AVENGED AT LAST;

Or, a World-Wide Chase.

A STORY OF RETRIBUTION.

BY "WABASH"

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CHAPTER I.

If I take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth,—even there shall Thy hand find me.—Job.

WHEN a revolting sight meets the gaze amid surroundings where the hands of industrious settlers have been busy doing their utmost in an almost vain endeavor to improve on nature, the feeling of awe which it arouses exceeds by far such feeling created under ordinary circumstance and in paths of life where such sights are not uncommon. The violent contrast chills and paralyzes the senses and for the moment we know not how to act or what to do. We stand and gaze in horror, as if struck dumb, until the actual truth which has burst suddenly upon us is made clear and indisputable, when we begin to use our reasoning powers, and look for cause.

Such an experience was that of Anton Reyman on a bright July morning, as far back as 1875.

Anton was the foreman of the Posada wine cellars. Three years before he had left his home on the Rhine, and had come to tempt fortune in the land of the setting sun. For months he had wandered around earning what little he could, doing odd jobs in various large towns of Middle California, but poor success, or rather entire lack of success, at last made him so disgusted with city life that he turned his back upon bricks and mortar and set his face and feet toward the free, fresh country.

In his old home he had learned enough to make him a very useful hand in a vineyard or a wine cellar, and after wearying in his useless efforts to reap a fortune from the sidewalks of San Francisco, he had found his way to the beautiful and fertile Sonoma valley. His advent here was as devoid of good results as his roaming through San Francisco had been until he finally had the good fortune to meet a friend in the person of Mario Delaro, a prosperous vintager, who had need at that time of such a man as Anton.

From that day until the one in the early morning of which we find him wending his way to work he had given his master faithful service and had been rewarded accordingly.

Anton was in a gay mood this morning. He had breakfasted well and had kissed his young wife and year-old babe when he parted from them with such bright smiles as he had not worn for many a day. His thoughts were tinged with gayest hues, and as he walked along he sang lustily an old German hunting song in a manner which would have done credit to a Saxon Jager Meister.

Anton had been born in the midst of beautiful rural scenery, but nature had not lost its charm for him. He was never weary of gazing admiringly at the beautiful landscape which lay stretched before him. For him the brown, vine-clad hill possessed a never-failing, irresistible charm and he loved to revel in the grandeur of the sight while he compared it with the enchanting country he had left beyond the sea. In this manner was he engaged when he casually withdrew his glance from the hills and vineyards and cast it on the ground. As he did so he halted suddenly and stooped to make certain that it was a thick line of blood which he had beheld in the dust of the road. No, he had not mistaken. Blood indeed it was—but what could it mean? Blood was one of the last things he would be apt to associate with his surroundings here, and curiosity was now rampant in his mind.

He followed the trail a few feet and found that it turned towards the vines. A few steps further and he saw the body of a large, finely-formed man, lying flat on his back. In almost a single bound he was beside it, and then with an ejaculation which none but German throats can possibly utter, he threw up his arms with mixed feelings of horror

HE THREW UP HIS ARMS IN HORROR.

and anguish. "Mein Gott!" he exclaimed, "who has done this?" It was enough to shatter stronger nerves than Anton's, for there, in a pool of his life's blood, lay his beloved and respected employer, where between two rows of his own carefully tended vines he had apparently crawled to die.

It almost seemed as though he had thought his blood too rich to mingle with the dirt on the road-side, and had therefore with his last remaining strength dragged himself to the soft, fertile soil which he had for so many years tilled.

On his face was an expression horrible as that which some of us have seen on the face of a dead soldier, when death has come by a bayonet wound, struck by a hand skilled in the use of that weapon, beside which he lay in a listless attitude. His arms were spread ward and one knee bent, while his eyes were unclosed, and, although covered by the glassy film of death, seemed to gaze upward with a wild, weird stare. Every thing pointed to a cruel, sudden and unexpected end.

Who has not at one time or another experienced the awful, inexplicable sensation which now held full sway over simple-minded Anton? Even at quiet bed-sides, where those whom we have loved and cherished lie cold in death after long and tedious sickness—when we stand in the presence of the King of Terrors, after we have been, perhaps, sadly waiting his arrival for many days—even then we are prone to ask: "Can this be our friend sleeping his last sleep? Can this be he who took our hand and spoke so cheerily but a few days since?" And sudden death only intensifies this dreadful inability to grasp and comprehend what is, alas, so sternly true.

Yesterday, Mario Delaro, in the warm glow of perfect, healthy manhood: today, a soulless corpse, ghastly and livid!

It took Anton some moments to recover from the shock, but when he did, his first thought was to look for the cause of this terrible spectacle.

He examined the breast of the dead man, but found no wound; then he noticed that the blood had flowed from beneath the left shoulder and he knew that Mario Delaro, the beloved of all who knew him, the man who never feared to face his enemy, had been struck from behind.

He was mystified, and the terror with which his soul was filled prevented him from action, so that for many moments he knelt staring at the corpse, as though he expected to see it come to life.

At last, however, he awakened to the necessity of the hour and arose to look around. There was not a being in sight, so without stopping for further reflection he hastened in the direction of the cellars, the entrance to which was scarcely a stone's throw from where he stood. There he expected he would find some one. He was not disappointed, for two of the cellar-men soon appeared and in a short time he had told them the dreadful news, as well as his excited state would permit, and they all three made their way to the victim of a foul and, at present, mysterious crime. They were all Germans and with natural Teutonic caution each refused to touch the corpse until some person of authority was present. One of them was an old man who had worked around the vineyard and cellars for years and the other a tall, gaunt young fellow who was a recent acquisition to the place.

Neither of the three could advance any reasonable theories. The old man knew everybody for miles around, but could not remember that Mario had an enemy. Anton had known the dead man for more than two years, and had never heard a bitter word spoken of him, while the youngest man of the three only knew that during the short time he had been there he had received his pay regularly, and had heard his employer spoken of as a good fellow.

The other two looked to Anton for some suggestion, and he gave only one of which he could think, was that the young man should make all haste into the town of San Paola and inform the authorities of what had happened, without letting any more people know of it than was absolutely necessary.

The messenger was hardly out of sight when the two watchers fell to talking of the excellent qualities in the character of him who had met with such a violent death.

With tears in his eyes and a voice thick with emotion, Anton told of the tender regard he had for his dead employer; he mentioned the many little kindnesses he had received from Delaro, and said that he had seldom heard a harsh or unkind word from him since the first day they had met.

The old man could go further back into Mario's history than Anton, and he told of deeds and acts of charity which all redounded to the credit of the vintager.

It seemed as though neither of them would ever tire of talking about him, and when they ceased for a moment to eulogise his character they would endeavor to speculate on the probable cause of the murder, but no tangible theory presented itself to either of their minds. In the space of half an hour the messenger was seen returning up the road followed by two uniformed officers (the only two of which the little town could boast) accompanied by another man in civilian's clothes.

As they neared the spot where the dead man lay, they were overtaken by a doctor who had received instructions to follow them and had done so, calling into service the wagon and horse of a grocer, with the grocer's boy for driver.

The sight of these people gave Anton infinite relief, and he breathed more easily when he felt that the care of his ghastly charge was being shared by others.

The first of the officers to approach the body was the marshal. He took a careful survey of the surroundings, but found nothing that aroused his curiosity in an unusual degree; nothing that would serve as a clew, or indicate that there had been a struggle. The doctor, with the assistance of the others, examined the body, and found only the one wound immediately below the left shoulder blade, though that was evidently very deep.

Plainly the blow had been struck by a strong arm and hand, which had not erred in its purpose. It was useless to surmise; there was nothing to say in the matter except the plain, horrible truth that it was a cold-blooded murder, though whose hand had dealt the blow no person could imagine.

The officers noted all the particulars which they possibly could, and the doctor, having taken a diagram of the exact position of the body, there was nothing left to do but to remove it.

They carefully carried the remains to the wagon and covering it up with some empty bags the melancholy little procession started for the town. They had not gone far when they were met by a man on horseback. His appearance denoted that he was a person of especial importance in the community. He was tall but rather thin and had a very perceptible stoop, although being on horse back it was not easily noticed. His eyes were jet black and were covered by heavy, bushy eye-brows; his beard was carefully trimmed and his dress rather too perfect for the locality.

While the expression on his face was not repulsive, it was of a kind which would cause a man to exercise extreme care and caution in dealing with him.

A glance at his features was enough to make clear the fact that he was not American born, although his dress and manners would not have indicated otherwise.

As the party with the wagon drew near to him he stopped his horse and inquired: "What is the meaning of this crowd so early in the morning?" (It was not yet seven o'clock) "and what is it that you have lying in the wagon covered with those bags? The body of an injured man, if I mistake not—who is it?" and as he spoke he moved his horse closer to the the wagon.

The marshal replied to his inquiries: "Mr. Velasquez, I am sorry to have to tell you that Anton Reyman has this morning found the dead body of your friend and partner Mr. Delaro in his own vineyard, and we are now removing it to the town." "The dead body of my part-

"WHAT HAVE YOU LYING IN THE WAGON?"

ner?" responded Velasquez, "and are there any marks of violence?" "Indeed there are," said the officer, "there is no doubt but that he has been foully murdered."

"But, my God," exclaimed Velasquez, "can it be possible that a gentleman who bore the good will of every body, as Mario Delaro did, can have been slain in cold blood?" "Such is the case," calm'y replied the officer. "And is there nothing to indicate by whom the dreadful deed was committed—no clew?" asked Velasquez.

"We have carefully searched and can find nothing," was the reply.

"And what are you now going to do with the body?" pursued the questioner.

"We are going to take the body into the town and prepare for an inquest," he was answered. "Meanwhile, Mr. Velasquez, will you kindly undertake to see that the news is gently broken to his wife—poor, soul!" asked the officer.

"I can not at present," was ply, "for she went yesterday morning with her little daughter, Armida, to Santa Rosa; but I will try to make arrangements so that the news can not reach her suddenly and will telegraph to her friends at Santa Rosa as soon as I can reach the depot. It is not a long ride, but I will start at once and join you later at the mayor's office." Saying which, Valasquez started his horse at a brisk trot, and the sad little party moved on at a slower pace.

CHAPTER II.

Mario Delaro, the man whose dead body had been found, was, as his name indicates, an Italian who had emigrated to America immediately after the close of the civil war, while he was still a youth.

His parents had been well-to-do, but his father met with reverses in consequence of a patriotic endeavor to establish some large factories near to Naples, which had turned out a failure.

Young Mario, full of pluck and spirit, determined not to become in any way dependent on his father in his straitened circumstances, so with praiseworthy energy he resolved to try his luck in California. Like many others, before and since, he was doomed to meet with some bitter disappointments, but as he had made up his mind to battle in earnest with the world, there was little fear that he would starve.

He first tried the mining districts, but there met with indifferent success. Still, by hard work he managed to get a little money ahead and drifted to San Francisco, where he opened a fruit store. There he was more successful and soon saved several thousand dollars.

Growing tired of the busy, yet humdrum life of the city, he resolved on trying his hand in the wine-growing districts, and bought a few acres of land in the fertile Sonoma valley.

Owing to his imperfect knowledge of the business he at first lost a great deal of money in the venture, and by the time that he had mastered all the necessary points and was turning out satisfactory wines, he found that the poor wines which many of his competitors were putting on the market had caused the people to speak disparagingly of domestic wines, so that the trade in them was considerably fallen off. However, he continued to persevere in the face of ill fortune, and was at last rewarded with success.

Elated with his good fortune, he conceived the idea of becoming part owner and manager of one of the largest wine-growing concerns in Sonoma County, and in an evil hour took into partnership a Portuguese named Leon Velasquez, so that he might have the means to purchase some neighboring vineyards.

Velasquez brought quite a large sum of money into the business, though how he came by it was often afterwards a theme for speculation in the mind of Mario.

For nearly a year all went well and the prospects for the next year were quite brilliant. But before the end of twelve months' partnership Velasquez began to show signs of lessening personal interest in the business.

He took oft-repeated trips to San Francisco and made frequent demands for money, which at first Mario invariably met without questioning; but when one day Velasquez proposed to considerably overdraw his account, a quarrel ensued, caused by Mario's refusal.

Thereupon Velasquez displayed characteristics which told that he was not quite the polished gentleman he pretended to be.

But Mario's refusal served a good purpose; for, after this, Velasquez was not so importunate in his demands on the financial resources of the firm. Matters went on with comparative smoothness for a time, but Mario was not well satisfied with his partner and often wished that he had kept along alone in his old quiet way. As year followed year the Posada property continued to increase in value and Sonoma wines found a ready sale at all times. Both Mario and his partner were making large sums of money every year.

Mario was a careful man and invested his money very cautiously as fast as he made it, but Velasquez was given to rash speculation, and frequently lost large sums of money dabbling in mining stocks in San Francisco.

This and his frequent absence from the Posada cellars gave Delaro good cause for complaint, and he suggested to Velasquez the purchase of his share in the business.

To this Velasquez would not listen. He was always sure of a good thing, as he knew full well, so long as he retained his interest in the vineyard and the wine-cellars and he knew enough to stick to his partner.

Mario Delaro had built himself a pleasant home on the hillside a little below San Paola. To this home he took a lovely wife, by whom he had one child, a daughter, who was at the time of her father's death about eight years old. The child, Armida, was a bright little brunette, combining in herself the beauty of her handsome father and the sweetness of her lovely mother—the latter a daughter of a wealthy Spanish merchant in Santa Rosa.

Mario had been very proud of his lovely wife and child and was the tenderest of husbands.

Leon Velasquez, on the other hand, possessed a history which was quite obscure up to the time when he made his first bow in San Paola with a profusion of money and the appearance of one whose path in life was particularly smooth and easy.

As related, he soon became the partner of Delaro, and at the time when the partnership was formed he appeared to be a man of about thirty-five years, though none ever knew his exact age.

If any one had followed him on his frequent trips to San Francisco they would have discovered that he went there to participate in all kinds of vices, and, as men whose deeds are evil love darkness rather than light, they would have found that he did not expose himself much during the day.

He acted like a man who was afraid of being seen, and his haunts at night were places where it required a peculiar knock on the door as well as a glance through a peep-hole before the applicant was admitted.

It looked as though his seclusion in the quiet Posada vineyard was a forced one, though he had not apparently enough discretion or force of will to keep entirely from the outside world.

He was, in short, an inveterate gambler, and would resort to any means in order to gain the material with which to tempt fortune's cards. He had jogged elbows with the worst classes of thieves and villains in San Francisco, and any one aware of his history would have known that it was not the first time he had associated with questionable characters.

The fact of the matter was that Velasquez had walked in crime from an early age. His parents had afforded him a good education, and at the age of sixteen he had entered a large mercantile house in Lisbon.

He took advantage of the first opportunity which presented itself to steal quite a large sum of money, and, failing in his efforts to fasten the crime upon a fellow clerk, he eluded the vigilance of the Lisbon police and secreted himself on a sailing vessel bound for America. The captain being susceptible to a bribe he managed to land safely in New York.

Velasquez lost no time in improving his knowledge of the English language, and after perfecting himself as far as possible he started across the continent.

At Chicago he found his way into a ring of gamblers who soon fleeced him, and he then sank into every kind of vice imaginable. From Chicago he

AFTER DINNER THEY REPAIRED TO THE LIBRARY.

drifted West, but he always, however, managed to keep his photograph out of the various rogues' galleries.

A short time before he fell in with Delaro he had been implicated in a stage-coach robbery in Nevada, but being new in that business the authorities did not suspect or even know him and he thus got clear with his share of the booty.

Becoming somewhat scared, and fearing lest his phenomenal luck should desert him and leave him at last in the hands of justice, he concluded to try f few years to reform and he went to Sonoma. With the exception of his too frequent absence and calls for money, all went well with him after he entered into partnership with Mario Delaro.

Indeed it seemed as though Velasquez had at last settled down to a civil, reasonable kind of life, and towards the beginning of 1875 Mario had so restored his confidence in his Portuguese partner that he sometimes listened to his propositions of a joint investment in mining stocks, at which for a time they both made money, so much so that the deals continued to increase in amount until one day Velasquez induced Delaro to invest twenty thousand dollars with him in a mine which he had privately heard was going to be "boomed" for all it was worth.

The speculation turned out to be a success, and, elated at his lucky hit, Velasquez became greedy for more.

He invested in other mines and lost heavily; then he gave his notes for large sums, and a day or two before settling time with Delaro for the successful deal he found himself nearly fifty thousand dollars in debt, with no immediate prospect of being able to meet his obligations.

He had realized on his own share of the deal in which Delaro was interested, but Delaro had not yet cashed his certificates.

Velasquez was in a bad mood, and ready to meet any emergency with fraud or violence when he started back to San Paola to meet Delaro. He reached Delaro's house, where he had always been a guest about seven o'clock on the evening immediately preceding the morning on which Delaro had been found dead.

After dinner he and Delaro repaired to the library, and commenced to discuss matters of business.

Velasquez, as we know, was in no very pleasant state of mind, and Delaro was in an equally bad mood, owing to the fact that a quantity of wine had been spoiled at the cellars that day, the result of neglect on the part of one of the workmen.

The conversation was quiet enough at first and Delaro calmly signed the transfer of the mining stock so this Velasquez might complete the negotiations on his return to San Francisco.

After this Velasquez told Delaro that he had been speculating further and had lost considerable money; and that

SUDDENLY HE HEARD A SLIGHT NOISE BEHIND HIM.

in order to square himself, he must borrow at least twenty thousand dollars.

Delaro refused to lend the amount, and angrily proposed that they should at once dissolve partnership, offering to pay Velasquez fifty thousand dollars for his share in the business.

After a long discussion Velasquez consented on condition that Delaro would give him a note for the amount then and there, for which he would make over a receipt. The papers of dissolution to be filled out and signed in the course of a day or two.

On his part Velasquez gave Delaro a note for the value of the mining stock, which he held to realize on, and the deal was ended.

It was nine o'clock before the business was settled. At that hour Delaro rang a bell, and the call was answered by a colored servant. "I'm going out, John, may not be back till late, so you need not wait up for me; but see that all lights are put out except the one at the head of the stairs, and the one in my bedroom," said his master.

"All right, sir," responded the attendant; "but is there any thing you want before you start, sir?"

"Yes, you may bring in some claret and ice and cigars."

After each had lit a cigar and drank some of the wine, Delaro arose to start.

"If you care for my company," said Velasquez, "I will walk with you."

"I have no objections," was the response. "We can finish talking over the matter on the way."

During these few moments a great deal was passing in Velasquez's mind. He was meditating on committing a deed which would place him in comparative ease for awhile at least.

He rapidly weighed the chances of detection and made up his mind what he would do.

He was a man whose nature it was not to rest unless his hands were steeped in crime, and he hesitated at nothing when a chance came within his reach to secure a good round sum of money.

Delaro had not pleased him with his carefulness; besides he was exasperated at his repeated losses by speculation and ready for any kind of a deed as a means to escape his difficulties.

"Excuse me for a moment," he said, before they started. "I wish to step up to my room."

He was only gone for a few moments, but it was long enough to get what he wanted.

There was not much said between the two men on their walk towards the town and on beyond it to the cellars; their differences were settled and only one or two minor matters were left to discuss. When they were about two hundred yards from the entrance to the cellars, Velasquez stopped and seated himself on a log, saying that he would remain there until Mario returned.

Mario Delaro proceeded toward the entrance and was soon inside. It did not take him more than twenty minutes to conclude his inspection, after which he did not wait, but at once started down the road toward where he had left Velasquez sitting.

He could not see Velasquez where he had left him, but supposed that he had walked on a little way. He whistled and shouted: "Velasquez! Velasquez!" But no answer came.

Suddenly he heard a slight noise behind him, but he had no time to turn. A blow, a groan, and Mario Delaro was in the dust. He had received his death wound and Velasquez was the murderer.

The blow had been aimed too sure for the victim to retain consciousness more than a second.

Valasquez dragged the body in between the vines, and, after making sure that the deadly blade had done its work well, he left his victim to die.

Shortly afterwards Anton Reyman passed by, followed in the course of half an hour by three of the cellarmen, who had been helping him with some work that had caused a great deal of trouble and worry in the cellars of late.

Velasquez was at the Delaro home by this time. He had entered the ... picked the lock of the desk and taken out his own note and the receipt he had given Delaro for the fifty thousand dollars.

After that he retired to his room, and slept as soundly as if guilt and crime were perfect strangers to him.

CHAPTER III.

The morning after the murder Valasquez arose early, as was the custom with every one in the Sonoma valley, and started out for a ride. He did not appear to have had a very bad night of it and, for a man who must have had the recollection of a recent murder ever present before him, he was remarkably self-possessed.

After leaving the party of men who were escorting the dead body of Mario Delaro into the little town of San Paola, he hastened to the railroad depot and sent a message to friends of his victim's young wife telling them of the horrible occurrence and warning them to be careful in breaking the news to her.

He then started back and reached the little, low building, dignified by the name of City Hall, a few moments after the officers had arrived with their charge.

The body was placed in a room connected with the hall, after which the coroner was promptly notified, and it was not long before the news spread through the town.

The body had hardly been carried in before a servant from Delaro's house came rushing along in eager haste on his way to the cellars. The man had gone up to the bedroom to call Delaro and found that the door was opened, the lamp still burning with a low, flickering light, but the bed had not been slept on.

Knowing his master's intention to visit the cellars on the previous evening, he was now bound thither.

The man was soon told of the sad news and hastened back to the house to inform the other servants about it.

During the long hours of that hazy, warm summer afternoon there was a great deal of bustle and extraordinary excitement in San Paola. It reached fever heat, however, at Delaro's late home and among the workmen at the cellars.

Velasquez undertook the charge of affairs in the place of Delaro and acted as though he intended to run matters with a high hand.

In the afternoon the coroner called a jury together and commenced his official investigation into the cause of the death.

The first witness called was Anton Reyman, who testified to having parted with Delaro on the previous night about ten o'clock, near the entrance to the cellars, also to finding him dead among the vines on the following morning.

From the surroundings of the murdered man he could imagine nothing which would indicate by whom the deed had been committed, but noticed that he had been stabbed in the back.

The other workmen were then called, but only corroborated Anton's statement. Then the men who were present at the cellars when Delaro called in on that fatal night were questioned as to what had transpired on that occasion.

They each told the same story, saying that Mr. Delaro was in a very bad temper over the fact that a large quantity of wine had been spoiled owing to carelessness on the part of the man who had charge of it, and that he spoke rather sharply to all of them.

"Did he pass angry words with any one in particular?" asked the coroner of the last witness, a burly German.

The man hesitated before replying, then said: "Yes, he spoke quite angrily to Anton Reyman, about keeping a sharper eye on the men."

"Were these the first cross words spoken that day between Mr. Delaro and Anton?" was the next question.

"No," replied the workman; "they had several noisy talks that day and Anton, who is himself rather hot-tempered at times, talked back and said something about understanding his business, but that he could not be responsible for the mistakes and carelessness of idle worthless fellows like those Mr. Delaro sometimes employed at a busy time."

Then the coroner inquired if Anton often showed signs of hot temper. "He gets in a rage sometimes, when things don't go quite right, but it soon passes off," was the response.

After this other witnesses were called who testified to several recent quarrels between Delaro and Anton, though all insisted that none of these hot-word passages were at all serious affairs.

Just about this time one of the officers approached Anton and bent down as though to examine his clothing.

"Where did you get this blood on your overalls?" he inquired of Anton.

Realizing the horrible purport of the question, Anton replied: "I got that as I knelt over the body of my dead employer this morning," was the reply.

"Some on your shirt, too," said the officer. "Is that the same shirt you wore last night?"

Anton's quick temper made the hot blood fly to his cheeks, and the veins in his neck distended as he angrily replied:

"Yes, it is; but why do you ask such insinuating questions? I must have got the blood on my shirt when I examined the body in my curiosity to see whether the wound was self-inflicted or not."

"A pretty thin story, ain't it, coroner?" asked the officer.

The coroner looked wise and said that that was for the jury to decide. There being no further witnesses to be examined the jury were called upon for a verdict.

It did not take them long to reach a decision, and in a very few moments they declared that the dead man came to his death at the hands of an unknown murderer.

Practically, however, the "unknown man" of their verdict was a farce, for they added: "We strongly advise that Anton Reyman be held in custody for further examination before a justice."

The same day Anton was taken before a justice—people in these parts lose no time in such matters—for examination.

It is not necessary to go over the ground covered by the witnesses again. The same witnesses who had been brought before the coroner once more appeared and repeated what they had already said. Many minor points were

"WHERE DID YOU GET THIS BLOOD ON YOUR OVERALLS?"

magnified, however, and the consequence was that almost before the full tenor of the situation had made itself felt in Anton's mind he stood charged with the murder of Mario Delaro.

The accused man's distracted wife had arrived on the scene by this time, and as soon as it was told to her that her husband would be tried for willful murder she swooned away.

But before the order for Anton's commitment to prison could be made out a man arrived on the scene for whom every body made way as if by instinct. This was none other than Mr. Joel Wilcox, the richest man in Sonoma County, an uncultured, good-natured, large-hearted, "grasp-my-hand-tight" down-Easter. Wilcox had made an immense fortune in California and spent his days in the valley at a large and luxuriously appointed house which he had built in the midst of a beautiful estate.

He knew everybody for miles around and hob-nobbed with rich and poor, great and small. All met him on equal terms and he had a good word or a hearty laugh for everybody.

His dress was untidy and ill-fitting, owing to the fact that he paid very little attention to outward appearances.

He liked a man of his own ilk, but he hated, as he said, "them as put on airs bekaa they'd med a bit o' money."

Accompanying him was Velasquez, the man whom Wilcox despised above all the many despicable people he had met in the course of a long life-time.

"Hello," said Wilcox, in his free and easy manner, to the justice, "what's up?"

He had like every one else heard all about the tragedy, but felt bound to give vent to the stereotyped inquiry.

The old gentleman walked across to the justice and sat down beside him while the administrator of law and order related to him the more recent developments of the case.

When Wilcox heard that Anton Reyman was charged with the murder he excitedly jumped from his seat and shouted:

"Why you thunderin' blockheads, you are not going to commit an honest man like Reyman for the murder of Mario Delaro, just because he had a few angry words with him and happened to be the first man to foller him out of the cellars last night?"

"There seems to be no alternative," said the justice, "but you may rest assured he will have a fair trial."

"Ah, by God, that he shall," said the bluff Yankee, "if it takes every cent of money I've got to secure it. Dammit, he's no more guilty of that crime than his poor little baby is."

As he spoke these words—whether intentionally or not—his glance wandered towards Velasquez, who was in the room, and it struck him that Velasquez winced.

Then he crossed over to Anton and said: "Cheer up old boy and keep a good heart. If there's any justice in those parts at all you shall get it."

Then turning to Velasquez, he said: "And as for you, I suppose now that Delaro is out of the way you are pleased at the bottom of your hard heart. You'll be trying next to turn the widow out of her house and home in order to get money to throw across the tables up to Frisco. I know more than you think I do about your goings on, and you can make your mind up right here that you're not going to have it all your own way. If Mrs. Delaro ever wants protection from such infamous blood-suckers as you she knows where to find one."

Velasquez listened apparently quietly, but inwardly full of interest, and said as politely as he could: "I fail to comprehend what I have ever done to merit this abuse, Mr. Wilcox."

"Then you can know now that I've got a mighty good reason for my words and you'd better be careful."

With this they both walked away. That night Anton spent behind the bars, charged with the dreadful crime of murder.

(To be continued.)

John Adderton, of Nanaimo, has been committed for trial on a charge of attempted murder.