"Virgil and Youth"

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Virgil and Youth.

It has been said that most people, when asked to quote Virgil's best line, would give this:

"sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia taugunt."

It is a line which has captured the imagination of many modern poets, among them Wordsworth, Matthew Arnold, and Tennyson. It is spoken by Virgil's hero Aeneas as he gazes up at wall paintings in the interior of a temple to Juno erected by Phoenician Dido on the North African shore. Great had been the Trojan's amazement at finding depicted there the story of his city's downfall and the immortal deeds of her heroes. As he stands scanning the matchless work of art, there come back to his mind vivid memories of the horrible experiences through which he had passed six years earlier. There was borne upon him afresh an overwhelming sense of bereavement. With tears in his eyes, he utters these words in a mournful tone:

"Tears are to human sorrow given, hearts feel for mankind."

Even the Phoenicians had heard of Troy's misfortune and, when erecting a temple in their new home, took the opportunity of expressing sympathy for their former neighbor.

1. Translated by Sir C. Bowen, cited by Tyrell, "Latin Poetry" P. 146.
The "lacrimae rerum" expresses adequately the melancholy which has been observed by scholars to pervade Virgil's work. In spite of the fact that there is a joyous shout of triumph ringing through his masterpiece, "The Aeneid", there are unmistakable signs of the poet's sensitiveness to the plaintive note which not infrequently accompanies a triumphal cry. "All his emotions seem to have fused or melted into that impersonal and indefinable melancholy, the sound of which since his day has grown so familiar in our ears, which invades the sanest and the strongest spirits, and seems to yield to nothing except such a love, or such a faith, as can give or promise heaven."

1.

The tragic side of Virgil's work is evident even in the story of Aeneas. It is only after facing the deepest disappointments—loss of wife, death of father, the scourge of pestilence, shipwreck, the disloyalty of comrades—that the Trojan hero is able to fulfill his destiny. Yet the poet must of necessity endow him with a will of iron and a certain amount of immunity to the sorrows of life, for is he not the traditional founder of the Roman state?. While Aeneas is Virgil's most god-like character, he is at the same time his least human. Therefore it is to numerous minor characters we turn when we wish to see most clearly the poet's personal reaction to man's struggle against fate.

1. Myers, "Essays Classical"
It seems that Virgil lavishes his sympathy upon the portraiture of young warriors slain in battle. Such tender regard has he for these unfortunate youths that the reader is reminded more than once of the similarity between Virgil's attitude toward youth and that of Jesus of Nazareth. There is the same compassionate understanding of youth's fool-hardiness, and, at the same time, an unwavering appreciation of all that is best in it. The poet expresses earnestly the desire to perpetuate the memory of certain youthful characters simply for the sake of reminding future generations of their brave deeds. But there is another and deeper reason for his frequent allusion to this type of character, namely, a personal interest in the philosophical problems involved. What relation have gods to man if they are powerless to prevent the pouring forth of beautiful young lives on the grim field of battle? Is there some omnipotent Purpose underlying the Universe which guides the destiny of each individual? Is man repaid for being virtuous? One feels that it is such perplexing questions as these which intrigue Virgil's mind, as indeed they have intrigued the minds of all thinking people ever since. In short, he felt the mystery of death. We do not feel that our poet has solved the mystery either to his own satisfaction or to ours, but he succeeds in doing a greater thing - bringing the reader to a mood of pensive thoughtfulness and sending his mind groping after a solution to some of the world's most thought-provoking problems.
There are four distinct episodes falling within three of the twelve books of "Aeneid", all of them devoted to youthful characters, which afford excellent examples of the poet's sensitiveness to the pathos of youth. When carefully examined, they reveal, not only Virgil's interest in philosophical and religious problems, but also his ability to understand the soul of youth. He understands all the weaknesses to which young people are subject - capriciousness, thoughtlessness, and love of praise. Yet he sees beyond these faults to the dauntless heart within. Because these episodes disclose all the tenderness of the poet toward childhood and early manhood and womanhood, an examination of them makes an ideal basis for the discussion of the subject in hand.

The first of the episodes referred to above concerns two young Trojan warriors, Nisus and Euryalus by name, who had arrived safely in Italy with Aeneas and his party. Some two hundred and seventy-five lines of Book IX are set aside to relate the experiences which they underwent in carrying out a scheme to cut through the enemy's camp. Virgil mentions the two young men in an earlier book as taking part in the games held at the tomb of Anchises. This earlier incident in the lives of the two young men gives some hint as to their respective characters and is of interest in itself, though Virgil does not connect it directly with the episode in Book IX. (1)

(1) Tyrell suggests that Book VII was added as an afterthought to give symmetry to the whole work. This would account for the disconnection.
The two were competing in a footrace. Nisus was well in the lead, when he suddenly slipped and fell to the ground, losing all chance of winning. In this rather unfortunate predicament, he did not forget his close friend, Euryalus, who was holding third place in the race. He deliberately pushed himself in front of the runner who was second, causing the latter to fall, and giving Euryalus the opportunity of winning. Nisus' treatment of Salius, the second runner, was unsportsmanlike according to our standards, but Virgil succeeds in conveying to the reader the impression that it was merely a boyish trick. He places the emphasis upon the fact that Nisus remembered his friend even though he himself had met with misfortune. As the poet relates the incident, one scarcely notices Nisus' unfairness. It is the strength of the friendship between the two youths that is outstanding.

"Non tamen Euryali, non ille oblivus amorum: nam sese opposuit Salio per lubrica surgens, ille autem spissa iacuit revolutus harena." 1

The impressions of Nisus and Euryalus to be gleaned from the incident just retold are deepened and broadened in Book IX. Here Virgil pictures the pair standing as guardsmen at one of the gates in the defensive wall recently raised by the Trojans. They are still firm friends and have both entered wholeheartedly into the spirit of the camp.

"his amor unus erat, pariterque in bella ruebant" 2

As they stand in their places, side by side, they converse with one another and the poet has written what he imagines to be their exact words. So skilfully has he handled this

conversation that when it is ended the reader has a definite impression of the personalities involved. At the outset we are informed that Nisus is the elder of the two. Euryalus is still a boy -

"ora puerprima signans intonsa iuventa". But he is nevertheless the bosom friend of the older youth. Nisus has been doing some hard thinking while standing at his comrade's side, and addresses him thus:

"Dine hunc ardorem mentibus addunt, Euryale, an sua cuique deus fit dira cupidio?"

After this thoughtful utterance (which is typically Virgilian in that it involves a profound philosophical problem) he unfolds to his friend the plan which had been taking shape in his mind. This plan comprised a daring attempt to pass through the enemy's camp, which was pitched just outside the Trojan ramparts, and gain the road to Pallanteum. Aeneas had left the previous day on a diplomatic mission to that town, which stood on the site of Rome. In his absence, the garrison had been attacked by a large force of Italians and was not in a position to hold out against them very long. Nisus hoped to elude the enemy's guard by making his way through their encampment under cover of night and carry word to Aeneas of the impending danger. After hinting at his proposed exploit he remarks to Euryalus "If the councillors provide for you as I shall ask them to do - as for myself the glory of the deed is enough - I shall make the attempt."

He realizes the risk that he is about to take, and wishes to satisfy himself that his young friend will suffer no neglect in the event of his death. The reader has already obtained some fairly definite ideas about Nisus' character. He is patriotic to the point of sacrificing his life for the welfare of his countrymen, he possesses a courageous spirit, and he displays an almost fatherly thoughtfulness for his comrade in arms.

There is no hesitation on the part of Euryalus in answering his companion, although the latter's proposal has taken him by surprise. He rebukes his friend in no uncertain terms for not considering him as a partner in the venture.

"solum te in tanta pericula mittam?".

1. It never occurs to him to question Nisus about the details of his plan or to examine its feasibility. Instead he reminds him of the courage his father had shown in the face of danger and of his own conduct throughout the recent expedition. He concludes with a fine flourish:

"est hic, est animus lucis contemptor, et istum qui vita bene credat emi, quo tendis, honorem."

2. There is no uncertainty about his attitude. One would be tempted to look upon these last two lines as an expression of the noblest intentions ever originated in the mind of man if it were not for four little words which the poet uses to describe Euryalus just before he speaks:

"magno laudum percussus amore Euryalus" 3

This phrase sheds another light upon the lad's thoughts. Euryalus is not more than eighteen years old. He does not realize the seriousness of the situation as Nisus does but he sees in it a chance to make a name for himself. He might not have uttered such glib statements about "despising the light" if he had stopped to consider carefully the step which he was contemplating. But such is the impetuosity of youth. Nisus pays no heed to the outburst but reminds him gently that his aged mother-"genetrix vetusta"- will be left behind with no one to care for her. He also intimated that he would like to be assured of someone's paying the last rites to his departed shade if misfortune befell him. This earnest pleading only serves to add fuel to the flame. Euryalus becomes more determined than ever to go.

"causas nequiquam nectis inanes
nec mea iam mutata loco sententia cedit:
adceleremus."

1.

It is useless to argue with the fiery spirited youth, so the twain set out together to find "Prince Ascanius", (2) who is responsible for the camp in the absence of his father Aeneas. Nisus must have regretted mentioning his scheme to Euryalus, for, being the elder, he felt responsible for him. Perhaps it was impossible for him to separate himself from his friend long enough to impart his daring project to Ascanius.

1. Bk.1X 11,219-221. (2) Bk.1X,1,223. Ascanius is referred to as "rex" for the first time.
Perhaps he placed implicit faith in his own ability to influence the youth to remain behind. Knowing his impulsive nature, he must have anticipated his reaction to the unfolding of the plan. Whatever his reasons for discussing the proposal with Euryalus, the mischief was now done.

Ascanius is found in the Council Ring with the chief warriors and elders, discussing ways and means of defending the stronghold on the following day. Nisus bursts in upon the circle and explains carefully his proposed venture. Aletes, one of the councillors, "hic annis gravis atque animi maturus (Aletes?): is the first to recover from surprise and makes a fitting reply. In doing so, he makes one of the finest tributes to youth which can be found in all literature:

"di patrii, quorum semper sub numiue Troia est, non tamen omnino Tencros delere paratis, cum tales animos invenum et tam certa tulistis pectora." (1)

He goes on to say that he is at a loss to think of any reward worthy of such deeds, then he utters the following words, and one can imagine that it is not Aletes, but Virgil who is speaking from years of experience:

"pulcherrima primum di moresque dabunt vestri." (2)

Ascanius, on his part, is quick to promise Nisus the highest possible honors and speaks of making Euryalus, "mea quem spatiis propioribus aetas", his boon companion. The answer which Euryalus makes to Aeneas' son is interesting, because

it brings to light a hitherto unnoticed quality in the speaker's character. After thanking Ascanius, he asks one favor of him, that he promise to take care of his old mother if she is left without a son. He explains that he is undertaking the escapade entirely without her knowledge and does not mean to inform her of his intentions because he cannot bear her tears:

"nox et tua testis
dextera, quod nequeam lacrimas perferre parentis."

(1)

This does not seem to be the same ardent lad speaking who had lately brushed aside all arguments used to deter him. Indeed his friend had reminded him of his mother, but he gave no heed. Dr. Henry in his comments upon this passage says, "Euryalus is not put forward as an example of filial affection" (2) His argument in support of this statement is that the youth did not think of his mother until Nisus reminded him of her. But when Nisus had spoken of her, Euryalus had given no thought to the matter. It was only after he had heard his companion explain the scheme again to the councillors and after he had seen how seriously these men took it that he thought of his parent. Surely the poet meant us to feel that Euryalus was sincere in his regard for his mother. The sentiments expressed can scarce be taken otherwise. Is it not possible that he was just now beginning to realize the seriousness of the affair and his thoughts turn first of all to his mother?.

His love of adventure and love of fame come to the fore previous to his affection for his mother. This seems entirely natural, for he is very young. On the other hand it does not necessarily indicate that his love for his mother was less strong than his other emotions.

The actions of the two warriors throughout the rest of the episode are consistent with their personalities. It is Niscus who takes the lead, and it is Euryalus whose reckless ardour leads to the untimely death of both. As they pass through the ranks of the Rutulian foe, "somno vinoque soluti", each works great havoc with his sword. Niscus noticing that his companion is becoming "nimia caede atque cupidine ferri", reminds him that dawn is approaching and that they must hasten to find their way out of the enemy's territory. Euryalus, however, cannot resist the temptation to gird himself with some of the spoils which lie about him. He therefore lingers to fit a swordbelt hurriedly on his shoulders and don a massive helmet. At this point, the poet gives us a keynote to future occurrences by including one little word, "nequiquam":

"haec rapit atque umeris nequiquam fortibus aptat."(1)

As the youths are leaving the enemy's camp, they approach unawares a detachment of Laurentine horsemen who, as allies, are drawing near the camp of the Latins. Unfortunately they are spotted by this party and it is the glint of Euryalus' helmet in the moonlight that has attracted attention.

"Euryalum immemorem"! Volcens, the leader of the mounted men,

(1) Bk.IX 1.304
commands them to halt, but they stop for nothing. Before the troops know what is happening, they disappear among the tangle of the nearest thicket. The darkness of the night is deepened there to blackness, for the area is matted with briers and stubby oaks. The horsemen lose sight of them, but they lose sight of one another.

"Euryalum tenebrae ramorum onerosaque praeda
impediunt fallitque timor regione varium.
Nisus abit; iamque imprudens eveserat hostes." (1)

Both forget everything except the immediate danger, and dash blindly ahead. Euryalus is hampered by his accoutrements and, desperate with fear, he very soon mistakes the ill-defined path. Nisus, on the other hand, with all his heedlessness, succeeds in groping his way out of the undergrowth and reaching safety. He gives no thought to the plight of his comrade until his foot treads on safe ground. He too has been seized with panic. For the first time, he thinks of his own welfare before that of his friend. While we would like to think that Nisus never forgets his friend even in the face of grave danger, nevertheless we know, as Virgil knew, that the instinct of self-preservation is probably the most deep-seated of any human trait. The amazing thing, then, is, not that he temporarily forgets his companion, but that he does not continue his mad flight until he reaches his destination. Instead, his first impulse when he has reached safety is to look for his friend. He can see him nowhere. Without any hesitation, (simul), he retraces his steps through the wood, intent on finding his

comrade. He has just re-entered the danger zone when he hears the clash of arms and espies Euryalus surrounded by the foe. What can he do to help his friend? What is his best move? He decides to fight from ambush. Poising his spear, he prays fervently to Fatona, asking her to guide it. It proves fatal to one of the enemy's number. A second dart is equally effective. Volcens, becoming thoroughly angered at this "guerrilla warfare" raises his sword to despatch Euryalus. On seeing this move, Nisus loses all self-control and rushes into the enemy's midst, shouting,

"me, me adsum, qui feci, in me convertite ferrum, O Rutuli; mea fraus omnis;
. . . . . . . . . .
tantum infelicem nimium dilexit amicum." (1)

"He but loved his hapless friend too well"! All thought of his own personal safety is now scattered to the winds. A less generous soul would have cursed the lad who had accompanied him unbidden. Nisus is "Great Heart" indeed!

Volcens remains unmoved by Nisus' passionate words and promptly slays Euryalus ("candida pectora rumpit")

"So doth the purple floweret, dying, droop,
Smit by the ploughshare. So the poppy frail
On stricken stalk its languid head doth stoop,
And bows o'erladen with the drenching hail." (2)

The dauntless soul of Nisus swells with revenge. Obsessed with the desire to draw the blood of Volcens, he charges wildly at the slayer of his beloved Euryalus. None can stay him. His sword reaches its mark,

"et moriens animam abstulit hosti." (1)

This done, he falls on the lifeless form of his friend.

"Then, pierced, he sinks upon his comrade slain,  
And death's long slumber puts an end to pain," (2)

Had Virgil been a Christian, he would have penned lines about Nisus similar to these of John Oxenham:

"Great Heart is dead, they say -  
What is death to such a one as Great Heart?  
One sigh, perchance, for work unfinished here -  
Then a swift passing to a mightier sphere,  
New joys, perfected powers, the vision clear,  
And all the amplitude of heaven to work  
The work he held so dear.  
... ... ... 
A soul so fiery sweet can never die  
But lives and loves to all eternity."

It was Virgil's express wish that Nisus and Euryalus be remembered "as long as the house of Aeneas dwelt on the immovable rock of the Capitol." Little did he realize that the pair would be immortal fifteen hundred years after that house had crumbled to dust and ruin. Throughout the centuries they have been characters in world literature and it is likely that they will retain that position. As long as human nature remains unchangeable, so long will they be vital personalities. Euryalus, with his love of fame, his impetuosity, his daring, embodies the spirit of thoughtless youth. Nisus, with his cool bravery, his patriotism, and, above all, his affection for his friend, demonstrates the divinity of the human soul. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Virgil has perpetuated these characters in the

(1) Bk.IX,1.443.  (2) Bk.IX,11.445-6 Trans. by E.F.Taylor
minds of countless millions who never saw the glory of his beloved Rome. "Si quid mea carmina possunt,!") (1)

Virgil is indebted to Homer for the concept of the Nisus and Euryalus story, as he is for many another incident. It is modelled upon the story of Diomedes and Ulysses, who entered the Trojan camp as spies. When the two episodes are compared, one realizes how much more intensely human Virgil's characters are than the Greek poet's. Diomedes and Ulysses impress one as being inhumanly strong and ruthless men-at-arms. They are responsible for murdering the witless Dolon and killing scores to effect the rape of a team of horses. They are not youths, but men in the prime of life who have lost all youthful idealism and consequently do not hesitate to commit any offence in order to gain their ends. It is characteristic of Virgil to replace them by two noble young souls whose plundering and killing is not so offensive because it is the result of rashness, not deliberate intent to rob; whose friendship is the flowering of man's noblest quality, love for his fellow. One is not surprised to find a certain editor referring to the incident of Nisus and Euryalus as "one of the crowning instances of Virgil's power of appealing to human sensibility."

In the tenth book, Virgil records the untimely death of two other youths whose names may be linked together, not because of friendship between them, but because of the similar way in which Fate treated them. They were both very young -

1. Bk. IX 1.446  2. Papillon & Haigh, Notes, P.295
"nec multum discrepat aetas" (1) and handsome - "egregii forma" (2) as well as courageous to a fault. Both were born leaders, and proved their mettle by boldly dashing into the midst of the opposing party, thus encouraging their comrades to follow them. In fact, they had a great deal in common, but differed in respect to one important thing, namely, their allegiance, Pallas being an ally of Aenas, Lausus of Turnus. Thus it comes about that the two are fiercely striving against one another when they are introduced to the reader:

hinc Pallas instat et urguet,
Hinc contra Lausus . . . . . . (3)

As the story is related, the young warriors are not permitted by Juppiter to come to grips with one another on the battlefield. Each in turn is to face a more experienced warrior, indeed an almost invulnerable warrior, for the one is destined to fall by the hand of Turnus, the other by that of Aeneas himself. According to the degree of the fates, Pallas is to face his doom before his youthful opponent.

Who is Pallas, the youthful ally of the Trojans? He is the son of Greek Evander, king of a colony of Arcadians who had settled at Pallanteum, located on the site of future Rome. Aeneas had visited this venerable monarch with the desire of making him his ally and felt amply rewarded for his trouble when the old king promised him all the assistance he could give. Because of his advanced age, Evander could not follow Aeneas himself, but he generously offered to send his son

(1) Bk. X, 1.434   (2) 1.435   (3) 11. 433-434.
Pallas as the leader of the Arcadians. Pallas, being an only son and a worthy descendant of his illustrious ancestors, was the "spes et solatia" of his father. (1)

One of Virgil's most touching scenes occurs here, when the king, his royal dignity forgotten, gives way to a father's tears on the event of his son's departure. In supplication, Evander raises his hands to heaven and implores the gods to grant him continued life if the lad is to return safely, but to end his days immediately if some unutterable fate awaits the boy. So overcome with emotion is the king that he falls fainting at his son's feet. Throughout this scene, our attention is fixed upon the grief-stricken father, but we find ourselves forming unknowingly a mental picture of the boy who presumably is worthy of such intense father-love. He must be refined in temperament, we think, yet stout of heart.

Fortunately, as we read on, we are not required to alter these ideas. Pallas proves himself worthy of the tenderest regard.

This, then, is the Pallas who finds himself in the thick of the fight as soon as he disembarks near the mouth of the river. His Arcadians, being unaccustomed to fighting on foot, find that they can make no headway against the Rutulians, who are used to the rough ground. Pallas sees, to his dismay, that his comrades are being forced into the sea by their antagonists. In a very courageous effort to rally their lagging enthusiasm, he rushes to the fore and ruthlessly deals one fatal blow after the other upon the surprised Rutulians.

(1) Bk. VIII, 1.514
So ashamed are the Arcadians to see their youthful prince recklessly, yet gallantly flinging himself almost against the sword-points of the enemy that they quickly rally.

The rare fortitude displayed by Pallas while restoring the fighting strength of his following attracts the attention of mighty Turnus, the formidable chief of the Rutulians. We marvel at the thought of the remarkable display of skill which the young warrior must have given to attract the attention of one as experienced in warfare as Turnus. Not only does Turnus notice him, but he determines to meet him in single combat. Needlessly pushing aside the fighting men, and ordering them to cease battle, he approaches the spot where Pallas is standing. The latter gazes wonderingly at the huge bulk of the giant Rutulian, but shows no sign of fear. Instead, he addresses him with dignity:

"aut spoliis ego iam raptis laudabor opimis, aut leto insigni; sorti pater aeguus utrique est." (1)

Perhaps these words remind us too strongly of Euryalus and his wantonness; nevertheless they reveal the indomitable courage of the lad Pallas.

As Turnus bears down upon him, Pallas hurls a spear with all his strength, but it merely grazes the shoulder of the older warrior. Then Turnus, taking careful aim, drives his shaft with such force that Pallas' shield is cleft and his heart pierced by the same merciless steel. The brave young warrior falls to the ground at Turnus' feet, struggling in the throes of death. Turnus, placing his foot upon the body,

(1) Bk. X, 11.449-450.
defiantly states that he is sending back Pallas to his father as he deserved to be sent back, and, like a brutal savage, tears from the slim waist a magnificently embossed belt which he proudly fastens upon himself. So adorned, he passes on to deal with other opponents who appear to be too active. The Arcadians slowly and tearfully place the body of Pallas upon his own broken shield and carry it from the scene of battle.

When news is brought to Aeneas of Pallas' death, the Trojan hero is seized with a burning desire to draw the blood of Turnus. As he mows his way through line upon line of foes-men, there come to his mind vivid memories of his visit at Pallanteum:

"Pallas, Evander, in ipsis omnia sunt oculis; mensae, quas advena primas Tunc adit, dextraeque datae." (1)

Such thoughts spur him on to further action. In a wild fit of rage, he slays every Italian he meets and gives no quarter. Evidently the Trojan leader had realized the worth of Evander's son, and, when he heard of his death, was unable to restrain his passion.

It is with an understanding heart that Virgil writes the verses relating the grief of Evander at the approach of Pallas' funeral procession. Rushing out from the City to meet the mourners, the old monarch throws himself upon the bier, and utters these words in a voice choked with sorrow:

"Pallas, not such thy promise to thy sire, WARELY to trust the War-God in the fray. I knew what ardour would thy soul inspire, The charms of fame, and battle's fierce desire." (2)

(1) EK.XL 11.515-16. (2) BK.XI. 11.152-155, trans. by E.F. Taylor
What wonderful understanding of the human heart Virgil had! How frequently young people with their boundless enthusiasm break the hearts of their elders! Evander finds little comfort in the thought that Pallas died a glorious death. He wishes to live just long enough to hear of Turnus' death, then "bear the news to Pallas' shade below."

Indeed we learn in the course of the story that it is only a matter of time until mighty Turnus will himself die a warrior's death. As Virgil pictures him rudely flaunting the beautifully wrought belt which he had seized as spoil from the lifeless youth, he writes these lines:

"nescia mens hominum fati sortisque futurae,
et servare modum, rebus subbata secundis.
Turno tempus erit, magno cum optaverit emptum
intactum Pallanta, et cum spolia ista diemque
oderit." (1)

The day does come when Turnus curses his booty. It comes when he and Aeneas are engaged in a life and death struggle for supremacy. The powerful Daunian has lost his weapon and is almost on the point of surrendering. In a last mighty effort to redeem himself, he grasps a huge boulder and flings it at the wary Trojan. The clumsy missile misses its mark completely and Turnus sinks exhausted to the ground. Helpless, he pleads with Aeneas to take pity on his old father Daunus, and asks that he be restored, either alive or dead, to his native city. Aeneas hesitates a moment or two, moved, no doubt, by Turnus' concern for his father, and is actually on the point of sparing him, (Bk.XII, L.940) when the bright gems of the belt which the

(1) Bk.X, LL 501-505.
Italian is wearing on his shoulder catch his eye. The Trojan recognizes immediately the baldric belonging to Pallas. Then there returns to him all the wrath which had surged up within him at news of the lad's death.

"tune hinc spoliis indute meorum eripiare mihi? Pallas te hoc vulnere, Pallas immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit."(1)

Mad with fury, he drives his blade through Turnus' body.

The happenings related in the last paragraph are not recorded in the "Aeneid" until the very end. It is most interesting to find the name of Pallas mentioned in the closing lines of Book XII. Since there are many little inconsistencies in the "Aeneid", we would not have been surprised if Virgil had not referred to the stolen belt of Pallas after Book X. It seems that the poet was particularly concerned with the youth whom Turnus slew. Perhaps he considered that of all the deaths for which the Rutulian had been responsible, this was the most heinous. Perhaps he wished us to notice that Aeneas did not forget Pallas. Perhaps he had something entirely different in mind, namely, the problem of the soul's immortality, for he assured us that Pallas was immortal in this sense at least - the memory of his virtuous life lived on in the minds of men.

The Pallas incident differs from the Nisus and Euryalus incident in that it was created to afford a pathetic situation, rather than an opportunity for character analysis. Virgil gives us very few definite details about the boy Pallas. He

(1)Bk.XII. LL 947-949.
gives just enough to leave us with the impression that he is a youth of great promise and that is all. He places the emphasis upon the fact of his death. He gives us a glimpse of Pallas' flower-like form, then takes us quickly to the death scene in which the noble youth meets an opponent over whom it is impossible for him to triumph. The giant-like Turnus is so much older and stronger than Pallas that he crushes him as a lion would an antelope. Then the poet gives us Aeneas' reaction to the news of Pallas' death and tells us of the arrival at Pallanteum of the mourners. Finally he tells us how Aeneas avenged the death of his youthful confederate. It is the fact that so youthful a warrior fell that interests Virgil. Pallas had entered the fray full of eagerness to distinguish himself. Why could he not have been permitted to do this without having to forfeit his life? What cruel fate willed that he should die so soon? He had lived a virtuous life. Was this his reward? If so, is there any purpose in life at all? Some such thoughts as these filled the poet's mind.

We find that Virgil delves fairly deeply into Philosophy when he attempts to settle the doubts which assail his mind. One does not suppose that he settled them to his own satisfaction, for the same questions trouble men's minds today. Of course we read intently any lines which suggest that he is striving to face them. Such lines occur in this episode when Pallas is ready to try his skill against Turnus. As he raises his arm to hurl his spear, he prays fervently to Hercules, asking him to guide his weapon. Hercules hears the prayer, but
is powerless to help Pallas, for "Fate" has decreed that he
must face death. The god is troubled so much that Jove
notices his plight and remarks to him:

"stat sua cuique dies; breve et inreparabile tempus
omnibus est vitae; sed famam extendere factis,
hoc virtutis opus" (1)

"For each his appointed day is sure; short
and unrenewable for all is the span of life;
but to make fame live on by deeds, that
is the task of valour."

These lines indicate that there are very few things about
which Virgil is certain. He feels that man's life follows a
plan made by some power beyond his control; he realizes that
the human span, however long, is but short when compared with
the history of mankind as a whole; finally, he believes that
it is man's deeds, and his deeds alone, which live after him.

In spite of all this philosophizing, the poet is left
with one great question unanswered: why does the hand of fate
fall heavily upon the young? He never answers this. One
wishes that he himself could have been granted a few more
years of existence in which to devote himself to the study of
philosophy. We know that he intended to do just this after he
finished his great epic. As "fate" willed it, he was not per­
mittted to accomplish his purpose. If he had undertaken the
study of philosophy, the outcome would have been a treatise,
not on "Old Age" but on "Unfinished Lives."

Toward the end of Book X, there is recorded the death of
Lausus, the young Etruscan who had been leading the Italian

(1) Bk. X, LL 467-469 Trans. by T.E. Page
forces against Pallas when, it will be recalled, Turnus aggressively brushed him aside. As has been mentioned, the chief difference between Pallas and Lausus was that they were fighting on opposite sides; they were, on the other hand, equally brave, equally fair, and of the same age. There is no doubt that Virgil is just as sympathetic with the one as with the other. Yet there is an air of artificiality present in the Lausus story which is absent in that of Pallas. This point will be explained in another connection: here it is necessary only to recall the details of the incident.

Lausus was the son of Mezentius, a former Etruscan tyrant who had ruled his own people so unwisely that he had been forced to give up his throne. Old Evander mentioned him as being a depraved character and hoped that the gods would punish him for his misdeeds.

"Quid memorem infandas caedes, quid facta tyranni Effera? Di capiti ipsius generique reservent!" (1)

Little did the king realize how quickly and how thoroughly his wish was to be carried out. Mezentius fled to Turnus, who gave him protection. When he is introduced to the reader, both he and his son had joined the Italian cause. Whatever bad qualities the father of Lausus may have had, he displayed a certain nobility of character in the circumstances about to be discussed. He loved his son with all the depth of a father's love and, as the story proves, the boy was devoted to him. Any man, whether he be a tyrant or not, has redeeming qualities if he inspires and holds the affection of his son.

(1) Bk.VIII, L482 ff.
Mezentius, being a bold and experienced warrior, is in the van of the Italian army. So dangerous is he that he has attracted the attention of the Trojan leader. The two come to grips, Aeneas being unscathed, Mezentius receiving a very severe wound. Lausus, who is stationed not far from his father, sees the plight of the older man, and in an instant darts underneath the upraised arm of Aeneas and is successful in staying the fatal blow. Mezentius is thus given an opportunity to retire while Lausus and his comrades shower Aeneas with spears. The Trojan stands firm amid the "tempest of war", and, when the air clears for a moment, he speaks to Lausus as he would have spoken to Ascanius if he had caught him in the same predicament:

"Quo moriture ruis, maioraque viribus audes? fallit te incautum pietas tua!" (1)

"Why are you rushing to your doom? Why do you dare a deed too great for your strength? Your love for your father is betraying you, rash youth." (2)

The next words of Virgil are significant:

"nec minus ille exsultat demens." (3)

Naturally enough, no mere words can cool the passion of Lausus. He has gone too far and must now fight to the death. His strength is useless against the power of Aeneas, just as the strength of Pallas was of no avail against that of Turnus, and he might have realized this if he had taken time to think before he acted. No doubt the words which are put into the

(1)Bk.X,LL,811-812 (3)Bk.X,L,812
mouth of Aeneas embody the poet's own thoughts. One feels that Virgil would like to prevent, if possible, the mad onrush of youth, but he knows from experience that youth would not listen. Still he sees something to admire in Youth's recklessness, even though it does mean a waste of human resources.

"The Fates are spinning the last threads for Lausus."

With one mighty sweep, Aeneas buries his sword's hilt in the youth's body.

"But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,  
And think to burst out in sudden blaze,  
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears  
And slits the thin-spun life." (1)

With a characteristic touch of tenderness, Virgil mentions that the sword's point pierces the tunic which Lausus' mother had carefully woven for him.

The moment he has killed Lausus, Aeneas is arrested by the look on the face of the dying lad. In a beautiful passage, famed for its pathos, Virgil describes the sudden change from savage violence to wondrous compassion which takes place in Aeneas.

"At vero ut vultum vidit morientis et ora,  
Ora modis Achisiades pallentia miris  
Ingemuit miserans gravkter dextramque tetendit,  
et mentem patriae subiit pietatis imago.  
quid tibi nunc, miserande puer, pro laudibus istis,  
quid pius Aeneas tanta dabit indole dignum?" (2)

(1)Quotation from "Lycidas" by John Milton.(2)Bk.X,LL821-826.
One editor has this comment upon the first two lines quoted above: "The wild pathetic rhythm of the lines is unsurpassed in its suggestive beauty by anything that even Virgil has written" (1). Aeneas is sensitive to the pathos of the situation, and is overcome with pity for the youth so suddenly bereft of life. The word 'Anchisiades' is cleverly inserted by the poet here to indicate that it is Aeneas' love for his own father that is the keynote of his sympathy for Lausus. Not only does Aeneas promise to give every honour of burial to the corpse of his youthful antagonist, but he chides the Italians for dallying and himself lifts the body of Lausus from the ground. Virgil could not have shown Aeneas' feelings more plainly than in this last act of the hero. To think that he was so overcome with emotion that he stooped to lift the body of an opponent from the gory battlefield! One recalls inevitably the picture of Turnus standing with his foot upon the breast of the dead Pallas and eagerly tearing from the slender waist a gaily-decked belt.

The thought of Turnus brings one back to the statement previously made, that there is a certain amount of artificiality about the Lausus incident. Virgil's main purpose in composing the lines was to contrast the brutality of Turnus as displayed in the Pallas incident and the humanity of Aeneas as displayed in this one. The story of Lausus seems to offset as it were the story of Pallas. As Dr. Henry puts it, Lausus

(1) Papillon and Haigh, Text, P. 337
is the "Counterpart" of Pallas. This scholarly commentator also makes the observation that it is essential to the conduct of the poem that Lausus should be killed by Aeneas. In view of this interpretation, the following lines spoken by Aeneas as he gazes down at the prostrate form of the young Etruscan seem stilted:

"hoc tamen infelix miseram solabere mortem
Aenea magni dextra cadis" (1)

In reality, the incident is the first of several which Virgil uses for the purpose of contrasting sharply the characters of Turnus and Aeneas. It might almost be said that the main character in it is Aeneas, not Lausus at all.

It is not necessary to give further space here to the point above mentioned, for it does not concern us. Suffice it to mention that the story furnishes ample proof of Virgil's very deep concern over mankind's most puzzling problem, premature death. There are traces here of that same melancholy noticed before, that same awareness of the pathetic waste of beautiful young manhood. This is noticeable particularly in the words spoken by Aeneas to Lausus just before the former flings the death-bearing dart and in the almost miraculous change of heart which Aeneas experiences when he notices the look on the white face of the dying youth. Aeneas is humanized in this scene as in no other. It is worth while to take note of the fact that it is Virgil who humanizes Aeneas, trite though the fact may be. The legendary Trojan hero was a

(1) Bk.X LL 829-830
semi-barbarous personality. Virgil, because of his own understanding of life, softens that personality, civilizes it, by endowing the hero with the most divine of man's qualities - sympathy for his fellow men, particularly for the noble youth among them.

There should be included in the group of young warriors who suffered premature death in battle Virgil's "most striking and original character", Camilla. This Etruscan Amazon is the only female character whom Virgil paints in definite and enduring colors. For this reason alone, the name Camilla enters again and again into any discussion of Virgilian literature. Moreover, her story is told in such a way that she seems a living personality, while Pallas and Lausus are merely tragic figures. It is thought by students of Virgil that the story of Camilla, like that of Nisus and Euryalus, was originally written as a separate epyllion and was inserted into the Aeneid as an afterthought. While its length indicates this, yet the story does not seem at all out of place. On the other hand, it appears as a delightful oasis in a barren desert of brutal warfare. In all probability, the world of literature would have lost one of its most romantic figures if Virgil had not made the incident an integral part of the epic.

We find in the story of Camilla Virgil's most detailed account of child life. The girl is just an infant when she becomes a central figure in the Aeneid. Her father Metabus was a dethroned tyrant who had held sway in one of the Latin towns. On being driven out from the city, as Mezentius had
been driven out from Etruria, he took his infant daughter with him. While fleeing his pursuers, he was compelled to cross a wide river in order to escape capture. His first impulse was to leap into the stream, but he was deterred by the thought of his small daughter.

"Ille innare parans, infantis amore tardatur, caroque oneri timet." (1)

 Quickly he devised a daring scheme whereby he could get her safely across. He swathed her to the middle of his spear shaft, then flung the weapon across the river's gulf. As fate would have it, the javelin's point found a safe resting place in the soft grassy turf of the farther shore. Metabus himself swam the river and, catching up the spear with its precious burden, quickly disappeared among the woodland. There among the hills he lived the rest of his life, caring for Camilla as best he could, and training her to be a faithful handmaid of Diana the huntress.

"utque pedum primis infans vestigia plantis institerat, iaculo palmas armavit acuto, spiculaque ex umero parvae suspendit et arcum." (2)

In these surroundings Camilla grew to womanhood and, remaining faithful to the early training which she had received from her father, she spent her days scouring the hills of Latium for game.

In the story thus far, the most interesting feature is the strong affection displayed by Metabus for his infant daughter. In only one other instance has Virgil, in his

(1) Bk.XI,LL549-550. (2) Bk.XI,LL570-573.
inimitable way, described the love of a father for his daughter, namely, in the case of Juppiter and Venus. It is almost unreasonable to compare the two instances, for the one is much more realistic than the other. However, inasmuch as they both display the poet's tenderness, it is possible to compare them to some extent. Of the two, the story of Camilla and her father is by far the most impressive. Metabus risked his life to save that of his child while Juppiter simply indulged the whim of his petulant, yet lovely daughter. Myers aptly writes in his essay on our poet, "Where has Virgil more subtly mingled majesty with sweetness than in the lines which paint her happy nurture among the woodlands where her father was a banished king?" (1)

We are not surprised to find Camilla "exulting like an Amazon" in the forefront of the Italian lines.

"Bellatrix, non illa colo calathisve Minervae femineas adsueta manus, sed proelia virgo dura pati, cursuque pedum praevertere ventos."

She has persuaded Turnus to leave her in charge of the forces while he takes to the hills in an effort to ensnare Aeneas. When she made the request, Turnus was taken aback, but the maiden and her band of followers, although they had never before engaged in open warfare, had nevertheless created an admirable reputation for themselves. Well aware of the unusual courage implied in the mere asking of such a request, Turnus leaves her, with her chosen companions and a band of

(1) F.W.H. Myers, "Essays Classical", P. 30 (2) Bk. V11, LL, 805-807
Volscian warriors to guard the walls of old Latinus' city from the onrush of the Trojans. Fearlessly Camilla leads her comrades in attacking the Trojans. She herself causes warrior after warrior to fall, defeating even Ornytus, terrible in his armour of bull's hide and helmet cleverly devised from a wolf's-head. She outran the steed of the deceitful Aunus, and brought that warrior to earth in spite of his deceitful attempt to entrap her. So she continued to take her toll among her enemies.

"Quotque emissa manu contorsit spicula virgo, tot Phrygii cecidere viri."

(1)

Virgil delights in comparing her to the legendary Amazonian queens, Hippolyte and Penthesilea. Modern readers, however, must inevitably call to mind the immortal story of the Maid of Orleans.

In spite of her enviable fighting ability, Camilla is doomed to fall by the hand of a craven. A crafty Trojan warrior, Arruns by name, plans to watch her every move, being careful to keep out of her sight himself, until he sees a chance of striking her when she is off her guard. He succeeds in doing precisely this. The interesting point is the reason for the maid's want of caution. In the course of the onslaught she catches sight of a Cybelean priest who is adorned in all his priestly raiment. His armour, his robes, and his weapons gleam with gold and precious stones. The splendor of his raiment catches her woman's eye and she becomes oblivious to

(1) Bk.XI, LL, 676-677.
everyone but him. Virgil quaintly remarks that she might have been obsessed with a desire to adorn temples with beautiful spoils, or perhaps she wished to see herself arrayed in golden splendor, but in any case she pursued him as a huntress pursues her prize. We strongly suspect that Camilla is very human after all and that her woman's love for finery is the cause of her undoing. That she was undoubtedly fond of it, we know from Virgil's description of her in Book Vll:

"ut regius ostro velet honos leves umeros, ut fibula crinem auro internectat. . . . . . . . . . ."

(1)

Is it possible that Virgil had his female readers in mind when he attributed this one weakness to the otherwise superb Camilla? In any case, this enables the rest of us to maintain our self-respect when we read the story, for we become aware of the fact that this otherwise unusual woman had at least one weakness!

Whatever the cause of her desire, Camilla covets the priest's armour.

"totumque incauta per agmen femineo praedae et spoliorum ardebat armore."

(2)

Seeing his chance, Arruns flings a well-aimed spear which finds its resting place in the breast of the brave, though heedless maid. Powerless, she droops, lets fall the reins, and tumbles to the ground.

"vitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras."

(3)

"Her soul, chafing indignantly, fled to the shades." - indignant, because it had been so young and vigorous and was now doomed to an endless period of inactivity. The word "indignata" might well be used to describe the departure of a soul from any young body. Indeed the whole phrase is typical of Virgil's treatment of youth. Is it not significant that he repeats the line just quoted at the very end of Book XIl? It refers there, of course, to the soul of Turnus, who, though not a youth, had not passed the prime of life when he was killed by Aeneas. It matters not whether the term be applied to Camilla or Turnus or Lausus. As the poet sees it, all had been denied the opportunity of living life to the full. So the soul of each, "indignata", "maesta", quits the body which is frigid in death.

Modern lovers of Virgil are not the only ones who find Camilla a strangely captivating character. Dante, who made his fellow-poet and fellow-countryman his ideal, imagined that Virgil was his guide through the realms of the Blessed. When he supposedly met the Mantuan, Dante spoke with him about their native Italy. Immediately the name of Camilla sprang to the lips of the Roman. It was not Lavinia he mentioned, she who shared in founding the great race of Romans, but Camilla, the huntress, the Amazon. Surely this is an indication that she stood out in Dante's mind as one of the most vivid characters which Virgil describes in the last half of his epic. No doubt this lonely, yet amazingly lovely young personage would fire the imagination of any poet. Virgil must have
enjoyed writing her life-story; in fact, the number of lines
given to it would indicate that he was carried away by the
glamour of it all. Yet he does not lament over her death as
he does over the loss of Nisus and Euryalus, Pallas and
Lausus. Here are the only two passages which can be compared
at all to the beautiful lines describing Euryalus' death, and
the pathetic passage which describes Aeneas' reaction after he
had killed Lausus. Both are put into the mouths of goddesses,
but, like the lines just referred to, they reveal to a certain
extent the poet's interest in his characters:

"vellem haud correpta fuisset
militia tali, conata lacessere Teucros."

(1)

"heu nimium, virgo, nimium crudeli
supplicium, Teucros conata lacessere bello!"

(2)

The first passage was spoken by Diana when she became aware
of Camilla's intentions to enter the fighting field. The last
is taken from the lament of Diana's messenger over the death
of Camilla. It is significant that in each case the word
"lacessere" is repeated. As one editor remarks, this
"emphasizes the wanton rashness of Camilla." There is not
the same intensity of sentiment in these passages as in the
lines describing the feelings of Mercury when Pallas prayed
to him in vain for guidance, for example. Could it be possi­
ble that in the poet's estimation Camilla deserved her fate
more than the young men? After all, she was a woman meddling
in the affairs of men. For this reason the poet might have

(1)Bk.XI,LL584-586. (2)Bk.XI,LL841-842.(3)T.E.Page,Notes,P.
had more genuine sympathy with the young men than with his heroine.

There still remains the fact that the sketch of the armed maid is drawn with more definite lines than that of any of the young men discussed thus far, with perhaps one exception, namely, Nisus. Readers of the "Aeneid" will never cease to rejoice in it, for it adequately relieves a dreary background of blood and slaughter. Like the Laurentians, young and old, who thronged the streets of Laurentum when Camilla rode past, and stood gazing at her open-mouthed;

"prospectat euntem attonitis inhians animis," (1)

we are dazed by the brilliance of Virgil's most original character. It is only the beautiful, tragic figure of Dido which can overshadow the warrior-maid, Camilla.

A study of Virgil and Youth would not be complete unless some thought were given to the hero's son, Ascanius. Yet one does not enter wholeheartedly into an analysis of this personality, for Ascanius is colourless compared with the other characters discussed thus far. Doubtless Virgil found it difficult to make the hero's son an interesting figure because he was hampered by tradition in portraying him. Ascanius, or Julius as he is sometimes called, is an indispensable character in the story, a part of the background as it were, just as Aeneas himself is. He is not a glamorous figure inserted to hold the attention of the reader for a few fleet seconds, as

(1)Bk.VII.LL 813-814
Lausus or Camilla. He appears at the very beginning of the play and remains in the background of every succeeding act as an uninteresting minor character. Because Virgil had to follow certain well-defined traditions in describing Ascanius, he was forced to treat him in a different way from his other youths. In spite of the fact that comparatively few lines are devoted to him, he is mentioned in every one of the twelve books in some connection. Most of the passages which have reference to him are only two or three lines in length, while the very longest comprises only thirty lines. Since this is true, a study of Ascanius necessitates a piecing together of odd lines in an effort to glean from them some definite idea as to the youth's personality.

At the very outset, we expect to find some reference to the small boy who fled with his father, mother, and grandfather from the ruins of Troy. There is just one reference to him on this occasion, but since that is one of the most beautiful passages in Virgil, it cannot well be omitted. Aeneas had decided to leave the burning city with his family. He carried his aged father on his back, took his small son's hand in his, and told his wife Creusa to follow him at a short distance:

\[ \text{"dextrae se parvus Julus implicuit sequiturque patrem non passibus aequis."} \]  

(1)

This is a passage which touches the heart of every reader of Virgil. Yet, how simple it is! Certainly the tender human touch of the poet is discernible here as in various other

(1) Bk.11,LL 723-724. "Little Julus took firm clasp of my hand and accompanied his father with unequal footsteps."
passages, but it is not this alone which causes the reader to pause here. It is the poet's ability to reconstruct in the reader's mind a complete picture of the scene, even though the fewest possible details are given. In other words, Virgil, like all immortal poets, discovered the power of suggestion and employed it skilfully here and elsewhere. We see not only the father and son walking hand in hand, but we see also the look of trustfulness on the face of the small boy as he gazes up into his father's strong features and slips his small hand into his. We see the father's face softened by a tender smile as he looks down upon the sweet face of his child. Such a passage as this stands in direct contrast to the solemn narrative which is the strong fibre, as it were, running throughout the whole story. The entire epic might be compared to a huge tapestry, richly dark in colouring, but relieved here and there by soft bright spots of rose and wine-red, and cream. The patches of light, beautiful in themselves, serve to add depth and distinction to the dull background.

We assume that Ascanius was seven or eight years old when he left Troy. Since the "Aeneid" does not deal in detail with the wanderings of the Trojans from the time they left Troy to their landing at Carthage five years later, Ascanius, when we next see him, has grown to vigorous boyhood. He is now a lad of twelve or thirteen, and, as we expect; is interested in everything that is going on. When his father leaves his ship and goes to present gifts to Queen Dido, he sends Achates
back to fetch Ascanius, so that he might witness all the
ceremony.

"Aeneas (neque enim patrius consistere mentem
passus amor) rapidum ad navis praemittit Achaten,
Ascanio ferat haec ipsumque ad moenia ducat;
omnis in Ascanio cari stat cura parentis"

(1)
The strong attachment of father to son here manifested is an
aspect of character which Virgil very frequently brings to the
fore. It is a point which merits special study in itself. It
is sufficient here to note that the poet has not forgotten
Ascanius and that he imagines him no longer a child, but a
growing boy.

While the Trojans winter at Carthage, Aeneas and his
party find time to engage in a few amusements. On one occa­s­
ion they make arrangements with Dido for a hunting party.
After all details are settled, Aeneas and Dido with their
respective attendants set out on horseback for the foothills
on a bright autumn morning. Ascanius, boy-like, is very much
excited at the prospect of going on a real hunting expedition.
In no time he is riding far ahead of the rest of the party,
scanning the countryside for game. Not being able to see any­
thing sufficiently large or fierce to attract his attention,
he begins to wish for the sight of a foaming boar or a tawny
lion:

"At puer Ascanius medius in vallibus acri
gaudet equo, iamque hos cursu, iam praeterit illos,
spumantemque dari pecora inter inertia votis
optat aprum aut fulvum descendere monte leonem."

(2)

(1) Bk. 1, LL 643-646.  (2) Bk. 1V, LL 156-159.
How skilfully Virgil has conveyed to us the adventurous spirit of boyhood! We have seen that he understood childhood and even babyhood; now we see here that he has caught the spirit of healthy boy-life. How like a boy to rush ahead of everyone else and scout for himself! How like him to scorn small game and wish fervidly for a sudden encounter with a fierce lion!

Aeneas made a final decision to leave Carthage in spite of the entreaties of the passionate Dido. He sails from there to Sicily, where games are celebrated at the tomb of Anchises. True to his narrative, Virgil does not forget the youthful Julus, for we find him listed as a leader of the young horsemen - the cadets, as it were. He happens to occupy a post at the end of the column, but Virgil makes sure that we know what a fine appearance he makes:

"Extremus formaque ante omnis pulcher Julus." (1)

It is while the Trojan party is encamped at Anchises' tomb that Ascanius first gives proof of realizing his responsibility as Aeneas' son and king-to-be of the new Trojan settlement. The Trojan women have set fire to the ships in the harbor and the whole camp is in an uproar. Ascanius, pre-occupied by his duties on the sport's field, suddenly notices the smoke rolling upwards in great clouds. He dashes in great haste to the harbor and confronts the refractory women, shouting thus:

"non hastem inimicaque castra
Argivum, vestras spes uritis, En, ego vester
Ascanius!" (2)

He hopes by his very presence to avert panic, but, since his
father rides up almost immediately behind him, he is not given
an opportunity. We are left wondering as to just how much
influence the lad might have exerted. For the meantime, he is
overshadowed by his father. It is noticeable, however, that
Ascanius, after this incident, assumes more and more responsi-

bility as a prince of royal blood.

When the party finally reaches Italy, Aeneas chooses a
camping site and fortifies it strongly. Preparing to face
the Rutulians as best he can, he leaves the camp in charge of
his council with the understanding that Ascanius is to act as
his personal representative. All instructions given, he sails
up the river to Pallanteum in search of allies. It is in his
absence that Nisus and Euryalus make their heroic attempt to
get a message through the enemy's lines to him. It will be
remembered that Ascanius' name appears fairly often in the
first part of that epyllion. He it is who first notices the
pair approaching the council ring. He urges the youths to
attempt the proposed enterprise; in fact, he shows great
eagerness in promising them rewards. We note with interest
that he addresses Euryalus as a youth of his own age:

"te vero, mea quem spatiiis propriioribus aetas
insegurtur, venerande puer, iam pectore
toto
accipio et comitem casus complector in omnes." (1)

These words sound strangely dignified to be uttered by a
boy of fifteen. It seems that there is an attempt here on the
part of the poet to make the lad appear older than he really
is.

(1) Bk. IX, LL 275-277.
This is still more evident in the two lines which occur below those above quoted:

"ante annos animumque gerens curamque virilem,
multa patri mandata dabat portanda." (1)

These refer to the bearing of Ascanius as he withdraws from the council and privately gives Nisus a message to carry to his father. As one commentator remarks, these lines have almost an apologetic air. The boy has very suddenly become a man, and is now acting the part of a prince to perfection. In fact, he is given the name of "prince", ("regem", L. 223) here for the first time. It is apparent that the poet is now trying to portray him in more definite colors then heretofore. In reality, it is only in this ninth book that he is brought into any degree of prominence. We shall soon discover whether or not he is to be numbered among Virgil's immortal youths.

During his father's absence from camp, Ascanius has his first opportunity to try his skill at arms. On the morning after the murder of Nisus and Euryalus, Turnus breaks his agreement with Aeneas and attacks the Trojan camp. Ascanius, unnoticed by anyone, quietly takes a place on the battlements and bides his time. Presently he catches sight of the huge frame of Numanus, Turnus' brother-in-law, watches his pompous flaunting of himself in front of the Trojans, and hears his loud boasts. He is throwing taunts mercilessly, going so far as to call the Phrygians women.

"O vere Phrygiae, neque enim Phryges." (2)

(1) Bk. IX, LL 311-312. (2) Bk. IX, L 617
Ascanius cannot brook this vainglorious speech. Drawing his bow, and praying at the same time, he lets fly his arrow. It pierces the temples of the braggart. Ascanius, exulting in his victory, is now thoroughly possessed by the war-god's fury.

Before any harm can come to Julus, the scene changes. Apollo has witnessed the boy's deed and, realizing the necessity of preserving the life of this "dis genite et geniture deos," intervenes. Disguising himself as Ascanius' bodyguard, the god descends to earth, and advises the youth to withdraw from the fight - "parce, puer, bello." The Trojan leaders recognize the god and immediately pull Ascanius, now eager for the fray, to a place of safety.

There is something grotesque about this incident when compared with the stories of any of the other youths in whom we are interested. This is the first time that Julus is allowed to show any initiative, and then to think that he is carefully withdrawn in the very heat of the battle! We are disappointed, to say the least. We cannot blame the poet for this outcome, for he dared not expose Ascanius to any danger. The boy must be glorified, for he is to be the future ruler of Latium. He must be mentioned because he is Aeneas' royal son. Yet he must be kept out of harm's way for the sake of the future history of the race. Taking these things into consideration Virgil handles the incident tactfully. The boy has no longer the charm of childhood and he is not old enough to assume real responsibility, yet Virgil endows him with the qualities which make for leadership. He is fearless,
diplomatic, and sympathetic with the sorrows of others. This is the best that can be expected of him. Virgil does not have the opportunity of making him another Pallas. McKail adequately sums up these thoughts in the following statement: "As in Book Eight he is eclipsed by Pallas, and in Book Ten by Lausus, so he is here by Euryalus; their beautiful and tragic figures leave little scope for the boy who is sedulously kept out of all chance of danger." (1)

Virgil gives us one or two final glimpses of Julus in Book XII. There is rather a touching fondness of Aeneas and his son for each other displayed here. When Aeneas accepts the challenge of Turnus, the boy is very much upset about the coming combat between Aeneas and his rival, so much so, in fact, that Aeneas tries to comfort him:

"tum socios maestique metum solatur Juli." (2)

Later when Aeneas rides forth to make terms of peace with Latinus, Ascanius is by his side.

"it juxta Ascanius, magnae spes altera Romae."

The terms of peace are of course broken almost as soon as they are made, and the skirmish begins afresh. Exerting all his energy in leading on his men, Aeneas is taken off his guard and receives a deep wound. He is carried to his tent, where an aged doctor removes the arrowhead from the wound and dresses it. Being greatly refreshed, Aeneas is preparing to take the field a second time. He pauses while donning his armour to fling a mailed arm about the neck of his son.

(1) McKail. Intro. to Bk. IX. (2) Bk. XII, L110. (3) Bk. XII, L168.
Hurriedly kissing the boy, he bids him follow his example in future years when he has grown to manhood:

"tu facito, mox cum matura adoleverit aetas,
sis memor, et te animo repetentem exempla tuorum
et pater Aeneas et avunculus excitet Hector." (1)

This is the last time Ascanius is mentioned in the "Aeneid". We are left with the impression that he is still a very young lad. We are not convinced that he is all that Virgil tries to make him in Book IX; yet we must be satisfied with the assurance that he is "the second hope of the Roman Empire."

A discussion of the life and deeds of the boy Ascanius concludes the series of main topics which come within the scope of this essay. One hesitates to add anything more because of the possible danger of losing the main threads of the argument thus far; but, on the other hand, one feels that the subject is not quite complete. There are a number of comparatively minor passages in the "Aeneid" and the "Eclogues", all of them describing in some way youth or its activities, which seem trivial beside the episodes of Camilla and Pallas, but yet contain some of the most exquisite lines in the whole of Virgil's writings. For this reason, it seems folly to omit them. They are widely scattered, and will not be mentioned in any particular order. An attempt will be made to group them according to poetic beauty, though it is almost impossible to do even this, for each is superb in its own way.

For sheer beauty of metrical form, there is no passage in Virgil which surpasses an excerpt from the Eighth Eclogue.

(1)Bk.XII,LL 438-440.
It is taken from the first half of the poem, which tells the disappointment of a young lover at being jilted by his loved one. The lines deal with the lover's reminiscences of their first meeting as children.

"saepibus in nostris parvam te roscida mala -
dux ego vester eram-vidi cum matre legentem,
alter ab undecimo tum me iam acceperat annus
iam fragiles poteram ab terra contingere ramos,
ut vidi, ut perii ! ut me malus abstulit error!"

The passage is an imitation of Theocritus, but the Latin is unmistakably Virgilian. It has the simplicity and the freshness which characterizes the best of the Roman poet's work. In comparing this passage with the similar one in Theocritus it is found that the following touches are Virgil's own:
"parvam te", "roscida mala", and the two lines beginning
"alter ab undecimo" and "iam fragiles poteram". If the lines are deprived of these words, all the pathetic tenderness is gone. The pathos is heightened by the rhythm of the lines, which is plaintive and melancholy. These lines received the highest praise from Macaulay and Voltaire. Here is an extract

(1) Eclogue VIII, LL 38-42.

"Twas in our crofts I saw thee, a girl thy mother beside,
Plucking the apples dewy, myself thy pilot and guide;
Years I had numbered eleven, the twelfth was beginning to run.
Scarce was I able to reach from the ground to the branches that snapped.
Ah, when I saw how I perished! to fatal folly was rapt!"

from one of the former's letters: "I think that the finest lines in the Latin language are those which begin 'saepibus in nostris'. I cannot tell you how they struck me. I was amused to find that Voltaire pronounces this passage to be the finest in Virgil." (1)

As regards pure beauty of diction, one hesitates to quote any one example from Virgil. So many of his lines are graced with simple, yet peculiarly effective words. This quality more than any other convinces the reader of the poet's genius. As has been remarked before, Virgil discovered the power of suggestion and used it to best advantage. There is a very short passage describing the Italian maid Lavinia which is exceptionally fine. Though it contains only six lines, it is the longest passage devoted to her. The reader assumes before this that she is beautiful, but it needs only some three lines from Virgil to settle the point:

"accepit vocem lacrimis Lavinia matris flagrantes perfusa genas, cui plurimus ignem subiecit rubor, et calefacta per ora cucurrit. Indum sanguineo veluti violaverit ostro si quis ebur, aut mixta rubent ubi lilia multa alba rosa: tales virgo dabat ore colores." (2)

It is true that one figure which Virgil uses here, namely, "Indum ebur", is directly borrowed from Homer; yet what could be more beautiful than the comparison which Virgil himself added?

"As when some hand hath sullied Indian ivory with bloodred stain, or when white lilies blent with many a rose seem red." (3)

It is perfectly simple, but full of suggestive power.

(1) Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay"1, 371. (2) Bk.XII, LL. 64-69 (3) Translated by Papillon and Haigh.
There is a short simile in Book VII, which reflects Virgil’s appreciation of youth’s eagerness while at play. The figure is used, strangely enough, to describe the actions of Amata, who is the aged wife of the Italian king, Latinus. She has just realized the hopelessness of the Italian cause and, goaded by frenzy, she is raging through the streets of the town like a Bacchante. Virgil compares her dizzy movements to the whirls of a top flung from a cord by boyish hands. The actual comparison of the gyrations of a human being to the circling of a top was made by Homer. Whether or not Virgil borrowed the idea is of little importance, for it bears unmistakable signs of his genius. Here is Virgil’s passage:

"ceu quondam torto volitans sub verbere turbo, quem pueri magno in gyro vacua atria circum intenti ludo exercent; ille actus habena curvatis fertur spatiis; stupet inscia supra impubesque manus, mirata volubile buxum; dant animos plagae: non cursu segnioc illo per medias urbes agitur populosque feroces."

(1)

(1) Bk. VII, LL 378-384. "As spins a top beneath the whirling lash, driven in great circles round some empty court by boys all rapt in their play; in circling course it moves beneath the throng, while over it in childish wonder stands the beardless troop, amazed at the spinning boxwood, as their lashes lend it life - with no less swiftness flies Amata through crowded streets and warlike throngs." Trans. by Papillon & Haigh.
Homer's passage just contained a bare simile, comparing the twirling of a man's body to the spinning of a top. Virgil elaborates upon this simile by mentioning the boys who fling the top and describing their eager participation in the sport. He deserves just as much credit for doing this as the Greeks do for copying the clumsy cylindrical pillars of the Egyptians and developing from them the beautifully balanced Doric and Ionic columns.

Tibullus has a passage involving the same figure discussed above. For the sake of comparison, it is quoted here:

"namque agor, ut per plana citus sola verbere turben, quem celer assueta versat ab arte puer." (1)

What is it that makes Virgil's lines so much more impressive? What words does he employ to put the breath of life into them? We find on close examination that he merely adds a few very simple details. When we read his lines, instead of visualizing just a boy hurling his top to the ground, we picture a circle of boys, "intenti ludo", flinging down their tops, then, with heads together, bending over to watch them spinning. We can almost hear their shouts. We have all seen such a scene many times and we rejoice inwardly at the thought of ruddy, boyish faces alight with eagerness. Again Virgil's ability to suggest is unmistakable.

There are two short episodes which deserve mention here because they show Virgil's understanding of certain relationships and qualities of youth which are not treated elsewhere.

(1) Tibullus, 1.5.3.
One of these is a story which tells of the love between two brothers. The pair, who were both very tall and powerful, had been stationed by Aeneas at one of the gates leading into the Trojan fort. There they stood guard "like two tall pines."

"abietibus invenes patris et montibus aequos." (1)

When the Rutulians unexpectedly attacked the camp, these two "beardless youths", Pandarus and Bitias by name, took it upon themselves to open the gate which they were guarding and together meet the onrushing horde of Italians. Because of their great strength, they were able to maintain their position for some time. Turnus, hearing of the disturbance, set out to find the two brothers who were causing such havoc amongst his troops. He slew Bitias as he approached the passage-way. Pandarus saw that fortune had now turned against him; setting his broad shoulders to the door, he forced it shut. Unfortunately Turnus was left inside the walls! The Rutulian raged madly with all the fury of Mars.

"Tum Pandarus ingens emicat et mortis fraternae fervidus ira effatur." (2)

The death of Bitias had fired the blood of Pandarus and he challenged Turnus single-handed. The gods did not favor him. With one mighty blow Turnus cleft his head in twain.

In this incident we catch a glimpse of the intensity of brother's fondness for brother. More than this, we are reminded of the impetuosity of Euryalus and Lausus. Youth ever

(1) Bk. IX, L 674. (2) Bk. IX, LL 735-737.
glories in its strength "summis adnixus viribus" (L. 744) and knows no fear. What a bold gesture to open the gates of the garrison to the enemy! This act was the beginning of great slaughter among the Trojans and all but caused their annihilation. Who but "impubes invenes" would be guilty of such indiscretion?

The story of Dares and Entellus is quite different from the one above, but it illustrates somewhat the same point. The scene is the tomb of Anchises in Sicily. At Aeneas' command, funeral games were being held. All went well until it came time for the boxing match. Dares, a youthful boxer, had made his reputation in old Troy. So remarkable was it that no one now wished to challenge him. Full of confidence he suggested that, since this was true, Aeneas might give him the prize without further ado. Aeneas seemed disposed to comply with this request when suddenly a challenger appeared in the person of aged Entellus, a wrestler who had won fame in his youth for remarkable strength and endurance. Although he was now tottering with age, the muscles of his powerful arms were still hard from much exercise. Aeneas tied to the hands of both, boxing gloves of equal weight and they began to parry,

"ille pedum melior motu fretusque iuventa,  
hic membris et mole valens; sed tarda trementi  
genua labant, vastos quatit aeger  
anhelitus artus." (1)

Dares, being lithe and quick, evaded one of Entellus' strokes and the old veteran sank to the ground with the weight of his

(1) Bk.V,LL 430-432.
own blow. This did not discourage him, however. He was soon on his feet again, "acrior ad pugnam." Now he battered the younger man with such a shower of blows that Aeneas had to intervene in order to stop the contest.

"sed finem imposuit pugnae fessumque Dareta eripuit, mulcens dictis."

(1)

Aeneas "rescued" the beaten Dares and his friends carried him senseless from the plain, leaving the victor's prize to Entellus. Virgil seems to take delight in recording the defeat of the young athlete who had considered himself so worthy of the victor's prize that it was not necessary for him to compete in order to win it. Dares is one of the few youths in the "Aeneid" who boasts of his might without giving proof of possessing it. Even Pandarus and Bitias, foolhardy though they were, won our admiration by displaying unusual courage. There is little to admire in Dares; we feel, with the poet, that he deserved his fate.

The last of the minor incidents which will be mentioned is one of the most beautiful passages yet cited. It is taken from Virgil's masterpiece, Book VI of the "Aeneid", where it occurs near the end. The few lines to be discussed were not originally a part of the poem, but were inserted by the poet at the death of Augustus' nephew, young Marcellus. This young man had been adopted by Augustus and chosen as his successor. At the age of eighteen, he was married to Augustus' daughter, Julia. At the age of twenty, he was the

darling not only of his mother and uncle, but also of the
Roman people as a whole. He was a gentle-natured lad who gave
promise of developing into an illustrious man. Unfortunately,
as Virgil says, he was unable to alter his fate; in 23 B.C.
at the age of twenty he fell prey to a malarial fever and in
spite of every care died at Baiae. Sidgwick has the following
note on his death: "He was buried amid the tears of Rome in
the mausoleum of Augustus near the Tiber; and it is said that
his mother fainted when Virgil recited this splendid and
pathetic passage in the emperor's presence. The poet is
supposed to have added these lines to the poem, which was
then probably already written; and he is said to have received
from Octavia 10,000 sesterces for each line." (1)

Here are a few of the lines which moved the mother of
Marcellus so strongly. They are spoken by the shade of
Anchises in the lower world.

"Heu pietas, heu prisca fides, invictaque bello
dextera! . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Heu miserande puer, si qua fata aspera rumpas,
tu Marcellus eris! Manibus date lilia plenis,
purpleos spargam flores animamque nepotis
his saltem accumulem donis et fungar inani
munere."

(2)

Anchises imagines that he is attending the funeral of
Marcellus and tries to convey to Aeneas the depth of feeling
he would have on that occasion. No passage more full of

(1) Sidgwick, Vol. 11, P. 314.  (2) Bk. VI, LL 878-886
pathos could be found in any literature.

These lines serve well as the funeral dirge of all the youthful characters whose premature death Virgil has recorded one after the other - young men and women, noble in character, and dauntless in war. They passed away, being unable to "break their fate", and left parents and comrades weeping beside tombs erected all too soon. The mother who wept beside the grave of Euryalus, the aged father who flung himself upon the bier of Pallas, the warrior who was spurred on to renew the fight by the death of his son Lausus, the faithful companions who carried Camilla from the field cold in death, the Roman Octavia who fainted at the mention of her son - all were plunged into the abyss of passionate grief. All believed in some terribly powerful "Fate" out of whose clutches it had been impossible for their young people to escape. They did not blame themselves for causing the wars in which the majority of these unfinished lives were cut short; they had no hope that God might have taken them from their midst to fulfill more worthy purposes. They could not ask, with Tennyson, "How know I what had need of thee?"

The famous Dr. Arnold of Rugby died before he was forty-seven. One of his biographers says: "When we see a life of such immense possibilities of usefulness and work cut short, it is very hard to believe that all is well. We can only rest on such words as: 'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter'. We must believe that such souls are called away to other labors in some more perfect place,
leaving behind an example for us to try to imitate." This represents adequately the Christian point of view. What a sharp contrast between this and Virgil's feeble words:

"Heu miserande puer, si qua fata aspera rumpas."

To use the figure employed by Dr. H.T.J. Coleman in an exquisite little poem entitled "Sorrow", we can see the shrouded form of Sorrow when we read these lines, but, strain our eyes as we may, we cannot perceive that she is weaving the rose of faith. She is rather weaving a "chaplet of lost hopes and vain desires."

"She stood beside me in the fading light,
Her hair was dusk of twilight, and her eyes
The first faint stars of the slow-coming night
And the sad glory of the pale moonrise.

Upon her breast she wore a tender flower
That bravely had withstood the ardent sun
And the rude buffetings of wind and shower
Only to hang its head when day was done.

For a brief space her look on me inclined;
No word she spoke, but I could hear her breathing
In the soft whisper of the evening wind;
And all the while her hands were wreathing

A chaplet of lost hopes and vain desires,
Of foiled ambitions, vanished ecstacies,
And aspirations withered by the fires
Of hate and cynic scorn; and then with these

A single rose she wove which made them seem
No longer symbol of decay and death;
Before my tear-dimmed eyes there shone a gleam
Of springtime and of morn. That rose was faith."

(1) "Sorrow", by H.T.J. Coleman.
Despite the fact that Virgil lacked the Christian view of immortality, he approached it more closely than any classical poet. This fact was noted very early in the history of the Christian Church, with the result that the Roman poet was regarded as a prophet by the apostles of Christ. In the Cathedral of Zamora his bust appears among the images of Christian seers. At Limoges and Rheims as late as the Fifteenth Century, the following words were included in a chant sung at the Christmas-tide: "O Maro, prophet of the Gentiles, bear thou thy witness unto Christ." This astonishing interest in Virgil on the part of the early church is generally conceded to be attributable to an interpretation of the Fourth Eclogue which numbers Virgil among the prophets of Christ's birth. This also has been used as an explanation for that strange custom common among Christians of the early centuries of using the "Aeneid" for purposes of divination. The practice was to open a copy of the poem at random and obtain the "Sortes Virgilianae" from the first line that caught the eye. After reading the epic in its entirety, one wonders if the poem itself did not inspire, at least partially, this uncanny belief in Virgil's magic. As has been previously noted, he manifests a sympathy for humanity in the throes of hardship and sorrow approaching in intensity the feelings of Jesus himself. Then there is contained in the poem that strain of melancholy which a study of Virgil's treatment of youth reveals more clearly than a study of any other phase of his work. That Virgil prophesied Christ's coming is doubtful.
That he shared his devotion to the cause of humanity is indisputable.

Many lovers of Virgil, both ancient and modern, have been interested in Virgil's semi-Christian philosophy. Dante placed him among those whose one involuntary fault was that they were not baptized. Glover, in speaking of the philosophers of the classical world, says, "Dark night enwraps their heads with hovering gloom; Virgil is their solitary rearguard and is on the very confines of the day." Again he remarks, "To minds touched with the same sense of life's problems which pervades the poetry of Virgil, the Gospel brought the rest and peace which they could not find elsewhere." In a mass of St.Paul there are a few stanzas which show true appreciation of Virgil's work and disclose the one thing which it lacked in order to make it the epic of all humanity. In these verses, written by an unknown student of the poet, St.Paul, it is supposed, visits Virgil's mausoleum and being deeply impressed by the occasion, utters these words:

"Ad Maronis mausoleum
Ductus fudit super eum
Piae rorem lacrimae;
'Quem te,' inquit, reddidissem
Si te vivum invenissem
Poetarum maxime!"

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