. "It is for this world only that I have said these things, for here is my present business."

His purpose in cultivating the acquaintance of eminent people was to introduce himself into the best society and through them to be recommended to royalty itself; thus he gained an advantage over "those contemptible dabblers" as he termed his brother quacks, whose practice was confined to treatment of the common people. To be invited to exercise his art on kings and queens appears, in his view, as a proof of their high regard for him, but it may be said that it was rather the result of his duplicity. The only surviving letter from his pen shows an attempt to insinuate himself into the esteem of Sir Hans Sloane. I have been able to copy from the original in the British Museum, and as the letter has

escaped the notice of biographers, it may be allowed a place in this memoir.*

In the "crisis of his grandeur" he travelled in an impressive manner with two coaches and six black horses, five of which were said to be blind in consequence of their master having exercised his skill upon them. Ten servants in livery, besides gentlemen companions, all paid by himself, were also included in the equipage. It is said that his coach was painted over with eyes and bore the motto "Qui dat videre, dat vivere." His arrival at a town was accompanied by a shower of leaflets, and preliminary notices in the press prepared the people to behold "a man, who not only while living is admired by the whole of Europe, but also after his death may attain a distinguished place in the history of learning. . . . An Englishman without being addicted to drinking, and without a preconceived, flattering opinion about his nation. A Doctor without ostentation, he has earned a harvest of blessings from the poor for his good deeds." One of the more elaborate advertisements† sets out his works, degrees and honours, patrons, and testimonials. He was unequalled in the art of beating the big drum and his efforts to sell his "wares" are not surpassed by the pushing commercial of to-day. This preliminary boasting ensured an abundance of patients when he appeared on the scene. At Amsterdam in 1751, one hundred and seventy people sought Taylor's advice on the day of his arrival, and at Rouen in 1743 it was necessary to have the door of his lodging guarded by soldiers because of the importunity of the people.

Sometimes, however, he was mobbed for quite another reason. In "An Epistle to a Young Student at Cambridge" a footnote says that going through Canterbury in a stage-coach, a great crowd of people, whose friends had been under his hands, were gathered together, threatening revenge upon him. But having notice of the danger he told the other passengers that there were such numbers of people wanting his assistance that he should. . . . The remainder and interesting part has been cut away by the

* SIR,—The inclosed are from Lynn, and Norwich. The physicians of the first Class in the Countrey (who have thought me worthy their acquaintance) having wrot Letters in my favour, to their correspondents in Town, particularly to Dr. Mead, Dr. Arbuthnot, etc.—and also at Cambridge, particularly to Professor Saunderson—Smith—Green—etc., I entreat leave to inform you, that if by these, or any of my future endeavours, I should be so happy as to acquire your Esteem; a new Life would be given, to all the pleasing Views, of Sir, With great respect/ Yr Obdt humble Servt/ Jno Taylor.

P.S.—Having entirely finish'd my progress thro' great Britain, and Ireland, (to which only I owe every part of happiness I now so evidently enjoy) I intend this week for Paris; and with permission will pay my duty, before I leave Town—The hour you please to appoint, I'll wait on you.

† The distribution of trade circulars by quacks has for long been part of their armamentarium. The circular of Johann von Tokenburgh, the oldest known, is dated October, 1470.

binder, but the adroit Taylor may be trusted to extricate himself from such an obvious scrape as this. The incident explains why the oculists of that time were "itinerant," and why a considerable interval was allowed to elapse before visiting the same place a second time.

In the face of Taylor's wonderful array of instruments glittering with gold, his portfolio of testimonials, and a striking collection of 150 to 200 pictures of eye diseases painted on glass and copper, about which he would lecture so learnedly, who could doubt that here at last was one who would open the eyes of the blind and clear the sight of them with dim vision? Certainly not the poor peasant, who, out of goodness of heart, he offered to treat free, but from whom he turned away to attend a person with a fee to give. This side of his character was emphasised in a ballad opera called "The Operator," published in London in 1740. Taylor appears as Dr. Hurry, an oculist; the scene is the hall of a doctor's house. The patients gathered there have heard that he does not take fees—but there is a secretary who "holds out the palm." This individual is reminded of the promise of free treatment by a woman who has nothing. "It makes no difference at all," he says, "but the Doctor is too busy this morning with 13 lords and dukes." The Doctor's motto is "Get money honestly if you can; however, get money."

A supposed blind man is led in and Dr. Hurry is begged to give an honest opinion for once; he says the case is hopeless. In the last scene the Doctor invites his duns and creditors into a tavern, then decamps and leaves them to pay the bill. The pawnbroker seeks to console the others by singing

"But let us be gay, and our losses despise,
And rejoice that we've safely escaped with our eyes."

The incident of the bill may have been founded on fact, for Taylor is said to have given a ball at Dresden, during which he taught the ladies the English contre-dance, changed his shirt twenty times, and tried to depart without paying the bill.

He charged large fees for small services and was rapacious when dealing with wealthy patients. Sir William Smyth was clever enough to make a bargain with Taylor for 60 guineas if his sight could be improved. An operation was successful and Smyth was able to see till the end of his days, but pretending that he had derived no benefit obliged Taylor at last to accept 20 guineas in settlement of his claim. He expected a substantial fee for curing a number of ladies in a convent but was presented instead with an image of the Virgin, which fortunately he was able to accept with an appearance of reverence that concealed his real feelings. On another occasion a wealthy man gave a silver statue of himself to

our Lady of Loretto in return for Taylor's services! The latter's speech of thanks has not been preserved.

At an early stage of his career his ability was questioned and his discoveries adversely criticised. Yet it is admitted that he evinced considerable skill in his operations, which were performed in the presence of a brilliant circle of chosen people. Taylor's grandson was assured by Sir Walter Farquhar that his manual dexterity appeared like the touch of magic, and he may be said to have been born with a genius for his art. On the continent the opinion of the leading surgeons was divided. Marteau of Amiens saw him operate "*d'une main aussi légère que sûre.*" König and Gesner referred to him in favourable terms, and Haller called him "*a skilful man, but too liberal of promises.*" Mauchart of Tübingen said "*Let him give up the claim (which stirs the saliva of the vulgar, the bile of the learned) that he has remedies for all diseases.*" Heister said that he had little success in Amsterdam and rendered many people blind.

The French author Caqué met Taylor at Rheims in 1765 and learned with surprise that he had been called to Canon Favart, one of his own patients, who suffered from cataracts and corneal ulcers. To see how Taylor would treat the case, he accompanied him to the Canon's house, and on arrival Taylor took a little gold instrument, with ends fashioned like a file, and passed it into the lower part of the conjunctival sac. He then drew a bandage of black taffeta from his pocket with which he secured a cold compress applied to both eyes and said, "*It is all over, you shall see to-morrow.*" So saying, he opened the Canon's shirt-collar, placed his thumb on one jugular while an assistant compressed the other, and, with the utmost dispatch, bled the poor Canon who, not knowing which saint to beseech, cried to Caqué for help. When the latter remonstrated with Taylor because of his hasty treatment the answer was, "*I work for results, and if I tell patients what I am about to do they would not have anything done at all.*" This reason did not satisfy Caqué who thought him extraordinary and "*beaucoup plus charlatan qu'habile.*"

Taylor describes the case of a handsome lady of the court whose eyelid was so injured from burning that the lower lid had fallen down, leaving part of the eye uncovered, a condition which Taylor assured her he could remedy. Retiring with the lady into a private room he dissected a piece of skin from the muscles near the lesser angle of the eye, during which the patient often cried out "*You hurt me! You hurt me!*" And Taylor as often answered, "*Remember, Lady, Beauty! Beauty!* and with this charming word '*Beauty*' she kept her courage to the end of the operation," which consisted in drawing the edges of the wound together with sutures. A small plaster being applied over the wound he led the lady back to the

courtiers in the palace whom she had left but a short time before. Seeing her thus changed "they were astonished and looked as if the business had been done by some miracle."

Another case concerned a lady of distinction who had a defect of the upper eyelids so that in order to see she was obliged to throw her head back or raise her eyelids by her own hands. "I soon fixed the lady's eyelids like those of other people by my well-known methods of curing this defect, which is by removing part of the eyelid and sewing the lips of the wound delicately together."

For squint, Lecat of Rouen, an eye-witness, says that Taylor took up a fold of conjunctiva by means of a silk suture, cut it off with scissors and clapped a plaster on the sound eye. The squinting eye came straight "et chacun cria miracle." When asked the reason for this procedure he said that the over-powerful muscle must be weakened, and this he did by dividing one of its nervous filaments of supply. Taylor promised to teach Lecat his methods and to demonstrate the nerve filament that he was supposed to divide. Lecat haunted him for three days and soon saw through his pretensions. "Je sus mon homme par coeur dès le premier jour." One day at dessert a dish was brought in and placed before Taylor. The cover removed, a human head was revealed, cleft from forehead to neck, and carefully dissected as to the eyes by the astute Lecat, who requested a demonstration of the elusive nervous filament. To Taylor the head was "une vrai tête de Meduse," he could not show what did not exist, and for once his glib tongue failed him; he could only sit dumbfounded while Lecat lectured him on his quackery.

In 1744 the following exposure appeared in the *Scots Magazine*. "Whereas one John Taylor, has inserted in the newspapers of this city advertisements stuffed with gross injurious falsehoods—We, the President, Censors, and Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh, declare that not one of the Professors of Medicine in this university ever attended a single lecture of his. Some of our number were present out of curiosity and they report that his lectures were exceedingly trifling, and his operations attended with indifferent success. The sight of many was made worse; he promises cure to incurables, and is oppressive with fees. Our object in this declaration is to prevent people in other places which he threatens to visit, from being imposed upon." Resentful at first, Taylor soon gave up retaliation and adopted the pose of injured innocence. Later we find him dedicating a book to the President and Fellows of the College that exposed him, which shows him possessed of at least one essential of the successful empiric—a skin of the pachydermatous order. His own view would doubtless be that because of his superior intellect and endowments he could ignore such a petty circumstance as an exposure by a Royal College.

In 1749 the chief medical men of Amsterdam sent a notice in French and Dutch to the newspapers describing Taylor as a quack. His results on a previous visit to the city 15 years before had been disastrous. Another unfavourable critic was Guérin, who in 1770 said "When he performed an operation 'il chantait victoire, il criait miracle.' He then bandaged the eye, collected his fee, left orders that the eye was to remain covered for five or six days, and himself departed on the fourth."

He suffered yet another set-back at the hands of the King of Prussia, though the story, as related by Taylor, shows him turning the tables and emerging, as usual, in triumph. In 1750 he arrived in Prussia and sent his papers to the King with the request that he should be made the royal oculist. Although there was a strong suspicion that Taylor was employed by the English Ministry to spy on foreign courts, the King received him politely and said, "You desire to be my oculist—there is your patent. My eyes do not need assistance; yet are you my Oculist; but if you touch the eyes of one of my subjects, I will hang you up. I love my subjects equally with myself."* He was ordered to leave the country in six hours, when he would be escorted to the border.

Here was a situation after the Chevalier's own heart. What was to be done in so short a time? Apparently he already had many people as prospective patients and to the most eminent of these he hastened and pretended to perform an operation, at the same time assuring them that there was grave danger of loss of sight if they were deprived of his subsequent treatment. On learning that he was ordered from the country, coaches were quickly summoned, the patients helped into them, and when the hour arrived for Taylor's departure he was accompanied across the border by the most imposing retinue that had ever followed him.

A qualified compliment is paid to Taylor on page three of "Lettres familières écrites d'Italie en 1739-40 par Charles de Brosses."

"Je m'amusai, pendant mon séjour, à voir l'opération singulière d'un médecin Anglais, nommé Taylor, qui ôte le cristallin de l'oeil en fourcant dans la cornée ou le blanc de l'oeil un petit fer pointu d'un demi-pied de long. Cette opération, que l'on nomme lever, ou plutôt baisser la cataracte, est extrêmement curieuse, et fut faite avec beaucoup d'adresse par cet homme, qui me parut d'ailleurs un grand charlatan."

As a young man of 32 he was already a personality. In a newspaper of September 3, 1735, appears the following :

* In the grandson's "Records of my Life" the tone of the King's reply is not so paternal; he is there made to say, "I shall take care of the eyes of my subjects myself, that they might see no more than is necessary for the interest and glory of their country."

"Yesterday the famous Oculist Doctor Taylor, was presented to the Queen at Kensington, and had the honour to Kiss her Majesty's Hand, in consideration of his surprizing Capacity in the Science he professes." The following year he was appointed Oculist to George the Second,* and this success was probably responsible for the appearance of "An Epistle to a Young Student at Cambridge, with the Characters of the Three Great Quacks, M . . p, T . . l . r, and W . . d," which was published in July, 1737, price sixpence. This production is an eight-page folio in verse and as it has become rare, it is perhaps well to include here the parts most relevant to the subject. The pamphlet itself may be seen at the Library of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, to which it was added in 1900.

"Whilst you, dear Harry, sweat and toil at College,
T'acquire that out-of-fashion Thing call'd Knowledge.
Your Time you vainly misemploy, my Friend,
And use not proper Means to gain your End.
If you resolve Physician to commence,
Despise all Learning, banish Common-Sense;
Hippocrates and *Galen* never follow,
Nor worship *Aesculapius* or *Apollo* :
But to bright *Impudence* Oblations pay,
She's now the Goddess bears resistless Sway,
Instinct by her, vile Ign'rance gains Applause,
And baffles Physick, Churchmen and the Laws. . . .
And when a Quack or Thief gets once in Vogue,
There still are Ideots to caress the Rogue.

Come up to Town, then, *Harry*, leave the School,
Your gilded Coach shall be upheld by Fools.
Pall-Mall be thy Abode, or *Grov'nor-Square*,
An ample Crop of Fools you'll harvest there. . . .
But This, you say, 's *against the plainest Sense*,
The more is due to glorious IMPUDENCE.
T . . l . r and M . pp too here her Reign exalt,
And to her Foot-stool lead the Blind and Halt.
T . . l . . r, with Learning, wise as any Grandam,
Brushes away, and ventures all at Random.
With Lady's Hand, and Play-Things bright and keen,

* Taylor was not an exception in gaining royal recognition. Wm. Read, formerly a tailor, set up in the Strand as an oculist in 1694 and was so successful that he found favour with Queen Anne, whose weak sight led her to seek relief from anyone sufficiently daring to promise a cure. She actually knighted him and allowed him to use the title "Her Majesty's Oculist and Operator in the Eyes in Ordinary." He published a book he could not read, which is full of bombast and ridiculous statements. He recommended "putting a louse into the eye when it is dull and obscure, and wanteth humours and spirits. This tickleth and pricketh so that it maketh the eye moist and rhumattick and quickeneth the spirits."

Another quack oculist patronised by Queen Anne was Roger Grant, who had lost an eye as a soldier in the German Emperor's service. He set up as an oculist in Mouse Alley, Wapping, and succeeded Read as Royal Oculist to the Queen and subsequently to George the First.

Can Cataracts remove, and Drop serene
 He to the Poor, most charitably kind
 Can, if they want a Trade, soon make them blind."

Twelve months after his introduction to Royalty, Taylor published a book dedicated to the Queen, in which he airily states "Nothing of the Kind has yet appear'd in our Language worthy the least Notice." The work, entitled "A New Treatise on the Diseases of the Chrystalline Humour of a Human Eye," is addressed to the Surgeons of Westminster, one of whom, J. S., did not share the author's estimate of its value. Indeed, he was so much at variance with Taylor's views that forty-four printed pages were required to contain the results of his examination of "A New Treatise." J. S. calls his reply "Dr. Taylor Couch'd for a Cataract," and a perusal of the final passage leaves no doubt as to the writer's opinion of Taylor and his work:

"Had he only given us some Account of his own Dissections of the Eye, or of some extraordinary Discoveries he had made abroad, from whence he returned loaded with Honours, we might have believed him a Man of Integrity. But he has exposed his Ignorance by this Treatise, and if the Doctor, contrary to my advice, should present the Publick with another piece of his performance, I hope he will take Care to give us something more Intelligible, and not such a piece of incoherent Nonsense."

His "Traité sur les Maladies de l'Organe de la Vûë," Paris, 1735, is prefaced by commendatory letters from Gesner and König, followed by an epigram in Latin which says:

"Wherever he goes Taylor will be as a quickening light to cure the blind. O doctors of Basle, who have admitted him into your company, he will ever be a bright star in your College of Medicine!"

A later publication "Le Mechanisme, ou le Nouveau Traité de l'Anatomie du Globe de l'Oeil," Paris, 1738, is favoured with a 12-page review, in the *Journal des Scavans*, whose value is depreciated by the final paragraph. "Those who wish to see a great number of matters contained in this book clearly explained should read the excellent treatise by Banieres on 'Light and Colour.'"

Taylor's daily programme was to treat patients in the morning, while the afternoon was devoted to operations and demonstrations. There were also special lectures to which the Faculty were invited, and for which he seems to have charged a shilling entrance fee. A view of Taylor as lecturer is given in a letter to Dr. Ducarel from John Palmer, a layman, who at Northampton attended one of his Sunday gratis Declamations. "This *gratis*," he says, "took me in for an auditor, and I'll tell you how it was carried on.

The Doctor appeared, dress'd in black; with a long, light, flowing ty'd wig; ascended a scaffold behind a large table raised about two feet from the ground, and covered by an old piece of tapestry, on which was laid a dark-coloured cafoy chariot-seat, with four black bunches (used upon hearses) tyed to the corners for tassels, four large candles on each side the cushion, and a quart decanter of drinking water, with a half pint glass to moisten his mouth. He bowed, snuff'd the candles, descended and delivered out to the company his hat-full of Syllabuses, divided into Sections, No. 1, 2, 3, etc. (such stuff, and so printed, as to be entirely incoherent and unintelligible). Then mounting his scaffold he bowed very low; then putting himself into a proper attitude, began, in a solemn tragical voice and tone—"At Number 1 thus written you will find"—and repeating this with some vehemence, he read No. 1 of his Syllabus, speaking for two hours in the same manner, and with the same air, gesture, and tone, and making a sort of blank verse of it, and always ending with the verb—for that, he says, is the true Ciceronian, prodigiously difficult, and never attempted by any man in our language before. In some instances, he said, 'He equal'd the finest periods Tully ever wrote or spoke'; which always began with the genitive case, were followed by the substantive, and concluded with the verb—as thus—"Of th' Eye, the Beauties I will now declare." This was often repeated, as his masterpiece; and he exulted and admired himself vastly upon it. When he had finished he came smiling among his Auditors, appealed to them publicly if it was not charming fine, and if they had ever heard anything like it. I must own I never did, or saw his equal; and therefore send you this sketch of him as a great rarity."

Gibbon, in his "Autobiography," when writing of the various ailments of his childhood, says that "every practitioner, from Sloane and Mead to Ward and the Chevalier Taylor were successively summoned to torture or relieve me." Taylor's name trailing ignominiously in the rear seems to imply a slender respect on the part of Gibbon, or perhaps painful recollections of the Chevalier's ministrations. Taylor claimed to have operated on Bach and restored his sight and to have attempted the same in the case of Handel "but upon drawing the curtain, we found the bottom defective from a paralytic disorder." It is unfortunate for his veracity that Mr. George Coats, by a comparison of dates, proves this claim to be false.

From his narrative it will be seen that he was a great traveller, that he was the bosom friend of sovereigns and potentates, and was even in the confidence of the Pope himself. He flattered the influential in high-sounding terms, and in the same breath insinuated his own affairs in the most ingenious manner. A considerably trimmed version taken from his book is given here as an example of his effusions—to whom they refer is sufficiently obvious:

" Oh ! thou mighty ; oh ! thou sovereign pontiff ; oh ! thou great luminary of the church ; given to mankind as a star to the Christian world. Who can believe, that you would proclaim your high approbation of my works, but by the voice of truth."

" Oh ! ye imperial ; oh ! ye royal ; oh ! ye great masters of empire ; who have so far extended your benevolence, as to be witnesses of my labours, when from before the dark eye, by my hands, the dismal veil was removed. You, the rulers of man, point out, as it were with the sceptre in hand, me alone amongst all mankind for these things."

" Oh ! ye empresses ; oh ! ye queens ; who have so often lent your awful presence on these occasions—what satisfaction you have expressed at seeing the blind, by me, expressing their joy at what they first saw ; because 'twas you they saw—the first object of their duty—the highest in their wishes ; and where is the man so daring as to call in question what you have said ?"

" Oh ! ye great people of Rome, once masters of the world, have you not declared with one voice, in praise of my works ? And who will venture to say, that a body so illustrious, could possibly err in their defence of a cause like mine ?"

" Oh ! ye learned ; great in knowledge of physic ; you, who are placed as at the head of human wisdom ; have you not declared to the world how highly you approved my deeds, and promised that my memory should to you be ever dear ?"

He is said to have addressed the University of Oxford in the same extravagant language, doubtless to the huge delight of the students, if their sense of humour was then as keen as at the present time. The following are the more scintillating parts of the speech which is of considerable length.

" The Eye, most illustrious Sons of the Muses, most learned Oxonians, the Eye, that most amazing, that stupendous, that comprehending, that incomprehensible, that miraculous Organ, the Eye, is the Proteus of the Passions, the Herald of the Mind, the Interpreter of the Heart, and the Window of the Soul. The Eye has Dominion over all Things. The World was made for the Eye and the Eye for the World. My Subject is Light, most illustrious Sons of Literature—most Intellectual. Ah ! my philosophical, metaphysical, my classical, mathematical, mechanical, my theological, my critical Audience, my Subject is the Eye. You are the Eye of England ! England has two Eyes—Oxford and Cambridge. They are the two Eyes of England and two intellectual Eyes. You are the right Eye of England [Cambridge was the right eye when he lectured there] the elder sister in Science, and the first Fountain of Learning in all Europe. What filial Joy must exult in my Bosom, in my vast circuit [he was a slim man] as copious as that of the Sun himself, to shine in my course, upon this my native Soil, and give light even at Oxford. The Eye is the Husband of the Soul ! The eye is an Angelic faculty. The eye is in that respect a Female.

[To be female as well as husband is to endow the eye with hermaphrodite qualities which no ophthalmologist would countenance.]

Let there be Light, that first Fiat of the Almighty, and there was Light. For whose use, I pray? For the use of Man, for the Use of the Eye. The Sun, and Stars were lighted up and the bright Chandeliers over Head, were all hung out, to minister to this little Speck, this Peep-hole of the Mind, this Inlet of the Soul, this Surveyor of the Universe, this Lord of all Things, the Eye.

In Generation too, how powerful is the Eye! It is the Signal of the Affections; it is the Lightning of Desire, and the Loadstone of the Soul; whose magic Effluvia inchant the Imagination, attract the Coalitions, irritate the muscles, stimulate the Nerves, and brace up the whole Apparatus of Propagation.

We owe the Ladies to the Eye, those Transcripts of the Angels, those Specimens of Bliss, those Fountains of Joy, those Dainties of Desire, those patterns of Purity and Love, these Master Pieces, these lucky Hits of Heaven, are the finest Regale for the Eye of Man, where it feasts on the Ruby of the Lips, the Vermillion of the Cheek, the Snow of the Forehead, and the Cherub in the Eye; yet even these are but the Signs, the Invitation held out of that extatic, that soul absorbing—But Language is too weak. Without the Eye my Lady is no more than Joan in the dark.

Compared with the Tongue what an Orator is the Eye! whose single Glance conveys a Volume. The Tongue is an Upstart and Words an Artificial, tedious, and imperfect Commerce, a kind of *Hocus Pocus* agreed upon by a few and comprehended by fewer still; which arrive at the Understanding through a dirty, winding Canal; where a little Wax can stop its Career, or a Paltry Fiber unbraced, destroy the whole Business. How many ages old was the Eye before that Babel of Sounds called language was sent among Men as a Curse?

The Eye is the Orator of Nature, and talks the Language of the Universe and of Heaven too; it renders useless all Sounds except the tender Moanings of Lovers, those turtle Cooings of Desire, those nameless Throbbings of Fruition which the Eye—Nature's Orator—scorns to shape into Words.

O ye Sons and Daughters of Minerva, ye Children of Wisdom, ye Offspring of Oxford, how precious is the Eye! How deserving is the Art that keeps its Springs in Order and wages eternal War against the three mortal Foes to sight, Glaucoma, Cataract, and the Gutta Serena—these Auxiliaries of ancient Night, that would restore her gloomy Reign, and bring back Chaos to the World once more.

My Art, O ye Sons of Oxford, is the Ally of Heaven itself, and aids even the Almighty, obeying still the omnipotent Behest, *Let there be Light.*"

If "chairing" was in vogue at the time Taylor surely suffered the ordeal for being guilty of such an oration.

THE HISTORY of the
TRAVELS and ADVENTURES
OF THE
Chevalier JOHN TAYLOR,
OPHTHALMIATER,

Pont. Imp. and Royal to the Kings of England,
Poland, Denmark, Sweden, The Electors of the holy
Empire—The Princes of Saxegotha, Mecklenberg,
Anspach, Brunswick, Parme, Modena, Zerbst, Lo-
raine, Saxony, Hesse Cassel, Holstein, Salzbouurg, Ba-
viere, Leige, Bareith, Georgia, &c. Fr. in Opt. C. of
Rom. M. D.—C. D.—Author of 45 Works in dif-
ferent Languages: the Produce for upwards of thirty
Years, of the greatest Practice in the Cure of dis-
tempered Eyes, of any in the Age we live—Who has
been in every Court, Kingdom, Province, State,
City, and Town of the least Consideration in all
Europe, without exception.

Written by H I M S E L F.

This Work contains all most worthy the Attention
of a Traveller—also a Dissertation on the Art of pleasing,
with the most interesting Observations on the Errors &
Prejudices; numberless Adventures as well amongst Nations
and Frars, as with Persons in high Life; with a De-
scription of a great Variety of the most admirable Rela-
tions, which, though told in *his own peculiar*
Manner, each one is strictly true, and within the Che-
valier's own Observation and Knowledge.—Interpersed
with the Sentiments of crowned Heads, &c. in Favour of
his Enterprises; and an Address to the public, shewing
that his Profession is distinct and independant of every
other Part of Physic.

Introduced by an humble Appeal, of the Author, to the
Sovereigns of Europe.

Addressed to the Merchants of LONDON.

V O L. III.

Qui Vivum Vram Dat.

L O N D O N :

Printed for Mrs. WILLIAMS, on Ladgate-Hill. 1762.

A Title-page of the Royal College of Surgeons' Copy
of the "Travels and Adventures."

While dining with the barristers upon the Oxford circuit he told them of the wonderful things he had performed until, tired of his boasting, Bearcroft said, "Pray, Chevalier, will you be so good as to tell us anything which you cannot do?" "Nothing so easy,"

Taylor's Coat-of-Arms. Reproduction of coloured drawing in the Royal College of Surgeons' Copy of the "Travels and Adventures."

replied Taylor, "I cannot pay my share of the dinner bill, and that, Sir, I must beg of you to do."

"The History of the Travels and Adventures of the Chevalier Taylor"* was published in three volumes in 1761-2. The first volume is dedicated to his son, the second to David Garrick, and the third to the Merchants of London. To arouse public interest the announcement in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of its publication promised revelations of a Decameronian nature, but the book would prove poor fare for those in search of this type of literature.

* The Royal College of Surgeons' copy is elegantly bound, and on the fly-leaf appears a hand-painted coat-of-arms in blue and gold surrounded by the motto "Qui visum vitam dat" (See figure). This book was apparently the property of the Taylor family, for the signature J. S. Taylor is to be seen inside the cover.

A complete list of his forty-five works* has a prominent position; this is followed by the names of the numerous people he met and the places visited in the course of his travels. The book should not be rare, but as it is curiously difficult to acquire a copy, a selection of extracts from its pages, divested of the tedious style that characterises the work, may perhaps be of sufficient interest to include in these notes.

The first step in the treatment of a hypochondriac, he says, is instantly to agree in opinion with the patient. An Italian nobleman, complaining that he was blind, went to Taylor, who did something to his eyes and kept them bandaged for a few days. Before uncovering them he prepared the mind of his patient to believe that the sight had been restored, and this he accomplished to such good purpose that the nobleman was overjoyed again to find himself in possession of a faculty that had never been lost.

He is enthusiastic regarding the medical value of music and dancing. Whatsoever sets the blood in gentle motion without pain is conducive to health. Dancing is particularly beneficial to children for promoting growth, for giving them poise, and as a relaxation from the fatigue of study. In the case of adults, the particles in the blood are so well divided by the exercise of dancing that many diseases peculiar to them are avoided. He has always noticed that gout, rheumatism, gravel, and headache are less frequent in countries where dancing is more practised than with us. He is of opinion that two-thirds of the diseases that affect the body would be prevented if dancing were the vogue. For the amiable sex it enables them to endure with greater ease the pains

* Number 44 on the list is entitled "The sentiments of the late most high pontiff Benedict the XIVth, her imperial majesty, and of almost all the crowned heads and sovereign princes in Europe, on the happy enterprizes of Chevalier Taylor, Italian, 4to, Milan, 1758."

These "Sentiments" seem to have been published in pamphlet form for distribution as advertisements; they are also given as footnotes in the first and second volumes of the "Travels and Adventures" from which the following has been copied to indicate the tenor of the whole collection:

The sentiments of his majesty the late king of the two Sicilies now king of Spain, given by express command, etc.

The Chevalier John de Taylor having appeared worthy of royal benevolence, and desirous of some public testimony of his majesty's royal bounty, I Francis Buoncruore, first physician to his majesty, and archiater of this kingdom, etc., in consequence of his majesty's commands, and being well instructed of the innumerable proofs that the said Chevalier John de Taylor has given of his success in this kingdom, and having myself often been present at his operations, and been witness, with great satisfaction, to the most happy events; I hereby declare, by the authority reposed in me, that I regard the said Chevalier John de Taylor as a man the most excellent that perhaps any age has produced, as well as for the theory, as practice, in what he professes; and I further declare, that I consider him well worthy the benevolence of sovereigns, the esteem of the learned, and the care of the publick. Given under my hand, in the royal palace at Portici, this 14th day of May, 1755, and signed below,

L.S.

FRANCIS BUONCUORE.

of life, gives a fair colour to their faces, adds lustre to their eyes, and displays their graces in the most advantageous light.

According to the Chevalier, every eye that had not been under his care was defective. He compares the eye with a diamond in the mine, both are the works of Heaven; but if the brute diamond must be polished to reveal its charms, why not the eye? He has always observed with joy an astonishing addition to the beauty of the eyes, especially those of women, which have been under his care. The increase in fire and vivacity that result from his attention endows the owner with power to work those "Marvels" of which he could give numberless instances if space allowed.

He has a great regard for the fair sex who, in his respectful estimation, are faultless. But this high praise is qualified where he suggests that they are negligent in attire, especially in the morning, when a carelessly dressed woman causes her husband "to drink his tea in a hurry, and seem impatient to be gone." To charm the eye and to gain approbation it is essential that a woman should dress becomingly, and he also strongly recommends her to paint the face, for even in the married state these things are powerful auxiliaries for preserving the lover in the husband.

He has much to say regarding nuns and boasts that he could write many volumes on the adventures of "these beauties." He is of opinion that nuns surpass ordinary women in the language of love, wit, vivacity, and sublimity of thought, because they are ever meditating on these things. It is therefore a species of cruelty to talk to them of love. He says "I am perfectly acquainted"—this is a constantly recurring sentence—"in the secret business of that respectable tribunal named the Inquisition"; he has attended innumerable religious services and has assisted at the ceremony of burning the Jews. In the cure of various diseases of the body he has knowledge of marvellous effects from the power of faith, and a vast variety of extraordinary instances of the imagination of women.

He describes an epidemic of the killing of their charges by nurse-maids which, in spite of executions, continued until the offenders were marched to death meanly dressed and deprived of the pomp, flowers, and ribbons, that formerly accompanied the condemned.

He shows an unusual want of tact when he says "I am perfectly acquainted with the history of Persia . . . and am instructed in the cruel manner of putting out the eyes of conquered princes, and of cutting away the eyelids of soldiers taken in war, to make them unfit for service."

He says that in the art of pleasing, especially those of the fair sex, he is an expert, having published a book in Italian on "The Art of Making Love with Success." He cannot determine whether his gift of reading women is a natural one or the effect of science,

but certain it is that there is no lady living on this side 40 but "on fixing my eyes upon her, I can read her very soul." Nuns as well as others were subject to this influence, and many were the tokens of regard that he received from admirers within the walls of convents. One of these was so indiscreet as to keep up a tender correspondence with Taylor until discovered in her sin by the abbess. He was then urged by the nun to "shake off the heretical notions of thy country, join with me in prayer, and die with me. So shall we be happy together and the abbess may do her worst." Taylor's view of this proposal is reflected in an addendum where he says, "as I have not heard for some time from this beautiful lady, I know not whether she is gone before me, or whether she has yet the patience to wait for my departure."

A ridiculous "adventure" is that of his abduction by a great lady who yearned to know whether he loved her. The lady called at his lodging in her coach into which he was invited. As soon as he was seated the door was shut, the horses were whipped up and driven in haste through the town and two miles into the country. The lady, after assuring Taylor that he was in no danger, kept silence until the end of the drive, when she declared herself and her purpose. The Chevalier was so surprised that he hesitated to answer her appeals. Madam, quick to notice, said, "Sir, you need not pause, I see your heart is for another, not for me." So lamenting, she gave the order to drive back and this was done, as before, in silence, except for Taylor's entreaties for an understanding.

Another story concerns a widow of 90 whose sight Taylor had restored. She wished to keep him with her and proposed marriage. Not knowing what to answer, he makes excuses, and decides to postpone considering the question till after dinner, on the principle that when the body is at ease, the mind is free. But Conscience intervenes to spoil this plan; he is driven to confide in another, and naturally the widow is made acquainted with the hesitating attitude of her swain. Love quickly turns to anger and Taylor is no longer required. Afterwards he often thinks of his misfortune in neglecting so happy an opportunity of making himself independent and seeks consolation by reflecting that "I had then living a lady who claimed me as her right. . . . All must agree, that this deed of mine was well worthy of applause."

He shows a knowledge of human nature when he says that the art of pleasing is to show the person we are with to advantage, but his prescription to ensure happiness in marriage, "The wife must appear to believe that all her husband says and does is right; that faults on his side should be overlooked and even unfaithfulness condoned," cannot be described as the perfection of wisdom.

In the course of his travels he found himself in a monastery of

Capuchin friars and saw there a great number of pictures representing the punishment of sinners in the lower regions, in one of which a devil was seen plucking out the eyes. He told the Father that this sight was not very disagreeable to him, for if there were heads and eyes in the lower regions, it might also be the same in the upper, thus, whatever his fate hereafter, he would still have something to do.

"In Naples," he says, "I was present at a feast of St. Lucia, so famous for curing defects of sight. Many hundred blind people marched in procession, the greatest part of whom I should have declared incurable. That day no miracle happened, on which I judged the next visit would have been made to me, but I was happily advised not to attempt the cure of what the saint had refused, for, in the judgment of their teachers, it was better that people should continue in temporal darkness, than hazard the loss of the spiritual light, so essential to their well-being in the next world."

An absurd story relates that Taylor, bedecked with diamonds—the button of his hat being worth 8,000 crowns—attended a masked ball at one of the greatest courts in Europe and for three hours played the passionate lover to a beautiful girl who was so anxious to discover his identity that she "seized him by the button" and, calling on a party of her friends to assist, forced him violently into a corner where he was obliged to reveal his features. At the general unmasking he was disturbed to find that his tender speeches had been made to the Princess of the Court, and though the guests enjoyed his discomfiture, he says he was obliged to employ all his wit to avoid censure and to preserve himself in favour.

On another occasion he went to a foreign theatre when the King and Court were present and as soon as he entered a box he attracted much attention because the people judged from his dress and many diamonds on his breast that he was a stranger of high dignity. The King being informed that this was the famous and long-expected oculist instantly invited Taylor into the royal box "to which all eyes were now directed." After paying his respects to the Sovereign, a lady of the party introduced herself as one of his former patients, and with a loud voice proclaimed that by restoring her sight he had saved her life. "I need not express the satisfaction I received in being thus flattered, I well knew the happy circumstances that must follow so important a declaration," says Taylor.

He sees a close connection between the doctors' fees and the tithes of the clergy. The spiritual fathers take money from their flock because they are composed of body and spirit—of mind and of matter. If the mind is out of humour, as it must be when the body is in need of supplies, how is it possible to guide the heart of the

penitent? And if one is asked "How are these supplies to be procured, will not the answer be—Money?" In the same way fees are essential to the doctor who, like the priest, is composed of matter as well as spirit, in order that he, being himself healthy, may with wisdom direct the health of others.

Against those people who fail "to call in the doctor" he is specially severe. Not only does such a person wickedly deprive the medical man and his children of rightful fees, but if he dies he is guilty of *felo de se*. Such a one is an enormous and abominable criminal, vile and wretched, "and does he not deserve to have a stake drove through him?" If a man has a pain in his finger it is his duty to send instantly for the Physician, the Apothecary, and the Surgeon. Should the trouble spread to his body and cause his death in spite of the struggles of medical men to keep him here, is it not possible that he might be called home for reasons we have no right to know? And in such a case, however great our abilities, it becomes us most respectfully to submit. The deceased will have been spared the horror of reflecting that he had robbed us of our fees and his relatives will have the consoling knowledge that he died according to the Art.

He feels that he should refer to a celebrated Roman oration delivered in his honour, and gives the substance of this "pompous" speech in sections, each followed, in italics, by what appear to be protests against such high praise, but the construction of these comments is so ingenious that they are made to agree with or amplify the sentiments of the orator. In one place he so far forgets himself as to suggest that his fame is due to the exceptional opportunities he has enjoyed, but the oration ends on a lofty note, "Shall virtues like his pass unrecorded. Shall it be said that a prodigy like this has breathed within our walls, and that we forgot to inform posterity—No, *it must not be*. Let us then tell our children's children, that such a man we once had amongst us. Let us lay our hands to our hearts and cry aloud with one united voice—Behold a new citizen of this great mistress of the world!—And let us proclaim this our publick act to all the inhabitants of the earth, in the name, and with the voice of the Senate and the People."

The end of the book is devoted to a comparison of England with other countries which he knows almost as intimately as his own. Himself a physician, he considers that English physicians deserve the first place amongst men. In surgery and anatomy many at home are great but they have equals abroad, where, too, opportunities for improvement are more numerous. Regarding ophthalmology "in which I have been so long remarkably distinguished," he owes the advancements he has made chiefly to foreign specialists, who consider the art as a distinct and independent part of Medicine, and who received him not as a rival, but a

friend. In mathematics and poetry two or three Englishmen have claimed the laurels from all mankind, while Italy holds the field in painting, music, and architecture. For the intellectual and studious, Rome affords the most delight, and regarding the luxuries of life no country can equal England, which is also a paradise for the fair sex.

His "Travels and Adventures" failed to impress at least one critic who wrote:

"And lest some hireling scribbler of the town
Injures his history, he writes his own.
We read the long accounts with wonder o'er
Had he wrote less, we had believed him more."

"The Life and Extraordinary History of the Chevalier John Taylor," printed for D. Chamberlain in Smock Alley in 1761, is a scurrilous production in imitation of the "Travels and Adventures." Soon after the publication of his autobiography Taylor went abroad and a report of his death arriving the son resolved to write a new life of his father wholly free from that egotism which characterised the Chevalier's own rendering. But finding himself unequal to the task he gave his materials to Henry Jones, a disreputable Irish poet and dramatist, who, having lost the manuscript during a compulsory "midnight flit" brought out a scandalous version partly founded on the lost notes but mainly the product of a vicious imagination. When last seen Jones was being kicked down the stairs of a public house in Bow Street by the landlord, to whose wife he had been making overtures.

It is not known whether Ann King, Taylor's wife, accompanied him on his travels. By her he had an only son, John, born in 1724, who in turn had a son John,* subsequently appointed oculist, jointly with his brother Jeremiah Taylor, M.R.C.S., to George III and George IV. The most human picture of Taylor is as playmate to his grandson, with whom he would romp on the floor, forgetful of his dignity and rich attire, allowing the child to use his neckcloth as a bridle to guide the willing steed.

In 1767 Taylor went abroad never to return. In a Leipzig journal† appears a notice of his death: "We read recently a report that the famous John Taylor had expired in this year of 1772 in a monastery near Prague at an advanced age," which implies that he was older than is usually supposed. According to another

* John the third relinquished ophthalmology for the stage, for which he wrote innumerable addresses, prologues, and epilogues. He was dramatic critic and later editor of the *Morning Post*, and proprietor of the *True Britain* and the *Sun*. His best known work is "Monsieur Tonson," a dramatic poem.

† Comment. de Rebus in Sci. Natur. et Med. Gestis, 1772, Vol. XVIII, p. 159.

account he died in Paris and lost his own sight towards the end of his life.

The Chevalier composed his own epitaph which Guérin gives *in extenso*. A dozen Latin verses are rounded off by a final one in French as follows :

Dieux ! Taylor gît dans cette bière ;
Cet oculiste si fameux ;
Après avoir donné tant de fois la lumière,
Devait il donc fermer les Yeux !

An estimate of Taylor's character which considers him as a mere quack would be inaccurate and unjust. By virtue of a liberal education in general medicine and a special study of ophthalmology his practical work was probably equal in quality to that of his contemporaries. In the absence of all regard to asepsis it is not fair to judge solely by good results, for it is surprising that success should ever attend operations on the eye in those days, when we read that the oculist treated the needle with spittle or earwax, or rubbed it on the "stern" of a dirty hand to make it pass the sclerotic more easily. Although there is diversity of opinion on Taylor's operative skill the balance is perhaps in his favour.

He rendered service to ophthalmology by always maintaining that this branch of Medicine should be a specialism and that a thorough knowledge of the human economy was necessary in order to practise the art. He invented a cataract needle and other instruments and was among the first to publish an illustration of conical cornea. He was a shrewd observer and his writings contain many things in advance of his time, notably his theory of the causation of squint, which aroused the ire of Lecat.

It has been suggested that he wished to keep secret the means by which such a dramatic result was achieved in his operation for squint, and so resorted to subterfuge when pressed by Lecat regarding the nervous filament alleged to be divided. Antonelli, after a critical examination of the evidence concluded that Taylor never divided a muscle in his operation for strabismus, but Mr. George Coats says "the impression conveyed is that he conceived the idea that strabismus might be cured by dividing a muscle." If such be the case he was nearly a hundred years ahead of the time when Strohmeier practised the operation on the dead and Dieffenbach performed it on the living.

To this point he was an able and worthy representative of the profession and on account of his discoveries deserving of respect, but he spoilt his record and brought discredit on the medical art by extravagantly advertising himself, by his lies, bombast, and duplicity. Mr. George Coats has kindly credited him with a sense

of humour, but it is difficult to discover a sign of the saving grace in his autobiography, which is a tedious book to read. He was much too serious a person to give way to humour, his conceit bordered on the pathological, and on reading his "Travels and Adventures" one is left with a feeling of disgust that a man of his ability could be so childish. The mention of his name amongst those who know of him produces somewhat wry smiles and he is dubbed "a great scamp." Thus he loses the honourable place in history and the small measure of fame that his work would have ensured him, and instead, has become merely notorious.

SUMMARY OF THE MANUSCRIPT

The report on the case of the princess is made in response to a command of "Votre Exllce.," who is apparently responsible for Taylor's detention until satisfied that the patient is no longer in need of his assistance. He complains that he is compelled to remain when other work calls him to continue his journey. He describes the treatment applied and emphasises the great care bestowed on the case, which caused him much anxiety until at last he has brought it to a successful issue. The Princess herself fears his absence and wishes to retain his services, at which he is flattered, but protests that by remaining longer he will be ruined. The passage dealing with the treatment of the case is reproduced as a specimen of Taylor's handwriting and to show the actual procedure adopted by him.

After expressing himself satisfied with the results of his operation, he is disturbed to find that his patient is a subject of struma and complains that he was not informed of this condition by her family, but in the same sentence says that the glands under the chin were extremely swollen, unequal, and hard. Other symptoms of the disease were apparent in the lips and nose, and he concludes that she had had the disease from infancy. Of all disorders of the blood, he says, this has always given most trouble to medical men, only two patients out of ten being cured.

In spite of evacuants and other measures the glands persist and he resolves to provoke a slight salivation by means of calomel and mercurial ointment applied to the glands, which treatment caused them much to decrease in size. This complication prolonged the cure, which in an ordinary case would take 15 to 20 days, to 9 months, the extra time being consumed in applying the treatment with caution, instead of endangering the sight by hasty procedures.

He thinks his presence no longer necessary since his patient's

health and sight are now established, except for a scar in the right eye left by smallpox, which he never pretended to cure. There are frequent allusions to the rewards that he trusts will accrue to him as recompense for all his trouble, and on page ten he suggests that "Your Excellency will report my success to the throne in order that I may leave this court with the same distinction that I have received from so many others."

In a final appeal he again expresses the hope that "distinctions" will be bestowed upon him and that he should be allowed to depart quickly in order to follow the occupations which call him, and to return to his own country.

Notes on the Manuscript

In 1893 Mr. Thomas Madden Stone, who for 50 years had been a member of the Staff of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, presented to the Library of that Institution a large collection of medical portraits, autograph letters of members of the profession, and other interesting MSS, which included that written by Taylor. The script is in French and the handwriting so legible as to be easily read. Affixed to the foot of the first page of the manuscript is a printed description, cut from a sale catalogue, as follows:

375 Taylor (Chevalier) grandfather of Mr. John Taylor. Autograph account of the malady of one of his patients, a Russian Princess, 30 pages, 8vo. His autograph is RARE.

Is it genuine?

The manuscript is unsigned and the objection has been made that it bears no definite evidence of being the work of the Chevalier. The only unquestionable manuscript by Taylor is a signed letter to Sir Hans Sloane in the British Museum which I have used for comparison, with the following results.

At first sight the handwriting in the letter is dissimilar to that in the manuscript. The characters in the former are small, well formed, and separate one from the other; the letter is, therefore, much neater in appearance than the flowing and unevenly written manuscript. The difference is probably due to the fact that the letter was written early in Taylor's career when he was insinuating himself into the notice of the leading men in England, and it is natural that a letter of introduction to such an eminent man as Sir Hans Sloane should be carefully written. The date is not legible but as he says "I intend this week for Paris," it is possible, by referring to the diary of his travels, to fix 1734 or 1736 as the date of the letter. The history of the "illustrious Lady Narishkin" was published in Russian in 1754, and although the manuscript is

• Lorsque je fus appelé
pour cette illustre D^{emoiselle}
je voyois un très grand
nombre des vaisseaux variqueux
dans l'oeil gauche, qui en-
troient dans la substance de
la premiere pellicule de la
Cornee, et qui se terminoient

Dans deux ou trois differen-
tes opacités inégales, situées
à une distance différente,
et d'une figure irréguli-
ère; enfin, toute la Cornee
étoit si troublée, qu'avec
peine elle pouvoit distinguer
le moindre objet.

Dans l'oeil droit j'ai
remarqué quasi toutes les
mêmes circonstances, non.

pas si avancées; la vûe
subsistant, quoiqu'im-
parfaite: et de plus il y
avoit une cicatrice vers
le centre de la Corneé,
qui étoit le effet d'une
pustule de la petite verole.

Ainsi j'ai recommandé
l'opération; mais je ne
la fis pas le même jour;
tout ce que je fis alors,
étoit, d'appliquer un ban-
dage et une compresse
trempée dans quelque
Collyrium pour l'inten-
tion de rendre les vaisseaux
encore plus pleins. Le len-

Demain j'ai enlevé envi-
ron trois lignes de diamètre
de la conjonctive tout au-
tour du globe de chaque oeil,
c'est à que j'ai fait sans
autre préparation; et la
raison en est claire, parceque

il s'agissoit d'avoir une
suppuration après l'opéra-
tion, et non pas de l'em-
pêcher; étant le seul moyen
de rétablir la pellucidité
de la cornée; et certe, si j'
~~est~~ avais fait aucune évacua-
tion, je n'aurois pas
agi comme la science l'
exige. J'ai continué de
garder les yeux fermés
pendant quelques jours,

pour obtenir plus abon-
damment la supuration
attendue. j'ouvris les yeux,
et trouvant tout à mes
souhaits, j's ordonnai les
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et le regime à vivre, pour
retablir la perfection natu-
relle des yeux; par là la
cicatrice de la plaie com-
mençoit à se former.

Specimen of Taylor's handwriting from the Royal College of
Surgeons' Manuscript.

written with a thicker pen or a heavier hand it will be seen that the following characters, traced from the Sloane letter, have their counterparts in the manuscript, the same formation persisting over a long period of 20 years.

<i>Tracings from Letter</i>	<i>Tracings from Manuscript</i>
A capital <i>N</i> from page 1 of the manuscript.
A capital <i>P</i> from page 20 of the manuscript.
A capital <i>C</i> from page 1 of the manuscript.
The <i>f</i> has an unusual loop to the <i>left</i> .
The <i>p</i> shows an <i>unfinished</i> loop, which bears away from the stem.
The <i>pp</i> has the same peculiarity.
The <i>s</i> is very similar.
The <i>c</i> in many cases is incompletely formed, and resembles an undotted <i>i</i> .
The <i>e</i> is tall, and this peculiarity is almost constant in both letter and manuscript

There are doubtless further examples of similarity but it is assumed that the instances here given are sufficiently unusual to remove doubt regarding the authenticity of the manuscript. If necessary, further evidence is to be found by comparing Taylor's books with the manuscript, in which one cannot fail to recognise the peculiar phraseology that is characteristic of his writings. Indeed the passages we have bracketed in the copy have such a familiar sound for those accustomed to Taylor's language, that it is difficult to imagine the author to have been other than the Chevalier. To "clinch the diagnosis" it only remains to point out that number 26 in Taylor's list of

publications is entitled " An exact description of the singular disorder and recovery of sight of the illustrious Lady Narishkin, of the imperial family of Russia " (Russian, 8vo, Moscow, 1754). The similarity in name and description cannot be due to coincidence.

Is Taylor's handwriting rare?

It is said that he was a prolific letter-writer and that specimens of his script should be fairly numerous. In an endeavour to locate some of these letters a search was made in all the available indexes of manuscripts at the British Museum, and, through the medium of a literary journal, information was sought regarding the possible existence of other manuscripts. One hundred and fifty-eight years have passed since Taylor died and during this long period nothing further has emerged to be included in medical literature or in the known collections of manuscripts. It is possible that memorials of Taylor may be hidden away in private libraries, but until this material is brought to light the manuscript here described must be regarded, if we except the Sloane letter, as a unique document.

COPY OF THE MANUSCRIPT

C'est avec bien de plaisir que j'obeis [les]* aux ordres de Votre Exllce et que je me soumet à sa volonté, en donnant un detail de la maladie singuliere et du succès que j'ai eu par ma maniere de traiter La Freule de Nariskin. Je serai aussi circonstancié, que la nature extraordinaire de ce cas l'admet; touchant l'operation que j'ai fait et les remedes dont je me suis servi pour son retablissement, vu que je n'ai jamais conservé aucun journal, n'ayant jamais été dans ma vie engagé de rendre compte de ma pratique, que par les evenements; ainsi je croïois que V. Exllce aussi bien que toute la cour n'auroit attendu de moi dans ce cas, qu'une heureuse suite. De plus, tant de differents changemens sont arrivés dans le progrès de cette guerisson, qu'aucune prudence humaine ne pouvoit prévoir, que je fus obligé de changer presque journellement les remedes selon les circonstances que j'ai remarqué. Ainsi c'est impossible de donner une autre description de tout ce que j'ai fait, pour obtenir cet'heureux événement, qu'en general, ce que je ferai avec toute l'exactitude, que ma memoire le permet. J'ajoute, que nonobstant mes meilleurs soins, j'ai rencontre tant de difficultés pour

* The bracketed words are deleted in the original and the succeeding word or words superimposed as a correction.

obtenir la fin désirée, et sachant bien la consequence, dans l'état ou je me trouve, d'avoir eu une suite facheuse, que je me suis mille fois repentí d'avoir jamais entrepris une maladie si dangereuse et si difficile à guerir, et qui m'a employé, et m'a obligé de rester tant de tems, et par là m'a exposé à des inquietudes excessives, par rapport à mes occupations, qui m'ont avec tant d'empressement, appelé dehors.

(Vôtre Exllce sait bien que la reputation que j'ai acquis s'est soutenuë pendant longues anneés dans les país etrangers, par les promptes et subites guerissons de mes malades;)* les suites connuës de toutes les differentes operations que je pratique, et qui appartiennent à la science que je professe. Par tout ceci il est facile de [voir] comprendre ce que je dois avoir souffert en me voyant engagé seul avec un Malade de cette consequence, et d'une constitution si delicate, dans un cas ou tout sembloit conspirer pour me faire craindre les suites. Malgré le tems que j'étois obligé de sacrifier dans cette anxiété, à force de travail et des peines, le succès, que j'ai cherché avec tant d'assiduité, est à la fin arrivé.

(Le jugement que j'ai montré dans [ma] la conduite de cette maladie se voit par les evenemens aux yeux de tout le monde). Mais comme il plait à V: Exllce en droit de son autorité d'être instruit de mes raisons, j'ose me flatter de Lui donner la satisfaction qu'Elle peut souhaiter, et votre Exllce sera fort aise de trouver par là une occasion de me procurer la consolation que la longueur et le danger de cette entreprise m'ont pour longtems empêché de posséder. [De] Par cet' événement la Famille est infiniment contente comme de raison et la Freule sur tout, cette Illustre Demoiselle [sent de coeur] est tres sensible a la peine excessive que j'ai [a line deleted] pris, et Elle a le coeur trop bien placé [qui d'] pour oublier ce qu'Elle me doit. Sa souffrance est d'une autre nature que la mienne. Elle craint mon absence, et moi je ne respire que d'être en état de la contenter mais les motifs de ses craintes sont tres mal fondés, parce elles proviennent d'une possibilité qu'un jour Elle pourroit avoir besoin de mon secours; une pensée qui me flate, mais qui surément n'est pas juste; puisqu'elle peut subsister pour toujours. pour moi, je souffre, parceque je sens que je me ruine; ayant deja resté si long tems ici pour mettre cette Illustre Demoiselle dans l'état heureux ou Elle se trouve, et il est fort naturel que je cherche quelque fin de mon inquietude quand je sais que ma presence n'est plus necessaire à son égard.

Presentement je vais repondre aux volontés de V: Exllce, j'entre en detail, autant que les circonstances de ce cas extraordinaire me le permet. J'appelle V: Exllce pour mon juge, et je serai bien flaté

*The passages in parentheses are considered to be characteristic of Taylor's style and are submitted as part of the evidence that the Manuscript is the work of the Chevalier.

si Elle approuvera la conduite que j'ai observé dans la guérison d'une maladie si singulière et si circonstanciée, alors bonheur en dépend ; par ce que pour lors les assurances que la famille m'a donné tant de fois pendant le progrès de cette guérison, pour me consoler de mes peines, ne s'évanouiront pas [mais] au contraire (mon succès dans cette entreprise sera fidelement représenté au Trône par la bonté de cœur de V: Exllce ; à fin que je puisse par là paroître digne de cette consolation à la quelle j'aspire, et que je sorte de cette auguste Cour avec la même distinction, que j'ai reçu de tant d'autres ; comme le moien le plus sur de conserver cette reputation qu'on m'a flaté d'avoir mérité, avant que je fus entré dans cet Empire.)

Lorsque je fus appelé pour cette illustre Demoiselle je vois un très grand nombre des vaisseaux variqués dans l'oeil gauche, qui entroient dans la substance de la première pellicule de la cornée, et qui se terminoient dans deux ou trois différentes opacités inégales, situées à une distance différente, et d'une figure irrégulière, enfin, toute la Cornée étoit si troublée qu'avec peine Elle pouvoit distinguer le moindre objet.

Dans l'oeil droit j'ai remarqué quasi toutes les mêmes circonstances, non pas si avancées ; la vue subsistant, quoiqu' imparfaite ; et de plus il y avoit une cicatrice vers le centre de la Cornée, qui étoit l'effet d'une pustule de la petite verole. Ainsi j'ai recommandé l'opération ; mais je ne la fis pas le même jour ; tout ce que je fis alors, étoit d'appliquer un bandage et une compresse trempée dans quelque Collyrium, avec l'intention de rendre les vaisseaux encore plus pleins. Le lendemain j'ai enlevé environ trois lignes de diamètre de la Conjonctive tout autour du globe de chaque oeil, c'est ce que j'ai fait sans autre préparation ; et la raison en est claire, parceque il s'agissoit d'avoir une supuration après l'opération, et non pas de l'empêcher ; étant le seul moien de rétablir la pellucidité de la cornée ; et certe, si j'avois fait aucune évacuation, je n'aurois pas agi comme la science exige. J'ai continué de garder les yeux fermés pendant quelques jours, pour obtenir plus abondamment la supuration attendue. J'ouvris les yeux, et trouvant tout à mes souhaits, j'ordonnai les évacuations accoutumées, et le régime à vivre, pour rétablir la perfection naturelle des yeux ; par là la cicatrice de la plaie commençoit à se former.

C'est pour cette raison seule, n'ayant que les yeux pour mon objet, que j'ai parlé de la voir en état de se mettre aux pieds de Sa Majesté Imperiale dans quinze ou vingt jours. J'ai parlé par les expériences du succès que j'ai eu dans mille cas ainsi circonstanciés en apparence. (Comme personne ne peut douter, que jamais un homme n'a eu une pratique si étendue dans les maladies des yeux, pendant tant d'années que moi, et ainsi je me suis flaté d'être parfaitement au fait.)

Vôtre Exllce voit ici la seule operation, et l'unique que j'ai jamais fait pour les yeux de la Freule jusqu'à ce moment ; et ce que j'ai fait depuis, c'est un nombre infini des Collyr : et de remedes externes que j'ai appliqué selon les differentes circonstances que j'ai remarqué. Mais c'est pour lors, que V : Exllce peut juger de mon inquietude, d'avoir après mon prognostique et les circonstances si avantageuses pour le *favoriser, trouvé ; sans avoir eu la moindre notice de la Famile, que cette Freule avoit dans le sang le vice strumeux à un degré le plus haut : Les glandes par dessous le menton extremement gonfleés inegales et endurcies, particulièrement à coté gauche, et d'autres symptomes de cette maladie dans les levres et dans le nés. J'ai appris par mon examen qu'Elle avoit cette maladie dés son enfance et à ce qu'on pretend, néé avec Elle.

Je prevoiois que c'etoit impossible de retablir pour la moindre continuation cette Freule, à moins que je puisse chasser ce vice du sang, ce que j'ai communiqué toute de suite à la Famile, pour montrer l'impossibilité d'etre si prompt dans la guerison que je m'etois flaté, une entreprise la plus difficile, etant bien connu, que de tous les vices du sang, c'est celui qui a toujours embarrassé les plus savans dans la Medecine une guerison qui demande le plus de tems et de travaux ; et dont le succès est si incertain qu'entre dix malades avec peine on en trouve deux radicalement guéri. Me voyant engagé, et obligé pour ainsi dire de travailler au retablissement de la Freule, malgré que ce qui me regardoit alors ne soit pas immediatement de ma profession ; quoique V : Exllce sache que je suis élevé il y a long tems au degré [deletion] de Docteur en Medecine, ayant même pratiqué comme tel pendant quelques années dans ma patrie, je me suis appliqué à cet' objet principal qui regarde les yeux.

Pour cette fin V : Exllce verra par ce qui suit, comment je m'y suis pris. J'ai mis la Freule en regime, et apres les evacuations generales pour preparer le chemin pour mon dessein, j'ai commencé avec un cours d'alteratives dans les quels entrent des Millepedes et une petite quantité de Calomel. Après un certain tems j'ai donné, au lieu du précédant, des pillules dans les quelles entrent Aethiops et gummi guaicum ; accompagnées des decoctes ordinaires de Sassaparille &., et pour empecher le frequent retour de l'inflammation, qui etoit pour tant d'années la consequence de ce vice du sang j'ai fait un setum, que j'ai continué ouvert jusqu'a [il y a un] la fin du mois dernier : quand je jugeois que le vice ne subsistoit plus ; argument que j'etois sur de mon fait par rapport aux yeux, sans cela je n'aurois jamais consenti d'arreter une evacuation de cette importance.

Mais non obstant cette evacuation, et tous les remedes que j'ai recommandé comme ci dessus, et l'attention que j'ai eu à tout ce qui regarde sa santé, j'ai trouvé, que les glandes autour du menton continuoient d'etre également endurcies et les yeux enflammés plus

ou moins, particulièrement l'oeil droit. Cela m'a obligé de cesser l'usage de ces remèdes, [deletion] et de travailler par les saignées et d'autres évacuations pour délivrer les yeux des inflammations; mais sachant que cela étoit seulement *pro tempore*, j'ai pris la résolution, d'exciter, comme l'unique remède selon moi, une petite salivation par le moïen du Calomel; continuant en même tems d'appliquer pour quelques nuits de suite L'unguentum mercuriale sur les glandes endurcies, tout fut accompagné par le régime nécessaire en pareilles occasions. La petite salivation n'ayant pas continué pendant trois tours sans avoir remarqué un changement très favorable; la dureté de ces glandes étant extrêmement diminuée, et tous les symptômes du vice du sang commençoient à disparaître. Au bout de quatre ou cinq jours j'ai jugé à propos de faire cesser peu à peu la salivation, craignant d'exposer trop sa santé, je voulois plutôt recommencer, après que sa force [soit] fut un peu retablie. Si j'avois continué la salivation dans ce tems là, il y a de l'apparence que mon succès auroit été plus prompt; mais V: Exllce approuvera certainement mes precautions. [Deletion.] Un mois après j'ai fait la même tentative, avec le même succes; et après un mois encore, et pour la troisième fois: ceci étoit fini il y a six semaines, et voyant cesser pour lors tous les symptômes du vice du sang, j'ai ordonné le régime de vivre, avec les évacuations ordinaires, pour empêcher aucune mauvaise consequence du Mercure qu'Elle avoit pris; ne prevoyant aucune necessité d'élever une quatrième fois la même salivation.

Voici les raisons, pourquoi au lieu de quinze ou vingt jours, ce cas m'a occupé, avec mes meilleurs soins, plus de neuf mois, non pas parcequ'il a été impossible de procurer un heureux changement plus prompt; mais en consequence du danger au quel je me serois exposé, si j'avois avancé plus vite.

Quoiqu' a présent, [deletion] comme j'ai eu l'honneur de dire à V: Exllce il y aye plus de cinq semaines que le setum este ôté, et que j'aye cessé de donner des remèdes, sa santé continue d'être parfaite; non seulement toutes les circonstances de sa maladie ne paroissent plus, mais les yeux sur tout continuent d'être dans un état parfait, à l'exception de cette cicatrice dans l'oeil droit; l'effet de la petite verole, que je n'ai jamais pretendu [d'oter] guerir et qui n'empêche nullement la vuë.

Ainsi la santé et la vuë étant retablies, et les yeux continuant d'être libre d'inflammation et qu'il ne reste que les Eaux de Saltze à prendre, avec le régime ordinaire, les quelles Elle prend actuellement; je ne vois aucune necessité de ma présence ici d'avantage à l'égard de cette illustre Freule; parceque tout ce qui peut rester à observer, consiste dans le régime de vivre, selon les directions que je Lui laisserai en partant.

Comme la Famille m'a assuré, que Sa Majesté Imperiale. par sa

grande benignité veuille encore permettre, que La Freule se mette a ses piés, avant mon depart, à fin que sa Majeste Imperiale puisse voir la difference infinie qui se trouve dans son état d'aprèsent, et l'étât dans le quel Elle etoit, quand cette Freule etoit honoré de sa haute presence, dans la maison de S: Exllce Madame de Narishin.

(Je supplie très humblement V: Exllce de m'honorer pour cette fin de sa puissante protection, [qu'ainsi par] en consequence de la satisfaction, que j'ose me flâter que Sa Majesté Imperiale en aura, Soutenue par votre approbation je puisse sortir avec les distinctions, que j'ai [me suis toujours flate] toujours esperé d'obtenir ; pour les quelles j'ai travaillé avec tant d'assiduité et de peines;) et que je sois libre de partir au plutôt, pour suivre mes occupations qui m'appellent, et pour joindre ma patrie.

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