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THE AENEID AS A NATIONAL EPIC.  
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by

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## The Aeneid as a National Epic.

### 1. The Mirror of Rome.

The purpose of this thesis is to present the Aeneid as the national epic of Rome. In doing so it will be necessary to show that it is an epic, that is, that it answers to the requirements of that type of poetry. In the next chapter an effort will be made to prove that it does fulfil these requirements. In subsequent chapters it is proposed to deal with different aspects of its national character. In this introductory chapter, I propose to take advantage of the fact that the Aeneid is not a new work which has yet to establish itself, but rather a work which has been submitted to a long and severe test. A modern essayist of standing—Dean Inge—is fond of reminding his readers that "the wisdom of the ages is wiser than the wisdom of the age." While conceding that it is possible for the learning of our age to revise the judgement of all past ages, as I do not discern any signs of such an attempt to question the national character of the Aeneid, I desire in this chapter to occupy the strong citadel of the verdict passed upon the Aeneid by the ages that have intervened since it first appeared.

The Aeneid has been a classic, submitted to the close scrutiny which is the lot of a classic, since its first appearance a decade or two before the beginning of our era. During that prolonged period of probation it has been uniformly conceded that the Aeneid is the best exponent of the spirit of the Roman people which the world possesses. In the first half of the nineteenth century, it is true, the right of Virgil to be ranked among the great poets became a subject of debate; but it is well to note what was the point of that debate. It was aimed rather at Virgil's greatness as a poet, than at



the essentially Italian character of his production. It affected Roman writers generally as well as Virgil. No doubt it resulted in a juster estimate of Latin literature as a whole, for it brought out the fact that the writers of the Republic faithfully represent the practical genius of Rome, and could not attain to the heights of the imaginative and speculative genius of Greece. But that is only to sustain the contention of this chapter. At the period in question, it became the habit to say that Virgil was a mere imitator, in the *Aeneid*- of Homer, in the *Eclogues*- of Theocritus, in the *Georgics*- of Hesiod and the *Alexandrines*. The answer to that is that he did draw much of his material from the sources named, but he stamped upon it all the impression of his own Italian Personality. In his pastoral and didactic poems he gives a living voice to the whole charm of Italy; in the *Aeneid*- to the soul of Rome. If we knew as much of Homer's predecessors as we do of Virgil's, it is probable that a similar attack could be made on his originality. To say that is not to deprive the blind poet of his pre-eminence, it is only to plead that originality does not consist so much in the materials used, as in the impress put upon them. When Virgil wrote the *Aeneid*, he was in the maturity of his powers, he wrote at a crisis in the history of his people, and as we pass from the annals of the time to his great poem, it is like turning from arid facts to the atmosphere which imparts to them human life and breath. The *Aeneid* "remains" says Merivale, "the most complete picture of the national mind at its highest elevation, the most precious document of national history, if the history of an

age is revealed in its ideas, no less than in its events and incidents." (1.) "The *Aeneid*" says Hallam "reflects the glory of Rome as from a mirror." (2.) In the close scrutiny to which the poem has been exposed, it has ever been regarded as the mirror of Rome.

(a.) The first and perhaps the severest test it had to pass was the verdict of the author himself. Virgil died in 19 B.C., and as he lay on his death-bed he sent for the manuscript of the *Aeneid* with the intention of burning it. That, and the fact that in a letter to Augustus (3.) he spoke of his undertaking to write the *Aeneid* as a mistake, has sometimes been taken as the calm and reasoned judgment of the poet upon his effort to produce an Italian epic. In forming a judgment upon this, there are two considerations to which due attention must be paid. First, Virgil, in the circumstances, was not in a fit frame of mind to estimate his own work. What he said of Camilla in her last moments, may be applied to himself-

"Hactenus----potui; nunc vulnus acerbum  
confluit, et tenebris nigrescunt omnia circum."

(Bk. XI-823-825.)

and we may go on-

"-----linguebat hebenas,

Ad terram non sponte fluens."(Bk. XI. 827-828.)

(1.) Roman Empire. Chap. 41.

(2.) Intr. Lit. of Europe. Pt. 2. chap.5.

(3.) Macrobius l. 24. 11. - quoted from Sellar

While all things around were growing dark, it is no wonder that his own production should, in his judgement, fall into the shade.

Secondly, Virgil was an artist with all the refined sensibility of an artist. He had essayed a task that had been the ambition of his countrymen from the days when they had humbled Greece by force of arms- a task that in the circumstances of his country seemed laid upon him as a pious and patriotic duty- to produce a Roman classic that might rival the classics of Greece. The appeal of Cicero to men of culture at Rome must often have sounded in the ears of Virgil:- "quoniam horum omnes qui facere id possunt, ut hujus quoque generis laudem jam languenti Græciæ eripiant."(1.)

The success of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* could have left their author no stranger to the esteem in which he was held by his countrymen. Every finger seemed to point to him as the man gifted and destined to achieve the national victory to which Cicero had summoned the literary men of Rome. Tacitus records that on one occasion when some verses of Virgil's were read in the theatre, he received from the people a demonstration such as was usually reserved for Augustus.(2.)

Suetonius tells us that the *Georgics* had so touched the heart of the Italians, that obscure people were in the habit of parodying occasional lines. (3.) A work is truly national when such a tribute is paid to it.

(1.) Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 11. 2.

(2.) Tacitus, *Dial.* 13.

(3.) Suetonius *Virg.* 43. - quoted by Glover p. 39.

Her is the parodying of his pastoral poetry out of keeping with " the criticism which Virgil by implication applies to his earlier works, in the use of such expressions as "ludere quae vellent", " carmina qui lusi pastorum", "in tenui labor", etc., as compared with the high ambition with which he first indicates his purpose of composing an epic poem in celebration of the glory of Augustus-

" temptanda via est qua ne queque possim

Kellere humo, victorque virum volitare per ora."

(1.)

He had taken the mighty task in hand, none knew as well as he how mighty it was. He had finished it and was devoting three years to give it the final touches, when he was seized with his last illness. Such was his passion for perfection that rather than let the Aeneid, as his beloved country's rival to the Iliad, go forth with one blot upon it which he could remove, he would destroy it- a noble tribute indeed to the poet's lofty conception of his art.

(b.) Although princes are not always competent judges in such matters, posterity owes a debt of gratitude to Augustus for overruling the natural but mistaken scruples of the poet, and rescuing the Aeneid. The decision of the Emperor, there is evidence to show, was justified by the verdict of contemporary Romans. Probably many of them had not to wait for the actual publication of the work to form an estimate of its beauty and value. The custom then prevailing of authors reciting portions

(1.) quoted from Sellar, Roman Poets, p. 61.

of their works to select audiences had been followed in at least one case by Virgil. He had read to Augustus and Octavia the lament of Marcellus. (1.) How much more had thus reached the ears of contemporary Romans we cannot tell, but certainly enough to justify Augustus in overriding the poet's last wish. Allowance must no doubt be made for the partiality of a fellow patriot in the words of Propertius, in which he calls upon Ennius to yield the palm, the Greek poets to surrender, even upon the Iliad to make way for a superior:-

"Cedite, Romani scriptores, cedite Graii,

Mecum quid majus nascitur Iliade." (2.)

This quotation must suffice to illustrate the effect produced by the poem among the contemporaries and immediate successors of the poet. When the strong desire on the part of the Romans to outdo the Greeks in the field of literature is kept in mind, the lines of Propertius clearly testify that the Aeneid won its popularity as much because it reflected the glory of Rome as because it excelled as a work of art.

(c.) There is little need to deal with present day opinions on Virgil's work. "The Aeneid brings home to us, in a way in which no other work of Latin literature can do, all the elements in the idea of destiny, the genius and character of Rome which most powerfully move the imagination, while it enables us for a time to forget those elements of hardness, unscrupulous injustice, and oppressive domination on which the historian is forced to dwell, and which alienate the sympathies

(1.) Suetonius, Virg. 52.- for practice see

Prop. 3. 32-59-66.

(2.) *Bl.* 111. 32, 64-65.

as much as her nobler aspect compels the admiration of mankind." (1.) "Dans ce poëme," writes M. de Coulanges of the *Aeneid*, "ils (les Romains) se voyaient, eux, leurs fondateurs leur ville, leurs institutions, leurs croyances, leur Empire!" (11) The French, <sup>with</sup> but says in French with greater fulness what Hallam says in the words which suggested the title for this chapter: "The *Aeneid* reflects the glory of Rome as from a mirror."

(3.) As we review the bequests of Rome to later civilisations, her gifts of law, and jurisprudence, her genius for government, her municipal system; and endeavour to arrange them in order of their value, no mean place in the scale must be assigned to the *Aeneid*. A national epic is an heirloom. The epic of a great imperial power is a rich legacy to the races that follow in her train. To the masses in western lands their inheritance from Roman law and methods of government, particularly their inheritance of local freedom derived from the municipal system of Rome (3.) has no doubt been more fruitful in immediate tangible benefits than any that have come to them directly from the national epic of Rome. Whatever benefits have come to the masses through it, have reached them through a comparatively small band of students in each generation. But the influence of a great poem can never be estimated by comparing the numbers of its readers with the numbers of those who have never heard of it. This is not so much a case of numbers as a spirit that needs only to gain entrance

(1.) Sellar- Roman Poets- p. 79.

(2.) *Etudes sur la Poësie latine*- quoted by Sellar p. 79.

(3.) For a suggestive treatment see Conway "New Studies in a

to a few to influence the many. In every case it was a Roman who framed the law, a Roman who organized the army, the province or the municipality- a Roman animated by the spirit of Rome. Milton, we say is greater than Paradise Lost, Shakespeare than Hamlet, the man is always greater than his achievements. In like manner the spirit of a people is always greater than anything it has done. And if in the case of the Roman Empire, the spirit of Rome which breathed through every statesman, every hero, every humblest citizen, has been embodied in words "worthy of Phœbus", if the "anima Romana" has been enshrined in a form of which it can be said that-

"Of the soul the body form doth take

For soul is form and doth the body make." (1.)

then the poem which enshrines and transmits that spirit must be given a prominent place among the choice legacies of the proud and mighty Empire.

(6.) Therein lies the value of the *Aeneid*. It reflects the soul of Rome. Through the mirror of its stately diction we see the power, the glory, the majesty, the civilizing influence of Rome. If, as we read, we feel that all this cannot be the work of man unaided, our instinct is satisfied by seeing the Empire enabled with a divine origin and a divine sanction. The love of the past, the yearning for the simplicity of pioneer days, which seems to grow stronger as life grows more complex, is enlisted by an appeal to a remote antiquity; by a picture of unspoiled rural scenes, inhabited by a hardy native race; by a stirring account of the struggles of

(1.) Spenser-"An Hymne in Honour of Beattie."



the early races with the more civilized newcomers who gradually acculturate and refine them. If in studying the annals of Rome we cannot see the wood for the trees, cannot, I mean, feel its unity as we feel the unity of our own race, the Aeneid enables us to see Rome in all its ages, by the recital of an unbroken continuity of great men, all animated by one spirit. The martial instinct, which condemned though as it is will assert itself in human hearts, is amply provided for in the grand exploits of the masters of the world. If in a time of emasculation we crave for strong and stable government, we turn to the Aeneid and see there a vision of government, vigorous and majestic, yet humanized by the peace, law and order which it has brought to a distracted world.

What we see is not a mere vision. It is something that has been actually realized. As the vision opens before us we are encouraged by the reflection that men have not only thought this, but that men have done it, and we are inspired to hope that with greater advantages, with ampler resources and no more serious difficulties men ought to do even greater things than these.

The subject is one that might seem more adapted to be the inspiring motive of a great history like that of Livy. True from such a work you may learn with greater scientific accuracy what Romans did; you may learn better of the material greatness of Rome and the structure of civilization which its people built up. But a true epic like the Aeneid does more than present the external achievements of a people. It breathes their spirit. Therein lies the peculiar



quality of Virgil's epic. It breathes the spirit not of one age only, nor of one individual but of a people throughout all the changes of a long and glorious history. When we think of the Iliad, we think of Achilles or Agamemnon or Hector; we do not think directly of Greece. When we think of Paradise Lost, we do not think of England at all. When we think of the Aeneid, we think of Italy and Rome. It is truly the national epic, the epic of devotion to country. It is the mirror of Rome.

## II. The Essentials of Epic Poetry.

The purpose of this chapter is to show that the Aeneid conforms to the class of poetry called epic, while at the same time there is stamped upon it the impress of Rome; in other words that it is both national and epic. A student does not require to have done more reading in general literature than is required in the B.A. course of Manitoba University to realize how very diverse in form, in theme and in treatment epic poetry may be. For example, we read "Hiawatha" and are told it is epic. We read Scott and are told that some of his poems are epic in character. We read portions of "Paradise Lost" and it is also put in the same class. We read Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome" and are told that they have an affinity with epic poetry. Ballads, we are told, are for the market place. They have not the grand style.<sup>(1)</sup> They imply a certain degree of simplicity and an absence of high poetical ambition. Yet their affinity with epic poetry is clear.

It requires then but a limited course of reading to realize the range of epic poetry. It provokes the question—what are the common characteristics that link together poems like "Lays of Ancient Rome" and "Paradise Lost"? What is epic?

The term is from the Greek and means a word. Very early it would appear, the term came to be used to denote the utterance of one to whom was specially given the gift of utterance, one who could put into language the feelings and aspirations of the many,— the poet. The creations of primitive poets in Greece were not reflective, they were narrative and so we come upon the first outstanding characteristic of all epic poetry.

(1) Ker's "Epic and Romance" p. 142-4.

It must be narrative. "An epic poem is a poem which narrates a story, real or fictitious or both, representing in an elevated style, some signal action or series of actions or events, usually the actions of some distinguished hero, and intended to form the morals and affect the mind with the love of virtue." (1.)

In this definition we come upon the second essential of epic poetry, namely its elevation of style. Not only must the character or characters and their actions be lofty, but the style in which they are narrated must be elevated above ordinary expression. Character and expression must harmonize.

The two essentials of epic then are (1.) it must be narrative, (2.) it must be elevated in style. There is no difficulty whatever in clearly grasping what is meant by the former, but elevation of style may designate so many diverse ideals that it is necessary to be precise. It is almost impossible to give a definition. Elevation of style must be felt. Fancy yourself watching Achilles as he starts out to battle. You know that you are watching one who surpasses all others. If you try to describe him you must keep your conceptions your language and the whole environment of his action on a level with the pre-eminence of the actor. So also as we watch Aeneas advancing to his mighty destiny of founding a universal empire. There is elevation of style in Wordsworth as he unfolds the beauty of some familiar scene in Nature. There is

(1.) Imperial Dictionary- epic

"finish" in Tennyson. A lyric may be perfectly expressed but you feel at once the difference between the elevation of style in all these and that required in an epic. In almost every other branch of poetry there exist noble examples of elevated style. But for the most part you are dealing with that which is common to man. In an epic you are dealing with the outstanding, the princely, the heroic. That last adjective reminds us, indeed, that epic and heroic were originally synonymous. It would not be far wrong to say that the elevation of epic style must differ from the elevation of other poetry as the hero differs from the ordinary man, provided we always remember that the hero of a national epic is a hero of his people, bound up with them in thought, in action, in ideals.

I have said that you must feel the heroic style and the contrast between the heroic and the ordinary style is well illustrated by some lines in a satire of Horace. He is narrating a simple fable about a town and country mouse, intended to teach that things are not always what they seem. In the course of his simple narrative he suddenly includes a mock-heroic line, "Jamque tenebat nox medium coeli spatium."<sup>(1)</sup> To bring in a description of the sky in that way is quite in harmony with the grand style of epic. Here it only serves to bring out the insignificance of greatness, and incidentally to make one feel the gulf that yawns between the grand style of epic and any other.

We now turn to enquire through what lines the epic came to Virgil. When we consider the answer that must be given to that question we must concede that the lot of our poet was cast for him in pro-

(1.) Horace - Satire 2. 6. 100.

pitious circumstances. Not only was he the heir of the master epic literature of the Greeks, but through Naevius and Ennius and other Latin poets a preparation had been made for the production of the epic of Rome by Virgil if only he had the genius.

There is no need to repeat here what so many authoritative writers have said about the relation of the Aeneid to the Iliad and the Greek epic on the one hand; nor about its relation to its Latin precursors on the other. But if it does seem to be necessary for the purpose of this essay to show how Virgil modified the epic as it came to him. To do so we must distinguish three elements which enter into the composition of a true epic, its matter, its form, its end.

The matter includes the action of the narrative, the episodes, the characters, and the machinery. The form includes the manner of narration, the discussions, the sentiments, the verse, figures and other ornaments. The end is to inspire a love of illustrious action.

To begin with the matter of the Aeneid- the matter is the old story of Aeneas. It is narrative and so fulfils the first condition of an epic. It is the narrative of him who founded Rome and so it is at once heroic and national. To trace in detail the probable sources of the Aeneid would require a thesis in itself and would be a task for a Sellar or a Glover. The story appears to have existed in many forms and to have reached Rome through many other channels than through the chief ones - the Iliad and the Odyssey. It is conceded that the Aeneas of Virgil is his own creation based upon the legends of the past. Why did Virgil choose for the matter of his poem this story from a remote antiquity and from the literature of an alien race?

Sellar answers the question thus-" The subject of the wand-

erings and subsequent adventures of Aeneas enabled Virgil to tell again and from a new point of view, the old story of the fall of Troy, to present a modern version of the sea adventures of the *Odyssey*, and to awaken the interest of a nation of soldiers in the martial passions of an earlier and ruder age.

Although there is no evidence that the connexion of Rome with Troy had sunk deeply into the popular mind before the time of Virgil, yet it had been recognized in the official acts of state for more than two centuries. So early as the first Punic War the Acarnanians had applied to the Romans for assistance against the Aetolians on the ground that their ancestors alone among the Greeks had taken no part in the Trojan War. The Senate had offered alliance and friendship to King Seleucus on condition of his exempting the people of Ilium, as kinsmen of the Romans, from tribute. T. Flaminus in declaring all the Greeks free after the conclusion of the Second Macedonian War, described himself as one of the *Aeneadae*.<sup>(1)</sup> Later he says, "From the time of Naevius this account of the origin of the Romans had been the accepted belief in all Latin literature. Sinius begins his annals from the date

"*Quum veter occubuit Priamus sub Marte Pelasgo.*"

The poet Accius had written a tragedy called "*Aeneadae*". The Roman Annalists started with the tradition as an accepted fact. Thus Livy in reference to this belief uses the expression "it is sufficiently established." The great antiquarian Varro wrote a treatise on the Trojan origin of Roman families. Cicero in his *Verrine orations* (Act. II. 4. 33.) speaks of the relationship of the people of

(1.) Sellar- Virgil- p. 306 ff.

Segesta of Sicily which claimed to be a colony founded by Aeneas, with the Roman people. Even Lucretius who stands apart from the general traditional beliefs of his countrymen, begins his poem with the words "Aeneadum genetrix". Virgil's poem appealed not to the popular taste, but to the national, religious, aristocratic, and literary sympathies of the cultivated classes. The legend of Aeneas if less ancient and less popular, assigned a more august origin to the Roman race than the tale of the birth of Romulus:-

" Ab Jove principium generis, Jove Dardana pubes,  
gaudet avo, rex ipse Jovis de gente suprema  
Trojan Aeneas----- " ( Aen. VII. 219- 221.)

These considerations may have recommended this subject to Virgil, as the most suitable symbol of the idea of Rome, from both a national and religious point of view. But the circumstance which must have absolutely determined his choice was the claim which the Julian gens made to be directly descended from Iulus, Aeneas and the goddess Venus. " (L.)

As a key to Virgil's motive in freely adapting the traditional Aeneas to his purpose, perhaps the variation he introduced into Naevius' account of the voyage of the hero is as suitable as can be found, Naevius represents him as having only one ship- a limitation which did not suit Virgil's account of the scale on which the war was carried on, after the landing in Italy.

In the case of the matter of his poem, then, Virgil adopted the narrative and machinery which the Iliad and the Odyssey had made the accepted standard for such composition. But in doing so

(L.) Sellar- Virgil- P. 306ff.

he modified his material by infusing into it the spirit of Rome. That he himself was conscious how closely in this regard he had copied his great model, and the difficulty of so copying is exhibited in his reply to the critics, who thought him a plagiarist that it was easier to steal his club from Hercules than to convey a verse from Homer. (1.)

If Horace could say to himself " *Sume superbiam quæsitam meritis* " because he had been the first "*Æoliæ carmen ad Italos deduxisse modos*", (2.) so might Virgil take credit for being not indeed the first to employ the epic, to celebrate the achievements of Roman heroes, but the one who employed it with signal and lasting success.

One element in his success doubtlessly lay in the marked improvement which he introduced into the form of the epic. The work which had given the truest expression to the genius of Rome before the time of Virgil had been the *Annales* of *Annianus*. It satisfied the national imagination as an expression of the national life in its vigorous prime, but it could not satisfy the newly developed sense of art. One important part of the problem before Virgil was to produce in Latin a work whose artistic finish would compare favourably with, if it did not equal that of Homer in Greek.

Included under form are the plan of the work, the discussions and sentiments, the verse and similar devices.

(1.) Quoted from Sellar's *Roman poets of the Republic* p57

(2.) *Suet. Vergil* 46.



The plan groups itself entirely around the experiences of his hero, "

Trojae qui primus ab oris  
Italiam, fato profugus, Lavinique venit

Litora, multum ille et terris jactatus et alto

Vi superum, saevae memorem Junonis ob iram

Multa quoque et bello passus, dum conderet urbem

Inferretque deos Latio, genus unde Latinum

Albanique patres, atque altae moenia Romae." (Aen. I. 1-7)

The first seven lines are a summary of the poem. No stronger proof of its unity could be adduced. There is no need to trace this unity by bringing out the consistent purpose of the several books composing it. Even the apparent breach of unity between the wanderings of Aeneas and his early exploits in Italy, that is between the first six and the last six books, is inevitable if the founding of Rome was to be connected with the heroic figures of a mythical past. That without question was Virgil's purpose. His own sentiment as he passes from the one to the other shows that he was aware of the difference in theme, while he regarded the Italian portion of the story as even more important. He pauses as he makes the transition to invoke the Muse,

"// -----Major rerum mihi nascitur ordo;

Majus opus moveo." (VII. 44-45.)

In the sentiments put into the mouths of his characters, and in all their actions, there is woven in, so easily that our attention has to be called to it, the supreme purpose in the poet's mind. It has often been noted that the epic of Homer is the epic of free spontaneous action, the epic of life; while in the Aeneid the characters and their expression are all moulded by the genius of

Rome. Achilles would proceed to battle for battle's sake; he had no great objective. Aeneas ever reminds us of his ultimate object

"Per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum  
Tendimus in Latium, Sedes ubi fata quietas  
Ostendunt." (l. 204-206.)

Among many passages showing how Virgil insinuated into his Trojan narrative the sentiments of a Roman, none surpass the scene in the Sixth Book, where Anchises makes the future heroes of Rome to pass before the eyes of Aeneas. The contrivance is a much subtler one than that employed by Shakespeare in the case of Banquo's descendants, (l.) and a much more attractive one. Shakespeare's device is the scene of punitive horror, Virgil's is suffused with all the tenderer and loftier sentiments of humanity. To the pious Aeneas is granted the unwonted privilege of visiting his father in the lower world. He finds him in the green swards and pleasant seats of the blessed. As they wander through them the aged father repays his dutiful son for the horrors he had passed through to meet with him once more, by gratifying the deepest longing of his son's heart. He grants him a vision of the illustrious men that are to follow him in the land of promise. This vision, the poet is enabled to present by making use of the widely accepted doctrine of the transmigration of souls.

"Tum pater Anchises ; Animae quibus altera fate  
Corpora debentur, Lethaei ad fluminis undam  
Secures latices et longa oblivio potant,

(l.) Shakespeare- Macbeth- Act4. Sc. I. l.111ff.

Has equidem memorare tibi atque ostendere ceram

Jampridem hanc prolem cupio enumerare meorum

que magis Italia mecum laetare reperta." (Aen. Bk. VI. 713-717)

These examples suffice to illustrate Virgil's adaptation of the epic to his supreme purpose. The great change which Virgil brought about in the epic was to make it for the first time the instrument for celebrating the glories of a nation, rather than those of an individual or group of individuals. "It was a new thing in literature." (1.) "Among the most original and significant features of the poetry of Virgil is its conscious appeal to a nation, as we understand the word "nation" to-day, to a people of one blood living within well-defined but broad limits, a people with various traditions all fusing in one common tradition. It is the poetry of a nation and a country, for the poet will not think of them apart; and it is not the least of his greatness that he has linked them thus closely, and made people and land as a unity so distinct from the rest of the world." (2.)

(1.) Glover's Virgil- p. 105.

(2.) " " " " " .

## III. The Hero of the Aeneid.

The first line of the Aeneid leaves us in no doubt as to whom Virgil intended to be the hero of his epic, but we have not read far till we are brought to feel that Virgil is not depicting a hero for his own individual heroism. The first section which begins by identifying the hero with the Trojan Aeneas,

"Arma virumque cane, Trojae qui primus ab oris,  
 Italiam, fate profugus, Laviniaque venit  
 Litora, -----". (Aen. I. 1-3.)

ends by asserting that he endured all

"-----dum conderet urbem,  
 Inferretque deos Latiae, genus unde Latinum,  
 Albanique patres, atque altae moenia Romae." (Aen. I. 5-7.)

These initial passages may be designated as the preface to the Aeneid. They state its motive, they provide the mould and spirit in which its hero is conceived, and throughout them Rome almost personified, is always in the foreground. No one who has ever read the Aeneid with care, can ever escape the designed impressiveness expressed in the measured cadence of the line

"Tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem!" (Aen. I. 33.)

If due consideration is thus given to Virgil's own interpretation of his purpose in the Aeneid, we must conceive of his hero as an epic hero indeed, but as an epic hero adapted to the Rome of the Augustan age. We must not, that is, suppose that Virgil intended to make his hero slavishly to conform to the traditional heroes of the Homeric epic.

He chooses him, it is true, from among those celebrated by the genius of Homer. There is still about him more than a mere aroma of the warrior chiefs of the

Iliad; he is represented as worthy of comparison in military prowess with the mighty Hector; his adventures on the sea, while by no means so romantic, would recall to Roman as they do to modern readers, the wanderings of the crafty Ulysses. He is all that. But to revive an Homeric hero, corresponding as some would have him do, in every detail to that relentless warlike age would have been to defeat the purpose Virgil had in view. That the poet deliberately adopted a different ideal seems to be the obvious inference from the sentiment which he puts in the mouth of Diomedes, the Grecian king of Argypira, comparing Hector and Aeneas in his reply to the ambassador of Venulus,

"Ambo animis, ambo insignes praestantibus armis;

His pietate prior.+++-----"(Aen. XI. 291-2.)

Manifestly Aeneas was meant to be great in arms, but that was not to be his outstanding characteristic. Rome had accomplished great exploits in war, her military spirit and power were still to be feared. But the Rome for which Virgil wrote was war-weary, as the world is to-day. The hundred years of internal struggle were over and Rome was exhausted. The gates of Janus were closed for the third time since the founding of the city, and the people were glorifying Augustus for it all. It was in such a crisis that Virgil undertook to write the epic of Rome, and to construct her ideal here. It would be as unreasonable to expect Virgil to make him an embodiment of the martial spirit such as had adorned the pages of Homer and delighted ages that delighted in war, as to expect a poet writing after nineteen hundred and eighteen to omit from the character of his

here the prevailing desire for peace, for social regeneration and the restoration of stable and just government. Indeed, in estimating the hero of the Aeneid, we to-day are probably better prepared to sympathize with Virgil's portraiture of Aeneas than were the critics prior to the Great War. Our days in many ways resemble the days of Augustus.

It seems that we may properly accept the theory that our poet meant to reflect in his hero, not only the general spirit of Rome, but a Roman hero modelled in part on Augustus but intended even more as a model for Augustus.

In the remainder of this chapter it is proposed roughly to analyze the character of Aeneas as portrayed in the Aeneid under two heads- first as pious Aeneas; secondly as prince Aeneas.

First- as pious. That "pietas" - of which the adjectival form is "pius" - was a distinctively Roman characteristic may be said to be the theme of Warde Fowler's work on "Roman Religious Experience". In the last chapter of this thesis this matter is more fully dealt with. Here it will suffice to say that Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in the age of Augustus, while resident in Rome, and looking back over the previous history of Rome, stated his conviction that we needed to know the "pietas" of the Romans in order to understand their career of conquest. (1.) The persistency with which the epithet "pius" is applied to Aeneas is evidently intended to suggest the outstanding trait in his character. It is not a narrow word designating a single virtue.

It is, on the contrary, a broad term describing his  
 (1.) Quoted by Warde Fowler- Roman Rel. Experience  
 from Dion. Hal. II. 27.3.

general attitude to the gods and to his fellow men. A happy illustration of this twofold bearing of the epithet is furnished by the position of the fifth commandment in the Decalogue. This commandment enforcing the duty owed to parents, it has often been noticed, stands between the first and second tables of the Mosaic law, thus indicating that "pietas" includes both duty to God and duty to man, and that it finds its peculiar application in fidelity to parents. If in the Decalogue, for God, parents and man, we substitute gods, parents and country we have almost an exact parallel to the range of "pius" as applied to Aeneas.

With regard to Aeneas and his submissiveness to the gods, and his punctiliousness in rendering them their dues; it is unnecessary to bring forth instances. The Aeneid teems with them.

In the time when the Aeneid was composed, there was a deep longing for peace, so deep that it should and did find expression in the character of the ideal Roman as depicted by Virgil. The significance of "pietas" had deepened, so as to include the more peaceful and tenderer feelings. (1.)

The first illustration I shall choose of the spirit implied in the word is the death of Lausus:

" At vero ut vultum vidit morientis et ora,  
 ora modis Anchisiades pallentia miris,  
 ingemuit miserans graviter dextramque tetendit  
 et mentem patriae subit pietatis imago.  
 "Quid tibi nunc, miserande puer, pro laudibus istis  
 quid plus Aeneas tanta dabit indele dignum?"

(1.) Warde Fowler, Roman Religious Experience P. 405-6.

arma quibus laetatus habe tua, teque parentum  
manibus et cineri, si qua est ea cura, remitto.  
hoc tamen infelix miseram solabere mortem  
Aeneas magni dextra cadis."(Aen. X. 821-30.)

Te quoque Glover's comment - " This is how Aeneas makes war. Stern necessity compels him to strike down Lausus: but in a moment the dying face, the boyhood, and the filial love of his victim turn Aeneas from foe to friend. Lausus is but a boy-puer- but he has done what Aeneas did himself years before, he has saved his father- the patronymic Anchisiades is not without purpose- and now all the honour that a hero can pay to a hero Aeneas will render to Lausus. "Pietas" covers his feeling for Lausus as well as his feeling for Anchises". (1.)

The next illustration I take from the story of the escape from Troy as related in Book II. l. 640 seq. His care for the aged Anchises is too familiar to call for notice. But note the picture of little Iulus-

"-----dextrae se parvus Iulus

implicuit, sequiturque patrem non passibus sequis"(II. 723)

Of this Glover says-" The instinctive act of the child-slipping his hand into his father's- is his comment on Aeneas' "pietas", and it is surely significant that at such an hour and in such a place the little footsteps of the child are one of the signal memories of the night."( 2.)

Further passages illustrating the meaning of the term "pius," as applied to Aeneas in this sense are- his search for

(1.)Glover's Virgil. p. 225ff.

(2.) Glover's Virgil. p. 224.



Creusa (Bk. I. 737-795); his preparation of funeral rites for Polydorus (Bk. III. 62-68); his contemplation of the pictures in the temple of Juno at Carthage (Bk. I. 1.462 seq.); and the building of a city in Sicily, at Nautus' advice, for the old and infirm among his followers (Bk. V. 755-761.)

Aeneas has throughout the poem, so thoroughly subordinated himself to his duty to his country that it is difficult to choose any special passages illustrating this side of his character. Two however occur.

At the time when, amidst the flames of his native city, the shade of Hector first apprises him of the duty assigned him by Fate of building anew and elsewhere the walls of Troy, (Bk. II. 281-296.) the natural inclination of Aeneas is to die with Troy. Nothing perhaps can bring out more clearly his submission to the will of the gods than the obviously intense struggle it cost him to leave his native city when his whole being urged him to seek a glorious death in arms. Immediately upon awakening from the dream in which Hector appears, he says:

"Arma amens capio, nec sat rationis in armis  
Sed glomerare manus bello, et concurrere in arcem  
Cum sociis ardent animi. Furor iraque mentem  
praecipitant, pulchrumque mori succurrit in armis".

(Bk. II. 314-317.)

Again, when the cruel slaying of Priam and the appearance of Venus have, a second time, warned him to return to his loved Anchises, Creusa and Ascanius, he does so, only to find the old man, too, resolved to perish amongst the ruins of his city.

Again Aeneas states

"Rursus in arma feror, mortemque miserrimus opto"

(Bk. 11. 655.)

And yet again

"Reddite me Danais: sinite instaurata revisam  
proelia. Nunquam omnes hodie moriemur inulti."

( Bk. 11. 669-70)

When the flame which arose from the temples of Iulus finally convinced old Anchises, versed in omens, that desertion of the city was the will of the gods, Aeneas finally consents. The last lines of Book 11. relate how he reluctantly abandons the fight, shoulders his burden, and seeks the mountains.

"-----ne spes opis ulla dabatur

Cessi et sublato mentes genitore petivi."

The word "cessi" brings out my point.

A second illustration of Aeneas' self-sacrifice for his country, is that scene where he leaves Dido. First-

"-----curam sub corde premebat"(Bk. 1V. 332.)

Then he says "Ne si fata meis paterentur ducere vitam

Auspiciis, et sponte mea componere curas,

Urbem Trojanam primum dulcesque meorum

Reliquias colorem, Priamæ tecta alta manerent

Et recidiva manu posuissent Pergama victis.

Sed nunc Italiam magnam Gryneus Apollo,

Italiam Lyciae jussere capessere sortes.

Hic amor, haec patria est.-----" (Bk. 1V. 340-347.)

and later-" Desine neque tuis incendere teque querelis

Italiam non sponte sequor."(Bk. 1V. 360-361.)

I have dwelt at length on the significance of this term, for its implications as interpreted by the conduct of Aeneas appear to go a long way towards solving the problem of the lack of unity in his character, so often discussed by critics. If for "lack of unity in" we read "development of" character, the criticism would have been more exact. As I interpret the character it is one which changes from resistance to complete submissiveness to the gods. Glover, quite in harmony with this view, speaks of "that new attitude of quickened man with which Virgil endows his hero." (1.) He strikes down Lausus but not in the spirit of an Homeric hero. It is the cruel necessity of war, but his spirit is one of tenderness and longing for peace. When Turnus is humiliated and pleads with Aeneas to remember his father-

" -----fuit et tibi talis

Aeneas genitor-----"

(Sk. XII.933-4.)

Aeneas relents. He is spurred to take his life only by the sight of the belt of Pallas and the memory of the harshness of Turnus, thereby recalled. Turnus paraded his triumph over Pallas. Aeneas lamented his over Lausus. Unless we are to deny the possibility of the development of a peaceful spirit, while yet war and its horrors remain a necessity, there can be no inconsistency in representing Aeneas as a bold warrior and a man who in his heart was tender and peaceful. The combination is easy for us to conceive. It was difficult no doubt for the mind to apprehend in the day of Virgil. To explain it the suggestion has been made (2.) that Virgil as a product of Mantua possessed a

(1.) Glover's Virgil. p. 226.

(2.) Garrod's Essay on Virgil.

strong dash of the Celtic spirit, and in consequence was endowed with a prophetic vein. At all events he did add a new and higher trait to the character of the warrior by the epithet "pius". If the development of character from lower to higher is inconsistent, then his portraiture of Aeneas is inconsistent. Otherwise not.

We pass next to consider Aeneas as Prince. In dealing with this aspect of Virgil's hero we must bear in mind the nature and purpose of an epic poem. The essence of this type of poetry may be expressed in the one word "elevation". The characters portrayed must be elevated, the actions must be heroic, the style must be lofty and dignified, what we are concerned with at present is limited to the character of the hero of the Aeneid. Is he princely? Our answer is-Yes, whether we estimate him by comparison with the epic heroes of the Iliad, by his manner and bearing or by his constructive ideals.

As portrayed by Homer, Aeneas is ranked among the heroes of Troy, second only to Hector. As an heroic warrior of the Homeric type, he does not however bear comparison with Achilles. But it is not the Homeric Aeneas we are studying, it is the Virgilian. The princely man of Virgil's day must possess other qualities than the martial one, and Aeneas does. It will be sufficient to quote the judgement in this matter of Glover.(1.) "Achilles and Agamemnon are called kings by Homer, but the royalty of Virgil's Aeneas dwarfs them at once into Highland chieftains. Mycenae may have been rich in gold, and yet had, like Ithaca, a midden at the palace doors; but Virgil was writing under a

(1.) Glover's Virgil. p.226.

monarch who could boast that he found Rome brick and left her marble. It was a boast that implied imperial resources, imperial power and an imperial outlook, and all these come between the Homeric chiefs and Aeneas, and make him a prince in manner, in attitude and in ideal."

Sainte-Beuve has provided a telling illustration of the dignity of manner and bearing of Aeneas from the episode of his killing the stags in the First Book, contrasting it with Odysseus' story of his hunt. The point of the contrast is that Odysseus is the hero of the simple ages, Virgil's Aeneas - of the age when urbanity had been born. Odysseus kills but one stag, Aeneas seven. The Homeric hero shoulders his stag and bears it to his camp. Virgil is careful not to exhibit the founder of the Roman Empire with the legs of a stag dangling around his neck. The "gravitas" (1.) which Livy describes as marking the Senators of Rome when the Gauls prevailed was too deeply ingrained in Roman character. Aeneas leaves his stags for menials to carry home, at least the silence of the poet leaves that impression. But as this gravity and dignity did not prevent the great heroes of Rome, such as Cincinnatus, from engaging in the ordinary work of the farm, so Virgil frequently represents Aeneas as sharing the necessary duties of camp life and the pursuits of his followers. For example in Book VII. l. 107 seq. we find him spreading his food on the ground with the other chiefs. And in Book IV. l. 259-261. Mercury "ut primum alatis tetigit  
magalia plantis

(1.) Livy. Bk. V. Chap. 41.

Aeneas fundantem arces, ac tecta novantem  
conspicit.-----"

It is needless to press this point at length. The princely bearing of the son of Venus has never been questioned. Quite properly he never shows contempt for the throng as Ulysses or Agamemnon might have done. He is the ideal of Rome; the sense of the dignity of the leaders of a great republic sits naturally upon him; there is about him the dignity of one of the rulers of the world.

Further Aeneas is not simply a warrior prince. He has the statesman's temper. Not only does he in this furnish a contrast to the Homeric chieftains who destroyed towns and gloated in war for war's own sake; he also equally provides a contrast with the chiefs of Italy among whom he came. Numanus, brother-in-law of Turnus boasts"-----; semperque recentes

comportare juvat praedas, et vivere rapte."

(Bk. IX. 612-613.)

Aeneas' thought is for his nation. It would be easy to make him a statesman of the twentieth century, who thought impartially. As a ruler he ever subordinated himself to the good of his people. "Apart from the affair of Dido, nowhere does he fail to put his people, present and future, before himself."(1.) Yet even here his duty as the founder of Rome finally conquers. True he never <sup>has</sup> to make the world safe for democracy. He is not even a republican ruler. He is a king. He issues orders and they are obeyed as if from the gods. There are but two passages, so far as I

(1.) Glover's Virgil. p. 228.

can recall, in the whole poem, describing the hero in the process of forming a decision. First in Book IV, when Mercury warns him not to forget his destiny and second in Book VIII, when he discovers, in spite of his peaceful reception by Latinus, that he is forced to war with most of the tribes of Italy against him. The same lines in each case express his indecision.

" Atque animus nunc huc celerem nunc dividit illuc  
In partes rapit varias, perque omnia versat."

(Bk. IV. 295-6.

Bk. VIII. 20-21.)

The emergency of these supreme crises justifies a departure from the poet's uniform characterization. This readiness of decision is due, no doubt, partly to the fact that he was a man of destiny, the lines of whose actions had been marked out for him by fate. While this may lend a mechanical air to his character and has often been quoted as tending to monotony; in another way it well befits the son of a goddess and the founder of the Empire over which Julius Caesar and Augustus were to preside. Though so absolute in his decisions and commands he is not unwilling to listen to the advice of the old and tried, such as Anchises and Nautas.

In the wars he conducted, he is a prince who ever considers how they will affect his people. When war is forced on him, he enters upon it as a prince. No cost of death or suffering will tempt him to falter. He lands in Italy.

"Tum satus Anchisa delectos ordine ab omni

Centum oratores augusta ad moenia regis

Ire jubet, ramis velatos Palladis omnes,

Donaque ferre viro, pacemque exposcere Teucris." (VII. 152-5

He intended that the Trojans should settle peacefully in Italy, if possible.

Another passage illustrating his desire to save his people from war, is found in Book XI, when he replies to the Latin ambassadors seeking a truce-

"Quoniam vos tanto fortuna indigna, Latini.  
 Implicuit bello, qui nos fugiatis amicos?  
 Pacem ne exanimis et Martis sorte peremptis  
 Oratis? equidem et vivis concedere vellem.  
 Nec veni, nisi fata locum sedemque dedissent;  
 Nec bellum cum gente gere: rex nostra reliquit  
 Hospitia, et Turni potius se credidit armis.  
 Aequius huic Turnum fuerat se opponere morti.  
 Si bellum finire manu, si pellere Teucros  
 apparat, his moem decuit concurrere telis;  
 Vixet, cui vitam deus aut sua dextra dedisset."

(Bk. XI.108-118.)

This quotation exhibits at once Aeneas as prince in war, and prince in council. Reference may also be made to his resourcefulness when the Latin war broke out. His diminished band, worn out by their perils on the sea, can not endure the onset of the Latin League. As an assistance to them he bethinks himself of Evander and secures his help. Though this, in harmony with the idea of a divine guidance which permeates the whole poem, is suggested to Aeneas by the god Tiber, the reader readily accepts this divine intervention as if part of the mechanism of the epic, which does not detract from the credit due to the hero - in fact enhances it. For his decisions, you are made to feel, are really the will of heaven, while none the less his.



"*Latinus and Turnus are his foils*," says Glover. (1.)

"the one unable or unwilling to make up his mind and act on it, and by this weakness bringing defeat and death on his people; the other heedless of national well-being or divine decree, if at any cost to anybody and everybody, he can gratify his own wishes."

It would be a serious omission to make no reference to the hero's constructive ideals. An epic written mainly to glorify Rome and incidentally in praise of him who could boast that he "found Rome brick and left it marble", must have a hero devoted rather to the building up of communal life, than to mere destructive warfare. Such is Aeneas. Early in the poem this trait obtrudes itself. He weeps over burning Troy. He stands marvelling at the sight of the rising city of Carthage-

"Miratur moles Aeneas, magna quondam

Miratur portas, strepitumque et strata viarum." (Bk.1.21-

As he gazes he wistfully wonders when his city will arise in like manner. He builds his city in Sicily for the protection of the aged unable any longer to endure the strain of his enforced wanderings. Uniformly he is constructive. He is Virgil's ideal of a prince. In part the hero of the Aeneid may reflect what Virgil felt was due to the achievements of Augustus and his house in promoting the peace and well-being of Rome; but it would be as extravagant as it would be unfair to the independence of spirit ever maintained by Virgil to hint that Aeneas is copied from Augustus in any way. It would probably be truer to say that he is drawn to be the ideal not only of every Roman prince and ruler

but of Augustus himself.

Aeneas is a prince. Virgil was no democrat. A democrat would hardly write

"As veluti magno in populo quum saepe coorta est  
 Seditio, saevitque animis ignobile vulgus;  
 Jamque faces et saxa volant, furor arma ministrat  
 Tum pietate gravem ac meritis si forte virum quem  
 Conspexere, silent, arrectisque auribus adstant;  
 Ille regit dictis animos et pectora mulcet."

(Bk. I. 148-153.)

He could not conceive of his ideal prince after the style of Turnus and Brances; nor as the followers of his prince as divided into factions as were the Italian tribes. Aeneas' followers have no loyalty save to their prince. Aeneas is Virgil's ideal of a princely character.

To sum up- the character of the hero of the Aeneid stands out with fair consistency. He is a mighty warrior, but a warrior not of the age of Achilles but of the new age, the age when the temple of Janus was closed. The desire of the Augustan age for peace, the old Roman sense of duty to family and state brought to a higher pitch of refinement, the ambition of the prince to restore the ancient rites due to the gods are all written in the epithet "pius". Aeneas is a prince not of the type of an Agamemnon but of an Augustus.

### III. The Patriotism of the Aeneid.

In previous chapters an effort has been made to show how Virgil stamped upon the epic the impress of nationality. As in his day all roads led to Rome, so he casts over the form, the language, the characters and the hero of his poem, the spell of the Eternal City. Rome is the centre. But the day of the city state had gone by and for him Rome and Italy are one. In dealing then with the patriotism of the Aeneid, we shall find Rome central indeed, but Virgil's patriotism is by no means confined to it. It includes within its range the whole of Italy.

Patriotism, moreover is a very wide term. A patriot loves the very soil of his country, its very stones to him are dear. Its scenery has a charm for him for its <sup>own</sup> sake. When he sees it - a land of settled homes, the thought of the struggle it has taken to subdue it, fills him with admiration for the pluck and endurance of its pioneers. He comes to love his land not for its own sake alone, but for the sake of the hardy race who have lived and loved and toiled to make it what it is. When he sees how its clan-ish tribes have slowly coalesced and made their land the mistress of the world, the scenes where tribe met tribe in the struggle for internal supremacy are transfigured by memories of growing unity. The scenes where the foreign invader was checked and defeated become memorials of the one divine event to which Rome was slowly moving, stages on her way to universal empire. Moreover as he learns the stories, mythical or historical, connected with these scenes, there stands out in each case the man of the hour, the man who led his countrymen one step further towards their destiny. The patriot cannot withhold their meed of praise from

the heroes of his land.

Such is the patriotism of the Aeneid." Among the most original and significant features of the poetry of Virgil is its conscious appeal to a nation as we understand the word "nation" to-day, to a people of one blood living within well-defined but broad limits, a people with various traditions, all fusing in one common tradition. It is the poetry of a nation and a country, for the poet will not think of them apart; and it is not the least of his greatness that he has linked them thus closely and made people and land as a unity so distinct from the rest of the world. It was a new thing in literature."(1.) New in the literature of the Greeks and the Romans but not new in that literature which has come down to us side by side with it. The Hebrews had their promised land too; and in their literature the same patriotic feature find expression.

I have written "such is the patriotism of the Aeneid". It would be more exact to say such is the patriotism of Virgil, for we must not lose sight of the fact that the Bucolies and Georgics are complementary to the Aeneid in their presentation of love of country. In the Bucolies the poet unveils his love of his land for its own sake. He is almost the Wordsworth of Italy. He seems throughout them to be saying-

" Think you through all this mighty sum of things forever  
speaking

That nothing of itself will come

But we must still be seeking."(2.)

(1.) F .E. Glover's "Virgil" p. 108

(2.) Wordsworth, "Expostulation and Reply."

"In the *Eclogues* Virgil shows a great openness and receptivity of mind, through which all the softer and more delicate influences of the outward world enter into and become part of his being." (1.) "Virgil enables us to feel the charm of 'the sparkling stream of fresh water' of 'mossy fountains and grass softer than sleep'.-----He makes us hear again with a strange delight the murmur of bees feeding on a willow hedge, the moan of the turtle doves from the high elm tree, the sound of the whispering south wind' etc." "The human affections which mingle with the representatives of Nature are the love of home, and the romantic sentiment, rather than the passion of love.---Many of the sayings of Tityrus and Meliboeus bear witness to the strong hold their lands and flocks had on men of their class:-

"nos dulcia linquimus arva-----"

" ergo tua rura manebant, Et tibi magna satis--"

"Ille meos errare boves ut cernis"

" Spem gregis a, silice in nuda conixa reliquit----"

"Ite meae, quondam felix pecus, ite capellae". "((2.)

Coleridge is quoted as saying "I am much pleased how highly Mr. Wordsworth speaks of Virgil's style and of his *Bucolics* which I have ever thought most graceful and tender." Wordsworth's estimate is for us the truest test of the genuineness of Virgil's feeling for Nature. "These poems are truly representative of Italy, not as a land of old civilization, of historic renown, of great cities, of corn crops and vineyards-'the mighty mother of fruits and men'-but as a land of soft and genial air, beautiful with the tender foliage and fresh flowers and blossoms of spring,

(1.) Sellar's *Virgil*. p. 164.

(2.)

and with the rich colouring of autumn; a land which has most attuned man's nature to the influences of music and pictorial art. As a true and exquisite symbol of this vein of sentiment - associated with Italy, the Eclogues hold a not unworthy place beside the greater work- the 'temple of solid marble'- which the maturer art of Virgil dedicated to the genius of his country, and beside the more composite, but stately and massive monument which perpetuates the national glory of Rome."(1.)

If the love of country as portrayed in the Eclogues may be said to answer to the summary of the creation story in Genesis "And God saw all that He had made and behold it was very good," in the Georgics it may be said to answer to the primal charge and challenge. "Have dominion- Replenish the earth and subdue it." In the Georgics Nature does not present herself to man, only in her majesty and beauty. She stands to man in the attitude of an antagonist. She makes an appeal to human energy. She says "Subdue me but remember you can only do so on my own terms. Study my ways and when you have mastered them and have learned to obey them, you will find me no longer a stern antagonist, but a just and beneficent helpmate." To ennoble toil, to glorify labour, to instil the need of constant struggle with the reluctant powers of Nature, to show that the conditions of success are incessant toil and vigilance, propitiation of the Supreme Will by prayer and piety,- these are the main theme of the Georgics so far as it affects our subject. The aim of the poem is to invest with charm and dignity the kind of life in which the Italian mind placed its ideal of worth and happiness. That it represents this

characteristic of the Italian mind has been shown in detail by Sellar.(1.) It is Virgil's monument to the praise of the hardy pioneer, of the patient peasant, of a land of settled homes and peaceful pursuits, of all the men and women who in their simple rural life had laboured unknown to make Italy what it was. In the first book of the Aeneid there is a passage which might be taken as setting forth by means of a familiar simile, quite in harmony with its theme, the patriotic purpose of the Georgics. For Aeneas as he surveys the rising walls of Carthage, let us substitute Virgil contemplating the rise of Rome.

"Qualis apes aestate nova per florea rura  
 Exercent sub sole labor, quum gentis adultos  
 Educunt fetus, aut quum liquentia mella  
 Stipant, et dulci distendant nectare cellas;  
 aut onera accipiunt venientum, aut agmine facto  
 Ignavum fucos pecus a praeseptibus arcent;  
 Fervet opus, redolentque thymo fragrantia mella  
 "O fortunati, quorum jam moenia surgunt."

(Bk. I. l. 430-437.)

The "apes" are the hardy rustics of Italy; "aestate nova" suggests the dawn of the new age; "florea rura" - the pleasant scenes of Italy; "exercent sub sole labor" - the strenuous toil beneath the hot summer sun of Italy; "stipant" "distendant" - the stores of abounding wealth; "agmine" a martial word, the readiness to band together to expel the intruder; "surgunt" the hope of still higher achievement.

(1.) Sellar's Virgil. - p. 263-278.

The *Bucolics* then are mainly devoted to the love of Nature for its own sake; the *Georgics* to the praise of country life and countrymen; but the *Aeneid* is an epic, couched in heroic strain, and devoted chiefly, though by no means exclusively, to recounting the deeds of the hero and the heroes of Italy, and to glorifying the scenes where they performed their feats of valour, won their triumphs or laid the foundations of the proud superstructure of Roman industrial life and Roman dominion, ever spread before the gaze of the poet.

As we pass to consider the patriotism of the *Aeneid*, there is a feature in Virgil's treatment of his subject which we must stop to notice. To Virgil, Roman history from first to last is a unity. From the time when Aeneas came, up to Virgil's own day, there is a continuity of custom, an unbroken succession of patriots and heroes. The same spirit that wrought in Aeneas, wrought also in Augustus. The interpretation of the rites of Imperial Rome was the same which every Roman father had taught his son from the beginning. At his first sacrifice on Italian soil Aeneas is to abjure Trojan forms and by veiling his head, is to conform to Latin custom.

"Quin ubi transmissae steterint trans aequora classes  
 Et positae aris jam vota in litore solvas,  
 Purpureo velare comas adopertus amictu  
 Ne qua inter sanctos ignes in honore decorum  
 Hostilis facies occurrat et omnia turbet.  
 Hunc seci morem sacrorum, hunc ipse teneto  
 Hac casti maneat in religione nepotes." (Bk. III. 403-409.)



The continuity of custom could not be more strongly expressed than in the last line. "Let the piety of generations to come abide in this observance." The Greeks uncovered the head; here Helenus tells Aeneas what the local custom is. Livy (Bk. I-7.3.) alleges that the covering of the head was an Alban practice.

Similarly the ancient usage of the Latins in the proclamation of war remained unchanged.

" Mos erat Hesperio in Latio, quem protinus urbes  
 Albanæ coluere sacrum, nunc maxima rerum  
 Roma colit, quum prima movent in proelia Martem  
 Sive Getis inferre manu lacrimabile bellum  
 Hyrcanisve Arabisve parent, seu tendere ad Indos  
 Auroramque sequi, Parthosque reposeere signa."

(Bk. VII. 601-606.)

In the last phrase the recovery of the standards recently lost by Crassus at Carrhae is brought into connection with times " the far off whisper of whose years scarce reaches our bewildered ears." (1.) Glover compares it with the ceremonies at the opening of the English Parliament - the origin of which are shrouded in antiquity but which tell of hundreds of years of English history and the continuity of the race throughout. Changes there were of course, in customs, in habits of thought, in every way. What Virgil seeks is in part to commend the ancient practices, but chiefly to show how through all the centuries which have seen these customs live, Rome has never ceased to be the fruitful mother of a succession of heroic men.

Virgil does not discuss in what this community or national spirit consists. This link which binds together the first men and the last men and all the men between is to him the source and inspiration of national unity and greatness. As such he exhibits it. It is to a people what personality is to an individual, It is the self-consciousness, the self-love of a nation. As personality develops so does it. As such he fosters it.

We turn now to trace the means by which in the Aeneid, Virgil endeavoured to inspire his people to "love their land with love far brought from out the storied past". We begin with the contrast between the wanderings of Aeneas and those of Ulysses. Ulysses sails from place to place just as it happens, or rather to exhaust the possibilities of adventure. His wanderings are the symbol of unrestrained human action. Aeneas even as the Israelites is always seeking the promised land. The almost aimless course of the Greek hero leaves the poet freer- and freedom, spontaneity, is the secret of maintaining interest, but the patriotism of Ulysses is weak indeed. The genius of Virgil is manifested in the skill with which he keeps before us Italy, as the haven where his hero would be. For example -

"Arma virumque cano, qui primus ab oris  
 Italiam, fato profugus, Laviniaque venit  
 litera, multum ille et terris jactatus et alto  
 Vi superum, saevae memorem Junonis ob iram;  
 Multa quoque et bello passus, dum conderet urbem,  
 Inferretque deos Latio, genus unde Latinum,  
 Albanique patres, atque altae moenia Romae."

"Tentae molis erat Romanam condere gentem."(Bk.I. 1.33.)

"Ilium in Italiam portans victosque Penates."(Bk.I.1.68.)

"Italiam quaere patriam et gentis ab Jove summo."(Bk.I.1.380.)

"Hos cape faterum comites; his moenia quaere."(Bk.II. 1. 294.)

"At terram Hesperiam venies,-----"(Bk. II. 1.781.)

"Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off." So the Hebrew story records the first view of the site of Jerusalem by the patriarch. This brief sentence is suddenly obtruded into the narrative, but Virgil takes minute care to prepare us for that critical moment when first the eyes of its founder rested on the site of Rome.

"Janque rubescabat stellis Aurora fugatis

cum procul obscuros collis humilemque videmus

Italiam, Italiam primus exclamat Achatos

Italiam laete socii clamore salutant, "(Bk.III. 521.)

As Palinurus is passed the poet pauses to relate the legend attaching to the spot and thus to enrich the land permanently with a splendid tradition.(1.) So with Misenum. (2.) So with Caieta. (3.) In this way he takes a delight in gathering up and enshrining in memorable words the old legends of the land.

As Aeneas approached the mouth of the Tiber, it was dawn. It is hard to avoid feeling a symbolic reference to the dawning of a new day for Italy, torn with internal struggles for a century, in the emphatic "janque rubescabat radiis " with which his description

(1.) Aeneid Bk. VI.381.

(2.) Aeneid Bk. VI.234.

(3.) Aeneid Bk. VII.1-2.

leads off.

" Jamque rubescebat radiis mare, et aethere ab alto  
 Aurora in roseis fulgebat lutea bigis  
 Quum venti possare omnisque repente resedit  
 Flatus et in lento luctantur marmore tonnas  
 Atque hic Aeneas ingentem ex aequore lucum  
 Prospicit. Hunc inter flavio Fiberinus ameno,  
 Verticibus rapidis et multa flavus arena,  
 In mare prorumpit. Varias circumque supraque  
 Assuetas ripis volucres et fluminis alveo  
 Aethera mulcebant cantu, luceque volabant."

(Bk. VII. 25-34.)

It is a new land, a virgin land, everything in it is primitive, a land radiant with hope, a land teeming with the elements of future wealth.

Born in the country, bred amid virgin forests, in a land all rustic, the poet loves to linger over the simple life of early days. What could be more apt than the meeting of Evander with Aeneas?

"Aude hospes, contemnere opes, et te quoque dignum  
 Finge deo; rebusque veni non asper egenis."

(Bk. VIII. 364.)

What more suitable guide could be imagined to show Aeneas over the historic spots of Rome than this princely pioneer of his own race? Here is the cave of Cacus. And Evander relates the legend of the hero to whom he was at the moment sacrificing, an

imported story, but long localized in Italy. Here is the Carmental gate. Here-the sylvan Asylum of Romulus. Here- the Luper-cal Rock, the lair of the fabled wolf. Here- the grove of Argiletum. Here the Tarpeian Rock. Here- the Capitelia "aurea nunc olim silvestribus horrida dumis". Virgil has left a record of the impression made on him by his first view of Rome, the Rome of Augustus. "Scilicet et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma."

(Geor. II.534.) Plutarch pronounces it "the most beautiful of all the works of man." No doubt the poet is expressing his own feelings about Rome, when Aeneas at his first sight of Carthage,

"miratur portas strepitumque et strata viarum." (Bk. I. 422.)

Pleasing contrasts between this and that throng the mind of a citizen of Winnipeg as he stands on the site of La Verendrye's little trading post of 1735. Fancy the delight with which a Roman would read of Aeneas and Evander, traversing the site of the Roman Forum, "passimque armenta videbant Romanoque fore laetis mugire carinis." No lover of his country but is proud of its early simplicity. The Capitol was for Virgil as much the seat of Jupiter in the days of bush and cattle as in the new and golden splendour of Imperial times.

If a Canadian poet should arise who could induce the diverse races in Canada to regard themselves as one people he would be a true patriot indeed. Virgil brings an alien race to Italy. On arriving they find a Latinus with his elaborate palace a Mezentius and a Turnus bitterly opposed to the foreigner; they find tribe warring against tribe. How does Virgil deal with this problem? He solves it by invoking the magic charm that had gathered around the words "Italia" and "Roma". He heaps up incident upon incident to show how mighty was the task to found the

race of Rome. The founding of Rome, of the Roman race is the centre of the whole story- but Rome is not Trojan, nor are her people Trojan. Rome assimilates all that is excellent in Italy. We have already seen how in the worship of Juno, Aeneas surrenders his Trojan and adopts the Latin custom. So all through "the Trojan element reaffirms the ideals of the Italian race; all it does is to add the slight touch that changes nothing while it alters everything."(1.) This merging of Trojan and Italian elements in the Latin race is well brought out in the speech in which Juno makes her submission, and in Jupiter's reply-

"Illud te, nullâ facti quod lege tenetur  
 Pro Latie obtestor, pro majestate tuorum:  
 Quum jam conubiis pacem felicibus, este,  
 Component, quum jam leges et foedera jungent:  
 Ne vetus indigenas nomen mutare Latinos,  
 Neve Treas fieri jubeas, Teucrosque vocari;  
 Aut vocem mutare viros, aut vertere vestes.  
 Sit Latium, sint Albani per saecula reges;  
 Sit Romana potens Itala virtute propago;  
 Cecidit, occideritque sinas cum nomine Troja."

(Bk. XII. 819-828.)

Jupiter replies-

"Sermone Ausonii patrium moresque tenebunt;  
 utque est, nomen erit; commixti corpore tantum  
 subsident Teucri. Morem ritusque sacrorum  
 Adjicias, faciamque omnes uno ore Latinos.  
 Hinc genus Ausonio mixtum quod sanguine surget,  
 Supra homines, supra ire deos pietate videbis,  
 Nec gens ulla tuos seque celebrabit honores."(Bk. XII. 834-840)

"The sons of Troy unseen, though felt

In fusion with the mass shall melt."(1.)

That is Virgil's solution. The race remains the same. Italians they were when Aeneas came, and after a thousand years the strength of Rome is still the Italians. It is instructive to put side by side the estimate of Italian men by Evander and by Remulus Numanus. Evander is the worthiest and best of the Graecian race. Remulus is a survival of the old days of the school of Turnus. This is Remulus' account-

"Daram ab stirpe genus natos ad flumina primum  
 Deferimus, saepeque gelu duramus et undis;  
 Venatu invigilant pueri, silvasque fatigant;  
 Flectere ludas equos, et spicula tendere cornu,  
 At patiens operum parvoque assueta Juventus  
 Aut rastris terram domat, aut quatit oppida bello.  
 Omne aevum ferre teritur, versaque juvenum  
 Terga fatigamus hasta; nec tarda senectus  
 Debilitat vires animi, mutatque vigorem.  
 Canitiem galea premimus; semperque recentes  
 Comportare juvat praedas, et vivere raptos."

(Bk.IX. 603-613.)

Note that line 607 is used to describe the youth of Italy in general in Georgic II. l.472. Is it surprising, Virgil asks, that such discipline has produced the Marii and the Scipios and made Romans masters of the world? (Geor. II.167-172.)

(1.) Conington's translation, p.443.

" Haec genus aere virum, Marsos, pubemque Sabellam,  
 Assuetumque malo Ligurem, Volscosque verutos  
 Extulit; haec Decios, Marios, magnosque Camillos,  
 Scipiadas duces bello, et te maxime Caesar  
 qui nunc extremis Asiae jam victor in oris  
 Imbellem avertis Romanis arcibus Indus."

And here is Evander's account of Italian men-

" Haec memora indigenae Fauni Nymphaeque tenebant,  
 Gensque virum truncis et duro robore nata:  
 Quis neque mos neque cultus erat; nec iungere tauros  
 Aut componere opes morant, aut parcere parto  
 Sed rami atque asper victu venatus alebat."

(Bk. VIII. 314-318.)

The Arcadian prince and the kinsman of Turnus agree in ascribing to the early inhabitants of whatever race, the qualities of simplicity, endurance, dignity and courage. Remulus is more barbaric, Evander represents a more civilized strain. Virgil in the passage referred to adds a characteristic note. Where Remulus says "vivere rapto" Virgil prefers to lay stress on the sacred rites of the gods and the reverence due to old age. "Sacra deum sanctique patres". (Geor. II. 473.) Whether they were natives or wherever they came from, these pioneers required and exhibited the same sturdy character, and it was their submission to such vigorous discipline that made the hardy peasantry of Italy. Such portrayal still had a purpose. The effort to withhold the citizenship from sections of the Italians is sufficient evidence that racial feeling still smouldered in many places and by thus recalling the common hardships of their far-off ancestors, Virgil was



performing a patriotic duty of great importance. Howas saying to the jealous sections of his own day "If Trojans and Latins merged so readily into the Italian race, why should not you?"

"Let us now praise great men." (1.) This famous passage read at memorial services for the great and good of the past, has in the western world been consecrated to the service of religious and civil patriotism for two thousand years. Whether Virgil ever heard it or not is immaterial, for the feeling to which it appeals is universal. Virgil used it. Throughout the Aeneid you can everywhere catch the refrain-"Let us now praise great men." Not because they are exhaustive but because they are outstanding, I shall use as examples the three great prophetic passages and the catalogue of tribes. They enable Virgil to revive the thought of the great men and the great families of Rome, and of the great events with which they are associated.

The first occurs in Book I. lines 254-304, where Jupiter to console Venus "awakens the secrets of Fate's book from the distant pages where they slumber," (2.) and assures her of the immutable favour of the Fates. The retention of the ancient form "oili" as the first word that falls from Jupiter immediately transports the reader into the distant past. The goddess mother of the magnanimous Aeneas was his own child (natae). Most deftly is the descent of the Romans from Mars woven into their descent from the Father of the gods and men himself. With equal skill is Rhea Silvia here called Ilia to connect her with Iulus (Ascanius) and thus lead up to the eulogy of Augustus and the consoling vision of the clos-

(1.) Ecclesiastes 44.1.

(2.) Conington's Translation.

ing of the gates of war. The praise of Augustus is the climax of the prophecy, and it is to be noted how throughout Latin and Trojan are one. Augustus is "Trojanus pulchra origine" yet it is "Remo cum fratre Quirinus", who is to rule mankind.

The second and the greatest of the prophetic passages is contained in Book VI. lines 755-853. It is a recital of the bead-roll of Roman heroes, mythical, regal, republican and imperial. Amid the solemnities of the unseen world, with the glorious company assembled visibly before them, back in the dim and hallowed ages of the past, the father of the founder of Rome points out to his son, one by one, the heroic figures whose names were written indelibly on the memory of every Roman youth; the solemn recital again reaching its climax in the praise of Augustus. No memorial tablet, no group of statues, no eulogy even by a Livy, no idealizing by the imagination of a poet could exalt this line of heroes as Virgil exalted them by this extraordinary, skilful and dramatic setting. This eulogy echoes across all the centuries of his country's history; it repeats the faithful sayings of the Roman people as when Anchises adopts the words of Manius regarding Fabius Maximus "unus qui nobis cunctando restituit rem." (VI. 846.) It touches each worthy with a firm and true hand. The Scipios are "duo fulmina belli," Fabricius is "parvo potens." To recount the long line of the Fabii and their achievements is a task so mighty that even a spirit freed from the burden of the flesh grows weary at the thought of it, yet it is so inspiring that he is swept away by it. (quo fessum rapitis Fabii?) There follows the dirge over young Marcellus the pathos of which overcame his mother. This is immediately preceded by the sublime lines on the function of Rome,

accepted by all as a faithful statement of her contribution to the civilized world.

"Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento-  
 hæc tibi erant artes- pacisque imponere morem  
 parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos."

(Bk. VI. 851-853.)

The patriotism of Virgil, centred as it is in Italy, is not intolerant or ungenerous to other nations. Peace is his dominant note towards even the Carthaginians. But there is one exception- the Greeks.

"Eruct illo Argos" etc. (Book VI. 839.) "eruct" is a strong word but stronger still is Virgil's phrasing in Book I. 284-5. where "the house of Assaracus will reduce to bondage Phthia and famous Mycæneæ and lord it over vanquished Argos." Rome owed more to Greece than to any other race. Why is the generosity of Virgil taxed by her? Partly perhaps this hostility was due to dramatic propriety, but mainly it was traceable to an innate incompatibility of ideals, and that embittered by the haughtiness of contemporary Greeks. (1.)

The last great prophetic passage is better known as the "Shield of Aeneas", a prodigy of art untold.

"There prescient of the years to come  
 Italia's times, the wars of Rome,  
 The fire's dark lord had wrought:  
 E'en from Ascanius' dawning days

(1.) See Tacitus' Annals 11.86.

The generations he portrays

The fights in order fought."(l.)

"The shield of Achilles in the Iliad, is like the Iliad itself, a picture of life, of human activity, Greek no doubt but hardly Greek in any exclusive or self-conscious way. But the shield of Aeneas serves a different purpose. Its pictures are not ornament; they are to be prophecy, inspiration, history. The matter of this shield answers in like manner to the poem- both tell of Rome, of Roman life and of Roman men.

"res Italas Romanorumque triumphos."(Bk.VIII 626.)

Here we have more colour and action than in the other passage with its silent procession of the unborn. We see the mother wolf with the Roman twins, proper founders for their race, impavidi; the rape of the Sabine women and the peace that they made between husbands and parents; Porcenna, baffled and angered by the boldness of a Caelus and a Cloelia; the Capitol saved by Manlius and the geese; the punishment of Catiline among the dead; Cato on the throne of Rhadamantus; and finally the last great battle of Rome against the East at Actium, the marshalling of Augustus and his Italians against Antony and his motley barbarian herds, of the gods of Rome and Italy against dog-faced Anubis and the monsters of the East, and the victory of right over wrong, of the Roman over the Oriental spirit. These are the pictures upon the shield-pictures of joy and hope-

"rerumque ignarus imagine gaudet"(Bk. VIII.750.)

Critics have objected to the line which ends the passage as being something more like an epigram than one would expect of Virgil, yet

if we have caught the spirit of the poet, we can see how alien the suggestion of an epigram really is. The hero, bearing the shield pictured with the destinies of his race, symbolizes what he is in sober earnest. The pictures he carries are emblems of the destinies which he also carries- his race and its future are really as well as symbolically laid upon him as he goes

"attollens humero famaque et fata nepotum"(VIII. 731.)

The poet, says Mr. Myers, one of his most sympathetic critics, "was summing up in those lines like bars of gold the hero-roll of the Eternal City, conferring with every word an immortality, and, like his own Aeneas, bearing on his shoulders the fortune and the fame of Rome."(AA) ". (I.)

" The last of the four passages in which the land and heroes of Italy are acclaimed is the gathering of the clans in Book VII. lines 601-807. In it Virgil enumerates the tribes who came to the help of Turnus in the great struggle which was to end in planting his hero firmly on the soil of Italy. An epic poet would be expected to follow Homer and recite the formidable list of foes his hero had to encounter- but in Virgil's hands it becomes a pageant of the old races of Italy. By this pageant he could best appeal to the local feeling of his Italian readers. Local patriotism is ever where to be found and not least among the villages of Italy. Warde Fowler relates that many Italians search Mommsen's history for some allusion to their homes and treasure the reference with gratitude. To appeal to this deeply ingrained human instinct was no doubt the primary motive of the poet. As this stately procession of Italian warriors passed before him, each local patriot would

(1.) Glover's Virgil. p.157-8.

(a.) Essays Classical from Glover, p.143.

find among them the ancient representatives of his own district and his pride in it would be enhanced. But every member of this procession was an enemy of the Trojan intruder. Only twenty years before the poet's birth the peoples of central Italy had been in deadly strife with Rome. The clans of the peninsula were not yet fused into one. The effort of his prince to unify Italy had the fullest sympathy of Virgil's heart. Was he not provoking strife by thus recalling ancient differences? We must admit that in presenting his Pageant of Latin foes, the poet had set himself a problem that would strain his poetic craft. He must not treat the Latins as too flagrantly the enemies of the Roman spirit, nor must he seek too openly to claim all the sympathy of his readers for Aeneas and the invaders. How does he meet the difficulty? How does he keep Rome and her solemn destiny foremost in our minds, while he parades the vigour and bloom of Italy in a series of splendid pictures? He does it as he does so much in the Aeneid by the solemnity of a religious appeal. No local patriotism could withstand that. We have recalled in the last chapter the sublime prophecy of Anchises. The deep impression it had made would still be fresh in the reader's mind, and would resolve and assimilate to itself all local bitterness. "Scots wha' hae" does not stir up Scotch antagonism. It merges the ancient Scottish feeling in the larger field of which it is now a part. So with the Italians. Moreover Virgil is careful to exhibit the malign spirit of the deities who had prompted this massing of the Italians. Th ever unscrupulous Juno and her bitter hate and her grisly agent Allecto— These he insists represent the real spirit behind the scenes, while

Aeneas has the will of heaven behind him- and all the history of Rome was there to justify Aeneas in the eyes of the Italian reader. That justice lay with Aeneas is proved in the words of the Latin king as he capitulates with a deep sigh for rest and peace

" te Turne nefas, te triste manebit

supplicium, votisque deos venerabere seris."(Bk. VII.596)

In determining the effect of any part of the Aeneid, we must never isolate it from its setting in the days of Augustus. Every Roman in that day would think of other bad wars and of other misguided and reckless leaders.

Yet the Italian feeling is fully provided for. In two hundred lines the poet touches on every scene and every topic of interest that such space will permit. Legends, cities, rivers, local deities -all the variety possible. The special thing this city or that took pride in, found its place of honour in the pageant, to the delight of the present inhabitants. Then the hero and the heroine. Some think that Turnus eclipses Aeneas. And Camilla. A lovely creature she is, one over which the poet himself lingers affectionately. So does Virgil surmount his difficulty. What might have fanned present grudges into a flame is by his touch turned into a means of glorifying the fatherland.

It is noteworthy that the poet rarely fails to introduce as the climax in his praise of a series of great men a eulogy of Augustus. Are we to question the sincerity of the panegyrics? It is impossible to suspect the poet's disinterestedness. He was one of the three friends of whom Horace could say "Animae quales neque candidiores terra tulit."(Sat. V Bk. I. 1.41-2.) We cannot impute it to a bias in favour of a monarch or emperor. When Virgil is

surveying the history of his people, it is not of constitutional changes that he thinks but rather of the temper and character of his country's inhabitants, and the heroic quality of their leaders. He is never a statesman framing or discussing policies or systems of government. He is always a patriot admiring the qualities that make for stability and progress, that tend to unity and peace. I have already quoted a passage which clearly indicates that Virgil was not a democrat. So far as his views of government went, he was free to praise any benefactor of his country. The idea of a ruler in the Aeneid wherever portrayed is the same as that of the "Father". It is under such a rule exercised from Rome as its centre that the unchanging future of the world is anticipated-

"Dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum

Accolet imperiumque Pater Romanus habebit"(IX.448-9)

However it came about certainly not entirely through the suggestion of Maecenas or Augustus, more likely by the obvious and pressing needs of the time, the ideals and aims of the prince and poet were the same. Professor Dowden is quoted as saying "Shakespeare's admiration of the great men of action is immense, because he himself was not primarily a man of action."(1.) If this is true of poets as a class, how could Virgil withhold his admiration for the prince who did what he desired? Of Augustus' predecessor it had been said that in revising the calendar he had adjusted the year to the course of the sun.(2.) What Augustus did was to adjust the government both of Rome and Italy on the one

(1.) Glover's Virgil. p.161.

(2.) Suetonius, Julius 40.



hand , and of the provinces on the other to the real needs of both. If the ideal of Rome was-

"regere imperio populos-----

-----paci imponere morem;

parcere subjectis et debellare superbos."(VI. 851-5.)

Augustus, whatever his defects, was a genuine embodiment of this ideal. His work was an honest endeavour to give expression to the truth of the world about him.

Again , as he indicates by many a fiery outburst against the horrors of war, by many a lofty line depicting the bliss of peace, Virgil unveils the deepest longing of his heart. The victory of Augustus meant much, but most of all it meant peace.

"Augustus Caesar, Divi genus, aurea condet

in saecula qui rursus Latiae, regnata per arva

Saturno quondam:"(VI. 792-794.)

In conclusion, if patriotism is a true constituent of a national epic, the Aeneid fulfills the requirement.

## V. The Decree of the Gods.

Does the *Aeneid* faithfully reflect the attitude of a Roman and more particularly the attitude of a Roman of the Augustan age to the powers that guide the destinies of men and nations? That question must be the Ariadne's thread to guide us through the intricacies of the subject of this chapter. When one has collected and studied a number of the key passages in the *Aeneid*, and then in perplexity has turned for help to the critics, one can enter with sympathy into the cry of Ariadne, deserted on the lonely island:

" Sed quid ego ignavis nequiquam conquerar auris,  
 exsternata malo, quae nullis sensibus auctae  
 nec missas audire queunt nec reddere voces? "

(Catullus *Carm.* 64. 164-6.)

It is a relief to turn to Milton after the council held at Pandemonium, the "ranged powers" disbanded, and engaged in various diversions. Some of them resorted to games and for these Milton has words of approval; others sought relief in song and for them he has high praise;

" Others apart sat on a hill retired  
 In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high  
 Of providence, foreknowledge, will and fate,  
 Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute  
 And found no end in wandering mazes lost."

(*Par. Lost*, 2.557.)

This is not intended as an impertinent reflection on the critics but as an expression of one's own perplexity. Yet one is grateful for the caution contained in the last line

" and found no end in wandering mazes lost."

It warns us to avoid lines of treatment that are within the province of the specialist alone. "The religion of the Romans is a highly technical subject like Roman Law, the Roman constitution and almost everything Roman; it calls for special knowledge as well as a sufficient training in Roman institutions generally." (1. The lines warn us further to avoid dealing with a poem as if it were a systematic treatise in philosophy or in religion. At the close of a learned effort to reduce the supernatural powers to a coherent system Glover concludes that the reconciliation was Virgil's problem as it is ours. (2.) The Ariadne's thread which will guide us through such problems is not in our hands. Our purpose is to show that the supernatural in the Aeneid is typically Roman.

A mere enumeration of the superhuman powers will serve both to exhibit how intricate would be the task of reducing them to an intelligible system, and also to make the way clearer for us as we proceed to the end we have in view. They are as follows:-

- (1.) Fatum or Fate.
- (2.) Jupiter.
- (3.) The Italian god.
- (4.) The other gods of the Romans.
- (5.) The spirit of the world in Bk. VI. 726.

(1.) Warde Fowler "Roman Religious Experience" p. 6.

(2.) Glover's Virgil. p. 305.

Taking these in reverse order let us try to see what they mean for Virgil and whether he is a faithful representative of his people in the use of them.

The Spirit of the World in Bk. VI. It is suggestive to place side by side Conington's translation of this extract with the familiar lines of Wordsworth on the same subject.

"Know first the heaven, the earth, the main,  
The moon's pale orb, the starry train  
Are nourished by a soul,  
A bright intelligence whose flame  
Glows in each member of the frame  
and stirs the mighty whole." (Aen. VI. 724-7.)

" A sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns  
and the round ocean and the living air  
and the blue sky, and in the mind of man;  
A motion and a spirit that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought  
and rolls through all things." (Finstera Abbey.)

We have already referred to the effect on Virgil of this "sense of something far more deeply interfused" in dealing with his love for his native land and its people. We noticed how in the Georgics the sense of natural beauty is intertwined with the toil of man, raising the toiler to a higher level as he lifts his eyes from his work. We noticed too how the sense that all nature is alive and full of feeling found expression in the Eclogues in a deeper love for Italy. Passing by the touching description of the

nightingale robbed of her young (Geor. IV. 511.) I take as an example of his sympathetic regard for the animal world the beautiful simile of the migrating birds coming in from the sea.

"Quam multa in silvis autumnni frigore primo  
Lapsa cadunt folia, ad terram gurgite ab alto  
Quam multae glomerantur aves, ubi frigidus annus  
Trans pontum fugat et terris immittit apricis."

(Bk. VI. 309-312.)

He who could write so tenderly of the birds of the air must needs have a soul of pity for man. So Virgil used his conception of the "anima mundi". But was it Roman? According to Warde Fowler Virgil's "anima mundi" is but a refined form of the old Roman "numina". And he says "The moment this (Virgil's sympathy with all nature) comes home to us we see how it harmonizes with all we have learnt of the old Italian conception of the divine, of the forceful numina working for man's benefit if properly propitiated."(1.)

The other gods of the Romans? Virgil's gods are thoroughly Roman, in whatever epics they have adventured themselves in the past."(2.)

The Italian gods, Saturn, Janus, Picus, Pilumnus and Faunus. They are brought in mainly in the seventh and immediately following books, in connection with Latinus. They are designated "veteres" the old gods. They are very shadowy beings and play but a small part in the epic. This is quite in harmony with the early Latin ideas. The early Latins, it would appear, gave names to the powers at work for their benefit, in order to realize them more vividly.(3)

(1.) Warde Fowler- Roman Religious Experience. p.118 ff.

(2.) " " " " " " p. 407.

(3.) " 2 " " " p.117.

"Fatum" and "Jupiter" we shall take together, for it is only as he is related to the Fates that he calls for consideration. Otherwise he is the familiar king of the gods. In Virgil their relation is left undefined. Sometimes the Fates are spoken of as "Fata Jovis"- as if he were their author. If we could be sure that Virgil identified these two, he would come very near to our conception in which the Deity is limited in His action by the necessities of His own perfect Nature. "He cannot deny Himself." Even as the "anima mundi" of the poet approaches very nearly to our idea of the immanence of God. But usually and more consistently with Roman ideas, the Fates are represented as an undefined power behind Jupiter, and of which both he and all the other gods as well as mankind are the instruments. In his colloquy with Venus both these views are presented. He assures her "manent immota tuorum fata tibi tibi"(1.) as if the fates were independent of him; and then he adds "neque me sententia vertit"(2.) as if all were at his disposal. This indefiniteness is characteristic of Roman thought, for example Tacitus can say at one time "demittas gentes, captivitas et monstratus fati Vespasianus"(3.) and at another he cannot attribute the same power to the gods "noctem sideribus illustrem quasi convincendum ad scelus dei praebuere."(4.)

The brief analysis of the supernatural powers which I have attempted reveals an incoherence, a lack of system, a lack of unity which must naturally prove unsatisfactory to a modern mind. For us who can say "God" and include in our idea all the gods of Virgil

(1.) Aen. Bk. I. 257.

(2.) Aen. Bk. I.

(3.) Tacitus *Agrippa* 13.(4.) Tacitus *Annales* 14.5

and his fate as well, it is very difficult to bring our minds into sympathy with his want of unity. That difficulty is inevitable. We meet it quite as forcibly in reading such a work as Warde Fowler's "Religious Experience of the Roman People". It arises entirely from the divergence of our ideas from those of the Romans, which Virgil has so truly presented. From Cicero's "de Natura Deorum" Glover quotes in summary a portion(1.) with which a modern mind finds itself more in harmony. Why? Because it is the work of a philosopher. It is systematic. We expect unity and system in philosophy and theology. We do not expect it in an epic which endeavours to portray things as they are. Virgil deals with the gods as a poet. If we find in him something he has learned from Lucretius, something from the Stoics, the gods of Rome as they were worshipped and the fates as they were believed in and accepted, if we find no attempt at reconciling all these into a system, it was not his function. If it is eclectic, "eclecticism is only offensive when it is systematic"(2.) But it was not eclectic, it was a faithful portrayal of Roman thought.

Before we pass from this aspect of our subject, a short paragraph should be given to the idea of the decree of the gods as it affects Virgil's work as an epic poet. That it is by the fates that all action both of gods and men, is set in motion and directed to its end only needs stating in order that we may ask "Does this detract from the interest of the poem? Does it impose undue limits on the freedom of the actors, divine and human?" Juno yields to Fate in the end, but she is assuredly active enough and free enough before she yields. Aeolus and his subordinates are

(1.) Glover's Virgil p. 291.

(2.) Simcox. Latin Literature. p.251.

by no means tame. Neptune, notwithstanding his "placitum caput" could certainly assert his prerogative. We can scarcely refrain in taking an irreverent pleasure in the gods of the Aeneid. The decree of the Fates under which they acted left them full scope to exhibit individuality and to arouse interest.

In this connection a few lines should be given to the interesting question-How is the will of the gods made known? The answer is clear. It is made known by methods which are in perfect with the rules of epic poetry and also in perfect harmony with Roman belief and practice. The most conspicuous method is by the relation of conversations among the gods themselves in which they declare the decisions of the Fates. This is designated by critics the "machinery" of the epic, yet it is to be noted that even here where the poet follows most closely the conventions of his art, the gods are not as the gods of Homer. They are more human and more Roman. "They move with a certain Roman state and dignity of bearing," (1.) Jupiter displays the gravity of a Roman senator, while Juno reflects the dignified Roman matron. Another method by which the will of the gods was communicated was by omens, and here the contrast between the light which played around the head of Iulus in Troy and the litter of white pigs which Aeneas saw on the banks of the Tiber is indicative of the manner in which Virgil, as soon as his hero is on Italian soil, adopts the prosaic matter-of-fact type of omen peculiar to the Romans. The use made of augury is too obviously in harmony with the organized methods of the Roman state to call for notice.

(1.) Sellar's *Virgil* p. 265.



Are the human actors unduly restrained? The hero is the chosen instrument of Fate and is guided throughout by Fate. Yet in the extremest statement of his control by Fate he is not mechanically led or driven. When Nautas seeks to comfort his chief in his despair over the burning of the ships in Sicily, he uses the words-

"Fate des, quo fata trahunt retrahuntque sequamur

quidquid erat superanda omnis fortuna ferendo est."(Bk. V. 709)

Sequamur, superanda, ferendo, all show that Aeneas was free to refuse the leading of destiny. His submission was not compulsion. Virgil seeks to picture his hero as voluntarily accepting his part in the fulfilment of a lofty purpose. That the destiny of Rome would be attained inevitably that it was the "one far-off, divine event" to which she must attain was as deeprooted a conviction of Aeneas as it was of Virgil himself. It was for Aeneas to play his part or "take his rest unmindful of the Fates' behest". If the object of the poet were to inspire his contemporaries to a similar devotion to their country, then whatever his hero lost in independence, in spontaneity, one might almost say in self-seeking he gained as an example of the model patriot. It is suggestive that the actors in the Aeneid who are admittedly interesting, ardent and passionate characters are those whose fortunes bring them into antagonism with the decrees of Fate-Turnus, Mezentius, Camilla. They are not models, yet they appeal to our love of the heroic. Their struggle was hopeless, but it was not ignoble. There was a tragic interest in their antagonism which stimulated the imagination of the poet. At the end we can almost hear him pronounce over these old Italian forebears the sympathetic rebuke of Aeneas to Dares:-

"Infelix, quae tanta animus dementia cepit  
Non vires alias conversaque numina sentis?  
Cede deo." (Bk. V. 465.)

These are epic characters of a kind, worthily depicted, but they are not the ideal of a Roman citizen.

The decree of the gods as presented in the Aeneid has a human correlative. The great destiny of Rome had been accomplished by the service of man, by his loyalty, self-sacrifice and sense of duty, by that very response to the will of the gods, known as "pietas". What the gods willed, men had worked out. If either essential had been lacking, Rome would never have been what she was. That the decree of the gods can only be attained by human submission and human endeavour is the great truth exemplified in the person of the hero. If modern readers find him dull or uninteresting, that may be due to an excessive individualism. Roman readers did not, for the poem was popular from the start. The decree of the gods did not preclude development of character. (1.) If Aeneas grew in "pietas" - so might they; and his character became an inspiration as well as a model. To them he was not a statue once for all conceived and executed by the artist, he was a human being subjected to various experiences which worked upon his character as well as upon his career.

If we are rightly to judge of the decree of the gods, we must look not only for a gradual fulfilment of the task assigned to the hero by Fate, we must look as well for a ripening of his character. Individualism of the wrong type, such as that of Mezentius and Turnus, must be escaped. The Roman model must learn

from experience to hold in perfect balance the two conflicting interests of self and state. The indications of Aeneas' development as traced by Warde Fowler are convincing. The merest sketch is repeated here.(1.)

When we first meet Aeneas the conflict between the call of destiny and his own choice is bitter. When Troy falls and the call of Fate comes to him, he yields to despair.(Bk.I.92.) Even when the strain and danger are past, and he is striving to encourage his companions, he is half-hearted. "Perchance " he says "it will one day be a delight to look back on these things"(Bk.I.204.)

"Talia voce refert, curisque ingentibus aeger

Spem vultu simulat, premit altum corde dolorem"(Bk.I.208)

As we pass to the fifth book we leave self and passion behind and are introduced to the scenes where the careful performance of religious and family duties produce the tranquility of mind that comes of a soothed conscience. He here performs the Roman ritual of Parentalia.(2.) The manner of its observance with the accompanying games, an addition to the rite which might be adopted by families of wealth and distinction seems to have been designedly placed at this juncture between his old Trojan and his new Roman career. "A Roman would at once recognize the fact that Aeneas is here first presented to us as a Roman father of a family discharging the duties essential to the continuance and prosperity of that family, with cheerfulness as well as with "pietas" and that his "pietas" here takes a definite practical and truly Roman form, though it is not as yet extended to its full connot-

(1.) All this passage is adapted from Warde Fowler R.R.S. ch.18

(2.) Warde Fowler-Roman Festivals. p.407.

ation as the performance of duty toward the state and its gods."(Xx)

In the sixth book we reach the climax, after which Aeneas forgets the things that are behind and is seized by the vision of his magnificent destiny. The poet in the beginning of the seventh book indicates the change by a fresh invocation of the Muse and by the words "major rerum mihi nascitur ordo"(Bk. VII. 43.) In later book Aeneas and Rome are almost synonymous words. The conflicting interests in self and state are merged in one. Such a merging must be at some cost of individuality, but it presents a type of character that every Roman would recognize as his own natural ideal.

In affirming that submission to the will of the gods affects the character of Aeneas as well as his career I am not oblivious to the fact that this is a feature in Roman religion that cannot be said to be prominent before Virgil. Early Roman religion may be summed up in two words "jus" and "pax", "jus deorum" and "pax deorum". The deities who were regarded as dwelling in the humblest home, in the smallest city state, or finally in Imperial Rome its self, had certain rites due to them from the inhabitants.(1.) By the due performance of prescribed ritual acts the gods were supposed to be satisfied and the "pax deorum" secured for the worshipers. Ritual accuracy was essential. Even in historical times the rite of the "pores praecidanea" was observed. In case a man had wittingly or unwittingly omitted to pay the proper rites, it was his duty to make this offering, lest as a result of the neglect, the earth power should not yield him a good harvest.(2.) "Pacem deorum exposcere" or "petere" is a standing formula in Virgil(3.)

(1.) Warde Fowler R.R.E. P.169 ff. (3.) Aeneid IV. 56.

(2.) Warde Fowler quotes Gellius 4.6. Aeneid X. 31.

(xx) " " R. R. E. p 418.

It is obvious that in such a view of religion, a villain might preserve the "pax decorum" as well as a saint. Success in war, the fertility of the fields, all the blessings of life depended not on moral character, but on the preservation of the proper relation between the gods and their worshippers. This was undoubtedly the case till nearly the Augustan era. But there are many indications that religion was affecting morals in the literature of the period after the revolution. It will suffice to refer to the *Phydilo* of Horace -

"Immunis aram si tetigit manus

Non sumptuosa blandior hostia

Mollivit aversos Penates

Farre pio et saliente mica."(Horace Odes, 3.23. 16-20.)

or to quote from Virgil the lines-

"Di tibi, si qua pios respectant numina, si quid

Justitia est mens sibi conscia recti

Praemia digna ferant.(Aen. I. 603-5.)

These references make it clear that if the "pax decorum" still depended largely on the due payment of the "jus decorum", the word "pietas" was being deepened in meaning and given a moral content.

It was a Roman conviction that Rome was under the special care of Heaven. It was the positive belief of the later Romans that both they and their ancestors were "religiosissimi mortales" (1.) Cicero asserts that "we have overcome all the nations of the world, because we have realized that the world is directed and governed by the will of the gods."(2.)

(1.) Sallust. *Catiline*. 12.3.

(2.) Cicero. *Harus. Resp.* 19.

Polybius in the second century B.C. declared his opinion(1.) that what was reckoned among other peoples as a thing to be blamed -deisidaimonia-(i.e. religiousness)- both in public and private life was really what was holding together the Roman state. It was when this religiousness of the Romans had for a time lost its hold during the strain and trial of the hundred years revolution, when Rome was war-weary and heartsore, very much in the state of the western world since 1918, that Virgil wrote his great epic. He could not seek to revise the national sentiment without also striving to revise the old religious sentiment. The two modes of sentiment were inseparable. Stronger proof that it was the old gods and the old religion that are presented to us in the Aeneid can scarcely be adduced than the fact that at the great festival of re-inauguration or revival of the old religion, arranged by Augustus and celebrated two years after the poet's death, it was the gods of the Aeneid that were invoked.(2.)

Virgil's aim in the emphasis which he lays upon the decree of the gods was to declare the Roman conviction that the edifice of the Roman Empire built upon the foundation of the strenuous enterprise of the son of Venus, reared by the old kings of Alba and generations of great men who had followed in their train, and now crowned by the successes of Augustus and an age of peace and prosperity, was no mere work of human hands. It had been designed by the gods themselves. This, as I understand it, is the real import of the Decree of the Gods.

(1.) Polybius VI.56.

(2.) Warde Fowler R.R.L. Sec.19

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