THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE

VENDETTA;

The Story of One Forgotten.

n na Sal

CHAPTER XV.-Continued.

"There !" he exclaimed. " Like that she exactly resembles her father ! It is positively udicrous ! Fabio, all over ! She only wants o ne thing to make the portrait perfect. And pproaching her, be snatched one of her long urls and endeavored to twist it over her month n the form of a moustache. The child struggled angrily, and hid her face against my coat. The more she tried to defend herself, the greater the malice with which Ferrari tormented her. " Her mather did not interfere—she only langhed. I held the little thing closely sheltered in my em-brace, and steadying down the quiver of in-dignation in my voice, I said with quiet firm-

"Fair play, Signor ! Fair play ! Strength

"Fair play, Signor i Fair play: Stelloyed becomes mere bullying when it is employed against absolute weakness." Ferrari laughed again, but this time uneasily, and ceasing his monkeyish pranks, walked to the window. Smoothing Stella's tumbled hair, I added with a sarcastic smill-

"This little donzella will have her revenge when she grows up. Recollecting how one man teased her in childhood, she, in return, will consider herself justified in teasing all men. Do you not agree with me, Madame?" I said, turning to my wife, who gave me a sweetly co-quettish look as she answered-

Well, really, Conte, I do not know! For with the remembrance of one man who teased her, must come also the thought of another one who was kind to her—yourself—she will find it difficult to decide the just milicu."

A subtle compliment was meant to be conveyed in these words-I acknowledged it by a veyed in these words—I acknowledged it by a sulent gessure of admiration, which she quickly understood and accepted. Was ever a man in the position of being delicately flattered by his own wife before? I think not! Generally, married persons are like candid friends—fond of telling each other very unpleasant truths, and altogether avoiding the least soupcon of flattery. Though I was not so much flattered as amused.—considering the position of affairs ! flattery. Though I was not so much flattered as amused,—considering the position of affairs ! Just then a servant three open the door and announced dinner. I set my child very gently down from my knee and whisperingly told her that I would come and see her soon again. She smiled trustfully, and then in obedience to her mother's imparative gesture, slipped quietly out of the room. As soon as she had gone, I ous or the room. As soon as and and gone, I praised her beauty warmly, for she was really a lovely little thing—but I could see my admira-tion of her was not very acceptable to either my wife or her lover. We all went in to dinner,-I, as guest, having the privilege of escorting my fair and spotless spouse! On our reach-

ing the dining-room, Nina said-"You are such an old friend of the family, Conte, that perhaps you will not mind sitting at the head of the table?"

Tropp' onore, Signora I" I answered, bowing gallantly, as I at once resumed my rightful place at my own table, Ferrari placing himself on my right hand, Nina on my left. The butler, my father's servant and mine, stood as of old behind my chair, and I noticed that each time he supplied me with wine he eyed me with a certain timid curiosity,-but I knew I had a singular and conspicuous appearance which easily accounted for his inquisitiveness. Opposite to where I sat, hung my father's portrait -the character I personated permitted me to look at it fixedly and give full vent to the deep sigh which in very eirnest broke from my heart. The eyes of the picture seemed to gaze into mine with a sorrowful compassion,-almost I fancied the firm-set lips trembled and moved to echo my sigh.

that a good likeness?" Ferrari asked

"I started, and recollecting myself, answered— "Excellent! So true a resemblance that it arouses a long train of memories in my mind— bitter ard stuart Ab! what a arouses a long train of memories in my mind-memories both bitter and sweet. Ah ! what a proud fellow he was !"

"Fabio was also very proud," chimed in my wife's sweet voice. "Very cold and haughty." Little liar ! How dared she utter this libel on my memory ! Haughty, I might have been

to others, but never to her; --and coldnes. was no part of my nature. Would that it were! Would that I had been a pillar of ice, incapable of thawing in the sunlight of her witching or the wing in the sunlight of her witching smile ! Had she forgotten what a slave I was to her ? what a poor, adoring, passionate fool I became under the influence of her hypocritical caresses ! I thought this to meal that I

or pointing a satire, and I will show you a creature whose life is a masquerade, full of vanity, sensuality and pride. The man who married such an one must be content to take the second place in his household, and play the character of the hen-pecked husband with what meekness he best may. Answer me, ye long-suffering spouses of "society women," how much would you give to win back your freedom and self-respect? to be able to hold your head up unabashed before your servants? to feel that you con actually give an order without its being instantly countermanded? Ah, my poor friends! millions will not purchase you such joy; as long as your fascinating fair ones are like Cæsar's wife, "above suspicion" (and they are generally prudent managers), so long must you dance in their chains like the good-natured clumsy bear that you are, only giving vent to a growi now and then; a growl which at best only excites ridicule. My wife was of the true world worldly; never had I seen her real char-acter so plainly as now, when she exerted her-

Self to entertain and charm me. I had thought her spirituelle, ethereal, an-gelio! never was there less of an angel than she! While she talked, I was quick to observe the changes on Ferrari's countenance. H_{ℓ} became more silent and suller, as her bright ness and cordiality increased. I would not appear aware of the growing stiffness in his de-measor; I continued to draw him into conversation, forcing him to give opinions on various subjects connected with the art of which he was professedly a follower. He was very reluctant to speak at all; and when compelled to do so, his remarks were curt and almost snappish, much so that my wife made a laughing comment

on his behavior. "You are positively ill-tempered, Guido !" she exclaimed, then remembering she has ad dressed him by his Christian name, she turned to me and added—"I always called him Guido, en famille; you know he is just like a brother to me

He looked at her and his eyes flashed dangerously, but he was mute. Nina was evidently pleased to see him is such a vexed mood; she delighted to pique his pride, and as he steadily gazed at her in a sort of reproachful wonder, she laughed joyously. Then rising from the table, she made us a coquettish curtsev.

"I will leave you two gentlemen to finish your wine together," she said. "Afterwards, will you join me in the verandah? You will find coffee ready."

I hastened to open the door for her as she passed out smiling; then, returning to the table, I poured out more wine for myself and Ferrari, who sat gloomily eyeing his own reflec-tion in the broad polished rim of a silver fruitdish that stood near him. Giacomo the butler had long ago left the room; we were entirely alone. I thought over my plans for a moment or two; the game was as interesting as a problem in chess. With the deliberation of a pru-dent player I made my next move. "A lovely woman !" I murmured meditative-ly, spping my wine, "and intelligent also. I

dmire your taste, Signor ?"

He started violently. "What-what do you mean?" he demanded half fiercely. I stroked my moustache and smiled at him benevolently. "Ab, young blood ! young blood !" I sighed, shaking my head, "it will have its way ! My good sir, why be ashamed of your feelings. I heartily sympathize with you jif the lady does not appreciate the affection of so ardent and gallant an admirer, then she is foolish indeed ! It is not every woman who has such a chance of happiness.'

"You think-you imagine that-that-I" "That you are in love with her?" I said com-posedly. "Ma-certamente / And why not? posedly. It is as it should be. Even the late Conte could wish no fairer fate for his beautiful widow than that she should become the wife of his chosen friend. Permit me to drink your health ! Success to your love !" And I drained my glass as I finished speaking. Unfortunate fcol! He was completely disarmed ; his sus-picions of me melted away like mist before the

"Forgive me, Conte," he said with remose-il fervor; "I fear I have been rude and "Forgive me, Conte," he said with remose-iul fervor; "I fear I have been rude and unsociable. Your kind words have put me right again. You will think me a jealous madman, but I really fancied that you were beginning to feel an attraction for her yourself, and actually,-(pardon me, I entreat of you !) actually I was making up my mind to-kill

recompense you so richly merit. "Come, let us go and driak coffee with the fair one.", And arm-in arm we samtered out to the verandah in the most friendly way possible. Ferrari was c.m. letely restored to good humor, and Nina. I thought. was rather relieved many men according. But what of that? and Nina, I thought, was rath-r-relieved to see it. She was evidently afraid of Ferrari -a good point for me to remember. She smiled a welcome to us as we approached, and began to poor out the fragrant coffee. It a glorious evening ; the moon was already high in the heavens, and the nightingales' voices echoed softly from the distant woods. As I scaled myself in a low chair that words. As I seated myself in a low chair that was placed in-vitingly near that of my hostess, my ears were startled by a long melanchely howl, which changed every now and then to an impatient which whine.

"What is that ?" I asked, though the question was needless, for I knew the sound. "Ob, it is that tiresome dog Wyvis," an-swered Nina in a vexed tone. "He belonged

to Fabio. He makes the evening quite miser-able with his moaning."

"Where is he?" "Well, after my husband's death he became so troublesome, roaming all over the house and then he would insist on sleeping in Stella's room close to her bedside. He really worried me both day and night, so I was compelled to chain him up.

Poor Wyvis ! He was sorely punished for his fidelity.

"I am very fond of dogs," I said slowly, "and they generally take to me with extraor-dinary devotion. May I see this one of yours" "Oh, certainly! Guido, will you go and un fosten bin ?" fasten him ?"

Guido did not move; he leaned easily back

in his chair sipping his coffee. "Many thanks," he answered, with a halt laugh; perhaps you forget that last time I did so he nearly tore me to pieces. If you do not object, I would rather Giacomo undertook the task."

object, I would rather Graconic undertook and task." "After such an account of the animal's conduct, perhaps the Conte will not care to see him. It is true enough," turn-ing to me as she spoke, "Wyvis has taken a great dislike to Signor Ferrari—and yet he is a good-natured dog, and plays with my little girl all day if she goes to him. Do you feel in-clined still to see him? Yes?" And, as I bowed in the affirmative, she rang a little bell twice, and the hutler appeared.

twice, and the butler appeared. "Giacomo," she continued, "unloose Wyvi and send him here.

Giacomo gave me another of those timid questioning glances, and departed to execute his order. In another five minutes, the howling having suddenly ceased, a long, lithe, black, ing having suddenly ceased, a long, lithe, black, shadowy creature came leaping wildly across the moonlit lawn—Wyvis was racing at full spred. He paid no heed to hie mistress or Fer-rari; he rushed straight to me with a yelp of joy. His huze tail wagged incessantly, he panted thirstily with excitement, he frisked round and round my chair, he abased himself and kissed my feet and hands. he rubbed his and kissed my feet and hands, he rubbed his stately head fondly against my koee. His frantic demonstrations of delight were watched by my wife and Ferrari with utter astonishment.

I observed their surprise and said lightly-I told you how it would be ! It is nothing remarkable, I assure you. All dogs treat me in the same way.

And I laid my hand on the animal's neck with a commanding pressure ; he lay down at once, only now and then raising his large wistful brown eyes to my face as though he wondered what had changed it so greatly. But no disguise could deceive his intelligence-the faithful creature knew his master. Mean-time I thought Nina looked pale; certainly the little jewelled white hand nearest to me shook slightly.

"Are you afraid of this noble animal, Madame?" I asked, watching her closely. She laughed, a little forcedly. "Oh ro! But Wyvis is usually so shy with

strangers, and I never saw him greet any one to rapturously except my late husband. It is really very odd

Ferrari, by his looks. agreed with her, and appeared to be uneasily considering the circumstance.

"Strange to say," he remarked, "Wyvis has

for once forgotten nuc. He never fails to give me a passing snarl." Hearing his voice, the dog did indeed com-mence growling discontentedly; but a tcuch from me silenced him. The animal's declared ennity towards Ferrari surprised me,-it was quite a new thing, as before my burial his be. haviour to him had been perfectly fri indly. "I have had a great deal to do with dogs

in my time," I said, speaking in a deliberately "I have found their instinct marvellous; they generally seem to recognize "Ab, Conte, it is like your generosity to take at once the persons who are found of their scontession so lightly; but I assure you, for society. This Wyvis of yours, Contessa, has a last hour I have been absolutely wretched !" ne doubt discovered that I have had many friends among his brethern, so that there is nothing strange in his making so much of me." The air of studied indifference with which I spoke, and the fact of my taking the scubera: t delight of Wyvis as a matter of course gra-dually reassured the plainly disturbed f elings pause the incident was passed over, and our con-versation went on with pleasant and satisfactory smoothness. Before my departure that even-ing, however, I offered to chain up the dog-"as, if I do this," I added, "I guarantee he will not disturb your night's rest by his howling." This suggestion met with approval, and Ferrari walked with me to show me where the kennel stood. I chained Wyvis, and stroked him tenderly; he appeared to understand, and he accepted his fate with perfect rengulation, lying down upon his bed of straw without a sign of opposition, save for one imploring look out of his intelligent eyes as I turned away and left him. On making my adieux to Nina, I firmly refused Ferrari's offered companionship in the walk back to my hotel. "I am fond of a solitary moonlight stroll," I said. "Permit me to have my own way in the matter." After some friendly argument they yeilded to my wishes. I bade them both a civil "good night," bending low over my wife's hand and kissing it, coldly enough, God knows, and yet the action was enough to make her flush and sparkle with pleasure. Then I left them, Ferrari himself escorting me to the villagates, and watch ing me pass out on the open road. As long as he stood there, I walked with a slow and meditative pace towards the city, but the instant heard the gate clarg heavily as it closed, I hurried back with a cautious and noiseless st*p. Avoiding the great entrance, I slipped round to the western side of the grounds, where there was a close thicket of laurel that extended almost up to the verandah I had just leit. Entering this, and bending the boughs softly aside as I pushed my way through, I gradually reached a position from whence I could see the verandah plainly, and also hear anything that passed. Guido was sitting on the low chair I had just vacated, leaving his head back against my wife's breast; he had reached up one arm so that it had encircled her neck, and drew her head down towards his. In this half embrace they rested absolutely silent for some moments.

other. But I tell you what I think. I am almost positive he is some long lost relation of the family-Fabio's uncle for all we know, who does not wish to declare his sotual relationship. He is a good old fellow enough, I believe, and is certainly rich as Orceass; he will be a valu-able friend to us both. Come, sposina mia, ib is time to go to rest."

And they disappeared within the house, and shut the windows after them. I immediately left my biding place, and resumed my way to-wards Naples. I was satisfied they had no suspicton of the truth. After all, it was absurd of ne to fancy they might have, for people in gen eral do not imagine it possible for a buried man to come back to life again. The game was in my own hands, and I now resolved to play it out with as little delay as possible.

CHAPTER XVI.

Time flow swiftly on,-a month, six weeks, passed, and during that short space I had es-tablished myself in Naples as a great personage -great, because of my wealth and the style in which I lived. No one in all the numerous families of distinction that eager-ly sought my acquaintance cared whether I had intellect or intrinsic personal worth ; it sufficed to them that I kept a carriage and pair, an elegant and costly equipage, softly lined with elegant and costly equipage, softly lined with satin and drawn by two Arabian mares as black as polished ebony. The value of my friendship was measured by the luxuriousness of my box at the opers, and by the dainty fittings of my yacht, a swift trim vessel furnished with every luxury, and having on board a band of stringed instru-ments which discoursed sweet music when the moon emptide her how of silver rediance ments which discoursed sweet music when the moon emptied her horn of silver radiance on the rippling water. In a little while I knew everybody who was worth knowing in Naples; everywhere my name was talked of, my doings were chronicled in the fashionable news-papers; stories of my lavish generosity were repeated from meth to mouth, and the most highly-colored reports of my immense revenues highly-colored reports of my immense revenues were whispered with a kind of breathless awe at every cafe and street-corner. Tradesmen way-laid my reticent valet, Vincenzo, and gave him douccurs in the hope he would obtain my cus-tom for them—" tips" which he pocketed in his usual reserved and discreet manner, but which he was always honest enough to tell me of afterwards. He would most faithfully give me the name and address of this or that particular tempter of his fidelity, always adding-

Among other distinctions which my wealth forced upon me, were the lavish attentions of match-making mothers. The black spectacles which I always wore, were not repulsive to these diplomatic damer, - on the contrary some of them assured me they were most becoming, so anxious were they to secure me as a son-in-law. Fair girls in their teens, blushing and ingenu-ous, [were artfully introduced to I me-or, hould say, thrust forward like slaves in a marnocents laid many dainty schemes in their own minds for liberty and enjoyment when one or the other of them. *hould become the Countess Oiiva, and fool the old black spectacled husband to her heart's content. Needless to say their plans were not destined to be fulfilled, though

I rather enjoyed studying the many devices they employed to fascinate me. What pretty ogliog glances I received !--what whispered ad-miration of my "beautiful white hair ! so dis-tingue!"--what tricks of manner, alternating from grave to gay, from rippling much to witching languor! Many an evening I sat at ease on board my yatcht, watching with a satirical inward amusement, one, perhaps two or three of these fair schemers, ransacking their youthful brains for new methods to entrap the old millionnaire, as they thought me, into the matrimonial net. I used to see their eyes,sparkling with light in the sunshine, -grow liquid and dreamy in the mellow radiance of the

isgust-tant pis pour vous, tant mieux pour

I had of course attained the position of ami intime at the Villa Romani, I was welcome there at any hour,-1 could examine and read my own books in my own library at leisure (what a privilege was mine !); I could sauter (reely through the beautiful gardens accom-panied by Wyvis, who attended me as a matter of course ; in short, the house was almost at my disposal, though I never passed a night under its roof. I carefully kept up my character as a prematurely elderly man, slightly invalided by a long and arduous career, in far off foreign lands, and I was particularly prudent in my behavior towards my wife before Ferrari. Never did I permit the least word or action on on my part that could arouse his jealousy or sus-picion. I treated her with a sort of parental kindness and reserve, but she, trust a woman for intrigue l-she was quick to perceive my reasons for so doing. Directly Ferrari's back was turned, she would look at me with a glance of coquettish intelligence, and smile-a little mocking, half petulant smile ;-or she would utter some disparaging remark about him, combining with it a covert compli-

ment to me. It was not for me to betray her secrets, -I saw no occasion to tell Ferrari that secrets, —I saw no occasion to tell Ferrari that nearly every morning she sent her maid to my hotel with fruit and flowers and inquiries after my health, —nor was my valet Vincenzo the man to say that he carried gifts and similar messages from me to her. But at the com-mencement of November things were so far advanced that I was in the unusual position of being secretly courted by my own position of being secretly courted by my own wife -I reciprocating her attentions with equal secrecy ! The fact of my being often in the company of other ladies piqued her vanity -she knew that I was considered a desurable parti, and she resolved to win me. In this case I also resolved—to be won! A grim courtship truly-between a dead man and his own Ferrari never suspected what was widow! widow! Ferrari never suspected what was going on; he had spoken of me as "that roor fool Fabio, he was too casily duped;" yet never was there one more "easily duped" than himself, or to whom the epithet "poor fool" more thoroughly applied. As I said before he was sure-too sure of his own good fortune. I wished to excite his distrust. and enmity sometimes, but this I found I could not do. He trusted me-yes! as much as in the old days I had trusted *kins*. Therefore the catastrophe for him must be sudden as well as fakal-perhaps, after all, it was better so.

During my frequent visits to the Villa I saw much of my child Stella. She became pas-sionately attached to me-poor little thing !her love was a mere natural instinct, had she but known it. Often, too, her nurse, Assunta, would bring her to my hotel to pass an hour or "As to whether the rascal sells good things or bad our Lady only knows, but truly he gave me thirty francs to secure your excellency's good-will. Though for all that I would not re-commend him if your excellency knows of an honester man !" would be to be a sell the sell t last some kind fairies helped her to find him again. I was at first somewhat afraid of old Assunta,-she had been my nurse,-was it possible that she would not recognize me? first time I met her in my new character I almost held my breath in a sort of suspense,but the good old woman was nearly blind, and I think she could scarce make out my lineaments. She was of an entirely different nature to Giacomo the butler .- she thoroughly ket for my inspection—though, to do them justice, they were remarkably shrewd had every reason to do, but strange to say, Gi-and sharp witted for their tender acomo did not. The old man had a fantastical years. Young as they were, they were keenly alive to the importance of making a good match,—and no doubt the pretty in-on the point that my wife declared he must be on the point that my wife declared he must be believed her master to be dead, as indeed on the point that my wife declared he must be going crazy. Assunta, on the other hand, would talk volubly of my death and tell me

with assured earnestness,— "It was to be expected, Eccellenza—he was too good for us, and the Saints took him. Of course our Lady wanted him—she always picks out the best among us. The poor Giacomo will not listen to me, he grows weak and childish, and he lowed the meater to well-hefter." and and he loved the master too well-better," and here her voice would deepen into reproachful solemnity, "yes, better actually than St. Joseph himself ! And of course one is punished for such a thing. I always knew my master would dinners, and other diversions shall wait to die yourg he was too gentle as a baby, and too your return."

kind-hearted asa man, to stay here long." And she would shake her grey head and feel for the beads of her rosary, and mutter many an Ave for the repose of my soul. Much as I wished it, I could rever get her to talk about her mistress-it was the one subject on which

and Lam bound for the sake of decency to and Dam bound for the sake of decency to a tend his last moments. "Rather protracted la moments they, threaten to be, too, but the law yers say I had better be present, as the old ma may take it into his head to disinherit ma the final gasp. I suppose I shall not be abau long - fortnight at most - and in the man while - "

JAN. 25, 1888

"Continue, caro mio continue !" I said wi some impatience. If I can do anything in you absence, you have only to command me." He rose from his chair, and approaching the window where I sat in a half reclining pos tion, he drew a small chair opposite mine, and sitting down, laid one hand confidingly on m

sitting down, laid one hand confidingly on m wrist. "You can do much i" he replied earnestin "and I feel that I can thoroughly depend upo you. Watch over *her*'! She will have n other protector, and she is so beautiful an careless! You can guard her—your age, you rank and position, the fact of your being an of friend of the family—all these things warran your censorship and vigilance over her, and w can prevent any other man from intruding hin self upon her notice." self upon her notice."

self upon her notice." "If he does," I exclaimed, starting up from my seat with a mock tragic air, "I will not re till his body serves my sword as a sheath !" And I laughed londly, clapping him on the shoulder as I spoke. The words were the ver-same he had himself uttered when I had win messed his interview with my with in the surger same he had himself uttered when 1 had will nessed his interview with my wife in the avenu He seemed to find something familiar in the phrase, for he looked confused and puzzled Seeing this, I hastened to turn the current of the set of the se his reflections. Stopping abruptly in my mirth I assumed a serious gravity of demeanor, an said.

"Nay, nay! I see the subject is too sacro to be jested with—pardon my levity! I assu you, my good Ferrar, I will watch over th lady with the jealous scrutiny of a brother—a elderly brother too, and therefore one mod likely to be a model of propriety. Though frankly admit it is a task I am not specially fitted for, and one that is rather distanteful to me, still, I would do much to please you, an enable you to leave Naples with an easy min I promise you"—here I took his hand and show it warmly—"that I will be worthy of you trust and true to it, with exactly the same fin loyalty and fidelity you yourself so nobl showed to your dead friend Fabio ! Histo cannot furnish me with a better example!" He started as if he had been stung, and eve "Nay, nay ! I see the subject is too sacre He started as if he had been stung, and even

drop of blood receded from his face, leaving almost livid. He turned his eyes in a kind wondering doubt upon me, but I counterfeite an air of such good faith and frankness, that he checked some hasty utterance that rose to be lips and mastering himself by a strong effor said briefly,

"I thank you ! I know I can rely upon yor honor." "You can !" I answered decisively-" "You can !" Ag

positively as you rely upon your own !" Agai he winced, as though whipped emartly by a invisible lash. Releasing his hand, I asked i tone of affected regret,

And when must you leave us, carino?" "Most unhappily, at once," he answered "I start by the early train to-morrow mon

ing." "Well, I am glad I know of this in time, said, glancing at my writing table, which we atrewn with unsent invitation cards, and e timates from decorators and ball-furnish 'I shall not think of starting any more gaie till you return."

He looked gratefully at me. "Really? It very kind of you, but I should be sorry to inte

very kind of you, but I should be sorry to inter fere with any of your plans." "Say no more about it, amico," I interrupte him lightly. "Everything can wait till yo come back. Besides, I am sure you will prefs to think of Madama as living in some sorts seclus on during your enforced absence." "I sh: uld not like her to be dull !" he cage

exclaimed. "Oh no !" I said, with a slight smile at h

folly, as if she—Nina !---would permit heseit be dull ! "I will take care of that. Lift distractions, such as a drive now and then, or very quict, select musical evening ! I under stand-leave it all to me ! But the dance A delighted look flashed into his eyes.

was greatly flattered and pleased. "You are uncommonly good to me, Conte he said earnestly. "I can never thank y sufficiently.

"I shall demand a proof of your grating liquid and dreamy in the mellow radiance of the October moon, and turn upon me with a vague wistfulness most lovely to behold, and—most admirably feigned ! I could lay my head on a bare round with arm and not head on a "And now, had r with sudden and earnest scrutiny-sighed-but said nothing. I was glad to see how thoroughly devoted she was to Stella, and the child returned her affection with interest,-though as the November days came on apace, but sudden at the most sacred vows is the output of the state of the section of the section of the section through as the November days came on apace, binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is the binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is binding ber, by all the most sacred vows is ber all the most sacred vows is ber all the ber a could think of or invent, to be true to him.true as she had been false to me. In fanc could see him clasping her in his arms, a ing glance be be turned to you in either fear favor,-never again will that fair body net in your jealous embrace,-never again will you cisses burn on that curved sweet mouth ; net Risses our on that curved sweet mount; here never again ! Your day is done—the last bit moments of your sin's enjoyment has come—make the most of them !—no of shall interfere! Drink the last drop sweet wine,—my hand shall not dash the of from your lips on this, the final night of yo amour. Traitor, liar and hypocrite! may haste to be happy for the short time that y remains to you —shut the door close last if remains to you, -shut the door close, less pure pale stars behold your love ecstasies! let the perfumed lamps shed their softest ar ficial lustre on all that radiant beauty whi tempted your sensual soul to ruin, and of wi Let there be music too-the music of her vo which murmurs in your ear such entrant falsehoo's ! "She will be true," she says. must believe her, Guido, as I did, —and, bel ing her thus, part from her as lingeringly tenderly as you will,—part from her—jor (

caresses ! I thought this to myself, but I answered aloud-

'Indeed ! I am surprised to hear that. The Romani hauteur had ever to my mind some-thing genial and yielding about it-I know my friend was always most gentle to his depend ants.'

The butler here coughed apologetically behind his hand-an old trick of his, and one which signified his intense desire to speak.

Ferrari laughed, as he held out his glass for more wine. "Here is old Giacomo," he said, nodding to

hin lightly. "He rerembers both the Romanis —ask him his opinion of Fabio—he worshipped his master." I turned to my servant, and with a benignant

air addressed him-"Your face is not familiar to me, my friend,"

I said. "Perhaps you were not here when I visited the elder Count Romani?" I said.

"No, Eccellenza," replied Giacomo, rubbing his withered hands nervously together, and speaking with a cort of suppressed eagerness, "I caue into my lord's service only a year be-fore the Countess died, -I mean the mother of the young Count." "Ah ! then, I missed making your acquaint-

ance," I said kindly, pitying the poor old fellow, as I noticed how his lips trembled, and how al-together broken he looked. "You knew the

"I did, Eccellenza!" And his bleared eyes roved over me with a sort of alarmed inquiry. "You loved him well?" I said composedly,

observing his embarrassment. "Eccellenza, I never wish to serve a better master. He was goodness itself-a fine, hand-some, generous lad-the saints have his soul in believe he is dead-my old heart almost broke when I heard it. I have never been the same since,—my lady will tell you so—she is often displeased with me." And he looked wistfully at her; there was a

note of pleading in his besitating accents. My wife's delicate brows drew together in a frown a frown that I had oner thought came from mere petulance, but which I was now inclined

to accept as a sign of temper. "Yes indeed, Giacomo," she said in hard tones altogether unlike her usual musical voice. "You are growing so forgetful that it is posi-tively annoying. You know I have often to tell you the same thing several times. One command ought to be sufficient for you."

Giacomo passed his hand over his forehead in a troubled way, sighed and was silent. Then, as if suddenly recollecting his duty, he refilled my glass, and shrinking sside, resumed his former position behind my chair. The conversation now surned on desultory

and indifferent matters. I knew my wife was an excallent talker, but on that particular even-ing I think she surpassed herself. See had resolved to fascinate me, that I saw at once, and she spared no pains to succeed in her ambition. Graceful sallies, wibby bon-mots tipped with the pungent sparkle of satire, gay stories well and brickly told, all came casily from her lips, so that though I knew her so well, she almost surprised me by her variety and fluency. Yet this gift of good conversation in a woman is apt to mialead the judgment of those who listen, for it is seldom the result of thought, and still more seldom is it a proof of intellectual capacity. A woman talks as a brock babbles; pleasantly, but without depth. Her information is generally. of the most surface kind, --- she skims the cream of the most strate that, whether it up to you, in her own fashion, caring little whether it be correct or the reverse. And the more vivaciously she talks, the more likely she is to be danger-ously insincere and cold-herted, for the very sharpness of her wit is apt to epoil the more delicate perceptions of her nature. Show me

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but you know what place is paved with similar | composed voice. designs ?"

my confession so lightly; but I assure you, for the last hour I have been absolutely wretched !' "After the fashion of all lovers, I suppose," I answered—"torturing yourself without necessity! Well, well, it is very amusing! My young friend, when you come to my time of life, you will prefer the chink of gold to the laughter and kisses of women. How often dually reassured the plainly disturbed f elings must I repeat to you that I am a man absolute of my own betrayers, for after a 1 tile ly indifferent to the tender passion ? Believe it or not. it is true.'

He drank off his wine at one gulp and spoke with some excitement.

"Then I will frankly confide in you. I do love the Countessa. Love ! it is too weak a word to describe what I feel. The touch of her hand thrills me, her very voice shakes my soul, her eyes burn through me. Ah ! you cannot know—you could not understand the joy, the nain pain,'

"Calm yourself," I said in a cold tone, watching my victim as his pant-up emotion be-trayed itself. "The great thing is to keep the head cool when the blood burns. You think she loves vou?"

"Think! Gran Dio / She has-" here he paused and his face flushed deeply-" nay !] nave no right to say anything on that score.] know she never cared for her husband.

"I know that too !" I answered steadily. "The most casual observer cannot fail to notice

"Well, and no wonder !" he exclaimed warm-"He was such an undemonstrative fool ! ly. "He was such an undemonstrative root i What business had such a fellow as that to marry so exquisite a creature !"

marry so exqueste a creature !" My heart leaped with a sudden impulse of fury, but I controlled my voice and answered calmly— "Requisecat in pace/ He is dead; let him that Michael and the formation of the sum

rest. Whatever his faults, his wife, of course, was true to him while he lived ; she considered him worthy of fidelity-is it not so !" He lowered his eyes as he replied in an indis-

"Oh, certainly?"

"On, certainly?" "And you-you were a most loyal and faith-ful friend to him, in spite of the tempting bright eyes of his lady?" Again he answered huskily-"Why, of course !" But the shapely hand that rested on

the table so near to mine, trembled, "Well, then," I continued quietly, "the love you bear now to his fair widow is, I imagine, precisely what he would approve. Being, as you say, perfectly pure and blameless, what can I wish otherwise than this may it meet with the reward it deserves !"

While I spoke be moved unessily in his chair. and his eyes moved to my father's picture with restless annoyance. I suppose he saw in it the likeness to his dead friend. After a moment or two of silence he turned to me with a forced smile---

"And so you really entertain no admiration

"Oh, pardon me, I do entertain a very "Oh, pardon me, I do entertain a very "strong admiration for her, but not of the kind you seem to suspect. If it will please you, I can guarantee that I shall never make love to the lady unless-----

"Unless what ?" he asked eagerly. "Unless she happens to make love to me ; in which case it would be ungallant not to reciprocate i

proceste !" And I laughed harshly. He stared at me in blank surprise. "She make love to you !" he exclaimed. "You jest. "She would never do such a thing " "Of course not!" I answered, rising and

clapping him heavily on the shoulder. "Women never court men, it is quite unheard of; a re-verse of the order of nature ! You are perfect-"Women a brilliant woman noted for turning an epigram | ly safe, my friend ; you will certainly win the

1

Suddenly Ferrari spoke---"You are very cruel Nins. You actually made me think you admired that rich old Conte

She laughed. "So I do ! He would be really handsome if he did not wear those ugly spec-bacles. And his jewels are lovely. I wish he would give me some more !"

"And supposing he were to do so, would you care for him Nina ?" he demanded, jealously. "Surely not ! Besides, you have no idea how conceited he is. He says he will never make love to a woman unless she first makes love to him ; what do you think of that ?"

love to him ; what do you think of that ?" She laughed again, more merrily than before. "Think ! Why. that he is very original— charmingly so?! Are yeu coming in. Guido ?" He rose, and standing erect, almost lifted her from her chair and folded her in his arms. "Yes, I am coming in," he answered ; "and I will nave a hundred kisses for every lock and smile you bestowed on the Comte ! You little computed. You would first with your grand.

councils you would firs with your g and father 1. She rested against him with apparent tender-

ness, one hand playing with the flower in his button-h le, and then she said, with a slight accent of fear in her voice -Tell me Guido, do you not think he is a

bare round white arm and not be repulsed,-I c ruld hold little clinging fingers in my own as ong as I liked without giving offence,-cuch are some of the privileges of wealth !

In all the parties of pleasure I formed, and these ve.c m.ny,-my wife and Ferrari were included as a matter of course. At first Nion demurred, with some plaintive exense concern ing her "recent terrible b rea ement," but I easily personaded her cut of this.

I even told some ladios I knew to visit her and add their entraties to mine, as I said, with the bengmant ar of an elderly man, that t was not good for one so young to waste be: time and it jure her healta by uscless grieving. saw the force of this, I must admit, with admirable readiness, and speedily vielded to the united invitations she received, though always with a well-acted relucta ce, and saying that she sid so merely "because the Count Oliva was such an old friend of the family and knew my poor dear husband as a child." "because the Count Oliva

On Ferrari I heaped all manner of benefits. Certain debts of his contracted at play I paid privately to surprise him, - his gratitude was extreme. I humored him in many of his small extravagances, - I played with his follies as an angler plays the fish at the end of his line, and I succeeded in winning his confidence. Not that I ever could surprise him into a confession of his guilty amour, -- but he kept me well in-formed as to what he was pleased to call " the progress of his attachment," and supplied me with details which, while they fired my blood and brain to wrath, steadied me more surely in my plan of vergeance. Lattle did he dream in whom he was trueting !-little did he know into whose hands he was playing ! Sometimes a kind of awful astonishment would come over me as I lestened to his trivial talk, and beard him make plans for a future that was never to be. He seemed so certain of his happiness,—so ab-solutely sure that nothing could or would intervene to mar it. Traitor as he was, he way nnable to foresee punishment,-naterialist the heart's core, he had no knowledge of the divine law of compensation. Now and then a dangerous impulse stirred me,-a desire to say to him point blank,

"You are a condemned criminal-a doomed man to the brink of the grave. Leave this light converse and frivolous jesting-and, while there is time, prepare for death !"

But I bit my lips and kept stern silence Often, too, I felt disposed to seize him by the throat, and, declaring my identity, accuse him of his treachery to his face, but I always re-membered and controlled myself. One point in his character I knew well—I had known it of old—this was his excessive love for good wine. I sided and abetted him in this weakness, and whenever he visited me I took care that he should have his choice of the finest vintages. Often after a convivial evening spent in my apartments with a few other young men of his class and calibre, he reeled out of my presence, his deep y-flushed face and thick voice bearing plain testimony as to his condition. On these occasions I used to consider with a sort of fierce humor how Nina would receive him, --for though she saw no offence in the one kind of vice she practised, she had a particular horror of vulgarity in any form, and drunkenness was

one of those low filings she specially abhorred. "Go to your lady-love, mon beau Silenus!" I would think, as I watched him leaving my hotel with a couple of his boom companions. stargering and laughing loudly as he went, or singing the last questionable street song of the Neapolitan bas peuple. "You are in a wouldbe riotous and savage mood-her finer anima! instincts will revolt from you, as a lithe gazelle would fly from the hideous gambols of a rhinoceres. She is already afraid of you, —in a little while she will look upon you with loathing and

my little one looked far from strong. She paled and grew thin, her eyes looked preter-She natura ly large and solemn, are eyes looked prefer-natura ly large and solemn, and she was very early wearied. I called Assunta's attention to these signs of ill health; she replied that she had spoken to the Countes, but that "Ma-dama" had there no notice of the hal-

dama" had taken no notice of the ch ld's weakly condition. Afterwards I mentioned the matter myself to Nina, who merely smiled g atefully up in my face and answered,

"Really, my dear Conte, you are too good ! There is nothing the matter with Stella, her health is excellent; she eats too many bonbons, perhaps, and is growing too fast, that is all. How kind you are to think of her ! But, I assure you, she is quite well." I did not feel so sure of this,—yet I was

obliged to conceal my anxiety, as over-much concern about the child would not have been in ke-ping with my assumed character.

It was a little past the middle of November, when a circumstance occurred that gave im-petus to my plans, and burried them to full fruition. The days were growing chilly and sad even in Naples-yachting excursions were over, and I was beginning to organize a few dinners and balls for the approaching winter season, when one afternoon Ferrari entered my room unannounced and threw himself into the nearest chair with an impatient exclamation, and a vered expression of countenance.

"What is the matter?" I asked carelessly, as I caught a furtive glance of his eyes. "Any-thing financial? Pray draw upon me! I will be a most accommodating banker!"

He smiled unessily though gratefully. "Thanks, Conte-but it is nothing of that

sort,—it is,—oran Dio / what an unlucky wretch I am ?"

"I hope," and here I put on an expression of the deepest auxiety, "I hope the pretty Con-tessa has not played you false? she has refused

to marry you?" He laughed with a disdainful triumph in his laughter.

Oh, as far as that goes there is no danger !

She dares not play me false." "Dares not 1 That is rather a strong expres-sion, my friend !" And I stroked my beard beam and the stroked my beard and looked at him steadily. He himself seemed to think he had spoken too openly and hastily, -for he reddened as he said with a little em-

barrassment: "Well, 1 did not mean that exactly-of course she is perfectly free to do as she likes-but she cannot, I think, refuse me after showing me so much encouragement." I waved my hand with airy gesture of amic-

able agreement. "Certainly not," I said, "unless she be an

arrant coquette and therefore a worbbless woman; and you, who know so well her intrin-sic goodness and purity, have no reason to fear. sic goodness and purity, have no reason to tear. But, if not love or money, what is it that troubles you? It must be serious, to judge from your face." He played absently with a ring I had given him, turning it round and round upon his finger many times before replying. "Well, the fact is," he said at last, "I am compelled to go away-to leave Naples for a time."

CHAPTER XVII.

Next morning I. kept my appointments met Ferrari at the railway station. He loo pale and haggard, though he brightened als on seeing me. He was curiosly irritable a fussy with the porters concerning his lugg and argued with them about some petty th as obstinately and pertinaciously as a deal woman. His nerves were evidently jarred unstrung, and it was a relief when got into his coupé. He carried a yellow pa covered volume in his hand. I asked him

contained any amusing reading. "I really do not know," he answered in ferently, "I have only just bought it. It is

ferently, "I have only just bought it. Is in ferently, "I have only just bought it. Is in Victor Hugo." And he held up the title-page for me to "Le Dernier Jour d'un Condamne," In aloud with careful slowness. "Ah, inde You do well to read that. It is a very study !! "Ah, inde study

The train was on the point of starting, he leaned out of the carriage window beckoned me to approach more closely. "Remember !" he whispered, "I trust to take care of her." 'S Never fear !" I answered, "I will do

best to replace you !" He smiled a pale uneasy smile, and pre my hand. These were our last word, for a warning shrick the train moved off, and another minute had rushed out of sight. alone-alone with perfect freedom o many times before replying.
"Well, the fact is," he said at last, "I am time."
alone—alone with perfect freedom of acting could do as I pleased with my wife now could do as I pleased with my wife now could do as I pleased with my wife now could do as I pleased with my wife now could do as I pleased with my wife now could do as I pleased with my wife now could do as I pleased with my wife now could do as I pleased with my wife now could do as I pleased with my wife now could do as I pleased with my wife now could do as I pleased with my wife now could do as I pleased with my wife now could are myself, to her, or access her of her infidelity and stab to the heart! Any Italian jury would to gain the victory. Fortune surely favored me. But I answered with feigned concern, "Going away 1 Surely you cannot mean it. Why?—wnat for? and where?"
"An uncle of mine is dying in Rome," he and work it out with patience (hough new answered crossly. "He has made me his heir."