

I saw a face and I heard a voice which though I live to be 100 years old I shall not forget.

The warder opened a door, as he opened all the others, and with a sharp word called to attention a woman who stood up straight, looking deep into my eyes. The light fell upon her through the high barred window. Her hands were clasped in front of her. Her tall, lithe figure showed rounded and graceful even through the sacklike prison habit. Darkly passionate, stormily moist, blue black like the thundercloud striding the gulf of Taranto up from the Mediterranean, seemed to me the eyes of the woman who stood before me.

"Maria Perrone, wife of Leo Perrone brigand, for murder in the second degree," announced the warder, saluting with a face like a mask.

"Whom did she murder?" I asked of him quickly.

"One Giovanni Lupo, a soldier of the country militia of her own province."

I looked keenly at the woman, whose dark eyes had never swerved a moment from mine since the opening of the cell door revealed her to me.

"Are you innocent of the crime?" I asked her, expecting the usual denial.

"I killed the man! she replied impassively, standing like an angel carved in the niches of a duomo.

I turned to the jailer.

"Were there any extenuating circumstances?" I asked him. "She does not look like a murderess."

"It is said that the soldier insulted her, that her husband entered and attempted to interfere, whereupon the soldier had the best of it, and when he had overcome the man, the wife, this Maria Perrone, stabbed him to the heart."

"That is a lie," said the woman calmly, without any manifestation of heat, "no man who lives could overcome Leo Perrone, my husband!"

The warder shrugged his shoulders.

"Thus she answers ever," he said, "but indeed, as I have heard, there was some word that it was Leo Perrone himself who—"

The veil of indifference dropped instantaneously from the face of the woman. Her eyes blazed yellow fire. She clutched the palms of her hands, driving her long finger nails into them. Every moment she seemed to be about to spring upon the warder.

"Gently, gently, Maria Perrone," said, putting forward my hand, when my escort came closer behind us to seize her instantly if necessary. "I will be all and see that neither you nor your husband shall suffer any wrong."

The woman calmed herself with an obvious effort and dropped back into her previous stony impassivity.

"No man can accuse my husband of shedding blood," she repeated. "Have I not confessed? Have I not been tried? Have I not been condemned? Am I not now enduring my punishment? Aye, and shall endure it till the day I die!"

She ended with a wave of her hand, like one that cheers a well beloved in the when the victorious troops are coming in. The woman interested me vastly. She also spoke like one who had fought and triumphed.

The warder spoke again.

"Her husband goes free. She speaks truth. He is indeed suspected of being a free companion, but that is swam crime among these barbarous hills till a man is caught. I saw him in the market place today with a contadina—a country maiden!"

"What? Say that again," shrieked the woman, springing forward. Her eyes were deadly and defiant all at once.

The man went on without taking any notice.

"With a maiden of 10 or 11 years—very beautiful; in truth, a Madonna child."

"Ah, my little Margherita!" cried the woman, laughing a little, but with the tears raining down her cheeks. "Why did I fear? It was my own little lass—but, ah, misericordia, they will not come and see me—the prisoner, the murderess."

She dashed her bare hands up to her cheeks, and with the sallow, prison blanching fingers she hastily brushed away the running tears.

"But it is better not—a felon mother—ah, God, one forsaken of the saints! She will think me that, and she will not even remember me in her white prayers."

I motioned the warder to shut the door. I could not abide her grief. The inspector dragged me on to its close. Tier after tier, corridor after corridor, I passed in review, but do what I could it was not in my power to shut out that lovely, tear stained face, into which had not yet come that look of quick coming age which arrives so early for our southern women.

The eyes haunted me, and I caught myself wishing that I might again behold Maria Perrone, the murderess, wife of Leo, the bandit and free companion.

However, I resisted the desire to return to her cell, being well aware that the officials of an Italian prison would set my interest in the woman down to another motive than a disinterested desire to investigate a prisoner's complaints.

Presently, weary of the babble of syndics and councilors, I excused myself and sauntered out into the town. Groups of broad hatted country folk were scattering homeward. Every road out of the little city was filled with the small, wide horned Apulian oxen, dragging slowly the ox carts, with their straw tanks like great cups mounted upon them, into which beribboned girls and laughing lads crowded with jest and infinite laughter.

As I proceeded I saw that there was a great stir in the direction of the cathedral. Women stood chattering about the doors, beggars were edging and elbowing for places nearest to the entrance, vergers were striking at them with their official staves as often as the unlicensed encroached on the sacred paved space of the porch. It was evidently a great ceremonial, and, though mostly I am of the soldier's religion, which, they say, is that of the girl he is courting, I had not lost my interest in the noble and impressive pomp with which Mother Church keeps her hold upon the children of the south—lovers of color and tinsel every one.

Doffing my soldier's hat, I went in. The evening sun streamed through rich and ancient lozenges. Colored marble of most delicate inlaid work glittered with gold and silver. Lapis lazuli and veined porphyry overlaid the tawny travertine of the pillars like jewels on a bride's neck.

A great procession was sweeping up the aisle toward the altar—the Cardinal Carrara, prince of the church, nephew of the pope, bowing his keen, ascetic, churchman's face over his princely scarlet. Foster son of the heretic Waldense valleys as I was, Gallio in any religion as the redshirts of Sicily had made me, I soon found myself on my knees. Ah, I am wiser now. I think more of religion and its utilities now than I did in the sixties. Religion comes to most healthy men with the stiffening joints or the first touch of lumbago in the back.

Continued on page 25.

## \$15,000 in Cash to be Given Away

THE PRESS PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION will give \$15,000 in 1000 Cash Prizes to those making the nearest estimates on the combined Official Vote of Ohio, Massachusetts and Iowa, cast for Governor on the 5th day of November, 1901.



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1893 "	1,615,422	decrease 4.04%
1894 "	1,533,887	" 5.10%
1895 "	1,576,452	Increase 2.77%
1896 "	1,936,718	" 22.22%
1897 "	1,572,109	decrease 18.40%
1898 "	1,532,510	" 2.52%
1899 "	1,633,389	Increase 7.89%
1900 "	1,965,610	" 18.88%

The certificates of the Secretaries of the States named, showing the Combined Official Vote, will determine who are entitled to the Prizes and the awards will be made within 30 days after the Official Vote is known.

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