

Morning Star and Catholic Messenger. NEW ORLEANS, SUNDAY, APRIL 5, 1874.

were now trying to make their way into the street.

When the emperor came out, observing that the youth desired to speak with him, he stopped, saying:

"What wish you, Herod Agrippa?"

"Emperor, I have told you that this man is not my uncle."

"And I," said Augustus, "have now settled the question. He is not."

"This officer behind me (Pilate is his name) has been very obliging to us ever since our arrival. I wish, my sovereign, you would send him to Judea as procurator."

"He is too young," replied Augustus; "but I will put his name in my tablets. Perhaps, under my successor, he may obtain the office."

"I want a favor," cried the child Caius.

"What is it, orator?" asked Augustus. (Caligula displayed as a child a precocious volubility of speech, which procured him the epithet by which he was now addressed.)

"That man, that black Jew—who pretended to be my friend's uncle—won't you put him to death?"

"Eterni sunt ista mores," replied Augustus, quoting Cicero; "that would be quite a foreign proceeding. The anger that sheds unnecessary blood belongs to the levity of the Asiatics, or the truculence of barbarians."

Meanwhile Paulus and Thellus, who had unavoidably overheard these scraps of conversation, emerged now once more into the street, and Thellus guided Paulus to the stables of Tiberius Cæsar, where they found Lygdus expecting the visit. He led them into a long range of buildings, and showed them, standing in a stall which had a door to itself, so contrived as to avoid the necessity of letting any other horses, when coming or going, pass him without some intervening protection, the famous Sejan steed. The walls were tapestried with leafy vine-boughs, and the stable seemed very cool, clean, and well kept.

The stature of the ominous horse, as we have had occasion already to mention, was unusually large; but the firmness of his form took away the idea of unwieldiness, and gave a guarantee of both power and speed. However, any person who had studied horses, and was learned in their points, (which to a great extent merely means learned in their anatomy,) would at a glance have condemned this one's head. It was, indeed, not lacking in physical elegance, although not lean enough; the forehead was very broad, but the eye was not sufficiently prominent nor mild in expression, and it shot forth a restless light; the muzzle and the ears, moreover, were coarse; the bones, from the eye down, were too concave, and the nostril appeared to be too thick. Something untrustworthy, and almost wicked, characterized the expression of the head altogether. The jaws were wide, and the neck was extraordinarily deep. The shoulders were not so flat or so thin as the Romans liked them to be; the girth round the heart was gauged; the chest broad and full; the body barrel-shaped. The limbs were long, (which, says Captain Nolan, "is weakness, not power;") but then the bones were everywhere well covered with muscle, the hind-legs being remarkably straight in the drop; in short, they promised an immense stride when the animal should be urged to his fastest gallop.

"Now," said Paulus, after attentively examining these and a great many other points, which it would be too technical for us to detail, "I see he is not muzzled, but tied by the head, and I perceive a curious arrangement—that platform behind his manger, and raised somewhat higher than it. The object is to feed him thence, and approach him there, I suppose! Moreover, I observe you have pulleys in the roof and broad bands dependant from them; do you then lift him off his legs when you groom him?"

Lygdus assented. Paulus, after looking attentively at the animal's hoofs, and forming an idea of the state of his feet, inquired, "Is he savage to all alike, or can you, for instance, approach him?"

"Sir, I always take my precautions," answered the slave.

Paulus went round, and stood some ten minutes in front of the horse on the raised platform behind the manger, then shook a double handful of corn down before him and watched him eat it. Satisfied at length with this scrutiny, he now made arrangements for Philip to remain constantly in the stable, even sleeping there at night, and quitting it only to accompany the horse when taken out for exercise, and he made it clearly understood that Philip should superintend the feeding and grooming of the animal till he should be led forth for Paulus to ride him at the appointed time. He has said nothing to explain why the youth did not ride him muzzled, as often and as long as possible, during the two days which were still left for preparation; the fact being that he proposed even now to do so; but found that, not having stipulated this as one of the conditions, when he had his interview with Tiberius, orders had been given to Lygdus that no person whatever was to mount the horse till the hour when Paulus was to attempt his subjugation in presence of the court, camp, and people. Very much disappointed, and blaming his own want of foresight in not having extorted so important a right, Paulus now left the freedman "on duty" in the stables, Thellus volunteering to revisit him, and to bring plenty of provisions of all sorts, and thus to save the necessity of purveying for him from the distance of Crispus's inn. When our hero and the gladiator had retired, Philip began to make a couch of fresh and fragrant hay for himself on the platform behind the manger, muttering,

"But, if I sleep, it shall be with one eye open and the other not quite closed. If I find that sounder, for he looks a scoundrel, playing any tricks, I'll strangle him so surely as I have five fingers on each hand."

As Philip thus muttered, Lygdus drew nigh and addressed him.

"Your young master, I fear," he said, has

not long to live; no one can ride this horse."

"Three circumstances," replied Philip, seating himself deliberately on a roll of hay, "are unknown to you. I will tell you them. The first is, that this is not at all a case for mere horsemanship, although it is not to be denied that horsemanship is necessary. Courage and wit are more useful than any bodily adroitness in reminding brutes that their master is man. That is the first circumstance. The second is, that my young master learnt his riding among the Ætolians, who are not matched in the world."

"Take a sip of wine," said Lygdus, handing him a flask of hide.

"After you," said the wary old freedman. Lygdus drank a little, wiped the mouth of the flask with a vine leaf, and tendered it once more to Philip, saying,

"The first and second of your remarks seem to me to be appropriate, although I think the Gaulish riders equal to the Ætolians. I should like to hear the third circumstance."

Philip sipped some of the wine, gave back the vessel to the slave, and proceeded,

"The third has relation to your phrase, 'I fear.' My master, Paulus Lepidus Æmilianus, has been born and reared to fear death not over much."

"Edopol!" cried Lygdus; "what is to be feared more?"

"Well," said Philip, "various things he fancies, and I fancy so too. Considering that all men must die, and can die only once, and that it has become somehow, I suppose, by practice and decree, as natural as to be born, and that we have been doing nothing for thousands of years but making way for each other in that manner, it would be an error to look upon death as the greatest evil. Why, man, I should go mad if that which none can avoid was the greatest evil that any can incur."

"Edopol!" exclaimed the slave again; "you are apparently right. Yet what can be conceived worse than death? You mean immense pain, long continuing; in which case a wise man would put an end to himself."

"Well," returned Philip; "but it would be useless to reason with such a you. You should have heard, as I have heard him, Dionysius the Athenian upon this topic. When you make such reflections, is it your big toe, for example, or your belly, or your elbow, or any part of your body that makes them? You may put an end to your body, and we know what becomes of it. When it is no longer fit, as the young Athenian says, to be the house of that which thinks and reflects within it, this last departs; for the body once dead, ceases to think or reflect, and as soon as the thinker does thus depart, the body rots."

"But that other thing which kept the body from rotting, that other thing which thinks and reflects, and which is conscious that it is always the same, that it always has been itself—that other thing which knows its own unalterable identity through all the changes of the body, from squalling childhood to stiff-kneed age—how can that other thing, which may easily depart out of the body and leave it to perish, depart out of itself? A thing may leave another thing; but how can anything be left by itself? When this thing, says Dionysius, goes away from the body, the body always dies. It was, therefore, the body's life. But out of its own self this life cannot go (can any thing go out of itself?) and if it goes out of the body unbidden, what will it say to him who had put it therein when he asks, Sentinel, why have you quitted your post? Servant, why have you left your charge? What brings you hither? I am angry with you! What will this always conscious, always identical thing, then reply?"

"You frighten me," said Lygdus. "What, then, can be more feared by a reasonable man than death?"

"My young master, for example," replied Philip; "so long, be it always understood, as he is not his own murderer, would prefer to die in honor than to live in shame. His father, the brave Roman tribune, used to say to him as a boy, that a disgraced life was worse than a useless life, and a useless life worse than a noble death. But who comes hither?"

The interesting little child Caius Caligula and the boy Herod Agrippa, entered the stable as Philip spoke.

"Oh! there is the big wild horse," cried the sweet infant, who had only just arrived at the use of his reason; "but where is the young man that is to be eaten? I want to tell him what will become of him, and then to watch his face."

"He is, I see, even now coming back," said Philip sternly. He stood up, as he spoke, and an instant afterward Paulus, who was attended by the slave Claudius, bearing a basket of provisions for old Philip, crossed the threshold.

"Ah!" said Caligula, "you are the person, are you not, who are to be first thrown off that horse, next to be danced upon by him, and finally to have your head crunched between his grinders, and that fine wavy hair of yours will not protect your head?"

"That is a graphic description," said Paulus; "but I trust it will not be realized."

"Are you not very frightened? Do not you feel very unhappy?"

Paulus seemed to experience some repugnance to converse with this child; but guessing him to belong to the imperial family, he answered with a calm smile,

"Well, I do not feel the grinders yet."

"I will fix my eyes fast upon you," returned the child, "from the moment you mount."

"May they be blinded before they witness what they wish to behold!" muttered Philip. During this short conversation, Lygdus noticed something white gleaming in a fold of Paulus's tunic at the side, and picked it, unperceived by any one, out of the species of pocket where it lay. Caligula, after scrutinizing Paulus's face, turned away, and ran rapidly up the stable, passing behind the horse.

He skipped and danced a few moments on the other side, gazing at the animal, and exclaiming, "Good horse! fine horse! beautiful horse!"

Lygdus immediately called out to him not to come back till he had closed the door of the

box, the leaf of which was on the higher side and could be swung to, and the slave proceeded to do this. But Caligula, with a sort of skipping run, still uttering his exclamations and looking sideways into the stall as he passed, had already begun to return, giving Sejanus's heels as wide an oblige as the place allowed. A short, ferocious whinny, more like the cry of some wild beast than the neigh of a horse, was heard, and Sejanus lashed out his hind-legs.

Caligula would probably have crossed beyond range of harm, the line of this acknowledgment which the brute was making to him, in return for his ejaculatory compliments, only for the very precaution which Lygdus had taken, and which actually furnished the animal with a projectile, and transmitted to a further distance, by mean of the door-leaf, nearly the full force of the blow. As the door was swinging home, the powerful hoof met it, and, shivering it from top to bottom, dashed it open again, and sent the outer edge of it and a large detached splinter against the middle of Caligula's forehead and face, from the hair down along the whole line of the nose; for, as we have remarked, his face happened to be turned sideways to receive the blow just when it was delivered. He fell insensible; but having been already in motion, the united effect of the two forces was to cast him beyond the reach of any further usage on the part of the Sejan steed. Lygdus immediately lifted him up, and he, with Herod Agrippa, carried Caligula into the open air. Paulus and Philip followed; but ascertaining that the injury was superficial, they returned to the stable, where they were now left alone.

"I heard him tell you, my master," said Philip to Paulus, "that he would fasten his eyes upon you, when you mounted yonder brute; now, he will not open those eyes for a week, and whatever happens to you, he is not going to see it. He is not seriously hurt; he'll be as well as ever in ten days; but for the present his beauty is spoilt, and he's as blind as the dead."

Paulus now in a low tone related to the freedman, whose services would be necessary in the matter, the visit of Charicles, and the gift to him by that learned man of an unguent which, if rubbed into the horse's nostrils, would render him sleepy and, therefore, quiet. The old servant expressed great wonder and admiration at such a device, and Paulus felt with his hand for the little porcelain pot where he remembered to have placed it. Needless to say, it was gone.

"Well," said the youth, after a few questions and answers had been exchanged, "I must even take my chance without it. Charicles, I hear, has just been summoned to Rome, so that I cannot get any more of the compound. Farewell; I must now return to Crispus's inn."

CHAPTER III.

The day when the singular struggle was to occur, the expectation of which had excited such curiosity, arose bright, breezeless and sultry, and so continued till long past noon; but the sun was now sinking toward the Tyrrhenian Sea, and a cool, soft air had begun to blow as the hour approached when the nephew of the triumvir was to mount the horse Sejanus in the presence of such a multitude as the fields of Formiæ had never before beheld, whether in times of peace or times of war.

At the distance of a few miles on every side, the fair vales and slopes of Italy presented the appearance of a deserted land over which no sound was heard save the drowsy hum of insects, the occasional sigh of the rising breeze in the tops of the woods, and, predominant over all, far and near, the piercing ring of the cicada, with its musical rise and fall and its measured intervals. The fire of the way-side forge lay under its ashes; all its anger taking rest, its hoarse roar asleep, till the breath of the bellows should once more awaken it to resistance and torment it into fury. All the labors of tillage were suspended; the plow wearied no team of oxen; little girls were watching the flocks and herds. Their fathers and mothers and brothers had all gone away since early morning, and would not return till nightfall. A lonely traveler from the south, whose horse had cast a shoe and fallen lame, had no alternative but to take off his bridle and housings, leave them under a tree in charge of a little damsel five or six years old, turn his steed loose in a soft field of clover and continue his own journey on foot along the silent highway, amid the silent land.

The seats of the temporary amphitheatre were all filled; while within and beneath them, standing, but standing on three several elevations contrived by means of planks, (the rearmost being the highest,) were six ranks of soldiers from the camp; the two inner ranks consisting exclusively of Ælius Sejanus's prætorians. Immediately behind the centre of the amphitheatre, where Augustus with his court sat upon a strongly built, lofty, and somewhat projecting wooden platform, canopied from the glare, a grove of tall and shady trees offered in their branches an accommodation of which the fullest advantage had been taken by a vast miscellaneous multitude, chiefly youths and boys; but among them soldiers who had received a holiday, and had found no room for themselves in the amphitheatre, were also numerous, their costumes rendering them easily distinguishable. On each side of the large canopied platform of the Cæsars, with their court, were several seats of honor lined with purple and scarlet cloths, and connected with the outside in question by continuous pavilion roofs, but having their own benches. Here many ladies and some boys and girls sat. On one of these were our selves going to take post, invisible but watchful, unheard but hearing.

On the seat immediately in front of ours, and of course a little below it, is a group of three persons, attended by a slave: With these persons, and even with their slave, we have already made more or less acquaintance. One of them the doctors had forbidden to go forth, but he had come. He is a mere child; his pretty face is shockingly disfigured; both his eyes are closed and blacked; all the flesh round them is a discolored and contused mass

his head is bandaged, and every nerve in his countenance is twitching with the furious eagerness and curiosity of one whose organs of sight, if he could only see with them, would ravenously devour the spectacle which all the rest of that mighty multitude were to enjoy, and from which he alone was to be debarred. Amid the immense murmur of so many human voices, we have to listen with attention in order to catch distinctly what the child says in his shrill treble tones.

"Now mark you, good Cælius Piso, and you, Herod Agrippa, I am as blind as a stone, and I have brought you here in no other character than as my eyes, my left and my right eye. If a single lot of what passes escapes me, may all the Gods destroy you both, worse than any Roman or Jew was ever destroyed before! Has that beast of a horse—if it was mine, I'd tether it by all four legs to the ground, and make a squadron of cavalry back their horses against it, and kick it into shreds and little bits)—has that beast of a horse come forth yet?"

"Not yet, orator," answered Piso. "I see that your father, the illustrious Germanicus, has not taken his place in the emperor's pavilion; he is riding about yonder in the arena, and so is Tiberius Cæsar. I dare say they will prefer to remain on horseback; for they can thus see quite as well, while the scene continues to be enacted in this place, and if the Sejan horse should break away through the opening in the amphitheatre opposite to us, they could follow and still assist at the issue, whereas we could not."

"But I want to see; I must see; I'll get on my pony too! Ah my sight! I could not ride blind! O, that accursed horse!"

"Then," said Piso, do you wish the youth to conquer the horse, or the horse his rider?"

The child yelled, and struck his forehead furiously with his fists.

"Oh! if I could only see! I ought not to have come! It is worse to be here, knowing what is to happen, and having it all close under my eyes, and not to see it, than if I was far away and without the temptations around me. It is the hell of Tantalus; I cannot, cannot bear it."

After a pause of impotent rage, he asked Piso was the crowd of spectators very large?"

"It is the largest I ever beheld," answered Piso; "it would be impossible to count it, or to guess the number."

"I wish every one present was stone blind at this very moment," said the dear child.

"Thanks, orator, on the part of all here present," answered Piso.

"Understand me—only for the moment," hastily returned Caligula; "I would give them their sight again when I recovered my own." A pause. "Or even when to-day's show was over, perhaps."

While yet he spoke, the hum and murmur, which had been incessant, died rapidly away.

"What is it?" asked Caligula.

"The Sejan horse is being led into the arena; two men, as usual, hold two cavassons on opposite sides. He is muzzled; two other grooms are now slackening the muzzle, in order to get the bit well back between his teeth, by pulling up the reins which are under the muzzle, as the horse opens his mouth."

"They have the bit properly placed now, and have quitted his head. Oh! what a spring! It has jerked the farther cavasson-holder clean off his feet. O gods! he has lost the cavasson, and the other man must be destroyed. No, bravo! the fellow has regained the loop of his rein or thong, and hauls the beast handsomely back!"

"How can one man on either side," asked Caligula, "hold him? I have seen two on each side."

"I understand," replied Piso; "but before he could finish his explanation or remark, or whatever it was designed to be, a sudden and impressive silence fell upon that vast assembly, and Piso stopped short."

"What has happened now?" whispered the child.

"The rider has come forth," answered Piso, "and is walking toward the horse from the direction of the open space in front of us. By Jupiter! a splendid youth; it is not to be denied."

"How is he dressed? Has he his whip and spurs? He will not need such helps, I surmise."

"He has no spurs, and he carries nothing in his hands. He wears that foreign-looking head-gear, the broad-rimmed petasus, as a shade, no doubt, against the level rays of the sun; for I see he is giving directions to the grooms, and they are contriving to bring the horse round with his head towards the west. Ah! he thus faces the opening; I dare say he will try to push the animal into the excitement of a grand rush, and thus weary him at the outset. In that case, we shall not see much of the business; he will be miles away over the country in a few minutes."

"You will find that such an injustice will not be allowed," answered the child. "We must not be cheated out of our rights."

"His sense," continued Piso, "is belted tight, and I perceive that he wears some kind of greaves, which reach higher than the knee, that will protect him from the brute's teeth. Moreover, I notice a contrivance in the horse's housings to rest the feet; they seem to be made of plated hide."

"I don't care for his greaves," returned the child; "the teeth may not wound him, but they will pull him off or make him lose his balance all the same. It is agreed it is not, that, as soon as he is mounted, the muzzle is to be slipped off the horse?"

"Certainly," said Piso.

"Then the rest is certain," said the other. "How is it contrived, do you know?" added he.

"The muzzle consists of square roll of hide," replied Piso; "and it is those long reins alone which keep it folded, being passed it opposite directions round the animal's nose; while therefore both the reins are pulled, are held tight, they bind the muzzle. Each groom has the same kind of double rein; and each, acting in concert, will set the beast free as soon as they receive the signal."

"Who gives the signal?"

"The rider himself, when he is fairly seated; but Tiberius will tell him when to mount."

"Go on with your description of his dress and his looks. Does he seem afraid?"

"He still wears that queer sword; I should have fancied it cumbersome to him. Afraid! I should say not. No sign of it."

"For once!"

At first, this dialogue was sustained in a whisper; but as the full of all noise was again gradually replaced by that hoarse hum, which is blown out of a hundred thousand low-toned murmured words, Piso and the child Caligula raised their own voices, and the last exclamation of Piso was as loud as it was sudden.

"Has any thing further taken place?"

"Why, yes," said Cælius Piso; "and some thing which I do not understand. That old freedman of the youth, together with Thellus the gladiator, have approached him, and Thellus holds in each hand a sort of truncheon about a yard or more long; the top of which for more than a foot is black; the rest is sheathed or plated in bronze; the black top of the truncheon is thick; the rest, which is sheathed in the metal, is much thinner. The freedman who is by Thellus's side holds a small horn lantern in one hand, and tenders with the other a pair of large wollen gloves to his young master, who is even now putting them on. As he puts on his gloves, he looks round the benches; he is looking our way now. What can he mean? He has the audacity to wave his hand, and smile, and nod in this direction!"

"The slave whom we have mentioned as forming the fourth in this group was no other than Claudius, whose part Paulus was now performing."

"By your leave, most honored lords," said Claudius, "I think I am the person whom that valiant youth is saluting."

"True," said Piso; "he has taken your destined office to-day, has he not?"

"Yes, my lord," returned Claudius; "and having caught sight of me, he beckoned to me doubtless, to bid me have good courage."

"Well!" ejaculated Piso, "that is a good joke. I think it is you who ought to beckon to him to have good courage. He needs it more than you."

A moment after this remark, Cælius Piso suddenly turned to the child Caligula, and informed him that Tiberius was signing to him (Piso) to go down into the arena, and mount one of the spare horses; and, although unwillingly, he must go.

"And how shall I know what occurs?" cried the passionate, volatile boy. "It is like plucking out one of my eyes. Herod Agrippa here speaks Latian with such a dreadful, gross accent, and so slowly; he is but learning the language."

Piso rose and said, "I have no choice but to obey; you have the slave Claudius with you; he not only speaks fluently, but I'll answer for it he will watch all the stages of the struggle with at least as much attention as any person in all this crowd will! His liberty, his wedding, and fifty thousand sesterces are at stake."

Saying this, he descended the steps of the narrow gangway which was (with scores of similar stairs) the means contrived for reaching and quitting the higher seats in the temporary circus. A few moments afterwards, he was seen in the arena riding by the side of Tiberius to and fro.

(To be continued.)

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