

**MASTER VIRGIL, THE
AUTHOR OF THE AENEID AS
HE SEEMED IN THE MIDDLE
AGES; A SERIES OF STUDIES**

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Master Virgil, the author of the Aeneid as he seemed in the Middle Ages; a series of studies by J. S. Tunison

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J. S. TUNISON

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Virgil

MASTER VIRGIL

THE AUTHOR OF THE ÆNEID AS HE SEEMED
IN THE MIDDLE AGES

A SERIES OF STUDIES

Joseph Salathiel
BY
J. S. TUNISON
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Magis invitam accingier artis

SECOND EDITION

CINCINNATI
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1890

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1889.

*The arrangement of the citations in this book was a matter of some study for the author. As first written out, the notes were so frequent that almost every sentence in the text was ornamented with marks indicating quotations or references at the bottom of the page. Nothing could be more burdensome than this mass of indigestible fragments succeeding each other in an order dependent on the text, but not easily held in the memory. As the only originality possible to a work of this kind pertained to method, arrangement, and form of expression, it was finally decided to group the references with the sections of the table of contents, disregarding some punctilios of authorship, but relieving the eye from a fatiguing task, and still leaving it in the power of the zealous reader to trace all the sources from which the author drew his information. If some man of approved learning had taken up this task; if Thomas Wright, for example, had carried out his own suggestions made in the preface to his *Alexander Neckam*, he would have saved me trouble and gained my applause. The references are in most cases to books of value, in some to the mere curiosities of literature, and in others to volumes which have only the value, fixed but trivial, of specimens in a museum. Whether or not proper discrimination has been made in the text between books of authority and books of no authority, the reader can easily determine.*

*So much for the first edition of this book. Those who know the difficulties that obstructed the task of getting *Master Virgil* into print, will sympathize with the author in his gratification at having comparatively so few defects laid to his charge. In this, the second edition, an effort has been made to correct the errors of the first, most of which involved only the change of a letter. The most important alteration will be found on pages fifty-six and fifty-seven. This has been supplemented by an additional section in the closing essay. Though the caption of that essay has not been changed, yet on second thought, after examining some of the critical notices of the book, I am obliged to confess it is misleading. Perhaps the purpose would be clearer if the heading were *Later Eccentricities*, or something of that sort. Except where it was impossible, all the serious public criticism of the book has been met by suitable revision. An index of names and subjects has also been added.*

J. S. T.

SYLLABUS.

- I. AN APOLOGY: How these essays came to be written; the lines of study that were followed; the proposed synthesis of the legends respecting Virgil; the application of these tales to the name of Virgil due to a literary rather than a popular inspiration; the taste of the middle ages for narratives concerning magicians; acquaintance of the people in the middle ages with the writings of classic times; political movements that were favorable to the creation of a magical renown for Virgil; the growth of superstition as shown in the literature of the period between the beginning of the twelfth and the close of the sixteenth century; the problem that is sought to be solved in this book. pp. 1-9.
- II. VIRGIL AND THE DEVIL: Diabolism at first carefully excluded from the miraculous stories about Virgil; the wonders done by Virgil, as accounted for by Alexander Neckam, by Gervase of Tilbury, by Conrad of Querfurt, by the author of the *Dolopathos*, by the French and German romancers; Virgil's personality, as viewed by his contemporaries, tinged with a suggestion of mystery; stimulus to legend-making given by the notions entertained respecting poetry; the way thus made to a phase of demonism; no necessity for the introduction of Arabian fancies to account for the devil as presented in the Virgilian tales; modification in the classical theory of magic, which at last

rendered demons indispensable in all tales of necromancy; the opinions of Pliny, of Apuleius and of mediæval writers, interpreted by the mediæval Germans particularly, to mean demonism; the character of the devil, as connected with Virgil, a manifest creation of the German fancy; Virgil in this aspect a predecessor of Faust; examples of the tales in which Virgil figured with the devil; traces shown of an extremely early communication with the Far East, probably by way of Venice; the development of the diabolism in the legends of Virgil, so far as it is of any value, held to indicate that the craze on this subject grew in terror and intensity, so that what was a comparatively harmless belief in the twelfth century became a cruel and deadly fanaticism in the turbulent era of the Reformation; its outcome in the Faust legends. pp. 10-38.

REFERENCES—Comparetti, *Virgilio nel Medio Evo*, Vol. II., pp. 29 and 176, 177, 92, 93, 94, 162, 206; Thomas Wright, *Alexandri Neckam de Naturis Rerum*, preface and pp. 309, 310; Thomas Wright, *Essays on the Middle Ages*, Vol. I., pp. 238, 239; William J. Thoms, *Early English Prose Romances*, Vol. II., pp. 25-27; Heyne, *Opera Virgilii*, third London Edition, *Vita Donati*, I., II., X., XVII., VII., XII., XIII., V., Lemaire's Edition, Vol. VII., p. 280; Hazlitt, *Warton's History of English Poetry*, Vol. III., p. 180; Lane, *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, Second Edition, Vol. III., pp. 8, 90, 98, 103, Vol. I., pp. 119, 274, 379, 192; J. S. Brewer, *Fr. Rogeri Bacon Opera Quaedam hactenus inedita*, Vol. I., p. 269; Cruttwell, *History of Roman Literature*, pp. 278, 279; Benedetto Fiorentino, *Opere*, Florence, 1680, part second, p. 26; Polydore Vergil, *De Prodigis*, Elzevir Edition, pp. 12, 13; John Beaumont, *Gleanings of Antiquities*, London, 1724, p. 72; W. Robson, *Michaud's History of the Crusades*, Vol. II., p. 47; William Browne, *the History of Polesander done into English*, London, 1647, p. 308.

III. VIRGIL IN LITERARY TRADITION: Veneration felt for Virgil among the Romans; the use of his works as models of Latin style by the grammarians and rhetoricians; debased views of Virgil in post-classic times, showing a legendary tendency; superstitious use of Virgil's writing in divination; the legendary movement of the Virgilian tradition in the fourth and fifth

centuries, compared to modern tendencies involving the names of Shakespeare and Goethe; views of mediæval Latin poets concerning Virgil; expression of political and theological opinion respecting the works of Virgil; the idea of Virgil portrayed in the romance literature; the legendary tendency shown in the succession of purely literary anecdote. pp. 39-63.

- REFERENCES—Comparetti, Vol. I., pp. 10, 40, 42, 62, 63, 64, 165, 166; Vol. II., pp. 3, 8, 9; Heyne's *Virgilius, Vita Donati*, xiv. 52, xviii., xix., xl. 40, 42, xvii. 68, 70, xxi. 90; Polydore Vergil, *De Prodigia*, Lib. II., p. 99; Tiraqueau, *De Jure Primigeniorum*, Frankfort, 1574, p. 356; Lampridius, *Vita Alexandri Severi* xxx.; William Kyle, *An Exposition of the Symbolic terms of the Second Part of Faust*, &c, Nuremberg, 1870; Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*; Fabricius, *Bibliotheca Latina Medie et Infimæ ætatis*, Vol. V., p. 391, verses 36-44; Vol. VI., p. 665, verses 17-22; Vol. I., p. 356; Leyser, *Historia Poetarum Medii ævi*, pp. 1028, 827; Hazlitt's Warton, Vol. III., p. 199; Zappert, *Virgils Leben und Fortleben im Mittelalter*, III., IV., v., vi.; Dixon, *Mano, a Poetical History*, Book II., Canto vi., Book I., Canto iv.; Brunet and de Montaiglon, *Li Romans de Dolopathos*, preface and verses 1257-1268, 1-22, 1419-1425, 1950-1959, 1310-1328, 1826-1828; Wright's Alexander Neckam, p. 190.

- IV. VIRGIL'S BOOK OF MAGIC: Inception of the allegorical method of interpreting Virgil's poems; some of them open to such an interpretation; the tradition on this point handed down by Asconius Pedianus; vagaries of grammarians and rhetoricians concerning the infinite extent of Virgil's learning; the natural result an endeavor to find hidden meaning in all the works of the poet; the explanation of Macrobius; the allegory of the Æneid as expounded by Fulgentius; this species of allegory agreeable to the common taste of all ages; recurrence of the allegorizing tendency at the time when magical legends were first attached in literature to the name of Virgil; the apotheosis of Virgil and his book as viewed by the more illiterate of the romance writers; natural that the notion of a book of magic should occur to them; the various tales in which this book of magic figured; its diabolical character

gradually emphasized; the legend taken advantage of at last by a quack whose book was attributed to Virgil; a vague reminiscence betrayed in this book of the Virgilian allegory. pp. 64-83.

REFERENCES—Comparetti, Vol. I., pp. 45-46, 78-79, 80-81, 98, 84, 142-143, 156-158; Vol. II., pp. 95, 124, 126, 238; *Vita Donati*, XI., XXI.; Zappert, II. A; John of Salisbury, *Polycraticus* VI. 22, II. 15, 23; *Dolopathos*, verses 1396-1402, 2040, 2058, 1547-1552, 2225-2234, 4084-4101, 4207-4273, 11382-11394; Mencke, *De Charlataneria*, pp. 26-28.

V. VIRGIL THE MAN OF SCIENCE: Antique notions of the relation between poetry and medicine; skill in medicine attributed to Virgil; the historical basis of the legend concerning Virgil's garden of curative herbs; Virgil's legendary connection with the baths of Baia; guise in which Virgil appears to the mediæval imagination; superstitions of classic times which contain the germs of the Virgilian legends; notable similarity of tales concerning magicians; the accounts of Virgil's achievements given by various authors; an interpolation in the biography attributed to Donatus. pp. 84-112.

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