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HELIO - TROPES

1625

HELIO-TROPES

OR NEW POSIES FOR SUNDIALS

WRITTEN IN AN OLD BOOK PARTLY IN ENGLISH
AND PARTLY IN LATIN AND EXPOUNDED IN
ENGLISH BY **JOHN PARMENTER**, CLERK, OF
WINGHAM IN THE COUNTY OF KENT

1625

EDITED BY
PERCEVAL LANDON

1904

*With Travel far your Feet are sore :
Your Brows with gold are crown'd.
But is there Peace the wide World o'er
Such as these Hedges bound ?*

METHUEN & CO.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON

*These mottoes may be used for
sundials with permission of
Lettice Countess Beauchamp to
whom this volume is dedicated*

PREFACE

JOHAN PARMENTER must have been priest of a small collegiate chapel — previously a Benedictine “cell” — at Wingham, in Kent, for nearly sixty years. He died in or about 1629. His grandfather came from Allhallows the Great, in London, and died in 1534. Of John himself nothing more is known. That his family had some connection with the place is probable, as we find a John Parmenter, of Addisham, which is near Wingham, in the later years of the fifteenth century.

But the man is sufficiently revealed by his notes. There is an old-fashioned scent about them, which fitly frames the picture of the white-haired old man of God spending the evening of his days in his Kentish retreat, very far indeed from the world, and dreamily remembering the religious troubles which he must have known as a child. He has his limitations, and at times his touch of vanity still. His philosophy is rounded by his own small experiences and the letter—both in English and in Latin, for he is proud of his scholarship—of the Bible. He usually quotes from the Genevan version.

By the way, it is curious that he appears to have been partially colour-blind.

The thick little volume of manuscript, written in a clear, minute hand, contains much other work of his, but it is chiefly of a religious nature—commentaries upon obscure passages in the Bible, or hotly disputed doctrines of his youth—and the charm is lost when he becomes a partisan. He nowhere says where he collected or, as is more likely, copied in their entirety the “posies” which he “expounds.”

Some of them are dependent almost entirely upon the monkish Latin version for their point, and now and then I think that Parmenter has not wholly grasped it. The translations have been made somewhat loosely, but the general meaning has been retained. Where there has been ambiguity or any unusual divergence from the Latin, the original has been given as well.

If a second edition should ever be called for, the editor would willingly include adequate English translations of numbers VIII and XXXII from any reader who may be interested in the problems involved.

My sincere thanks are due to Mr. Rudyard Kipling, who has given me a singularly appropriate “posy” (XXVII) for this collection.

P. L.

I

What's right in Rome
Is wrong at home.

(From the Latin.)

“**T**HERE be many men who may with Ioye think vpon this Posie. For truly, the Vse in England of a diall reckoned and marked for service in Rome would bee but a foolishness and a cause of Stumbling to the Wayfaring Man, being as we are some Ten Degrees nearer Heaven, then they in the Papish City which men falsely call Eternall. There is no other citie which is Eternall save one, Ierusalem, and that not the citie to which men go on Pilgrimage by Ship, for truly, the Body of the Worme is a Properer Vehiculum for such as would set out upon so blessed and so dread a Iourney. . . .”



II

I Sleep at Sunset and I Worke at Dawn :
Tis onlie Idlers come vpon this Lawne.

“**B**UT a Gardner may scie the Grasse without Accusation of Idlenesse. Howbeit they are for the moste part but Do-nothings which walk on such Plots, and euen a Gardner, though a Scholar, shoulde, (if need be,) but regard the Time, not the Posie, for such Time as he so spendeth belongeth rather to his Master, than himselfe. Thus shall none be Reproached without cause. . . .”

III

God Maketh and Taketh his owne Time.

Nec Latet Æterno Tempus nec Tempora Suadent.

(In English and Latin.)

“**A**S the Grecian Schoolmen say, Ὅψι θεῶν ἀλέουσι μύλοι, ἀλέουσι δὲ λεπτά; The Millstones of the Gods Grind Late, but the Flower is Fine. Herein the meaning of Tempus at the first is rather Occasion, and after, it signifieth Lapse of Time. There is a kin Prouerbe in Sussex, God Flieth with Wings of Leade, but Striketh with Handes of Yron. . . .”

IV

For all those who have watched my Boarde
In Paine, or Sin, or Sorrow,
Thy Mercie and thy Quittance, Lord, . . .
(and then, after a little space)

Do I pray for You to-morrow ?

“*Et avis ad Volatum.*” *

[* *This is the translation in the Vulgate of the verse which in the Authorised Version is rendered, “(Man is born to trouble) as the sparks fly upwards.”*]

If I am wrong, the Sun as Culprit name.
 Yet why the Sun? The Earthe is more to Blame :
 Yet why the Earthe? Presumptuous Mortall Stay :
 And humbly put your Clockworke Toye away.

“**T**HIS may onlie be put vpon a truely disposed Diall. At times, and especially on the first daye of Nouember, the Time shown by the Shaddow seemeth to be greeuously out of the reckoning of the Clocke. But be you well assured there is no Falsitie in God. This is the reasone and none other, that while men flout at the Dial they may suddenly be moved to remember what daye it is and humblie take thought with goode purposings for the Time to come, that, when they too shall die, they may not Faile of their place among the holie Saints beneathe the Altar. . . . Therefore the Clocke is especially out by the Diall at Hallowmas, though on foure days of the yeare onlie are they truely reconciled, of which presently as followeth. . . .”

VI

Your Clockes keep Christmas, I keepe euery Feast.

“**B**UT at Christmas, alone of all Feasts, euen the uerie Devil himself, who inuented Clockes, doth confess with Gnashing of Teeth that Our Sauour is indeed Borne of Our Ladye, and doth so Amend the pace of his Engines that at Dawn they truely strike the verie houre. . . . *Gloria in Excelsis Deo.*”

VII

From God to Man at dawn my Bidding flies :
From Man to God my Prayer as daylight dies.

(From the Latin.)

“NOTE that the Shadow of the Diall moveth as the message. Of Old Time the East hath been helde to bee the especiall Seate of God, while Man hath his habitation in the West, as may be seene by our Galilee Porches in Cathedral and Colledgiat Churches. For the Northe, it is the countrie of those who sit in ignorance and doubt waiting for Deathe. Wherefore Gospel is reade thither. The Epistle is read Southward, where they do dwell who have received the Perfection of the Faithe, and do Expecte daily in Contemplation and Good Workes the Fulfilling of the Time, listening the while to the admonishments of Saint Paul, and Ensewing the same with Ioye. . . . There is no man willingly Buried on the Northe side of a Church except such as be Godless or Lunatick or suchlike.”

VIII

I am nothing but a name.

(Nemo nisi Nomen.)

“**F**OR verily Time is but a Figment and a Convient (*sic*) Method of Man: In the Eye of God *Mille anni tanquam Custodia in nocte*, that is, a Thousand Yeeres in his Sichte are as a Night-Watche which lasteth but Three Houres. . . . Observe that the Diall, speaking, saith *Nemo* or No Man, rather than *Nil* which is No thing, for that Man alone of creatures hath Mutualitie of Speche. For which reason, the Diall also professeth to be a Man when it Vseth the Priviledges of Men, though in his Essence but a Stocke or Engine of Brasse and Stone. Moreouer, from Heauen the Diurnall Passages of Mannes life are seen to bee no uerie Thinge, but are as the Pragmatique Discourse of Philosophers, moore Names, then Truth. *Dies ejus sicut Umbra praetereunt.*”

[*Parmenter seems to have overlooked one of the points of this rebus. It is a palindrome, i.e. the letters of which it is composed can be read equally well backwards or forwards. I have not been able to reproduce this in the translation. Would some reader try?*]

IX

When through my tears
My shade appears,
Look up, the Bow is set.

(Ante Arcum Arka.)

“**G**OD'S Iustice goeth before His Mercie : So that before there was euer a Rainebow there was sore need of an Arke. Be not therefore guilty of Wanhope or Accidie, for as our Kentish Prouerbe saith, When Neede is Highest : Heede is Nighest. . . .

Note that the Line of the Shaddow pointeth euer truely to the mid-point of the Arche which is sett in Heauen to mind folkes of the Promise made to Noe foure seueral times by God. And this Redundancie of Couenante is not of Chance : for truely hee would haue been a Dull man which had needed less Assurance and Warrantie after that hee had beene Afloate for more then a Yeere, and now, being Disingag'd, saw but the salt Slime and Stinking Carcasses of Sea-Monsters aground

vpon the fieldes of Armenie. Howbeit, Noe fainted not, hauing seene the Suretie of God for thirty score of Yeeres. . . .

The Collours of the Bowe are thus : Blew-Purpure to shewe forth the Maiestie of God : Greene to put us in minde of the Resurrection, as the Earthe rose againe from vnder the Floodes : Yelowe,—a small peece—that is for the Unconstancie and Lewdenesse of Men, wherefor the Earthe was Drown'd. There be manie who pretend that there is also Red in the Bowe ; But it is manifestly an Idle tale. Red is a uerie dim collour, moost unfit to be vsed, for it hath much Blacke in it.”

Within a Greater Gnomon all the Nighte.

“**A**S to the Eye of the figures on the Diall, the Sun retireth behind his wrie Brass Horizon, and all is thenceforthe in Shadowe, so do wee too see the Sun sinke belowe the West, which is to us as a Stile and a Gnomon. This thought is verie full of Comfort. It teacheth us that onlie as wee follow the ensample of the Handiwork of God may we atchieue success on Earthe, and also that as we still see the other Figures of the Diall illumined by the Sun, so also, the Daye which hath left us is still Fruitfull and Pleasant in Our Plantations and elsewhere. . . . And all men are with God when they do Sleepe.”

How often Good from Ill alightes
 Mark Rezin, King of Aramites.

“**T**HE first man which invented a Diall was the abhominable Rezin, thinking thereby to Glorifie the Sun his God, and from Aram Ahaz King of Iuda brought the Device, and worshipp’d it, making his sons to pass throughe the Fire to Moloch. Marke this carefully that Ahaz, knowing well that the Deuil hateth the Light of Daye, hauing himself bowed before him in the Groves, still put up his newe altars at the Corners of Streetes and Hill-tops : meaninge thereby Sundialls. And the Greate Altar which hee so rais’d that the Sun shoulde best strike vpon it on the Southe side of the Temple of Ierusalem is none other then the uerie Diall vpon which the Lorde afterwards made the Shadowe to Trauaile Backwards : Thus Sanctifying to the Vse of the Godly a thing hellish and of its Nature horrificent and Pagaine. And the Morning and Euening sacrifices were in their Originall but the Consultation of his mighty Circle. Thus

doth Good come from Euil. . . . The citie of Damasce hath twice been destroyed vtterly with all her inhabiters—saue once ten Christians—for the wickednesse of Rezin King of the Aramites. Howbeit Our Sauior spake the Tongue of Aram which is a greate maruel.”

XII

As you watch my shadow moving
Past each minute's ordered grooving
God's almighty purpose proving,
Rest is nearer, nearer, nearer as you look.

(From the Latin.)

“**I**T is greate happinesse to think vpon the Time when we shall
Cast off this Mortall Moulde and emploie that Breath which
wee haue so often vsed here to take God's name vainly withall,
in singing among th' Angelick Quire, and those Handes with
which wee have wrought naughtinesse on Earthe in plucking the
twelue maner of fruits which growe vpon the Tree of Life. . . .”

XIII

Most merciful,

My first word tells but half the time you could not
save last night.

More gracious still,

My last, but half the golden hours you wasted during
light.

(From the Latin.)

“**T**HE Houre of the Vprising of the Sun and of the First coming of the Shadow vpon the Diall, doth exactly equall the one half parte of the Hours of the past Night. The Houre of the Setting of the Same doth as truly equall the one half parte of the Houres of the past Day. Thus, if the Sun doe rise at fiue, the Darknesse hath been Ten Houres long : or if hee doe set at Eight, the Daylight hath been Sixteene Houres vpon the Earthe. Let us therefore so Order our Laboure that without Dismaye or Vaine Regret we may watch the Shaddow leaue the diall at Sunset, or if that may not bee, go, light a Candle and Redeem the Nighte.”

XIV

I cannot argue, while you speak I work.

(From the Latin.)

“THIS is the verie argument of the Elect. Let us alwaies be at some work of the handes, that, though the Occupation of the Minde be sillie, there shall yet be somewhat of good for all the wordes. Smoking of Tobacco leadeth to Disputings and Vaine Talk, as doth also the Sewing of women. It is best that a woman employ her Heade and a man his Handes, thus is the worsor part of either made more perfect. The saying of Beda is to be remembered: So work as to offer Prayer: So Praye as to work not with thy Lips alone.”

If I am wrong, 'tis your fault or 'tis God's.

(From the Latin.)

“**A** BOASTEFULL word indeed, but if we shall rightly regard it, of Comforte and Assurance. For to the Godlie minde the uerie Naughtinesse of the Posie shall make him to wonder for the Frowardnesse of him who sett it up. Then shall he see the trewe Interpretation, that a man should bethinke him whether it be his Fault or no. If hee shall Acquit himself of the Fault, then he shall minde him that the Wayes of God are past finding out, and that Hee will Iustifie himselfe within a while, as assuredly will the Diall also.”

XVI

A dark hour's length I cannot measure true,
Can you?

_____ (From the Latin.)

“**H**EE doth but meane that in Time of Sorrow the houres
pass heavily. . . . The Best Remedium is then rightly to
set a Man's self to remembring of past Heauinesse and how it
was presently removed: and so to judge himself to work
the more for the apparent length of the sad Day. This is
best, though Empty. . . .”

XVII

My cooler side alone doth useful work.

(From the Latin.)

“**M**ARRIAGES and Enterprises haue this in common, (if indeed Marriage be not the moost adventuresome enterprise of all,) that Hotheaded men should haue a Care of either sort. . . . But it is well said that the coole side of the Stile would bee of little vse were it not for the Sun on the warm side. Thus if Prudence were all no man woulde do anything.”

XVIII

The moon makes silly work of both of us.

(From the Latin.)

“**A** MAN went to a Sundiall on a Night, and said, See 'tis but Ten, and the sillie Diall maketh it past Two. Whether was he who went to the Diall by night, or the Diall, more silly? And the sillinesse of the Diall ceaseth at dawn. . . .”

XIX

Deathe and I Chime no Bell.

“**M**Y little sister died suddenly as shee was at Ball : and I am a uerie old man. When I was a child of eight yeeres, I sawe old Sir Henrie Palmer (he which was so strangely borne) two following Sundaies at Masse. Hee was killed at Guines when the Frenche took Cales in 1558. My good frend Dame Margaret (this monthe with God : I pray that Hee haue mercie on her soul) was euer fearefull when her own time came, as she hath often told me. . . . But it is not painefull to put off this Life, except it bee by Torture, and that is by Exception : felons and such. A man should put his House in order (not being Fearefull of the Ende, but lest, his Time being shorter, then hee may Beleeve, those that come after may be Empoverished) and then, hauing Chearfully disposed his Stuff, he may await without Haste or Feare the coming of Mortalitie, well assured that as hee hath done all that lay in him to sett

his Peace with his Neighbour, so also God, advised thereto by Our Saviour, shall find Occasion to forget his Wickednesse towards Himselfe.”

[Parmenter refers to an occurrence of which the record is to be found among the Palmer family papers at Dorney Court. It appears that Alice, daughter and heiress of Sir Richard Clement, of Ightbam Mote, and wife of Sir Edward Palmer, of Wingham, gave birth to three sons on Whitsun-day and the two following Sundays in the year 1488. Of these, Sir Henry, to whom Parmenter refers, was the second. Sir Thomas, the youngest, whom he could not have remembered, was executed in 1553, on the same scaffold with the Duke of Northumberland, for espousing the cause of Lady Jane Grey. The eldest, Sir John, lived to a great age at Angmering in Sussex. The baby clothes of the triplets are still preserved at St. Audries, the Somersetshire seat of Sir Alexander Acland Hood, M.P., Sir Henry's present representative. I believe that the fifteenth-century nurse stitched upon them a record of the event.]

XX

The stars may lie to you but not to me.

(From the Latin.)

“**S**IRIE, men say, hath cast a Shadowe. But 'tis a vaine Tale. A Foole will Consort with Astrologers and fare as the son of Kish fared at Endor : hee had better haue come by Daye to the Diall which prophecieth neither Good nor Ill. Sleepe is better, then Foolishnesse. . . .”

(Of the figures.)

We owe to Man's full noonday all our worth :
He profits only by our death or birth.

(From the Latin.)

‘**T**HE Figuring of a Diall is planned and worked vpon the Brasse by Grave Men. But it is onlie as the Light visiteth or deserteth the Figures that they are Profitable to Man : those figures which are full in the Sun, and those full in the Darke are alike Vnregarded. . . . Thus also are there men who may redeem a Naughty life by the maner of their Deathe : and there are Vnhappie men whose Birthe hath been the sole cause of Reioicing to their Fathers.’

XXII

In Sunnie Houres from Marke to Marke
Unconstantly I leap :
But, Womanlike, when comes the Darke,
My Pole-Star's course I Keepe.

“**A** PRETTY Conceit: But in the main it is not so. Woman is but a Barge saue when the Wind is Astern, and then a verie Faselus. But thus far hee is right, that a Stile doth truely point to the Pole Star all the night, for a Gnomon that did not point to the Pole would be a Toye. For which reason, a man from Aethiopie would not know a Diall of the Lappes to be a Diall at all so different are they.”

XXIII

Not least among thy many duties, Sun.

(From the Latin.)

“**A**S the Earthe is in heauy debt to the Sun whereby men work and eat, so is the Soule of Man debtor to the Ghooste whereby men Spiritually do liue. Holy Church is as a Stile raised aloft that men may Iudge of the Seasons. . . . And be it remembred that the uerie Straightnesse of the Stile of Brasse is in Mercie to Man’s weaknesse a little blunted when his Shadow lyeth vpon the Diall. . . . Again, as it was with Moses in the euening of the day in the Deserte, it is but the Backeparts of the Sun which are seen and marked by the Figures.”

XXIV

For mee the Sun is God.

“**T**HERE is no profitable thought to be taken from this
posie.”

XXV

At dawn, rest-hours are brightened by the Sun :
At eve, he gilds the work-hours past and done.

(From the Latin.)

“**T**HE Sun arising shineth brightly on the houres of Rest and Refreshment after Toile, making Promise of Rewarde. At Night the Remembrance of such Toile shoulde bee an Incitement to Godlinesse and all manner of seemly Reioicing when the light of the Sun doth especially fall vpon the Houres of past Work. . . .”

Look sometimes on the darker side of things.

(From the Latin.)

“**A**CHEARFUL Constancie of Expectation is to be Com-
mended: But it is not therefore to be vnderstood that
we should liue in a *Paradisus Stultorum* or Park of Fooles.
Rather let us take profit as Leeches do, in trafficking with
what is Ill, and so studie the Arbitrament of Good and Evil
that we may mark their Distinction as well as euer a man who
studieth the Shaddow of the Diall marketh the Time. For to
look onlie vpon the Lighted side leaveth a man often in the
Aduersaries’ aduantage.”

XXVII

I have known Shadow :
I have known Sun.
And now I know
These two are one.

RUDYARD KIPLING.

Me neque Sol radiis placat nec paenitet Umbra.

[This dog-Latin motto is of course not exactly translated by the lines of Mr. Kipling, but the two are sufficiently alike to justify the insertion of the latter in this place. Parmenter's comments have been omitted, as they refer exclusively to the pain and the pleasure which are not felt by the sundial.]

XXVIII

The Sun seeth no Shadowes on the Earthe.

“**T**HE remembrance of this shoulde set us a-thinking that of his free Will God would never see aught vpon the world that doth not reflect the bright Beame of His Righteousnesse and Glorie. The Deuil, as we knowe, sitteth under Branches and in the Darke. Whence we must scower him daily as doth the Sun from behind the alternate Shelter of the Gnomon. . . .”

XXIX

Man looks too closely and my voice is dumb.

(From the Latin.)

“**F**OR the Interposition of his Heade keepeth away the Light from the Diall. So also where the Braine of Man cometh betweene the Voice of God and his earthlie Traffickings, the latter profit but little by the Enquiry.”

XXX

'Tis not transparency that serves the end :
The dove and serpent both are needful, friend.

(From the Latin.)

“**A** WORLDLY saying, but Iustified by Writ. Consider, if the Sun shone throughe Brasse, there woulde be an end of all attempt to guide ourselves timely. So also a Man is bounden so to act as he hath been giuen reason : and especially to hide another's Secret, euen as the Gnomon willingly sheltereth the Louse from the heat of the Daye. And we do not certainlie knowe that his Louse is worser in the Eye of God then his Sparow that eateth Grain.”

Don't you think you had better go back and do it at once ?

Hodie Dominica.

“**A**S Tertullianus saith, Eevery Daye hath two Names, one Monday or Wednesday, (or as it may chance,) the other, Today. And be you sure that Today is God's Daye in a maner not less, then Sundaye. For there should be on Monday an Equal chance of Serving God, and a greater chance of serving a Man's Neighbour, then on a Sunday: and a Sunday of Prayer is not better than a Weekdaye of Work and Prayer. . . . There is a paranomasie, as the Schoolmen say, for Dominica is in Latin and among the French, as I found in Paris, the name for Sunday.”

XXXII

Munda Solaria dant, sed cor Solaria mundum.

[*This motto is, I think, incapable of adequate translation. The meaning is that while ground-rents (solaria) provide (dant) the smart and "mundane" things of this world (munda), sundials (solaria) by their admonitions lead men to purity of heart (cor mundum*). But I cannot render into equivalent English the double and daring play upon the words. Parmentier is hopelessly at sea, and I have omitted his comments, though some of them are curiously shrewd.*]

* See Vulgate, Psalm l. 12, which is in the English Prayer Book Psalm li. 10.

[On the last leaf of this manuscript are a few disconnected sentences in Parmenter's hand. One, the first of them, obviously applies to a sundial. It is possible that it represents his own contribution to the series. If so, it is a pity that the leaf should have been so much damaged.]

Ex ore parvulo(*rum*) . . .

Nil va(*let*) . . .

[Probably the meaning is that children cannot reach up to the sundial to tell the time. Below it is this:]

“**F**OR hee, though of Evill ways, which shall rather prefer the night-prayer of one Childe, to the Benediction of a benche of Bishops, hath still his Fingers, though Foule, vpon the Skirtes of Christ.”

[Lower down is the strange Gnostic verse quoted by Clement of Alexandria from the Gospel of the Hebrews.]

He that Wandereth shall Reigne :

And He that Reigneth shall Rest.

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