CHAPTER XV  YOUNG ROME

characters: Basil, Heliodora, Vivian, Muscula, Gala, Marcian

第九章で注目すべきは、Heliodora と Vivian の人物描写であろう。この作家の数多くの人物描写に接して来た者にとって、単純に言えば、遺作に於いても尚極めて‘stereotype’な人物描写しか出来て居ると言うことである。結論を急ぎすぎる嫌い無きにしも非ずだが、この作家の成長を見守り続けて来た筆者にとっては、失望を禁じ得ないと言うのが本音である。

Heliodora’s robe was of hyacinth blue, broderied in silver thread with elaborate designs. Bracelets, chains, and rings shone about her in the wonted profusion. Above the flat coils of her hair lay a little bunch of grapes between two vine leaves, wrought in gold, and at her waist hung a dagger, the silver sheath chased with forms of animals. Standing behind her the little Anglican slave Laetus gently fanned her with a peacock’s tail, or sprinkled her with perfume from a vial; the air was heavy with Sabæan odours.

(Ibid., p. 175)
This youth was the son of a man whose name sounded ill to any Roman patriot — of that Opilio, who, having advanced to high rank under King Theodric, was guilty of frauds, fell from his eminence, and, in hope of regaining the King’s favour, forged evidence of treachery against Boethius. His attire followed the latest model from Byzantium: a loose, long-sleeved tunic, descending to the feet, its hue a dark yellow, and over that a long mantle of white silk, held together upon one shoulder by a great silver buckle in the form of a running horse; silken shoes, gold embroidered, with leather soles dyed purple: and on each wrist a bracelet. His black hair was short, and crisped into multitudinous curls with a narrow band of gold pressing it from the forehead to the ears.

(Ibid., p. 176)

哀亡に向ってひた走る The Roman Empire の、本来ならば次代を背負うべきこの拾八歳の若き Roman の、質実剛健を旨とした風習をすっかり捨て去った Bythantium 風の流行の身形の中に、大帝国の末期の姿の一端を垣間見せようとする作家の意図は理解出来るものの、Basil に対抗する rival としての存在感についての説明は無きに等しく、単なる操り人形としか見えないのは残念である。

さて、こちらは仲々面白くなって来た plot の展開を追って見よう。周囲の忠告に配慮して、然し、Veranilda への変らぬ愛——‘It helped him to fix his thoughts upon Veranilda, and silently he swore that no temptation should prevail against the fidelity due to his beloved.’ (Ibid., p. 172) ——を確信して、Basil は Heliodora 邑に向うが、そこには Vivian と有関夫人 Muscula 及び Gala と言う取巻きの先客に囲まれて、騒々しい雰囲気の中で、女王然として鎮座する Heliodora の姿が在り、その内に他愛のない話題の中での意見の衝突から、二人の有関夫人の間で諦いが生じ、その鬱憤晴らしの一助として Muscula の口から重大な発言が飛び出して、Basil を驚ろかす。

‘I know well why you were here. Not for this woman’s painted cheeks and essence-soaked hair: you had enough of that long ago. You come because she pretends to know a secret which concerns you nearly. It was to discover this secret that she sought friendship with me. But do not imagine, sweet lord, that I tell all I know to Heliodora. I have played with her curiosity and fooled her. From me she has learnt nothing true — and be sure she does
not — she could only mislead you. I alone can discover for you what you wish to know. Give yourself no more trouble in suing to a woman of whom you are weary — a woman evil and dangerous as a serpent. When you choose to seek me, dear lord, I will befriend you. Till that day, fare you well, and beware of other things than the silver-hilted dagger — which she would draw upon me did she dare. But she knows that I too have my little bosom friend, though it does not glitter before every eye.’

(Ibid., p. 178)

結局これ迄思わせ振りな口調で、Veranilda の行方について熟知して居ると Basil の気を惹いて来た Heliodora の奸計は、この Muscula の告白で總て虚僞であることが判明し、Basil のみならず、讀者も驚くのである。このあたりの plot の展開振りは、流石に永年に亘る作家の著々と続けられて来た storyteller としての面目躍如と裏めて置こう。憤然として踵を返そうとする Basil に対して、あんな ‘harlot’ の言う事を信じてはいけないと、

Her arms were about his neck; her body clung against his; she breathed hotly into his eyes as she panted forth words, Latin, Greek, all burning with shameless desire.

(Ibid., p. 180)

撓垂れかかる悪女を突き飛ばして、Basil は Heliodora 郎を後にする。

憤慢やる方なく立ち寄った Marcian 郎で、彼の口から

‘If you come to tell me what you have heard this afternoon, spare your breath. I know it already. I have seen an angry woman. Angry women are always either very mischievous or very useful. In this case I hope to make use of her. But I can tell you nothing yet, and I would that you were far from Rome. Could I but persuade you to be gone, dear Basil?’

(Ibid., p. 181)

と、これ又意外な報告を聞いて、Basil は再び驚かされる。然し、この二重の衝撃から立ち直るかの様に意を決して、Rome を離れる覚悟を固め、‘Can I trust you, Marcian?’ (Ibid., p. 181) と友情と信頼を確認して去るのである。この確認が、後章の Marcian の行動に対する重要な伏線になることは言う迄もない。
CHAPTER XVI

characters: Marcian, Heliodora, Sagaris

南イタリアの大半は，the Goths に征圧されて，帝國の命運は日増しに滅亡へ向って転がり落ちて行く中で，Byzantium への救援依頼も殆んど効果なく，絶望した Rome の庶民の間からは，‘Let the Goth come quickly!’（Ibid., p. 183）と言う自暴自棄な聲を聞かれる様になって来て居る。そんな状況の中で，Totila とも Belisarius とも交渉の道を保持するMarcian は，‘He was now exerting himself in manifold ways, subtly, persistently, for the supreme achievement of his intrigue, the delivery of Rome from Byzantium tyranny.’（Ibid., p. 183）と言う大計画に向って行動を開始する。彼が先ず仕掛けた計略は，Heliodora を利用することであった。彼女を訪ねた Marcian は，‘thrice gracious lady’（Ibid., p. 185）と言う呼び掛け方からも推測される様に，この人一倍自尊心が強く pride の高い女性を，徹底的に持ち上げて，巧みに攻略する。Gissing の数多くの作品に見られる ‘plotting’ の集大成と言っても過言ではない程，Marcian の言動は水際立って居る。

‘Alas!’ sighed Marcian, ‘it was too much to hope. How could you be other than cold to him. Had you deigned, thrice gracious lady, to set your beauty, your gifts, in contest with his memory of that other!’

（Ibid., p. 185）

と，貴女こそ Basil と結ばれる運命にあると歎かし，更に，

‘Little chance, dear lady, I hope and believe, but I have confessed to you that I speak as a self-seeker and a faithless friend. It is not enough that Basil may not wed her; I would fain have her for myself.’

（Ibid., p. 186）

と告げて，自分も Veranilda を愛して来たことを明らかにすることに依って，彼女と親友が親密になる様に本気で画策して居るのだと思わせようとするのである。更に，彼は以下二つの ‘his invention’（Ibid., p. 187）を Heliodora に明かして，彼女の度胆を抜く。先ず Veranilda は，Belisarius の手に依って Constantinople の或る城に幽閉されて居ること，次に，Heliodora と敵対関係に在る Muscula は，Belisarius と同様に，彼を意の壇にして居ること，次いで，彼女は Basil に貰取されて，Veranilda を密かに城から連れ出して，
Rome 近郊に営む Basil の許へ送り届ける計画となるのである。そして、謀略の総仕上げとして、Belisarius が、「Wore I the purple, Heliodora should be my Empress.'（Ibid., p. 188）と、事もあろうに Muscula の面前で言い放つのを聞いたと話して、Heliodora の pride を掟る。Marcian に負けず劣らず実力に富む Heliodora は、直ちに Marcian の confidential servant である Syrian の Sagaris を呼び出し、色仕掛けで Muscula 殺害の実行を囁いて約束させ、自らに刃向う憎い女性を始末させて了う。

以後の plot の展開の上で、Marcian の ‘unhappy that he was, he himself loved Veranilda.’（Ibid., p. 185）と、Heliodora を自らの計略に引き込む手段として発した言葉が、徐々に現実のものへと変化して行く経緯を重視して行かねばならないまい。

CHAPTER XVII LEANDER THE POLITIC
characters: Marcian, Heliodora, Leander

この章では、謀略家の Marcian と野心家の deacon Leander との、各々の野望達成へ向けての駆け引き振りが鮮明に描出されて、小説の plot を複雑化し、読者の興味を物語の更なる発展に強烈に惹き付ける効果を挙げて居る。the Gothic maiden が船で東方 Constantinople へ向うのを目撃したとの噂を聞いて、急いで Heliodora を訪れた Marcian に、彼女は Veranilda は Belisarius の手許には居ないと告げ、彼の想像が正しくなかったことを詫る。Marcian は自らの将来設計の実現に向けて、現実の事態の発展を Heliodora に解説する。the Goth King の Totila は、進む程その地を掌中に収め、間もなく the Appia Way から Rome へ進駐するであろうこと、Belisarius よりは Totila の方が Rome 人民に人気があるらしいこと（‘Not even Belisarius can undo the work of Alexandros and these devouring captains. From end to end of Italy, the name of the Greeks is abhorred; that of Totila held in honour. He will renew the kingdom of Theodoric.’（Ibid., p. 195））等を告げた後、謀略に取り掛かる。即ち、Heliodora から事の外観を花な Belisarius に Rome の無血開城を勧めて欲しい、事が成った後その功績は自分から Totila に充分伝えて置く、更に、the Gothic King は非常に寛容な精神の持主なので、the Greek commander の處遇に関しても決して悪い様にはしない筈と持ち掛けるのである。この取引きは opportunist で計算高い Heliodora にとっても得にこそれ決して損はしない筈で、姪で彼女も納得するであろうとの強かな計画に基づいて居るのである。

暫くして、Marcian の許に Totila から deacon Leander に逢えと言う書簡が届けられ、彼は早速 Leander を訪れる。老朽した the temple of Minerva Chalcidica を取り壊して、新らしい教會建立に忙しい Leander と、事態の伸展を急ぐ Marcian と丁々発止の駆け引きが
美事である。何よりも先ず Veranilda の所在を突き止めたい Marcial は, the Goth King が, Basil との関係は水に流して, 'his own people' である Veranilda を queen として迎えたいと希望して居ると水を向けるが, 狭緒な deacon は the Pope Vigilius が密かに Rome を抜け出して身を隠すらしいと話題を変えて了う。法王脱出の後は, Leander 自身が the deacon Pelagius として, 賢能を掌握する筋書きであることは, 同転の速い Marcial の即座に理解出来ることで,‘Basil I hold dearer to me than my own; but I cannot help him to frustrate a desire of Totila. The King is noble; to serve him is to promote the weal of Italy, for which he fights, and in which name he will conquer.’

(Ibid., p. 199)

と, 親友を裏切って迄 Totila の為に働くのは, 唯一途に Rome の又 Italy 全体の weal を顧ってのことと力説する。

It was his principle to trust no man unless he were assured of a motive he had not yet discovered in Marcial.

(Ibid., p. 200)

心底から Marcial を信用し切って居ない Leander は, 彼の申し出が確かに自らの利益に関き付くと知りながらも, 'Be not impatient; great things are not hastily achieved.' (Ibid., p. 200) と老僕にも逸る若者を宥めて, the Pope の脱出の件も含めて, 事態の動向を探ろうとする。‘plotting’ の heroes としての Marcial と Leander の対決は, 更に後章に於いて, plot を興味深いものに仕上げて行くのである。

CHAPTER XVIII PELAGIUS
characters: Marcial, Heliodora, Pelagius

第拾八章は, 策謀家 Marcial の失意の状態を鮮明に描き出す。自らのシナリオ通りに動かない Heliodora と deacon Leander に少なからず失望した Marcial は, 日頃の過労も加わって, 病の床に就く。家中の者は疫病を恐れて近寄らない。幸い pest 罹患ではない事が判明して, 安堵の胸を撫で下しぶたものの, 悪う前に較べて可成り衰弱になって居る自分に気付いて, Marcial は驚く。暫く静養した後, 漸く元気を取り戻して, Heliodora の
許を訪れる。何時なく不機嫌な彼女は、自分と Marcian の密議が何故 Belisarius の耳に筒抜けになってしまったのかと語る。‘That is a question to put to your astrologer, your oneirocritic, your genethliac. I profess not to read mysteries.’ (Ibid., p. 205) とその場は穏しかったものの、‘Liar! How could he have had it but from your own lips?’ (Ibid., p. 205) と罵らせられて、Marcian は非道く傷付けたそうだ。更に、Pelagius に対面した際に、

‘Remember, then, how I have dealt with you; remember, also, that no such indulgence will be granted to a renewal of your crime against Rome, your sin against God.’

(Ibid., p. 208)

と痛罵されて、完全に打ちのめされていたのである。the festival of St. Laurentis の日に、martyr’s grave で祈る Marcian の姿は、彼が決して強気に倒さない男ではなく、意外に細細な神経の持ち主であることを証明して居る。

All Rome streamed out to the basilica beyond the Tibertine Gate, and among those who prayed most fervently at the shrine was Marcian. He besought guidance in an anguish of doubt. Not long ago, in the early days of summer, carnal temptation had once more overcome him, and the sufferings, the perils, of this last month he attributed to that lapse from purity. His illness was perhaps caused by excess of rigour in penitence. To-day he prayed with many tears that the Roman martyr would enlighten him, and make him understand his duty to Rome.

(Ibid., p. 208)

病床に在った時も、‘In his weak, dejected, and humbled state he thought of the peace of a monastery, and passed most of his time in prayer.’ (Ibid., p. 202) と弱気が顔を覗かせて居たのだが、練り上げた計画が一向に進捗しない状況も相俟って、今や Marcian は失意のどん底に落ち込んで居ったのである。

この様に打ち撃られた Marcian を立ち直らせたのは、何と deacon Leander であった。‘That for which you have been waiting.’ (Ibid., p. 209) と言う意味深長な言い廻しで、彼は Marcian に Rome を出立する様に勧める。

With difficulty Marcian dissembled his agitation. Was this the saint’s reply to his
prayer? Or was it a temptation of the Evil Power, which it behoved him to resist?

(Ibid., p. 209)

人智では抗い切れない運命の命ずる僕に，Marcian は Sagaris を連れて，Rome を後にする事になるのだが，尚も前途に言い知れぬ不安を抱く彼に向って，‘The travel is planned in every detail, and the letters ready.’ (Ibid., p. 209) と嘆く Leander の言葉が，何とも無気味である。

CHAPTER XIX THE PRISONER OF PRAENESTE

characters: Marcian, Veranilda, a bishop of Praeneste

第拾七章で詳らかになった二人の謀略家が，その目指す目的に向って，積極的に行動に移る姿を追って見よう。the Pope Viglius の Rome 脱出は，脱出と言うよりは敗走と言える程惨めなもので，早朝に拘らず，多數の民衆から石飛舞の洗禮を浴びる体たらくであったが，この Christ 教の敗退を知実に示す行方こそ，謂う及もなく deacon Leander の策略に基づくもので，自らの身の安全と the Pope に対する見せかけの忠誠心から，逃避行為に同進して居る間に，Totila が Rome を征略し，その後戻って Apostle の地位を手に入れようとその策段である。一方，Marcian は，

The thought most active in his mind had nothing to do with the contest of nations or with the fate of Rome: it was that on the morrow he should behold Veranilda. For a long time he had ceased to think of her; her name came to his lips in connection with artifice and intrigue, but the maiden herself had faded into nothingness, no longer touched his imagination. He wondered at that fantastic jealousy of Basil from which he had suffered. This morning, the caress of the warm air, the scents wafted about him as he rode over the great brown wilderness, revived his bygone mood. Again he mused on that ideal loveliness which he attributed to the unseen Veranilda. For nearly a year she had been sought in vain by her lover, by Greek commanders, by powerful churchmen; she had been made the pretext of far-reaching plots and conspiracies; her name excited passions vehement and perilous, had been the cause of death. Now he was at length to look upon her; nay, she was to pass into his gurdianship, and be by him delivered into the hands of the warrior king. Dreaming, dreaming, he rode along the Praenestian Way.

(Ibid., p.p. 211−212)
と、幕るばかりのVeranildaへの想いを胸に秘めて、本来の目的である‘the contest of nations or with the fate of Rome’を等閑にして、一路彼女が幽閉されて居るPraenesteへ向うのである。

Its great walls and citadel towering on the height above told of ancient strength, and many a noble building, within the city and without, monuments of glory and luxury, resisted doom. Sulla’s Temple of Fortune still looked down upon its columned terraces, but behind the portico was a Christian church, and where one abode the priests of heathen sanctuary, the Bishop of Praeneste had now his dwelling.

(Ibid., p. 214)

そして、deacon Leanderからの指示通り、BishopはVeranildaをMarcianの手に託すことになる。

The soft accent made Marcian tremble. He expected to hear a sweet voice, but this was sweeter far than he could have imagined: its gentleness, its sadness, utterly overcame him, so that he all but wept in his anguish of delight.

(Ibid., p. 218)

余りにも理想化されすぎた女性像の存在は、この作家の多数の作品の中で嫌と言う程繰り返されて来た人物創造のtechniqueではあるのだが、此の遺作に於いて又しても顕在して居て、realism作家の本質的な技倶不足を暴露して居るが、この點については他日に譲ることにした。

the Gothic Kingの前衛陣地に向って、人眼を避けて人跡未踏と言っても過言ではない荒地を抜けて、Marcianの故郷に近いAletriumに辿り着くと、其處は既に遊牧の異教徒に襲われた後で、あらゆる掠奪が行われて居り、村人達は恐怖のどん底に突き落とされて居る。村のbishopに対して、自分達一行はRomeのleading churchmenからのTotilaの一日に早い入城を督促する書簡を届ける鶴に道を急いで居ると説明するMarcianの言葉に、異教徒に対して反感を抱く村人達も、Romeの教會が認めて居るのなら安心と喜ぶのである。村の教會のmassで一心に祈るVeranildaに‘You have heard the mass?’(Ibid., p. 220)に対して、‘I am a Catholic. My religion is that of Basil.’と答えるVeranildaの今後何處へ向うのかとの問いに、胸の奥深くにjealousyの炎の燃えるのを覚えながらも、‘Not far from here
there is a villa. There you shall rest in safty until Basil comes.' と應え、‘He is near?’ と更に問いたげる Veranilda に、‘Already I have summoned him.’ (Ibid., p. 221) と心ならずも嘘を吐く Marcian の心箱に真實を告げて彼女を悲しませるよりは東の間でも愛しい女性を安心させたい彼女的心情が見て取れる、realism の破片を垣間見る気があるのである。

CHAPTER XX  THE ISLAND IN THE LIRIS

characters: Marcian, Veranilda, Sagaris

親友 Basil と愛する Veranilda に対する Marcian の激しい ‘jealousy’ が表面化する第二拾章は、彼等が急ぐ落ち着いた Liris の美しく穏やかな自然の中で展開される。Marcian の父の代からの villa は、凡そ五拾年程所有者一族には使用されて居らず、その為可成り荒廃した態勢で、僅かな slaves と peasants に依って辛うじて維持されて居る。Marcian の母が彼の少年時代に死んで、その直後亡霊として姿を現わし、お前もこの villa で ‘at peace with God’ (Ibid., p. 224) の態勢で生涯を閉じるだろうと予言し、この言葉が成人した後も Marcian の脳裏に焼き付いて離れず、引退後はきっとこの地で餘生を送る事になるだろうと考えて居る土地である。‘upper gallery’ を Veranilda の居室に定めた Marcian は、途中護衛に命じて贈られた Praenestines に Greek pursuers に注意して戻る様にと指示して、この villa で唯一資産価値のある Pluto と Neptune と Proserpine の三座の在る宮殿、初めて Veranilda と二人切りで対面する。Veranilda を nun にする計画があったことを告げた Marcian に、若し Basil が死んだとしたら運命に従ったかも知れないと答えた Veranilda は、Aurelia の消息について聞かれる時、誘拐されて船に乗せられた後全く知らないと話し、‘You never feared that he might have forgotten you?’ (Ibid., p. 228) と尋ねる彼に向って、‘Had I dreamt of it, I think I should not live.’ ときっぱり断言する。‘I thought only of Basil.’ と尚も彼への思慕の念をつなげられる Veranilda を残して villa を出た Marcian は、嘆いて叶わぬ恋を悲観した乙女が身を投じたと謂う傳説の斷崖 Lover’s Leap に立ち寄り、物想いに耽る。

‘Where Basil may be I know not. If he is still Asculum many days must pass before the summons from me could bring him hither. He may already be on his way to join the king, as I bade him in my last message. The uncertainty, the danger of this situation, can be met only in one way. On leaving Rome I saw my duty plain before me. A desire to pleasure my friend made me waver, but I was wrong — if Basil is to have Veranilda for his bride he can only receive her from the hands of Totila. Anything else would mean peril to the friend I love, and
disrespect, even treachery, to the king I honour. And so it shall be; I will torment myself no more.’

(Ibid., p.p. 229～230)

然しこの論理的な苦渋の決心も, Veranilda と一つ屋根の下で過ごす初めての夜の到来と共に, 感情的な行動に駆り立てる。

It came; the silent, lonely night, the warm, perfumed night, the season of fierce temptations, of dreadful opportunity. Never had the passionate soul of Marcian been so manifestly lured by the Evil One, never had it fought so desperately in the strength of religious hopes and fears. He knelt, he prayed, his voice breaking upon the stillness with anguish of supplication. Between him and the celestial vision rose that face which he had at length beheld, a face only the more provocative of sensual rage because of its sweet purity, its flawless truth. Then he flung himself upon the stones, bruised his limbs, lay at length exhausted, as if lifeless.

No longer could he strengthen himself by the thought of loyalty in friendship; that he had renounced. Yet he strove to think of Basil, and, in doing so, knew that he still loved him. For Basil he would do anything, suffer anything, lose anything; but when he imaged Basil with Veranilda, at once his love turned to spleen, a sudden madness possessed him, he hated his friend to the death.

(Ibid., p.p. 231～232)

沸き上る衝動を抑え切れず, Veranilda の寝室近くに忍び足で近付いた Marcian は, 不寝番の slave の一人に見咎められると, ‘Let me find you sleeping again, and your eyes shall be burned out.’ (Ibid., p. 232) と, 何時もの ‘humane’ (Ibid., p. 233) な主人の顔をかぬぐり捨てて威嚇し, 彼等の度胆を抜く始末である。

翌日筆談家としての冷静さを取り戻した Marcian は, the Gothic King に当てて何やら書簡を認めた後 Sagaris を呼び, その書簡を直接 Totila に手渡すこと, 他の人間には遥遥 Rome から来たと思わせること, 更に, 萬一 Basil に出逢ったら自分の主人は Rome に居ると答えて置く様に厳命する。帝国の運命を左右する運動を画策する筆談家としての顔と, 懇慕する女性に対して率直に心情を吐露することを躊躇する ‘weak-hearted’ な二面性を内包する人物の登場は, Gissing の大作 New Grub Street の Jasper Milvain と Edwin Reardon
It is so long since I was free to walk under the open sky,' (Ibid., p. 234) and自由を喜ぶVeranildaを馬の背に乗せる際の、又、彼女を馬から下す時のMarcianの細密な心の動きは、将に特筆に値する。

For a moment he held her, for a moment felt the warmth and softness of her flesh; then she sat sideways upon the horse, looking down at Marcian with startled gaiety. He showed her how to hold the reins, and the horse went gently forward.

She thanked him winsomely, and then, simply as before, accepted his help. Again Marcian held her an instant, her slim, light body trembling when set her down as if from a burden which strained his utmost force.

(Ibid., p.p. 234–235)

viperを気遣って、思わず反射的にVeranildaの手を掴んだ彼に、‘It will not be more than a few days?’ (Ibid., p. 235)と、Marcianの突喘の嘘を信じて居るVeranildaの間に、‘I have hidden the truth so long because I knew not how to utter it. Basil is false to you.’ (Ibid., p. 236)と応じ、‘He loves another woman, and for her sake has turned to the Greeks.’ (Ibid., p. 236)と告げるMarcianの胸中には、直接肌で感じた愛する女性の温もりに挑発された男性としてのsexual desireが潜んで居るのかも知れない。Basilが愛して夫のある身のHeliodoraと愛し合って居て、Veranildaの失踪後に彼女との間に繋がりが戻ったと話すMarcianの虚言に、純真無垢なGothic maidenは。

‘It cannot be true that he would have given me to the Greeks; that he may have forgotten me, that he may have turned to another love, I can perhaps believe — for what am I that Basil should love me? But to scheme my injury, to deliver me to our enemies — Oh, you are deceived, you are deceived!’

(Ibid., p. 237)
CHAPTER XXI THE BETRAYER BETRAYED

characters: Sagaris, Basil, Venantius

この作家の storytelling の常套手段の一つとして特徴的なものに、所謂‘rascals’の暗躍が在することは、これ迄の数多くの作品で見聞きした處であるが、従来の‘plotting’を演ずる脅威の中には、唯 plot の展開の為に創造された unreal な characters が多数を占めて居たのに対して、この作品に於いては、可成りの reality を賦与された人物が登場する。その一人が Syrian の Sagaris である。この‘wily and unscrupulous’（Ibid., p. 240）な Marcian の側近は、Basil を初め Belisarius や Heliodora 等にその行方を尋ねられて居る Veranilda を今自らの手中に収め、その上でこれからの善後策を手描りする為に、自分に書簡を持たせて、the Gothic King の許に派遣した主人 Marcian の意図を熟知して居る。

Now to the Syrian this would have been a matter of indiffidence, but for his secret communications with Heliodora and all that had resulted therefrom. Heliodora’s talk was of three persons — of Marcian, of Basil, of Veranilda — and Sagaris, reasoning from all the gossip he had heard, and from all he certainly knew, concluded that the Greek lady had once loved Basil, but did so no more, that her lover had turned to Marcian, and that she either knew or suspected Marcian to be arival of Basil for the love of Veranilda. Thus had matters stood (he persuaded himself) until his own entrance on the scene. That a woman might look with ardent eyes on more than one man in the same moment, seemed to Sagaris the simplest of facts; he consequently found it easy to believe that, even whilst loving Marcian, Heliodora should have conceived a tenderness for Marcian’s slave. That Heliodora’s processions might be mere tricky, he never imagined; his vanity forbade it; at each successive meeting he seemed to himself to have strengthened his hold upon the luxurious woman; each time he came away with a fiercer hatred of Marcian, and a deeper resolve to ruin him.

(Ibid., p. 241)

と，絶えず胸の奥底に燃り続けて来た主人に対する憎悪の念を，今實行に移す決心をするのである。‘Was his master serving the Greeks or the Goths?’（Ibid., p. 242）と自問する Sagaris は，‘On the whole he himself favoured Totila, heeling sure that the Goth would bring the war to a triumphant end; and on this account he was disposed to do his errand faithfully.’
（Ibid., p. 242）と自答して，愈々実行に移るのである。日に夜を継いでの強行軍を重ねて，the Goths の前線基地 Aesernia に着いた Sagaris は，旧知の the captain of the Goth のVenantius of Nuceria に面会する。そして，彼の口から思い掛けず Basil が此処に居ると聞かされて驚する。南に向う途中で，Basil は pest に罹患しかかるが，運良く Venantiusに救われて，彼の麾下の名医の懇切な治療と，Sagaris とは対称的な ‘good fellow’（Ibid., p. 243）Felix の文字通り寝食を忘れての手厚い看護とのお蔭で，同復の兆しが見えて来て居るのである。Venantius は，自分の大下が，Marcian 一行を送り届けて Praeneste に居る途中の六人の servants に偶然出逢い，彼等の口から若い貴族と ‘beautiful, with long yellow hair’（Ibid., p. 254）の婦人との護衛して来た跡跡であると聞いて来たと Basil に告げ，今 Sagaris が the Gothic King 宛の書状を携えて基地に到着したと伝える。旅の途次 brigands に襲撃されて，馬と武器を略奪された自分を助けるに，行方不明であった Veranilda を探し出して連れて来て臭れたものと Basil は親友の善意の行動と説明する。

Marcian had discovered her, had rescued her, had brought her thither to rest in safety till her lover could join them — brave Marcian, truest of friend! For this had he sent the summons southwards, perhaps not daring to speak more plainly in a letter, perhaps not being yet quite sure of success. This had he so often promised — O gallant Marcian!

（Ibid., p. 246）

善人 Basil のお人好しの想像を，根底から覆すのが Sagaris である。彼の主人を欺く意図的な計略を遂って見よう。‘You know very well that the lord Marcian has no secrets from me. With me you can speak in entire confidence. What has come to you, man? Tell me — did your lord leave before or after you?’（Ibid., p. 247）との Basil の言葉に，主人も同時に Rome を出立したと言い掛けて，旅の疲れでつまみ言い違った風を装って，Marcian は未だ Rome に留まって居ると強調し，更に会話が進むにつれて，‘villa’ を出発してから此処に到着する迄全く休んで居ないと口を滑べらせて振りをし，萬一 Basil に出逢っても，何も話してはいけないと厳命されたと傳えて，狡猾な Syrian は善良な Basil を自らの邪悪な計略の中へ引き込んで行く。更に，直接見た譜ではないがと前置きしつつ，maid 達から聞いた噂話として，その若い婦人が傍せそように自分の主人と連れ立って散歩して居たと話し，Basil を疑惑の淵に追いやるのである。

‘I ride straight way for Apinum. Ask me no questions, Venantius. When I return, if I do
return, you shall know what sent me there. I may be back speedily.’

(Ibid., p. 250)

‘They speak of her happy mien and gay talk, of her walking with my lord in private.’

(Ibid., p. 249) と自信あり気に話し Syrian の言葉に，

His thoughts far outstripped him; he regard at the prospect of long hours to elapse ere he could reach Marcian’s villa. With good luck he might arrive before nightfall. If disappointed in that, a whole night must pass, an eternity of torment, before he came face to face with him he had called his dearest friend, now his abhorred enemy.

(Ibid., p. 250)

と決心して，生命の恩人である Venantius の陣地を出発して，Marcian の villa へ向う破目に落ちる Basil の不幸が，この長篇の大囲円へと縫って行く事は言う迄もない。途中道を間違えた為に，廃墟化した山中の temple で一泊せざるを得なくなった Basil の短かい微睡の中に現われるのは，愛する Veranilda の幻で，文字通り ‘eternity of torment’ の象徴であり，二人の仲睦まじ気な対策の姿を夢想して，‘O villainous Marcian! O frickle, wonton Veranilda!’ (Ibid., p. 253) と叫ぶ Basil が，‘And in his heart was no desire but of vengeance.’ (Ibid., p. 254) と固く決心することになるのである。

CHAPTER XXII  DOOM

characters : Marcian, Gaudiosus, Basil

villa に着いて四日目の午後，Veranilda との参度目の interview に臨む Marcian の心地は複雑この上ないものである。Proserpine の銅像を眺める彼の胸の内には，Jupiter と Ceres の間に産れた四季の女神が，Pluto に連れ去られて天界を離れ下界の女王になったと言うギリシャ神話に準らえて，前者が Veranilda 後者が謂う迄も無く自分自身ではと言う想いが在り，これは自らの生き様を ‘a double face’ と反省する。

When Marcian parted from Veranilda in the peristyle, and watched as she ascended to her chamber, he knew that sombre exultation which follows upon triumph in evil. Hesitancies were now at end; no longer could be distracted between two desires. In his eye, as it pursued the beauty for which he had damned himself, glowed the fire of unholy joy. Not
without inner detriment had Marcian accustomed himself for years to wear a double face; though his purpose had been pure, the habit of assiduous perfidy, of elaborate falsehood, could not leave his soul untainted. A traiter now for his own ends, he found himself moving in no unfamiliar element, and, the irrevocable words once uttered, he thrilled with defiance of rebuke. All the persistency of the man centred itself upon the achievement of this crime, to him a crime no longer from the instant that he had irreversibly willed it.

(Ibid., p. 255)

そして

Unless, indeed, the young king, young and warm-blooded however noble of mind, should himself look upon Veranilda with a lover’s eye. It was not the first time that Marcian had thought of this. It made him wince. But he reminded himself that herein lay another safeguard against the happiness of Basil, and so was able to disregard the fear.

(Ibid., p. 256)

と、彼一流の計算高さを示して、自らを正当化しようと試みるのである。

Basil に依る Marcian 剎殺と言う悲劇の立会人となるのが、彼に浸礼を施した Gaudiosus である。

He bade introduce the visitor, and in a moment there entered a white-beared, shoulder-bowed ecclesiastic, perspiring from the sunshine, who greeted him with pleasant cordiality. This priest it was — he bore the name Gaudiosus — who had baptized Marcian, and had given him in childhood religious teaching; a good, but timid man, at all times readier to praise than reprove, a well-meaning utterer of smooth things, closing his eyes to evil, which confused rather than offended him. From the same newsbearer, who told him of Marcian’s arrival at the villa, Gaudiosus had heard of a mysterious lady; but it was far from his thought to meddle with the morals of one whose noble birth and hereditary position of patron inspired him with respect; he came only to gossip about the affairs of the time.

(Ibid., p. 257)
依らぬ惨劇が繰り広げられることは、事実皮肉な設定である。Veranilda を巡る Marcian と Basil の間の軋轢についての無知な Gaudiosus にとっては、前者が後者に突然刺殺される光景と、それを見て失神する Veranilda の姿を直視する事は、賛を驚天動地の出来事であったに違いない。親友の突然の訪問を受けた Marcian は、表面上は狼狽を隠して久闊を叙すが、Sagaris から Veranilda の存在を聞いて居る Basil の質問に対して、deacon Leander が the Pope と東方に逃れる際に Veranilda も同様したと言う真赤な儀式の説明で矛盾を抱えそうとした時、「Liar, traitor, devil」（Ibid., p. 260）と叫んだ Basil の dagger の攻撃を受けて、大量の血を流れて間もなく息絶える。

‘Man of God! You look upon me with abhorrence, and, perhaps, with fear. Hearken to my vindication. He whom I have slain was the man I held in dearest friendship. I believed him true to the heart’s core. Yesterday — was it but yesterday? — O blessed Christ! — it seems to me so long ago — I learned that his heart was foul with treachery. Long, long, he has lied to me, pretending to seek with me for one I had lost, my plighted love. In secret he robbed me of her. Heard you not his answer when, to catch the lie on his very lips, I asked what news he had give me of her. I know that she was here; his own servant had secretly avowed the truth to me. And you heard him say that she was gone on far travel. Therefore it was that he would not harbour me in his house — me, his friend. In the name of the Crucified, did I not well to lay him so?’

(Ibid., p. 262)

事の次第を Gaudiosus に打ち明けた Basil は、彼に手伝わせて、朱に染めて絶命して居る Marcian を飛び出してやる。そして、‘What is this? His blood is upon me — on my hand, my garment. When did I touch him? Holy father, whither has he gone? Does he live? Oh, tell me if he lives!’ と泣いて哀願する Veranilda を Gaudiosus の手に委ねて、

‘Consider his crime. In the moment when he swore falsely I lifted my eyes, and behold, she herself stood before me. She whom I loved, who had pledged herself to me, who long ago would have been my wife but for the enemy who came between us — she, hidden here with him, become a wanton in his embraces —’

(Ibid., p. 262)
CHAPTER XXIII  THE RED HAND

characters: Basil, Gaudiosus, Venantius, Veranilda

今や生前の‘desire and intrigue’（Ibid., p. 264）から解き放たれて静かに橫たわるMarcianの傍らで，‘I have slain Marcian’（Ibid., p. 265）と懊悩するBasilは，

A paralysis of thought and will kept him pacing alone in the courtyard; food he could not touch; of repose he was incapable; and though he constantly lifted up his blood-stained hand, to gaze at it as if in bewildered horror, he did not even think of washing the blood away. At moments he lost consciousness of what he had done, his mind straying to things remote; then the present came back upon him with a shock, seeming, however, to strike on numbed senses, so that he had to say himself, ‘I have slain Marcian,’ before he could fully understand his suffering.

Veranilda was now scare present to his mind at all. Something vaguely outlined hovered in the background; something he durst not look at or think about; the sole thing in the world that had reality for him was the image of Marcian — stabbed, shrieking, falling dead. Every minute was the fearful scene re-enacted. More than once he checked himself in his walk, seeming to be about to step on Marcian’s body.

(Ibid., p.p. 264～265)
newly learnt how you had deceived him.’ (Ibid., p. 267) と話し、Veranilda は如何にと問う
Basil には ‘Of you she said no evil.’ (Ibid., p. 267) と答え、

I remain here to pray by the dead, and I shall despatch a messenger to my brother
presbyter, that we may prepare for the burial. Remember that the guilt of blood is upon you,
and that no plea of earthly passion will avail before the Almighty Judge. Behold your hand —
even so, but far more deeply, have you stained your soul.

(Ibid., p. 267)

と決めつけて、この後永く Basil の魂に残る苦悩を暗示するのである。
突然 villa に手勢を従えて Venantius が姿を現す。Sagaris から Marcian の書簡を受け
取った the Gothic King が ‘the Gothic beauty’ (Ibid., p. 269) を連れて来る様にと命ぜられたと話す Venantius は、Gaudiosus から villa で起った事件の一部始終を聞いた後で、

‘Yonder priest tells me that you were over hasty; that you struck on a mere suspicion.
And methinks he may be right. By the Holy Cross, I could well believe this maiden a maiden
in very deed. I never looked upon a purer brow, an eye that spoke more innocently. Hark ye,
my good Basil, I am told that you have not spoken with her. If you would fain do so before we
set forth, I will be no hinderer. Go, if you will, into yonder room and when she descends (I have
but to call), you shall see her undisturbed.’

(Ibid., p. 270)

と、Basil が Veranilda と直接話すべきだと強調する。かくして第二拾叁章に到って初めて
hero と heroine の対話が表現することになるのである。

泣きじゃくる Veranilda に向って ‘Why do you weep? You weep for him’ (Ibid., p. 271) と
詰め寄る Basil に対して、Veranilda は ‘For him, for you, and for myself, alas! alas!’ と答える
が、彼は ‘Shed no tears for me. I am cruel of a long folly.’ と突き抜。今後の plot の展開の
核となる Basil の誤解とそこでから産れる後悔と悔悟の念をより明確にする為に、‘Listen
then, O Basil, whilst I make known to you what happened before you came.’ (Ibid., p. 271) と言
う彼女の懇願に従って、少々長い引用文を挙げて置こう。

‘I must go back to the night when I left the convent. No one had told me I was to go
away. In the middle of the night I was aroused and led forth, with me the woman who served me. We had travelled an hour or two, perhaps, when someone standing by the carriage spoke to me, some one who said he was Marcian the friend of Basil, and bade me have no fears, for Basil awaited me at the end of the journey. The next day he spoke to me again, this time face to face, but only a few words. We came to this villa. You have been told, by I know not whom, that I was light of heart. It is true, for I believed what Marcian had said to me, and nothing had befallen to disturb my gladness. I lived with my serving woman privately, in quiet and hope. This morning, yielding to a wish which I thought harmless, I went forth with my attendant to the waterfall. As I stood gazing at it, the lord Marcian came forth on horseback. He alighted to speak with me, and presently asked if I would go to see another fall of the river, across the island. I consented. As we went, he dismissed my servant, and I did not know what he had done (thinking she still followed), until, when we were in a wood at the water’s edge, I could no longer see the woman, and Marcian told me he had bidden her go to fetch seats for us. Then he began to speak, and what he said, how shall I tell you?’

Was it evil in his heart that shaped such words? Or had he been deceived by some other? He said that Basil had forgotten me; that Basil loved, and would soon wed, a lady in Rome. More than that, he said that Basil was plotting to get me into his power, his purpose being to deliver me to the Greeks, who would take me to Constantinople. But Marcian, so he declared, had rescued me in time, and I was to be guarded by the King of the Goths. This did he tell me, I went back to the villa to my chamber. I sat thinking, I know not how long; I know not how long. Then, unable to remain any longer alone, driven by my dreadful doubt, I came for to seek Marcian. I descended the stairs to the atrium. You saw me — alas! alas!’

(Ibid., p.p. 271~272)

彼女の側から見た真実を繰縦訴える Veranilda に対して，‘He had spoken no word of love?’ (Ibid., p. 272) と聞き，更に何故 Marcian は ‘these lies, these bellish lies’ を口にしたのかと訊す Basil に，‘Alas! Did he still live, the truth might be discovered. His first words to me, in the night when he stood beside the carriage, sounded so kind and true; he named himself the friend of Basil, said that Basil awaited me at the journey’s end. How could he speak so, if he indeed then thought you what he afterwards said? Oh, were he live, to stand face to face with me again!’ (Ibid., p.p. 272~273) と答える Veranilda に，‘I can well fancy that he spoke honestly at first; but when he had looked into your face, when he had talked with you,
something tempted him to villany." (Ibid., p. 273) と邪推の言葉を投げつけた Basil は、更に、「Eyes red with weeping, and for whom? If you are true to me, would you not rejoice that I have slain my enemy? You say you were joyful in the thought of seeing me again? You see me — and with what countenance?」と叫び、「You see a false lover, an ignoble traitor — the Basil shown you by Marcian. What would it avail me to speak in my own defence? His voice in your ears, its lightest tone outweighing my most solemn oath. “Oh, that he were alive!” That is all you find to say to me.’ (Ibid., p. 273) と罵倒した上で、「I dreamt of a Veranilda who loved so purely and so constantly that not a thousand slanderers could have touched her heart with a shadow of mistrust. But who are you — you whom the first gross lie of a man lusting for your beauty utterly estranges from your faith? Who are you — who wait for the liar’s death, and shrink in horror from the hand that slew him. I ever heard that the daughters of the Goths were chaste and true and fearless. So they may be — all but one, whose birth marked her for faithlessness.’ (Ibid., p.p. 273~274) と極めつける。謂う迄もなく、Veranilda の ‘Oh, were he alive!’ と言う嘆きの言葉の真意は、Marcian が生きて居れば彼の口から真実が説明される筈なのに今はもう誰も自分の潔白を証明して呪われる人は居ないと言う譲だが、直情徑行の hero は、唯々 jealousy に突き動かされて、相手の言葉の真意を曲解し、深く傷付けて了うのである。この軽はずみな言動が、自業自得とは言え、今後 Basil の魂を悲惨な状態に陥し込んで了う結果となるのである。

この論考は平成 15 年度札幌大学研究助成に依る成果の一部である。