

## FATHER TAYLOR, THE SAILOR-PREACHER.\*

BY REV. JAMES COOKE SEYMOUR.

GENIUS is a thing not easily described. It is as real as the lightning's flash or the thunder's roar, or the deep moan of the resounding sea. But it is often as hard to portray as they.

The subject of this sketch is a specially difficult case. It is probably not too much to say that a complete description of him and his work has never been given to the world, and never will. A friend remarked to him one day, "You are a strange mortal." "Well," said he, "I have made up my mind there never was but one E. T. Taylor, and so far as I have anything to do with it, there never shall be another."

It was in Richmond, Virginia, December 25, 1793, he first saw the light. Of his parents he scarce remembered anything. One recollection of his early childhood he never forgot. He used to preach funeral sermons over dead chickens. He would gather the Negro boys and girls about him, and discourse pathetically on the life and death of the departed. If he could not bring them to tears by his oratory, he would lash them to appropriate grief over his chickens and sermons.

One day, when he was about seven years old, he was picking up chips for his foster-mother, when a sea-captain passed by, and asked him if he did not want to be a sailor. Off he went without ever finishing his chips, or returning to the house to say "Good-bye."

For ten years he led the rough life of a sailor boy. At seventeen his ship entered the port of Boston. He was a bronzed, tough, wiry lad,

"Known to every star and every wind that blows."

He left his craft and strolled through the streets on a pleasant Sabbath evening in the autumn of 1811. The sound of a church-bell caught his ear. "Going to the door," to use his own description, "I saw the port was full. I up helm, unfurled topsail and made for the gallery, doffed cap, and scud under bare poles to the corner pew. The old man, Dr. Griffin, was just naming his text, 'But he lied unto him.' As he went on, and stated how the devil

\* "*Incidents and Anecdotes of Rev. E. T. Taylor.* By REV. GILBERT HAVEN and HON. T. RUSSELL. New York: Phillips & Hunt. Toronto: William Briggs.