

opinion, uproot every conviction — nay, forsake their very creed, all to please some potentate from whom they expect a favor. Our political life is a case in point, and so it was with Dido's sister. She had women's wit enough to see through the sham reluctance of the queen and sagacity, or if you wish, duplicity enough to flatter her real inclinations.

Vehemence is Dido's characteristic, and it is this which makes her the only real artistic delineation of human nature which Virgil has furnished; all his other *dramatis personae*, including his hero Aeneas, are mere shadows which flit across the stage without leaving any deep impression upon the mind. But, whilst this vehemence constitutes the one success of Virgil as a portrayer of character, it proves the ruin of poor Dido. Her passions are thereby rendered ungovernable, so that when love has entered her heart, her pride, her position, her honor, all are thrown to the winds, and she falls a willing victim to what in spite of all this, however, can only be characterized as reprehensible conduct on the part of Aeneas. It is creditable to Virgil that he condemns the deed itself, but he fails by placing all the blame upon the ill-fated queen. Strange, too, that despite the wonders Christianity has wrought for the elevation of woman and for the proper appreciation of her dignity as a fellow-creature with man, the world in similar circumstances still pursues the same line of conduct. To say that woman is the guardian of morality upon which all society rests and that, consequently, she must be severely punished when she proves false to her trust, will hardly clear the world from the charge of injustice. It is not claimed that the penalty she pays is too severe, but, since in the words of the Apostle of the Gentiles, she is the weaker vessel, why, in all conscience, is not a like punishment meted out to her companion in guilt. In this regard, the world is as pagan as it was when it drove the unfortunate queen of Carthage to suicide, whilst it received back her faithless lover with open arms and rejoiced to recognize in him the founder of the greatest nation of antiquity.

Then too, as now, evil news spread fast, and the allegorical figure of scandal almost instantaneously growing from an insignificant pigmy to a giant whose fore-

head touches the skies, is one of the finest figures to be found in the *Aeneid*.

Little need is there to detail further Dido's fate. Human nature is ever the same, and in this tragic tale Virgil has but pointed out vagaries of which we have all heard, if we have not witnessed them. Yet, he has done so with wonderful skill. Aeneas attempts to escape unobserved, for he soon grows weary of his intrigue with the queen; but she quickly discovers his treachery, for "what arts can blind a jealous woman's eyes?" The ensuing scenes are painted with the hand of a master. The queen's first wild outburst of anger; her subsequent pitiful appeal to her faithless lover; the fierce struggle between love and hate in her heart; her tragic despair and death; all these the poet has set before us in a manner so thrilling at times as to become positively painful. Especially does it seem so to us as we listen to the fearful invectives she utters whilst catching a last glimpse of the Trojan ships slipping beneath the western waves. Byron might well have had this scene in mind when he wrote:

"Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned."

But women have more to do with sentiment than with passion, and Virgil was too true an artist to allow the latter to be the predominant characteristic of his heroine in the death-scene. As she mounts the funeral pile, her glance falls upon the tokens of her short-lived happiness. A meteoric change comes over her; all her rage is calmed now; bitter tears of regret and shame well up to her eyes; with one last look at these tender pledges of her fatal love, she raises her hand and plunges the sword into her bosom. Dido is dead; another is added to the already long list of man's inhumanities towards woman.

Virgil contents himself with merely stating the fact of the suicide without making any comments upon the propriety of the act. Since, however, he utilizes it to disprove so important a personage as Dido, and one in whose fate his readers are naturally deeply interested, it may be safely concluded, especially when taken in conjunction with collateral evidence, that the Pagans looked upon self-destruction in a far more favorable light than do Christians.

It has been stated that Dido is the best drawn of all Virgil's characters, but it