

THE CATHOLIC RECORD

AURELIA; OR, THE JEWS OF CAPENA GATE

Such are the events and the abominable calculations which explain the presence of Cecilia on Parmenton's slave-stand, at the time the divine Aurelia passed, returning from Pompey's portico, on its way to the Villa publica. Marcus Regulus, concealed behind one of the pillars of the portico, was enjoying the spectacle of the young girl's shame and her friends' sorrow, when he recognized the lady of the divine Aurelia.

"Oh fortune!" exclaimed the wretch, "will you cease at last to defeat my schemes? Let the emperor's niece purchase Cecilia, and I shall sacrifice to you a white heifer!"

This vow of Marcus Regulus can be easily explained. The divine Aurelia is related to Flavius Clemens and the two Flavian Domitians; the Vestal Cornelia lives with her. If Cecilia enters the house, whether she speaks or persists in her silence, the emperor may seize, by one lucky effort, the proofs he has so far vainly sought.

Will not the relations of the divine Aurelia feel the most hopeful joy, when they learn that Cecilia fills the place of Doris? If her protectors could not obtain her release from Parmenton, will it not be easy now to restore her to her father, by applying to their young relative? Doubtless; but Regulus will watch, and if Cecilia should cross that door with her freedom, Parmenton will be ready to claim her in accordance with the conditions of the sale.

Besides, in these efforts there would be a new proof of Christianity, and Regulus may surprise his father. Aurelia, Flavius Clemens and his family had not embraced her creed, why should they devote themselves to this poor daughter of the people, placed so far beneath them?

Cecilia is a Jewess! But then, will she not associate herself to the efforts made to redeem the divine Aurelia to adopt this accursed superstition, — the new faith of her relations? Oh! Regulus is well aware that Christianity, like the bright flame, seeks to spread itself. But Aurelia is destined to the empire! she will not renounce this glorious destiny; she will bid her slavehusband, but she will cry out against her family; and Regulus will be there to hear that cry, to read that complaint to Domitian's ears.

CHAPTER XVII. THE OWEN TREE.

When Aurelia returned home, she went at once, followed by Vibius Crispus, to the room occupied by the Grand Vestal. Cornelia, still overwhelmed by the shame of the punishment which had impaired her health, was reclining on the sofa, her face pale, her eyes closed, her hands clasped in prayer.

"My dear ward," he added, "you can not keep this new slave of yours a single day! She must be sold without delay!"

"And why, if you please, my dear guardian?" asked Aurelia in a tone of playful irony, for she thought Vibius had spoken in jest.

"Because," replied Vibius seriously, "in that young girl belongs to Regulus because it is he who sold her to you, he who introduced her into your house."

"Ah!" exclaimed Cornelia and Metellus in a tone of alarm, for they realized the fearful import of this discovery.

"But my dear guardian," resumed Aurelia, who could not understand all the terror, "why, then, did you not prevent me from purchasing her? You should have told me!"

"You are perfectly right, my august ward, but on your way here I have reflected upon certain circumstances, and I am sure my conclusions are correct. I shall explain my meaning to Regulus; but I must first make a good deal of noise in Rome, particularly among the Vestal virgins. However, I was told by Piny-the Younger, who had succeeded Regulus in this slave, that he had introduced her into the name of one Parmenton, — the very man who had just sold her to you!"

"Vibius Crispus passed, for it seemed to him that Metellus Celer had made an intemperate motion of surprise upon hearing the name of Parmenton. But the young man said nothing."

"What convinces me now that I do not mistake, is that while at the form of man, I captivate Regulus, who seemed to take a great interest in it, for he approached the girl and whispered something in her ear which I could not hear. Well, is it clear enough? What do you think of it?"

"Oh! there can be no doubt," replied the Grand Vestal and Metellus Celer. "This young girl must be a new spy sent by Regulus!"

"So," added Metellus, "you are quite sure that the slave-dealer's name is Parmenton?"

"I know it, my lord," replied Metellus; "but I must speak of them, and that is what I am doing now, to get a better number of those wretches to beseech me, with tears, to grant them life. I consented for who could I punish them so many were guilty? But none of them could reveal to me the real cause of my father's murder, and of the terrible disaster of that eventful night. I have captured, one after another, all the wretches who had surrendered themselves. I have tortured — to make them confess — but among all these men, some of whom had been spared by my indulgence, and the others had felt my just severity, not one was found who could shed a light on this dark deed! I found in them only poor wretches excited to pillage by the hope of freedom, and led to crime by those cruel instincts, unknown to our souls, but which will over suddenly, in the mire of those abject natures, schemes and murderous objects all had confirmed, I have searched Rome and Italy, during six months, to wreak upon him my rage and just vengeance, but I have failed to obtain the least clew to his whereabouts!"

"All this is strange and terrible!" said Vibius, who seemed plunged in deep thought.

"My lord, will you know my secret opinion?" asked Metellus, reading assent in the old man's eyes, "these things happened at the time Domitian proclaimed himself a god, and had his golden statue erected in the Capitol. I am convinced that the disaster of the villa where Vespasian and his family were born, was ordered to destroy the testimony of his plebeian origin written on its walls; that Phœria was the instrument of Regulus, and Regulus the infamous agent of Domitian's secret wishes!"

"Oh! young man! young man!" exclaimed Vibius. "But why, then, this murder of your father?"

"And why the son's condemnation?" replied Metellus. "For you do not see, my lord, what happened to me. I was running upon Phœria's, he continued, 'when I found myself all at once assailed by the most singular accusations. It was alleged that I was the author of the plot against your father, and that I had sought to throw the power of the Emperor into discredit, by repeating the name of the traitor of public works. I protested against these allegations; but I was told, — which is very significant, — that I had got this story from my father, who had, himself, propagated it in Phœria and Reata."

"Oh! evening, as I was returning home, I was assailed by a cohort, dragged before a judge, and tried and sentenced on that same night. I was marching in the midst of an escort of soldiers to my fate, when, — but I said the young man, leaning to the Vestal, with eyes beaming with gratitude, 'it is you, not I, who should inform Vibius of what then took place.'"

"It was a very simple occurrence," said Cornelia, "and I claim no particular merit for acting as I did. You know, my lord, that one of our most ancient and indisputable privileges is to pardon any citizen on his way to be executed, provided we can declare that we met him accidentally. The full exercise of this right is particularly guaranteed to the Grand Vestal. No sentence of death, even if decreed by the emperor, can be executed when the victim who proceeds her has extended his faces over the condemned man's head."

"At an early hour on the morning of the caleds of May, of last year, I was returning in my litter, from the Consul's house, where I had attended the God of the night at the mysteries of the God of the night, when I met the escort which accompanied Metellus, and I immediately halted. 'Vestal!' and extended towards the soldiers, who in his faces towards me, a centurion whether he was taking this man, for I did not know Metellus. He replied that he was taking him to the Tullianum by order of the emperor."

"Young man, you are free," said I to Metellus, and I made the prescribed declaration to the centurion. 'This is all I have done for Metellus. It is much since I saved his life, but it is little, since it only required a few words. And,' added the Vestal, with a cressing

look at the young man, "it is nothing, for you know how Metellus repaid his debt?"

"You forget, dear Cornelia," remarked Metellus, "that Regulus having sought to have me reentered during the day, pretending that you had no right to pardon me, you claimed me from Domitian himself, and the emperor dared not forget the duty of the Great Pontiff!"

"Having avoided this danger," continued Metellus, "I soon fell into another. Regulus was not the man to give up the victim who had once escaped from his clutches. It is clear, my lord, that the wretch had been instrumental in my condemnation, for otherwise, why should he have attempted to deny an indisputable prerogative? I am right in my suspicions, and my poor father was likewise the victim of an accusation, the principle of which is to be found in the facts I have alluded to. There can be no doubt of this."

"Having failed in this first attempt, my enemies seek new means to injure me. But this time their object is twofold. They wish to destroy not me alone, but also her to whose intervention I owe my life; she must perish with Metellus! Oh! this is dreadful! . . . What more shall I say, my lord! I soon discovered that an implacable hatred was seeking to work out of me whom I would give my life for the object of a pious worship, and of a gratitude which will forever fill my heart. Well! they have calumniated these noble sentiments and given them the name of superstitions. So great were the suspicious thus aroused, and so persistently woven the web, that I had to leave Rome, and to condemn myself to live in complete solitude. Yes, my lord, I had selected an unknown and almost inaccessible retreat, and these accusations were hushed by my absence. But I heard of the Grand Vestal's sorrow; I hastened back to Rome to devote myself to her for the first time, and give my life for this secret persecution. . . . I am denounced!"

"Young man," said Vibius, solemnly, "when Metellus had ceased speaking, I asked my advice. . . . here it is! Leave Rome instantly, return to your hiding-place. Should it not be safe enough, burrow, if necessary, in the bowels of the earth; but hide, try to be forgotten! This is all I can say to you. . . . I shall do it," exclaimed Metellus. "Yes, I shall go! but not until I have ascertained whether a man whom Sosthenes followed yesterday, and whom he saw enter one of the taverns of the Villa publica, is not Phœria, my father's murderer, the victim I demand of heaven and hell since two years past!"

"Good-by," said Vibius, addressing the Vestal and Metellus. "You have heard and understood me! Reflect and act!"

And the cautious old courier left the room, muttering to himself, "Minerva! one must have prudence! Let us keep clear of these dangerous mysteries! I have got enough already with my unlucky job about the dies!"

TO BE CONTINUED.

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IN THE WAKE OF THE GREEN BRIGADE.

W. ARCHIBALD M'LEAN IN DONOHUE'S. Timothy Flynn and I were examined for the service on the same day at the recruiting office in Philadelphia. We had never seen each other before that day, nor heard of the other's existence. My name, Timothy Rourke, followed his on the muster roll. He was a big strapping fellow, broad of shoulders, and standing six feet one in his bare feet. I was slender and just tall enough to pass, and not be turned down by Uncle Sam.

We were mustered into the 116th Pennsylvania Regiment, under the command of a loved and intrepid leader, Colonel Mulholland. Our regiment became a part of the famous Irish Brigade under that matchless commander, General Meagher. We were hurried off to camp to be drilled and made soldiers of. From that first day it always seemed to me that some destiny or divinity, was shaping the course of the lives of the two Timothys to link them together. It happened, as though pre arranged, that we were assigned the same tent and became mess mates.

I could not have helped it, for he was a lovable fellow, big-hearted as there ever lived a man, and good natured under all circumstances. It seemed to me as though he had been put in charge of, so much did he concern himself about me, and to me he was always more than a brother. As we grew inseparable the boys found a way to distinguish us, for they named him Big Tim, and me Little Tim. In time these were the only names we were known by.

By all odds he was the favorite not only of his company but also of the regiment. I didn't have much more than a speaking acquaintance at any time outside of our company. Every one hailed him familiarly as Big Tim. He had in return a happy speech for every one. He was a genius at odd jobs, with the strength of a giant, and his services were to be had for the asking. With them nine times out of ten went a good story, one that many a poor fellow heartily laughed over, in spite of weariness and sickness. Yet there were times when every one gave him a wide berth, when he was in one of his tantrums — in liquor. At such times I have often heard him referred to as that Big Irish Devil.

He was a born soldier. He never knew what it was to be tired. On a forced march he was simply great. When it came to a question of strength there wasn't a man in the regiment that could keep pace with him. He could sleep just any place, wherever we happened to be, in a tent, upon wet ground, when it came to a forage for something to eat, he always outdid himself. He was liberal, too, to the last mouthful. He never saw in one side of a hospital unless it was to do a turn for some poor fellow, and had never known a day when he could not sleep, eat, drink and be merry, or as merry as he might be allowed to be.

His mirth was frequently the result of his one bad habit — drink. The days were scarce that he did not have a nip of something hot in his canteen. He was a wonderful forager when it came to something to drink. I have often heard the boys say that Big Tim could catch the smell of a still house ten miles away, and given the run his trail would lead there in an hour. I know that the others, less fortunate along this line, again and again begged him for his luck. He was generous with the stuff, but it angered him to have his canteen returned empty. He would express himself to me then that he thought a last swallow might have been left for the owner.

When we were in camp and he had plenty of liquor there was sure to be trouble. He never knew how to gage his capacity. He always took too much. When he was started he kept right in sight. His officers have frequently admitted to me that when drunk he could give more trouble and annoyance than a dozen men. When drinking he was merry, witty, noisy, rough, fighting or disagreeable. As long as he was merry or witty his company was sought after. He became the soul of a camp fire in either condition. No one could match him in sallies, or tell a story after him. He always told the last one, and it was the best one. His gift of paraprattling Irish balls in his speech kept the boys in a roar. Even when he was noisy he was tolerated, for he could do and say the most ridiculous things. But when he was deeper in his cups he was more or less afraid of him then. Without warning he would grab a fellow and gave him such a terrible hug that when he let go the victim would fall out of his arms limp. Or he would stand off and put a chip on his shoulder and make all manner of mean contemptible speeches, that at heart he never meant, but doing his utmost to pick a quarrel with anyone. If any of the boys crossed him or gave him a word, he would square off, and he was like lightning when it came to hitting. He would listen to no one, unless it was myself, and always do the things he was told not to do.

He, however, was never rough with me. I have often come upon him when a fight was on, or when he was in a disagreeable or offensive mood. Again and again he has turned upon me fiercely, until he saw who it was. Then his whole manner would change and he would say, soft-like.

"It's you, Little Tim, is it; I ain't doing nothing. What is it you want with me?"

Unless I took charge of him, watching him like a hawk, he was sure to get into some difficulty. He was arrested a number of times, usually after a fight in which the guards came off worse than he did, and handcuffed before the Major. If I could I would plead for him and get him off. But more than once he was put in the guard house and fed on bread and water. Other times he was made to do police duty, all kinds of dirty jobs. This he would do with such obedience and at the same time such an innocent shame-faceness that the Major, laughing, admitted to me one day that it meant to injure in punishing him. When time was up and he was free, another drunk would follow in the due course of time.

I have often heard our Captain plead with him to keep straight, to stop drinking, encouraging him by telling him that when sober there wasn't a better soldier in the regiment, which was a fact. He would listen quietly and in the end make many promises, all of which he meant for the moment to keep. They would last until he caught the sight or smell of whiskey. It seemed to me often even the thought of a good swag was enough to make him forget his promises and everything else.

We had a long spell of campaigning, marching and counter marching, crossing and re-crossing the Rappahannock and the Rapidan, during which we not only had many brushes with the enemy, but also fought the battles of Fair Oaks, Gaines Mill, Savage Station, Malvern Hill and Antietam. In all of these Big Tim displayed his great strength and endurance and distinguished himself for his courage and bravery. He could be depended upon for any emergency. He would carry out orders to the letter. He was bold, without fear and indefatigable. When our regiment came out of that awful field of carnage at Fredericksburg with the loss of many men and a number of officers and non-coms, promotions were soon the order of the day. Our captain sent the name of Timothy Flynn to the Colonel as sergeant. He had well earned the chevrons with which he was rewarded. I was made a corporal.

He was as proud of his chevrons as a boy with a new plaything. When alone in our tent he would often pat them lovingly, calling them his wings. In due time he celebrated his promotion getting drunk. I was fortunate enough to come upon him before he was deep in his cups and I never let him out of my sight until he had him sober. The captain, knowing my influence over him, had privately said to me that among other reasons why he had recommended his promotion would be the means of keeping him sober. After this drunk I gave him a very serious lecture, warning him never to repeat his offense, warning him that the result would be if he continued his spree and begging him to keep sober.

He made the most abject promises which had their effect for some little time. He wasn't the kind, however, that could be restrained or could restrain himself. The time came when he kicked over the traces, when I was least expecting it, and went off on a fearful spree. He was in a devilish humor that day. He made a grand noise, quarreled with a number of the boys, tried to strike several, did burn several heads together until they acted, dared the guard to arrest him, telling them he was an officer and they laid their hands on him he would break open their heads. Drunk, he had become more important in his own eyes and hence was more disagreeable. He was reported to speak to him kindly, cautioning him never to repeat his offense, warning him if he did so he would be compelled to disgrace him.

The next drunk came after a long interval. I was expecting it, and dreading the result. He outwitted me so that it was another public spree worse than the last. The Colonel was as good as his word. Sending for him, he informed him that the chevrons must be stripped from his sleeves and that he must be reduced to ranks. The poor fellow wanted to argue the matter, saying, "Indeed, Colonel, haven't I done anything to deserve this. Haven't I always been a good soldier? Haven't I always done my part in every fight?" "Yes, you have," the Colonel answered. "You have always been one of the best of soldiers in every action and have done more than your part when there was anything to be done but that isn't the question."

"Can't ye overlook the matter, Colonel, just a little for I've been doing me very best."

"The Colonel shook his head, saying, 'It can't be done. It can't be done. If you were moderate it would be different. But you are never satisfied until you are drunk. It is demerit you and very sorry that it must be done, but you will have to be reduced to the ranks.'"

IS THE CHURCH LOSING?

Prominent Catholics writers assign the following reasons for loss of church members in this country:

1. Catholic families settling in places many miles from church or priest.
2. Mixed marriages.
3. Neglect of religious instruction and deficient education at home.
4. Reading of bad papers, and the joining of non-Catholic societies.
5. Staying away from the Church to evade contributing towards building churches and keeping up schools.
6. Catholic children compelled by limited means to leave home to secure a living.
7. Occupations where there is no chance to hear Mass on Sunday.
8. Emigrants who had little faith when they left Europe.
9. The absence of solid Christian literature from the average Catholic home.
10. Not enough priests. (This cause is gradually disappearing.)
11. A false idea of social position. (This cause is confined principally to women of fat parses and little brains.)
12. Not being taught Christianity and the beginnings of theology in the vernacular.
13. The oft-repeated attempts to introduce and keep alive foreign customs, manners, modes of thought which tend to make the Catholic religion appear as an exotic, instead of having its roots in the soil.
14. Intemperance.
15. Want of activity in Catholic Church circles for young men and women.
16. Briefest and best. A summing up of them all. The world, the flesh and the devil. — American Herald.

THE HERESY OF THE DAY.

Thinking men see in the attempts of some so-called Catholics to belittle and even deride the work of the Sacred Congregations great and imminent danger to the faith. Leo XIII. has wanted to and again censured the tendency of modern civilization to dispense with God, to abjure faith, to believe there is no supernatural, and to refer all things to measurement by the narrow gauge of man's intellectual powers. If the critics be thoughtful, they must find admit that the head of the Catholic Church could not look with indulgence on such tendencies. To do so would be falsehood to the awful trust reposed in him. But there is, on the part of the Catholics, no fear. They have the consoling assurance that the head of the Church is guided by an inspiration which will not let him wander from the path of wisdom or fidelity. — American Herald.

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