

LITERATURE

SUN DIALS AND ROSES OF YESTERDAY.

By Alice Morse Earle.

ROBERT HEGGE, living in 1630, said, "*A Dial is the Visible Map of Time, till Whose Invention 'twas follie in the Sun to play with a Shadow. It is the Anatomie of the Day, and a Scale of Miles for the Jornie of the Sun. It is the Silent Voice of Time, and without it the day were dumbe. . . . It is ye Book of ye Sun on which he writes the Storie of the Day. Lastly Heaven itself is but a generall Dial it, in a lesser volume.*"

If it was the utility and sublimity of the dial that was felt in those centuries, it is its charm and sentiment that appeal to the people of to-day.

The author makes an exhaustive study of the subject of dialling, and has illustrated the text by several hundred photographs and drawings, which add immensely to the interest and use of the volume.

The subject is too minutely treated to permit of review, but the chapter on sundial mottoes is particularly interesting. One almost unvarying characteristic of all the mottoes is solemnity. A few are jocose, a few are cheerful, nearly all are solemn, many are sad, even gloomy. They teach no light lesson of life, but a regard of the passing of every day as a serious thing.

Biblical texts offer a vast field for culling. Here are some of the favorites:—

Our days on earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.—1 Chron. xx : 15.

Abide with us, O Lord, for it is toward evening.—Luke xxiv : 29.

He brought back the shadow by degrees.—2 Kings xx : 11.

Some of the posies run thus:—

"A clock the time may wrongly tell ;
I, never, if the sun shines well."

"Light rules me
The shadows, Thee."

"Time goes, you say ? Ah, no !
Alas, Time stays, *we* go !"

Harriet Martineau's dial at Ambleside, England, bears the words:—

"Come ! Light ! Visit me !"

King Edward's dial at Sandringham carries the inscription:—

"Let others tell of storms and showers,
I'll only count your sunny hours."

The author makes the suggestion to architects that fine brass meridian lines be laid on the floors of broad vestibules, of open porches, and paved terraces wherever the sun rays can shine, in order to prove the use and interest of the noon mark.

The author also points out that the Washington monument, with its superb shaft of 555 feet traces unnoticed day by day its wonderful parabolic path on the green-sward around it. She makes the proposition that Government order the tracing of its analemma, and mark the hours by beds of flowers.

The union of this subject with the "roses of yesterday" has not been through any relation of one to the other, but simply a placing together of what Bacon calls two "garden delights," and with somewhat of the thought that a dial standing alone in a garden was a bit bare without flowers, so it was likewise in a book.

MacMillan Co., New York.