

〈論文〉

英國小説の realism 研究 (VI)
— George Gissing : *Veranilda* (4) —

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CHAPTER XXIV THE MOUNT OF THE MONK

characters: Basil, Venantius, Marcus, Abbot Benedict, Deodatus

運命的な激流に押し流された Basil が、魂の安寧を見出す端緒となる第二拾四章は、彼の精神的苦痛から病床に臥す場面から始まる。前夜 Basil の召使の一人から 'all through the night his master had talked wildly, like one fever-frensied.' (*Ibid.*, p. 275) との報告を受けて居た Venantius が危惧した通り、彼の陣地へ向う途中で Basil は失神して落馬して下う。水を飲んで意識を取り戻した彼は、Casinum の山中に知己の居る monastery が在るので、其處で暫く病いを養いたいと申し出る。'I have been expecting this. Well if he dies, it may save the king some trouble.' (*Ibid.*, p. 276) という本心を毛振り程も見せず、Venantius は賛同する。Basil の胸中には 'the burning torment' (*Ibid.*, p. 277) が渦巻いて居て、'Let me die in the monastery' (*Ibid.*, p. 276) という切羽詰った心境に立ち到って居るのである。將に彼は肉體的にはやがて回復するものの、精神的には一度死んだ状態に陥り、その揚句に新しい Basil として復活すると同時に、心の安寧を確立することになる。

Basil lay with closed eyes, but at a certain moment he seemed to become aware of what was passing, crossed himself, and then folded his hands upon his breast in the attitude of prayer.

(*Ibid.*, p. 278)

六時間に及ぶ難行の果てに漸く辿り着いた Casinum の文字通り俗界から隔離された monastery の描寫を引こう。

When at length they issued from the forest they overlooked a vast landscape of hill and valley, with heads of greater mountains high above them. Here rose the wall of the citadel, within which Benedict had built his monastery. For some distance around these ancient ramparts the ground was tilled, and flourishing with various crops. At the closed gateway of the old Arx, flanked by a tower, the monks rang, and were at once admitted into the courtyard, where, in a few moments, the prior and all his brethren came forward to greet the strangers.

(*Ibid.*, p.p. 278~279)

brother Marcus と言う ‘a small, nervous, bright-eyed man of some forty years.’ (*Ibid.*, p. 280)
‘the poet-physician’ の手當てで睡りに落ちた Basil は、奇妙な夢を見る。

When at length the fever declined, and his head turned upon the pillow in search of a human countenance, he saw standing beside him a venerable figure in the monastic garb, whose visage, though wrinkled with age and thought, had such noble vividness in its look, and wore a smile so like that of youth in its half-playful sweetness, that Basil could but gaze wonderingly, awestruck at once, and charmed by this unexpected apparition.

‘My son,’ sounded in a voice grave and tender, ‘be your first syllables uttered to him by whose omnipotent will you are restored to the life of this world.’

With the obedience of a child he clasped his thin hands, and murmured the prayer of childhood. Then the gracious figure bent over him. He felt the touch of lips upon his forehead, and in the same moment fell asleep.

(*Ibid.*, p. 279)

將にこの僧衣の人物こそ誰あろう Abbot Benedict その人であり、祖父の代から Basil 家とは舊知の仲で、高德の譽れ高い聖職者として廣く知られ、迷える Basil の心を解脱の境地に迄導いて呉れる important person なのである。翌日實際に Basil の病床を見舞ったこの聖職者は、Basil の部下 Deodatus のこの一週間の仕事振りを穩かに話して聞かせる。

This man, whose age was something more than thirty, was the son of a serf on

Basil's land, and being of very peaceful disposition, had with some reluctance answered the summons to arm himself and follow his lord to the war. Life in the monastery thoroughly suited his temper; when Basil encouraged him to talk, he gave a delighted account of the way in which his days were spent; spoke with simple joy of the many religious services he attended, and had no words in which to express his devotion to the abbot.

(*Ibid.*, p.p. 283~284)

Marcus の謂う 'labour is a form of worship' (*Ibid.*, p. 285) を主人 Basil より一足早く體得した Deodatus の姿に臆て自らを重ね合わせる予感を抱いた Basil は、改めて monastery の一日に想いを致すのである。

He learned that the day was equitably portioned out (worship apart) between manual and mental work. During summer, the cooler hours of morning and afternoon were spent in the field, and the middle of the day in study; winter saw this order reversed. On Sunday the monks laboured not with their hands, and thought only of Word of God. The hours of the divine office suffered, of course, no change all the year round: their number in the daytime was dictated by that verse of the Psalmist: 'Septies in die lauden dixi tibi'; therefore did the community assemble at lauds, at prime, at the third hour, at mid-day, at the ninth hour, at vespers, and at compline. They arose, moreover, for prayer at midnight, and for matins before dawn.

(*Ibid.*, p. 285)

「勤勞と祈りの日々」とは凡そ無縁の日々を送って來た Basil にとって、心に深い agony を抱いた今、この日課通りの單調な暮らしの中に、穩かな平安を見出す人生こそ自らの取るべき道と悟るのである。

'And when I laid it before the venerable father, who is always indulgent to those who do their best, he was pleased to speak kind things. "Take it to our noble guest," he said, "that he may see how we use the hours God grants us. And it may be that he would like to read therein."'

(*Ibid.*, p. 286)

使いの monk から Augustine の *De Civitate Dei* を手渡されて「日々生かされて在る俸せ」を痛感し、供せられた自給自足の品々に依る朝食—— ‘a roast pigeon, a plate of vegetables, honey and grapes, with bread’ (*Ibid.*, p. 286) ——と、Abott Benedict の自分のみ極めて質素な献立—— ‘a bowl of milk, a slice of bread, and a couple of figs’ (*Ibid.*, p. 286) で満足する姿を眼の当たりにし、更に、

Basil surveyed with interest the assembly before him. Most of the faces glowed with health, and on all was manifest a simple contentment such as he had hitherto seen only in the eyes of children. Representatives were here of every social rank, but the majority belonged to honourable families: high intelligence marked many countenance, but not one showed the shadow of anxious or weary thought.

(*Ibid.*, p. 286)

と、小児の様に純粹無垢の住人達を見るにつけ、anxiety と weariness に満ちた己の過し方に對する悔悟の念がいや増す Basil の姿に、死期迫る體調不良の中でこの遺作を書き續ける Gissing の、自らの後悔のみ多かりし四拾六年間の生き様に對する腹立たしさを見て取るのは永年の讀者として當然の感慨であろう。實際この作品の主題は、おそらく Basil の解脱の中に作家自身の想いを籠めて、幸薄い短かい人生の締め括りの意味で構想されたものであろうが、残念乍ら完結を見なかったのである。

These are men, said Basil to himself, who either have never known the burden of life or have utterly cast it off; they live without a care, without a passion. And then there suddenly flashed upon his mind what seemed an all-sufficient explanation of this calm, this happiness. Here entered no woman. Woman's existence was forgotten, alike by young and old; or, if not forgotten, had lost all its earthly taint, as in the holy affection (of which Marcus had spoken to him) cherished by the abbot for his pious sister Scholastica. Here, he clearly saw, was the supreme triumph of the religious life.

(*Ibid.*, p. 287)

Veranilda に對する ‘passion’ 故に親友 Marcian 殺害と言う非人道的な行動に走った Basil の悲劇と、貧困に喘ぎ乍らも複数の妻無しでは生きられなかった作家自身の生涯が、

將に混然一體となって居て興味深いものがあるが、この點に關しては後章に委ねることにしよう。

CHAPTER XXV THE ABBOT'S TOWER

characters: Basil, abbot Benedict

此の章は高德の士 abbot Benedict に依る Basil の迷える 'an idle and wonton child' の如き魂の救済が theme である。

Beholding the aged man seated at a table on which lay books, amid perfect stillness, in the light from a large window; before him a golden cross, and, on either side of it, a bowl of sweet-scented flowers: he seemed only now to remember that this was that Benedict whose fame had gone forth into many lands, whose holiness already numbered him with the blessed saints rather than with mortal men, of whom were recounted things miraculous. Looking upon that face, which time touched only to enhance its calm, only to make yet purer its sweet humanity, he felt himself an idle and wanton child, and his entrance hither a profanation.

(*Ibid.*, p. 289)

眞に有徳の abbot に接して、自らの不徳を恥じる Basil に對して、'the learned and pious Cassiodorus' の注釋付きの the Book of Psalms を引き合いに出して、Basil の罪深い行爲を論じた Benedict は、'Holy father, I were a hypocrite if I spoke of my country first of all. For all but a year gone by, another love has possessed me. Forgive me that I dare to speak such a word before you.' (*Ibid.*, p. 291) と本音を洩らす彼に、これ迄の経緯を話す様に勧める。

And Basil told all; told it with humble simplicity, with entire truthfulness, recounting his history from the day when he first beheld Veranilda to the dreadful hour when Marcian's blood stained his hands. He began in calm, but the revival of emotions which had slept during his sickness and his convalescence soon troubled him profoundly. Not only did the dormant feelings wake up again, but things which he had forgotten rushed into his memory. So, when he came to the last interview with Veranilda, he remembered, for the first time since that day, what he had said to her, and

the recollection dismayed him. He burst into tears, over whelmed at once with misery and shame.

(*Ibid.*, p. 291)

病いに倒れて居る間は、彼の脳裏から遠去かって居た記憶が甦るにつれて、思わず落涙した Basil は、若し萬一 Veranilda が潔白であったなら、自分は萬死に値いする程卑しい男であると自らを責め、この上は 'Not in my own strength; but perchance with the help of God.' (*Ibid.*, p. 292) と、神に救いを求めるのである。

'In the days of old, Romans knew how to subdue their own desires to the good of their country. He who, in self-seeking, wronged the State, was cast forth from its bosom. Therefore was it that Rome grew mighty, the Omnipotent fostering her for ends which the fulness of time should disclose. Such virtue had our ancestors, even though they worshipped darkly at the altars of daemons. But from the pride they fell, for their hearts were hardened; and, at length, when heathendom had wellnigh destroyed the principle whereby they waxed, God revealed Himself unto His chosen, that ancient virtue and new faith might restore the world. To turn your thought upon these things I sent you the book written long ago by the holy father Augustine, concerning the Divine State.'

(*Ibid.*, p. 293)

透徹した視點で Rome の現状を解説した abbot は、'A little patience, a little of the calm which becomes a reasoning soul, and you might not only have saved yourself from crime, but have resolved what must now ever be a doubt to your harrassed thoughts.' (*Ibid.*, p. 294) と、Basil の今後取るべき行動について示唆を與え、更に、

'Call it frenzy; but remember, O my son, that no less a frenzy was every act of your life, and every thought, which led you on the path to that ultimate sin. Frenzy it is to live only for the flesh; frenzy, to imagine that any good can come of aught you purpose without beseeching the divine guidance.'

(*Ibid.*, p. 294)

と、'frenzy'こそ嚴に慎しむべきものと戒めた上で、the Seven Penitential Psalms を熟讀

して神意を體得しつつ、畑に出て同胞と共に労働せよと命ずる。Rome が現在の様に墮落したのは農耕の尊さを忘却した故と斷じた上で、‘I do not bid you live in silence, for silence is not always a good councillor; but refrain from merely idle speech, and strive, O Basil, strive with all the force that is in you, that your thoughts be turned upward. Go now, my son. It shall not be long before I again call you to my tower.’ (*Ibid.*, p. 296) と、讀書と労働に没頭することに依ってのみ魂の救済は可能になると説き、Basil の心の整理が出来次第再び逢うことを約束する。

abbot の Basil が去った後の tower の自室の廣い窓邊に二羽の鳩が飛來して、彼の投げた grains を靜かに啄む姿を穏やかな笑顔で眺め、‘Welcome ye whose love is innocent’ (*Ibid.*, p. 297) と獨語するこの章の last scene は、何とも含蓄に富む設定であり、今後の Basil の贖罪の日々の成り行きを暗示して居る様な氣がしてならない。

CHAPTER XXVI VIVAS IN DEO

characters: Basil, Deodatus, Prior

Basil の心の葛藤は、先ず Aesernia での Sagaris との會話から始まり、Venantius と villa を去る迄の一連の出來事が總て dream と reality の狭間に存在することを認識することから派生して、Syrian の報告は總ては全くの嘘か單なる推測に依るもので、本人の言う通り Marcian は the Gothic King に引き渡す爲に Veranilda を villa に連れて來たのかも知れないと言う想いが強まる中で、確たる證據も無しに ‘blindly’ (*Ibid.*, p. 298) に凶行に走った自らの無謀な行動に強い嫌惡感を抱かせ、更に、Veranilda に對して、Marcian との ‘amorous complicity’ (*Ibid.*, p. 299) を理由に、これ又確かな事實に基づくこと無く彼女を面罵した行爲は、永久に許されるものではないとの結論に至るのである。忠實な monk Deodatus の

Hardships of many kinds had oppressed him from childhood; his was a meek soul, which had no place amid the rudeness and violence of the times; from the first hour, the cloistered life had cast a spell upon him.

‘Here is peace,’ he repeated. ‘Here one can forget everything but to worship God. Could I remain here, I were the happiest of men.’

(*Ibid.*, p.p. 300~301)

と言う率直な述懐と、Psalms の中の ‘How weak we are, Thou indeed knowest; by what a

foe we are beset, Thou art aware. In the unequal contest, in our moral infirmity, we turn to Thee, for it is the glory of Thy Majesty when the meek sheep over comes the roaring lion, when the Evil Spirit is repulsed by feeble flesh.' (*Ibid.*, p.p. 299~300) という一節に感化されて、罪人は神に縋ることに依ってのみ 'salvation' (*Ibid.*, p. 301) を與えられると確信した Basil は、monastery での畑仕事に素直に精を出す心境に達するのである。更に、自然の中で額に汗して働くこと、その労働に依って得られたものを喰することこそ、精神と肉體にとって將に健康的と言えることをも実感した Basil は、改めて労働と祈りの生活に依って 'murderer' も 'sinner' (*Ibid.*, p. 303) も許されることを自覺するのである。加えて彼の信仰心をより強固なものにする一助となったのは、Prior に導かれて眼にした religious books のみならず、the ancient poets の詩行をも熱心に書き寫す monk 達の眞摯な姿で、

In the silent monks bent over their desks he saw much more piety and learning. They rose to a dignity surpassing that of consul or praefect. With their pens they warred against the powers of darkness, a grander conflict than any in which men drew sword.

(*Ibid.*, p. 306)

と、一心不乱に筆を動かすことに依って、自らの心の中に潜在する諸々の苦惱に打ち克つ努力を傾ける monk 達の光景に一人の感慨を憶え、Marcian 殺害の罪と Veranilda への愛着と言う現世の軛からは完全に脱け出せない乍ら、其れ等の一日も早い拂拭を願って、讀書と労働の日々に没入しようと決心する Basil の姿は清々しいものに映るのである。

CHAPTER XXVII THE KING OF THE GOTHES

characters: Basil, Felix, Totila, Venantius, Abbot Benedict, Marcus

突然 Basil の前に姿を現わした忠僕 Felix の報告が、plot の展開の速度を増すことになる。誰からの情報かは明かさずに、主人の居場所を訪れた Felix は、先ず the Gothic army は既に Via Latina を進攻中であると告げ、續いて the Gothic King が今 Abbot Benedict と會談中と話して Basil を吃驚させる。嫉妬故に親友を殺害したと Totila が考えて居るのではないかと危惧しつつ Veranilda の行方について尋ねる主人に、Venantius に連れられて Totila の陣中に落ち着いた Veranilda は、彼の一族と共に南下して居ると告げた Felix は、更に、the Gothic maiden は、現在も尚 Italy に存在する Amal line の the lost princess で、Rome 征壓の後に Totila と結婚して、名實共に Italy の王妃になる筈と話す。彼は

Venantius と Totila 本人から尋問を受けたが、その際の the Gothic King の印象を 'Yes, Totila is noble. With that nobleness which became him, it is said among the Goths that only a lie or an act of cowardice can move Totila to wrath against one who is in his power; and after speaking face to face with him, I well believe it. He questioned me in few words, but not as a tyrant; and when I had replied as best I could, he dismissed me with a smile.' (*Ibid.*, p. 309) と証言して、後に Basil 自身が Totila と會見して得る感觸と相違ないことを予期させる。

暫くして、the Gothic King から Basil へ會談の通知が届く。

He was bare-headed and wore neither armour nor weapon; his apparel a purple tunic, with a loose, gold-broidered belt, and a white mantle purple seamed. Youth shone in his ruddy countenance, and the vigour of perfect manhood graced his frame. The locks that fell to his shoulders had a darker hue than that common in the Gothic race, being a deep barnished chestnut; but upon his lips and chin the hair gleamed like pale gold. Across his forehead, from temple to temple, ran one deep furrow, and this, together with a slight droop of the eyelids, touched his visage with a cast of melancholy, whereby, perhaps, the comely features became more royal.

(*Ibid.*, p. 310)

一瞬の狂氣から親友 Marcian を殺害した理由は、彼が Veranilda を the Greeks の手に引き渡し匿まう心算だったからと説明する Basil に、王は唯一言 Basil が後悔と自責の念から monk になる決心をしたのかと丈尋ねて、短かい會見は終る。荒々しい猛將の image を予想して居た Basil にとって、王の極めて 'comely' な雰囲気は一種の shock であり、想わず 'I honour the Goth, even as I love my country.' (*Ibid.*, p. 312) と Venantius に正直に告白する結果となる。Veranilda の安否を問う暇も無く、王一行は monastery を後にする。Basil の胸中には、曾って the great commander の Belisarius に對して尊敬の念を抱いて居たが、今では the Gothic King の人柄にすっかり魅了されて了ったと言う奇妙な感情が根付き始めたのは確かだが、その王と Veranilda との予定された結婚と言う事實をどの様に受け止めるかと言う點になると、依然として釋然としないものが残り、彼女に對する愛慕の炎は燻り續けて居るのである。

過去を振り返らず未來を凝視することを決意しつつある Basil は、the psalm of penitence を熟讀して日を過すのだが、時折 Veranilda の夢を見た後には 'When you are

sound in flesh and spirit, follow me northward. I shall then have more to say to you.' (*Ibid.*, p. 313) との Totila の含みのある別れの言葉の中に勝手に一縷の光明を見出そうとする自分を感じて、唯々神への献身にのみ生きる monk 達の誠實さに對して強く引け目を憶えるのである。そんな折しも Totila との會見後身體の不調を訴えて tower に籠って居た Abbot Benedict から呼び出される。poet monk の Marcus から予め傳えられて居た通り、monastery の生活に良く耐えて眞心から己の罪を悔いたと認めると告げた聖人は、

'Receive, O lord, our humble supplications, and to me, who above all have need of Thy compassion, graciously give ear. Spare Thou this penitent that, by Thy mercy, he may escape condemnation in the judgement to come. Let him not know the dread of darkness, nor the pang of fire. Having turned from his way of error into the path of righteousness, be he not again stricken with the wounds of sin, but grant Thou that there abide with him for ever that soul's health which Thy grace hath bestowed and Thy mercy hath established.'

(*Ibid.*, p. 316)

と、敬虔な感謝の祈りを神に捧げた後、明日 brethren と共に聖餐式を済ませてから、神の御心を抱いて ('be that with the Ruler of All.' (*Ibid.*, p. 317)), 何處へなり望む處へ出立せよ、自らの壽命を識る自分とは再びこの地で相見えることはあるまいが、'we may meet in the life eternal.' (*Ibid.*, p. 317) と永遠を信じて命ずるのである。翌日 Prior の 'I wish you, dear lord, a fair journey. Let your thought turn to us; by us you will ever be remembered.' という暖い惜別の言葉と、'Lest we should never meet again, take and keep this; not for its worth, for God knows it has little, but in memory of my love.' (*Ibid.*, p. 318) という Marcus の慈愛に満ちた忠告を背に、Basil は再び俗界に向けて旅立つことになる。

CHAPTER XXVIII AT HADRIAN'S VILLA

characters: Veranilda, Athalfrida, Osuin, Basil

晩秋 Tibur の町近くの Hadrian 帝が約四百年程前に建てた pleasure-house に本陣を置いた Totila は、Rome 市内に布告のピラを撒き、市民に自らが進軍した暁には glorious Theodric の時代と同じ liberty と honour を保證すると宣言する。彼の陣営には戦士は勿論王の近親達も數多く參集して居るが、その中でも特に Totila の妹の Athalfrida の言動が興味深い。この作家の多數の長篇小説に屢々姿を現わす vivid な byplayer の一人である。

'an armed giant, with flowing locks, and thick, tawny beard' (*Ibid.*, p. 325) の夫 lord Osuin との間に二拾五歳の若さながら七人の子 (内五人は夭折) を儲けたこの女性は、兄王から Veranilda の世話を委嘱されて居るのだが、大の Roman 嫌いで、初めは背教徒の Veranilda を輕蔑して居たが、彼女の轉變の事實を識るにつれて同情し、優しく取り扱う氣の好い女性として描かれる。長期に亘る行軍に倦む彼女は、たとえ Rome に進軍しても決して住みたくないと言明し、Ravenna はまずまず、Verona は仲々、然し、故郷 Mediolanumこそ最高の土地で、一刻も早く戻りたいと歎く。

'Surely not *there!* I was but once in Rome, and I had not been there a week when I fell sick of fever. King Theodric knew better than to make his dwelling at Rome, and Totila will never live there. The houses are so big and so close together they scarce leave air to breathe; so old, too, they look as if they would tumble upon your head. I have small liking for Ravenna, where there is hardly dry land to walk upon, and you can't sleep for the frogs. Verona is better. But, best of all, Mediolanum. There, if he will listen to me, my brother shall have his palace and his court — as they say some of the emperors did, I know not how long ago.'

(*Ibid.*, p. 324)

'I would no one might ever look upon it again! I would that the pestilence, which haunts its streets, might make it desolate, and that the muddy river, which ever and again turns it into a swamp, would hide its highest palace under an eternal flood.'

(*Ibid.*, p. 324)

と、徹底的に首都を扱き下ろす言葉から、衰亡を目前にした榮光の都の荒廢振りが窺われて興味深い。更に Athalfrida は、Antinous の像を見て、'Is that one of their gods, or an emperor?' (*Ibid.*, p. 325) と問い、'Indeed, I know not. But surely he is too beautiful for a man.' との Veranilda の答えに對して、'Beautiful? Never say that, child; for if it be as you think, it is the beauty of a devil, and has led who knows how many into the eternal fire. Had I a hammer here, I would splinter the evil face. I would not have my boys look at it and think it beautiful.' と極言する。Rome 帝國の何たるかを皆目知らない女性の言葉として聞くよりも、異教徒 the Goths の帝國に對する認識の度合を報らされると共に、その没落の姿の痛々しさを間接的に教えられる氣がしてならない。

さて愈々 Basil と Veranilda の再會の時が訪れる。the Gothic King が the Goths と Romans の爲に何か仕事を成した時 Basil を厚遇しようと言葉に従って、彼は忠僕 Felix と共に百姓に身を糞して市内に潜入し、Totila の布告を撒いた功績に依って、今 Veranilda の許を訪れることを許されたのである。先ず Abbot Benedict の死について the Goths の人々にも惜しまれて居たのかと告げた Basil に對して、'Of my creed? My faith is that of the Catholic Church.' (*Ibid.*, p. 328) と答える Veranilda の心の内を察した彼は、あの villa での行爲は總て一時の狂氣の齎らしたものと辨解し、'false' は自らの心の中に在って、Veranilda に對して吐いた暴言を心底恥じると共に、親友を殺害した罪を償う爲に monastery で悔悟と贖罪の日々を送り、その間にも彼女の面影を常に追い求めて居たと訴える。更に、Marcian に依って明かにされた Heliodora との件は遙か昔日の想い出に過ぎず、自分に關して親友が如何に悪い噂を吹き込んだとしても、彼は Marcian を本當に愛して居たのだと述懐し、'I hope, I hope with all my heart, that he was innocent, and daily I pray for his eternal welfare.' (*Ibid.*, p. 330) と語り掛けるのである。一方 Veranilda も、anchoret Sisinnius 一味に依って船に乗せられ、凡そ二日の船旅の後、大きな家に連行され、嘗って彼女に仕えたことのある女性に手厚く扱われて居たと話し、船を下りる際の Aurelia の様子を、'Her face, as I remember its last look, was dreadful, so white and anguished. I have often feared that, if she were long kept prisoner, she would lose her senses.' (*Ibid.*, p. 331) と告げて、その後の消息は皆目判らないと付け加える。

Basil, having heard the story to an end without speaking, made known the thoughts it stirred in him. They talked of Petronilla and of the deacon Leander, and sought explanations of Veranilda's release. And, as thus they conversed, they forgot all that had come between them; their constraint insensibly passed away; till at length Basil was sitting by Veranilda's side, and holding her hand, and their eyes met in a long gaze of love and trust and hope.

(*Ibid.*, p. 331)

共に忌わしい過去を忘却することで一致した二人は漸く打ち解けて、許して貰えるかとの Basil の問いに、自分こそもう忘れられて了ったと思つて居たと Veranilda は答え、更に彼が自らの犯した罪を忘れられるかと聞くと、

'Listen, dearest Basil. To think that I guard this in my memory against you would

be to do me wrong. Remember how first I spoke to you about it, when we first knew that we loved each other. Did I not tell you that this was a thing which could never be quite forgotten? Did I not know that, if ever I sinned, or seemed to sin, *this* would be the first rebuke upon the lips of those I angered? Believing me faithless — nay, not you, beloved, but your fevered brain — how could you but think that thought? And even had you not spoken it, must I not have read it in your face? Never ask me to forgive what you could not help. Rather, O Basil, will I entreat you, even as I did before, to bear with the shame inseparable from my being. If it lessen not your love, have I not cause enough for thankfulness?

(*Ibid.*, p.p. 332~333)

と答える Veranilda の眼からは臙て涙は消え, 'for in a few moments Veranilda's tears were dry, or lingered only to glisten amid the happy light which beamed from her eyes.' (*Ibid.*, p. 333) と明るい眼差しが甦り, 'Side by side, forgetful of all but their recovered peace, they talked sweet nothings, until there sounded from far a woman's voice, calling the name of Veranilda.' (*Ibid.*, p. 333) と再び平和を取り戻すのである。lord Osuin がこの二人の和解の結果を the Gothic King に報告すると二人に告げる處でこの章は終る。

CHAPTER XXIX ROME BELEAGUERED

characters: Totila, Basil

Belisarius, meanwhile, had crossed to Italy, and was encamped at Ravenna. Why, asked the Romans, impatiently, anxiously, did he not march to meet the Gothic King? But the better informed knew that his army was miserably insufficient; they heard of his ceaseless appeals to Byzantium, of his all but despair in finding himself without money, without men, in the land which but a few years ago had seen his glory. Would the Emperor take no thought for Italy, for Rome? Bessas, with granaries well stored, and his palace heaped with Roman riches, shrugged when the nobles spoke disrespectfully of Justinian; his only loyalty was to himself.

(*Ibid.*, p. 335)

周邊を Totila の軍勢に包圍され、頼みの Byzantium への援軍要請も叶えられず、彼の

現在の唯一の loyalty は、自らの思い通りに行動すること丈で、その末路は、誰の眼にも明らかな様に、來たるべき敗走を控えての束の間の安逸に耽ける哀れな姿である。一方、the Gothic King は徒らに急戦を好まず、自軍の損傷を最小限に抑える爲に、港灣のほとんどもを軍事封鎖して、糧道を斷ち、兵糧攻めの作戦を執る冷靜さを備えて居る。

Opposite Portus, and separated from it by a desert island, on either side of which Tiber flowed to the sea, lay the ancient town of Ostia, once the port of the world's traffic, now ruinous and scarce inhabited. Here Totila established an outpost; but he did not otherwise threaten the harbour on the other side. His purpose evidently was to avoid all conflict which would risk a reduction of the Gothic army, and by patient blockade to starve the Romans into surrender.

(*Ibid.*, p. 336)

更に、彼一流の冷徹な計算により、Amal line 最後の princess である Veranilda との結婚は、the Goths の内部に宗教上の難點を指摘する輿論が根強いことから、敢えて得策ではないとの判断に立って斷念し、the Gothic maiden を餌に Basil の自分に對する loyalty を確立させて、Rome 陥落の爲の裏面工作の先兵として縦横に利用しようと目論んで居る強かさをも備えて居るのである。‘I am sent to Ravenna, to spy out the strength of Belisarius.’ (*Ibid.*, p. 339) と Veranilda に言い置いて、Totila の命令に従う Basil の純粹さに、少々の危惧を憶えるのは思い過しであろうか。

CHAPTER XXX ※※※※※

一九〇三年拾一月拾一日に實妹 Ellen に宛てた最後の書簡を引こう。

I am glad to tell you that I have done about two-thirds of *Veranilda*; when it will be finished, I dare not say, for, with the beginning of winter have come the usual troubles — illness and discomfort — and I have just lost a week. It *might* be finished before the end of January. I am just now in the monastery of St. Benedict, and very difficult it is to make such a man talk.

(*The Letters of George Gissing to Members of his Family*, p. 395)

逝去約五拾日程前のこの手紙で、St. Benedict の monastery の部分を書いて居ると告白

して居る點から見て、その後更に數章を書きついだことが明らかだが、三拾章に到って遂に力盡きた證據に章の title が脱落し、更に Sagaris と Apollonius の會話が途切れて了って居ることが擧げられるが、この最終章に在っては單語の空白が見られる等、從來の精密無比なこの作家の image を著しく損う缺點が散見されることは誠に残念でならない。これ迄の慣習から考えて、恐らく後百頁餘りの物語の展開が予想される處だが、病魔がその進捗を妨げたのであろう。

扱て本章は 'After sunset, the city became a dark and silent desert, save when watch-fires glared and soldiers guarded the walls.' (*Veranilda*, p. 341) と、六ヶ月餘りに及ぶ the Goths 軍の包圍網に依ってじわじわと次第に糧道を斷たれつつ在る Rome の荒涼とした市街の佇いの中の Quirinal の Heliodora の豪邸の悲惨な現状の描寫から始まる。その 'caprices' と 'cruelty' (*Ibid.*, p. 341) 故に、數多く居た slaves 達の大半が歡迎して呉れる the Goths 側に逃亡して、邸内が荒れ放題の上、嚴しい食料不足の情況が活寫される。

In her strong box there remained little money, and the estate she owned in a distant part of Italy might as well have been sunk in the sea for all the profit it could yield her. True, she had objects of value, such as were daily accepted by Bessas in exchange for corn and pork; but, if it came to that extremity, could not better use be made of the tough-skinned commander? Heliodora had no mind to support herself on bread and pork whilst food more appetising might still be got.

(*Ibid.*, p. 342)

加えて、'A very small lamp was set upon the table, and as she glanced at its poor flame, Heliodora remembered that the store of oil was nearly at an end.' (*Ibid.*, p. 342) と、將に生活の極限状態に在る中で、Sagaris が訪れる。'Esteeming himself the shrewdest of mankind' (*Ibid.*, p. 343) と描寫されるこの rascal は、約一年程 Heliodora の office of steward を勤めて居たのである。そこへ突然 Belisarius の手の者が亂入し、女主人を無理矢理何處かへ拉致して、翌朝なんと Belisarius 自身が指揮をして邸内から金目の物品總てを運び出させて了う。當座の仕事を失った Sagaris は、不圖今は亡き主人 Marcian を思い出して、彼の元住居を尋ねるが、空き家を予想して來た彼の前に、主人の使用人 Stephanus が現われる。

He who opened looked indeed the image of Famine — a fleshless, tottering

creature, with scarce strength left to turn the key in the door. His only companions in the house were his daughter and the dog. Till not long ago there had been also the daughter's child, whom she had borne to Marcian, but this boy was dead.

(*Ibid.*, p. 346)

父 Stephanus と同居する彼の娘は Sagaris の rascality を見抜いて居て、主人 Marcian を殺害した張本人は Sagaris 自身であり、Basil にその罪をなすり付けたに違いないと信じて居るのだが、父親は人の好き丸出で、過日夢の中で邸内に多数の宝物が隠されて居ることを知り、更に大量の金塊が埋蔵されて居る事実を知ったと告げる。狡猾な Syrian は、直ちに Apollonius を訪れる。Apollonius は Rome では高名な astronomer で、可成の金を貯め込んで居るのだが、それを狙われるのを極度に恐れて、乞食同然の身なりで暮らして居るのである。Sagaris は悪黨一流の直感から、Stephanus の夢の中に、金儲けに繋がる何かを嗅ぎ取ったのであろうが、残念乍ら最終章は此處で途切れて了うのである。

plot の進行上、未解決の儘に残されたのは、(1) Basil と Veranilda の未来、(2) Heliadora の行く末、(3) Aurelia の消息、(4) Sagaris の plotting、(5) Totila の Rome 侵攻等々枚舉に違がない程であるが、勝手な想像を廻らせて plot の展開を推理する愚は避けて、作家の親友 Frederic Harrison の本篇の序文の一部を引用して、この小論の結びとしたい。

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.

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.*, p. v)

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