

THE CATHOLIC RECORD

AURELIA; OR, THE JEWS OF CAPENA GATE.

He had once already forgiven Cornelia. It is true that the accusation was based on the most vague suspicions. But the two sisters, Cecelia and Yaronilla, had been found guilty, and he had consented to let them choose their mode of death, and to banish their accomplices, whereas the former should have been buried alive, and the latter condemned to die under the lash of the Pontiff.

PART SECOND.—THE SLAVE.

CHAPTER I.

We must ask the reader to throw a retrospective glance on certain events which transpired in the territorial establishment of the barber Entrapeles, a few months previous to the incidents related in the second chapter of this book. Entrapeles's shop was one of the most elegant and fashionable establishments of the kind in Rome, where they were quite numerous and generally well patronized.

Entrapeles, who had inherited it from his father—himself a tonsor of merit—left nothing undone to make his shop worthy of the fame of its founder. He entertained, probably, the secret hope that Dominian might confer upon him the dignity of Licinius had received at the hands of Augustus, who made a senator of his barber.

Licinius owed that distinguished honor less to personal merit than to the rare accomplishments of a magpie which he had taught to recite verses in praise of the Emperor. Entrapeles's great ambition was to possess a bird of this kind, which would utter the name of his predecessor's magpie. He succeeded, after several years of patient teaching, in training one whose incontestable superiority would have thrown Licinius into a fit of jealous despair.

The magpie of this ambitious barber imitated, with rare perfection, the human voice, the cries of animals, and even the sounds of instruments. Upon a sign from his master, it recited, with great accuracy, a pompous eulogy on Dominian, the right of marching at the head of funeral processions, preceded by lictors clad in mourning.

Caius was only a vespillo; but he would succeed his father, and when he gave the prospect of a high rank, we are looking for somebody in this world, whatever be our present condition.

Caius Tongilianus had taken the surname of Vespertinus as indicating his profession, exercised in the park hours of the evening. Gargues was a glorious name, the reward of his great deeds; it meant a bold drinker who feared neither the number of the cyathus nor the depth of the amphora.

in this bachelor's home,—when he was quite alone behind his closed shutters, he gave a preconcerted signal, and, immediately, a man slipped through a door which he discreetly held ajar. Entrapeles had long conversations with this man.

Who was he, and what was said in these frequent interviews? The neighbors had tried to find out, but their curiosity had been invariably baffled.

"On the evening of the fifth day preceding the calends of January, 842, (25th of December, 811, for the Romans counted the days backward), and some time after the Saturnalia, which commenced on the 16th, previous to said calends (17th of December), and lasted one week, Entrapeles and his nightly visitor shop, according to their custom, and conversing in a subdued tone of voice, when a noise was heard at the door of the shop.

The countenances of the two men expressed singular alarm and anxiety, but Entrapeles, in the furthest end of his eyes, he uttered a voice calling from outside, "Entrapeles! Entrapeles!" soon quieted their fears.

"It is Gargues, the vespillo," said the barber, "he brings me certain articles of my trade, which I shall need for the gift of the January census. My lord Regulus, have the goodness to step into this tepidarium (bath-room); this little affair will soon be settled."

Regulus disappeared behind the closet door, and Entrapeles went to let Gargues in. He was struck with the wild expression of the vespillo's features and the disorder of his dress.

"Have you failed to bring the hair and the teeth I ordered?" exclaimed the barber, whose first thought, like a good tradesman, was for the evil consequences likely to result from the Vespillo's want of punctuality.

The latter made no answer, but he threw at Entrapeles's feet six magnificent long tresses of hair, and a handful of frostily-extended teeth.

"Gargues, you are a great man!" cried the admiring barber. "By Venus! you are the king of Vespillos. Ah! Pallicanus, Gellia, Lesbia, Marcella, Lydia, and Phyllis, how charming you will look when these tresses, plaited by my skilled hands, will adorn your hair!"

"I have an admirer as yet," said Entrapeles, "but in a few days, my dear Gargues, my dear Gargues, impudible as I am at this hour," replied Entrapeles, remembering Regulus's presence.

"I said I wanted to speak to you, and I shall speak," repeated the vespillo, almost in anger. "The time is favorable; I selected it purposely."

"Speak, then, Gargues, but be quick, for it is late, and I have but little time to give you," replied the barber, who saw that the only way to get rid of the vespillo was to listen to him, and who in doing so, said that the conversation would not be long.

Caius-Tongilianus-Vespertinus-Gargues belonged to the worthy class of the agents of Libitina, the goddess of funerals, and his title of vespillo could be rendered in our language by that of "undertaker's aid." He was the son of Tongilianus, the master of ceremonies of the inexorable divinity.

This dignity, for nearly a century, had been transmitted from father to son, in the Tongilian family, and gave its chief the right of marching at the head of funeral processions, preceded by lictors clad in mourning.

with the disappointment you have suffered?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Gargues; "that is the crowning piece! The wretches! This is the way the thing happened: Cecelia was in earnest at least, I think so, for he was singularly flattered by the prospect of his daughter's marriage; it secured quiet comfort for his old age. He does not spare Cecelia, whom he calls rebellious and impious, and whose new superstition he says is infamous, and he wants to crush it. Cecelia is quite as angry as I am. The more so, as he would lose his place if it should be discovered."

"You understand?"

"Perfectly. But to the point, Gargues, to the point. Sumper ad eventum festina, hasten towards the event."

"I am coming to it, Entrapeles. But, in order to make things clear, I have to go into some particulars. As you see yesterday—it is recent, as you see—following it, I went, yesterday morning, to see Cecelia."

"Is your daughter here?" I asked. "No, Gargues, she has gone to the Forum pistorium, (the bread-market)."

"Cecelia, are you aware that your daughter never remains at home during your absence. Where does she go?"

"My dear Gargues, she goes most of the time to the Palatine to see a matron of high rank, who protects her, and whose name is Flavia Domitilla."

"Look you, Entrapeles, we are not alone here!" exclaimed Gargues, who had heard again a noise in the tepidarium. "I must see."

"The vespillo was rising to ascertain the cause of the noise; but Entrapeles persuaded him once more that it was only the water flowing into the bath-tub."

Gargues appeared satisfied with the explanation, and resumed: "You are sure of this?" I asked Cecelia.

"Perfectly sure, Gargues. My daughter goes there with an old woman named Patronilla, who lives there, near the Capena gate. What will you? My duties keep me away all day, and Cecelia must take some recreation. She has no mother to stay with her."

"Certainly," I replied, somewhat soothed. Then I added: "Well, Cecelia, has she made up her mind yet, near the Capena gate? Will she give up the idea of leaving her father?"

"It is evident she has not reflected enough upon marriage. Cecelia, an idea has suggested itself to my mind. I will write to the divine Domitilla, and I will request the influence of the little god Jugatinus?"

"It is a marvellous good thought, dear Gargues!"

"We shall fix a sacellum (a little chapel) in her cubiculum."

"I bought you a little god Jugatinus, in the Triumphal Way." And I showed to Cecelia an small statue of the little god, which I had brought concealed in my tunic.

"I was gilded, crowned with flowers, ornamented with small bands of yellow, and I was made to play yealings,—but let us project immediately," I added.

"When Cecelia returns, she will see the sacellum, and, perhaps, the little god will begin to operate, for she will naturally think that I alone could have had the idea of this delicious attention."

"Nothing easier, my dear Gargues! Let us make haste, for Cecelia will soon return for the tepidarium (bath-room)."

"We went up to Cecelia's cubiculum, and I remained in the sacellum, and she entered the bath-room, and she returned to me."

"The vespillo would have willingly expatiated on all his impressions, and had he not commenced describing his feelings upon the sight of Cecelia's virginity, which Entrapeles, who was anxiously expecting the conclusion, interrupted him."

"Gargues! Gargues!" he said affectionately. "It is getting late, my good friend, understand your feelings,—but let us make haste. What happened next?"

"We had just done arranging the sacellum, when we heard Cecelia's voice,—as sweet as Philomela's! She was coming up to her cubiculum. I withdrew quickly, for I was my duty bound to be ready to observe her countenance. Ah! Entrapeles, how shall I relate what followed?"

"Courage, Gargues, courage, my friend!" said the tonsor, who saw the catastrophe coming.

"Cecelia, as soon as she came in, in disguise, she was seized by me, and she covered her face, and she cried: 'I remember those incredible words—'An idol in my room!' she cried, and the little god, hurried through the windows, was broken to pieces on the street pavement."

"My good friend," remarked Entrapeles, who had some literary pretensions, "I have some literary pretensions, and I should like to know what you are doing?"

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her. She and a matron of high rank, Flavia Domitilla, the emperor's relation, had inveigled her into this superstition. And I, I am only Gargues, the vespillo; and he has paid his shame ten thousand sestertii! O vengeance! O furies! What shall I do, Entrapeles?"

The question was asked in a tone of the deepest despondency. Entrapeles seemed to reflect.

"Friend Gargues," he said at last, "this is a very serious matter; but I shall come to your assistance, don't let me hear of your assistance, don't let me hear of your assistance, don't let me hear of your assistance."

I shall require a few days of reflection. I need a man unyoked, besides, to assist me in the execution of my plan. We shall work things right. It is very late; go home, my friend, and leave me the care of your vengeance."

The tone in which this was said was so earnest, so full of assurance, that Gargues doubted not that he had found a powerful auxiliary. He allowed himself to be gently led out of the shop by the crafty barber, who, replying to his supplications by renewed promises of assistance, freed him, and closed the door upon him with great carefulness.

When Entrapeles returned to the end of the shop where and Gargues had had the interesting conversation we have narrated, he found Regulus waiting.

"By Hercules! Entrapeles, this is wonderful luck. At the very start I am on the track of those Christians of whom I was speaking to you when the vespillo came in, and who give so much uneasiness about his religion. This little girl will be very useful to us; we shall know everything through her."

"Certainly, Entrapeles. Whilst listening to your conversation, certain ideas have suggested themselves to my mind. In the first place it is necessary that the vespillo should get back his ten thousand sestertii, and that his claim against Cecelia should pass into my hands. I shall have a hold on him by this means, and by making him known to my good time. As for the girl, we shall see what is to be done; I shall attend to it. With a little care, prudence, and precision, your promise to the vespillo will be fulfilled without giving yourself the least trouble. Good-night."

And Regulus, leaving the tavern, was soon lost in the darkness which filled the streets of Rome. As Entrapeles closed his door, a hopeful smile illumined his features.

"Who knows," he thought, "but that this matter will result in securing for me the senatorial purple with which the divine Augustus rewarded my predecessor, Licinius?"

Cecilia was an old freedman who had purchased her liberty, and she had accumulated proceeds of his daily savings on the diarium, or ration of wheat granted to the slaves by their masters. He was, nevertheless, a Roman citizen, for he had stipulated the great manumission which conferred upon the freedman the same rights as his former owner enjoyed.

After passing forty years in bondage, Cecilia had found himself, at last, master of his own person, and at liberty to carve his own fortune; but, for a long time, his change of condition had only brought him the misfortune and hard trials which were the share of the weak in a society where public compassion,—this Christian and modern virtue,—did not exist.

In fact, the only assistance tendered dutifully to the poor,—not to console, but to keep them in perpetual dependence,—consisted in the sportlike or panziolium, that is, aims of a trifling amount, or rations of inferior food, or the money distributed by the noncalculators of the patrons to the tumultuous crowd of clients assembled at the door of their sumptuous mansions.

In his capacity of freedman, Cecilia remained the client of his former owner, but he had had to earn the sportlike or panziolium, that is, aims of a trifling amount, or rations of inferior food, or the money distributed by the noncalculators of the patrons to the tumultuous crowd of clients assembled at the door of their sumptuous mansions.

Cecilia, a freedman and a citizen, had remained a slave at heart. To satisfy his selfish instincts, this man would have sacrificed, if necessary, the dearest and most sacred objects of his affection; and to conquer the enjoyments of life, for which he thirsted, would not have stopped before an abject or guilty action.

AN ADVENTURE OF PAGANINI.

Vervin Julien in Easter Donohoe's. When I visited the Royal Museum of Naples, among all the curiosities which it contained, one object especially attracted my attention; not because of its intrinsic or artistic value, but on account of its oddity. It was a violin made out of bits and clippings of tin, rather awkwardly soldered together, yet recalling the form of the kind of instruments.

I inquired of the keeper what could have procured for this poor old fiddle the honors of a permanent exhibition in such noble company; but notwithstanding the locution natural to a cleric, and the unimaginativeness natural to a Southerner, the old fellow was obliged to confess that he did not know.

I was then an orderly of the King of Naples. When, that evening, I entered upon my duties at the palace, I spoke to some of the officers of my visit to the museum, and of the odd instrument I had there noticed. At first no one could tell me anything about it. A few had seen it, and, like me, had wondered why that ugly thing had been placed among so many art treasures; but their curiosity had not gone so far as to lead them to inquire particularly concerning this important question. I had already determined to give up the investigation, and I verily believe I had forgotten the incident, when the Duke de Casa Calenda, who was one of my colleagues in the service of His Majesty, and of whose exquisite politeness and most obliging disposition I had had a hundred proofs, brought to me the Marquis de Livra, and introduced him to me, saying that he knew the history of the violin in question, and of its admission to the museum. Here is what the cousin of Casa Calenda then related: In 1832, Paganini was to come to the palace, to play before the Court some of the marvellous improvisations whose secret he has kept; for he alone could attempt and accomplish what no one has dared to essay since the days of this immortal artist, who obtained from his violin tones and effects which have justly caused him to be proclaimed "the incomparable Paganini."

It was in the month of July, if I rightly remember; the concert was to take place at 8 o'clock, but by 7 o'clock the carriages began to arrive at the palace and the Via di Toledo was full of people. Our beautiful bay was flooded with light, for the sun, away down the horizon, about to disappear beneath the waves, seemed to caress with a last glance of love this shore to which winter is unkind. Like a god who changes to purple, gold or precious stones, everything which his gaze but lights upon, the sun caused the waves to sparkle, while invisible gull hung above his downy couch and shining curtains of clouds, which seemed like a magic cloth, woven of golden rays and azure vapors. In the distance, one could see the passing sail of some felucca from Sorrento, or the upright sculptured prow of a gondola, which might have been taken for the white wings of some halcyon skimming the waves, or for a swan with elegant and majestic carriage slowly sailing to land. Upon the shore, the sea-birds, anxious and hurried, flew in large circles, and flung towards the king of day, who was about to disappear beneath the blue sea, a harsh and sharp cry—a prayer or a reproach—and one by one these inhabitants of the air were seen to disappear within the clefts of the rocks, where they were about to hide their heads beneath their wings, in order that they might not see the darkness, but peacefully sleep until morning. As the daylight faded away large gleams of red light became more and more visible on the east of the bay; it was Vesuvius that was being lighted like a gigantic light-house, to guide homeward the gondolas, which all the day long glide over the most beautiful bay in the world.

Although familiar with the splendors of those sunsets, for they are daily, the gondoliers and the fishermen leaned upon the quay or upon the side of their boats to admire them. Even the lazzarini, lazily lying upon the steps of the palaces, raised themselves upon one elbow, to address a last, long look to the setting sun; and the carriages, the horsemen and the promenaders that filled the street, walked, or moderated their speed to look towards the west.

As one approached the upper portion of the Via di Toledo, the crowds became more and more dense and the carriages more and more numerous, for it was towards the Royal Palace that most of the carriages were going, and the crowd was increased by the idlers and curiosity hunters who came to see the "upper ten" sighting from their carriages. Therefore, it was not without some difficulty that a tall, spare and eccentric looking man, of some fifty years of age, elbowed his way through the populace that crowded the sidewalks. He had just crossed the Via Frattina, when he suddenly stopped and listened. For a minute he discovered that the crowd was pushing him and carrying him along towards the palace until the strange sounds which struck his ear appeared to become more and more remote.

"Per Giove!" cried he, speaking to himself, "what instrument can that be?" He listened again. "It sounds like a clarinet," he said aloud, "and yet it is a stringed instrument! What can it be? And his curiosity, I should perhaps say his anxiety, became so great that he bravely pushed against the ever increasing crowd, and returned to the entrance of Via Frattina.

Queen Victoria has ordered one of her grandsons to be named Patrick. The name will now become so common among the American Anglophiles that you cannot know a real Irishman when you see him. That half-baked Irishman out in St. Louis who petitioned the Missouri Legislature to change his name from Patrick to Percy will be sorry now.

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Here there was an open space, and saw sitting upon the steps of a palace but a few doors away from the thoroughfare which the multitude crowded, an old man playing a violin. He was playing before a lazzarone who dozed, leaning against a column and three or four bambini in tatters, who, standing with legs wide apart, listened as they ate remnants of angles, or gnawed away at watermelon rinds. By the side of the old man a little boy, who held upon his knishshapen hat, which was probably serve as a contribution box, and which there was not a single carlini in no one had listened to the music.

When he saw the old man play the violin the listener was more bewildered than before. He saw, and did not believe; for his ear told him positively than ever that those notes were the sounds of a violin, had glen of katyids been put into it, stepped forward, and was at last pelled to admit that it was a violin, one made of tin—whence those tones.

He looked, listening, when the minstrel stopped to search his pockets for the tin he had last dredged a piece of tin, upon which he rubbed his vigorously, preparing probably make use of all his means to please one genuine auditor who had come, and whose attentive ear had nevolent smile caused him to bow a few carlini—the first that day.

But, just as he was about to rub the instrument under his chin, a stranger stopped him and said: "Don't do that, my friend, but what is it?" "Why, it's a violin, as you call Signor!" answered the other, who hurt that any one should recognize it.

"Yes, to be sure," continued the stranger, who understood the tone of the old artist, and did not wound his feelings, "it is a violin—an extraordinary one! Will you let me look at it?"

The old man handed it to him, and assumed the dejected look common old paupers, when you ask them anything, without emphasizing request by putting your finger upon your vest pocket.

After having turned it over to examine it on all sides, the stranger said to the old man: "You did you get the notion of having a violin made of tin?"—for it was undeniably made of tin.

"Papa made it!" proudly said the little boy.

"Yes," answered the old man, "it was the child's father, who made it." "Nor was without a touch of pride."

"Ah! said the auditor; "you gave your son the idea of making a tin violin," he repeated.

"My son is a tinner," said the old man, "and his wages are one scudo a day. One scudo, a sighing, is but little for ten he, his wife, the children at school (for he never would hear of him to the poorhouse), and so we work upon the quay—but ashamed." He was silent for a moment, and then continued to long ago I had learned to play the violin, and many dancers and myself that if I could only play myself, I could play in a street and bring home a few carlini evening. But how can one play violin when one has no money to buy bread? And yet, I had had some food and a good work for me, began to make one for the worthless clippings about of his employer. He must have a month at least making it; a violin is no easy job. At last he succeeded, and he brought me—"

"I understand," said the stranger, stretching out to take the bow. "Will you try it?"

The old man gave him the instrument, and the stranger picked up the strings with his fingers as if he did it not unskilfully. The owner, smiling in a friendly way, said to him: "Ah, you are a trade, too!"

"Humph! just a bit," said the smiling man, and the violinist, and he played it in a few minutes, so masterly, that the even the children, looked curiously; for in Italy every artist by instinct.

After a short prelude, he gave him the range and the instrument, the excellent man whom I introduced transfigured; the lines about became sharper and beneath his thick eye brows depths of his cavernous appeared; and as he played and developed, the face and the world player, who had forgotten both the was and the people who surrounded him; for he whole soul to the breath even as a vessel opens favoring breeze, or as of antiquity, possessed a prophetic ecstasy which vious of earthly things.

In the meantime, he continued to proceed slowly palace, whither they the aristocracy of Naples had gathered at the the Via Frattina attraction of a lady, who re-