

The Classical Review

<http://journals.cambridge.org/CAR>

Additional services for *The Classical Review*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)



The Thoughts of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus reprinted from the revised translation of George Long. London: George Bell, 1890. cr. 8vo. pp. 287. 6s.

John E. B. Mayor

The Classical Review / Volume 6 / Issue 1-2 / February 1892, pp 66 - 66
DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00184756, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00184756

How to cite this article:

John E. B. Mayor (1892). The Classical Review, 6, pp 66-66 doi:10.1017/S0009840X00184756

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

Mr. Lawton is conscientious and appreciative: his remarks are better than his translation: his misfortune is that he was not 'born' to English the Greek of the poet, who could

'Roll out a rhesis: wield some golden length
Stiffened by wisdom out into a line,
Or thrust and parry in bright monostich.'

W. S. HADLEY.

The Thoughts of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus reprinted from the revised translation of GEORGE LONG. London: George Bell, 1890. cr. 8vo. pp. 287. 6s.

THE late General Gordon was in the habit of giving Antoninus and Epictetus as presents, no doubt in Mr. Long's version. Few men have done so much literary work as Mr. Long; but much of it, as his Penny Cyclopaedia, Commentary on Cicero's speeches, Histories of the French Revolution and of Rome, was of the nature of task work. His translations, of some of Plutarch's Lives, of Epictetus and of Antoninus, were a labour of love, and by their means his name will long be kept in grateful remembrance. To the Stoic doctrines he owed much of that cheerful fortitude with which he endured severe and long-continued pain towards the end of his life. The present reissue is beautifully printed at the Chiswick press, on fine paper, and has a neat buckram binding. It is to be hoped that the sale will be such as to encourage the publishers to issue the Epictetus and the Plutarch in companion volumes; many who would be glad to give them as presents, crave some more attractive dress than that of Bohn's Library. No ancient writer of equal merit—indeed except Lycophron and a few others who aimed at obscurity, scarcely any ancient writer of any kind—has clothed his thoughts in so repulsive a garb as the imperial Stoic. Mr. Long says of his own version: 'I could have made the language more easy and flowing, but I have preferred a ruder style as being better suited to express the character of the original.' I have compared one book with the Greek, and can bear testimony to Mr. Long's skill and fidelity. His English is pure, unaffected and robust. He has prefixed a life of Antoninus, in which he impartially discusses the emperor's treatment of the Christians; and a short sketch of his philosophy. Gataker's commentary is justly extolled: 'it is a wonderful monument of learning and labour, and certainly no Englishman has yet done anything like it.' Mr. Long compares the teaching of Antoninus with the Bible, Justin Martyr, Swedenborg, John Smith the Platonist and Bishop Butler, and no one can read his Introduction without respect and sympathy. He concludes thus: 'Epictetus and Antoninus both by precept and example laboured to improve themselves and others; and if we discover imperfections in their teaching, we must still honour these great men who attempted to show that there is in man's nature and in the constitution of things sufficient reason for living a virtuous life. It is difficult enough to live as we ought to live, difficult even for any man to live in such a way as to satisfy himself, if he exercises only in a moderate degree the power of reflecting upon and reviewing his own conduct; and if all men cannot be brought to the same opinions in morals and religion, it is at least worth while to give them good reasons for as much as they can be persuaded to accept.' [In a new edition the proofs should be carefully revised: Exen. for Xen. (Xenophon) occurs twice on p. 52; Plutarch, Antoninus (*read* Antoninus) on p. 201.]

JOHN E. B. MAYOR.

Cicero in his Letters, edited with notes by R. Y. TYRRELL, M.A., Litt. D., Regius Professor of Greek, Dublin, &c. London, Macmillan & Co., School Classical Series, 4s. 6d.

OF making many books out of Cicero's Letters there is no end, and Prof. Tyrrell will hardly expect to have the last word. One is rather inclined to begrudge the time necessarily withdrawn from his far more important task, now more than half completed, of editing the whole of Cicero's Letters for scholars in a higher sense. Where so much has already been done, and often very carefully done, in selecting and editing some of the Letters for schools, some justification is clearly needed for a new edition of the kind. Prof. Tyrrell rests his justification—not quite consistently carried out—on the purpose to present 'what will show Cicero in the character of a private gentleman, and throw light on his everyday life, his home amusements, and his domestic worries.' But as Cicero was surely at least as much a public statesman as a private gentleman, and as his Letters show him to an unequalled degree among statesmen in both characters, *Cicero in his Letters* can hardly be said to be presented to us in letters of the one class alone. Prof. Tyrrell remarks that this selection coincides with Mr. Watson's, consisting of 148, in only seven letters; but he does not mention that he also coincides in seven letters with the selection of only nineteen which I edited in the (so-called) 'Elementary Classics,' a book really intended for the higher forms of schools, and that many others would have suited either of our books equally well. I merely mention this to show that we were working on not dissimilar lines.

The various sections of the Introduction, 'Cicero as a public man,' 'Cicero in his private life,' 'Form of the Letters,' 'Style of the Letters,' and a critical *excursus*, are, it is hardly necessary to say, both valuable and interesting to present to young scholars, being abridgements and adaptations of those which have already appeared in the greater work. But the first and longest of these is made somewhat inappropriate for the present book by the professed principle of selection. They are followed by an odd little appendix of no relevance at all, consisting of some very clever translations into colloquial Ciceronian Latin of small pieces such as 'Diners out' (*conviviorum circulares*), 'A motley crew' (*supperis*), &c., which well illustrate the Professor's facility of composition, but seem to have missed their address.

The notes, as all who know Prof. Tyrrell would expect, are very thorough and very interesting, graced with many bits of very neat translation, a little rash in conjectures (the only instance of over-caution, perhaps, being the non-adoption in the text as well as in the notes of Mr. Purser's clever conjecture of *iam diem undecimum* for the clearly corrupt *Dexius* of *Fam.* vii. 23), and a little too much given to slang renderings, such as 'to do Banting' as a rendering of *πεινητικὴν* *facere*. It might seem a back-handed compliment or a feline amenity to say that the most valuable parts of them, at least in the letters already treated by Prof. Tyrrell, are the notes appended by Dr. J. S. Reid, but at any rate we have in them the comments on Prof. Tyrrell's notes of the greatest living master of Ciceronian language as a whole, and Prof. Tyrrell is perfectly right in recording sometimes Dr. Reid's dissent, while still adhering to his own view. It is not only allowable, as he pleads, but is of the highest advantage, that 'where two views may be held consistently with grammar and sense, both should be put before both teachers and learners.' Instances of this may be found on pp. 131, 139, 147, 149, 155, 176, 199, 243, 247, 255, 271, &c. Perhaps