

A SHORT STUDY OF AENEID, BOOK III ¹

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THE Third Book of the *Aeneid* is not much read compared with the other books in the first half of Virgil's epic. It has not the excitement and intensity of the Sack of Troy, or the poignancy of Dido's love and despair, or the grandeur and solemnity of the Descent to Avernus. It has not the varied interest of danger and novel experiences which make Book I such good reading : nor has it the air of mild festivity and recreation which invest even the games of Book V with an attraction which, if not thrilling, is at any rate not disagreeable. The subject of Book III is, *Aeneas Ilium in Italiam portans*, Aeneas' long voyage from Troy towards Italy : and nothing can be so dull as the record of a long voyage. It is true that Virgil appears to do his best to diversify and enliven it by adding a selection of incidents from the many traditional episodes which had become part of the Aeneas legend : and to a certain extent he also invents material which will provide relief from monotony. These are the parts of the Book which are best known ; they appear in all the anthologies ; they make good pieces for occasional reading ; but they are usually studied (legitimately enough, but I think regrettably) away from their context and without relation to the Book as a whole or to the place of the Book in the sequence of events. It is felt, too, in Book III that the person and character of Aeneas, the hero of the poem, are dimly portrayed. Aeneas is the leader of the Trojan expedition : but he carries with him in the ship his father Anchises, whom on all occasions of moment he consults with more than the dutiful piety of a devoted son—so that he acts indeed as the captain of the ship, responsible for its navigation, but having an admiral on board whose views he must take in all matters concerning the general conduct of policy : and

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this dual responsibility, though admirable in its Roman portrayal of the relations between a good son and his father, is hampering to the progress of the story and is significantly discarded by Virgil at the end of the Book. After the death of Anchises in Sicily, Aeneas is sole commander of the Trojans, and he grows in heroic stature as a result. One cannot, therefore, escape the first impression that Book III, considered as a unit of the epic, somehow lacks the artistic quality of completeness which is so characteristic of Virgil's workmanship in the other Books. The poet at times, and notably in the unusually long speech of Helenus, has not achieved the compression and finish which we expect of him. We feel that some parts of the structure need more attention, and that other parts have bits of scaffolding still attached to them.

Much of this may be granted, and yet it may be argued that the Book is not so ineffective as might seem at first sight. Virgil had decided that an account of the Trojans' voyage from Asia Minor to Italy was a necessary element in his plan. He had good Homeric precedent for so deciding; and even without such precedent the story of the voyage, as I shall hope to show, was an essential link in the arrangement of his design for the first four books. The voyage itself, with its geographical details of the Aegean, the Adriatic, Sicily, and Italy, was likely to be of far more familiar interest to his contemporary Mediterranean readers than it is to Atlantic outlanders like ourselves; and since the scene was laid in the mythical heroic age and since he fully availed himself of a poet's licence to modify mythical history and invent anachronistic details, he could plausibly introduce marvels and persons and places which could not have been combined in any strictly historical or semi-historical narrative. Besides, it cannot be expected that in a long epic the emotional tone must always be pitched high. Book I, where it tells of Aeneas' welcome in Carthage, leaves me with a sense of anxious expectancy. Book II, with its grim narrative of war-time treachery, carnage, and ruin, moves me to horror and pity. The love and despair of Dido in Book IV, contrasted with the stern self-denial of Aeneas, create an almost intolerable pathos. If one reads the *Aeneid* continuously as a whole, the different nature and different

tempo of Books III and V intervene as a blessed and welcome relief ; and I have come more and more to the conviction that, however great the individual Books may be, we miss much of the effect that Virgil meant, if we read them, as we tend to do, in isolation. They are parts of a grand design deliberately planned to vary the effects ; selections are all very well, but the differing movements of the symphony ought to be heard in their proper sequence.

I admit that in the ancient world there seems to have been some question about the proper sequence of the first three Books. Servius mentions a class of critic who would have preferred an order depending on the sequence of events rather than the present artistically involved order ; and Donatus in his *Life of Virgil* tells the curious story that Varius, one of the poet's literary executors, " *duorum librorum ordinem commutasse, et, qui tum secundus erat, in tertium locum transtulisse*". Frankly, I find this incredible ; to reverse the order of the present Books II and III is impossible. But it may well be that our Book III was not always so firmly anchored in its present position and that, in some of Virgil's earlier and tentative arrangements, it may have been the opening Book of the series. Donatus' statement, therefore, may be mistakenly based on a tradition of some such variation. I can conceive that Virgil, having sketched out in rough the plan and divisions of his epic, worked on large sections of it, each section approximating in length and substance to the measure of a book ; and I can imagine that he tried out different sequences, as he sought for the arrangement of books that would be artistically most satisfactory. For example, once he had decided on the Aeneas legend for his subject, at what point in the legend was he to begin ? The obvious, though not necessarily the best, starting point was the departure from Troy, and the voyage would form one unitary coherent section of material. What, then, of the destruction of Troy by the Greeks, the Wooden Horse, the deluded Trojans, the final agony of Priam's death and the city in flames ? None of this is described in Homer ; ought it not therefore to be included in the new Roman epic ? There is a strong case for including it, for this great catastrophe is the beginning and cause of all that follows in the

poem ; and, besides, in itself it affords a magnificent subject for epic treatment in the grand style. What place will it take, then, in the series of books ? Clearly in any causal and chronological sequence it will have to precede the voyage. But again, the voyage leads to Sicily, and Sicily is close to Carthage ; and Carthage too offers a magnificent opportunity of showing, in the break between Aeneas and Dido, the primeval origin of the historical conflict between the Romans and Carthaginians. What, then, will be the order of the books thus conceived ? Will it be I Troy, II Voyage, III Arrival at Carthage, IV Dido ? I do not find it impossible to think that, in the earliest formative stage of the *Aeneid*, the voyage may even have included the Arrival at Carthage, before this part was separated, expanded and immeasurably enhanced to its present size and content. And I suppose that, when Virgil first thought of varying the chronological order of his books on the model of Odysseus' recital in Homer, the order might have become—I Voyage, II Arrival at Carthage, III Troy (by recapitulation), IV Dido ; and then by some happy inspiration he saw the dramatic effect of making his exordium a plunge *in medias res*, and so he finally arrived at the established order of Books. I think it may be a vague tradition of some such experimental variations of sequence that may have survived to the fourth century and have been responsible for Donatus' strange statement. Certainly, by that time there could be no serious question about the order. "Ordo librorum manifestus est", says Servius ; and there we may leave it.

While I am speaking of these experimental blue-prints (if I may be allowed the phrase) for the design of the *Aeneid*, I may perhaps touch upon an impression about Book III which on close study it is very hard to reject. There are evidences, of greater or lesser importance, which combine to suggest that what is now Book III had been designed in its earliest and tentative form as the introductory book of a different kind of poem—an *Aeneid* which would be a straight chronological verse narrative. I have time to mention only a few of these curious pointers but quite enough to show that Virgil, though he undoubtedly revised the book, had not brought it entirely into relation with his final

scheme for the epic. Take, for instance, the opening lines with their solemn and sonorous majesty :

postquam res Asiae Priamique evertere gentem
 immeritam visum superis, ceciditque superbum
 Ilium et omnis humo fumat Neptunia Troia . . .

This, I suggest, has a stately magnificence of rhythm and diction which is out of keeping with a mere continuance of Aeneas' narrative but is far more suited in tone to the exordium of a poem. Then consider the point I mentioned earlier, the joint rôle of Anchises and Aeneas as leaders of the expedition : all through the Book, Anchises is seen as a wise and experienced counsellor, a very present help in trouble : and yet, just before, in Book II, he had been made to appear as a feeble, obstinate, and indeed tiresome old man. There is some discrepancy here. Virgil eliminates him at the end of Book III, just as he had eliminated Creusa at the end of Book II ; neither of them would have been convenient, indeed both of them would have been serious encumbrances, in the adventure he was planning for Aeneas at the Carthaginian court. An even more suggestive piece of evidence is the fact that in Book III the divine guide and monitor of the Trojans is Phoebus Apollo. Virgil seems to have taken him in this capacity from Homer where he is always the patron of Troy, "Phoebe, graves Troiae semper miserate labores". "Fata viam invenient" says Helenus, "aderitque vocatus Apollo." But in fact Apollo has very little to do with the later success of the Trojans. He is here given a part which he is not given in the other books of the *Aeneid* : for as Virgil's conception of his subject grew and as his vision of Rome's power and greatness becomes the central theme of the poem, so it seems that only Jupiter the all-supreme and all-good should preside over its destiny. But what strikes me as the strangest discrepancy is the absence from Book III of Aeneas' divine mother who so often appears in the rest of the poem to help and guide her son and to plead the cause of the Trojans. She is indeed mentioned twice in the book when Aeneas is conventionally addressed as "nate dea" and once again when Anchises is named as her husband, but nowhere in Book III does she play the part which everywhere else she constantly takes ; and this is all the more surprising when

Aeneas, referring in Book I to his voyage, names her as the one who had charted and piloted his journey :

bis denis Phrygium conscendi navibus aequor,
matre dea monstrante viam.

In fact, she takes no part whatsoever in the direction of the voyage ; and the presumption must surely be that in Book III Virgil has used the introductory portion of an earlier draft *Aeneid* which was designed on quite different lines, and has only partially modified it to fit in with his later scheme for the epic.

Though the main facts of Aeneas' voyage had been approximately settled in the accepted tradition, and though in a way the rough materials for Book III were ready to hand, we can see everywhere in the Book the mind of the poet at work—selecting, modifying and controlling the material to suit his purpose. He guides the Trojans on their long journey in such a manner that they will conform generally to the tradition yet will move from stage to stage for reasons that are credible and valid ; that they will be brought by a route which is reasonably normal and which yet can be made to fit in with his design for the rest of the epic. It is worth while to look at the journey in some detail. After the sack of Troy we find that Aeneas with a company of followers had withdrawn to the mountainous region in the south of the Troad above the port of Antandrus. There he constructs a fleet from the sacred timber of Phrygian Mount Ida (which incidentally in the second half of the poem is destined to produce miraculous results). It has been revealed to him that, by the will of Heaven, he is not to settle in his own country or to rebuild Troy there ; he goes forth to seek overseas a destination so far unknown, and unspecified, where it is appointed that his new kingdom will be. His journey, therefore, is in the nature of a quest ; he sails by guess and by God. Aeneas' first movement is in accord with the traditional account : he sails north with his company to the coast of Thrace where he was supposed (through an apparent similarity of name) to have founded the town of Aenus. But here, by a miraculous revelation, the Trojans discover that Polydorus, the young son of King Priam, sent to Thrace with the royal treasure for safety during the siege, had

been savagely murdered by the Thracians, and in horror they leave that ill-omened land and sail south, straight down the Aegean Sea, to Delos where they land to enquire of the oracle of Apollo, the deity who, in the recent war, had been Troy's best ally among the gods. Apollo's answer is mysterious: they are told that they should found the new city on the site of their "ancient mother-land"; and this cryptic utterance is represented by Virgil to have been misinterpreted, and quite plausibly misinterpreted, as pointing to Crete; so by this deliberate and planned error Virgil makes them sail to the extreme south of the Aegean, avoiding by this central route all the populous and hostile parts of the Greek mainland—a convenient device on the poet's part to bring them well on their way without interference, though lacking in the human interest of men and cities. A settlement in Crete is started, but is a failure owing to the drought and plague. How can this be reconciled with Apollo's instructions? Can the god have misled them, or have they misunderstood him? Aeneas is about to turn back to Delos to make another enquiry of the oracle, but Virgil prevents this return by making the Penates, the Trojan household gods, appear to Aeneas in a vision and reveal Apollo's true meaning—that the Trojans' ancient mother-land is Hesperia, the western land, Italy, from which their ancestor Dardanus had originally come to Troy. This is decisive; they obey the god, and set sail from Crete for Hesperia. Virgil has skilfully contrived their voyage so as to bring them clear of the Aegean and down into the central Mediterranean with sailing orders to steer west. He now, by a legitimate epic device, delivers them to a storm (an epic storm!) which, blowing furiously for three days, sweeps them north-westward past the capes of the Peloponnese and up to the island group of the Strophades off the west coast of Messenia. They land tentatively on the islands, but any stay is made impossible by the winged monsters, the Harpies, that infest the place; and so on they go, coasting up the west side of Greece, past Zacynthus, Cephallenia, Ithaca (the kingdom of their hated enemy, Ulysses) and so on to Leucas and Actium, where in triumph at having won clear of the territories of their Greek enemies they celebrate the Trojan games and Aeneas

erects a trophy to the success of the conquered Trojans in eluding the victorious Greeks : *Aeneas haec de Danais victoribus arma*. They have achieved a definite stage in their journey. Soon they pass Corcyra and skirt the coast of Epirus until they reach Buthrotum, whence the distance to Calabria in the heel of Italy is about fifty miles across the outlet of the Adriatic. Here they are almost within sight of their promised land. But no part of Italy has yet been specified as their appointed destination ; they require further direction ; and by an opportune piece of invention Virgil supplies it. He makes use of the legend that Helenus, the son of Priam, is now married to Andromache the widow of Hector and that together they rule over Buthrotum, which they have turned into a miniature replica of Troy ; and in a meeting between the two Trojan leaders, he supposes Helenus, as the prophet and mouthpiece of Apollo, to give Aeneas the god's instructions about the rest of his voyage. He must not settle on the south coast of Italy, because of danger from the unfriendly Greek settlers whose cities are strung along the shore line (a gross anachronism, but it is useful) ; he must not enter the Straits of Messana—they are dominated by the monsters Scylla and Charybdis that lie in wait to engulf ships : he must steer past Mount Aetna and round the south coast of Sicily : he must be especially careful to placate the goddess Juno at this point of his journey : he will then sail from Sicily across the Tuscan Sea to Cumae in Italy, where the Sibyl will give him further instructions. The speech in which Helenus gives Aeneas this advice is long and detailed and rather overloaded and heavy. Considered as poetry or rhetoric, it is below the Virgilian standard ; considered as a functional part of the design, it is important ; in it Virgil is laying the plot of his story. He wishes for Roman historical reasons to bring his hero to Carthage : therefore he must bar to him the normal sea-route through the Messana channel which would lead up the west coast of Italy ; and so the dangers of that passage are horribly magnified in a fearsome description of Scylla and Charybdis, and Aeneas is brought round Sicily to the west point of the island, whence it is only a short distance to Africa and Carthage. So the setting is prepared for Juno's angry interruption of the voyage, for the

great storm that sweeps the fleet from Drepanum to the Syrtes, and for the tragic meeting between the Queen of Carthage and the progenitor of Rome. On the structural side Virgil has excellently contrived the movements and stages of Aeneas' voyage so as to bring him so far westwards to the very place where the dramatic climax he had planned for the last stage of the journey can reasonably begin. Book III is not just a travelogue: whether it was intended to be the opening of the poem or to have its present place, I feel that it is an essential part of the structure, and fulfils a necessary function in the economy of the plot.

Book III gives an opportunity, perhaps more than any other Book, of seeing Virgil's method of construction and of taking a look into the poet's workshop. I have earlier hinted at what I think to have been his method in the preparation and disposal of Books within the epic; here I am concerned with the choice, arrangement and insertion of material within the Books. It will only be a guess and it may be quite wrong. But I will hazard a cautious opinion. What I notice is that Virgil in each Book maintains a central action by means of his hero, Aeneas: sometimes this action slows down; sometimes it almost halts; but it is always there as a central current of movement, except in Book IX—and there the absence of Aeneas is felt so keenly that the thought and need of him pervade the Book as an actuating force. But attached to the central theme there are incidents, not unrelated to the story, not inappropriate in their context, which are in the nature of digressions or episodes: these episodes are often finished with great care and skill: they show some of the poet's best workmanship; and it looks as if he had completed them as separate pieces and then embodied them like pre-fabricated sections in his growing structure. I think we may recognize one of these pieces in the famous and disputed passage about Helen in Book II: here the work of completion and integration was so nearly finished that all modern editors admit the passage into the text in spite of its withdrawal by the original editors, Varius and Tucca. The piece is readily detachable; it is a small self-complete unit; the poet had made all preparations for its insertion, but at the time of his death had not decided about it finally. All the evidence goes to show that Virgil was

supremely self-critical, slow to make up his mind, always testing, experimenting, and seeking perfection. I see him as a man to whom poetic inspiration came not continuously but at times. As he meditated or worked on his poem, some idea would come welling up into his mind—suggesting perhaps a different treatment, or a new setting, or some possibility of a novel development; and he would elaborate in draft until the piece was in tolerable shape. He had always an exquisite sense of words and rhythm and a subtle power of phrasing. On the structural side he was less sure of himself—or rather, I should say, more distrustful of his first judgements. He built slowly and with much reconsideration, trying formations experimentally and resetting them to achieve a different or better effect. I am convinced his real creative strength lay in shorter pieces, in cantos rather than in solid books, in epyllia rather than in epics. No serious reader of the *Aeneid* who sees how episode after episode is built into the poem could think otherwise. To say so is not to disparage Virgil's *magnum opus*; he did achieve an over-all unity in the *Aeneid*; but he did it by the vast and prolonged labour of preparing the parts first, then assembling them, and harmonizing them and bringing them into relation with the main theme, and paying great attention to the transitions and *iuncturae* at the points of insertion. For instance, I am not surprised when, by a series of subtle and well prepared transitions, the IVth Georgic merges into the epyllion of Orpheus and Eurydice. I am not surprised when in the VIIIth *Aeneid* the legend of Hercules and Cacus is introduced, even at such length. And similarly in Book III. Here the voyage of Aeneas is central: it forms the vertebral column of the book: the episodes introduced are not irrelevant: they derive from the action and are meant to vary the interest and amplify it. Virgil's handling of this material is very different from Ovid's use of the same material in *Metamorphoses* XIII and XIV. He also treats of the voyage; but with him the voyage means nothing and leads to nothing; it is the merest framework on which to hang a group of miraculous tales which are the stuff of the poem. So it may be worthwhile to examine more closely two of the episodes in Book III and see how the poet creates and builds them.

I have chosen for scrutiny two of the longer episodes in the Book, that of Helenus in which Aeneas meets an old friend and comrade-in-arms, and that of Achaemenides in which he encounters a former enemy, a Greek who had fought under Ulysses against Troy. Both episodes give an insight into Virgil's method of construction; and the first in which the idea has been excellently conceived but the matter has not been adequately compressed, contrasts well with the other in which plot and execution are admirably balanced and finished. The meeting with Helenus has the makings of a very fine scene. It is introduced as a romantic diversion (but also a useful diversion) in the dullest part of the voyage. It gives Aeneas an opportunity of seeing for the last time some of his Trojan friends who have succeeded in building their new city and whose descendants will be allied in friendship with his Roman descendants; and it gives the poet an opportunity of escaping for a time from the catalogue of islands and ports of call on the west coast of Greece. Aeneas hears that Helenus, taken prisoner by Neoptolemus after the war, is now freed and is ruling over Epirus, and he decides to go and see him. As he approaches the city, to his amazement he finds his kinswoman, Andromache, the widow of Hector, performing the rites of the dead,

*libabat cineri Andromache manesque vocabat
Hectoreum ad tumulum*

“with wine for the ashes and invocations to the Spirit” at the cenotaph which she had consecrated as a memorial to her dead husband. From her Aeneas learns all that had happened since the end of the war—how she is now Helenus' queen and how they have built their city as a New Troy. The emotion of Andromache as she welcomes Aeneas and speaks about the unforgettable griefs of the past makes this scene the most characteristically Virgilian in the Book. There follows a good account of the meeting with Helenus and of the royal entertainment given to the Trojans—until Aeneas, remembering that Helenus is a seer and prophet of Apollo, asks him to foretell the future for him. I need not examine the prophecy in detail; it is clearly a rough draft which has not been revised. The long prophecy is like a verse itinerary. Apollo's seer has none of

Apollo's cryptic brevity. True: it gives much useful and necessary advice; it anticipates many events which do not therefore need to be narrated as they occur; and it links up with later parts of Virgil's plot. But as an utterance it is diffuse and straggling; and it shows very little of the rhetorical art which in the other speeches of the epic Virgil has used with masterly skill. The whole episode which began so well tails off into a monologue which requires more revision than any other part of the Book. I have often wondered why this is so. Can it be that Virgil has quarried from his own mine, that he left this part so ragged because, in fact, he borrowed something of its situation and materials to be elaborated in another and greater part of his poem? The circumstances are not exactly analogous; but here, praying at the shrine of her lost husband, is a widowed queen who had come through much tribulation to a relative calm; here is a newly built city which Aeneas admires and envies; here is princely hospitality for the Trojan seafarers. It could be that this early sketch supplied the design which was infinitely expanded and ennobled into the picture of Dido; and after that, the early sketch hardly mattered.

The other episode comes towards the end of the Book. The plot of it is entirely Virgil's own invention; he took it from no myth or legend: in design and completion I find it excellent—a first-class example of his skill in short pieces. The Trojans had by this time reached Sicily; they had harboured for the night under the side of Mount Aetna, where through the dark hours they had listened in terror to the rumblings of the volcano. Virgil creates the atmosphere of awe and apprehension in a passage of remarkable power, vividly describing the eruptions that shoot and glare in the sky. In the morning a strange weird being presents himself to them: (I quote from Day Lewis) "suddenly there stepped out of the woods a strange individual, a man unknown to us, in rags and a state of extreme emaciation, who stretched imploring hands to us on the shore. . . . Appallingly dirty, his beard overgrown, his rags held together with thorns, in all else he was a Greek, one who had gone to Troy once in the Greek expeditionary force." The humane, generous Trojans rescue their former enemy and encourage him to tell his

story. It must be remembered that it is now six years since the end of the war and that the Greek leader, Ulysses (as we know from Homer), returning to his kingdom in Ithaca, had had a fearsome adventure with the Cyclops who dwelt in Sicily near Mount Aetna exactly at the place where the Trojans were now camping. Virgil can hardly ignore so close a coincidence: he manages it excellently by a device reminiscent of the Messenger's Speech in tragedy. This forlorn Greek is imagined to have been one of Ulysses' crew, inadvertently left on the island after the blinding of the Cyclops, Polyphemus: and now the castaway is made to describe the frightful experiences that Ulysses and his companions had endured when they entered the Cyclops' cave. Suddenly his words receive terrifying confirmation, when the blinded monster himself appears on the hillside and, sensing the intruders, with a stupendous roar summons to his aid the whole Cyclopien people—a monstrous assembly of towering giants who line the shore as the Trojans for dear life row out to sea. Virgil is so taken and so carried away by his picture of them that he finishes it off with a simile (oddly enough, when one remembers Virgil's practice, the only simile in the Book) a rather literary simile but appropriate to the situation:

Aetnaeos fratres caelo capita alta ferentes,
 concilium horrendum, quales cum vertice celso
 aëriae quercus aut coniferae cyparissi
 constiterunt, silva alta Iovis, lucusve Dianae.

In all this Virgil is at his best: the plot of the episode is well designed; it is skilfully and opportunely inserted into the main narrative; it begins, continues, and ends strongly; it achieves several purposes at once—for it shows the humanity of the Trojans in their treatment of an enemy, it gives a glimpse of the unspeakable Ulysses, it satisfies expectation in describing the legendary monsters of Sicily. Furthermore, it does all this with a verve and energy and accomplishment which make me feel that Virgil himself found the episode a refreshing change from the doldrums of coastwise navigation.

I have said that the personality of Aeneas in Book III is dimly drawn. Virgil gives only an outline of the figure which in the two previous Books he had endowed with many virtues and

much capacity for action. The events of the voyage offered much scope for the portrayal of heroic character, and yet somehow Aeneas fails to impress deeply. If Book III had begun the epic, this would not have mattered so much; the hero would have grown in brightness as the story unfolded and developed; but as it is, the reduction in Aeneas' candlepower is surprising, and this seems another reason for supposing that the composition of the Book was relatively early, and that it was never fully integrated by revision. However, the chief characteristic of Aeneas is there: he is *pious Aeneas*, faithful in his duty to gods, people and family, a precisian in religious observance, a careful leader, a good, almost a self-effacing, son. The recent memory of his country's defeat and the repeated frustration of his quest give him an air of sadness; and the call of the heavenly mission, which puts off his hope of a quiet, peaceful, settled life to an ever receding future, is so far a matter of obedience, not of assured faith. He longs for a termination to his wanderings: "da propriam . . . domum", he prays to Apollo at Delos, "da moenia fessis et genus et mansuram urbem". And the cry that breaks from him later, when he sees the Carthaginians completing the erection of their new city, "o fortunati, quorum iam moenia surgunt"—this passionate cry of admiration and envy can be understood only in the light of the disappointments described in Book III.

It was on the instructions of Heaven that he and his Trojans had sailed to seek a new land; "auguriis agimur divum", he says. They do not know where the new land is; they simply act in obedience to the command—going forth "incerti quo fata ferant, ubi sistere detur". This quest for assurance of their destiny seems to me the most important element in the Book. They are religious men; they believe in the power and interest of the gods; they feel themselves to be dependent on and responsible to the supreme beings, with whose will and purpose they wish their new city to be wholly in accord. So their voyage becomes a search for knowledge of their destiny, conducted over a period of seven years, with much disappointment, and yet with encouragement and hope. It is not easy for mortals to attain to this knowledge: in this Virgilian epic there is a far wider gulf

fixed between earth and heaven than in the Homeric poems. The gods are not now so easy in their communication with mankind ; the immortals can be brought to listen and help ; but their guidance comes only fitfully, with moments of revelation and then strange silences. Book III has this in common with the whole poem : it is the story of Aeneas' search for the will of heaven and of his sacrificial resolve to endure all hardships if only he may arrive at that certainty.

His human and personal purpose in setting out is very natural : it is to replace the lost Troy by a new city that will resemble the old. In his prayer to Apollo at Delos it is for " *altera Troiae Pergama* " that he invokes the god's protection. Pergamea is the name he gives to his city in Crete. He has exactly the same idea as Helenus, whose city at Buthrotum has been built as a model of ancient Troy, with a Scaean gate and two watercourses called Simois and Xanthus, " *Pergamaque Iliacamque iugis hanc addidit arcem* ". Helenus is like all pilgrims and refugees who go out from their own country : his first thought is to reconstitute the past ; he has no other idea but to restore and maintain what he and his fathers had known and valued ; and Aeneas would have been the same if Heaven had allowed it. But Fate had decided to abolish the Trojan pattern and to bring into being a new state that will be different and greater, though comprising some elements of Troy. The first step in this plan is to guide Aeneas towards Italy and gradually to accustom his mind to the thought of Italy. So Book III is a re-education, a conversion of Aeneas : he is in process of ceasing to be a Trojan and of becoming an Italian. He is becoming a forward-looking man instead of a nostalgic exile. He is passing from the old order to a new dispensation, *ἡ καίνη διαθήκη*. Juno in a sense is right when at the end of the epic she insists on the virtual extinction of the name of Troy : for the age of Laomedon's Troy is ended ; the age of Augustan Rome has begun faintly to dawn.

What are we to conclude, then, about this curious Book ? In a way it is like Aeneas himself : it is in process of becoming ; it is still partly what it had been ; it has not entirely become what it was finally meant to be. We can discern the outline and

purpose of its old form ; it has taken on enough of its new shape for us to see what Virgil intended for it. But it contains the growing revelation of Heaven's purpose for Aeneas and his Trojans, which is the most pervasive and compelling thing in the Book. It contains the voyage which in the plan of the poem is central, for it derives from the capture of Troy and it leads to Sicily and Carthage and Dido : and it presents Italy as the goal of endeavour and the land of promise. It is wonderfully diversified with incidents and marvels which are germane and relevant to the main action. I would say that it is essential to the epic, both for itself, and for the part it has in the structure as a whole.