

## RECORD OF THE MONTHS.

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*Michael Angelo, considered as a Philosophic Poet, with Translations.* By JOHN EDWARD TAYLOR. London: Saunders & Otley, Conduit Street. 1840.

WE welcome this little book with joy, and a hope that it may be republished in Boston. It would find, probably, but a small circle of readers, but that circle would be more ready to receive and prize it than the English public for whom it was intended, if we may judge by the way in which Mr. Taylor, all through his prefatory essay, has considered it necessary to apologize for, or, at least, explain views very commonly received among ourselves.

The essay is interesting from the degree of acquaintance it exhibits with some of those great ones, who have held up the highest aims to the soul, and from the degree of insight which reverence and delicacy of mind have given to the author. From every line comes the soft breath of green pastures where "walk the good shepherds."

Of the sonnets, we doubt the possibility of making good translations into English. No gift of the Muse is more injured by change of form than the Italian sonnet. As those of Petrarch will not bear it, from their infinite grace, those of Dante from their mystic and subtle majesty; so these of Angelo, from the rugged naiveté with which they are struck off from the mind, as huge splinters of stone might be from some vast block, can never be "done into English," as the old translators, with an intelligent modesty, were wont to write of their work. The grand thought is not quite evaporated in the process, but the image of the stern and stately writer is lost. We do not know again such words as "conchetto," "superna" in their English representatives.

But since a knowledge of the Italian language is not so common an attainment as could be wished, we ought to be grateful for this attempt to extend the benefit of these noble expressions of the faith which inspired one of the most full and noble lives that has ever redeemed and encouraged man.

Fidelity must be the highest merit of these translations; for not even an Angelo could translate his peer. This, so far as we have looked at them, they seem to possess. And even in the

English dress, we think none, to whom they are new, can read the sonnets, —

“Veggio nel volto tuo col pensier mie.”

“S’un casto amor, s’una pietá superna.”

“La vita del mio amor non é cuor mio.”

and others of the same pure religion, without a delight which shall

“Cast a light upon the day,  
A light which will not go away,  
A sweet forewarning.”

We hope they may have the opportunity. It is a very little book with a great deal in it, and five hundred copies will sell in two years.

We add Mr. Taylor's little preface, which happily expresses his design.

“The remarks on the poetry and philosophy of Michael Angelo, which are prefixed to these translations have been collected and are now published in the hope that they may invite the student of literature to trace the relation which unites the efforts of the pure intelligence and the desires of the heart to their highest earthly accomplishment under the complete forms of Art. For the example of so eminent a mind, watched and judged not only by its finished works, but, as it were, in its growth and from its inner source of Love and Knowledge cannot but enlarge the range of our sympathy for the best powers and productions of man. And if these pages should meet with any readers inclined, like their writer, to seek and to admire the veiled truth and solemn beauty of the elder time, they will add their humble testimony to the fact, that whatever be the purpose and tendencies of the time we live in, we are not all unmindful of the better part of our inheritance in this world.”