AURELIA ;

OR,

THE JEWS OF CAPENA GATE.

CHAPTER IV.

PARMENON'S REGISTER.

On the morning following the nocturnal conversation between Eutrapeles and Gurges, and the short consultation which had afterwards taken place between the former and Marcus Regulus, a stranger presented himself in the barber-shop soon after it had been opened.

This stranger was no other than Parmenon, the slave-trader; but he no longer wore the gaudy toga we have seen him wearing whilst attending his calling; his dark-colored tunic was almost concealed under the folds of a wide pallium or mantle.

"I am sent," said Parmenon to the tonsor, whom he found alone in the shop, "by the Lord Marcus Regulus, for the business you know of."

"Ah, very well," said Eutrapeles, "I see that the Lord Marcus Regulus loses no time. You are welcome."

"Here," resumed Parmenon, "are the ten thousand sestertii which it has been agreed to pay Gurges, and here is the register which will prove the transfer to me of that amount."

Parmenon unrolled the connected leaves of a roll of papyrus of a common kind, and proceeded to explain the writing to the barber.

"You see," said he, "here is the acceptum on this side, and the expensum on that, which is sufficient to show that I have paid in order to receive. The vespillo must sign at the bottom of these two columns during the day."

"Gurges cannot come before night," remarked Eutrapeles.

"Very well," said Parmenon, "I shall call for my register at the hour you generally see the Lord Marcus Regulus. He will not come to-night. See that the register be properly signed."

And Parmenon went out, after nodding to Eutrapeles in a rather discourteous manner.

"I don't like this fellow," mused the tonsor. "He looks like a real parricide's sack . . . After all, Regulus has his own reasons for employing him; it is none of my business."

At the hour appointed, Parmenon called for his register. He found it duly signed by Gurges.

The vespillo had readily consented to the transfer by which he got back the ten thousand sestertii he had considered lost. He could not understand, however, why any one should exchange those pretty gold pieces for a claim against an insolvent debtor like Cecilius.

On the following day, Parmenon, still wearing his dark tunic and his pallium, and carrying his register under his arm, could be seen awaiting the opening of the court of Publius Aufidius Namusa, one of the seventeen pretors who administered justice in Rome.

When this magistrate had taken his seat, and his crier (accensus) had asked aloud whether any citizen had a case for trial, Parmenon unrolled his register before the pretor, and requested him to see that his claim against Cecilius was legal, certain, and demandable.

Aufidius Namusa ordered an action to be entered against the fiscal agent, and Parmenon went away rejoicing. During the day, an executor litium, or viator, that is to say, a constable, called on Cecilius.

"I summon you in Parmenon's name; follow me to the court," said the viator, putting a written citation in the hands of the astonished Cecilius.

"I do not know this Parmenon, and I owe him nothing," remarked Cecilius.

"This, the Pretor Publius Aufidius Namusa will decide," replied the viator. "If you should refuse, I would touch this witness's ear," he added, pointing to a man who had accompanied him, "and I would take you by the neck, in conformity with the law of the Twelve Tables. However, you have until to-morrow to make up your mind, for this is an uncertain day (intercisus dies)."

Cecilius, after due reflection, came to the conclusion that he could not do otherwise than appear before the pretor. He there found Parmenon, who had taken care not to forget his register.

The pretor requested Parmenon to swear, according to the provisions of the law, that in bringing this suit he had not been actuated by a feeling of chicanery or revenge, and that he did not claim more than was due to him.

Parmenon hastened to take the required oath.

Aufidius Namusa then told him to state his claim, and to show Cecilius his register. These two formalities having been complied with, the pretor invited Cecilius to declare whether he acknowledged the debt, or if he denied it, to state upon what grounds.

Cecilius admitted that he owed ten thousand sestertii to Gurges; but remarked that he could not understand why Gurges should have transferred his claim to Parmenon, unless it were through motives of revenge because Cecilia had refused to marry him.

This argument had little weight in law. "Dico," said the pretor, which was affirming Parmenon's right. "Consequently," he continued, "I adjudge the body of Cecilius to the said Parmenon."

And he ordered the crier to call the next case.

"I don't understand," faltered Cecilius, rolling his ear between his fingers,—a way embarrassed people have had from time immemorial.

"You don't understand!" quoted Parmenon, brutally, as he retired. "It means that if by to-morrow you have not paid me ten thousand sestertii, I shall put my hand on your tunic, and you will belong to me!"

Cecilius began to comprehend; but ten thousand sestertii are no small sum for a poor man to find, and the wretched tax-gatherer saw no issue to his dilemma.

"This Parmenon has gained his suit very easily," remarked a stranger who had followed the case with interest, and who was walking by the side of Cecilius. "Marcus Regulus shrugged his shoulders when he heard the judgment."

Cecilius heard the remark, and conceived a hope.

"Who is this Marcus Regulus, and what did he say?" asked the unfortunate suitor, approaching the stranger.

"Marcus Regulus is the first lawyer of Rome," replied the latter, "and he was saying that he would have compelled this Parmenon to carry away his register without obtaining anything."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Cecilius; "Marcus Regulus said this? Is he still in the Forum?"

"Yes, there he is, amidst that group of pleaders. I would advise you to speak to him; he will give you some means of escaping from Parmenon's clutches," said the stranger, pointing out the lawyer, who, on his side, had lost nothing of this by-play unnoticed by others.

Cecilius went straight up to Marcus Regulus, to whom he explained his case in a few words, asking him whether there was any means of obtaining a reversion of judgment.

"We shall see about it," replied Marcus Regulus; "I think we may find some remedy. But, at present, as you see, I am detained here by other engagements. Come to see me to-morrow morning, early. My house is beyond the Tiber."

Cecilius turned his steps homeward, feeling a little easier in mind. But the poor fellow had not seen the end of his troubles. When he arrived home he found a communication from the City Prefect, enjoining him to explain his suspected affiliation with the Jews or Christians of Capena gate; then a summons from the Council of the Pontiffs, to answer an accusation of sacrilege, based on the fact that the little god Jugations had been found found lying broken on the public highway, in front of his house.

Could it be that some officious neighbor, having collected those mutilated fragments, had really carried them to the Pontiffs, and, in his indignation, had brought this accusation against Cecilius? Or did the blow come from a hand more directly interested in his ruin?

The unfortunate man did not even think of propounding to himself these questions, overcome, as he was, by the triple calamity with which he was threatened; to be in Parmenon's clutches, to lose his situation, and, what was still more serious, to be accused of sacrilege before the Pontiff's court!

"Cecilia!" he cried, in a voice of thunder, "come here, unworthy child!"

The young girl hastened to her father's presence. Since the scene witnessed by Gurges, she had not left the house. Her father had forbidden it. Cecilius had ascertained without difficulty that, as alleged, his daughter was a Christian, that she was about to marry a Jew, and that old Petronilla had been the cause of all this trouble. He was furious! Whatever religious convictions he had, revolted at the idea that his daughter had embraced the odious superstitions of those miserable Jews, the most despised of men; and he foresaw the misfortunes likely to happen to him, the agent of the law, and commissioned to enforce it in all its rigor towards a detested class, when it should be known that his own daughter had been initiated to their sacrilegious and impious creed.

He had, therefore, signified to his daughter that she must give up her new faith, or he would compel her, even if he had to use the extraordinary power conferred by the law, to its fullest extent. Meanwhile he placed her under the closest surveillance, to prevent any communication between her and those who, in his judgment, had caused her ruin.

When Cecilia came down she found her father in a state of terrible excitement.

"Wretched child," he cried, "here, then, are the fruits of your infamous conduct!"

And he showed her the writ in Parmenon's name, the citation to appear before the Pontiffs, and the Prefect's letter.

"So," he continued, "I am ruined, my freedom is in the hands of a wretch, my life is in danger, because my daughter has betrayed her father and her gods! . . . Come, Cecilia, have you reflected? For you must speak now! Will you renounce that abominable creed?"

"How, my dear father, could the sacrifice of my faith save you? Would your misfortunes, if they exist, be remedied?"

"If they exist! Great gods! Have I invented them?"

"No, father; but it is not you they threaten, it is me!"

"How is that?"

"The City Prefect will not displace you when you will have told him that your daughter alone is a Christian. The Pontiffs will not punish you, but me, when they learn that I broke the idol."

"And Parmenon?"

"Parmenon will have no power when his claim is satisfied."

"By hercules! The girl has a charming, easy way of arringing things!" cried Cecilius, with bitter irony. "Indeed, it is foolish in me to feel alarmed! Oh! how like the way of those perfidious Jews this is! They have a ready answer for the most difficult questions! Unfortunate child!" added the father, addressing his daughter with a certain tenderness, "can you not understand that all is lost if you persist in proclaiming yourself a Christian! and that all is saved if you abjure at the feet of the Pontiffs!"

"Father," said Cecilia, in a firm and respectful tone, "do not expect that I shall ever renounce the religion of Christ. Better die, than—"

"What! you would persist in this infamous creed, at the risk of destroying your own prospects, and, what you do not seem to care much about, at the risk of consummating your father's ruin, and, perhaps, of imperilling his liberty and his life!"

"It would be a dreadful thing, O my father! it would be for me a source of everlasting sorrow, if I should be the cause of your misfortune! but, I repeat it, you are unnecessarily alarmed, and—"

"And?" asked Cecilius, trembling with fear and rage, "And? . . . Proceed, unnatural child!"

"Oh, father! take my life,—it belongs to you,—and I would be happy to lay it down for you; but do not ask of me a sacrifice which I cannot make."

Cecilius, pale with rage, was fearful to behold. He raised his hand as if to strike or curse his daughter! But a sudden thought made him withhold the blow.

"You are no longer my daughter!" he exclaimed vehemently; "no, by all the gods; I disown you! But I shall crush you, as I crush this vase, which, like you is mine!"

And, seizing an amphora upon the table, he dashed it on the floor.

"Father! Father!" said Cecilia imploringly.

"What is it you wish to say? That you repent? That you renounce this cursed superstition?" asked Cecilius, looking at her with a madman's gaze.

"Never!" said the young girl, making a supreme effort; and, overcome by her emotion, she fell, sobbing bitterly, on a seat.

Her father cast on her a glance full of sadness and bitter sorrow, and left her without speaking another word; but as he muttered to himself,—

"This consultation with Marcus Regulus is more necessary than ever."

CHAPTER V.

A LEGAL CONSULTATION.

Marcus-Atilius Regulus possessed more wealth than many illustrious patricians. In his youth he once offered a sacrifice to the gods, for the purpose of learning whether he would ever possess sixty millions sestertii; and he often related, himself, how, on that occasion, the entrails of the victims happening to be double, he had understood this omen to mean that this immense sum was twice promised to him.

He had, in fact, accumulated this incredible amount, but by the most abject and infamous means. His career may be divided into three distinct periods.

During the first, which extends from Nero's reign to those of Vespasian and Titus, he served his apprenticeship in those crimes which subsequently won him such unenviable fame.

His father, banished by Claudius or by Nero, having left him no patrimony, he had felt at an early age the thirst for blood, and the insatiable craving for gold —Libidine sanguinis et hiatu præmiorum, says Tacitus, with inimitable force of style—and he had inaugurated his entrance into the bar, by becoming instrumental in three odious murders, perpetrated by Nero, upon his accusations.

These murders were those of Marcus Licinius Crassus, great-grandson of the famous orator, who was also one of the wealthiest citizens of Rome, during the last years of the republic; and of Camerinus and Salvidienus Orphitus, about whose rank and quality little is said by the historians.

The accusation against Crassus brought to Regulus seven millions sestertii; those against Camerinus and Salvidienus Orphitus were paid with the questorship and the sacerdotal dignity.

During the second period, which comprises the reigns of Vespasian and Titus, informers were looked upon with disfavor. Regulus endeavored to retain his seat in the Senate, but was crushed under the burning words of Curtius Montanus, and ignominiously expelled from that illustrious body.

He returned to the bar where shone such men as Satrius Rufus, Pompeius Saturninus, Suetonius, the author of the life of the Twelve Cæsars, Salvius Liberalis, Cornelius Tacitus, the great historian, Caius Fronto, Tuscilius Nominatus, Claudius Restitutus, and Pliny-the-Younger, the greatest orator among them.

We need not say that Regulus was despised by his colleagues.

During the third period,—Domitian's reign,—Marcus Regulus resumed his trade of informer and spy. It was not however, by acting openly, as he had done in former times, but by secret denunciations and dark undertakings, that he endeavored to win Domitian's favor.

He vied in infamous zeal with Metius Carus, a vile informer, but less dangerous than Regulus, and who could scarcely brook the latter's competition.

Herennius Senecionus having been condemned and put to death through the accusations of Metius Carus, simply because he had eulogized Helvidius Priscus, the son-in-law of Thraseas, and one of Nero's victims. Regulus, jealous of having had no share in so meritorious a denunciation, attempted to connect himself with it by pursuing with his insults the memory of Herennius.

But his rival could not bear this interference, and checked him in the midst of his facile triumph, with this terrible apostrophe: "What have you to do with my dead? Have you seen me torment Crassus and Camerinus?"

Marcus Regulus was certainly, as one of his victims wrote to Domitian, the most wicked of two-legged animals,—omnium bipedum nequissimus. He was also the most skilful of plotters. We have already seen how he had woven a web around Flavius Clemens, the Grand-Vestal, and Metellus Celer. He had found a most useful tool in the loquacious Eutrapeles, in whose shop he picked up, almost every night, some valuable information.

The conversation between Gurges and Eutrapeles, overheard by Regulus from his hiding-place in the barber's tepidarium, had admirably served his purpose, for he had acquired the certainty that Flavia Domitilla was a Christian, entertaining relations with the Jews of Capena gate; and, at the same time, he had learned the name of the young girl through whom it would be easy,—so he thought, at least,—to penetrate the mysteries he was so anxious to discover.

But, before all, he must have the girl in his power. If this might have seemed difficult to others, it was nothing for a tactician like Marcus Regulus. His plan was promptly conceived, and he made the most of every circumstance mentioned by the vespillo. He imagined, first, to bring forward Parmenon, in order that he might have a hold on Cecilius, who, being without resources, must fear for his liberty.

Then he completed his lan of campaign against the poor tax-gatherer by the Prefect's letter, and the citation before the Pontiff's court; for, the reader must have surmised it, these documents found by Cecilius on his return home, had been sent at this arch-plotter's suggestion.

He it was who had sent the officious stranger to the Forum to lead the defeated pleader into the snare, by showing him Marcus Regulus as the only man who could save him from Parmenon.

Marcus Regulus now felt sure that Cecilius would come, and he was confidently expecting him, when his nomenclator introduced Cecilia's unhappy father in his exedre, or consultation-room.

A single window admitted the light in this vast room, around which were placed purple-covered seats or beds for the visitors. The four angles were occupied by the brazen statues of Apollo, the god of eloquence and poetry; of Minerva, the goddess of science and wisdom; of Hercules, the emblem of strength; and of Cupid, the god of love and the symbol of literary.

Above the seats, and running up as high as the hand could reach, could be seen a number of little balls, some gilded, and the others simply made of wood, of bone, or of horn. These were the bosses or umbilici of the books placed in their scrinia, or forull, cylindrical cases, with round holes in the top into which the volumes, carefully rolled, were slipped.

Generally, these scrinia were placed on their end, around the room; but Regulus had adopted the system introduced by the booksellers in their shops, and which consisted in cutting small square compartments, or pigeon-holes, in the thickness of the wall, into which the scrinia were placed horizontally.

The number of books contained in these nests was quite considerable, and had been collected at a great cost; for Regulus aspired to the triple fame of the jurisconsult, the eloquent lawyer, and the writer; and the choice of his books corresponded with this ambition.

The table placed in the centre of the exedra was covered with briefs and documents, with wax tablets and styles for taking notes; with pergamins and immaculate sheets of papyrus for writing petitions and pleadings. There could also be seen the long calami which served as pens; the small, cylindrical vases, containing a gummy preparation for connecting together the papyrus sheets. The rollers or sticks were piled there, ready to receive the completed manuscripts and their umbilici.

When Cecilius entered the exedra, the lawyer seemed to be busily engaged in examining some manuscripts; but an oblique glance thrown on his visitor was sufficient to identify the latter. An imperceptible smile lighted his features.

"What is it? What do you want?" he asked, feigning at first not to recognize Cecilius; then he resumed, "Ah! very well; it is you who spoke to me yesterday, concerning one Parmenon—"

"Yes, sir," replied Cecilus; "but since yesterday, my position has undergone a strange complication."

"How is that?" asked the lawyer. "What new incident has occurred?"

Cecilius handed him the Prefect's letter and the citation of the pontiffs.

Regulus feigned to read the two documents with the greatest attention.

"This is nothing," he remarked to Cecilius, after a pause, and he crumpled the Prefect's letter. "I am particularly acquainted with Honoratus Messio, and with a word of explanation from me, the matter will be dropped. But this is much more serious," he added, putting his forefinger on the pontiff's citation. "Is this charge true?"

"Unfortunately it is," faltered Cecilius. "However, it was not I, but my daughter, who broke the statue of the little god Jugatinus."

"Your daughter lives with you, and under your paternal authority?" asked the lawyer, with peculiar emphasis.

"Of course she does," replied Cecilius.

"Then it amounts to the same thing. It is the same as if you had committed the sacrilege yourself. Qui vox tua tanquam filii sicuti filii vox tanquam tua intelligitur, say the jurisconsuits in their figurative style."

"By Jupiter! Is it possible?" exclaimed the poor man.

"Did you not understand the quotation? Well, let us put manus in the place of vox, and the meaning will be, that thy hand is like the hand of thy son, and the hand of thy son like thine. Is this clear?"

"And what is the penalty?" asked the wretched Cecilius, with evident anxiety.

But Marcus Regulus thinking, probably, that the time had not come to satisfy his client on this point, replied by putting this other question:—

"And what was the motive for this sacrilege?"

"My daughter is a Christian!"

"Your daughter is a Christian!" exclaimed Regulus, with well-assumed astonishment. "Oh! this is serious! Very serious! I understand now Honoratus Messio's letter . . . and I don't know if he can show himself as leniently disposed as I hoped. No, it is scarcely probable. Let us see, however," he resumed; "the case may not be so bad, after all. If your daughter would renounce this infamous superstition, I am sure the pontiffs would pronounce themselves satisfied. Have you tried to persuade her?"

"Alas! yes," replied the unhappy father dejectly; "but I have not succeeded."

"You must try again, and by the most energetic means," suggested Regulus, who, before proceeding further, wished to ascertain how far he could go.

Yet he knew that the Christians had never allowed themselves to be vanquished. In Nero's time he had been a witness to their contempt for life, and the immovable intrepidity of their faith.

"By the gods! I will do it," said Cecilius; "may they grant me better success! . . . . But this cannot be! It is useless to hope! . . . . What," he added, looking anxiously at the lawyer, "is there no other means?"

"Oh! there are always means," said Regulus. "But there are some means which are too harsh for a father to use, however inevitable they may be," he added, with deep commiseration.

"And what means are those?" inquired the wretched man, overcome by his anguish.

"There is the noxal abandonment," replied the lawyer, watching his client's features, to see the effect of this suggestion. And perceiving that Cecilius did not seem to understand, he added,—

"The law is not so unjust and absurd as to make the father necessarily responsible in his own person, for the misdeeds of his child. This severing of the legal tie, to which I have just alluded, is possible for the father who does not wish that his daughter's crime should be visited upon him. It is done by surrendering the child to those who have made the complaint."

Cecilius bounded on his seat.

"What!" he cried, "I would surrender my daughter to the pontiffs? And what would they do with her?"

"What will you? It must be you or she, or rather both of you," retorted Regulus, coolly, noxa caput sequitur, unless the separation takes place."

"How can this be, and to what danger are we exposed?"

"You are not threatened with personal punishment; and yet it is pretty much the same thing," said Regulus.

"What punishment do you mean? What will amount to the same thing? In the name of the gods, explain your words, my Lord Regulus," cried the wretched father, raising his hands in supplication.

"Listen to me, then," said the lawyer, "it is unfortunately but too simple. Formerly," he continued, putting great stress on his words, "when the religious feeling, so weak nowadays, was all powerful, your daughter would have inevitably incurred the servitude of the penalty, that is to say, would have been condemned to the beasts, or rather to the mines, for Jugatinus being an inferior god, the penalty of the second degree would have been applied. When the criminal is a woman, the condemnation in metallum may be commuted to perpetual slavery."

"Oh, gods!" faltered Cecilius, astounded.

"I do not think," remarked the lawyer unconcernedly, "that things will be pushed so far. And yet I would not affirm it, for the divine Domitian has undertaken to restore the creed. But he is absent, and, thanks to this circumstance, the pontiffs may not be so stringent. It is probable they may be satisfied with a heavy sum of money in reparation for the sacrilege, say twenty thousand sestertii, which you will be obliged to pay in your quality of her father; for, according to law, the prosecution must be against yourself,—tecum est actio. But, at all events, your daughter shall have to renounce her superstition, else I cannot answer for the consequences."

"And if my daughter does not abjure her creed, and I cannot pay the twenty thousand sestertii?"

"If you cannot pay the twenty thousand sestertii," replied the lawyer positively, "the pontiffs will enforce the sale of your body to recover the judgment. This is why I have just told you that it would amount to the same thing."

The unhappy Cecilius was horribly pale. He found nothing to refute in these rigorous consequences which he had not perceived at first, but which now appeared perfectly clear to him. Often, in his office of Fiscal Agent, he had exercised the same rigor towards unfortunate insolvents, and had caused them to be sold at auction. Why should the pontiffs abstain from this uniform means of constraint which the Roman law placed in the hands of all creditors?

His trouble did not escape Regulus. The informer distilled with skilful cruelty the words which fell into Cecilius's heart like so many drops of melted lead!

"Happily," he resumed, "to all these causes of grave anxiety, there remains the remedy of the noxal abandonment."

And as Cecilius made again a gesture of unconquerable repugnance,—

"How!" cried the tempter, "can you hesitate to give up a daughter who has not feared to expose you to such terrible misfortunes, by her sacrilegious act, and who abandons you to those dangers by her obstinate refusal to abjure her false creed!"

"And Parmenon?" remarked Cecilius. "Parmenon whom we have forgotten, but who will take possession of me! Even if I should surrender my daughter to the pontiffs, would that save me from Parmenon?"

"Ah! that is true, there is this Parmenon! The judgment is legal, and I do not see how to avoid this difficulty," replied Regulus.

"It is to-day," resumed Cecilius, "that Parmenon is to demand what I owed Gurges; and if I do not pay him—which must happen, for I have not hundred sestertii—I must expect—"

"To be sold within the legal delay, beyond the Tiber," added Regulus. "This, in fact, is unavoidable, unless—"

"Unless what?" asked Cecilius anxiously.

"Why, unless you should do with Parmenon what you can do with the Pontiffs."

"The noxal abandonment! always the noxal abandonment!" cried the wretch, with bitter anguish.

"Not precisely," said the lawyer, with undisturbed calmness. "The noxal abandonment can only take place when a misdemeanor has been established. But the law permits us to satisfied a creditor by surrendering that which belongs to us. Now, your daughter belongs to you; she is your thing, in law."

"So, it is the sale of my daughter to Parmenon which you counsel?" asked Cecilius dejectedly, but with some indignation,

"I counsel nothing," replied Regulus. "You come here to consult me, in your embarassments, and I suggest the only means by which you can get out of them. Do as you please; what concern of mine is it? The gods are witness that I have only sought to save you."

As he said these words, a young child ran into the room and sprang joyfully on his knees. It was his son.

The wretch caressed the child tenderly, and after playing awhile with him, kissed his fair young brow.

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE PRIEST'S MEMORY OF HIS CHILDHOODS HOME.

Here is a beautiful dream-picture from the Rev. P. A. Sheehan's "Luke Delmege: Idiota," current in the American Ecclesiastical Review:

The image remained imprinted on the retentive retina of Luke's memory for many a day, and came up, amongst strange scenes and sights, to comfort him with its holy beauty. Often, in after years, when sitting at the tables of noblemen, who traced their blood back to the invakers, who bit the sands at Hastings, that cloud dream of his sea side home rose soft and beautiful as a piece of enchantment raised to the witchery of soft music; and often, on the streets of Southwark at midnight, when the thunder of the mighty stream of humanity rolled turbid and stormy along the narrow streets, did he see, as in a far off picture, narrowed in the perspective of memory, the white farmhouse above the breakers, and the calm, beautiful, twilight holiness that slept above it—a canopy of peace and rest. He saw the two windows that ventilated the parlor—the one looking northward over soft gray meadows and golden cornfields, that stretched away till they were lost in the purple and blue of the shadowy, mysterious mountains; the other looking southward over masses of purple heather, to where the everlasting sea shimmered in silver all day long, and put on its steel blue armor against the stars of night. There was the tea table, with its cups and saucers and its pile of dainty griddle-cakes, cut in squares, and fresh from the hands of Margery; and golden butter, the best that was made in the Golden Vale; and thick, rich cream; and fragrant strawberries, nestling in their grape-like leaves. And there was his good father, a stern old Irish Catholic of the Puritan type, silent and God-fearing and just, who never allowed a day to pass without an hour of silent communion with God, in his bedroom after the midday meal, and on whose lands the slightest whisper of indelicacy was punished by immediate expulsion. There sat the kindly mother, her beautiful white hair arranged under her snowy cap, and the eternal beads in her hands. Gliding to and fro, was Margery—a perfect Martha of housewifely neatness and alertness; and Lizzie, the grave, thoughtful Mary of the household; and there was Father Pat, best and kindest and truest of friends, to whose arms children sprang for affection, and in whose hands the wildest collie or sheepdog was glad to lay his wet nozzle, alter he had valorously defended his premises.

COMPOSER NOW A MONK.

Giovanni Spinelli, the Musician, Becomes a Franciscan.

A remarkable change of occupation in life is that of the Maestro Giovanni Spinelli de Girolamo, a distinguished student of the musical art and regarded as a master composer. He has just forsaken his occupation and become a poor Franciscan friar.

From his boyhood's years he showed an uncommon genius for music, and his compositions gained several prizes in competition with others, both Italian and foreign.

His earlier studies were made under Father Gesualdo da Foggia, of the Friars Minor, or Franciscans, and after seven months' severe application he composed an elegy dedicated to Cardinal Gennaro Portanova. This work, presented at a competition at Paris in 1894, gained a diploma of honor among two hundred and fifty-three competitors. His oratorio, "St. Francis of Assisi," had a great success at London in 1899. There are also many other musical compositions bearing his name.

Giovanni Spinelli, who began his musical studies under Father Gesualdo of the Friars Minor, by a strange coincidence returns to him and seeks from him the humblest garb of a Friar of St. Francis.

Henceforth he will be known as Fra Guido, a name probably borrowed from Guido, the monk of Arezzo, who restored or reformed ecclesiastical music in Italy. The new Fra Guido will not be silent in his new life. He will present at times to the public some of his own compositions, together with those of Don Lorenzo Perosi and that other Franciscan friar, Father Hartmann, whose oratorio of "St. Peter" recently created such enthusiasm in Rome.

It is interesting to note the fact that at the present moment in Italy three members of the clergy—those just named—are highly distinguished as composers of religious music.—Baltimore Sun.

VITALITY OF THE IRISH CHURCH.

A member of the Irish Protestant Church writes in the current number of the Church Times in the following terms as to the marvelous vitality of the Catholic Church in his country:

"The recuperative power of the Roman Church in Ireland is marvelous. In the year 1649 there were in the country twenty-two Bishops and four Archbishops. In the Cathedrals there were as usual dignitaries and canons; the parishes had pastors, a great number of secular priests and numerous convents of regulars. But after Cromwell had attained to supreme power all these were scattered. Over 300 were put to death, 1,000 more were driven into exile. Four Bishops were killed in the Cromwellian campaign in Ireland; the others were all obliged to fly to foreign countries, except the Bishop of Kilmore, who was too feeble to be removed. In 1641 there were in Ireland forty-three houses of the Dominican Order and 600 religious. Ten years after there was not a single house in their possession, and three-fourths of these religious were dead or in exile. There was no doubt great provocation in the massacre of 1641, which brought Cromwell to Ireland as the avenger of blood, but the retaliation was terrible. In 1657 the newly appointed Vicar Apostolic of Dublin, Dr. James Dempsey, wrote to the Pope of the period: 'Dublini non sunt tot Catholici quot constituerlini tres Parochias. There are not in Dublin Diocese Catholics enough to form three parishes. The Catholic population of this diocese now is probably not under 400,000."

THE CHURCH'S GREATEST ENEMY.—The great enemy against which the Church has had to contend is ignorance of the constitution and charter of the Catholic Church. It is ignorance which makes some men narrow-minded; it is ignorance which makes Catholics disloyal to the Holy and Apostolic See; it is ignorance which exposes the children of Catholic parents to be led away, flattered and seduced by erroneous opinions, and carried away by corrupt doctrines. It is ignorance which is the parent of all crime.—American Herald.

The pagan who simply believed in the myth of Jupiter, Alcmena and Hercules, much more he who had been initiated into the unspeakable names of Bacchus and Persephone, knew more of living Christian doctrine than any "Christian" who refuses to call Mary the "Mother of God." Well might Wordsworth lament that he was "suckled in a creed outworn" (though it was only three hundred years old) and long that he might

Have sight of Proteus rising from the Sea,
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.
—Coventry Patmore.