

〈論文〉

英國小説の realism 研究 (Ⅲ)
—— George Gissing : *Veranilda* (1) ——

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“My quarrel is not with *England*, but with the people who are doing their best to change, and perhaps destroy that English civilisation.”

(*Letters of George Gissing to Members of his Family*, p. 369)

1899年末から翌年5月迄の約半年間の Paris 在住中に、南アフリカの金やダイヤモンド獲得の爲に、英國がトランスバール共和國及びオレンジ自由國に侵略した、所謂、南アフリカ戦争を、厳しく批判した George Gissing は、當時の英國及び英國民に對して、その無謀振りを嘆き、急發展してその方向を誤まりつつある英國文明の先き行きに、非常な不安を募らせて居た。これは、三年後に迫った生命の終りを予感させる体調の著しい不調が引き金となり、加えて、三番目の妻 Gabrielle Fleury 母娘との大陸での新生活に必要な資金作りに苦惱して、

“Reading very little; my novel is poor stuff, I wish I could afford to destroy it; but I am sore pressed for money.”

(*Ibid.*, p. 368)

と悲鳴を擧げる程の身邊環境の悪化から生じたこの作家獨特の ‘straight-forwardness’ の表われと言って良からう。事實、*Our Friend Charlatan* (1901 發刊) や *Will Warburton* (1905 發刊) を、原稿料目當てで書きまくると言った意に染まぬ執筆が、その不健康な状態を否應無しに悪化させて行ったと考えられる。この悪循環は、Gissing にとって、‘Pleaded for imagination in the novel: “must be fruit for the reader to take away.” ’ (*Ibid.*, p. 343) とその日

記に特に書き留めた畏友 George Meredith の忠告に背くもので、生來小心なこの作家にとっては、たまらなく心細い状態であったことであろう。

そこで、この劣悪な環境から逃避するべく Gissing が選んだ道は、古典の持つ romanticism の世界への回帰であった。1897 年秋に、三度目の Rome 訪問に際して、ドイツの親友 Eduard Beltz と、實妹 Ellen とに、

‘Italy is a splendid country for the young and the strong. For invalids it offers little comfort and many dangers; to send Keats to Rome was the height of folly. It resulted from ignorance, of course, but might have been a deliberate plan for shortening his life.’

(*Ibid.*, p. 364)

と書き送って、彼の心の故郷 Italyこそ強靱な肉體の持ち主にのみ微笑を洩らす土地であることを熟知していながら、四度その地を訪れることを「回想」の中で實現させるべく、*By the Ionian Sea ; Notes of a Ramble in Southern Italy* として、1901年に上梓したのである。「追憶の世界」の中での南イタリアは、現實の印象より遙かに美化されて居ることは、想像に難くないであろう。

I shall look upon the Ionian Sea, not merely from a train or a steamboat as before, but at long leisure... Every man has his intellectual desire: mine is to escape life as I know it and dream myself into that old world which was the imaginative delight of my boyhood. The names of Greece and Italy draw me no others; they make me young again, and restore the keen impressions of that time when every new page of Greek or Latin was a new perception of things beautiful. The world of Greeks and Romans is my land of romance; a quotation in either language thrills me strangely, and there are passages of Greek and Latin verse which I cannot read without dimming of the eye, which I cannot repeat aloud because my voice fails me.

(*By the Ionian Sea*, Ch. I, p. 13)

身體の不調と、本意でない創作活動、そしてそこから派生する不安定な精神状態から脱却するべく逃避したこの realism 志向の作家の辿り着いた先は、何と realism とは対極に位置する romanticism の世界であったとは、何とも皮肉な結果と言わなければなるまい。

‘I experience at present a profound dislike for everything that concerns the life of the people... All my interest in such things I have left in London. On crossing the Channel I become a poet, pure and simple, or perhaps it would be better to say an idealist student of art.’

(*Letters*, p. 228)

1888 年秋、初めての Italy 訪問に向けて、英國を離れて Paris に到着した際に、日記に認めた引用文から、Greek と Italy への旅は、不本意な現状からの逃避の手段であったことは、極めて明白な事実であろう。米國流浪の旅から戻った London での約拾年間の生活は、この作家にとって、堪え難いものであったことは言う迄もない事実であるが、その物心両面に於ける閉塞状況から脱け出す爲の最も望ましい手段こそ、Ionian Sea への逃避であったと言う譯である。Naples から Rome へ、そして Florence から Venice への約五ヶ月に及ぶ Italy の旅こそ、二拾二年生きて来た間に心身にこびりついた種々の汚穢を洗い流して呉れたに違いない。それから丁度拾年後、即ち 1897 年 12 月に、*Veranilda* 執筆の構想を抱いて Ionia の海邊を再訪した時のこの作家の身邊の状況はと言えば、處女作 *Workers in the Dawn* (1880) から *The Town Traveller* (1897) に至る迄の拾二篇の長篇小説と三篇の中篇小説を書き上げた爲に生じた創作の苦しみと諸々の身邊上の troubles —— 例えは最初の妻との結婚及び離婚、更に二番目の妻との結婚と別離等々 —— からの脱却を必要として居た譯で、拾年置きに二度の南歐旅行こそ、作家 Gissing が飛躍發展する爲の活力補給源としての役割を担って居たと位置づけられるのではあるまいか。

Greece と Italy を背景にした歴史ロマンを描く構想は、第二作 *The Unclassed* (1884 年三卷本出版・1895 年一卷本出版 (著者に依る改訂趣旨——‘Revising this early effort, the author has been glad to run his pen through superfluous pages, and to obliterate certain traces of the impertinent Ego.’ 付き)) の中に、早くもその萌芽が見受けられるのは非常に興味深いものがある。Julian Casti という副主人公の口を借りて、当時既に作家の胸中に在った historical romance の構想を語らせて居るのである。

Virgil wrote of the founding of Rome; her dissolution is as grand a subject. It would mean years of preparation, and again years of writing. The sieze and capture of Rome by Alaric — what do you think?

(*The Unclassed*, Ch. IX)

準備に数年、そして執筆に又数年を要すると言う構想が、實は、拾七年近い年月を経て、漸く結實しようとしたのである。

未完の遺作 *Veranilda* が、London の ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE AND COMPANY, LTD. 社から刊行されたのは、作家の死後二年経った 1905 年であるが、彼の生涯の恩人 Frederic Harrison は、巻頭に付けた短い序文の中で、この歴史ロマンスについて、

Fascinated as I have always been myself with the history, antiquities, and topography of Rome and its surroundings, I have read the proofs of *Veranilda* with keen pleasure; and I judge it to be far the most important book which George Gissing ever produced: that one of his writings which will have the most continuing life. It is, in my opinion, composed in a new vein of his genius: with a wider and higher scope, a more mellow tone than the studies of contemporary life which first made his fame. I do not pretend to have read all of these, nor indeed did I always feel in touch with everything of his that I did read. But in *Veranilda*, I think, his poetical gift for local colour, his subtle insight into spiritual mysticism, and, above all, his really fine scholarship and classical learning, had ample field.

(*Ibid.*, vi)

と絶讃し、又、未完に終わった事実についても、

Yet it is not in any sense a fragment; nor is it at all a rough preliminary sketch. It is finished with that spirit of loving care and delicacy of touch which George Gissing gave to his best work. And the two or three missing chapters are not indispensable for us to judge the piece as a work of art. It is not at all a torso — a trunk without limbs or head. It is a finished piece of sculpture, from which some portions have been broken off and lost. To the thoughtful reader this *lacuna* will but add to the pathos and the charm of this singularly original book.

(*Ibid.*, v)

と、作品を彫塑に喩えて、氣の利いた表現で弁護して、流石に ‘... of his sorrows, his sufferings, his dreams, and his hopes’ (*Ibid.*, vii) と Gissing について熟知して居る年來の友人振りを窺わせて居るのだが、彼の謂う ‘his genius with a wider and higher scope, a more

mellow tone than the studies of contemporary life' を實證し、併せて、'that spirit of loving care and delicacy of touch' を確認する爲に、この未完ながら三拾章から成る大長篇小説を各章を逐次検討しながら、精密な考察を加えて見ようと言うのが、この小論の目的である。

CHAPTER I THE VANQUISHED ROMAN

characters: Belisarius, Totila, Maximus, Petronilla, Basil, Dicius, Aurelia

romance の舞臺は、Justinian 一世 (東ローマ帝國皇帝 ユスチニアヌス法典の編纂で知られる) の軍隊が、異教徒 Goths の集団と七年間に亘り争闘を續けた Italy。皇帝軍の司令官 Belisarius は、Goth 族の王を捕えて凱旋し、戦亂は収まったかに見えたが、國民は Byzantium からの支配者の下で繰り返される殺戮と飢饉と疫病に悩まされ續けたが、ほどなく若き Goths の將軍 Totila に依って、Belisarius 軍は驅逐される。Senator Flavius Anicius Maximus は、Rome 元老院の力の衰えと共に、自らの體力の限界を悟って、Campanian shore に villa を建てて蟄居し、未婚の實妹 Petronilla が執事役として家事一切を引き受けて居る。Maximus の長男は pestilence に罹って早逝、一人娘の Aurelia は若くして寡婦となった後、敵軍の將 flaxen-haired lord と再婚、それにより Rome 人からは異教とされる Arius (336 年頃死亡した Alexandria の神學者で Christ 教を否定した) の教を信奉することになる。Belisarius 軍の反攻で Cumae 市を追われた Goth 軍に取り残された Aurelia は、囚われの身となってしまう。その生涯の總てを國家の爲に捧げ盡した Maximus は、迫り来る死の影に怯えつつ、その國家の崩壊に直面せざるを得ない。

It was a bitter thought for the dying man that all his life he had not only failed in service to his country, but had obstinately wrought for her ruin.

(*Veranilda*, p. 5)

そんな父親の今生の唯一の願いは、長く音信不通の愛娘との再會で、老 senator は甥の Basil に總てを打ち明け、Cumae に赴いて Aurelia を連れ戻して欲しいと依頼する。(この historical romance の main character の一人 Basil の登場であるが、この序章に在っては人物の説明は無い。) 死後その遺體を祖先の眠る Temple of Probus に埋葬して欲しいとの希望に、實妹は不快を表わす。何故なら、後継者の存在しない senator の後生は Rome 教會が世話をする慣習を覆す行爲だからである。Petronilla の次の描寫は、当時の 'The gracious Lady' の格式と服装を再現するものとして興味深い。

Ushered by her eunuch, and attended by half a dozen maidens, one of whom held over her a silk sunshade with a handle of gold, the sister of Maximus approached at a stately pace. She was tall, and of features severely regular; her dark hair — richer in tone and more abundant than her years could warrant — rose in elaborate braiding intermingled with golden threads; her waistless robe was of white silk adorned with narrow stripes of purple, which descended, two on each side, from the shoulders to the hem, and about her neck lay a shawl of delicate tissue. In her hand, which glistened with many gems, she carried a small volume, richly bound, the Psalter.

(*Ibid.*, p. 8)

老父が待ち詫びた一人娘 Aurelia の登場である。

The father's voice uttered the name of Aurelia, and, putting aside the curtains that had concealed her, she stood before him. A woman still young, and of bearing which became her birth; a woman who would have had much grace, much charm, but for the passion which, turned to vehement self-will, had made her blood acrid. Her great dark eyes burned with quenchless resentment; her sunken and pallid face told of the sufferings of a tortured pride.

(*Ibid.*, p. 10)

更に、Maximus から Virgil を贈られて喜ぶ Dicius について、少々觸れて置きたい。

Dicius, whose years were scarce thirty, had the aspect and the gait of an elderly man; his thin hair streaked with grey, his cheeks hollow, his eyes heavy, he stopped walking and breathed with difficulty; the tunic and the light cloak, which were all his attire, manifested an infinite carelessness in matters of costume, being worn and soiled. Than he, no Roman was poorer; he owned nothing but his clothing and a few books. Akin to the greatest, and bearing a name of which he was inordinately proud — as a schoolboy he had once burst into tears when reciting with passion the Lay of the Decii — he felt content to owe his sustenance to the delicate and respectful kindness of Maximus, who sympathized with the great wrong he had suffered early in life.

(*Ibid.*, p.p. 7~8)

落魄して monk-servitor を勤めた後, Dicius が拾二歳の時に, 失意の内に死去した父親の遺志を継ぐことを嫌って Rome へ出た Dicius は, kinsman である Maximus を頼って彼の後継者の秘書の仕事を手話してもらって糊口を凌ぎつつ, 'his love of letters' を持続して, 途中屢々病いに苦しみながら, 誰にも認められずに細々と生きて行く人物として描かれる。言う迄もなく, この人物創造は, この作家がこれ迄に幾度となく試みて来た「自己投影型」人物の流れを汲むもので, 遺作に於いても尚その手法を繰り返して居ることが明白で, 永年の読者にとっては, *New Grub Street* の Edwin Reardon や, *Born in Exile* の Godwin Peak を容易に想い出させるのである。

CHAPTER II BASIL'S VISION

characters: Maximus, Aurelia, Basil, Marcian

第二章で登場する Basil と Marcian と言う二人の heroes の内, Basil は序章で紹介された作家の投影とおぼしき人物 Dicius と對極に位置する character として設定されて居る。

The two young men made a singular contrast, for Basil, who was in his twenty-third year, had all the traits of health and vigour: a straight back, lithe limbs, a face looking level on the world, a lustrous eye often touched to ardour, a cheek of the purest carnation, a mouth that told of fine instincts, delicate sensibilities, love of laughter. No less did his costume differ from the student's huddled garb; his tunic was finely embroidered in many hues, his silken cloak had a great buckle of gold on the shoulder; he wore ornate shoes, and by his waist hung a silver-handled dagger in a sheath of chased bronze. He stepped lightly, as one who asks but the occasion to run and leap.

(*Ibid.*, p. 11)

性格・健康状態・服装のあらゆる點に於いて, 貧弱な 'man of letters' を凌駕する Basil に, *New Grub Street* の Jasper Milvain の姿を彷彿させるのは容易であろう。對照的な Edwin Reardon の役割を Dicius に分担させたことは言う迄もない。もう一人の hero Marcian も, 又, 或る意味では Basil と對稱的な人物として描出される。

Marcian, a year or two elder, was less favoured by nature in face and form; tall and

vigorous enough of carriage, he showed more bone and sinew than flesh; and his face might have been that of a man worn by much fasting, so deep sunk were the eyes, so jutting the cheek-bones, and so sharp the chin; its cast, too, was that of a fixed and native melancholy. But when he smiled, these features became much more pleasing, and revealed a kindness of temper such as might win the love of one who knew him well. His dress was plain, and the dust of Campanian roads lay somewhat thick upon him.

(*Ibid.*, p.p. 12~13)

笑顔が魅力的なこの人物は、後に、Basilの愛するGoth族の美姫に横戀慕して、信賴して居た親友を激怒させる結果を産むのであるが、その予兆が引用文中の眼を中心とした険のある表情に隠されて居ると思われる。つまり、同じ青年貴族ではあっても、單純な言い方をすれば、「陰」と「陽」のimageを感じさせて、對照的である。

Basilの艶福家振りを示す一例として、MarcianがRomeから持参したHeliodoraと言う女性からのmissiveが擧げられる。この女性の夫は、the Perfectとして勤務して居たが、三週間程前にindigestionで死に、残された妻は、手紙の中に‘a lock of raven-black hair, tied with gold thread’を入れて、ギリシア語で、‘I am free’と記し、Basilに求愛するのである。對してBasilは、‘I abhor the thought of her.’と、言下に拒絶する。Rome在住時代に、可成りのlove affairsを経験して居たらしいことを暗示し、この人物像の一端を示して、その奥行を想像させる手法と考えて良からう。

Goth族の猛將Totilaが、既にTuscany地方を掌中に収め、いずれはItaly全土を手中にする勢いの今、Rome元老院は、Maximusを必要として居るとのMarcianの訴えに對し、病篤い老senatorは、天下國家のことよりも、愛する一人娘Aureliaの行く末を案じ、自ら亡き後は、誰が彼女を庇護するのかと悩み、實妹と實娘の間の險悪な空気は、Aureliaが異教を捨て、deacon Leanderに誓いを立てさえすれば、立ち處に拂拭される筈と忠告する。

Basilは、MarcianのCumae滞在中のAureliaの動向についての疑義に、同居して居たa companion — a ladyが、實は、Theodoricのlineに連らなるGothic princessであったと返答する。King Theodahadの娘と結婚したGothic captain Ebrimutの遺児こそがこの‘hair of the purest gold, eyes brighter than the sky of noon’のprincess Veranildaであろうと推測したBasilの、前出の手紙の主Heliodoraとは較べ様もない美しさの持ち主と絶讚する言葉に、‘this Gothic maiden should so have vanquished you?’とMarcianが問いかける部分の‘vanquish’と言う表現は、實はこのVeranildaとして刊行する予定であった作品の最初の

title が、序章の *THE VANQUISHED ROMAN* であったことがこの作家の日記や書簡に散見されることから、great Roman Empire の衰亡を念頭に置いた歴史小説の構想が、一女主人公を中心とした romance との印象を與える title に変化して了った事實に興味を抱くのだが、この点に関しては、更に読み進んで行くにつれて、何等かの解答を見付け得るかも知れないと考えて、今はこれ以上觸れないことにしたい。

Veranilda 本人が登場する前に、他の人物の口を借りて、予め讀者に印象を與えて置くと言う手法も、この作家が多くの作品に於いて屢々採用して來た技法であるが、この作品でも、Basil の次の臺辭によって、Veranilda の美しさを予知させて居る。

Her voice, Marcian! This whisper of the night breeze in the laurels falls rudely upon the ear after Veranilda's speech. Never have I heard a tone so soft, so gentle. The first word she spoke thrilled through me, as never did voice before; and I listened, listened, hoping she would speak again.'

(*Ibid.*, p.p. 20~21)

そして、Rome 帝國侵略の異教徒の娘に再び逢いに Cumae に行くかとの Marcian の問いに、'Basil opened his lips to reply, but thought better of it, and said nothing' (*Ibid.*, p. 21) と含みを持たせて、この章は終る。

CHAPTER III THE DEACON LEANDER

characters: Leander, Petronilla, Basil, Marcian

この章では、title 通り 'a long visage expressive of much shrewdness' の持主、deacon の Leander の活躍が興味を引く。

The deacon Leander was some forty years of age, stoutish, a trifle asthmatic, with a long visage expressive of much shrewdness, and bushy eyebrows, which lent themselves at will to a look of genial condescension, of pious austerity, or of stern command. His dark hair and reddish beard were carefully trimmed; so were the nails of his shapely, delicate hands. His voice, now subject to huskiness, had until a few years ago been remarkably powerful and melodious; no deacon in Rome was wont to excite more admiration by his chanting of the Gradual; but that glory had passed away, and at the present time Leander's spiritual activity was less prominent than his services as a most capable steward of the

patrimony of St. Peter. He travelled much, had an extensive correspondence, and was probably rather respected than revered by most lay folk with whom he came in contact.

(*Ibid.*, p. 22, Italics は筆者)

嘗っては有能な deacon として期待されながら、四拾歳を過ぎた今は、St. Peter's の家令として、心ならずも平凡な日々を送らざるを得ない Leander にとって、Aurelia の出現により、目前に迫った實兄 Maximus の死がもたらす莫大な遺産の行方が自分から遠のいて了うのではと言う危機感を抱く Petronilla の焦燥につけ入って、あわよくば遺産の分配に與り、昔日の榮光を取り戻したいと、奸計をめぐらすこの byplayer の存在は、Gissing が数多くの作品で多用した「悪漢」(rascals) と「悪計」(plotting) の系譜に連なり、plot の展開を多彩にする役割を担って居るのである。‘Her nature is stubborn: she has the pride of the fallen angels.’ と姪を警戒する伯母に對して、‘Be not over anxious, Leave this in my hand. Take comfort, noble and pious lady.’ (*Ibid.*, p. 25) と、自信あり氣に答えた Leander は、早速 Maximus の眞意を計る工作に取り掛かる。自らの死後にその遺産を先ずは Aurelia, 次いで最近親の Basil, 更に貧しい Dicius に少々、そして奴隸はすべて解放すると決心した老 senator は、たとえ異端であっても我が娘を庇護するかと deacon に尋ねるが、‘In poverty, in humiliation, she might be obstinate; but as the possessor of wealth — restored to her due rank — oh, my gracious lord, be assured that her conversion will soon follow.’ (*Ibid.*, p.p. 27~28) と巧みに答えられて、安堵するのである。次いで Leander the rascal は、

Noble lady, let not your eyes take note of my garb. See in me only a devoted servant of your illustrious house. His Magnificence, your father, assured of the sincerity wherewith I place at his command such powers and opportunities as I owe to heaven's grace, has deigned to confide in me regarding the disposition of his worldly affairs whereto he is prompted by languishing health.

(*Ibid.*, p. 29)

と、直接 Aurelia に接近し、

Return to the true belief, but guard a while the secret of your conversion. That it shall not be disclosed until you wish, I can give you firm assurance — if need be, on solemn oath. You will privately make known to your father that he has prevailed, thereby you put

his flesh and spirit at rest — he will die blessing you, and enriching you to the full extent of his desire. You will then also set your signature to a paper, which I shall write, making confession of the orthodox faith, and undertaking to be duly reconciled with the church, by the imposition of hands, at some convenient season. That is all that will be asked of you for the present. The lady Petronilla — he all but smiled in uttering the name — shall not even suspect what has happened.

(*Ibid.*, p. 30)

と、言葉巧みに説得し、‘Swear to me that no one living, save my father and you, shall know’(*Ibid.* p. 31) と Aurelia の同意を取り付けて了う。そして首尾を確かめる Petronilla に向って、‘Stubborn, stubborn!’ と丈答えて、細部は明かさない。利害で一致した丈の強欲な Lady を、本気で信用して居ない Leander の強かさの表われであろう。

ここで Aurelia が異教に改宗した経緯について、少々觸れて置く必要があるだろう。

When yet a maiden she had several times spent summer at Surrentum; her memory revived that early day which seemed so long ago; she lived again with her brothers and sisters, all dead, with her mother whom griefs had aged so soon. Then came a loveless marriage, which soon involved her in the public troubles of the time; for her husband, whose estate lay in Tuscany, was robbed of all by Theodahad, and having vainly sought redress from the young king Athalaric, decided to leave Italy for Byzantium, to which end Aurelia sold a property in Campania, her dower. Before they could set forth upon their journey, her husband caught the plague and died. In second wedlock she would have known contentment but for the alienation of her kin and the scornful hostility of all her class. When widowhood again befell her she was saved from want by a small treasure of money which remained hidden in the dwelling at Cumae when the Gothic warrior, her lord, escaped from Belisarius. As this store diminished, Aurelia looked forward with dread, for she hoped nothing from her father. And now that such fears seemed to be over, her long-tortured pride clamoured for solace. It was not enough to regain her father’s love and enjoy an inheritance; she wished to see her enemies at her feet, and to trample upon them — her enemies being not only Petronilla and certain other kinsfolk but all the nobility of Rome, nay, all the orthodox of the Christian church. Pacing, pacing alone, she brooded vast

schemes of vengeance.

(*Ibid.*, p.p. 28~29)

Leander の謂う ‘Stubborn, stubborn!’ との評が正しい事を認識させる事實である。

以降の章への繋がりを持たせる *tecnicque* として、作家は、Basil の Veranilda への戀情を公開する。Cumae へ Aurelia を迎えに行った際に、彼女の companion として出會った Goth 族の美姫 Veranilda の面影が忘れられない Basil は、偶然 Aurelia の彼女への手紙を託された機会に便乗して、自らの書簡も併せて使者に持たせる。‘Which duty discharged, he prayed more fervently, to whatever saint or deity has ear for such petitions, that he might be loved by the Gothic maid.’ (*Ibid.*, p. 32)

CHAPTER IV TO CUMAE

characters: Aurelia, Petronilla, Leander, Basil, Dicius, Marcian, Felix, Sagaris

Flavius Anicius Maximus が遂に死亡し、臨終の枕頭に集った面々—— The Bishop of Surrentum, The Presbyter Andreas, Aurelia, Petronilla, Basil, Dicius, Leander ——の間で遺産分與の話し合いが進み、遺産管理人として Basil が選ばれ、first of legatees に Aurelia が指名され、the Surrentine estate, the great house of Rome, そしてその他の property が繼承されることが決定する。この成り行きに眞先きに不満を唱えたのは、言う迄もなく、Petronilla で、

The will was already known to her in every detail, and she harboured a keen suspicion of the secret which lay behind it. Leander, she could not doubt, was behaving to her with duplicity, and this grieved her to the heart. It was to the Bishop that she now addressed herself. ‘Holy father, I am yet suppliant. Not even for a day will I remain under this roof, even if — which is doubtful — I should be suffered to do so. I put myself under the protection of your Holiness until such time as I can set forth on my sad journey to Rome. At Surrentum I must abide until the corpse of my brother can be conveyed to its final resting place — as I promised him.

(*Ibid.*, p.p. 35~36)

と、先ずは Leander の二枚舌を詰り、次いで、Bishop に引用文の様に訴えて、自らの立場に同情を引き寄せようと画策する。これに對して、海千山千の Leander は、ここは暫ら

く何も言わずに、いずれその内譯が總べて判明する筈と意味深長な言辭を弄して矛先をかわし、一週間後に Neapolis から連絡すると約して、唯一言 ‘Patience!’ (*Ibid.*, p. 39) と告げて去って行く。晴れて遺産相続人となった Aurelia は、これも又伯母と同様に、Leander に對し、‘I will believe you if you give me back the paper I signed, and trust to my word for the fulfilment of what I promised.’ (*Ibid.*, p. 38) と迫るが、老獪な deacon に、‘You ask for a trust you yourself refuse.’ (*Ibid.*, p. 38) と往なされて了う。改宗についての誓約の事實を隠蔽した儘、Basil に、‘My cousin Basil, I must needs ask you to be my guard, until I can command service here. Follow me, I pray.’ (*Ibid.*, p. 37) と懇願した Aurelia は、その日の午後に早速父の遺言に従って、slave 達を解放し、相続人としての権限の一部を行使する。一方、Petronilla は、Basil と Dicius に、今夜遺體を The Cathedral of Surrentum に安置し、明朝 rites を終えた後海路又は陸路（こちらは Goths の襲撃を受ける恐れがある）のいずれかの方法で Rome へ移送して埋葬したいと提案し、自ら海路を使って同行するとの Basil の同意を取り付ける。Basil は、一方で、Aurelia から Cumae に遺して來た自分の ‘treasure’ を持ち歸りたいので是非同行して欲しいと依頼され、これも引き受けることになる。Cumae で Marcian に會った Basil は、彼の出発後の出來事（Aurelia が秘かに Catholic faith に改宗した事等）を話した後、唐突に Veranilda との結婚を望んで居ると切り出して、Marcian を驚かせる。‘Pray you now, dear lord, be sober a while. Have you reflected that, with such a wife, you would not dare return to Rome?’ と、親友の突飛な告白に疑問を投げ掛ける Marcian の心情は、實は、この作家の實生活に於ける度重なる ‘sober’ を缺いた決斷と、その大量の作品のほとんどに於いて繰り返される思慮を缺いた結婚願望を熟知する者の感ずる、何ともやり切れない憐愍の情と一致するものであろう。Basil のこの straight-forwardness が次章以降どの様に展開するのかを讀者に期待させて、storyteller の面目を發揮させると言う従來の技法を、この遺作に於いても多用して居る点に注目したい。

序盤の舞臺となる Cumae と言う土地は、

Basil impatiently trotted on, and, as he issued into sunlight, there before him stood the walls of the ancient city, round about that little hill by the sea which, in an age remote, had been chosen for their abode by the first Hellenes tempted to the land of Italy. High above rose the acropolis, a frowning stronghold.

(*Ibid.*, p. 44)

と言う描寫でも明らかな様に、純粹なギリシア人の建設した都市で、

The island peak of Inarime stood purple against a crimson sunset... The hour before noon saw them drawing near to land. They left on the right the little island of Nesis, and drew towards Puteoli. On the left lay Baiae, all but forsaken, its ancient temples and villas stretching along the shore from the Lucrine Lake to the harbour shadowed by Cape Misenum; desolate magnificence, marble overgrown with ivy, gardens where the rose grew wild, and terraces crumbling into the sea.

(*Ibid.*, p.p. 41~43)

と、船旅で Cumae へ向う主人公達の眼を借りて、Gissing 自身が實地に踏査した現實の風景が、この未完の大作の背景として、全篇に亘って描き出されるのである。

Basil の二人の servants の描寫にも注目して置きたい。

At a glance these men were seen to be of different races. Felix, aged some five and thirty, could boast of free birth; he was the son of a curial — that is to say, municipal councillor — of Arpinum, who had been brought to ruin, like so many of his class in this age, by fiscal burdens; the curiales being responsible for the taxes payable by their colleagues, as well as for the dues on any estate in their district which might be abandoned, and, in brief, for whatsoever deficiencies of local revenue. Gravity and sincerity appeared in his countenance; he seldom smiled, spoken in a subdued voice, and often kept his eyes on the ground; but his service was performed with rare conscientiousness, and he had often given proof of affection for his master. Sagaris, a Syrian slave, less than thirty years old, had a comely visage which ever seemed to shine with contentment, and often twinkled with a sort of roguish mirth. Tall and of graceful bearing the man's every movement betrayed personal vanity; his speech had the note of facile obsequiousness; he talked whenever occasion offered, and was fond of airing his views on political and other high matters. Therewithal, he was the most superstitious of mortals; wore amulets, phylacteries, charms of all sorts, and secretly prayed to many strange gods. When he had nothing else to do, and could find a genial companion, his delight was to play by the hour at *micare digitis*; but in spite of his master's good opinion, not to Sagaris would have applied the proverb that you might play that game with him in the dark.

(*Ibid.*, p. 47)

heroes や heroines の行動よりも, byplayers のそれに精彩を放つ性格を賦與させることの多いこの作家の諸作品の締めくくりとして, この二人の slaves の對稱的な人物像は, 當時の時代背景や服装の精細な描寫等, 作品の雰囲気合致するものとして, 極めて意圖的に活寫された例として貴重である。二人の交わす會話—— seven shooting stars の出現と Capua で産まれた winged dragon の Rome への飛翔——が, 次章以降に生ずる種々の事件を暗示する予兆として用いられて居る点も, この二人が狂言廻しの役割を與えられたものと理解することが可能であろう。

CHAPTER V BASIL AND VERANILDA

characters: Basil, Veranilda, Aurelia, Dicius, Marcian

‘I have been anxious for your coming. Do you think they will let us depart without hindrance? Yesterday I saw the owner of this house to transact my business with him. It is Venustus, a curial, a man who has always been well disposed to me. He said that he must perforce make known to the governor my intention of leaving the city, and hoped no obstacle would put in our way.

(*Ibid.*, p. 49)

と言う Aurelia の危惧が現實のものとなり, 嘗って Belisarius の bodyguard を勤めて居た Cumae の governor Corsoman は, a maiden of Gothic race である Veranilda を滞同して町を出ることに難色を示し, 是非にと言うなら, one thousand gold pieces を支拂えと強迫する。東ローマ帝國の末期を象徴する現象として, 巨額の遺産を相續した Aurelia の足許を見て, 末端の指揮者迄もが私腹を肥す行爲に走る一例と考えて良かろう。‘A moment’s reflection and Basil decided to risk immediate departure; delay and uncertainty were all times hateful to him, and at the present juncture intolerable.’ (*Ibid.*, p. 50) と言う性格そのままに, Basil は, ‘immediate liberty’ を手に入れる爲に, Aurelia を説得し, 彼女が現在手持ちの treasure 總てを差し出すことで, Corsoman の許可を得ようと試みるが, 要求額の半分に過ぎない treasure を理由に, ‘A Hun! A Scythian savage!’ (*Ibid.*, p. 53) と Basil が輕蔑する governor は, 首を縦に振らない。そして Marcian から連絡が入ったとして中座した Corsoman は, 再び姿を現わすと, 何故か途端に, Aurelia 一行の退去を認めて, 一座を驚かせる。このあたりの狀況は, Marcian の行動の謎として, 後章で解明されることになる。

さて, Basil と Veranilda の關係に移ろう。先ずは a Gothic maiden の初めての描寫を引

く。

And at Aurelia's side, bending over a piece of delicate needlework, sat the Gothic maiden, clad in white, her flaxen hair, loosely held with silk, falling behind her shoulders, shadowing her forehead, and half hiding the little ears. At Basil's entrance she did not look up; at the first sound of his voice she bent her head yet lower, and only when he directly addressed her, asking, with all the gentleness his lips could command, whether the journey had left much fatigue, did she show for a moment her watched eyes, answering few words with rare sweetness.

(*Ibid.*, p. 54)

needlework に卓越した技術を持つ Veranilda は、四年程前に、實兄の葬儀の際に、僅か數日で Aurelia の喪服を縫い上げた程の腕前で、一方、citern を美事に弾奏する talent をも併せ持って居る。Aurelia の語る彼女の出自を見てみよう。

Veranilda was a great-grandchild of Amalafriada, the sister of King Theodoric, being born of the daughter of King Theodahad; and her father was that Ebrimut, whose treachery at the beginning of the great war delivered Rhegium into the hands of the Greeks. Her mother, Theodenantha, a woman of noble spirit, scorned the unworthy Goth, and besought the conqueror to let her remain in Italy, even as a slave, rather than share with such a husband the honours of the Byzantine court. She won this grace from Belisarius, and was permitted to keep with her the little maiden, just growing out of childhood. But shame and grief had broken her heart; after a few months of imprisonment at Cumae she died. And Veranilda passed into the care of the daughter of Maximus.

(*Ibid.*, p. 56)

この薄幸の美女に對して、多くの作品の主人公と同様に、文字通り first impression で愛を抱いた Basil は、Marcian に託した love letter を読んで呉れたかと問う。‘My letter reached your hands, O fairest?’ それに對して、羞じらいを籠めて ‘I received it — I read it.’ と言葉少なく応答する Veranilda に、‘Will you reply, were it but one word! One word, O Veranilda! I worship you — my soul longs for you — say only that you will be mine, my beloved lady, my wife!’ と直截に疊みかける Basil に、‘Do you know who I am?’ と、自らの

出生の秘密に苦慮して問い返す Gothic maiden に對し, ‘You are Veranilda! You are beauty and sweetness and divine purity —’ と更に迫る Basil の姿は, その straight-forwardness に於いて, 従來の多数の ‘Gissing men’ の延長線上にある stereotype な人物と見做して良からう。それ以上多くを語らず ‘With a murmur of apology to her friend, and a timid movement of indescribable grace in Basil’s direction, she escaped, like a fugitive wild thing, into solitude.’ (*Ibid.*, p.p. 55~56) と, 彼女はその場を立ち去って了う。

‘I know what the Apostle of the Gentiles has said: “For the husband who believes not is sanctified by the wife, and the wife who believes not is sanctified by the husband.” None the less, Veranilda is under the menace of the Roman law; and you, if it be known that you have wedded her, will be in peril from all who serve the Emperor — at least in dark suspicion; and will be slightly esteemed by all of our house.’

(*Ibid.*, p. 59)

と, 異教徒の娘との結婚に不安を隠さない従姉に對して, ‘What if I care naught for those of our house? And what if Emperor of the East is of as little account to me? My country is not Byzantium, but Rome.’ (*Ibid.*, p. 59) と決然として反論する Basil に, Arthur Golding や Bernard Kingcote 等の姿が重なるのを禁じ得ないのは, Gissing と言う作家と永年に亘り付き合ってきた者として止むを得ないことなのかも知れない。温厚な人物 Dicius でさえ, Rome の貴族の家系に属する若者が, 人もあろうに Goth 族の娘と結婚しよう等と考えること自体 ‘indignity’ に値いすると極論し, 將來の悲劇は不可避と断言する。かくして Dicius は, Basil と Veranilda の前途に林立する苦難の數々を讀者に予測させる形で, 後章へ興味を繋ぐ役割を果たして居る。

本稿は平成 13 年度札幌大學研究助成制度による研究成果の一部である。