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COLIN A. SHEPPARD M. A.



AUROVILLE PUBLISHERS,
KOTTAYAM.

Auroville's
Simplified English Series
Stage 4. No. 2.

THE STORY OF THE AENEID

By COLIN A. SHEPPARD M. A.

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THE STORY OF THE AENEID

1. THE DEPARTURE

If you have read the story of the *Iliad*, you perhaps remember the end of Troy. Homer, the poet, did not describe it in that poem but in the next one, the *Odyssey*. This describes the wanderings of Ulysses. In the course of them he reached the island of Circe. To her he related how Troy fell. Perhaps you have also read the story of Homer's second poem.

He was a Greek, so he speaks in favour of his countrymen. The story of the *Aeneid* is told by a poet from the Trojan side. Virgil was a Roman poet, and the Romans claimed to be descended from the Trojans. Virgil wrote the epic, or long poem, called the *Aeneid*. He lived a thousand years after Homer. He held Homer in great respect, and followed his example when he wrote his epic.

But his style is faultless and learned, while Homer's is rough and full of energy, for Virgil lived in highly civilized times.

The *Aeneid* begins where the *Iliad* ends, on the night of the fall of Troy. Some Trojans managed to escape from the burning city, which the Greeks had set on fire. Among them was the Trojan prince Aeneas, from whom Virgil's poem takes its name. His mother was Venus, the goddess of love. His father was Anchises who came from a family of kings. Aeneas was sleeping when the Greeks entered Troy. Hermes, messenger of the king of the gods, came to him in a dream.

"Wake up, Aeneas," he said. "Leave Troy with your family. You cannot save the city, but Zeus, king of the gods has sent me to tell you that a new Troy will rise from the ashes of the old one."

"Then I shall stay" said Aeneas, "and hide in some city near by until that time comes."



Hermes came to Aeneas in a dream.

“No,” said Hermes. “The new Troy will arise in a country far from here. You will build that city. That is your duty, given you by the gods.”

Hermes then mentioned a place on the sea-shore, a few miles away from Troy, and told Aeneas to go there. “The Trojans who escape to-night will go there too,” he added. “I shall send

them there, and you will be their leader. With their help you must make some ships and sail away across the sea. Zeus will show you where you are to build the new city.

Aeneas was always dutiful. He always did his duty to the gods, to his country, and to his family, as son, husband and father. Without a moment's delay he woke his aged father, his wife Creusa, and his little son, Ascanius.

"Troy is burning," he said. There's not a minute to lose. Come with me. We shall escape if we can."

Anchises was too old to walk fast, so Aeneas carried him on his back. They slipped out of their house into a dark street. The Greeks had not come there yet. Aeneas hurried towards a small gate in the city wall. Few knew of it, for it had not been in use for years.

"Don't look back," he warned his family. Creusa, however, who was following at some distance, turned and

saw a horrible sight. The Greek soldiers were cutting men, women and children to pieces. Behind this scene lay blazing houses and palaces. Aeneas, his father and his son, had reached the gate by then. He called out to his wife, and some people caught sight of him. A crowd made a rush for the gate, and prevented her return. She could not push through the crowd, whom the Greeks were chasing. She fell under a Greek sword. Meanwhile Aeneas, his father and Ascanius got out of the city and fled to safety in the darkness.

Aeneas was sad at the loss of his wife. From far off he saw the burning city, and thought of her. All night he stayed awake, hoping she would come. He wanted to go back and search for her, but he remembered Zeus's command. When day broke he saw parties of Trojans coming in his direction. He asked them about Creusa. One of them told him that she was dead. "A Greek soldier killed her," he said.

There were no women among those who escaped. They were all soldiers, and had fought under Aeneas against the Greeks. "Please be our leader," they told him now. "We shall do what you tell us."

"All right," said Aeneas. "First of all we must move on to a safer place. If the Greeks see us they will make short work of us."

All day they marched on. Evening found them on the edge of a forest. Some of the men hunted for deer and returned, before nightfall, with a few of these animals. Presently they lit fires and began to cook the meat. Their dinner, that night, was their first meal since they left Troy.

"We shall camp here," said Aeneas, "for the next few months. From tomorrow there will be plenty of work to do."

They awoke, at daylight, after a refreshing sleep. Aeneas sent them into the forest to cut down big trees. While

some hunted animals for food, others with saws, cut the trees into planks. Others again, carried the planks to the sea-shore, a few miles away. There some men set to work to build ships. No one was idle for a minute. At the end of the day they met on the edge of the forest. Here Aeneas and a few men had put up rough shelters; and here, after a good meal they slept soundly all night.

From a distant village they bought corn and made bread from it. At other times they bought other kinds of food. On the whole they were happy although they were busy with hard work all day. Little by little the ships began to take shape. At length, nearly eight months after their escape, twenty ships were ready. For nearly a month they were busy making salted meat and large biscuits. They loaded the ships with these and other kinds of food. From a distant city they bought canvas and made sails. A day came, at last, when they were ready for their voyage.

With tears in their eyes, as the sun rose, the Trojans left their homeland, never to return. What thoughts were in their minds we can guess. They remembered the terrible night of destruction. Their king and queen had died; their families had perished in the flames or under the Greek swords. The land they were leaving held nothing for them except sad memories. All the same they loved it, for they had grown up there, and had seen happy days before the city fell.

The rocks along the edge of the land faded from sight, and now they were alone on the sea. Aeneas told his men about his dream. "We have to build the new Troy," he said, "but I don't know where the city will be. Zeus will give us a sign."

After many days they arrived at the land of Thrace. "I wonder if this is to be our new country," said Aeneas. "We shall begin to build our city, if nothing bad prevents us."

He wanted to offer a sacrifice of a deer to the gods. For this purpose his men found a flat rock to serve as an altar. They laid the deer on it, and Aeneas went to a bush near by, to pluck some leaves. He broke off a twig, and to his horror, blood flowed from it. He broke another twig and blood came out of it too.

"Spare me, cousin Aeneas," a voice cried. "I am Polydore. Do you remember me?"

"Of course I do," said Aeneas. Polydore was a young prince of Troy. His father had sent him, with a load of treasure, to be brought up by the king of Thrace, far from the scene of war.

"How did you become a tree?" Aeneas asked.

"When I arrived here," said Polydore, "I went to the king and gave him my father's message. He immediately took my load of treasure, and then told

his soldiers to kill me. They dragged me to this spot and shot me down with arrows. They buried me here, and from my body sprang this bush."

"Poor Polydore," said Aeneas. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Yes," said Polydore. "Until someone performs my funeral ceremonies my soul cannot cross the boundary river and enter Hades, the land of the dead. Please perform the ceremonies."

Aeneas agreed to do this, and carried out his promise without delay. Then he said to his followers, "Let's leave this wicked country before it is too late. We have had a sign that Zeus does not wish us to settle here."

They set sail at once, and arrived, a day later, at the island of Delos. This was where the sun-god Apollo and his sister the moon-goddess Diana, were born. It was once a floating island, but Zeus chained it to the bottom of the sea. There was a cave on the island, and a priestess of Apollo sat at the

entrance of it. People asked questions about the future, and the god answered them through her. A cave of this kind is called an oracle. Aeneas consulted the oracle. "To which country must we go?" he asked.

"Look for your ancient mother," the oracle replied. (It never gave a straight answer to a question.) "There the descendants of Aeneas shall live for ever, and bring other countries under its control."

"What can this mean?" Aeneas asked himself. He thought a long time about the words of the oracle. Then the truth dawned on him. He had to go to motherland of the Trojans. There was a belief that the first Trojans had come from the island of Crete, and had built the city of Troy. Aeneas at once set sail for Crete, where he and his men set to work at once to build the city. But sickness broke out among them.

The corn that they had planted dried up. One night in a dream Hermes came to Aeneas. "What are you doing in Crete?" he said. "The first Trojans did not come from Crete. Your first king, Dardanus came from Hesperia." (This was the old name of Italy.) Aeneas then knew that he must go to Italy.

2. ON THE WAY TO ITALY

To Italy, then, Aeneas prepared to sail. He waited until his sick men were well, and then resumed the voyage. His twenty ships flew forward, with a light breeze filling their sails. The next few days passed pleasantly. The weather was calm, and they met with no difficulties. All around them lay the sea, as level and clear as green glass. The men sang at their work, and kept a look-out for land.

One morning they saw a green island, and Aeneas told them to make for it. Soon the ships came alongside the island, and the men went ashore. There were no houses in sight, but they saw herds of fat cattle feeding on the grass. These belonged to the harpies, who lived on the island. These were strange ugly birds with the heads and faces of women, and long sharp claws instead of feet.

Aeneas did not see them, for they were hidden in the branches of the trees. He and his men went all over the island. Finding no one there they felt free to take some of the cattle. These they killed and cooked, and when the feast was ready, sat down to eat it. No sooner had they done so than the harpies came out of the trees. They waved their large wings up and down, rushed at the meat and carried off pieces of it.

"Draw your swords!" Aeneas told his men. "We shall soon get rid of these birds."

Back came the harpies for more meat, and the men struck at them with their swords. Their blows, however, were of no use. The harpies moved quickly, and the feathers on their wings were as strong as steel. One of them sat on a rock, some distance away, and screamed curses at the Trojans.

"Is this the way to behave?" she cried. "You come to our island and kill our

cattle, and eat them; and when we try to stop you, you attack us."

"I'm sorry," said Aeneas. "We did not know that they were your cattle. We searched for the owners and found none."

"Don't make excuses," the harpy cried. "They won't help you. For this crime you and your men will pay heavily. You hope to reach Italy soon, but you will soon be far from that country. I wish you ill-luck. We curse you from the bottom of our hearts."

Aeneas did not wait to hear more. He and his men hurried to their ships and sailed away at once. The harpies followed them with mocking cries, but not very far. As they drew away from the island the cries came more faintly until, at last, they stopped altogether.

"Those hateful creatures cursed us," said Aeneas. "I hope I never see them again."

"We need not fear their curses," one of his men remarked. "We did no harm to them. They played a trick on us."

"What a dirty smell came from them!" said another.

"I've never seen such creatures before," said a third man. "What are they?"

Aeneas explained that they were harpies. "There was once a cruel king named Phineus," he said. "He was also greedy. Zeus wanted to punish him, so he made these harpies. Whenever Phineus sat down to a meal the harpies rushed down and carried it away. The poor man almost starved to death. At length a famous hero, Jason, rescued him and drove the birds away. After that, I dare say, they came to the island."

"They're selfish, greedy creatures," said a sailor. "They let us cook the meal and then carried it off. They have a lot of cattle. We took a few, and they would not let us eat them."

"Anyway," said Aeneas, "we are lucky to be rid of them and the king of the gods, I think, knows that we are not to blame. Their curses will not hurt us."

The ships came next to the country of Epirus, wondering what kind of welcome they would get there. They had a pleasant surprise. The wife of Troy's greatest hero, Hector, was the queen of Epirus. Her name was Andromache. Hector was killed in the war, and when the Greeks burnt Troy one of the leaders carried off Andromache. He married her afterwards, and they had a son. When he died she married a Trojan named Helenus. They were ruling the land. Aeneas and his followers were received with all honour and friendship. Hector's wife and Helenus were very glad to see some of their countrymen.

"Where are you going?" said Andromache.

"To Italy," said Aeneas "We are going there to build the new Troy. The gods allowed the Greeks to win the war, but they want Troy to be re-born. We shall make our past glory live again."

"Good luck to you!" said Helenus. "All the blessings of the gods go with you!"

"Thank you," said Aeneas. "May Troy be great again through you, in Epirus."

The voyagers spent many days in Epirus, and when they left, Andromache and Helenus loaded them with gifts. "Take care," said Helenus, "how you sail from here to Italy. There's an island called Sicily, at the foot of Italy. Between the island and the mainland there is a dangerous whirlpool. The water spins and goes down for half a day, then it spins and goes up. If you sail near it your ships will be sucked in. On the other side there is a hollow rock, and inside a creature with six

heads. She will try to catch six of your men and eat them. Take my advice. Don't sail between Italy and Sicily but go round the island."

Aeneas paid attention to his warning. He kept away from the two dangers and went round Sicily, although the voyage became longer. Juno, wife of Zeus, saw that the Trojans would soon reach their new country. She always hated the Trojans, ever since Paris, the Trojan prince in a beauty competition, overlooked her and gave the prize to Venus. All through the war between the Greeks and Trojans she helped the Greeks. She did as much harm as possible to the Trojans. Her anger continued. She went to Aeolus, god of the winds, and said, "Send a storm, and drive back the Trojan ships."

Aeolus willingly obeyed her. He set free his wildest winds and a great storm broke out near the island of Sicily. The ships were scattered; the winds blew them here and there. They did not

move towards Italy but backwards to the coast of north Africa. It was a time of great worry for Aeneas. He feared that some of his ships would sink. He did not know where they were.

While the storm went on, Neptune, the god of the sea, was disturbed. "How did this happen without my permission?" he asked the sea-spirits. None of them could tell him. Neptune asked them if they had been up to mischief. "No, no," they replied. Then the sea-god, in anger lifted his head above the waves. He saw the stormy winds enjoying themselves, as they beat the ships and bent them on their side, towards the water.

"Stop!" Neptune shouted. "what do you mean? What business have you here?"

"Aeolus sent us," they replied, in fear.

"He has no right to start trouble on the sea without my permission," Neptune told them. "Go away from here at once;"

The winds did not wait for a second command. They fled back to the floating island on which Aeolus lived. When he heard of Neptune's anger, Aeolus became afraid. "Neptune may sink my island," he thought. "I fear him more than Juno or Zeue."

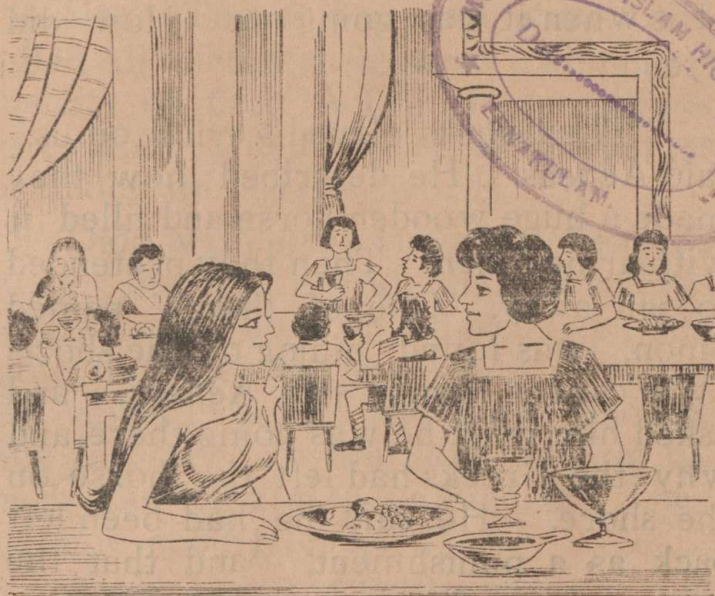
The storm suddenly ended, and Aeneas saw his ships again. They were safe though weather-beaten, All of them now sailed together until they reached the city of Carthage.

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3. HAPPY DAYS AT CARTHAGE

The ruler of Carthage, at that time, was Queen Dido. She was the daughter of King Belus of Tyre. On his death her brother, Pygmalion, became king. She, meanwhile, had married Sichaeus an extremely wealthy man. Pygmalion who wanted to get possession of Sichaeus's wealth, put him to death. Dido, however, with a number of friends and followers managed to escape from Tyre, carrying her husband's wealth with her. They sailed across the sea and came, at last, to the north coast of Africa. There they built a city, and by means of trade became wealthier and more powerful.

Dido now ruled over a small kingdom. She welcomed Aeneas and his followers. "Make yourselves at home here," she said. "Stay as long as you like."



Dido gave a grand dinner in honour of Aeneas.

That night she gave a grand dinner in honour of Aeneas. "Perhaps," said Aeneas, as they sat together, "you wish to know who we are and why we came here."

"Yes, I do," the queen replied.

"We are the last of the Trojans," Aeneas explained. "I dare say you have heard of the war between Greece and Troy?"

"Yes, I have," said Dido. I heard of it when it was going on. How did it end?"

"The Greeks played a trick on us," said Aeneas. He described how they made a huge wooden horse and filled it with armed men. Then they pretended to sail away. One of them, named Sinon, was found hiding on the shore. "We caught him," said Aeneas, "and asked him what he was doing there, and why the Greeks had left the horse on the shore. He said he had been left back as a punishment, and that the horse was an offering to Athene, goddess of wisdom. She was the guardian goddess of Troy."

Aeneas told Dido how the Trojans believed Sinon and took the horse into the city. "At dead of night," he continued, "the Greeks got out of the horse and opened the gates to their friends, who had not sailed away. They had returned and hidden farther up the

shore. The Greek army poured into the city. The soldiers ran about and killed all whom they saw. They set the city on fire. A few of us managed to escape. The rest died in the flames or under the Greek swords."

Dido was deeply moved by Aeneas's story. He told her all that he and his followers had done or suffered from that time; how they had made their ships and the adventures they had gone through. She felt sorry for him, and he, for his part, was thankful to her kindness. They became good friends.

Every morning they went on a hunt in the forest. Juno, who hated the Trojans saw her chance. She made friends with Cupid, the blind boy-god of love. He shoots his gold headed arrows through the hearts of men and women and makes them fall in love. Venus, goddess of love is his mother. She was on Aeneas's side, but Cupid, who liked to play tricks behind her back, was ready to help Juno. She hid him

among the trees, and directed his aim. Aeneas and Dido were taking shelter, at the time, from a shower of rain. Cupid sent an arrow through their hearts, and they fell deeply in love.

From that time thought less and less of the journey to Italy. Life was pleasant in Carthage. Dido was clever, and the two of them enjoyed talking together, when they were not hunting or feasting in each other's company. The people of Carthage were glad to see that their queen **was** in love with the stranger. He **was brave and wise**, and outstanding in sports and games. "He will make a good king," they thought.

The days grew into weeks, and the weeks into months. One night, as Aeneas lay asleep, Hermes appeared to him in a dream.

"Is this how you do your duty, Aeneas?" said the messenger of the gods. "Why were you saved from the flames

of Troy? Was it to make love in Carthage?"

Aeneas did not know what reply to make. It was a hard moment for him. He was torn between love and duty. On the one hand he wanted to stay in Carthage with Dido. On the other hand he had to carry out Zeus's command, and think of the new Troy, and of the glory of the new Trojans. That depended on him.

"I will leave tomorrow," he promised Hermes.

"Do," said Hermes, "and the gods will bless you."

The next morning Aeneas went early to see Dido. He looked troubled and sad.

"What is the matter?" she asked him. "Is anything wrong?"

He was silent for a while. She could see that he was suffering greatly. "My good and beautiful queen," he told her at last, "I have to leave you."

Her mouth opened in wonder, and she shook her head. All of a sudden she burst into tears. Aeneas tried to comfort her, but she would not listen to him. He could not bear to look at her grief.

"It's all my fault," he said. "I let myself fall in love with you, and forgot my duty. The gods saved me from death so that I might build the new Troy."

"How does that help me?" said Dido. "If you leave me now I won't be able to live. Must I lose you for ever?"

Aeneas was silent again. He knew he would never return. Dido could not accompany him, leaving aside her duties as queen. The only way open to them was to part for ever.

"You don't care for me," Dido said, between her tears. "You don't love me as much as Paris loved Helen." (He was one the sons of King Priam of Troy. She was the beautiful wife of a Greek king. When Paris took her with him

to troy, the Greeks became angry and went to war with Troy.)

"Paris loved Helen," Aeneas admitted. "But what was the price of their love? Troy was burnt to the ground, and thousands died. Must I sacrifice the new Troy for you?"

Dido had no answer to this question. She walked away from Aeneas, and locked herself in her room. It was useless for him to argue with her. She had only one demand. She wanted him to stay. With a heavy heart he went to his men and told them to prepare for their departure. "We must leave at once," he said. "If I stay longer I may change my mind."

A few hours passed and the Trojans were ready to sail. Aeneas wanted to meet Dido and say good-bye but she refused to see him. "Go, false Trojan;" she cried from the other side of the door. "I don't want to see your face again."

Sadly he turned away from the door, and with bowed head walked to the harbour. As soon as he got into his ship, the fleet made for the open sea. From her window Dido watched the ships sailing away. She did not take her eyes off the sea until they were all out of sight.

All that day she kept to herself, and would not eat anything. Through the rooms of the palace she went silently, like a ghost. There was the bed on which Aeneas had slept. She took the sheets and pillows and threw them in the court-yard. In the next room lay his fine clothes which he had left behind in his hurry. There were his bow and arrows, and as she looked at them she thought of that day in the forest, when it had rained. In the feasting-hall were the high chairs and cushions on which they had sat, while Aeneas told the story of the fall of Troy. She spoke, now, for the first time, and told her servants to carry these, and the

the things belonging to Aeneas, to the court-yard.

She searched the rooms for things that he had left behind. They lay in a large heap, now, in the court-yard. Nothing of his remained in the palace. Night had fallen over Carthage. Dido set fire to the heap. The flames rose higher and higher. From its case at her belt she drew a dagger, and stabbed herself. While she was dying she threw herself into the fire.

Far out at sea Aeneas and his men saw the fire. They did not know where it was burning. They wondered what it meant. Aeneas's grief did not let him pay much attention to the fire. He thought of Dido sadly, and did not know that she was dead.

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4. THE ARRIVAL IN ITALY

The Trojans sailed on, in the direction of Italy. Aeneas did not know in which part of the sea he was, but he held on northwards, guiding the ship by the sun, during the day, and the stars, at night. At the steering-wheel (or helm) stood his faithful helm's-man, Palinurus. While the others slept he stayed awake, turning the wheel this way or that, and keeping the ship on her course.

Meanwhile Venus went on a visit to Neptune, the sea-god, and said, "Let my son Aeneas reach Italy safely. You know how dutiful he is to you and to the other gods, even to Juno who is so spiteful towards him. He suffered enough at Carthage."

"All right," said Neptune. "I do this willingly because of the troubles that await him there. But I cannot let the voyage end without an accident. I shall take one life as the price of my favour."

Venus had to consent to this arrangement. While the fleet moved steadily forward, in a calm sea, Palinurus, in Aeneas's ship, stood at the steering-wheel, and looked out for rocks and other dangers. It was night and the stars shone overhead. Somnus, the god of sleep, sent by Neptune, came to palinurus in the shape of his friend phorbas.

"You are tired, aren't you?" said Somnus. "Take a rest, Palinurus. The weather is good and the sea is clear of rocks. I shall keep watch while you sleep."

"I don't trust the sea and the winds," the helm's-man replied. "Aeneas is depending on me to look after his ship. When he wakes up he will take the wheel and I shall have my turn of rest."

The god of sleep was not able to get Palinurus to listen to him. At last he dipped a branch in the waters of sleep and sprinkled them on the helm's-man. Sleep closed the eyes of Palinurus in

spite of his efforts to keep awake, but his hands still held the wheel. Somnus gently pushed him over the side of the ship, and he sank into the sea, with the steering-wheel still in his hands. There was no one to guide the ship, and no wheel with which to control its movements. But Neptune kept his word. The whole fleet sailed steadily towards Italy.

A long time passed before Aeneas discovered the loss of his faithful helm's-man. He felt sorry at the accident, and missed the company of Palinurus. But it filled him with wonder to see the ship sailing in the right way without anyone to guide it. The other ships, also, seemed to sail without guidance, and to know where they were going. Aeneas realized that Neptune was helping him. He promised to offer a sacrifice to the god when he reached shore.

By and by the fleet arrived in sight of Italy, and not long after, the Trojans

went ashore. They were glad that their wanderings were over, but did not know that great troubles were in store for them. Aeneas offered a sheep to Neptune, with prayers and ceremonies. Then leaving his men to build a camp he set out alone for a temple sacred to Apollo and Diana. It stood in the midst of a forest, and in a cave near by lived the sibyl, or priestess of Apollo. Through her the god made known the future. Aeneas was anxious to find out what lay ahead for him and his companions.

The old priestess, informed by Apollo of this visit, greeted Aeneas while he was still a little distance off. "Founder of the new Troy!" she cried. "Father of the Romans! That shall be your new title, when you become the leader of a people here. But war and hardship await you in the future. However, do not give in to difficulties but push on more bravely, and you will get over all of them."

"With the gods to help me," Aeneas said, "I am ready to face any

danger. I have come in obedience to them. They will see me through the hard times to come."

Now, Aeneas's father, Anchises, whom he had saved from the flames of Troy, had died early in the course of the voyage. The dutiful Aeneas had buried him on an island, with proper ceremonies and prayers. Anchises was now in Hades, the region of the dead. This is situated in the centre of the earth. There was a way leading to Hades, known to the sibyl alone. Aeneas asked her if she would take him there to meet Anchises.

"I have been advised in a dreem," he said, "to visit my father in the underworld. He will tell me about those who will come after me, in my family, and show me their glorious future."

"I will take you to Hades," said the sybil. The entrance is the cave of Avernus. It lies in a lonely place not

far from her. The descent through Avernus is easy, for all who die enter Hades by that cave. The return to the upper world is difficult. The dead do not return to life. You will need a bold heart. The danger of death is always there."

"I am ready to face it," Aeneas told her.

"Go, then," she said, "into this forest, and look for a tree with a golden branch on it. There is only one tree of this kind. If the king and queen of Hades allow this visit, you will be able to break off the golden branch. As soon as it is broken off another grows in its place. We shall take the golden branch as a gift for Proserpina." (She is the queen of hell. Pluto is the king.)

Aeneas wandered through the forest in search of the tree. The forest stretched for many miles on all sides. It contained thousands of trees. Where

was the one with the golden branch?

Venus came to his help. She sent two of her doves, and they guided the Trojan to the tree. There, within reach of his hand, was a branch of pure gold, shining, with its gold leaves, in the darkness. Aeneas broke it off with ease. He knew, now, that he was permitted to visit his father in Hades.

When he returned to the sibyl she was ready for the journey. She had made a sweet cake for the three-headed dog at the entrance of Pluto's palace. "We shall give this to him," she said, "and he will let us enter the palace with our present for Proserpina."

They set out through the forest, and arrived, after a time, at the edge of it. In front of them lay a deep, wide hollow with a lake at the bottom of it. The ground was ash-grey, with large black rocks here and there. Through cracks in the earth smoke

and steam came out, and sometimes flames. The black water of the lake bubbled and boiled far down below. Near the lake on the sloping edge there was a cave. "That," said the sybil, "is the mouth of Avernus, the entrance to Hades."

She led the way through steam and flames. The air was black with smoke. Aeneas had to walk carefully. He was hardly able to breathe. Near the entrance to the cave he offered sacrifices to Pluto and Proserpina. A sound like thunder came from the centre of the earth. "Now call up your courage," said the sibyl. "You will need it."

As they went through the cave they saw, on both sides, all kinds of fierce strange creatures, a giant with a hundred arms, a snake with a hundred heads. There were the Furies, women with snakes instead of hair, and with whips in their hands. They took charge of bad people who had died

and led them to places of punishment in the underworld. Aeneas, in fear, drew his sword, but the sibyl held his hand. "Don't enter into a fight with these creatures," she said. "You will get the worst of it."

When they had walked a long distance they came to a river. On their side of it stood countless souls, waiting to cross to the land of the dead. There was a dark, old boatman in dirty clothes. His name was Charon. When his boat drew near them the souls tried to get in, but he drove them back. "Wait your turn," he said rudely. Then he pointed to one soul here and another there, and signed to them to enter his boat, and took them across to Hades.

In the crowd on the river-bank, Aeneas caught sight of Palinurus, his helm's-man, who fell into the sea on the way to Italy. "What are you doing here?" Aeneas asked.

"Oh sir," said Palinurus, "my death ceremonies have not been performed. I must wait here until someone does them for me."

Aeneas was sad. "I will do them," he said, "When I get back."

"Oh, take me now, with you, across the river," Palinurus begged him. "I have waited long enough."

"No," said the sybil. "Don't disobey Pluto's law. Wait a little longer, Palinurus. Your body will be washed up on the sea-shore. The people of that land will find it and feel pity for you. They will perform the ceremonies, and you will be able to enter the land of the dead."

Meanwhile Charon caught sight of Aeneas. "How dare you come here before your death?" he asked.

"We have not come to give you any trouble," said the sibyl. "This young man has come to see his father. Pluto has given him permission to visit Hades."

"I have brought this for Proserpina," said Aeneas, and he showed the golden branch to Charon. All at once the boatman became respectful and obliging "Get into my boat," he said. "I will take you across."

The boat moved slowly, for it was carrying living people. As a rule it carried souls, with no weight at all, but now it lowered into the water with its burden. When they reached the opposite bank, they saw Pluto's palace, and the three-headed dog that guarded the door. The sibyl threw her cake to him. He ate it and fell asleep. Aeneas then went into the hall where Pluto and Proserpina sat, and presented the golden branch to Proserpina.

— "You are a good young man, Aeneas" said the queen. "You may go where you please in the land of death. When you return to the upper world you will have troubles to face, but the gods will always be on your side."

Aeneas thanked her, for her kindness, and Pluto smiled. He then left the hall, and went in search of his father. On his way he passed a forest where souls wandered among the trees. Aeneas suddenly saw a face which he recognized. It was Dido's! All his love for her rushed back into his mind, and he called out eagerly to her.

"My beloved queen!" he cried, "Why are you here?"

Dido turned and saw him. He ran towards her, but she gave him angry looks, and walked away to join her husband, whom her brother had murdered for his wealth. Aeneas sorrowfully returned to the sibyl, and they went on their way. Leaving the road they entered a field in which they met soldiers of the war between Greece and Troy. The Greeks fled when they saw him. The Trojans crowded around him, and asked him many questions about their living friends.

"They are with me," Aeneas told them, "and they are safe and sound. We are going to build a new Troy. The gods have promised us that the new Troy will be greater than the old."

"Where will it be?" the ghosts wanted to know.

"In Italy," said the sybil, "and its new name will be Rome."

From the field they returned to the road and came to a point where it branched in two directions. One led to Tartarus, which was surrounded by a river of fire. "There is a deep pit behind those walls," said the sybil, pointing to the region. "Inside are wicked people who are punished for their crimes on earth."

The gates opened, at that moment, and Aeneas saw a huge snake with fifty heads, which guarded the entrance. Within those walls was Ixion, who had tried to make love to Juno. He was tied on a wheel which turned



*Aeneas saw a huge snake with fifty heads
which guarded the entrance.*

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round and round for ever. Tantalus was there, who was a greedy king. He stood in a pool of wine, but when he stooped to drink some, his lips did not reach it. Over his head fruit-trees lowered their branches loaded with fruit. He raised his head to catch them with his mouth, but the branches swung back and he was left hungry and thirsty.

The sibyl led Aeneas along the other road. They came, at last, to the beautiful fields of Elysium. Here, on beds of flowers, the heroes, poets and learned men, took rest and forgot the troubles of earthly life. The sibyl asked some of them where Anchises was. "He is in a valley not far from here," they replied. One of them offered to take Aeneas to his father. Guided by him the two visitors walked towards the valley.

"What a beautiful region this is!" said Aeneas. "Anyone who comes here from the upper world will never want to return there."

They were admiring the lovely flowers when Anchises caught sight of them. He ran joyfully, with outstretched arms, towards his son. "At last you have come!" he cried. "I have waited a long time for this visit."

After he had embraced Aeneas they walked away together, and Anchis-

es spoke about the future. "You must travel farther up, to the north of Italy," he said. "You will come to a river called the Tiber. In a village near by there is a king whose name is Latinus. His beautiful daughter, Lavinia, will become your wife. From your children, hundreds of years from now, will come the great rulers of Rome. The greatest of them will be the emperor Augustus. He will show much kindness to the poet Virgil, and Virgil will write your story."

They talked of many matters, and on the way came to the river Lethe. If anyone drank the water he forgot his past. On their side of the river there were thousands of souls. "They are waiting to go to the upper world," said Anchises. "On the other side are the souls of those who have died. They have newly come to Hades, and will be here, for a time. Then they will join these souls and return to the land of the living."

"No one who came here would want to return," said Aeneas. "There is no place in the upper world as beautiful and peaceful as this."

"You are right," said his father, "but on account of the law of life and death men have to be born again and again untill they are fit to stay here for ever. I shall not be born again, as a man."

"Why are the souls on this side drinking water from the river?" Aeneas asked.

"They will forget their life in Hades," said Anchises, when they return to your world. Those who come from your world, and who are on the other side, also drink the water of Lethe. It makes them forget all their past."

When they had been together for a long time the sibyl called out to Aeneas. "Come, sir," she said, "it is time for us to return to the upper world."

He felt very sad when he had to leave his father.

He felt very sad when he had to leave his father. "Never mind," said Anchises. "You will come here one day, my son, and after that we shall be together for ever."

"I shall think of you always," said Aeneas. "My thoughts of you will make me remember to do my duty."

"You did it," said Anchises, "when you left Carthage. I know what sorrow you suffered. Pluto himself praised you for your great deed."

Aeneas now took leave of his father. He and the sibyl set out towards the river Lethe. There they crossed the waters of forgetfulness. "I know a short way to the upper world from this place," said the sibyl. She led Aeneas through fields and valleys. By and by they came to a small cave which they entered. They walked, for a while, through a passage, and came out, at the end of it, into the sunlight and the world of men.

5. IN SEARCH OF FRIENDS

Aeneas thanked the sibyl for her help and hurried back to his followers. They were waiting anxiously for him, and were glad to see him again. He told them that they had to continue their voyage. "We must sail farther," he said, "until we reach the mouth of the river Tiber. I was told this in the land of the dead."

The ships set out at once, and arrived, a few days later, at the river mouth. They were now in the land of the Latins, whose king was Latinus. His daughter, Lavinia, was very beautiful. Many kings wanted to marry her, but Latinus was warned, in a dream, not to give her in marriage to any of them. "Her husband will come from a distant land, across the seas," he was told. His wife, Amata however, wanted Lavinia to marry Turnus, the king of the Rutulians. She promised Turnus that Lavinia would be his bride.

Arriving in the kingdom of Latinus, Aeneas at once sent messengers with gifts to him. The king received them kindly. When he heard that Aeneas had come from Troy, he thought, "This is the man whom the gods have chosen for my son-in-law. Lavinia shall marry him."

Juno, however, was determined to prevent the marriage. She made the queen object strongly to the marriage. She sent an old priestess to Turnus to tell him that some foreigners had come to that part of Italy. "One of them," she said, "is about to rob you of your future wife."

The messengers returned to Aeneas, and told him how well the king had treated them. "He wants his daughter to marry you," they said. "She is the most beautiful woman in the world. But the queen is against you. She is opposed to the marriage."

Aeneas met with further ill-luck. His son Ascanius went on a hunt in

the forest with some friends. There they killed a deer. It happened to be a pet deer belonging to the forester's daughter. He and his friends attacked Ascanius, and in the fight that followed two Latins were killed. All the villagers then turned against the foreigners.

It was a time of worry for Aeneas. He did not know what to do. As he lay asleep, one night, the god of the Tiber appeared to him. "Welcome to this land, Aeneas," he said. "This will be your home, but not yet. Tomorrow morning, take a few men with you and sail up my river. You will come to a small town. In days to come it will be the great city of Rome. There you will find a king whose name is Evander. He will help you against your enemies."

Aeneas woke up early the next morning, and called a few men together. "Get a boat ready," he said, "We shall sail up the river." To the others he

said, "Guard our camp carefully, but don't get into a fight with the Latins. I shall return shortly, and bring with me enough men for a battle with the Rutulians and their friends."

They promised to be watchful, and to avoid a fight with their enemies. Aeneas then left them, and his boat went quickly up the Tiber, helped by the river-god. He and his men came, at noon, in sight of a small town. King Evander was holding a feast beside the river. When he saw the boat he became afraid, and wanted to stop the feast. He was an old, peace-loving man, and he thought that the strangers had come to create trouble. His son Pallas, however, said, "Let the feast go on. I will go and speak to the strangers."

He drew his sword and went to the river-bank. "Who are you?" he asked. "What do you want here?"

Aeneas held out an olive branch as a sign of peace. "We have come here as friends," he said. "We want

King Evander to help us. The Rutulians are determined to destroy us. I have only a hundred men. I was told that the king would come to our rescue."

Pallas took Aeneas's hand and held it long, in friendship. "You have come to the right place," he said. He led the Trojans to his father, and seats were arranged for them at the feast. When it was over King Evander walked back to his palace between Pallas and Aeneas. He was bent almost in two, with old age. "I came here from Greece," he said. "The people here lived like wild beasts until the god Saturn came to live among them. He, as you know, was the father of Zeus, and was driven by Zeus out of heaven. Saturn taught the people how to grow corn. They became good and gentle, but in course of time bad leaders arose in their midst. Saturn then left them, and the leaders quarrelled among themselves. At that time I arrived here. With the support of some of the people

I put down the trouble-makers and became king of land."

Aeneas was glad to have Evander's friendship. "I need your help," he said. "The gods have sent me to build the new Troy. I don't want to go to war with the people of Italy, but Turnus, king of the Rutulians, is determined to fight against me."

"I would like to help you," said Evander, "but I haven't got a strong army. On one side of my kingdom is the river. On the other is the country of the Rutulians. If they attack us they will defeat us easily. Near by, however, is a group of people called the Etruscans. They are my friends, and they are good soldiers. Their king, Mezentius, was a very cruel man, so they turned against him. He and his son Lausus went to Turnus, and took shelter in his country. The Etruscans have been demanding the return of their king. They want to put him to death. But Turnus is

opposing them, and protects Mezentius with his strong army."

Aeneas listened to Evander patiently, and then said, "Will you send me with some of your men to the leader of the Etruscans?"

"My son Pallas shall go with you," Evander replied. "He will be a soldier under you, and learn from you how to be a great man."

He sent for horses, the next morning, and Aeneas, Pallas and a few men, set out for the land of the Etruscans. They welcomed him, on his arrival, for they had been told, by their wise men, that they would defeat the Rutulians under a leader who would come from across the sea. Tarchon, at the time, was their chosen governor. He promised Aeneas a large army.

6. THE END OF THE STRUGGLE

In his absence the followers of Aeneas were going through great difficulties. The Rutulians attacked their camp but they defended it bravely. Remembering Aeneas's advice they did not go out into the open and fight against the enemy. The Rutulians felt proud of their strength. They stayed, at night, in a field, a little distance from the Trojans.

"We must get a message to Aeneas," said the Trojan leaders when they met to talk about the situation.

"Let me carry it," said Nisus. "I shall go carefully through the camp of the Rutulians when they are asleep. I shall reach the river-bank and tell Aeneas about our danger."

"I shall go with you," Euryalus told Nisus. They were close friends.

"You are young," said Nisus, "and a long life lies before you. It is better that you stay here."

Euryalus was determined to accompany Nisus. The leaders gladly accepted their services. When darkness fell they set out together. As they passed through the Rutulian camp they killed a number of sleeping soldiers. They were almost out of the camp when a group of men suddenly arrived to join the Rutulians. Their leader, Volscens, immediately spoke to the two Trojans. They did not stay to answer him but ran, in different directions, to the forest near by.

Volscens and his men knew that they were Trojans, and went after them. Nisus escaped and waited for Euryalus to join him. When he saw no sign of him he turned back and searched for his friend. Hiding behind the trees he went forward, and after a while saw Volscens and his men. They had surrounded Euryalus and were asking him questions. He remained silent, and would not answer them. Volscens drew

his sword. Nisus could not bear to see his friend killed, so he threw his spear. His aim was good. The spear went through the back of one of the men, and he fell dead.

"You shall pay for this," said Volscens to Euryalus. Nisus then went forward crying, "I am to blame. I killed your man. Spare my friend."

Volscens, however, took no notice of him, and killed Euryalus. Nisus, then, in a fit of anger rushed on Volscens and cut him down with his sword, and was killed, presently, with numberless blows from the leader's men.

The next day Aeneas arrived with an army of Etruscans. The war now began in earnest. Mezentius, seeing his people on the Trojan side, was filled with rage and fought fiercely. He killed a number of men. Aeneas's soldiers ran from him, and this made him bolder. At length he stood face

to face with Aeneas, and threw his spear at him. The spear missed its mark. Aeneas now, in turn, threw his spear with better success, for it pierced his opponent's shield and entered his leg.

Mezentius's son, Lausus, could not bear to see his father wounded. He rushed at Aeneas, and meanwhile the Rutulians carried Mezentius to safety. Aeneas did not want to kill Lausus. He tried to keep away from him, but the young man followed him about the field. In the end Aeneas was forced to fight with him. He struck Lausus down with his sword. He was sorry for the young man and did not take away his armour although it was the custom to do so.

In another part of the field Turnus fought with Pallas who, however, was no match for him. The Rutulian king killed Evander's son but did not take his armour. Pallas was wearing a beautiful belt of gold. This attracted

Turnus's eye and he took it from the dead man's waist and put it on his own.

When Mezentius heard of his son's death he was furious with Aeneas. Although he was wounded he returned to the battle-field and rode about, on horseback, in search of the Trojan leader. They met, at last, and Aeneas guarded himself successfully while his opponent threw spear after spear at him. Presently Aeneas threw his spear at the head of Mezentius's horse. Down fell the Etruscan king, and a loud cheer went up from the Trojan side. Aeneas now drew his sword and they fought on foot. Mezentius was not able to hold out for long. In the end Aeneas, cut off his head, and the Etruscans were pleased that their cruel king was punished for his past misdeeds.

The next day saw the end of the battle. Aeneas sent word to Turnus saying, "As this quarrel concerns only both of us, let us fight it out alone. If you defeat me, you can marry Lavinia,

and I will die or leave this land. If I win, promise that you will give up your claim to Lavinia."



"Spare my life!" cried Turnus

Turnus accepted the challenge. The fight was long and bitter. At length, however, Aeneas had his rival at his mercy. "Spare my life!" cried Turnus, and Aeneas was inclined to do this when he caught sight of Pallas's belt round the other's waist. "It is not

I who kill you," he shouted as he drove his sword through Turnus. It is Pallas!"

When their leader was dead, the Rutulians were ready to make peace with Aeneas. King Latinus now came forward and said, "Noble Aeneas, you have won my daughter's hand. After I die you shall be king in my place."

Thus Aeneas married Lavinia, and their children were the first Roman kings. He went with her to live in Evander's kingdom, and built a great city on the banks of the Tiber. This was the city of Rome which, in course of time, became the heart of a mighty empire. Julius Caesar spread it far into Africa and Asia, and after him came the emperor Augustus. He was the greatest of the emperors, and he showed great favour to poets. Among them was Virgil, who wrote the *Aeneid* in praise of him and of his country.

Questions

1. THE DEPARTURE

- 1 Which was Homer's second poem?
- 2 How long after Homer did Virgil live?
- 3 Who was Aeneas's mother?
- 4 How did Hermes appear to Aeneas?
- 5 What had Zeus sent him to tell Aeneas?
- 6 Where was the new Troy to rise?
- 7 What was Aeneas told to make, on the sea-shore?
- 8 How did Aeneas take his father out of the burning city?
- 9 Describe the death of Creusa?
- 10 Why did Aeneas stay awake all night?
- 11 Where did Aeneas and his followers arrive the next evening?
- 12 What different kinds of work did they do from the next day onwards?
- 13 In which country did they arrive first, after they set sail?
- 14 What happened when Aeneas broke a twig from a bush?
- 15 How did Polydore die?
- 16 Why did Aeneas leave the country?
- 17 What did Aeneas do on the island of Delos?
- 18 What reply did he get from the oracle?
- 19 Where did he go after that?
- 20 How did he know that he had to go to Italy?

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