

**A SPIRITUAL
AENEID**

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A spiritual Aeneid by R. A. Knox

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R. A. KNOX

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BY

R. A. KNOX

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*Expectabat enim fundamenta habentem civitatem,
cuius artifex et conditor Deus*

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PREFACE

THIS book is a religious autobiography. The matter of it is not original, and (I thank God) the conclusion of it is not original either. But, so long as minds differ, there must always be some difference in the most hackneyed of pilgrimages, as the pilgrims compare notes at the Confessio.

I have tried to avoid all references that could be damaging to anybody but myself; if and where I have failed, I must take this opportunity to ask forgiveness. The publishing of autobiographies by the obscure is always, in any case, a target for criticism; but even obscure things have an interest; let us call it an autobiography. And before you say "self-advertisement"—think, what a bad advertisement.

In explanation of the *Aeneid-motif* which runs through the chapter-headings and parts of the book, I had perhaps better give the key to a somewhat obvious set of symbols. Troy is undisturbed and in a sense unreflective religion; in most lives it is overthrown, either to be rebuilt or to be replaced. The Greeks are the doubts which overthrow it. The "miniature Troy" of Helenus is the effort to reconstruct that religion exactly as it was. Carthage is any false goal that, for a time, seems to claim finality. And Rome is Rome.

A SPIRITUAL AENEID

I

FIRST INFLUENCES

Me si fata meis paterentur ducere vitam
Auspiciis, et sponte mea componere curas,
Urbem Trojanam colerem.

NOT very long ago the Archbishop of Canterbury, animadverting upon the varied religious experiences of a certain free-lance Bishop, described them as "an episcopal Odyssey." The phrase is wanting in aptness, when it is remembered that, wherever your Odyssey takes you, it must involve coming back home at the end of it. I have dared to take my title from a poem even richer in associations. For an Aeneid involves not merely coming home, but coming home to a place you have never been in before—one that combines in itself all that you valued in the old home with added promises of a future that is new. In an Aeneid, as in an Odyssey, you may be driven from your course ; but, to crown the sense of adventure, in an Aeneid you do not even know where your port lies ; you are bidden

Ausonium, quicumque est, quaerere Thybrim ;

you must make experiments, hark back to beginnings, throw yourself upon a celestial guidance. Nor is it, as