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[Interview with Vito Cacciola #40]

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Interview

with

Vito Cacciola

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by

Merton R. Lovett

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“As well as remembered.”

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Interview with Vito Cacciola

by Merton R. Lovett

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(from memory)

“Why do I ruba these white shoes with de sandpaper? I doa what you call, breaka de grain, Mr. Lovett. Then I will puta on black stain. I will maka de shoes black and sparkling.

“Often de white shoes geta so soil-ed that they must be black-ed. White is only beautiful when it is pure and fresha.

“White shoes is lika de good heart. They must be watch-ed with care. The pure heart too must be keep-ed from stain of sin. Peoples that breaka de commandments hava hearts which need to be cleans-ed by power of Jesus.

“It is true that I am de philosopher. I thinka that whata peoples do and de purpose what they have is worth de study. We can learna much from understanding what men and women do and thinka.”

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“Here coma a strange man. I think he is de salesman.

“Whata you say? So you wanta sell to me de new motor? Why?

“Why you thinka my motor is worn out?

“So de cobbler from Cabot Street tella you my motor was no good. My jingo, it wasa new last year. It worka fine.

“No, I do not needa new motor. When you seea that cobbler once more, you tella him, he hava motor in his head. You tella him that Vito say he has motor in de head.

2

“Yes, perhaps I doa need new belt. That belt has been menda often. It bumpa and thumpa much.

“Thank you, I would lika you to show me how to menda de belt so it will runa with smoothness.

“Ah, now I understanda de mistake. I will buya from you de tool and de fasteners.”

. . .

“Does you seea de new Police Station, Mr. Lovett?

“Yes it is de handsome building. Many millionaires liva with lessa comforts and luxuries. I do not believe we should maka de punishment for sin so pleasant. Some gangsters will maka robbery for chance to liva there.

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"I still thinka de old hoose-gow wasa better. De crookers hat-ed that place much. It maka them turna back some times from crime.

"One day I visita an Italian in that place. He geta drunk and acta lika jackass.

"What did he doa? He getta de belief that he is Italian officer, — de Black-shirt. He thinka his neighbor is de communist — de spy.

"No, of course he was not communist. But de drunks was mosta paraliz-ed. He was a crazy lika coot. He coaxa that neighbor in his house, then by force he locka him in de closet. He plana to keep him there till Mussolini coma to get him.

3

"By jingo, no one could rescue that neighbor. De drunka hava a knife and shouta big threats. Everybody is much frighten-ed. The policemens coma and he is pinch-ed.

"In de morning I visita him in his cell. It is most dark and dirty. There is no furniture, only a bed on de boards. De prisoner groana and maka de long face.

"'Vito,' he saya. 'Geta me out quick. I go crazy. I sleepa not at all. De evil spirits, they torture me. Seea they bita me on de arm, de leg, de neck.'

"No wonder you laugha, Mr. Lovett. Has you meta them buggers, which bita so firecely in de dark?

"In de cells was also many, insects, long lika this, and with many legs.

"Yes, that's right, cockaroaches. And de cell wasa cold, with no water pipes, only de pail.

"De prisoner bega me to make de bail and release him. He saya, 'Vito, if I geta free from here I will never maka disturbery any more. I will liva most temperate.'

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“Yes, by gracious, he learna from de experience. He is acta like lamb ever since. But the new cells, my, my, my, they is fix-ed so nica, I would like to sleepa there myself. It is mucha wrong. The Bible tella us that, 'De wages of sin isa death!'”

“What's that, Mr. Lovett? You say that de policemens and de chief hava each private shower baths. De club rooms and de pool table. I bet some of those peoples never taka a bath before, except at de beach.

4

“It is de great extravagence. Must I paya more taxes to bathe de cops and entertainer de gangsters? By jingo, it isa inrageous.”

. . .

“Yes, often I admire Mussolini much. He is greata man. He maka Italy powerful and respect-ed. He bringa order from confusion.

“That'sa true; he is also de dictator. But sometimes de strong man is necessary. De Italians needa de dictator. Many do not understanda or appreciate liberty.

“I wisha Mussolini hava more of generosity and lessa of pride. He is not de good Christian.

“No, he is not lika Christ. It would be gooda if he was.

“De way of Jesus it is best. It is love. De way of Mussolini is not so gooda. It is force.”

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