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BUTLER'S *PROPERTIUS*.

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PALEY'S Propertius, described by Haupt on its first appearance as 'liber uulgaris ac futilis', has now long been antiquated; and Mr Butler has produced a commentary which will generally displace it in the hands of English students. His book, like Paley's, is a compilation, and neither in illustration nor exegesis nor criticism does it add anything of moment to the work of his forerunners. But the performance has much more life and heartiness than Paley's, and will prove of much more service to the readers for whom it is designed. Mr Butler has made himself acquainted with a great deal that has been written on Propertius in the last five-and-twenty years, and has taken pains to set out his matter with clearness and precision, qualities which are seen at their best in his treatment of the question whether ii 29 is one poem or two and whether iv 8 19 sq. are in their proper place. He brings to his task independence, common sense, intelligent interest, and an open mind: not steady judgment, not sustained attention, and not a sufficient knowledge of Latin in general or of Latin verse in particular or indeed of Propertius himself.

For example, one does not expect an editor of Propertius to alter the text in i 20 17-20 'naualibus Argon | egressam . . . scopulis applicuisse ratem' with the remark that 'the ship Argo . . . could hardly be said *applicuisse ratem*', nor to accept at i 7 16 a conjecture which makes Propertius use *evoluisse* in the last half of a pentameter. A scholar is not much at home in metre who at i 10 23 *petiit ingrata* talks about 'the short syllable lengthened in arsis' and compares *vincishaec* and *ingenurus aut andruit externos*; or who writes at ii 28 53 (et quot Troia tulit uetus et quot Achaia formas) 'the awkwardness of the order of the words might perhaps be avoided by the transposition of *Troia* and *Achaia*, making both words trisyllables', and expresses doubt about *Troia* as a dactyl but none about *Achaia* as an amphibrachys; or who says at ii 32 5 that to reject *curue te in Herculeum* as unmetrical 'is perhaps to go too far, in view of lines such as 25 9 *at me*

ab amore tuo.' To render '*tenui unda*' (i 11 11) as 'shallow', '*excussis lumbis*' (ii 16 27) as 'exhausted', '*reludor*' (ii 29 4) as 'I am mocked', '*cur luna laboret*' (ii 34 52) as 'why the moon waxes and wanes', '*solitum ducite munus*' (iii 4 8) as 'ply your accustomed task', '*nullo facto*' (iii 6 21) as 'without any acts of love having passed between us', '*moribus*' (iii 6 25) as 'manners, accomplishments', '*uenundata*' (iii 19 21) as 'won', and '*alio pectus amore terat*' (iii 20 6) as 'torment', reveals unfounded opinions concerning the sense of Latin words and phrases. Knowledge of Latin again is not the strong point of a commentator who thinks at iii 13 56 that the use of the possessive pronoun in the sense of *faustus* has yet to be proved; and resorts to conjecture at iv 2 28 '*corbis in imposito pondere messor eram*' because of 'this extraordinary use of *in*'; and says that *Graeca* at iv 8 38 is 'a unique instance of this adj. in poetry'; and at i 11 30 '*Baiæ aquae*' writes 'this is the regular form'—*Baianus* and *Troianus* then are irregular—for adjj. formed from nouns ending in *-ius, -ia, -ium*', and quotes as parallels *Veius*, which is a dactyl, and *Tarpeia*, which was an adjective before ever it was a substantive.

At i 8 36 '*quas Elis opes ante pararat equis*' I find '*pararat* has the force of a perfect', then a list of references and a remark on 'this curious Propertian use.' *pararat* has the force of a past aorist, and this use is no more Propertian than Plautine. The pluperfect never has the force of a perfect except in the 3rd person plural, as at ii 8 10 *steterant*, iii 24 20 and iv 7 15 *exciderant*; a restriction which the editors who accept these readings can, I hope, explain, though they never attempt to do so.

I do not know what to make of the note on iii 13 7, where '*Tyros Cadmea*' is rendered 'Phoenician', or on i 4 24, where *qualis ubique* (such as one finds everywhere) is explained 'sc. of whatever shape or sanctity'. There are other strange misapprehensions of the author's meaning. *moraturis* (which would otherwise have tarried, nisi sedula fuisset) at i 3 32 is translated in a way which leaves no sense to the passage. ii 24 40 '*ferre ego formosam nullum onus esse puto*' is interpreted, perhaps in jest, 'sc. quia tam leues sunt'. ii 32 3 '*nam quid*, else why': read the preceding lines and try to imagine what 'else'

can mean. iii 1 6 (quoue pede ingressi?) 'pede, an allusion to the metre of their poems': conceive Propertius asking Callimachus and Pbilias what metre they wrote in. iii 11 29 'quid. sc. illam raptem etc. '; as if Cleopatra, like heroes and gods and Jove, were the slave of a woman. iv 6 21 *Teucro Quirino*, 'the Trojan Quirinus = Octavian': then who is the British Shakespeare?

Even where Mr Butler chooses, as he much oftener does, the right interpretation, he sometimes seems to be guided rather by a vague rectitude of feeling than by any firm apprehension or distinct perception of the truth. For instance at ii 4 9 'quippe ubi nec causas nec apertos cernimus ictus | unde tamen ueniant tot mala caeca uia est' he rightly sees and states the general sense, and avoids the error of comparing the *tamen* of ii 5 5; but he wrongly says 'there is an ellipse here', and he punctuates the distich so that it cannot be construed. The construction is 'quippe caeca uia est unde tot mala, ubi nec causas nec apertos cernimus ictus, tamen ueniant'.

An editor of Propertius is occupied half his time, or ought to be, in settling the text and discussing questions of criticism. Here again Mr Butler shows independence but not stability of judgment, and a brisk but not a penetrating or comprehensive intelligence. His work, as I said before, deserves much more praise than Paley's; and yet, if anyone desired to stock a museum of absurdities, Mr Butler's edition would yield far more treasure to the collector. But Mr Butler must not bear the blame for this; on the contrary, it is a surprise and pleasure to find that the absurdities are so much fewer than might have been anticipated. His defects are due to his environment: he has the misfortune to have been born in an age which is out of touch with Latinity. Propertius in i 2 9-14 is maintaining the superiority of nature to art: 'aspice quos summittat humus formosa colores, | ut ueniant hederæ sponte sua melius, | surgat et in solis formosius arbutus antris, | et sciat indociles currere lympha uias. | litora natiuis *persuadent* picta lapillis, | et uolucres nulla dulcius arte canunt'. Down to the new Pentecost, which happened somewhere about 1880, no one,—not even Vulpius and Hertzberg, who could understand most things,—could understand *persuadent*. Since 1880 everyone can understand it; but no two persons understand it alike. One scholar says that the meaning is 'litora *persuadent* se natiuis lapillis picta esse'; another that

it is '*persuadent naturam arte potiozem esse*'; a third supplies *dulcius* from below and interprets '*persuadent ut diutius commoremur et commodius acquiescamus*'; and now Mr Butler explains as follows:

persuadent. 'persuade us', i.e. 'beguile the heart and eye'. The phrase though bold is most expressive. There is no real difficulty in such a use of *persuadeo*, and the emendations proposed [*præfulgent* is one of them] are neither particularly probable in form nor do they give any improvement in point of sense.

The mixture of mirth and horror with which such notes as this would have been read by critics in the past, and are likely to be read by critics in the future, is an emotion of which we in these times are fast ceasing to be capable. 'Direness, familiar to our slaughterous thoughts, Cannot once start us.' And notes of this sort, common almost everywhere, are common in Mr Butler's Propertius. It is true that he often revolts against the fashion, and says of the MS lections defended by his contemporaries that they are impossible or that they possess no meaning; and he adopts conjectures¹ such as ii 30 8 *ipsa*, iii 2 16 *nec defessa*, iv 8 48 *totus*, whose merit and probability would be invisible to a dull man. But when one reads on, and comes to some other emendations which he rejects, and to some other MS lections which in his eyes possess a meaning and are possible, one attributes his occasional recalcitrancy less to any virtue of his own² than to the sudden and violent intervention of his guardian angel.

i 6 4 cum quo Rhipeos possim conscendere montes | ulteriusque domos uadere Memnonias. '*ulterius* is used as preposition = further beyond'. Further than what?

i 8 27 hic erat! 'She was here all the time!' Of course she was, or not a word of lines 1-26 could have been written. If a man who had been talking to Mr Butler for the last five minutes should suddenly burst out 'you were here all the time', it would surprise him; because the only people who say such things are live madmen and dead classics.

ii 18 9 sq. illum . . . fouit in ulnis | quam prius adiunctos sedula lauit equos. '*quam prius* = *priusquam*. Cf. Tib. iv 7 8 *ne legat id nemo quam meus ante, uelim*.' Then here-

¹ The following conjectures should have been assigned to their true authors thus: ii 6 41 *seducet* Birt, iii 18 24 *atrocis* Leo, iv 1 81 (*fallitur* . . . *Iuppiter*) Tyrrell, iv 3 55 *Craugidos* Bergk.

² At iii 1 27 he rejects the words *cunabula parui* as interpolated, but in a note of twenty lines he does not even mention the one decisive argument which proves them so.

after we will say *qui is* for *is qui*, and defend ourselves by quoting ii 32 1 *qui uidet, is peccat*.

ii 28 19 Ino etiam prima terris aetate uagata est. 'The reference seems to be to her wanderings after she leapt into the sea.' In other words, *terris = mari*.

ii 32 33-8 are printed and punctuated thus: ipsa Venus fertur (N, *quamuis* most MSS and editors) corrupta libidine Martis, | nec minus in caelo semper honesta fuit. | quamuis Ida Parim pastorem dicat amasse | atque inter pecudes accubuisse deam, | hoc et Hamadryadum spectauit turba sororum | Silenique senes et pater ipse chori.

Oenone . . . was a Naiad, and may therefore be correctly styled *deam*. Objections have been raised to the reading *Parim* owing to a misconception of the reference of *deam*. The majority of editors take *deam* to refer to Venus, and then assert correctly enough that Venus had no love affair with Paris. Hence we get emendations such as *Phrygem* (Schröder) and *palam* (Haupt), and the passage is made to refer to the loves of Venus and Anchises. . . 37, 38 *The nymphs and satyrs saw and approved*. Cf. Verg. Ecl. iii 9 *sed faciles nymphae risere*.

Mr Butler has here attained the two chief ends of the modern editor of Propertius: he has stuck to the MSS where others desert them, and he has followed N where others follow FDV.¹ Consequently he is pleased with himself; and his natural elation finds vent in this little sally: 'The difficulty is of the editors' own making.' Most true: the editors have wilfully and without provocation paid heed to the context; which an editor, as Mr Butler proves, is not obliged to do. I neither criticise the meaning he assigns to *spectauit* nor enquire what meaning, if any, he assigns to *quamuis*: I only point out what it is that he has made Propertius say. The subject of the poem is Cynthia's infidelity, which her lover here seeks to palliate by precedents from ancient story. These precedents, according to Mr Butler, are three: the adultery of Helen, the adultery of Venus, and—the blameless and honourable union of Oenone and Paris.

iv 1 81 sq. nunc pretium fecere deos et (fallitur auro | Iuppiter) obliquae signa

¹ I do not know what he means by saying 'It may reasonably be objected [to *quamuis* in 33] that we should require *non minus*, not *nec minus*'. *nec* is indispensable and *non* would be inadmissible. He adds 'the presence of *quamuis* might be explained on the hypothesis that *fertur* had been accidentally omitted'; and at iii 14 19, desiring to read *capere arma* with N, he says 'supposing *capere* to have been accidentally omitted (as perhaps in L), *arma* would easily be expanded into *armata*'. I wonder what the patrons of N would think if anyone invoked these hypothetical accidents to save the credit of another MS. Fortunately no one ever does.

iterata rotae. 'Now they have turned the gods to profit and—Jupiter the while is duped to blindness by their gold—to profit have they turned the oft-scanned constellations of the slanting zodiac.' It is not possible that Mr Butler should attach any meaning to his own words: he has never heard of an astrologer duping Jupiter to blindness by his gold.

iv 3 49 omnis amor magnus, sed aperto in coniuge maior. 'Love is ever a mighty power, but mightier far where the beloved is one's lawful husband'. No student wants to have the verse translated, for its words and construction are both quite simple: what he wants is to be told the reason why Propertius puts into Arethusa's mouth a statement which is both false and irrelevant.

iv 7 69. Andromeda and Hypermetra tell over their sad histories to Cynthia in Elysium: 'sic mortis lacrimis uitae sanamus amores'. Mr Butler defends *mortis*, but says nothing about *sanamus*; he merely translates 'the tears of sympathy and reminiscence that we shed in the world beyond heal the wounds love dealt in life'. What wounds did love deal in life to Andromeda?

If I wished to lengthen out a series of adverse comments I might examine Mr Butler's notes on ii 3 45, 7 15, 8 31, 10 22, 15 28, 16 12, 28 33, iii 16 19, iv 1 142, 8 60, 9 60. But there are other places where what invites comment is the absence of notes. At i 5 3 '*meos* sentire furores' anyone who reads the next five lines will find that *meos* must mean *Cynthiae*, which seems a strange sense for the word to have; yet Mr Butler is silent, and silent at ii 19 5, where *nulla* means *ulla*, and at ii 19 29, where *sic* means heaven knows what. ii 27 9: is *stere domibus flammam* Latin? ii 29 27: what does *hinc* mean? iii 5 6: what does *miser* mean? iv 5 40: does wordy warfare leave bites on the neck? iv 7 81: do boughs grow out of the ground? No reply from Mr Butler. In ii 26 31 sq. a voyage over the high seas, '*mare per longum*', is signalled by these unusual incidents, '*unum litus erit sopitis unaque tecto | arbor, et ex una saepe bibemus aqua*'; then we proceed, with disappointing tameness, '*et tabula una duos poterit componere amantes, | prora cubile mihi seu mihi puppis erit*'. Mr Butler writes '*tabula*, the planking of the deck', but of *litus* and *arbor* and *aqua* he says not a word. Here I think he has missed an opportunity: the next commentator will explain that *arbor* means the mast, *aqua* the water-cask, and *litus* the side of the ship, because *litus = ora* and *ora = extremitas*.

Mr Butler seems to share with the majority of conservative critics one of their favourite fancies,—that the chief merit of an emendation is closeness to the MSS, and that conjectures are probable in inverse proportion to the number of letters which they alter. Hence it naturally happens that he adopts some very bad conjectures. At i 19 22 he reads with Aldus ‘abstrahat ei! (e MSS) nostro puluere’, though the classical poets never employ *ei* without a dative. At ii 12 18 he reads with Lipsius ‘alio traice duella (puella MSS) tua’. Think what this means: that Propertius, instead of *bella*, chose the form *duella*, which he never elsewhere uses, in order to make *traice* a trochee, which it never elsewhere is. At iii 9 44, where the MSS have ‘*dure poeta*’, he accepts Scriuerius’ *Dore*, and explains ‘*Dore poeta* = Philetas. He was a native of Cos, which was colonised by Dorians’. *Dore* is not Latin for Dorian, nor Greek either; and ‘O Dorian poet’ can no more mean Philitas than ‘O Scotch poet’ means Alexander Smith. At iv 3 38 he adopts Prof. Ellis’s proposal ‘*qualis et educti (haec docti MSS) sit positura Dai (dei MSS)*’ and translates *educti* as ‘elevated, because they dwell in the northern heights of Scythia.’ The word has no such meaning: it would signify ‘tall’.

The editor has accepted six of his own conjectures. His proposal to assume a lacuna between iii 15 10 and 11, instead of transferring 43–6 to that spot, is possibly right; and against his conjecture of ‘*corbis at (ab DV, in N, om. F) imposito pondere messor eram*’ at iv 2 28 there is nothing to be said except that it is needless and does not account for the variants. The remaining four are all quite impossible.

At i 21 7–10 he writes ‘*ne soror . . . sentiat . . . Gallum . . . effugere . . . non potuisse . . . ; | nec (et MSS) quaecumque super dispersa inuenerit ossa | montibus Etruscis, haec sciat esse mea*’. These are the words of a dying soldier whose last thought is of his sister, and Mr Butler thus translates them: ‘nor let her ever know that whatever bones she may find on the Tuscan hills are mine’. Certainly the discovery that her brother had 1000 skulls, 2000 femora, and 26,000 vertebrae, would be at once a painful shock to her affections and an overwhelming addition to her knowledge of anatomy.

At ii 17 15 he writes ‘*nec lubet (licet MSS) in triuiis sicca requiescere luna, | aut per rimosas mittere uerba fores*’, which he renders ‘I care no more to lie at your threshold waiting in vain for admission’, and says ‘*nec licet* is wholly pointless: there was nothing to prevent his going to Cynthia’s door to demand admission.’ This is the same misapprehension which led Beroaldus to conjecture *nunc licet*. The couplet is severed from its context by 13 sq., but its sense is evident, and is very different from Mr Butler’s paraphrase. *requiescere* means here what it means in ii 22 25 ‘*Iuppiter Alcmenae geminas requieuerat Arctos*’, and the words refer to the stolen interviews of iv 7 19 ‘*saepe Venus triuio commissa est*’ and 15 sq. ‘*uigilacis furta Suburae | et mea nocturnis trita fenestra dolis*’.

At iii 6 9 he punctuates ‘*sic, ut eam incomptis uidisti flere capillis, | illius ex oculis multa cadebat aqua?*’ and translates ‘Did her tears fall even so when you beheld her weep?’ That would be *cum uideres: ut uidisti* means ‘as soon as you set eyes on her’, and will not consort with the imperfect *cadebat*.

At iv 11 53 sq. he writes ‘*uel cui, iuratos (cuius rasos MSS) cum Vesta reposceret ignes, | exhibit uiuos carbasus alba focos*’. The reader wonders what *iuratos* means, and he will never guess. Mr Butler renders it ‘the sacred fire which she had sworn to keep’, and then, instead of supporting his translation, subverts it by confessing the true sense of the word, ‘lit. by which she had sworn’.

I suppose that this is hardly what would be called a favourable review; and I feel the compunction which must often assail a reviewer who is neither incompetent nor partial, when he considers how many books, inferior to the book he is criticising, are elsewhere receiving that vague and conventional laudation which is distributed at large, like the rain of heaven, by reviewers who do not know the truth and consequently cannot tell it. But after all, a portion of the universal shower is doubtless now descending, or will soon descend, upon Mr Butler himself; and indeed, unless some unusual accident has happened, he must long ere this have received the punctual praises of the *Scotsman*.

A. E. HOUSMAN.